

City of Grass Valley
Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2026, 7:00 PM
Grass Valley Market Annex

Present: Christian Ayles, Mayor; Samantha Allen, City Administrator; Rita Wilson, Council President; Bonne Whitley, Councilmember; Ree Ella von Borstel, Councilmember; Everett Carson, Councilmember.

Absent: Tom Rolfe, Councilmember; Joann Duarte, Councilmember

Guests Present: Joanna Lyons-Antley, Legal Counsel (Sagebrush Legal LLC) via Zoom; Jaime Crawford, City Planner (Bell Design Co) via Zoom; Sean Orsborn, Joe Sharp, Leta Ann Reckmann

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Grass Valley met in regular session on February 2, 2026, at the Grass Valley Market Annex. The meeting was called to order at **7:00 PM**. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2.0 CONSENT AGENDA

May we accept the agenda as written.

Motion By: Ree Ella von Borstel | **Second:** Rita Wilson | **Vote:** All in favor.

2.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 2026

Council noted that not enough members present at this meeting had been present at the January meeting to legally approve the minutes.

Action: January minutes were tabled until the next regular meeting.

2.2 FINANCIAL REPORTS – JANUARY 2025

Council reviewed the monthly financial report and current budget status. Discussion included:

- Timing of shared revenue deposits, which may not follow a predictable quarterly schedule
- Overall budget position mid-year
- Confirmation that grant-funded expenses are properly tracked and offset

Council confirmed that an outside auditor is retained annually, but no monthly CPA service is contracted.

Staff handles ongoing financial management.

Motion: Approve January financials as presented.

By: Ree Ella von Borstel | **Second:** Bonne Whitley | **Vote:** All in favor.

2.3 MAINTENANCE REPORT

Walter provided a detailed update on his water system operations this month, including:

- Updating the City's Emergency Response Plan
- Preparation for the upcoming State sanitary survey of the municipal water system
- Explanation of the Direct Responsible Charge (DRC) role and operator protocols
- Ongoing asset management planning efforts

Walter also presented:

- **Garage Door Replacement Quotes**

Two commercial garage doors for the City maintenance building were discussed. Quotes from Gorge Doors and Home Depot were comparable. Council expressed preference for using a local vendor if cost remained similar.

Council emphasized the need for written documentation and a not-to-exceed amount.

Motion : To authorize replacement of two commercial garage doors (one with opener) with a not-to-exceed amount of \$5,500, pending written estimate and subject to Council approval for any overage.

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By: Ree Ella von Borstel | **Second:** Bonne Whitley | **Vote:** All in favor.

Next:

- **Cost Per Gallon of Water (Electricity Only)**

Walter provided calculations showing the electricity cost to deliver a gallon of water. Council discussed this in context of long-term water rate planning and lawn watering impacts.

2.4 CITY HALL UPDATES

City Administrator provided updates including:

- No new ordinance violation letters issued
- Existing cases showing active compliance progress
- All backflow prevention issues resolved
- Six late water notices to be issued
- One red-tag situation resolved through direct communication
- SIP grant funds to be used for Water Master Plan final invoice
- Wastewater planning invoices are current; additional updates to the wastewater plan at the March meeting with the Engineer.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None formally recorded.

4.0 OLD BUSINESS

4.1 STRATEGIC PLAN –ONGOING DISCUSSION (CEDS LIST)

Council reviewed the project list to be submitted to the County at their upcoming meeting.

Discussion included:

- Whether to continue advancing wastewater planning or pause
- Importance of keeping wastewater listed due to ongoing consultant work
- Park improvements and grant opportunities
- Combining water infrastructure and meter upgrades under one umbrella priority

Council reached consensus to prioritize:

1. Wastewater infrastructure planning
2. City Park upgrades
3. Water infrastructure improvements (including meters and line upgrades)

Staff directed to submit list accordingly.

4.2 WATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Final draft completed. Council discussed previously requested revisions and confirmed the engineer will attend the March meeting for formal review.

4.3 SHARP EASEMENT UPDATE

Mayor announced Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(h) to consult legal counsel.

Public was excused.

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(No executive session discussion recorded.)

Council returned to open session.

Mayor summarized legal counsel's interpretation:

- Free water service applies only to Joe Sharp's residence and one identified rental residence.
- The easement does not extend free water privileges to additional heirs or properties.
- Development charges (SDCs) may be waived per easement terms, but ongoing water service charges are not waived beyond the specified residences.

Direction: Staff to issue written notice to affected parties requiring standard water service payment moving forward.

Council discussed enforcement procedures if payments are not established.

4.4 **126 MILL STREET- PROPERTY COMPLIANCE**

Staff reported significant cleanup progress. Council acknowledged visible improvements.

Property owner requested clarification on compliance timeline.

After discussion:

Consensus: Extend compliance deadline to April 1, 2026.

If not in compliance by that date, daily abatement fees may be applied consistent with City code.

Staff directed to conduct a walkthrough and provide written clarification of the remaining required items for the resident.

4.5 **MANUFACTURED HOME- 406 LINCOLN**

Update included:

- Plumbing completion scheduled
- Skirting installation pending for when plumbing is completed
- Septic system confirmed
- City water service hookup completed
- Electrical connection status unclear

Council discussed potential permitting sequence concerns.

4.6 **PARK COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Discussion included:

- Interest in installing a basketball hoop or shared court space
- Possible coordination with adjacent property owner
- Liability considerations and fencing
- Surface leveling and trip hazard mitigation on the grassy area
- Grant opportunities for park upgrades

Next Park Committee meeting scheduled for February 11, 2026.

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5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 PUBLIC HEARING- WASCO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE FENCE VARIANCE

Mayor opened public hearing.

No disclosures. No challenges to jurisdiction.

Planner Jaime Crawford presented report regarding retroactive variance for fence height exceeding front yard limitation.

No public testimony received.

Applicant waived seven-day post-hearing response period.

Motion: To approve variance as presented based on findings and staff recommendation.

By: Ree Ella von Borstel | **Second:** Rita Wilson | **Vote:** All in favor.

5.2 AUP AUDIT REPORT

Staff reported compliance with audit requirements and payment of \$14,500 invoice.

Council requested a list of remaining policy updates to be completed this fiscal year.

Council members took copies of the auditor's reports.

5.3 LOC BUDGET TRAINING

Council reviewed the virtual training opportunity for staff and council on February 24 and 26.

Cost: \$159 per participant. Ree Ella expressed interest in elected official training.

Staff to coordinate registration for councilmembers and possible shared participation with neighboring cities for staff training.

6.0 PUBLIC COMMENT (NON-AGENDA ITEM)

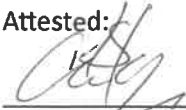
None formally recorded.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Adjourn. **By:** Rita Wilson | **Second:** Ree Ella von Borstel | **Vote:** All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at **8:31 PM**.

Attested:



Christian Ayles, Mayor



Samantha Allen, City Administrator

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Present: Christian Ayles, Mayor; Samantha Allen, City Administrator; Rita Wilson, Council President; Ree Ella von Borstel, Councilmember; Tom Rolfe, Councilmember; Everett Carson, Councilmember.

Absent: Bonne Whitley, Councilmember

Guests Present: Ed Hodges, Curran-McLeod, Engineer via Zoom; Meinrad Kuettel, Sean Orsborn, Leta Ann Reckmann

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Christian Ayles called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

1.1 Pledge of Allegiance

The Council and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ree Ella to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion seconded by Tom and **passed unanimously.**

2.0 CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Approval of Minutes

Council reviewed prior meeting minutes.

- **January Minutes:** Approval postponed due to lack of quorum for that meeting.
- **February Minutes:** Council discussed wording related to grant fund tracking. A correction was made to change language indicating “confirmation” of grant tracking to reflect it as a **question or discussion point.**

Motion made by Rita to approve the **February minutes as corrected.**

Seconded by Ree Ella and **passed unanimously.**

2.2 Financial Reports – February 2026

Council reviewed the February financial report.

Discussion included:

- Payroll allocation between General Fund and Water Fund
- Clarification of payroll distribution related to water maintenance work
- Discussion regarding tracking grant funds and how they appear in the ledger
- A question was raised regarding the **WWTF planning expense appearing twice**, due to transfers between accounts

Council agreed further clarification was needed before approving the report.

Financial report approval was tabled pending clarification.

2.3 Maintenance Report – Walter

Walter reported on maintenance activities and provided an update regarding the **City truck purchase.**

Key details:

- 2016 Ford F-250 purchased from a dealership in The Dalles
- Purchase price negotiated to **\$30,000**
- Included:

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- 24-month / 24,000-mile bumper-to-bumper warranty
- Airbag repair
- Steering wheel control repair
- Dome light repair
- Four-wheel alignment
- Brake pad replacement and rotor resurfacing
- New windshield wipers
- Inspection and service

Council discussed disposing of the **old city truck**. Options discussed included: Auction and Posting locally.

- Minimum sale price suggested around **\$5,000**

Council consensus was to attempt selling the vehicle rather than accepting a low trade-in value.

2.4 City Hall Updates

Staff provided updates on:

- **Past-due water accounts:** Late notices continue to prompt payments.
- **Violation notices:** Additional notices are being addressed.
- **Moore property issue:**
 - Plumbing reportedly completed
 - Electrical work pending inspection scheduling

Council expressed concern about the extended timeline for resolving the property compliance issue.

Motion made requiring the property owner to provide:

- Written documentation from a licensed electrician
- Timeline for electrical compliance

Deadline set for **March 30, 2026**.

Motion by Ree Ella, seconded by Rita **passed with one abstention**.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments were presented.

4.0 OLD BUSINESS

4.1 Curran-McLeod Updates

Engineer **Ed Hodges** provided updates on:

Wastewater Planning Study

- Survey conducted regarding septic systems
- Approximately **89% response rate**
- Findings suggested most residents report functioning systems
- Data will be included in a forthcoming report

Additional planning work underway:

- Environmental review
- Mapping

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- Ordinance development
- Funding exploration

Estimated project cost:

- Approximately **\$8 million total**
- Possible grant and loan funding sources identified

A **public meeting** will be scheduled to present findings once the report is completed.

Water Master Plan

Ed reported that the Water Master Plan has been completed and submitted to the appropriate state agencies.

Curran-McLeod Engineering Firm Transition

Ed informed Council that **Curran-McLeod will be acquired by MacKay Sposito**, an engineering firm based in Vancouver, Washington.

He stated:

- Staff and services will remain the same
- He will continue serving Grass Valley as the primary contact

Council discussed the required **contract assignment letter** transferring the agreement.

Motion made by Ree Ella to approve the contract assignment. Seconded by Tom.

Vote: **3 in favor, 1 opposed, Motion passed.**

4.3 Strategic Plan – Grants

Council discussed strategic planning items including:

- Hiring spring/summer maintenance assistance
- Possible outreach to high school students
- Potential apprenticeship or part-time seasonal position

Staff will develop a job description for review at next meeting.

4.4 Sharp Easement

Council reviewed concerns regarding legal advice previously received on the Sharp Easement matter.

Concerns raised included:

- Legal counsel reportedly issued advice without reviewing the full easement documentation
- Recommendation to hire a surveyor was questioned

Council discussed seeking **new legal counsel** and reviewing attorney options.

No formal action taken during this agenda item.

4.5 Committee Updates

Safety Committee

Issues discussed:

- Illegal parking near stop signs
- Long-term abandoned vehicles
- Possible towing enforcement

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Council discussed issuing final notices prior to towing.

Parks Committee

Updates included:

- Playground replacement planning
- Contact with playground equipment supplier
- Potential basketball half-court installation
- Future ADA pathway along the creek
- Exploration of other grants for park improvements

Pavilion Committee

Committee exploring:

- Installation of stage curtains
- Improvements to pavilion functionality

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Water Rights Inquiry – Brookfield Renewable

Council reviewed a request from Brookfield regarding water access.

Council determined that the City does **not have sufficient water capacity** to supply the requested amount.

Consensus was to **deny the request**.

5.2 Hiring Policy and Agenda Request Policy

Council reviewed two draft policies.

Public Agenda Request Policy

- Submission deadline adjusted from **5 days to 10 days**

Tom moved to approve the policy as amended. Ree Ella seconded.

Passed unanimously

Hiring Policy

Policy outlines procedures for regular and emergency hires.

Motion by Rita to approve policy, seconded by Ree Ella, **Passed unanimously**

5.3 Council Seat Vacancy / Recognition of Joann

Council discussed recognizing Joann for **40 years of service** on City Council.

Ideas included:

- Commemorative bench
- Recognition related to the Easter event tradition

Council also discussed recruiting candidates to fill the **vacant council seat**.

5.4 Pavilion Rental Rates

Council discussed increasing rental fees for out-of-area commercial users.

Proposal:

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- **\$500 pavilion rental for out-of-county commercial events**

Motion made by Ree Ella, seconded by Tom and **passed unanimously.**

6. PUBLIC COMMENT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

A resident provided an update regarding compliance efforts related to previously discussed property concerns.

Council acknowledged improvements and encouraged continued progress.

Other property owner out of compliance is getting ready to move and will have a dumpster coming out soon.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made Tom to adjourn the meeting.

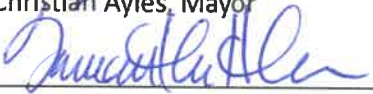
Seconded by Rita and **passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at **9:25 pm.**

Attested:



Christian Ayles, Mayor



Samantha Allen, City Administrator