



CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 14, 2025 AT 6:30 PM
FINLAYSON CITY HALL

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1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM by Mayor Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
 2. **ROLL CALL:**
 - a. Council members present: Dave Auchter, Barb Morgan, Kim Schaefer, Jeff Flaws, Rhonda Kriesel
 - b. Council members absent: None
 - c. Others present: Wyatt Lucht, Sierra King, Mike Drahosh, Greg Sorenson, Stanley Thompson, Dennis Liebelt, Nancy Liebelt, Marge Haefner, Russ Lucht, Kris Ristamaki, Kati Slama, Diana Ristamaki, George Slama, Joe Luedtke, Randy Millner, Ethan Bjorklund.
 3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A concern about the Clerk report regarding the number of satellite bathrooms was brought up, but it did not warrant a correction to the official minutes; no action taken. Another concern about posting unapproved minutes on the website was brought up, but Mayor Auchter noted it was an agenda item and will be addressed there; no action taken. *A motion was made by Auchter to approve the June 9, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 4. **PUBLIC FORUM:**
 - a. Wyatt Lucht presented a hand-written statement to the Council. The statement has been retained as part of the official meeting record and has been attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.
 - i. The City Auditor was present for the conversation and confirmed that the Fire Department is a department of the City of Finlayson, and therefore bound by the same rules that the City is bound by.
 - ii. Mayor Auchter acknowledged and recognized the Fire Department's efforts and clarified that this is not about being unappreciated, but rather following the statute.
 - iii. Lucht also presented two checks dated July 4, 2025 from Josette Kotts and Mike & Rose Hansen, which he stated were given to him over the holiday and not part of the pancake breakfast. The council accepted these donations and will formally acknowledge them via resolution at a future council meeting.
 - b. Stanley Thompson requested a review of the number of satellite bathrooms ordered for the 4th of July festivities. It was requested to note that for future years, one satellite per fifty people is recommended, as clarified by council member Schaefer.
 - c. Mark Guss requested to have chickens. *Schaefer motioned to approve up to six hens with review in the future for Mark Guss. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - d. George Slama presented a concern that the Finlayson-Giese Sportsman's Club was not going to be able to hold their Fall Hunting event; this is a rumor and the Council confirmed they are not aware of any reasons preventing the event from happening. Mr. Slama also presented a concern about the rubber speed bumps installed in the alleyway between the Post Office & Petry's. Mr. Slama asked that the City reimburse him for a part that had to be replaced on his vehicle. No council action was taken. Council discussed and agreed that the speed bumps could be removed, as there are no longer small children in the vicinity. Lucht suggested the speed bumps be placed in the Fire Hall for backstops; council agreed. No formal action taken. [Note: Public Safety Aid was used to purchase the speed bumps, and is unknown if the use at the Fire Hall meets the requirements of the Public Safety Aid.]
 - e. Greg Sorensen from the Finlayson Community Club discussed National Night Out, which will be held on Tuesday, August 5, 2025.

5. **CITY AUDITOR:** The City Auditor, Dennis Oberloh of Oberloh & Oberloh, Ltd., presented the audited financial statements. The auditor answered various questions from the council regarding preferred accounting software, processes and procedures.
- Mr. Oberloh confirmed the Mayor and one other signer must sign all checks, and that claim forms are not required. The City will update processes immediately to align.
 - Mr. Oberloh clarified that he does not have a personal preference for QuickBooks online, but that everyone will be using it within two years. He also clarified that CTAS is preferred, yet the City cannot use it for utility billing or payroll; which must be processed in separate programs. [Note: The City has already purchased CTAS and had been advised by the auditor in March to hold off on the transition to CTAS until the new fiscal year.]
 - Morgan requested a list of city bank accounts from the Clerk.
 - Auchter inquired if the City can include the bond payments for the Fire Hall into the expenses figure which is used in the Fire Contracts formula. Mr. Oberloh confirmed the interest expense and the depreciation expense could be included. Auditor will provide a depreciation schedule to Clerk. Auditor further confirmed there is no single way to calculate the City's portion of the Fire Contracts, but it is preferred to use the same formula used by the townships for transparency.
 - When asked how to reduce costs for the Audit, Mr. Oberloh noted that the City can switch to cash-basis accounting with the Office of the State Auditor, which reduces the amount of time needed to prepare the statements, therefore reducing the cost by an estimated 20%. No formal action taken. [Note: The City uses cash basis accounting for its regular budgeting and reporting, which tracks money when it's actually received or spent. However, the annual audit required by the Office of the State Auditor is done on an accrual basis, meaning it includes items like unpaid bills and retirement liabilities to meet state reporting standards.]
6. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *A motion was made by Flaws to approve the agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*
7. **CONSENT AGENDA:** Morgan raised concerns about the use of the term "Administrator". *Motion by Morgan to eliminate the use of the title "City Clerk/ Administrator" and to designate the position title as "Clerk-Treasurer" for all City correspondence, records, and references going forward. All in favor. Motion carried.* Morgan questioned a statement on a late notice issued to Greuel. *Motion by Auchter to forgive the late fee penalties assessed for Michelle & Anthony Greuel. Ayes: Schaefer, Flaws, Kriesel. Abstain: Morgan. Motion carried. A motion was made by Flaws to approve the consent agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*
8. **PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS:**
- Personnel & Policy (Morgan, Schaefer):** Schaefer requested to call a Special Meeting at 6:30PM on 7/28 for the purpose of a working session regarding personnel policy & procedure, including the revision of the employee handbook, a process for personnel reviews for staff (Luedtke, Millner, Lucht, & Bernhardt).
 - Public Works & Infrastructure (Auchter, Flaws):** Continuing to meet for needs, biggest item is snowplowing; committee is working on bids for a snowblower and skidsteer/loader.
 - Budget & Finance (Flaws, Kriesel):** Met late June, and again on Friday; still in the beginning stages of the budget.
 - Planning & Zoning (Flaws):** Met July 7, reviewed minor sub applications, recommend to council to review [unspecified] ordinance re: commercial vehicles. Additional updates provided by Melzark under Staff Reports.
9. **STAFF REPORTS**
- Water & Sewer Contractor (John Mikrot):** Auchter reported on behalf of Mikrot; valves ordered, they delivered electric vs. pneumatic. May be beneficial to stick with electric; will be checking with Engineer. Sewer/drainage ponds have been mowed & (Millner) sprayed.
 - Zoning Administrator (Ed Melzark):** Pogatchnik & Split Rock minor subdivisions presented & approved. Looked into a complaint regarding chickens on Front St; no nuisance confirmed. However Melzark identified a possible blight concern & is working through proper channels to remedy. Stovern/Sidhe

want to hand-dig a pond & build a foot-bridge; Melzark contacted Pine Co Soil & Water (as it is in a wetland area) and is awaiting confirmation. Does not believe foot bridge or pond will require building permit but property owners will need to coordinate with County and possibly State to move forward.

- c. **City Maintenance (Randy Millner):** Did not get meters read prior to July 1 due to weather and other time-sensitive projects. Worked with Northern Contractors/Skaiff to get the sidewalk by the church poured and believes the time and materials were donated; publicly acknowledged & thanked them. Filled potholes on Front Street (north of Hwy 18); will need more T-11 cold patch. *Motion by Morgan for to remove the installed speed bumps & utilize them at the fire hall for backstops. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- d. **Bar Manager (Joe Luedtke):** Reported a loss of ~\$16k for the year. June expenses were higher due to stocking shelves for holiday; should see reflected in sales for July. Sales Thursday – Saturday (over 4th of July holiday) were ~\$600 more than previous year. Auchter noted concern that sales were down but Luedtke reported food sales are going good, and the new menu is receiving positive feedback. Schaefer shared concerns with new menu pricing and typo. No action taken. Toast (POS system) is nearly complete; Luedtke has a zoom meeting on 7/16 to get it up and running. Luedtke will be taking vacation from 7/24 – 8/5. Schaefer questioned whether the Liquor Store is doing radio advertising. No action taken. Schaefer shared concerns again about pricing and kitchen operations. No action taken.

Kriesel motioned to extend the meeting until 9PM. In favor: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel, Schaefer. Opposed: Morgan. Motion carried 4:1.

- e. **Fire Chief (Wyatt Lucht):** Report submitted: 4 fire calls, 4 Rescue/EMS assists, 1 Motor vehicle accident, 0 false alarms, 1 County assist. Ten Calls this month. 80 hours for calls, 28 hours of training, for a total of 108 hours this month. Lucht reports he received compliments on the “waterfall” at the 4th of July celebration. Lucht reported malfunctioning phone on a truck that needed a \$1500 flow censer which was covered under warranty. Concern that sensor affected other areas and may have Emergency Apparatus look into when they do the annual certifications. ISO certification will occur next spring. Held a hose training last week. Morgan questioned whether or not the City is obligated to use the Fire Formula [that received the most votes.] Auchter stated that if / when the formula changes from the current formula, that the bond depreciation and interest will be included in the expenses for the Fire Department.
- f. **City Clerk (Liz Bernhardt):** Report submitted. Schaefer sought clarification on Paul’s Portable order for satellites for the 4th of July. Report stated “modified Paul Portable order for satellites for 4th of July to remove hand washing stations per Kim Schaefer, for the Community Club.” Clerk confirmed that is what was done; no changes to the satellite order were made.
- g. **City Financials:** Clerk reviewed financials. Auchter made a recommendation to the council that the Finance & Budget Committee review the Liquor Store financials, and Clerk will provide a month-by-month P&L to the committee. Schaefer is concerned about operational practices at the Liquor Store. Clerk would like to invite Bruce Pogatchnik to attend the Budget & Finance Committee meeting. *Morgan motioned to appoint Schaefer as a temporary bar liaison through the end of the year. All in favor. Motion carried.* Schaefer asked that any suggestions be sent to her. *Motion by Morgan to include prior year’s Profit & Loss Actual to Budget in the council packets. All in favor. Motion carried.*

At this point the Council addressed the following New Business topics:

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **National Night Out:** He is soliciting volunteers to help with the event; various Council Members volunteered to help. There will be food, bike raffles, law enforcement and games. Clerk will connect with Millner to bring trashcans and barriers out for Community Club to use for the event.
- b. **Temp Liquor License:** Motion by Schaefer to approve the temporary liquor license for the Finlayson-Giese Lion’s Club in September. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Auchter to recess the meeting to 5:00PM on Thursday, July 17, 2025. All in favor. Motion carried.

Submitted by Liz Bernhardt, City Clerk, July 14, 2025

Thursday, July 17, 2025

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:00PM by Mayor Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **ROLL CALL:**
 - a. Council members present: Auchter, Morgan, Schaefer, Flaws, Kriesel
 - b. Council members absent: None
 - c. Others present: Nancy Liebelt, Bill Morgan, Wyatt Lucht
3. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - a. **Council Conduct:** Discussed; no action taken.
 - b. **PERA Corrections:** Discussed; no action taken.
 - c. **Clerk Performance Review:** *Motion by Morgan to add to September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting Agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.* Discussion about other department reviews, including Bar Manager, Maintenance Worker and Fire Chief; will need to be scheduled. No action taken.
 - d. **Paid Family Medical Leave:** *Motion by Flaws to table until further information gathered; tabled without Council vote.*
 - e. **Microsoft Office:** *Motion by Flaws to move forward with Microsoft Office 365, researching current Google Subscription, and working towards getting our value out of our current product. In favor: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel. Against: Morgan, Schaefer. Motion carried 3:2.*
 - f. **Bar & Cook Pay:** *Motion by Morgan to table until research as been done in regards to bartenders earning a cook wage. In favor: Auchter, Morgan, Flaws, Kriesel. Against: Schaefer. Motion carried 4:1.*
 - g. **Snowplow Equipment:** *Motion by Kriesel to have the Public Works & Infrastructure Committee do a study/recommendation with full cost, and clear financial position of the City prior to proceeding. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - h. **Council Workshop Sessions:** *Motion by Morgan to schedule Council Workshops on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 6:30-7:30PM. Motion amended by Auchter to schedule Council Workshops on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 4:30-5:30PM. In favor: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel. Against: Morgan. Abstain: Schaefer. Motion carried 3-1-0. [Note: Schaefer is required by bylaws to state reason for abstention.]*
 - i. **Fire Formula:** *Motion by Kriesel to gather additional information from Clerk in a special meeting [Council Workshop]. All in favor. Motion carried.* Fire Chief to be invited to meeting.
 - j. **Minutes on Website:** *Motion by Morgan to publish only the approved version of the Council Meeting minutes on the website. All in favor. Motion carried.* Clerk to post that [unapproved] meeting minutes can be requested.
 - k. **Clerk Vacation:** *Motion by Auchter to close City Hall 7/28 & 7/29 and to approve Clerk vacation. Voted in favor of City Hall closure: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel. Against: Morgan, Schaefer. Motion carried 3:2.* Flaws suggested closing on a regular basis to process utility billing. Suggestion regarding reducing hours of operation to public on a regular basis. No action taken. *All council members in favor of approving Clerk vacation. Motion carried.*
 - l. **Ordinances & Resolutions:**
 - i. Resolution 2025-16 – Authorizing a Veteran’s Discount. Flaws proposed to bring discount to the Finance Committee to review. No action taken.
 - ii. Resolution 2025-17 – Donation from Great Water Real Estate. *Motion by Auchter to approve. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - iii. Resolution 2025-18 – Donation from James & Nancy Azarski. *Motion by Auchter to approve. All in favor. Motion carried.*
4. **ADJOURNMENT.** *Motion Morgan to adjourn the regular council meeting 7:36PM. In favor: Morgan, Schaefer, Kriesel. Opposed: Flaws, Auchter. Motion carried 3:2.*

The remaining items on the agenda were not addressed.

a. **Policies & Procedures:**

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. **Broadway Development:**

b. **Legalities of City Fundraising & Expenditures**

c. **Sedillo Property Hwy 18:**

6. MISCELLANEOUS:

a. No additions, as agenda was previously approved and this meeting is a continuation of that agenda.

Submitted by Angela Jansen, Deputy Clerk, July 17, 2025