



**City of Neenah**  
**SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING AND**  
**BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 6:00 PM**  
**Neenah City Hall – 211 Walnut Street**  
**Council Chambers**

[A broadcast of this meeting can be viewed and heard through this link on the City's YouTube channel.](#)

The Common Council of the City of Neenah, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, met in special session at 6:00 p.m., November 18, 2025, in the Council Chambers of Neenah City Hall.

Mayor Lang is the chair.

Present: Aldermen Bruno, Linski, Ellis, Steiner, Pollnow, Lendrum, Weber, and Council President Borchardt. Alderman Erickson arrived at 6:14 PM. Staff present Director of Finance Rasmussen, Director of Community Development & Assessment Nieforth, Public Works Director Kaiser, City Attorney Rashid, and City Clerk Nagel.

Also Present: Water Utility Director Mach, Community Development Deputy Director, Schmidt, Parks & Recreation Director Kading, Library Director Hardina-Willhelm, Police Chief Olson, Assistant Police Chief Bernice, Information Systems Director Schroeder, and those noted on the attached Meeting Sign-In Sheets.

Mayor Lang called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

The City Clerk called a voice roll call as the Mayor/Aldermen recorded their attendance in the RollCall-Pro System followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council President Borchardt.

Mayor's Comments on the proposed 2026 Operating Budget and 2026 Capital Improvements Program Budget.

Mayor Lang thanked the Director and Deputy Director of Finance, Rasmussen and Kahl, for their work on this year's budget. It's never easy to figure out how to balance all the priorities as the city with the top priority to our taxpayers to provide top notch services to the residents. Mayor Lang thanked the Department Heads and the staff who work diligently daily to make the City of Neenah a great place to live.

The aldermen received the proposed budget on October 29<sup>th</sup> for their review. We held Budget Workshops to go through the budget on November 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. As always the Council does a great job of reviewing the budget and offering suggestions on how to improve the budget as presented. Mayor Lang thanked the Council for their work over the long review.

The top priority is public safety with 53% of the total budget going to police and fire. The Police Department is fully staffed, and the city has negotiated a contract with the police officers. The remodel of Fire Station 31 and training grounds is fully underway which will greatly enhance fire firefighters' ability to train at the Tullar Road location.

The city is also committed to support the staff with a modest 2.5% pay increase spread out over the year with the 1.5% step increase in January and a 1% cost of living raise in July. This increase does not apply to elected officials. A salary plan evaluation for the employees will take place next year as we are committed to compensating our employees with competitive wages in order to retain and attract the best workers for our community.

We are committed to re-writing the zoning and housing code in 2026 for the first time since the 1960s. This will greatly help working with developers who want to do work for our community.

Looking back over 2025, there has been significant business expansions to Galloway and RGL, and a large facility for Gunderson is soon to be located in the Industrial Park. There has been a significant addition of 85 single-family homes built this year, which is twice the normal average. Our Community Development's ability to accomplish the goals that were identified in this year's Housing Study, another first in many decades to be conducted. The highest net new construction in the city's history in 2024 which positively impacts the city this year, and we already exceeded that number in 2025. There has also been growth at the Bridgewood Apartment Complex on the city's south side. We have also achieved the goal of acquiring the warehouse on Main Street for the purpose of establishing additional development on that site. Shortly after the acquisition, we are happy to announce that T. Wall Enterprises, the builder of the Solaris Development, offered to purchase this newly available site from the City for the purpose of development of additional apartments in the downtown.

The Commercial Street reconstruction project, one of the largest reconstruction projects in the city's history, was completed in October two weeks ahead of schedule and under budget. A Request for Proposals (RFP) along this corridor yielded four proposals for consideration. One of the proposals was chosen to move forward, which will certainly spur additional development and enhancements in the S. Commercial corridor.

We worked with Theda Care to add housing for their new residency program, located on the former Roosevelt School site. This is a great opportunity for the city to draw in doctors in training and hopefully get them to make Neenah their permanent home. This project will also spur additional development of Doty Island.

There are many great things to be thankful for that are happening in our city. Our staff and Council Members can each take pride in the part they play in making these great things happen.

The First ever Strategic Plan. This three-year plan which will be put before the Council later next month will provide specific action items that will help guide and direct our city in positive and productive ways. The plan will help prioritize investments, enhance services, and strengthen our connections with residents as we move our great city forward together.

Mayor Lang addressed the proposal to reduce the crossing guard number from 14 to 10. As is evident from our proposed budget, we prioritize public safety above all else. Chief Olson has been working with Neenah Joint School District Harrison, and East Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission Safe Routes to School Expert on this proposal. With that said, Mayor Lang will be making an amendment to her proposed 2026 budget to keep all fourteen crossing guards at this time. Conversations had with Dr. Harrison and Chief Olson offers reassurance that we will be able to work more collaboratively in the coming year with the school district to address the staffing concerns that precipitated this proposal. The citizen concerns regarding this issue are important and I want to make sure that not only do they have accurate information on this topic, but that they have the opportunity to have conversations with all nine alderman and all

School Board Members as well. I encourage both Council Members and School Board Members to support collaborative efforts between the city and the school district for consideration of solutions as we move forward to address the needs of all our Neenah student attending both public and parochial schools. Mayor Lang proposes a joint meeting for both Council and School Board to facilitate this conversation as safety is the priority for all of us. Mayor Lang will be amending the budget adding the four crossing guards back in and will leave it up to the aldermen to make their decision on this.

Chief Olson presented to Council of the facts behind his recommendation to remove four crossing guards. Staffing needs are continually assessed at the Police Department, including crossing guards throughout the year.

- Efficiencies need to be considered. It would be irresponsible of Chief Olson to continue to do things as they have always been done without looking for ways of efficiency.
- Crossing guards provide a daily count of students they cross.
- Safe Routes to School (RSR), which is part of Wisconsin Department of Transportation, are the subject matter experts. They are in favor of reducing the crossing guard locations. If the crossing guard locations are reduced, the Safe Routes to School Program would push out the messaging through multiple platforms including going to schools and training the students how to cross streets safely. Reducing the number of crossing guards would not take place without the recommendation of the RSR program as the subject matter expert.
- Hiring crossing guards is very difficult. Hiring for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon is challenging.
- There have been 52 days of school so far this school year. Out of those 52 days of school, officers had to cover 95 crossing guard locations. That is a huge task when there are only 4-6 officers on duty at any given time.
- In 1985, there were 42 sworn officers. Today, there are 42 sworn officers. In 1970, there were 41 sworn officers. Forty years ago, Neenah Police Department took 7,000 calls per year. Today, with the same staffing numbers, Neenah Police Department takes over 25,000 calls per year. Staff is stretched very thin. Therefore, when there are 95 crossing guard locations to cover, it is difficult to pull staff to do so.
- This is a data driven decision, not an emotional decision. Social media comments do not sway the recommendation either way as this is not a political issue. Social media comments are usually ill-informed, misinformed, or purposely provide half-truths for their own agenda. The decision is based on data and subject matter expert recommendations.

It is Chief Olson's job to bring forth facts of issues to Mayor and Council consideration. Whether the reduction is approved or not, the Police Department will carry out Council's decision. As far as the process in which this decision was made, it is done through the budget process which is the appropriate means to make this decision and is before Council today.

Every day we come to work to make the city a little better, a little safer. We don't come to work to continue to do things because we've always done it that way, even if it means reducing the number of crossing guard locations because the data supports it.

## II. [2026 Budget Public Hearing](#)

- A. Public Hearing on Proposed 2026 Operating Budget and 2026 Capital Improvements Program Budget.

Mayor Lang opened the 2026 Budget Public Hearing at 6:07 PM.

1. Katie Mc Cowen, 207 Cedar Street. Spoke on the reduction of number of crossing guards from 14 to 10. She believes that kids will cross the street at the most convenient spot with or without a crossing guard. Removing the crossing guard doesn't remove kids crossing the street, it only removes the protection. Ms. Mc Cowen encourages the Council to look at crossing guards through the eyes of a child; consider what is the value of a child's life. She is asking the Council to support the Mayor's amendment to include all 14 crossing guards.
2. Scott Becher, 1061 Green Acres Lane. Encourages the Council to support the Mayor's amendment to include all 14 crossing guards which has changed since her WHBY show yesterday. Child safety should be a priority for the city. The Council should also consider the beacon on Tullar Road because Tullar Road has the largest middle school in the state and more safety is needed on Tullar Road. As Chief Olson has stated, the police department is understaffed as the Mayor has frozen an investigative position and a traffic safety officer which was originally put in the budget by a former mayor. Mr. Becher supports those positions to be brought back to allow for additional police department staff. Public safety and child safety are important for a better Neenah.
3. Vicky Hanson, 368 Stanley Court. A current crossing guard and is here to represent the children. She was also a full-time nurse along with being a crossing guard, and spoke on the several near misses she witnessed throughout the years. Cars don't stop and others speed. She loves the kids she helps cross the street and knows most of the families. She is surprised that there aren't more parents attending tonight's meeting. Crossing guards a friendly face to children, and provides them a sense of safety. Cutting corners for the sake of child safety is not ok in the City of Neenah.
4. Don Ebolt, 746 S. Commercial Street. Questioned the police locker budget item and why we have to spend a half million dollars on it? How much is it going to cost to build apartments on the warehouse property? Is the building going to be razed before it is sold, and if so, how much is that going to cost? Who pays the interest on that? There are no homeless shelters in Neenah, why is that? The Mayor has stated that there are only two homeless people in Neenah which is inaccurate. There are tents in the woods and people living in campers in backyards. There is more than two homeless people in Neenah.

Mayor Lang clarified that she stated there were two homeless people counted in the Point In Time Count conducted through Pillars. It turned out there were three counted in that survey. Mayor Lang further clarified that she also continued to state that she was certain that not all the homeless were identified in the Point In Time survey.

Additionally, Mayor Lang clarified that while on the WHBY show yesterday, she was asked why the proposal was put forth and for the facts behind it; she was never asked whether or not she supported it.

Chief Olson clarified that it was not the Mayor who reduced the police staff from 44 to 42. In fact it was Chief Olson himself who made the request to reduce the staff to 42 order to increase the pay of the remaining sworn officers to retain them. It was a hard decision, but the officers agreed to the decision in order to keep those we had.

After additional calls for comments, there were no appearances. Mayor Lang closed the 2026 Budget Public Hearing at 6:14 PM.

III. Discussion and Consideration of Public Hearing and Other Matters Relating to the Recommended 2026 Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Program Budget.

A. Consider Resolution No. 2025-18 Adopting the 2026 Operating and Capital Improvements Budget. (Attached) **(RollCall-Pro)**

**MSCRP by Ellis/Lendrum to approve Resolution No. 2025-18 Adopting the 2026 Operating and Capital Improvements Budget.**

At 6:35PM, Mayor Lang turned the meeting over to Council President Borchardt to receive amendments to the proposed 2026 Operating and Capital Improvements Budget.

The following are amendments made to the 2026 Operating and Capital Improvements Budget:

1. **MSCRP Mayor Lang/Alderman Ellis to increase the Police Operating Budget by \$19,000 to add the four crossing guards back into budget bringing the total number of crossing guards to 14. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 8-1 with Ellis dissenting.**
2. **MSCRP Pollnow/Linski to increase Alderman pay by 5%. In 2026 this will affect the three alderman seats up for re-election in April. Motion failed in a roll call vote, 2-7 with Bruno, Erickson, Ellis, Steiner, Lendrum, Weber, and Borchardt dissenting.**
3. **MSCRP Pollnow/Bruno to increase the use of Unassigned Fund Balance from \$300,000 to \$450,000. Motion failed in a roll call vote, 2-7 with Erickson, Linski, Ellis, Steiner, Lendrum, Weber, and Borchardt dissenting.**
4. **MSCRP Pollnow/Bruno to increase the transfer in Developer Land Sales Fund from \$175,000 to \$350,000. Motion failed in a roll call vote, 3-6 with Borchardt, Erickson, Linski, Ellis, Lendrum, and Steiner dissenting.**
5. **MSCRP Pollnow/Steiner to increase the transfer in Alliant Energy Pilot Fund from \$300,000 to \$400,000. This will increase the transfer by \$100,000. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 8-1 with Ellis dissenting.**
6. **MSCRP Pollnow/Steiner to increase the Information Systems Capital Equipment Item "Multi-Year Hardware Software. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.**
7. **MSCRP Pollnow/Borchardt to increase the Public Infrastructure capital budget under category "Traffic Control" by \$25,000 for a Beacon to be place at corner of Tullar and Gay. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 7-2 with Ellis and Erickson dissenting.**
8. **MSCRP Pollnow/Borchardt to decrease the Redevelopment capital from \$50,000 to \$0. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.**
9. **MSCRP Pollnow/Borchardt to decrease the Park's carryforward for Cook Park from \$180,000 to \$0. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.**
10. **MSCRP Weber/Borchardt to increase the Facilities capital budget for the Parks and Recreation department by \$30,000 to repair the digital sign at Washington Park. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 7-2 with Bruno and Pollnow dissenting.**

[Discussion on the above listed amendments can be viewed and heard through this link on the City's YouTube Channel.](#)

**MOTION RESTATED: MSCRP by Ellis/Lendrum to approve Resolution No. 2025-18 Adopting the 2026 Operating and Capital Improvements Budget, as amended. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.**

- IV. [Approve 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan. \(RollCall-Pro\)](#)  
**MSCRP Ellis/Borchardt to approve the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.**
- V. Introduction and Confirmation of Mayor's Appointment(s)  
A. Appoint Ron Klatt, Jim Taylor, Stephen Gries, Karl Volkman as members and Erica Suchyta as an alternate to the Landmarks Commission for a three-year term expiring in 2028. **(UC)**  
**Seeing no objections, the appointments were ordered approved as presented.**
- VI. Approval of Council Proceedings  
A. [Approval of the Council Minutes and Proceedings of November 5, 2025 regular session.](#)  
B. [Approval of the Committee of the Whole Minutes of November 10, 2025 Budget Workshop.](#)  
C. [Approval of the Committee of the Whole Minutes of November 11, 2025 Budget Workshop.](#)  
D. **(UC)**  
**Seeing no objections, the above Minutes and Proceedings were ordered approved as written.**
- VII. Public Forum  
A. Speakers should give their name and residential address (not mailing address) and are allowed five minutes to speak on any topic.  
  
Public Forum was opened by Mayor Lang at 8:00 PM.  
  
Scott Becher, 1061 Green Acres Lane. Thanked the Council for supporting the amendment to the crossing guards and for supporting the Tullar Road beacon.  
  
After several calls for comments, there were no appearances. Mayor Lang closed the Public Form at 8:01 PM.
- VIII. Mayor/Council consideration of public forum issues  
A. None.
- IX. Consent Agenda **(Unanimous Consent)**  
A. None.
- X. Reports of standing committees  
A. [Regular Public Services and Safety Committee meeting of November 11, 2025:](#) (Chairman Lendrum/Vice Chairman Weber) (Minutes can be found on the City website)  
1. Committee recommends Council approve the Revocable Occupancy Permit for 612 Main Street to maintain a parking lot in Mayer Street right-of-way. **(RollCall-Pro).**

**MSCRP Lendrum/Weber to approve the Revocable Occupancy Permit as recommended by Public Services and Safety Committee, all voting aye.**

2. Committee recommends Council approve Ordinance 2025-15, repealing Article XI – Wrestling and Boxing License in its entirety, and reserving Article XI for future use. **(RollCall-Pro)**

**MSCRP Lendrum/Bruno to approve Ordinance 2025-15 as recommended by Public Services and Safety Committee, all voting aye.**

- B. [Regular Finance and Personnel Committee meeting of November 10, 2025](#): (Chairman Steiner/Vice Chairman Erickson) (Minutes can be found on the City website)

1. Committee recommends Council approve Resolution 2025-15 Adjusting Election Inspector Wages to an Hourly Rate Effective January 1, 2026. **(RollCall-Pro)**  
**MSCRP Steiner/Pollnow to approve Resolution 2025-15 as recommended by Finance and Personnel Committee. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 8-0-1, with Lendrum abstaining.**

Clerk Nagel advised the recommended pay is in line with the City of Menasha and is comparable statewide.

Alderman Lendrum abstained as she is an Election Inspector.

2. Committee recommends Council approve Resolution 2025-16 Designating City Services Building, 1495 Tullar Road, as a polling location for the 2026-2027 election cycle. **(RollCall-Pro)**  
**MSCRP Steiner/Pollnow to approve Resolution 2025-16 as recommended by Finance and Personnel Committee. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 8-0-1, with Lendrum abstaining.**

Alderman Lendrum abstained as she is an Election Inspector.

XI. Reports of special committees and liaisons and various special projects committees

- A. [Regular Plan Commission meeting of November 11, 2025](#): (Alderman Steiner) (Minutes can be found on the City website)

1. Meeting cancelled, no report.

- B. [Board of Public Works meeting of November 13, 2025](#): (Vice Chairman Lendrum) (Minutes can be found on the City website)

1. Board recommends Council approve Final Payment, Contract 7-21, Harrison Street Pond, MCC., Inc., in the amount of \$117,418.63. **(RollCall-Pro)**  
**MSCRP Lendrum/Ellis to approve Final Payment, Contract 7-21, Harrison Street Pond, as recommended by the Board of Public Works, all voting aye.**

2. Board recommends Council approve Final Payment on Contract 1-25, Street and Utility Construction, Alexander Drive, Forest Manor Drive, Bruce Street, Lexington Court, and Southfield Plat, to Donald Hietpas & Sons, Inc., in the amount of \$406,821.61. **(RollCall-Pro)**  
**MSCRP Lendrum/Bborchardt to approve Final Payment, Contract 1-25, as recommended by the Board of Public Works, all voting aye.**

- C. [Report from the Business Improvement District Board \(BID Board\) Meeting of November 18, 2025 – Alderman Ellis](#)
1. The 2026 BID Operation Plan was approved and will becoming to Council the first meeting in December.
  2. December 5<sup>th</sup> is the Very Neenah Christmas Event from 5-8 PM.
  3. The first every A Very Neenah Christmas Market will be held December 5<sup>th</sup>, 5-8 PM, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 10AM-8PM, and December 7<sup>th</sup>, 10AM-3PM.
  4. Annual Cookie Crawl and Luminary Night will be held December 11<sup>th</sup> from 4:30PM - 7:30PM.
  5. Special Saturday Office Hours on Decmeber 13<sup>th</sup> to sell Gift Certificates.
- D. [Report from the Neenah Arts Council Meeting of November 12, 2025 – Alderman Erickson](#)
1. Create an ornament on December 5<sup>th</sup> at A Very Neenah Christmas Event in the Alta Building.
  2. The Arts Council will be participating in the A Very Neenah Christmas Market Event on December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in the Alta Building. Santa will be joining us as we making gift cards.
- E. [Report from the Landmarks Commission Meeting of November 12, 2025 – Alderman Weber](#)
1. Commission Membership was discussed and reflected in the Mayor's Appointment on today's agenda.
  2. Updated brochures were handed out the Budget Workshops. This project is complete.
  3. A letter of intent was submitted to the Wisconsin Historical Society for a Local Government Grant for 2026. This is the first step in the grant process.
- XII. Presentation of petitions
- A. Any other petition received by the City Clerk's Office after distribution of the agenda.
1. None.
- XIII. Council Directives
- A. **Motion by Lendrum, seconded by Ellis to direct staff to evaluate Section 4-95(e)(1) of the Municipal Code of Ordinances as it relates to the requirement of having a "Class A" Liquor Licensed establishments to have a separate entrance and cash register to be modified to allow retail spaces under 3,000 square feet only one cash register and one entrance into their premises, therefore removing the requirement of a separate entrance and cash register for retail businesses under 3,000 square feet.**
- Per Council Rules, Council Directives are introduced at the current meeting and voted on at the following meeting.
- XIV. Unfinished Business
- A. Alderman Pollnow inquired on the timeline of the joint meeting with the Neenah Joint School District and City Council. Mayor Lang spoke with Dr. Harrison today about a joint meeting, and will work with him to get a meeting scheduled.
- XV. New Business
- A. Any announcements/questions that may legally come before the Council.



XVI. Closed Session

- A. The Common Council may convene in closed session pursuant to Pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. 19.85(1)(c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility specifically regarding the Director of Human Resources.
- B. The Common Council may reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(2) to consider or act on any item (s) discussed in closed session.  
**MSCRP Borchardt/Weber for the Common Council to convene in closed session pursuant to Pursuant to Wis. Stat. Sec. 19.85(1)(c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility specifically regarding the Director of Human Resources. The Common Council may reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(2) to consider or act on any items discussed in closed session. Motion carried in a roll call vote, 9-0.**

After a short break, the Council convened into closed session at 8:23 PM.

The Council adjourned in closed session.

XVII. Adjournment

**Motion by Alderman Erickson, seconded by Alderman Pollnow to adjourn. Motion carried in a voice vote 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.**

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Respectfully submitted,



Charlotte Nagel, City Clerk