

LAMBERTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING • CITY HALL
October 14, 2025 • 6:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ADOPT AGENDA/CEREMONIAL DUTIES

- Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM September 8, 2025.
- Present: Mayor L. Sik, L. Bittner, D. Irlbeck, A. Cairns, L. Pfarr
- Staff in Attendance: V. Halter, J. Thram, K. Mittelstadt, D. Determan, A. Vogel, T. Neperman
- Others in Attendance: Scott Kuhlman (Bollig), Marc Wiedeman, Marchele Walz, Julie Senst, Thomas Anderson, Gwen Batalden, Piper Bundy, Jadell Gorman, Kyle Hubert, Deb Thram

A. Additions/Deletions to Agenda

1. 2025-18 - Resolution Council Support for EDA Grant Application
2. Email from Amanda Cairns to Halter
3. Complaint on Halter

Motion/Second/Pass (Irlbeck/Pfarr/unanimous 5/0) to approve the agenda as amended.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes (can all be done in one motion)

1. 9-8-2025 City Council Minutes
2. 9-8-2025 CLOSED City Council Minutes (Confidential)

Cairns question if Chief Neperman was present at the last council meeting as she doesn't recall it.

Motion/Second/Pass (Pfarr/Bittner/ unanimous 5/0) to approve the minutes as listed.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. Bollig Engineering – Scott Kuhlman was present. Kuhlman stated that Lambertton was awarded the Small Cities Development grant of \$600,000. This is considered a gap funding source the USDA RD generally will pair up with. The MPFA Intended use plan – projects have been submitted and will await their decision. Federal funding still on the table, but they need to pass appropriation budget. Kuhlman asked the council if they would like Bollig to apply for the LRIP grant funding. This would be used for the east and west ends of 1st Ave. It has been applied for in the past, submitting a new application should be relatively low in cost approximately \$500. Lambertton had scored well but it is a competitive grant process. Discussion was held. Council gave the verbal approval to submit an application.

Kuhlman would like a motion to execute the Owner-Engineer Agreement for the Grove Street project that was not acted upon last month because of questions and review by the city attorney.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Pfarr/ unanimous 5/0) to approve Owner-Engineer Agreement for the Grove Street project

Lead Service Line project. The inventory has been submitted and will be resubmitted at the end of the month with the update of the ones being replaced. The city will have to send out notices to residents with unknown portions, lead, galvanized once complete. Bollig continues to get unknowns identified when possible. Kuhlman asked the council for direction if they discover some lead private service lines during this process and there is money left in the replacement grant, can they go ahead and get those changed. Council gave the verbal approval to replace what's needed as long as in budget.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Bittner/ unanimous 5/0) to approve pay application #1 to TE Underground for \$61,298.75.

B. Petitions, Request, Communications

1. Citizen Complaints & Concerns

- a. Gwen Batalden – was present to ask the council for credit on their outside water meter bill. Batalden gave a history to the council of water usage and explained that they had their irrigation system checked for leaks and nothing was found. Because of the rain experienced, they have not been using their system. Thram ran a history report and the water

usage was the same everyday for a period of time. Thram changed out the meter head and the usage stopped. Discussion was held.

Motion/Second/Pass (Irlbeck/Cairns/unanimous 5/0) to approve giving a credit of \$388.66 to Craig & Gwen Batalden.

Two anonymous complaint were received on Halter. Cairns questioned Mayor Sik's comment of because they are not signed it doesn't carry much weight. Council took time to read the anonymous complaint brought in by Cairns. Cairns stated that she feels the way Halter speaks has created a hostile environment and people don't feel comfortable bringing complaints forward. Cairns stated that people that voice their complaints are shunned. Mayor Sik stated he does not agree with that. Halter asked Cairns when and Cairns replied no. Mayor Sik stated it would be nice if the people were here so they could discuss them. Cairns stated that the last time someone was here and stated complaints about employees they were thrown out. Mayor Sik stated he did not throw anyone out he said they were done discussing the topic because she was accusing city employees of doing damage and that we would go through our attorney and at no point did he tell her to get out. Cairns replied she would feel that way if she were in her shoes. Gorman then made comments. Bittner stated they need to get the information from the person not from someone else. Halter stated that anyone that has a complaint towards her can go to any council member or the HR Committee of Leah Bittner and Dave Irlbeck. Gorman brought up a conversation in March of 2024. Halter did not recall the conversation or what she was referring to. Bittner state she likes having people either sign their name or come to her so they can have a conversation about the problem, ask questions and get a better understanding. Gorman stated she felt she has been treated poorly at this meeting. Mayor Sik asked how has she been treated. Gorman sated she did not feel the need to defend herself. More discussion was held on the previous meetings and minutes Gorman feels false statements were made. Mayor Sik made the statement he does not agree with virtually any of either complaint.

2. Building/Zoning Permit Requests

- a. Small Cell Facility Update – Halter stated she has reached out to the county and the cell site reps and they have come to an agreement. Halter stated she is nervous because the statute states that the applications are automatically approved in 90 days if no action is taken by the council. Discussion held.
- b. 2025-05 – David Wille - 600 S Birch – Front Steps – Wille started the project before he applied for a building permit. Wille came in to fill out a building permit. Measurements were taken and he made the steps bigger than they were before. Thram denied the building permit because he was not compliant with the setback requirements. Because of that, he needs a variance. Halter explained that she asked Wille to fill out a variance request and he said no he wasn't going to do it. Halter is asking the council how they would like to proceed. The project is basically completed and the house is going up for sale. Discussion held. Council stated to reach out to the lawyer and to reach out to Wille's.

3. Request for Council Action

- a. RCA – Change of Meeting Order – Halter explained she would like to have department reports at the beginning of the meeting. If council would like to have department heads attend meetings, that takes that time out of them being on duty during the day or when needed. Halter asked Novak if a department head turns in a written report, do they have to attend the meeting and he said no. Novak stated that if the council has questions they can certainly request their presence and if they have requests for the council they should be there. Pfarr asked that the department reports be placed before citizen complaints and that the reports submitted be detailed enough so there wouldn't be questions. Mayor Sik stated that even if they submit a written report every month it would be nice to see them a couple times a year. RCAs will put with the department in question.

Motion/Second/Pass (Bittner/Irlbeck/unanimous 5/0) to change the meeting agenda order.

- b. RCA – Change Zoning Ordinance – Halter explained the council has talked about the Stavnes container. The problem is the city should change zoning so this doesn't happen again and you need to address the other container in a R-1 zone (old school site). Halter gave the proposed zoning change to Novak he is ok to proceed as written. Halter needs approval from the council to publish it and then have a public hearing.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Irlbeck/Bittner Objected 4/1) to move ahead with Ordinance 162 amending section 305.4 of city zoning code.

- c. RCA - Stavnes Shipping Container – Halter spoke with Stavnes he really doesn't have a number.
- d. RCA – Annual Liability Coverage Waiver Form (No RCA Cover Sheet)

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Irlbeck/unanimous 5/0) to approve the Annual Liability Coverage Waiver.

- e. RCA – Library By-Laws and Policy – Mayor Sik clarified this is like what was done with the Ambulance service. Cairns questioned what was done with the ambulance. Halter listed what is in the Ambulance Policy book. Clarification was made to Bittner By-Laws are for the associations, where Policy is for the department. Discussion

held.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Pfarr/unanimous 5/0) to approve the library board develop policy book for the library and bring it to the council for further discussion.

- f. RCA – Library Board – Replace Board Member – There is an open slot on the Library Board. Halter has suggested that there be a council member on their board for representation just like EDA. This would be a voting member. Marc Weideman has been recommended to the board. Discussion was held. Bittner questioned Weidman's residency.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Pfarr/ Bittner Objected 4/1) to approve Marc Wiedeman to the Library Board.

- g. RCA – Tax Forfeited / Blighted Properties – Halter stated that the at the housing institute that she attends they talk about how to get housing established easily. Lots that have utilities already established to the lot are considered low hanging fruit and cheaper to develop than lots that need utilities installed to them. Halter then thought about the tax forfeited property for sale in Lamberton. Halter wants to know if the council wants to pursue the property for development. Discussion was held. No action taken.
- h. RCA – Work Session Topics – Halter presented a list of topics to be included for the work session.
Motion/Second/Pass (Pfarr/Irlbeck/ unanimous 5/0) to approve the topics for the work session set for October 27th.
- i. RCA – Halter Request for HR Meeting – Halter explained that everything that has happened over the last couple months, she would like the opportunity to sit down and air out what is actually going on. Halter has spoken to Novak and this would be with Cairns, Novak, a member of the HR committee, Halter and Thram. Cairns questioned how she has been targeting Halter. Cairns then apologized to Justin about a topic from last month. Cairns says she repeatedly asks things because Thrums has set an expectation and then when it isn't done she is questioned by residents and she looks as she walks the streets. Cairns explained that the reason she wants a written report because she has people saying to her that things aren't getting done. Cairns wants a list of daily duties along with special products and things that come up. Thram replied it is the way she goes about it and attacks his integrity. Discussion was held about employees using personal equipment that is rented to the city and keeping an arm's length because it can be considered unethical. Mayor Sik spoke up and stated Cairns sent an illegal email to the council members asking for Halter to be fired. More discussions were held. Cairns stated that Halter sent an email to the Vogel where she used capital letter stating she was frustrated by this. Cairns stated that using capital letters in an email is the same as being yelled at. Mayor Sik stated to Cairns that she was doing to Halter exactly what she is claiming Halter did to others but worse because you are asking her to be fired. Cairns stated she was also disappointed by Halter having the council listen to the phone message left last month. Halter explained that was requested by the person who left the message. Mayor Sik stated that Cairns is one person on the council. If she has issues she should bring it to the table to be handled by the five council members. Sik also stated he wasn't sure she should be doing her investigations like she is. More discussions were held. Bittner explained why yes she felt it would be good to sit down and discuss things in a manner that either side won't feel attacked and find a way to move forward. Halter was directed to set up the meeting.
- j. RCA – Department Report Request – Halter stated much of what Cairns is asking is on the employee time cards. Cairns stated she is asking for information from Mittelstadt so she can justify why the city is paying for a position we did not have before. Mayor Sik stated Mittelstadt does not have to justify anything. The whole reason she has that job is so that we have an ambulance service. The city had not covered day shift ambulance calls for two years and was dependent on Wabasso covering. Walnut Grove tried a position like this and the council decided to try it as well. Mayor Sik also stated that we have had a position like this in the past. At one time we had three full time street department people and one was allowed to be the ambulance director for 50% of his time. Thram stated Mittelstadt has been phenomenal in helping them. Cairns asked if there were duties Mittelstadt could be doing in the office because of our audit there should be more separation of duties. Cairns the adverse opinion in the audit is the worst opinion we can have so she is wondering if there are things she could be doing in the office for a better audit opinion. Mayor Sik explained that it is explained each year that is very common for small towns. Halter gave the second request from Cairns. Halter explained that Novak would like some of that information to go through him and then the HR Committee. Cairns stated she wants to know who is making what because wages are separated into different departments, she can't figure it out for budget purposes. Halter stated Cairns can look at the wage schedule and determine wages. Mayor Sik explained that wages are separated into different departments based on duties. Cairns wants to understand the wages more. Bittner explained that COLA is to stay in line each year and the steps are based on merit. Additional discussion was held. Halter asked how much time should she spend on these requests. Mayor Sik directed to work on it as she can. Cairns stated she is asking for detailed reports for

transparency and accountability. Cairns also stated that she wants this information so she can defend Thram when people complain to her. Cairns also questioned why Halter cannot give her schedule in advance. Halter stated she puts her schedule on the door each week and her cell phone number is on there is they need to call. Halter also explained that there use to be another full-time position in the office but the community was overwhelmingly opposed to that second position and Halter didn't feel they needed it as well. Halter stated that we could still have that second position so the door could be open at all times, but generally the only people that come in is to hand payments in and there is a drop box available for that. Halter questioned why she should be required to post her vacation and time off. Discussion was held about ESST time. Halter explained she is salaried and doesn't get paid for more than 40 hours and most weeks she is well over that but doesn't get paid any differently. Halter stated with all the stuff going on, she will not donate like she used to. Cairns stated she wants to see what has been worked on to see if there is progress. Halter stated most of the time there is no progress, or it can't be seen. Pfarr commented that she would like to see the details because it's not talked about unless they ask. Mayor Sik stated that in the past people would submit their report and then come in and read it. Sik stated he told them that it was pointless and said if you have questions, ask. Cairns stated she doesn't see what Halter is doing that is working towards growth for Lamberton. Halter stated that sometimes you have to trust that she is doing her job. Halter also stated if she only had one department to worry about it'd be different. Halter also stated that she is tired of being questioned about what she is doing for the town and if all you want is someone to keep the lights on, fine find that person. But it doesn't take long to be the next Sanborn, Revere or Walnut Grove – if that's what the council wants. Cairns question the council about Halter's tone. Bittner stated yes, she hears frustration just like she heard it from Cairns last month and that she hears passion. Mayor Sik asked if anyone had a motion.

C. Department Reports

1. Library – Written Report Submitted – Vogel asked for any comments or concerns. Bittner questioned the Libby program and aspen tracking. Pfarr asked what additional help Vogel needed. Bittner asked about the collection of money for the tour of tables.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Bittner/unanimous 5/0) to approve the Library report as submitted and given.

2. Ambulance Department – Written Report Submitted – Mittelstadt stated they have not figured out the siren problem yet and they have been covering for Wabasso some.

Motion/Second/Pass (Pfarr/Bittner/unanimous 5/0) to approve accept the ambulance report as given.

RCA – Ambulance Personnel Approval - ***Motion/Second/Pass (Bittner/Cairns/unanimous 5/0) to approve Rob Stoppel and Amy Sonnek to the Ambulance service.***

3. Fire Department – Chief Neperman was present and said he was applying for grants. He has taken the truck up to school for fire prevention. The department is down three people on their roster.

Motion/Second/Pass (Irlbeck/Bittner/unanimous 5/0) to approve the fire report as given.

4. Police Department – Chief Determan gave his report. He has been spending time with the school zone traffic and time at the school. Pfarr and Bittner stated they have heard good things.

Motion/Second/Pass (Pfarr/Irlbeck/unanimous 5/0) to approve the Police report as given.

5. Maintenance Department – written report submitted. Thram added the Maguire contracts are basically to lock in the pricing for wash outs. They will do a wash out when the tank is painted since it will have to be emptied out at that point. Thram contacted SW Glass and was told they will have it done this fall. Thram stated RDO should be delivering the payloador soon.

Motion/Second/Pass (Bittner/Irlbeck/unanimous 5/0) to approve the Maintenance report as given.

a. Maguire Contracts for Services

Motion/Second/Pass (Bittner/Pfarr/unanimous 5/0) to approve the McGuire contracts.

6. Administration/EDA Department – Written Report Submitted – Bittner asked is the new Family Leave should be added to the work session. Halter stated she has not seen any policy out on it yet, but she has budgeted that the city pays half and the employee pays half. Cairns questioned the Taylor Grant. Halter explained it is a grant opening up for expanding childcare. Cairns question what a POD owner is. Halter explained it is a home childcare provider in a space outside their home.

Motion/Second/Pass (Pfarr/Bittner/unanimous 5/0) to approve the Admin/EDA report as given.

Motion/Second/Pass (Bittner/Irlbeck/unanimous 5/0) to adopt Resolution 2025-18 Supporting the EDA Application to the Taylor Family Farms grant application for childcare.

D. Ordinances and Resolutions (can all be done in one motion)

1. 2025-17 - Resolution Accepting Donations – Halter explained the changing table came from an event with the childcare initiative event where they brought in all the childcare providers they could from the county, had a meal,

and talked about things that could be done to support them. At the event they gave away door prizes. Stacey Ramthun that lives here in town won a changing table and does not need it, so she donated it to the city to be used for the childcare initiative her in Lamberton.

Motion/Second/Pass (Pfarr/Cairns/unanimous 5/0) to adopt Resolution 2025-17- accepting donations.

E. Financial Report & Approval of Claims

1. October 2025 Financial Report
2. Approval of Claims
 - a. MERC Property Tax Refund
3. Quarter 3 Account Balances

Refunds were questioned. Cairns questioned quarterly reports where there are items that are over budget. Halter looked up items and gave explanations.

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Bittner/unanimous 5/0) to approve the October 2025 Financial Report and Approval of Claims.

4. MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS

A. Information for Council

1. Award of SCDG \$600,000 – this is what Kuhlman was talking about. We will be eligible for this again next year.
2. Old School Site Zoning/Conditional Use – Halter explained that the school and Superior Bus are in talks. Halter wants the council to be thinking about what they will want to do with zoning and the impacts of those who live around it. Halter did contact Novak.
3. Police Thank You

5. NEXT MEETING DATES

- A. Work Session Monday, October 27, 2025 at 5:30 PM
- B. Regular Council Meeting November 10, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Cairns stated she wanted on the record that two other items she felt were in appropriate were when Halter called someone a keyboard warrior on Facebook when they were voicing their opinion on the ambulance position and the library. Cairns also stated that when a resident brought up about the weeds around town and Halter stated other towns have weeds as well. Cairns felt that it was insulting because people travel to other towns and she felt Halter was just trying to shut her up. Halter stated she will stand behind the keyboard warrior comment 100% when you have people snapping people saying snide remarks about not needing the Wabasso ambulance when our ambulance was out of service and we received two calls at the same time. Cairns stated it goes against our personnel policy and we can discuss at the meeting with the lawyer.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/Second/Pass (Cairns/Bittner/unanimous 5/0) to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Valerie Halter
Clerk


Lydell Sik

Lamberton City Council
Meeting Date: 10-14-2025
Official Record of Attendees

	Name - Printed	
1	SCOTT KUHLMAN	- BOLLIG ENG.
2	Marchese Walz	
3	Julie Senst	
4	Kimberly Mittelstadt	
5	Thomas Anderson	
6	Gary Beutler	
7	Maria Wiedema	
8	Kym Burdumy	
9	Jadell Gorman	
10	Kyle Hybert	
11	Dee Vee	
12	Deb Thram	
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