



**CITY OF RIVER FALLS
UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by Utility Advisory Board (UAB) Chair Chris Lick at 6:30 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was said.

Utility Advisory Board Present: Josh Amundsen, Amber Bjork, Mike Gardner, Mark Klecker, Chris Lick, Scott Morrissette and Tim Thum

Staff Present:

Utility Director Kevin Westhuis; City Administrator Scot Simpson; Public Works Manager Erica Ellefson; Electric Operations Superintendent Wayne Siverling; Executive Assistant Lanae Nelson; and IT Specialist Lead Jon Smits

Approval of Minutes:

Meeting Minutes: 10-20-2025

MSC Amundsen/Thum approved minutes. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Patricia LaRue, 489 Marcella Court spoke on the history, process and renewable energy source operation of the Junction Falls Hydroelectric Dam.

William Hansen, N8723 1025 Street spoke on Lake George preservation, wildlife and Junction Falls Hydroelectric Dam as a renewable energy source.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 2026-01 Approving River Falls Municipal Utilities Support of the 2026FY City of River Falls BUILD Grant Application

Utility Director Westhuis introduced City Administrator Scot Simpson. Public Works Manager Erica Ellefson presented the City's FY2026 application to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program (maximum award \$25 million). The proposed project includes roadway and utility improvements (water, sanitary sewer, electric and storm sewer) from Division Street to Cascade Avenue. The total estimated cost is \$31.8 million, including \$9.9 million in utility-related improvements. No immediate financial obligation is required. The resolution authorizes a Letter of Support from River Falls Municipal Utilities (RFMU), for inclusion in the application due February 20. The Board reviewed project scope, infrastructure needs, costs, and planning considerations.

MSC Amundsen/Thum moved to approve the resolution. As there was no further discussion, UAB Chair Lick asked for a vote. The resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution 2026-02 Recommending Approval Award for 2026-2028 Tree Service Contract

Westhuis introduced Electric Operations Superintendent Wayne Siverling presented the proposed three-year vegetation management contract for distribution and transmission line clearance to Zielies Tree Service, Inc. Estimated contract total: \$360,000 over three years (2026: \$100,000 (distribution), 2027: \$160,000 (distribution and transmission) and 2028: \$100,000 (distribution)).

MSC Amundsen/Bjork moved to approve the resolution. As there was no further discussion, UAB Chair Lick asked for a vote. The resolution passed unanimously.

REPORTS:

Finance Report

Ellefson reviewed the updated year-to-date budget format. November financials were included in the packet.

Utility Dashboards

Westhuis reviewed the December 2025 dashboards.

Monthly Report

The utility reports for December 2025 were included in the packet.

Utility Director's Report

Westhuis provided an update on Wastewater Treatment Plant Biosolids Dryer construction project.

Journeyman Lineworker Cody Kruger graduated from the Chippewa Valley Technical College four-year apprenticeship program and was recognized at the MEUW Electric Operations Conference & Expo Apprentice Graduation Banquet on January 15 in Wisconsin Dells.

State of the City event scheduled for March 3 at Tattersall; registration due February 17.

ADJOURNMENT:

MSC Morrissette/Amundsen to adjourn. Unanimous. UAB Chair Lick announced the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Executive Assistant Lanae Nelson