



**CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN  
COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

**January 27, 2026**

Mayor Toland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**City Council Members Present:** Todd Bjerstedt, Jeff Bjork, Nick Carow, Sean Downing, Scott Morrissette, Diane Odeen, Michael Page

**Staff Present:** City Administrator Scot Simpson; Deputy City Clerk Jackie Hanson; City Attorney Chris Gierhart; Deputy Chief of Police Matt Kennett; Chief of Staff Jennifer Smith; Assistant to the City Administrator Jason Rohloff; Community Development Director Amy Peterson; City Engineer Todd Nickleski; Public Works Manager Erica Ellefson; IT Specialist Jonathan Thoen; Fire Chief Justin Wison; Several River Falls Fire Department Volunteers

The pledge of allegiance was said.

Mayor Toland paid tribute to River Falls Fire Department member Cody Peterson who passed away unexpectedly and took a moment of silence in his memory.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

January 13, 2026 meeting minutes

**MSC Downing/Bjerstedt to approve the minutes. Unanimous.**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

**MSC Page/Bjerstedt moved to approve the bills. Unanimous.**

Mayor Toland moved the Proclamation Congratulating the University of River Falls Football team on winning to 2026 NCAA Division III Nation Championship (item number 14 on the agenda) to the beginning of the meeting. Mayor Toland read the proclamation and took a photo with the players in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

Patricia La Rue – La Rue spoke about the US Postal Service changing the way mail is post marked and it's impact on mailing time sensitive mail.

Dana Linscott – Linscott spoke about procedures for public comment and advised council will not interact with the speaker

Tom Garfin – Garfin spoke about Indivisible River Falls and their members concerns about ICE activity in River Falls

Robert Combs - Combs spoke about concerns regarding medical services in River Falls

Stephanie Potton – Potton spoke about ICE activities

Austin Mahanke – Mahanke introduced himself as a candidate for Alderperson at Large

Jen Gergen – Gergen spoke about ICE activities

William Hansen – Hansen spoke about the Lake George and its preservation

Pat Hammerback – Hammerback spoke about ICE activities

Linda Vivoda-Sadee - Vivoda-Sadee spoke about the impact of ICE activities on people's mental health

Risa Matz – Matz spoke about the ICE activities

Rosa Magnus- Chief Executive Office of River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau thanked the council for their continued support of their events and for their consideration of the request in front of council tonight.

Council Member Morrissette asked Magnus about the number of volunteers need to run their event and stated there may be some people in the audience who are willing to help. Magnus provided the dates of the events and encouraged anyone interested in helping to reach out.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Acknowledgement of the following minutes: BID Board – 10/14/25; Plan Commission – 10/7/25, 12/2/25; Parks and Recreation Advisory Board – 11/19/25; Police and Fire Commission – 10/27/25; Historic Preservation Commission – 11/12/25

Resolution No. 7042 - Approving City Administrator Annual Performance Review Process

Resolution No. 7043 Approving the Purchase of a John Deere 1585 and Accessories for Midwest Machinery Co.

**MSC Odeen/Downing to approve the Consent Agenda. Unanimous.**

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution No. 7044 Approving River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau Request for Open Container Exemption for Special Events

**MS Morrissette/Bjerstedt to approve the resolution. Unanimous**

Resolution No. 7045 Approving River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau Request for Noise Control Exemption Special Events

**MSC Page/Bjerstedt to approve the resolution. Unanimous.**

Resolution No. 7046 Approving River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau Request for Street Closure for Special

**MSC Morrissette/Bjerstedt to approve the resolution. Unanimous.**

Resolution No. 7047 Approving River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau Request for City Assistance for Special Events

**MSC Downing/Morrissette to approve the resolution. Unanimous.**

Resolution No. 7048 Directing Staff on Outstanding Fire Call Balances

**MS Begrudgingly Morrissette/Reluctantly Bjerstedt**

Councilmember Bjork asked if Councilmember Morrisette wanted to put a time limit such as if it's still outstanding as of March 1<sup>st</sup> it's done. Councilmember Morrisette stated staff have already made pretty good efforts to the best they can he just hates to call it quits but they have too. Administrator Simpson asked for clarification regarding the immediate right off. Morrisette confirmed the motion was for immediate write-off.

**The resolution carried unanimously.**

Resolution No. 7049 Approving One-Time Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) for Personnel Matters

**MSC Downing/Bjerstedt approve the resolution. Unanimous**

### **REPORTS**

#### **Administrator's Report**

Administrator Simpson advised there are no 287 agreements in River Falls or holding cells so there cannot be a 287 agreement on that portion which is called jail. There are no task force, tribal task force or warrant service officers under 287G. All policies of the police department are on the website. Policy 413 regards immigration violations of most note would be an officer should not detain an individual for any length of time for a civil violation of federal immigration laws or relates to the warrant. Officers may detain an already lawfully detained person who committed a criminal violation or who has a federal warrant, not a civil warrant but a federal warrant. Any members of the public that are experiencing concerns about their safety are encourage to dial 911 and officers will respond.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Mayor's Appointments**

Mayor Toland appointed Steven Severson to Plan Commission through May 2027

Mayor Toland re-appointed Gary Donath to Police and Fire Commission through April 2031

Mayor Toland re-appointed Casie Radford to Historic Preservation Commission through January 2029

**MSC Morrisette/ Bjerstedt to approve the Mayor's appointments. Unanimous.**

### **CLOSED SESSION**

**At 7:25 p.m., MS Odeen/Morrisette move to Recess into Closed Session per Wisconsin State Statutes §19.85(1)(e) for the following purposes: "deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, to wit: discussion and consideration regarding the sale and development of City property in the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park". Mayor asked for a roll call vote which passed 7-0. Councilmember Morrisette recused himself from the closed session due to a conflict on interest.**

### **RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**

**At 7:25pm, MSC Odeen/Bjerstedt to move back into Open Session. Unanimous.**

**MSC Bjerstedt/Carrow move to adjourn at 7:26 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Hanson, Deputy City Clerk