

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the City Council for the City of St. Joseph met in regular session on Monday, January 20, 2026, at 6:00PM in the St. Joseph Government Center.

Members Present: Mayor Adam Scepaniak, Councilmembers Andrew Mooney, Kevin Kluesner, Kelly Beniek

City Representatives Present: City Administrator David Murphy, Finance Director Lori Bartlett, Public Works Director Ryan Wensmann, Police Chief Dwight Pfannenstein, City Engineer Randy Sabart & Bryce Johnson, Community Development Director Nate Keller, City Clerk, Kayla Klein

Public Comments: None

Approve Agenda: **Beniek moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Kluesner and passed unanimously.**

Consent Agenda: **Scepaniak moved to approve the consent agenda; seconded by Mooney and passed unanimously.**

- a. Minutes – **Requested Action:** Approve the minutes of December 15, 2025, work session and January 5, 2026.
- b. Bills Payable – **Requested Action:** Approve Check Numbers 63382-63414; ACH Accounts Payable #2400813-2400812 and Regular Payroll 1.
- c. St. Joseph Community Center/YMCA Donations – **Requested Action:** Approve Resolution 2026-009 returning the St. Joseph Community Center/YMCA donations to the donors.
- d. Donations – **Requested Action:** Approve Resolution 2026-008 accepting donations.
- e. Payment Application 2, Lanigan Way Pedestrian Crossing – **Requested Action:** Approve application for payment 2 in the amount of \$10,289.41 to Landwehr Construction, Inc.

Nomination and Appointment of Acting Mayor for 2026: Councilmember Kluesner nominated Councilmember Beniek for Acting Mayor. **Kluesner moved to approve Councilmember Kelly Beniek as Acting Mayor for 2026; seconded by Scepaniak and passed unanimously.**

Public Improvement Hearing, 2026 Street & Utility Improvement Project: City Engineer Randy Sabart informed the audience that this hearing is the first of two public hearings as part of the 429 process that is governed by state statute.

Bryce Johnson with SEH, Inc. provide a project overview which included the project areas, proposed improvements to each project area, preliminary costs, and the timeline should the project be approved.

Mayor Scepaniak opened the public hearing.

Isabella Margl 604 Hill Street. Margl asked if curb and gutter will be installed on Hill Street. Sabart responded that the street will be rebuilt as is. If there is currently no curb and gutter, then it won't be added with this improvement.

Nick Blonigen 821 Morningside Loop. Blonigen cited case studies and articles from the League of MN Cities regarding the benefit a property receives from an improvement. Blonigen asked how the city will ensure that the property owners won't be assessed more than the benefit the property will gain and does the city consider the market value increases in this process? Johnson stated the city hires a 3rd party to do a Special Benefit Analysis Report that is based off of market value increases due to the nature of the improvement. Sabart added that the city's policy allows the city to assess up to 60% of the project cost. The assessment amounts get adjusted after the Benefit Analysis Report is conducted and bids are received for the project.

Beth Jones, Iris Lane. Jones asked if the road where the storm sewer broke will be redone as well. Jones stated that the road was just redone after the break and doesn't need to be redone just for consistency with the rest of the improvement. Sabart stated the area is proposed to be overlaid.

Mike Hanuska, 817 3rd Ave SW. Hanuska asked what improvements are being done in his area as some streets in the area the entire water main is being replaced and others are just receiving an overlay. Sabart stated there are areas in the Hill Street and Morningside neighborhoods that do not have good soils as the soils are pitting the water main piping. The city is proposing to replace the pipe in these areas with PVC piping that won't be impacted by bad soils. The water main replacement is not being assessed to property owners.

Mark Harding, 815 Morningside Loop. Harding asked which portions of Morningside Loop will have the water main replaced. Johnson presented a map highlighting which areas in Morningside and Hill Street are getting the water main replaced.

Brian Johnson, 605 Hill Street West. Johnson stated his issue is with the current design of Hill Street, especially with the grading and lack of draining. If there is additional water or rain events, it drains down to the intersection; however, a lot of water gets trapped on the asphalt. Sabart stated roads are designed to have natural slope for drainage. Sabart will meet with the affected owners to see if a solution can be reached regarding the drainage issues.

Nick Blonigan asked if he will still have access to his home during construction. Sabart stated that when water mains are replaced, temporary water lines are used so that service can still be provided to residents with as little downtime as possible. Regarding the trenching, the contractors will communicate with residents throughout the project and homeowners will have access to their homes. Contractors will also work with those that may have mobility issues. There will be times when work is being completed directly in front of the homes and residents may not have direct access, but this will all be communicated with impacted residents.

Dan Felix, 600 Hill Street. Felix said the water comes across the road but also comes from the road and believes the project will be a mess. When the road was initially constructed, resident in that area were required to have a pump in their basements in order to maintain water pressure. Felix asked if the city will be putting in any transfer pumps. Sabart stated that no additional pumps will be going in.

Jim Jopp, 708 Baker Street East. Jopp asked if the owners on Baker Street will be assessed for the sidewalk improvements. Sabart stated that sidewalks are paid for by the city and not property owners.

Ann Hadish, 804 Baker Street East. Hadich asked if owners can opt out of having the sidewalk improvements on Baker Street. Sabart stated that the sidewalk would connect the trail from Graceview Estates to the sidewalks on 12th Avenue. Hadich stated that there are requirements that property owners have to meet if they have a sidewalk and she doesn't want a sidewalk.

Mayor Scepaniak stated that all the improvements being discussed are proposed and under council consideration. Scepaniak added that the council will want to hear from additional property owners on Baker Street regarding the sidewalk to help determine the best course moving forward.

Kluesner thinks that sidewalks are a good thing and maintain good pedestrian connectivity throughout the city.

Felix asked who is being assessed for the park improvements. Sabart responded that none of the park improvements are being assessed to property owners. Felix asked if his driveway will be narrowed as he has a rather wide driveway. Sabart stated that no alterations will be made during the project. The driveway width will remain as is.

Jim Jopp lives on Baker Street and is opposed to the sidewalk improvements on Baker Street. Jopp also has a unique driveway with exposed aggregate on the sides and diamond patters on the driveway. Jopp asked if his driveway will be restored to what it is today. Sabart stated he will have to do a site visit to see what the existing conditions are. Jopp noted that there is a large tree on his neighbor's property that may interfere with the sidewalk. Sabart stated that if the root system will impede on the improvements, then it will be cut down. A replacement tree will be planted.

Randy Broda, 3rd Ave SW. Broda said when Iverson was first constructed, there were multiple springs in that field, noting that the area is a problem area in the city. Broda said he was assessed already and just paid it off on his taxes and will now have to pay again. Sabart stated there is typically a 2-year warranty that the city required on their contracts. The tests completed for this improvement have not been done in the city as there haven't been any known soil issues prior to this.

Lacey Solhide, 1016 13th Ave NE. Solhide asked if the city has considered improving Northland Drive from CSAH 75 north to Gumtree Street. Sabart stated the improvement is on the city's radar. Solhide asked how residents pay for street assessments. Sabart stated residents can pay the full amount interest free within 30 days from when the assessment roll is adopted. Another option would be for the assessment amount to be collected with property taxes over the term of the assessment which is typically 10-15 years.

Felix asked how the city can call the project an improvement and doesn't believe the project will add any value to his home. Sabart responded that market value increases with street improvements. Sabart added that the city defines street maintenance as seal coating and crack ceiling.

Mayor Scepaniak closed the public hearing. No action will be taken on the item.

Sisters of Saint Benedict – Future Land Use Amendment, Rezone, and Preliminary Plat: Keller presented the item to the council. The Sisters of Saint Benedicts are developing plans for a new Monastery that would consolidate housing, monastery, chapel, and related functions into a single building. To accommodate the project, several existing outlots would be combined into one parcel, triggering rezoning and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map. The actions tonight would place the parcel entirely within the Educational and Ecclesiastical Zoning District.

Scepaniak moved to approve Resolution 2026-005 Approving a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Future Land Use Map; seconded by Beniek and passed unanimously.

Scepaniak moved to approve Resolution 2026-006 Adopting Findings of Fact Related to a Rezoning Request for Multiple Properties as Submitted by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict; seconded by Beniek and passed unanimously.

Scepaniak moved to approve Resolution 2026-007 Approving a Preliminary Plat for Benedict Second Addition; seconded by Beniek and passed unanimously.

Ordinance Amendment – 502.04 and 502.50: Keller reported that the Planning Commission has been reviewing the proposed ordinance amendments on where to allow tattoo/body art establishments in the city. It was determined that they should be allowed in the B1, Central Business District. Because they will be allowed in the B1, they are automatically allowed in the B2, Highway Business District. Keller noted that the city has a separate ordinance, Ordinance 608 that regulates the licensure of tattoo establishments. The proposed amendments are strictly related to zoning. The proposed amendments would add a definition for a beauty salon, add a definition for a tattoo/body art establishment, and allow for tattoo and body art establishments in the B1 zoning district.

Kluesner noted that the spoke at the Planning Commission public hearing regarding the aesthetics of such a place in the downtown areas. Keller stated that there are requirements businesses have to meet and abide by in the B1 district.

Scepaniak moved to adopt Ordinance 2026-001 An Ordinance Amending Ordinances 502.04 and 502.50; seconded by Kluesner and passed unanimously.

Scepaniak moved to approve Resolution 2026-010 Authorizing Summary Publication of Ordinance 2026-001; seconded by Kluesner and passed unanimously.

LELS 2026 Contract: Murphy reported that the Personnel Committee and city staff met with representatives of the Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) Union and have reached an agreement for 2026. The primary change in the contract is the 2026 cost of living adjustment (COLA) and health care insurance cost participation. The agreement calls for a 3.5% COLA over 2025 and the health care cost participation given to all non-union employees. The other change is the addition of one personal holiday for officers after 10 years of continuous employment with the City.

Kluesner moved to approve the 2026 contract between LELS and the City of St. Joseph; seconded by Beniek and passed unanimously.

Department Reports: Murphy noted that he would be gone on vacation early April.

Mayor and Council Reports/Updates: Beniek thanked the Joetown Tourism group for all their efforts in promoting St. Joseph.

Adjourn: **Kluesner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30PM; seconded by Beniek and passed unanimously.**

Kayla Klein
City Clerk