



CITY OF WALLED LAKE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026
7:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Gunther.

PLEDGE TO FLAG & INVOCATION

Invocation by Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Gunther, Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke, Council Member Ambrose, Council Member Arnold, *Council Member Loch, Council Member Schinzing, and Council Member Woods

OTHERS PRESENT

City Manager Whitt, Finance Director Pesta, City Attorney Vanerian, HR Director Sears, Deputy Director Public Safety Shakinas, Deputy Chief Kolke, Fire Chief Gonzalez, DPW Superintendent Ladd, and City Clerk Stuart

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES

Council Member Woods requested to add discussions about electricity on the poles in the downtown and the Banks-Dolbeer Foster Farmhouse at Riley Park. Items added under New Business items #3 and #4.

Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke requested to add discussion about correspondence from Dr. Ajay Raman and the Hospitality House Taste of Spring fundraising event. Item added under New Business as item #5.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chris Tamer, 435 Decker – explained there is an emergency access gate off Leon Road that leads to the Beachwood development. He said he is concerned about the snow piling in front and behind the gate that it will not be able to open.

Fire Chief Gonzalez explained this is secondary access, the fire engine does have the capability to access the drive. He explained the road is gravel and snowplows cannot plow it completely clear. He explained the fire engine is large enough to obtain any required access.

*Council Member Loch joined meeting

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Council Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2026

**CM 02-01-26 MOTION TO APPROVE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2026**

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Schinzing, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve regular council meeting minutes of January 20, 2026.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) Ambrose, Arnold, Loch, O'Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

2. Regular Council Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2026

**CM 02-02-26 MOTION TO APPROVE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2026**

Motion by Ambrose, seconded by Woods, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve regular council meeting minutes of February 3, 2026.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) Loch, O'Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Ambrose, Arnold, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

COUNCIL REPORT *None*

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Gunther explained he and DPW Superintendent Ladd had a walk through with Oakland County Water Resources Commission and they were educated on items that need to be addressed immediately. Mayor Gunther explained the sewer infrastructure is in bad shape, and we need a multidisciplinary team to work on this. Mayor Gunther explained there are significant problems that need replacement, repair, and lining, all the way around the lake, the sewers are in great need of rehabilitation.

Council Member Woods explained prior councils formally incorporated Oakland County Water Resources (WRC) as the city's water and sewer management team. Council Member Woods explained prior councils also authorized visual inspections of the infrastructure and at that time WRC was not on board however, since partnering with WRC the city gained technical expertise in reviewing its infrastructure. Council Member Woods explained there has been water loss

reductions which are measurable cost savings and those savings are reinvested into the city's water fund. Council Member Woods explained improvements in the Tri-A subdivision water supply stabilized water system performance and these upgrades contributed to the city's improved ISO rating of three (3); which positively impacts the resident's by lowering homeowner's insurance premiums because the fire suppression capabilities and water system reliability are directly evaluated in ISO scoring. Council Member Woods said infrastructure has been an ongoing topic in prior meetings and here today. Council Member Woods said the city is progressing in a positive direction and will continue to do so with education and assessment results.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Consent Agenda Written Departmental / Divisional Statistical Reports

- a. Police**
- b. Fire**
- c. Finance**
 - Warrant**
- d. Code Enforcement**

CM 02-03-26 MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA WRITTEN DEPARTMENTAL / DIVISIONAL STATISTICAL REPORTS

Motion by Woods, seconded by Ambrose, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve consent agenda written departmental / divisional statistical reports.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) O'Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Ambrose, Arnold, Loch, Gunther
Nays (0)
Abstain (0)
Absent (0)

City Manager Whitt explained the work on 14 Mile is not a city project but that of the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA).

DPW Superintendent Ladd explained he and City Manager Whitt spoke with the project manager recently. Mr. Ladd explained GLWA is done with the project on Maple Road in front of Walled Lake Elementary and the work on Angle Road. Mr. Ladd said the project manager explained the goal is to have Novi Road and Decker Road open back up in approximately two weeks, if good weather persists. The project manager relayed that they would hit July 1 for total completion. Mr. Ladd said all materials are on site and it is a matter of installation now.

Council Member Schinzing said he appreciates city staff providing the information on the city website including the QR code that directly links to GLWA.

CORRESPONDENCE *None*

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

1. Memorandum – Electronic Communications Policy

City Attorney Vanerian explained at the last meeting, questions were asked if whether a nonresident of the city can serve on the planning commission. City Attorney Vanerian explained there is an older provision in the charter that all members of boards and commissions shall be residents of the city. City Attorney Vanerian explained state law, however, does allow one nonresident to serve on the planning commission which could be an option for council.

City Attorney Vanerian explained another question brought up was that of personal devices used for city business. City Attorney Vanerian explained it is not the device type itself, or use, but what is on the device, does it meet the definition of a public record. City Attorney Vanerian explained regardless of any device, if it is a public record, it is potentially subject to disclosure under FOIA. City Attorney Vanerian explained someone cannot come in and request to view the mayor's phone or council member's phone. City Attorney Vanerian explained it would be an extreme case if required to be produced under court order.

Council Member Schinzing asked if the city has any policy on file for this.

City Attorney Vanerian said no the city does not.

Council Member Schinzing asked if the city should have a policy in place, to make sure employees know the proper process and etiquette for device use regarding public records.

City Attorney Vanerian said there are benefits to having a policy in place.

City Attorney Vanerian explained the litigation reports requested from last meeting were provided to council and if they have any questions, they can request a closed session to discuss. City Attorney Vanerian explained this Thursday, he will be in court on an open case, and he will provide council an update.

City Manager Whitt said we follow the law, if council wishes to follow a specific policy council can create one. City Manager Whitt said he has been with the city for 15 years, and he has not seen activity that is problematic. City Manager Whitt said there is state statute that provides record retention and staff follow it, there is no need to recreate the wheel.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Proposed Resolution 2026-04 Agreements and Contracts

Council Member Woods explained that he researched and compared reviews of transparency practices among our neighboring municipalities, including Novi, Wixom, Commerce Township, Northville, and Rochester. Council Member Woods explained none of the reviewed municipalities post individual employment contracts on their websites. All municipalities publish their annual budgets and audit reports, consistent with statutory transparency requirements.

Position classifications and compensation information are included within publicly available budget documents, similar to this City's current practice. He explained in regard to employee information on websites, some municipalities display director-level staff photographs. Most of those reviewed, list department heads and provide their contact information but none of the reviewed communities broadly publish employee photographs or detailed personnel information. Council Member Woods further explained that several communities limit external links to accounts payable platforms, citing cybersecurity considerations. He referenced recent cybersecurity concerns experienced by White Lake Township as an example of risks associated with expanded public-facing access. Based on the review, Council Member Woods explained that the City's current practices regarding employment contract publication and staff information are consistent with regional norms. He said he supports maintaining the existing approach, emphasizing alignment with peer municipalities and consideration of privacy and security best practices.

Council Member Arnold asked what the issue with posting employee contracts on the website is.

Council Member Woods said we discuss these items during a meeting, items of discussion are on the website, we are already putting this information out there. He explained this resolution request places extra burden on staff when information is already out there. He said the budget outlines the city positions and salary.

Council Member Schinzing said when he was campaigning, this was important to the Walled Lake residents he spoke with.

Mayor Gunther said people can FOIA information.

Council Member Woods said the budget documents are out there, all that information is already out there, if more information is requested people have the option to submit a FOIA.

City Manager Whitt explained employee agreements can be assembled and sent to each member of council, these are all public records. City Manager Whitt said his agreement seems to be of great discussion, it has been before, it has been in court, he will put it up tomorrow.

Council Member Woods explained he agreed to allow the council to have agreements to bring the new members up to date but the budget is out there with this information. Council Member Woods said to reference Council Member Schinzing comments the public wants this information, why over burden staff with additional acts when the information is already there.

City Manager Whitt also expressed concern that broadly publishing all employment contracts online could unintentionally create vulnerabilities by drawing attention to specific individuals, potentially making them targets. City Manager Whitt explained the union agreements are less intrusive.

Mayor Gunther explained these agreements and contracts shows what the city is contractually obligated to any payees.

CM 02-04-26 MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTIONS 2026-04 IN PART AND PROVIDE AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS TO CITY COUNCIL

Motion by Woods, seconded by Ambrose, MOTION FAILED

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (3) Woods, Ambrose, Loch
Nays (4) Schinzing, Arnold, O'Rourke, Gunther
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

Council Member Schinzing said he does not want to table item; he wants a vote on resolution as proposed. He said this is what his constituents want so that is what he wants to do.

Council Member Arnold suggested to table one more meeting, he said it would be wise to review first, but he is a fan of moving forward with posting.

CM 02-05-26 MOTION TO TABLE RESOLUTION 2026-04

Motion by Arnold, seconded by O'Rourke, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To table resolution 2026-04.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) Woods, Ambrose, Arnold, Loch, O'Rourke, Schinzing, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Second Reading C-376-26 Amend Chapter 38, "Fire Prevention and Protection", Article II "Fire Prevention Code"**

CM 02-06-26 MOTION TO APPROVE SECOND READING C-375-26 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 38, "FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION", OF THE CITY OF WALLED LAKE CODE OF ORDINANCES, TO AMEND ARTICLE II "FIRE PREVENTION CODE", TO ADOPT THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE WITH INSERTIONS AND AMENDMENTS AS PROVIDED BY THIS ORDINANCE

Motion by Woods, seconded by Schinzing, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve second reading C-375-26 an ordinance to amend Chapter 38, "Fire Prevention and Protection", of the City of Walled Lake Code of Ordinances, to amend Article II "Fire

Prevention Code”, to adopt the 2021 International Fire Code with insertions and amendments as provided by this ordinance.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) Ambrose, Arnold, Loch, O’Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

2. Proposed Resolution 2026-05 Interlocal Agreement with Oakland County for the P25 Simulcast System

Deputy Public Safety Director Shakinis provided an overview of the proposed operating agreement with Oakland County regarding the countywide public safety radio system. He explained that the city has been operating under a county agreement since approximately 2005. Under that agreement, the city does not own its public safety radios, the radios are owned and maintained by Oakland County and are part of the countywide communications network. He said that the radios used by the city’s police and fire departments are the same units utilized by other municipalities throughout the county, including Novi and Brandon Township. This structure ensures interoperability, allowing police and fire agencies to communicate seamlessly across jurisdictions, including coordination prior to and during incident response. He said that implementation of the updated system was delayed in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The agreement presented today formalizes the city’s continued status as a user on the county’s network. The city does not purchase or directly fund the radios through its operating budget. Funding for the system is derived from the countywide 911 surcharge collected on residents’ phone bills. The county collects, controls, and administers those funds. Deputy Public Safety Director emphasized that participation in the county network is critical to operations and that the city would face significant challenges operating independently.

Mayor Gunther asked City Attorney Vanerian if he reviewed.

City Attorney Vanerian said he reviewed agreement and had no objections to legal form of agreement. City Attorney Vanerian explained an agreement of this nature with Oakland County, many communities are serviced by this agreement, the county cannot have a separate agreement with each municipality.

CM 02-07-26 MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2026-05 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WALLED LAKE AND OAKLAND COUNTY FOR THE OAKLAND COUNTY P25 SIMULCAST SYSTEM

Motion by O’Rourke, seconded by Woods, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve resolution 2026-05 a resolution authorizing an interlocal agreement between the City of Walled Lake and Oakland County for the Oakland County P25 Simulcast System.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) Arnold, Loch, O'Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Ambrose, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

3. DTE and Downtown Electricity Services

Council Member Woods said he would like to direct the City Manager to reach out to DTE to inquire about steps to move aerial wires to underground. Council Member Woods said this area does look rough and that DTE is working on upgrades but not in Walled Lake just yet.

City Manager Whitt asked what council desires to have done, what is he asking DTE for. He said we need to include the Mayor in conversations, if both are involved, there is more potential. This is a good idea, but the council needs to know what they want to do.

CM 02-08-26 MOTION TO INSTRUCT CITY MANAGER WHITT AND MAYOR GUNTHER TO ENGAGE DTE REGARDING DOWNTOWN REHABILITATION

Motion by Woods, seconded by Schinzing, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To instruct City Manager Whitt and Mayor Gunther to engage DTE regarding downtown rehabilitation.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (7) Loch, O'Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Ambrose, Arnold, Gunther
Nays(0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

4. Riley Park Banks Home

Council Member Woods said that the Banks-Dolbeer structure requires substantial improvements to bring the structure up to current building code standards and acknowledged that renovation would likely involve significant expense. He explained that the group originally responsible for relocating the structure was unable to complete the project after it was moved. Council Member Woods explained preserving the city's history and referenced the historical significance attributed to the site, including connections to Sarah Banks, recognized as the first woman student in medicine associated with the community. He explained that maintaining historical value remains important and that the city should explore options to move the project forward in a way that is not financially burdensome to taxpayers. Council Member Woods suggested exploring potential partnerships, specifically referencing the local Masonic organization and the restoration work needed for the building.

Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke said this structure had been discussed with Parks and Recreation Commission and Member Giovanni Johnson expressed awareness of and interest in historical

preservation efforts, including a historical marker recognizing the Underground Railroad. Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke suggested that any future conversations regarding the Banks-Dolbeer structure should include Mr. Johnson.

City Manager Whitt said this matter would be discussed during upcoming budget workshops and agreed to initiate outreach. He stated that Council must determine how much the city is willing to invest in maintaining the structure and what long-term purpose it will serve. He expressed concern that leaving the building in its current, unmaintained condition is not appropriate. City Manager Whitt further noted that when the house was originally relocated, water and sewer connections were not installed. He explained that Council should decide whether to renovate, repurpose, or otherwise dispose of the structure. City Manager Whitt said that while relocation was believed to be the appropriate course of action at the time, the structure does not meet formal historical designation criteria because it was moved from its original site. He indicated that while certain historical timbers remain, the documented historical record is limited and much of the history associated with the property is based on oral accounts rather than written documentation.

**CM 02-09-26 MOTION TO DIRECT CITY MANAGER WHITT TO
ENGAGE WITH THE LOCAL WALLED LAKE MASONIC
LODGE ABOUT THE BANKS-DOLBEER FOSTER FARMHOUSE
AND ITS REHABILITATION**

Motion by Woods, seconded by Ambrose, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To direct City Manager Whitt to engage with the local Walled Lake Masonic Lodge about the Banks-Dolbeer Foster Farmhouse and its rehabilitation.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes (6) O'Rourke, Schinzing, Woods, Ambrose, Arnold, Loch, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

Mayor Gunther recused himself from the vote.

5. Hospitality House – Taste of Spring Fundraiser

Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke raised a question regarding a sponsorship request from Hospitality House for its "Taste of Spring 2026" fundraiser. Mayor Pro Tem O'Rourke explained he was contacted by Dr. Ajay Raman, a current volunteer member of the Hospitality House who is reaching out to various local municipalities, including Walled Lake, seeking participation or sponsorship support. He asked if the city historically sponsored or financially supported Hospitality House events or any event. Is this permissible.

Discussion was held on the city's past practices regarding nonprofit sponsorships.

Council Member Ambrose said that his family's restaurant has had a longstanding relationship with Hospitality House and has worked with representatives of the organization for many years.

He stated that his family's restaurant is a sponsor of the upcoming "Taste of Spring" event and that he and his family members plan to attend. Council Member Ambrose expressed personal support for Hospitality House and described the organization as a valuable community resource. He noted that the individuals assisted by the organization are often local residents and neighbors, underscoring the community impact of its services. He explained that while he is supportive, any decision regarding municipal sponsorship rests with the full Council.

**CM 02-10-26 MOTION TO APPROVE THE \$750 SPONSORSHIP
OPTION FOR THE HOSPITALITY HOUSE TASTE OF SPRING
FUNDRAISER TO BE HELD MARCH 11, 2026**

Motion by Orourke, seconded by Ambrose, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the \$750 sponsorship option for the Hospitality House Taste of Spring fundraiser to be held March 11, 2026.

Roll Call Vote

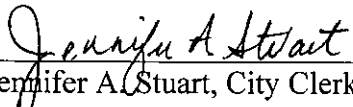
Ayes (7) Schinzing, Woods, Ambrose, Arnold, Loch, O'Rourke, Gunther
Nays (0)
Absent (0)
Abstain (0)

Council Member Woods commended the fire department for its continued strong performance, specifically noting the four-minute response time. Council Member Woods said the Department of Public Works made significant efforts during the winter weather working extended hours to maintain safe road conditions. He also said that the Special Olympics Michigan Polar Plunge event will take place on February 28th at the Tiki Bar. He said he is a volunteer with event and encouraged residents and council to attend, volunteer and support the cause.

ADJOURNMENT

CM 02-11-26 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Schinzing, seconded by Ambrose, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 8:51 P.M.



Jennifer A. Stuart, City Clerk
approved 3/1/26

Dennis O'Rourke, Mayor Pro Tem