



BUFFALO CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

January 5, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the City of Buffalo City Council was called to order on January 5, 2026 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the City Center at 212 Central Avenue.

The following members were present: Sheila Crawford, Brad Dahl, Steve Downer, George Fantauzza (via Zoom), Erin Walsh, and Student Liaison Jillian Pack.

Staff Present: Administrator Taylor Gronau, Finance Director/Assistant Administrator Josh Kent, City Clerk Susan Johnson, Community Development Director David Kelly, Utilities and IT Director Jason Meusburger, Fire Chief John Harnois, Police Chief Pat Budke, Parks and Rec Director Lee Ryan, Innovation Specialist Sam Solarz, and Consulting Engineer Justin Kannas of Bolton & Menk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Student Liaison Pack reported that school had resumed after winter break, with winter sports in full swing. She highlighted school activities including a food drive that collected 336 items and a winter blood drive.

Council Member Crawford announced that Christmas tree pickup will take place January 13-15 on residents' regular garbage days. Trees need to be set out by 6:00 AM.

Council Member Walsh announced that the Buffalo Historical Society was holding a "hot dish" fundraiser on January 25th to support their new website project. If you are unable to attend and would like to donate, donations can be mailed to 917 Circle Drive, Buffalo.

Council Member Fantauzza announced that the Community Center was seeking volunteers for tax preparation assistance.

Open Forum

Debbie Pohlkamp of 33 2nd Street NE thanked the Council for her appointment to the Community Center Advisory Board and suggested that Council Member Fantauzza should remain on the Community Center Advisory Board due to his knowledge of the ongoing construction. She also noted concerns about ice in the alley near the Community Center.

Council Reports And Recognition

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Council Member Walsh reported attending a meeting for the Minnesota City's Climate Coalition regarding the intersections of climate, land use, and housing. She shared information about emissions from light-duty trucks and SUVs being the biggest source in cities and noted that multi-family housing is more energy efficient and affordable.

Council Member Fantauzza commended city staff for their quick response to a resident's social media complaint about a utility bill, noting that staff had reached out to the resident to address the concern. He encouraged residents to contact the city directly with concerns rather than posting on social media.

Council Member Crawford reported on Park Board activities, noting that multiple community input sessions were held on December 22nd for the Park and Trails System Plan. She encouraged residents to visit the Parks and Recreation website to provide feedback. She also announced the "Chill Out and Read" winter reading challenge for teens through adults at the library, running January 2nd through February.

Mayor Downer reported attending an open skate event at the Civic Center on January 2nd sponsored by Buffalo Municipal Utilities, which was well-attended by families and children.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of December 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Claims Listing

Council Meeting ~		01/05/26			
A/P Check Runs	EFT/DRAFTS	Checks	Total	Check Numbers	
12/15/2025	\$ -	\$ 540.00	\$ 540.00	137366	
12/18/2025	\$ 21,392.91	\$ -	\$ 21,392.91		
12/29/2025	\$ 948,647.25	\$ 260,562.96	\$ 1,209,210.21	137368-137425	
Grand Total		\$ 1,231,143.12			

Council Member Dahl moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Council Member Crawford seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

Public Hearings

Public Hearing - Vacation of Drainage & Utility Easements, Kaysons Second Addition, Resolution 2026-1

Community Development Director Kelly explained that the public hearing concerned an existing public easement on a parcel that was being replatted as part of the Eighth Street development project previously approved by the Council. Before the new plat could be recorded, the existing easement needed to

be vacated, requiring a public hearing. The property would be part of a 42-unit apartment project with two buildings.

Mayor Downer opened the public hearing at 7:17 PM.

With no public comments, Mayor Downer closed the hearing at 7:19 PM.

Council Member Crawford moved to approve Resolution 2026-1 vacating the existing drainage and utility easements within PID 103-198-001010. Council Member Dahl seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

Old Business

Variance - South Shores on Lake Pulaski Development

Community Development Director Kelly presented the variance request that had been tabled at the December 15th meeting stating that based on Council concerns about parking, staff proposed widening Randall's Lookout street from 32 feet to 38 feet curb-to-curb, allowing for approximately 16 parking stalls without impacting driveways.

Council Member Walsh shared concerns about pedestrian crosswalk improvements, and the possibility of installing a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) for pedestrian safety. City Engineer Kannas recommended addressing pedestrian safety separately once development was further along and suggested that a traffic study could determine appropriate measures.

Council Member Crawford expressed concerns about long-term enforcement of the HOA rules regarding dock usage. Director Kelly explained that the HOA would likely self-regulate due to the limited number of boat slips available for the HOA.

After discussion with the developer, Roger Hokanson, the Council agreed to include a time limit on the requirement for the developer to be responsible for a traffic study and pedestrian improvements, making it valid for four years from the final plat approval of South Shores Phase One.

Council Member Dahl moved to approve the variance per the Planning Commission's recommendations with the conditions stated in Planning Commission memo 110.01-25.15, and that the proposed Randall's Lookout be widened from 32 feet to 38 feet to allow for on-street parking for users of the single dock. At the appropriate time, if a traffic study and pedestrian improvements are warranted, that will be the responsibility of the developer/HOA. The requirement would be valid for four years from final plat approval of South Shores Phase One. Council Member Fantauzza seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

New Business

Consider Approval of a Resolution Delegating Authority to Pay Claims and Make Electronic Fund Transfers

Finance Director/Assistant Administrator Kent presented this annual resolution, he noted there was no change from previous years and confirmed that adequate internal controls were in place.

Council Member Walsh moved to adopt Resolution 2026-2 delegating authority to pay claims and make electronic fund transfers to the city administrator and city clerk. Council Member Crawford seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

Approve Part-Time School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement with the Wright Technical Center

Police Chief Budke reviewed the background on this item noting that it was for part-time service at an hourly rate of \$95. The contract would run through the end of 2026, with the rate likely to increase in 2027.

Council Member Crawford moved to approve the School Resource Officer agreement with ISD 966. Council Member Dahl seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

Notice of Public Hearing for the Implementation of Body-worn Cameras for the Buffalo Police Department

Police Chief Budke explained that state law requires a public hearing before implementing body-worn cameras. Discussion on data software and storage, along with advantages to the cameras took place.

Council Member Dahl moved to recommend the City Council call for a public hearing for January 20th, 2026, on body-worn cameras for the Buffalo Police Department. Council Member Crawford seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

First Reading of Ordinance 2026-1: Amendment to City Code Chapter 48-Utilities, Article V. Stormwater Utility

Administrator Gronau explained that the ordinance changes would reflect how the city currently bills for stormwater, clarifying the residential equivalent unit system. He emphasized that these changes would not result in a rate increase but would align the ordinance with current billing practices.

Council Member Crawford moved to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2026-1 amending Chapter 48 of the Buffalo City Code per the utilities department recommendation. If approved, a second reading will be scheduled for January 20th, 2026. Council Member Dahl seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

Annual Mayor and Council Appointments

The Council reviewed the annual appointments with discussion about filling the positions for Safe Schools and United for Youth committees.

2026 MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Position	2026 Council Rep
<i>Liquor</i>	Brad Dahl
<i>Public Safety</i>	Steve Downer
<i>Public Works</i>	Erin Walsh
<i>Utilities (until PUC)</i>	Steve Downer
<i>Finance</i>	Steve Downer, Brad Dahl
<i>Public Utilities Commission</i>	TBD
<i>Planning Commission</i>	Erin Walsh
<i>Heritage Preservation</i>	Erin Walsh
<i>Parks</i>	Sheila Crawford
<i>Airport</i>	Brad Dahl
<i>Library</i>	Sheila Crawford
<i>Community Center</i>	George Fantauzza
<i>Safe Schools</i>	TBD
<i>United for Youth</i>	TBD
<i>Personnel</i>	Steve Downer, George Fantauzza
<i>Administrative</i>	Sheila Crawford, Brad Dahl
<i>Acting Mayor</i>	Brad Dahl
Staff Positions	2026 Council Appts
<i>City Administrator/Treasurer</i>	Taylor Gronau
<i>City Clerk</i>	Susan Johnson
<i>City Attorney</i>	Susan Dege
<i>City Engineer Consultant Pool</i>	Justin Kannas – Bolton & Menk (Civil) Jake Folkeringa – Bolton & Menk (Fiber) Sheldon Sorenson – Barr Engineering (Electric)
<i>Civil Defense Director</i>	John Harnois
<i>Fire Chief</i>	John Harnois
<i>Asst. Weed Inspector</i>	Carey Kotilinek
<i>Official Newspaper</i>	Wright County Journal Press
<i>Designated Depository(s)</i>	Old National Bank MidCountry Bank

Council Member Dahl moved to approve the City Council 2026 Annual Appointments as written. Council Member Crawford seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

2026 City Council Meeting Calendar

Administrator Gronau presented the 2026 meeting calendar. It was noted that this is subject to change.

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Council Member Fantauzza moved to approve the 2026 City Council meeting calendar. Council Member Dahl seconded. The motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

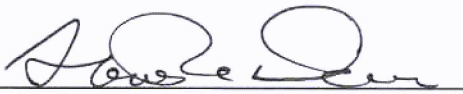
STAFF UPDATES

- State of City Address to be held on April 21
- Chamber of Commerce will host a Mayor/Council candidate forum on October 6

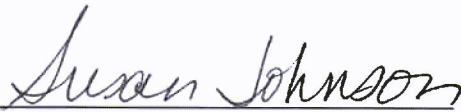
ADJOURN

Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM.

Attest:



Steve Downer, Mayor



Susan Johnson, City Clerk