

MINUTES
Plainwell City Council
April 27, 2026

1. Mayor Keeler called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm in City Hall Council Chambers.
2. Invocation: Given by Scott Fenner from Lighthouse Baptist Church.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was given by all present.
4. Roll Call: Present: Mayor Brad Keeler, Mayor Pro Tem Lori Steele and Councilmembers Randy Wisnaski, Roger Keeney and Cathy Green (7:02pm).
Absent: None.
5. Approval of Minutes:
A motion by Steele, seconded by Wisnaski, to accept and place on file the Council Meeting Minutes of the 04/13/2026 regular meeting. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
6. Public Comment:
 - A. Christopher Burnett introduced himself and shared that he is running for 57th District Court Judge.
 - B. Chris Macklin of Thomas St. in the Old Orchard discussed the tornado damage and offered a big thank you to the DPW crew for doing the hard and lengthy cleanup work without complaint or hesitation. He is grateful for a community that supports one another, with neighbors and volunteers alike offering to help. He thanked Public Safety, the DPW and residents for keeping people safe, and assisting those in need, stating there are many helpers in the City of Plainwell.
 - C. Tim Slais introduced himself and shared that he is running for 57th District Court Judge.
7. County Commissioner Report: None.
8. Agenda approval:
A motion by Wisnaski, seconded by Green, to approve the Agenda for the April 27, 2026 meeting as presented. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
9. Mayor's Report: Mayor Keeler discussed the current role of the Parks & Tree Commission. Established in the 1980's, the Commission serves as an advisory board to the City. Historically, this volunteer board had greater resources available and was responsible for selecting, planting, watering and maintaining City flower beds. Mayor Keeler noted that these responsibilities have since transitioned to the Department of Public Works, which now oversees the entirety of the City's flower program. As a result, the Commission's responsibilities are limited and not clearly defined. Superintendent Nieuwenhuis, who also serves on the Commission, noted that much of the frustration among members comes down to a lack of funding. While Commissioners continue to dedicate time and effort to meetings and propose ideas for improvements, those ideas are not feasible without funding. The Mayor, with support from Mayor Pro Tem Steele, recommended reviewing the Commission's role to determine whether it continues to serve a necessary purpose for the City.
10. Recommendations and Reports:
 - A. Director Callahan discussed repairs to Engine 11, model year 2000 fire apparatus. Engine 11 was scheduled for routine maintenance and repairs due to several known mechanical and electrical issues associated with its age and continued operational use. During the repair process, multiple critical deficiencies were identified that required immediate correction to ensure firefighter safety, operational readiness, and compliance with accepted fire service practice. This situation is consistent with maintenance of older emergency vehicles, where underlying issues may not be fully identified until repairs are underway. Addressing these issues at the time of service prevented future equipment failures, reduced the likelihood of more costly repairs, and ensured continued readiness of the apparatus for emergency response.

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A motion by Wisnaski, seconded by Keeney, approving the payment of \$10,377.50 for necessary repairs to Engine 11, a 2000 model year fire apparatus, to restore the vehicle to safe and reliable operational condition. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

- B. City Manager Lakamper discussed the survey of the Mill property to create the parcel for Classic Auto Mill. Part of our purchase agreement with Classic Auto Mill is for the City to conduct the survey to create the new parcel. Fleis & Vandenbrink, our engineering firm of record, is also working with Classic Auto Mill to complete the environmental work. They can begin work on the survey at the end of this week. The survey is necessary to keep the sale of the Mill property moving along, and once completed, we can close on the property.

A motion by Keeney, seconded by Steele, approving a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Fleis & VandenBrink for field and office work to provide an Ingress/Egress Easement Exhibit, PA 132 and ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey for an approximate 3-acre parcel surrounding the old Paper Mill Building in the Northeast corner of Tax Parcel 55-030-076-01 at a cost of \$13,750.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

- C. City Manager Lakamper discussed the survey of the Mill property to create the parcel for Plainwell Auto. Part of our purchase agreement with Plainwell Auto is for the City to conduct the survey to create the new parcel. Fleis & Vandenbrink, our engineering firm of record, is also working with Plainwell Auto to complete the environmental work. Fleis can begin work on the survey at the end of this week. The survey is necessary to keep the sale of the Mill property moving along, and once completed, we can close on the property.

A motion by Green, seconded by Wisnaski, approving a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Fleis & VandenBrink for field and office work to provide a PA 132 Survey and Topographic Survey for an approximate 1-acre parcel along the South Line of Tax Parcel 55-030-076-01 at a cost of \$5,000.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

11. Communications:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Wisnaski, to accept and place on file the March 2026 Department of Public Safety Report, the 03/10/2026 DDA/BRA/TIFA meeting minutes and the 03/10/2026 Parks & Tree meeting minutes. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

12. Accounts Payable:

A motion by Keeney, seconded by Green, that the bills be allowed and orders drawn in the amount of \$137,469.56 for payment of the same. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

13. Public Comments:

- A. Tom Siver introduced himself and shared that he is running for 57th District Court Judge.

14. Staff Comments:

Superintendent Nieuwenhuis discussed the City's response to the tornado, stating that overall, everyone did a great job. DPS rescued people from under trees and rafters, there was a gas leak Miller Road due to a tree being uprooted, and all traffic was rerouted from the highway due to debris from the storm blocking 131. City workers handled everything thrown at them and worked well together as a team. He thanked Mayor Keeler, who came out to help clean up with his loader, and City Manager Lakamper for coming in as well.

Superintendent Keyzer shared that the City's response was great. Water Renewal has 5 lift stations that need to have the generators manually turned on, which was handled quickly without issue. He was impressed with how smoothly and quickly Plainwell has handled brush pick up.

Director Callahan stated that the tornado had trees and power lines down everywhere, and without Bob and the DPW crew and the Mayor's help, there would have been no way for DPS to get through to provide aid to those in need. There were no fatalities, and only one reported injury. He noted that an additional form of communication

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might be something worth looking into for the future. He provided an update on accreditation, sharing that the final report should be ready soon. The Plainwell Department of Public Safety will be the first accredited agency in Allegan County.

Clerk Leonard shared that she is continuing to accept Election Inspector Applications for the 2026 election year.

City Manager Lakamper reported that Finance Director/Treasurer Wilcox and Personnel Coordinator/Deputy Treasurer Kersten are both at Treasurer's Institute.

Plainwell received an additional 10k grant from the Pipp Foundation for playground equipment for Thurl Cook Park, bringing the total available to ~35k.

Lakamper is working with Virgil on a grant for the Plainwell Municipal Airport. The grant would cover the cost of resurfacing the runway.

He shared that we are waiting for an engineering report confirming whether Building #2 is salvageable.

Lakamper discussed the storm response, stating that he was diverted off 131 on his way in, and arrived to find the City staff and crews hard at work clearing trees and debris and making sure the roads were open. He thanked everyone for their hard work and quick response time, stating how impressed he was with the amount of damage that had already been handled.

15. Council Comments:

- A. Councilmember Green has heard nothing but great things about Plainwell's response to the storm damage and the speed of cleanup.
- B. Councilmember Keeney got a late-night call from his grandson, waking him up and telling him to get in the basement. He lost a huge oak tree that took out a power line when it fell. He thanked everyone for their hard work.
- C. Mayor Pro Tem Steele thanked the staff for their tornado response, sharing that she witnessed DPW staff take care of an entire tree in less than an hour. She thanked the community for their support of each other, and congratulated Director Callahan on his upcoming accreditation.
- D. Councilmember Wisnaski congratulated Director Callahan as well, and stated hats off to the storm cleanup crew- great job!

16. Adjournment:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Wisnaski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:12pm. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes respectfully
submitted by,
JoAnn Leonard
City Clerk

MINUTES APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL
May 11, 2026


JoAnn Leonard, City Clerk