

MINUTES
Plainwell City Council
January 12, 2025

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.
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 12/22/2025 regular meeting. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
6. Public Comment: None.
7. County Commissioner Report: None.
8. Agenda approval:
A motion by Steele, seconded by Keeney, to approve the Agenda for the January 12, 2026 meeting as presented. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
9. Mayor's Report: None.
10. Recommendations and Reports:
 - A. Clerk Leonard shared that several board members' terms end on December 30, 2025. She has confirmed with each candidate their willingness to serve for another term. Appointments are made by the Mayor, and subject to confirmation from Council.
A motion by Keeney, seconded by Wisnaski, confirming the Mayor's appointment of several community members to various Boards and Commissions. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
 - B. Superintendent Nieuwenhuis discussed the purchase of four new tires for the newer front loader. The removed set of tires from the newer loader will be installed on the older front loader, because the older loader's tires are in poor condition. Swapping out the tires will allow both loaders to be available for use as needed.
A motion by Wisnaski, seconded by Green, approving the purchase and installation of four new tires on the newer front loader, and having the removed set of tires installed on the older front loader by Meekhof Tire/Bauer Built at a cost of \$13,540.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.
 - C. City Manager Lakamper discussed an offer from Balkema Excavating to purchase the entirety of remaining parcel at 830 Miller Rd. (26.98 acres) for the full asking price of \$674,500. Balkema Excavating would like to open a concrete ready-mix plant, similar to the one near Preferred Plastics that is no longer in business. A concrete ready-mix plant requires a Special Use Permit, and the sale of the property will be contingent on approval.
A motion by Steele, seconded by Wisnaski, approving the sale of approximately 26.98 acres of real property located at 830 Miller Road, Plainwell, MI 49080, parcel ID 55-020-056-00, and authorizing the City Manager and City Clerk to enter into a purchase/sale agreement for the property subject to final approval by the City Manager and City Attorney. Further authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute documents or other agreements as necessary to close on the sale of the property, subject to final review by the City Manager and Attorney, and authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to take any steps necessary to effectuate the sale of the property subject to this motion. On a roll call vote, Steele, Keeney, Wisnaski and Keeler voted in favor. Green voted not in favor. On a 4 in favor to 1 not in favor vote, motion passed.

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D. City Manager Lakamper discussed Resolution 2026-06, which establishes a Redevelopment Project Area encompassing the City of Plainwell including Industrial Park, and will allow Mill 17 to apply for a Class C Redevelopment Liquor License.

A motion by Steele, seconded by Keeney, adopting Resolution 2026-06 as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

E. City Manager Lakamper discussed the development of the Mill property. He shared that the lease agreement with Classic Auto Factory is undergoing final review with an environmental attorney and should be ready for the next Council meeting. Mill 17 is now asking to use the parking lot as is, keeping it gravel, and has offered to pay for snow removal and salt service in the winter. Mill 17 also inquired about moving the Outdoor Farmer's Market. The City is considering Fannie Pell Park as a possible venue for the Farmer's Market.

11. Communications:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Wisnaski, to accept and place on file the December 2025 Investment and Fund Balance reports. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

12. Accounts Payable:

A motion by Keeney, seconded by Wisnaski, that the bills be allowed and orders drawn in the amount of \$1,249,882.50 for payment of the same. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

13. Public Comments: Dale Burnham of 201 Prairie Ave. thanked Bob for snow removal, and Kevin for his efforts in resolving a campground situation within the City, and progress made toward taking care of the burned home on Mariette St.

14. Staff Comments:

Superintendent Nieuwenhuis shared that the Christmas decorations have been taken down, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Superintendent Keyzer stated that he is working on plant maintenance, doing some valve replacements and painting.

Director Callahan reminded everyone to slowdown for vehicles on the side of the road, sharing that the Chief of Hamilton's Fire Department was struck by a car while responding to call on the side of the road. He passed away from his injuries on Christmas Eve. All the surrounding communities sent Officers to cover Hamilton so the Fire Department could attend the memorial service.

Clerk Leonard reported had nothing to report.

City Manager Lakamper discussed the Plainwell Auto presentation and community feedback event scheduled for the Council meeting on Monday, January 26, 2026 at 7pm. The associated Agenda item will be consideration of whether City Council wishes to move forward with the land sale to Plainwell Auto.

He provided an update on Mill Building #2, sharing that the insurance company has settled on a payout amount of \$589k, which should cover the cost of demolition. The City will put out a bid for demolition, and hopefully will have significant progress made by spring. Councilmember Green asked if the demolition process would include haul away, and Lakamper answered yes.

Lakamper discussed the letter of concern from Weyerhaeuser about the development of the Mill site, stating that Weyerhaeuser hasn't proposed anything other than asking for more time. Their main concern is centered around future regulation changes dealing with PFAS. Watts Homes is aware of the letter, and wants to be sure they are able to develop both parcels. The City Attorney feels that there is no reason to delay development. The City has a new contact at EGLE. There is a meeting scheduled with Weyerhaeuser for the end of the month.

City Manager Lakamper addressed Dale Burnham's concerns with the fire damaged residence on Mariette St., stating that Plainwell's Code of Ordinances requires certain steps be followed. First, a hearing was scheduled and held, but the homeowner did not show up. The issue now goes to the Board, and then to Council for approval to go to court seeking demolition of the remains of the structure. Lakamper noted that Plainwell's Code of Ordinances is out of

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date, and the City is in the process of updating our Ordinances to adopt the International Property Management Code (IPMC), which is common and used federally. The City has about \$16k from the insurance claim from the fire to cover demolition costs. Progress is slow, but is being made.

Lakamper offered more information about IPMC code enforcement, sharing that it covers everything from grass and brush to demolition of dangerous structures. IPMC is used by communities everywhere, and has extensive case law support to back it.

15. Council Comments:

Mayor Pro Tem Steele and Councilmember Keeney wished everyone a Happy New Year.

16. Adjournment:

A motion by Steele, seconded by Wisnaski, to adjourn the meeting at 7:41pm. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes respectfully
submitted by,
JoAnn Leonard
City Clerk

MINUTES APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL
January 26, 2025


JoAnn Leonard, City Clerk