

*(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection at [westbranchiowa.org](http://westbranchiowa.org). The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)*

**West Branch, Iowa  
Council Chambers**

**City Council  
Regular Meeting**

**June 2, 2025  
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the West Branch City Council regular meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Roll call: Council members present; Tom Dean, Colton Miller, Mike Horihan, Jerry Sexton and Jodee Stoolman.

City Staff present: City Clerk Leslie Brick, Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken, Police Chief Greg Hall, Park & Recreation Director Erin Laughlin, City Attorney Kevin Olson and City Engineer Dave Schechinger.

### **APPROVE THE AGENDA**

Motion by Miller, second by Sexton to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a voice vote.

### **APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

Approve minutes from the May 19, 2025 City Council meeting.

Approve the appointment of Christine Humrichouse to the Library Board of Trustees, term expiration June 30, 2028.

Approve a Class B Retail Alcohol License for Parkside BP, 401 Parkside Drive, West Branch.

Approve a Class E Retail Alcohol License for Maverik 5079 (formerly Kum & Go #254), 620 S. Downey St., West Branch.

Approve an Iowa Retail Cigarette/Tobacco/Nicotine/Vapor permit for FY26 – Update for Kum & Go #254 rebranding to Maverik 5079.

Approve a 5-day Class C Retail Alcohol license, with outdoor service for Hazelhasky LLC (dba Herb & Lou's) for June 14, 2025 (in conjunction with Summer Kickoff 2025)

Approve a Special Event Permit for Hoover's Hometown Days 2025 (includes temporary street closures)

Approve a Special Class C Retail Alcohol (BW), 5-day license for the West Branch Firefighters Inc. (in conjunction with Hoover's Hometown Days 2025).

Approve the Monthly Financial Report for April 2025.

Approve Claims for June 2, 2025.

EXPENDITURES	6/2/2025	
AMAZON.COM	SUMMER LIB PROG PRIZES	518.98
BAKER & TAYLOR	BOOKS	285.97
BARNHART'S CUSTOM SERVICES	WATER STORM RD REPAIR	4,080.00
CHAUNCEY BUTLER POST 514	5 FLAGS	167.00
DATA443 RISK MITIGATION	RANSOMWARE RECOVERY SUBSCRIPTION	178.75
GOERDT INSPECTION	BLDG INSPECTIONS	2,058.00
HALL, GREGORY	LODGING REIMBURSEMENT	119.00
HI-LINE	SHOP SUPPLIES-PW	193.91
IA COUNTY ATTORNEYS ASSOC	IA ACTS OF INTEREST REGS	270.00
LAUGHLIN, ERIN	MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT	24.22
OLSON, KEVIN D	LEGAL SERVICES MAY 2025	1,500.00
ROOF, GERDES, ERLBACHER	AUDIT FY24-FINAL	9,100.00
STERICYCLE	SHREDDING SERVICES	89.93
SWANK MOTION PICTURES	SITE LICENSE-MOVIES	114.00
TOTAL		18,699.76
PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	5/23/2025	68,734.55
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 5/27/2025	531.35
HARLESS, VERONICA	SR. FITNESS CLASS MAY 2025	385.00
LEAF CAPITAL FUNDING	COPIER LEASE-CITY OFFICE	396.00
LYNCH'S EXCAVATING	WATER MAIN SERVICE REPAIR	4,796.40
MEDIACOM	CABLE SERVICE	41.90
MENARDS	MTLS TO BURN WEEDS	90.39

VERIZON WIRELESS	VERIZON WIRELESS	454.71
METLIFE	INSURANCE PREMIUM	2,310.73
SISCO	INSURANCE PREMIUM	16,994.66
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 5/19/2025	35.94
ALLIANT ENERGY	ALLIANT ENERGY	16,013.46
BAKER & TAYLOR	BOOKS	203.65
CEDAR COUNTY COOP	FUEL-FIRE, PW	1,671.07
CULLIGAN WATER	WATER SOFTENER SERVICE	30.49
FELD FIRE EQUIPMENT	THREAD SAVERS-FIRE	156.70
HAWKINS	CHEMICALS	3,436.86
LINN COUNTY R.E.C.	STREET LIGHTS	305.40
LYNCH'S PLUMBING	ICE MAKER FILTER	126.00
MPEC	VEHICLE MAINT SUPPLIES-PW	55.68
PAPAS TRUCK & TRAILER REPAIR	SPEED SENSOR REPAIR-FIRE	412.41
PITNEY BOWES GLOBAL FINANCE	POSTAGE METER LEASE - LIBRARY	77.37
PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL	PEST CONTROL	239.54
QUILL	OFFICE SUPPLIES-PW, CITY	133.57
REINHARD, BRADLEY THOMAS	UPDATE RIFLES - POLICE	5,454.00
THE GAZETTE	SUBSCRIPTION	462.80
TUTTLE, PETER	ICE MACHINE REPAIR-FIRE	193.13
US BANK CORPORATE CARD	CREDIT CARD PURCHASES	2,155.23
WEST BRANCH REPAIRS	VEHICLE REPAIRS- PW, PD	475.30
WEST BRANCH TIMES	LEGAL PUBLICATIONS	970.78
IA ALCOHOLIC BEV DIVISION	FIRE DEPT HHTD ALCOHOL LICENSE	48.75
VARIOUS VENDORS	UB REFUNDS	56.15
TOTAL		58,715.42
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		146,149.73

FUND TOTALS	
001 GENERAL FUND	58,575.52
022 CIVIC CENTER	390.10
031 LIBRARY	6,662.96
110 ROAD USE TAX	10,903.87
112 TRUST AND AGENCY	29,734.18
600 WATER FUND	23,763.30
610 SEWER FUND	15,376.43
740 STORM WATER UTILITY	743.37
GRAND FUND TOTAL	146,149.73

REVENUE-FISCAL YEAR 2025  
FUND APRIL

001 GENERAL FUND	533,835.78
022 CIVIC CENTER	1,160.00
031 LIBRARY	14,528.86
036 TORT LIABILITY	20,826.48
110 ROAD USE TAX	29,356.81
112 TRUST & AGENCY	118,728.84
121 LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	26,035.97
125 TIF	103,897.76
226 DEBT SERVICE	94,891.67
300 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE	27,768.84
500 CEMETERY PERPETUAL FUND	480.00
600 WATER FUND	68,857.83
610 SEWER FUND	86,773.30
740 STORM WATER UTILITY	6,110.66
TOTAL	1,133,252.80

Motion by Dean, second by Horihan to approve the Consent agenda. AYES: Dean, Horihan, Sexton, Stoolman, Miller. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNICATIONS / OPEN FORUM

Janeen Miller, 410 Clark St., who owns property at 341 E. Main Street wanted to go on record that her family “did not receive a cash offer” for their property from Blaine Thomas, developer of Heritage Hill property. Miller said she wanted to clear up any rumors on the subject. Miller did say there were some initial

conversations with the developer a few years ago, but nothing was ever put into motion. She added that her family is “willing” to sell the property as (they) support the city’s plan for future development.

## **PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA**

### Public Hearing – Regarding the Proposed Amendment No. 8 to the Amended and Restated West Branch Urban Renewal Plan.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. Mark Scharnweber, 178 290<sup>th</sup> St. asked the Council if his property (that abuts the creek) would be affected by the slum & blight designation. Olson informed Scharnweber that his property would not be affected and that he received the public notice because his property is within 200 feet of the new urban renewal area. Tracy Hansen, 865 275<sup>th</sup> St. who owns property along Beranek Drive, asked what the city planned on doing with the TIF money from the slum & blight designation. Laughlin replied that the money would be used to rebate the new owner of Parkside Hills. Laughlin went on to say that there are still plans for additional residential housing, a future hotel and commercial property at Parkside Hills. Dean added that the proposed redevelopment would add approximately \$72 million dollar increase in property values. Bruce Barnhart, 418 E. Main St., stated that he is not happy with the designation (which includes his business property), but understands the reason for it. Barnhart also said he understands that the City is probably not happy to have his business in the downtown district, but he has no plans on moving any time soon. Barnhart said is in support of the new urban renewal designation / area. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:34 p.m.

### Public Hearing – on the proposed Amendment to Chapter 165 of the West Branch Code of Ordinance.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:35 p.m. There were no public comments. The Council discussed briefly amongst themselves. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:39 p.m.

### Second Reading Ordinance 828 – Amending Chapter 18 – City Clerk. / Move to action.

Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve the second reading of Ordinance 828. AYES: Miller, Dean, Stoolman, Horihan, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### First Reading Ordinance 829 - Amending Chapter 165 of the Code of Ordinances by incorporating Residential Livability Flexible Front Yard Allowances. / Move to action.

Laughlin explained the purpose of the ordinance is to allow “flexible” front yard setbacks. Currently, residential lots have a twenty-five-foot setback requirement. The result of this is that the city is seeing more houses built with their garages “stubbed” out in front of the dwelling. This new ordinance language allows for houses to be constructed with a front porch that could be built at fifteen feet from the back of the property line (which is on the back of the sidewalk) to encourage traditional neighborhood designs.

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve the first reading of Ordinance 829. AYES: Sexton, Miller, Dean, Stoolman, Horihan. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### First Reading Ordinance 830 - Amending Chapter 41 of the Code of Ordinances Regarding Fireworks. / Move to action.

Olson explained that the Iowa Legislature passed Senate File 303 which regulates how cities can enforce consumer fireworks. The new law went into effect May 19, 2025 and Olson said the ordinance would update the current City Code. Miller said since the City really does not have a “choice” in the matter, that maybe the Council should condense all three readings at this meeting rather than “wasting time” at the next meeting. Olson said the Council could pass the first reading today, and the next two at the next meeting. Miller, frustrated, added that every year the State changes their mind on the fireworks subject and that next we would be changing the ordinance again.

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve the first reading of Ordinance 830. AYES: Sexton, Horihan. NAYS: Miller, Dean, Stoolman. Motion Failed.

### Resolution 2025-58 - Setting salaries for appointed officials and employees of the City of West Branch, Iowa for Fiscal Year 2026. / Move to action.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2025-58. AYES: Dean, Miller, Horihan, Sexton, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-59 - Approving the annual maintenance agreement for Information Technology support with Mainstay Systems of Iowa LLC. / Move to action.

Motion by Dean, second by Horihan to approve Resolution 2025-59. AYES: Dean, Horihan, Stoolman, Sexton, Miller. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-60 - Approving the annual subscription agreement with Tyler Technologies, Inc. in the amount of \$24,148.41. / Move to action.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2025-60. AYES: Dean, Miller, Stoolman, Sexton, Horihan. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-61 – Approving an Agreement for solid waste and recycling collection services with Lakeshore Recycling Services LLC. / Move to action.

Brick informed the Council that LRS has not yet signed the agreement and Olson noted that he added an early termination clause if the company did not meet certain service levels based on previous issues.

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2025-61. AYES: Sexton, Miller, Stoolman, Horihan, Dean. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-62 – Resolution Awarding General Obligation Corporate Purpose Bonds, Series 2025. / Move to action.

Maggie Burger, Speer Financial (the city's financial advisor) said the bonds were sold to Robert W. Baird & Co., of Milwaukee, Wisconsin at 4.03% which she felt was a very good interest rate. Burger also said the city received a rating of A1, which is very good for a city of our size.

Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2025-62. AYES: Miller, Dean, Stoolman, Horihan, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-63 – Approving and Adopting Amendment No. 8 to the Amended and Restated Urban Renewal Plan for the West Branch Urban Renewal Area. / Move to action.

Horihan said that over the past several weeks he has tried to educate himself on urban renewal law and TIF and questioned the current practice Council uses to determine why certain projects receive TIF rebates. He reminded the other members that Finance Officer Van Auken suggested several weeks ago that the Council adopt a TIF application process that could be used for all future (or potential) agreements to ensure transparency, fairness to each entity requesting, along with research on financial impacts to the City before the Council adds projects to the urban renewal plan. Horihan said he feels the process can and should be given more thought and that all Council members should have the information at the same time. He said more education is needed on the subject as the city continues to grow. Stoolman expressed her frustration on the inconsistency in the rebate percentages given to developers and businesses and said she is against giving seventy-five percent to a developer when just last year, the City Administrator said the city couldn't afford to give more than twenty-five percent due to HF718.

Motion by Dean, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2025-63. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Miller. NAYS: Horihan and Stoolman. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-64 – Approving the Revised Site Plan for Lot 9 Parkside Hills-Fourth Addition, West Branch, Iowa. / Move to action.

Schechinger explained that P&Z reviewed the site plan at their recent meeting and had approved it with His recommendations regarding some drainage issues on the east side of the dwellings. Schechinger said he spoke with the developer (Shay) and they will adjust concrete slabs or low decks where needed. He also noted that that will be a need for a utility easement for the sewer line that crosses over city property.

Motion by Dean, second by Horihan to approve Resolution 2025-64. AYES: Dean, Horihan, Sexton, Miller, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-65 – Approving the Final Plat of Parkside Hills – Fourth Addition, West Branch, Cedar County, Iowa. / Move to action.

Motion by Dean, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2025-65. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Horihan, Stoolman, Miller. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-66 - Approving an Engineering Services Agreement with Calhoun-Burns and Associates for 2025 Bridge Inspection and Load Rating. / Move to action.

Motion by Miller, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2025-66. AYES: Miller, Sexton, Dean, Stoolman, Horihan. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT - Absent**

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

Olson said Blaine Thomas would like to apply for Workforce Housing Tax Credits and needs a letter of support from the City Council before June 10<sup>th</sup>. Olson said he spoke with Kofoed who suggested a special meeting be scheduled.

**CITY ENGINEER REPORT**

Schechinger said paving would start on W. Orange Street this week as part of Meadows Part 6. He also said the Cedar-Johnson Road project is moving right along. He also reported that FEMA is ready to issue the permit for the Wapsi Creek project as soon as they receive the proof of publication on the notice of flood hazard revisions to the Wapsinonoc Creek that will be published in this week's newspaper.

**STAFF REPORTS - None**

**COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Laughlin asked the Council if they would support having power added to Mural Park (the old Casey's lot). Laughlin said that the inflatables would be relocated near the green space and that power will be needed for them and potentially future events held there. Sexton commented that Boomerang has been working long hours on the Cedar-Johnson Road and making good progress.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Miller, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

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Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Leslie Brick, City Clerk