

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF LA CRESCENT, MINNESOTA  
MARCH 23, 2026

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the second meeting of the City Council of the City of La Crescent for the month of March was called to order by Mayor Mike Poellinger at 5:00 PM in the La Crescent Community Building, La Crescent, Minnesota, on Monday, March 23, 2026.

Upon a roll call taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following members were present: Members Cherryl Jostad, Chris Langen, Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner, Dale Williams, and Mayor Mike Poellinger. Members absent: None. Also present were, Interim City Administrator Tyler Benish, City Attorney Skip Wieser, Finance Director Kara Tarrence, City Engineer Tim Hruska, Sustainability Coordinator Jason Ludwigson, Community Development Director Larry Kirch (via Teams Meeting), and City Clerk Angie Boettcher.

**ITEM 1 – CONSENT AGENDA**

At this time, the Mayor read the following items to be considered as part of the Consent Agenda for this regular meeting:

- 1.1 MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2026
- 1.3 BILLS PAYABLE THROUGH – MARCH 20, 2026

At the conclusion of the reading of the Consent Agenda, Mayor Poellinger asked if the Council wished to have any of the items removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Member Langen made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner, as follows:

**A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 2 – PUBLIC HEARING-** 5:00 P.M. – MnDEED Small Cities Development Grant – Walnut Street Streetscaping Project

At 5:00 pm Mayor Poellinger recessed the regular City Council meeting for a Public Hearing on the MnDEED Small Cities Development Grant, Walnut Streetscaping project. Community Development Director Larry Kirch (via Teams Meeting) reviewed with City Council that the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any additional public comments or concerns about the Walnut Street Reconstruction and Complete Streets project. There were no questions from the public.

At 5:08 pm Mayor Poellinger closed the public hearing and reconvened the regular City Council meeting.

**ITEM 3.1 – ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Sustainability Coordinator Jason Ludwigson and Erin Daly Davenport from Alta (via Teams Meeting) reviewed the draft Active Transportation Plan with City Council. This item was informational only. No action was required.

**ITEM 3.2 – APPROVE PLANS & SPECIFICATIONS/AUTHORIZE TO ADVERTISE FOR BID – WALNUT STREET**

City Engineer Tim Hruska reviewed the Walnut Street Reconstruction plan with City Council. The project consists of the reconstruction of Walnut Street from South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the north half of North 4<sup>th</sup> from the Walnut Street intersection to east of Walnut Place. The project includes utility replacement, streetscaping amenities, street lighting, the continuation of the future MnDOT trail connection north of South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to Veterans Park and a trail connection from Veterans Park to Park Street. The engineering estimate for this project is \$5,300,000. Funding for the project is as follows:

LRIP	\$1,500,000
Federal Funds – Small Cities	\$600,000
MSAS	\$900,000
ARPA Funds – Watermain	\$200,000
Street Reconstruction/Utility Revenue Bonds	\$2,100,000

It was recommended that City Council approve the plans and specifications and Advertisement for Bids.

Following discussion, Member Langen made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE WALNUT STREET RECONSTRUCTION PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS AND AUTHORIZE THE ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.3 – RESOLUTION – MINNESOTA PUBLIC FACILITIES – LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT**

City Engineer Tim Hruska reviewed with City Council that in January of 2026 the City received a grant for \$1,000,000 to replace approximately forty lead and galvanized water services. This is a continuation of the work to identify lead water service lines that started in 2024. City Council reviewed a resolution approving an application to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (PFA) for a loan and/or grant to complete the funding approval process. It was recommended that City Council adopt the resolution as presented. Following discussion, Member O’Donnell-Ebner introduced the following resolution and moved its passage and adoption:

**RESOLUTION NO. 03-26-08**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING AN APPLICATION TO THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC FACILITIES AUTHORITY FOR A LOAN AND/OR GRANT FROM THE DRINKING WATER REVOLVING FUND FOR A LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of La Crescent is hereby applying to the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority for a loan and/or grant from the Drinking Water Revolving Fund for lead service line replacement project as described in the application.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of La Crescent estimates the MPFA-Financed amount to be \$1,000,000 or the as-bid cost of the project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of La Crescent has the legal authority to apply for the loan and/or grant, and the financial, technical, and managerial capacity to repay the loan and ensure proper construction, operation and maintenance of the project for its design life.

I CERTIFY THAT, the above resolution was adopted by the City of La Crescent on March 23, 2026.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Member Jostad and Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.4 – APPROVE AGREEMENT – MEYER TIMBER SERVICE-CPL GRANT**

Sustainability Coordinator Jason Ludwigson reviewed a service agreement between the City of La Crescent and Meyer Timber Services with City Council. The City of La Crescent was awarded an expedited Conservation Partners Legacy grant by the MnDNR to complete invasive species removal in Stoney Point. The City has approximately 224 acres of bluffland park. With the grant funds the contractor will be able to complete invasive species removal of buckthorn, non-native bush honeysuckle, and round leaf bittersweet on 44 combined acres in Stoney Point and Vetsch Park. The work will take place in 2026, 2027, and 2028. The grant award is for \$50,000 and the service agreement with Meyer Timber Services is for \$46,500. It was recommended that City Council approve the agreement. Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF LA CRESCENT AND MEYER TIMBER SERVICES FOR THE REMOVAL OF BUCKTHORN, NON-NATIVE BUSH HONEYSUCKLE, AND ROUND LEAF BITTERSWEET ON 44 COMBINED ACRES IN STONEY POINT AND VETSCH PARK WITH THE FUNDS COMING FROM THE CONSERVATION PARTNERS LEGACY GRANT THROUGH MNDNR.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes

Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.5 – LEASE AGREEMENT – HEALTHY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

Interim City Administrator Tyler Benish reviewed with City Council for approval a six-month lease agreement from May 1, 2026, through October 31, 2026, with the La Crescent Area Healthy Community Partnership (HCP) for the house that the City owns at 333 Main Street. The City has leased the property to HCP since 2016. It was recommended that City Council approve the lease agreement. Following discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Williams as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE SIX-MONTH LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE LA CRESCENT AREA HEALTHY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (HCP) FOR THE CITY-OWNED HOUSE LOCATED AT 333 MAIN STREET FROM MAY 1, 2026, THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2026.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.6 – ROTARY REQUEST – APPLE BLOSSOM BIKE TOUR**

City Council reviewed a letter from Police Chief Luke Ahlschlager regarding the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Apple Blossom Bicycle Tour sponsored by the La Crescent Rotary Club. The event is scheduled for Saturday, August 15, 2026, beginning at 7:45 a.m. The organizers are requesting police assistance for traffic control at the intersection of Veterans Parkway and North 4<sup>th</sup> Street from 7:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Additional requests include four picnic tables and two garbage cans to be placed in the area between the parking lot and the playground on the far-left side of the Event Center Parking lot by 10:00 a.m. It was recommended that City Council approve the event requests. Following discussion, Member Langen made a motion, seconded by Member Williams as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE LA CRESCENT ROTARY CLUB REQUESTS TO HOST THE 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL APPLE BLOSSOM BICYCLE TOUR ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2026, AS STATED.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.7 – PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

The Personnel Committee had the following recommendations for consideration by the City Council:

1. That the City Council accept Mike Poellinger's retirement from the La Crescent Fire Department effective March 28, 2026, after serving forty-six years as a firefighter for the City. A letter from Mr. Poellinger was included. Following discussion, Member made a motion, seconded by Member as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE MIKE POELLINGER'S RETIREMENT FROM THE LA CRESCENT FIRE DEPARTMENT EFFECTIVE MARCH 28, 2026, AND THANK HIM FOR HIS FORTY-SIX YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes

and Mayor Poellinger abstained. The motion was declared duly carried by a 4-0 vote.

2. Interim City Administrator Tyler Benish reviewed with City Council the following recommendations from the Personnel Committee regarding a tentative agreement with the LELS Union on a three-year contract agreement for the years 2026-2028. The agreement includes an increase in the City's contribution to insurance and an increase in wages, along with language

changes to the union contract. Prior to the meeting LELS made an additional request to add Juneteenth as a paid holiday. The following items have been modified:

- Clarifying overtime pay calculation.
- Added language regarding supervisory call outs.
- Added compensatory time notification requirements.
- Added pay for instructing field trainings.
- Modified sick leave language to incorporate ESST requirements.
- Vacation accrual has been modified to align with other union accruals.
- Probationary employees will be able to use accrued vacation during the probationary period.
- Insurance contributions per month have been increased to:

	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
Single	\$1200	\$1320	\$1451
Family	\$2800	\$3080	\$3388

- Insurance opt out has been set at:

Single: \$700

Family: \$1200

No employee hired after April 1, 2026, will be eligible for the insurance opt out benefit.

- Minnesota Paid Leave payroll tax will be split equally by the City and the Employee.
- Language was added that an employee may not go into an unpaid status if the employee has accrued leave available to them; except when the employee is on workers compensation or MN paid leave.
- Language was added to incorporate employee rights under Military Leave Laws.
- Uniform allowance was increased from \$775 to \$900 per year.
- Wage scales were updated to clarify movement of employee's steps.
- Cost of Living Adjustment:

	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
	4%	5%	4.5%

- In lieu of retro pay, the City would make a one-time payment of \$750 to each union employee.

The contract would take effect April 1, 2026.

Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member Langen as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE LELS UNION THREE-YEAR CONTRACT AGREEMENT FROM JANUARY 1, 2026, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2028, WITH THE ADDITION OF JUNETEENTH AS A PAID HOLIDAY AND THE CONTRACT TAKING**

**EFFECT APRIL 1, 2026, AND AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE CHANGES AS APPROVED BY CITY ATTORNEY AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

- Pending the approval of the LELS union contract the Personnel Committee is recommending the following to city employees not represented by a bargaining unit beginning April 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026 with the addition of Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

- Insurance Contributions per month have been increased to :

	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
Single	\$1200	\$1320	\$1451
Family	\$2800	\$3080	\$3388

- Insurance opt out to be set at:

Single: \$700

Family: \$1200

No Department Head hired after April 1, 2026, will be eligible for the insurance opt out benefit.

- Cost of Living adjustment:

<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
4%	5%	4.5%

The City Administrator job advertisement had previously included a 4% increase above the 2025 wage and would be excluded from an additional increase in 2026, but would be included in 2027 and 2028.

- Minnesota Paid Leave payroll tax will be split equally by the City and the Employee.
- In lieu of retro pay, the City would make a one-time payment of \$750 to each Department Head excluding the City Administrator.

Department Heads include the Golf Course Superintendent, Police Chief, City Clerk, Finance Director, Public Works Director, and City Administrator.

Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE STATED UPDATES TO CITY EMPLOYEES NOT REPRESENTED BY A BARGAINING UNIT FROM JANUARY 1, 2026, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2028, WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF APRIL 1, 2026, WITH THE ADDITION OF JUNETEENTH AS A PAID HOLIDAY.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

4. A tentative agreement has been reached with IUOE #49 for a three-year agreement from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, with an effective date of April 1, 2026. Prior to the meeting the contract was revised to include Juneteenth as a paid holiday. The following items have been modified:
- Shift pay differential increase from \$1.50 to \$2.50 for all hours worked on Sunday and all hours worked after 4:00 p.m.
  - Cost of Living adjustment:  

<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>
4%	5%	4.5%
  - Cost of Living allowance increase from \$400 to \$550 per month worked, prorated if the entire month is not worked.
  - Incorporate Minnesota Paid Leave language.
  - Incorporate ESST language

Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE THREE-YEAR OPERATING UNION OF ENGINEERS CONTRACT FROM JANUARY 1, 2026, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026, WITH THE ADDITION OF JUNETEENTH AS A PAID HOLIDAY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF APRIL 1, 2026.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Chris Langen	Yes
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Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and Member Jostad voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried by a 4-1 vote.

- That the same wage increases for 2026 through 2028 be approved for the members of the Fire Department, with an effective date of April 1, 2026. Following discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion seconded by Member Langen as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE SAME WAGE INCREASES AS THE LELS CONTRACT FROM 2026 THROUGH 2028 FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF APRIL 1, 2026.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes

and Mayor Poellinger abstained. The motion was declared duly carried by a 4-0 vote.

- That the same wage increases for 2026 through 2028 be approved for all part-time seasonal employees, with an effective date of April 1, 2026. This includes summer maintenance employees, summer recreation employees, part-time golf course employees, and Police Reserves. Following discussion, Member Langen made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE SAME WAGE INCREASE AS THE LELS CONTRACT FROM 2026 THROUGH 2028 FOR ALL PART-TIME SEASONAL EMPLOYEES WHICH INCLUDES SUMMER MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES, SUMMER RECREATION EMPLOYEES, PART-TIME GOLF COURSE EMPLOYEES, AND MEMBERS OF THE POLICE RESERVES WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF APRIL 1, 2026.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes

Mike Poellinger                      Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

7. The City of La Crescent has recently hired employees in the Police Department as lateral transfers, meaning that the employees have started at a step higher than step one. The 2023-2025 LELS union contract had verbiage that in some cases would require 48 months of service before receiving a step increase. The proposed contract addresses this issue for future officers. However, to correct this for the recently hired officers, the City and LELS have agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to position the affected employees at a step consistent with years of service. The Personnel Committee is recommending that City Council approve the MOU.

Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member Langen as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE MOU BETWEEN THE CITY OF LA CRESCENT AND LELS FOR THE FOUR RECENTLY HIRED POLICE OFFICERS MENTIONED IN THE MOU TO BE MOVED TO WAGE STEPS CONSISTENT WITH THEIR YEARS OF SERVICE.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.8 – OFF-SALE LIQUOR & CIGARETTE LICENSE TRANSFER**

City Council reviewed a memo from Administrative Assistant Chris Fortsch regarding a transfer of liquor and cigarette licenses. The City has been notified that the property currently owned by Srisai Corporation at 301 Kistler Drive will be sold on March 24, 2026. The building is currently occupied by La Crescent Convenience Center and La Crescent Tobacco. The new property owner will be Witting, Inc. dba Marathon Mart. Rupesh Patel will occupy two spaces of the property under the name of Marathon Mart and will continue leasing the additional space to La Crescent Tobacco. Mr. Patel has submitted a cigarette license application and an off-sale liquor license. The applications appear to be in order, and it was recommended that City Council approve the license applications and authorize that they be forwarded to the state. Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member Langen as follows:

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE CIGARETTE AND OFF-SALE LIQUOR LICENSES SUBMITTED BY RUPESH PATEL OF WITTING, INC. DBA MARATHON MART FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 301 KISTLER DRIVE AND AUTHORIZE THAT THEY BE FORWARDED TO THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.**

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mayor Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

**ITEM 3.9 – LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION SCHEDULE**

Interim City Administrator Tyler Benish reviewed the 2026 schedule of the Board of Appeal and Equalization meetings for Houston County and the portion of Winona County located in the City of La Crescent. The meeting will be held on April 27, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the La Crescent Community Building. This item was informational only. No action was required.

**6. STAFF CORRESPONDENCE/COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- 6.1 HEART SAFE COMMITTEE MINUTES 12/10/2025  
City Council reviewed the December 10, 2025, Heart Safe Committee meeting minutes.
- 6.2 HEART SAFE COMMITTEE MINUTES 3/11/2026  
City Council reviewed the March 11, 2026, Heart Safe Committee meeting minutes.

**7. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Chamber of Commerce representative Jon Wilson was in attendance and had no updates.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Williams to adjourn the meeting. Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Clerk, the following Members present voted in favor thereof, viz;

Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Chris Langen	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes

Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried and the meeting duly adjourned at 5:49 P.M.

APPROVAL DATE: April 13, 2026

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interim City Administrator