

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF DEVILS LAKE, ND
JULY 21, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Devils Lake City Commission was held on July 21, 2025 with the following members present: President Moe and Commissioners Hach, Pierce, Knowski, and Uhlenkamp.

MEETING ITEMS

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Approval of Minutes – July 7, 2025

Commissioner Pierce made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2025 City Commission meeting. Commissioner Hach seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

AWARDS AND PROCLAMATIONS

PUBLIC HEARINGS – 5:30 PM

- 1) Devils Lake Renaissance Zone Program

The City Assessor communicated that this program has been around for the last 20 years, and it is now up for renewal and went through a couple of changes that will be made.

Tom LaMotte asked if an individual had a lot worth \$500,000 and \$250,000 was invested into it, the individual would be able to have a tax abatement. The City Assessor communicated that if you are within the 42 blocks of the Renaissance Zone and put in over 50% of the true and full value of it.

BID OPENINGS – 5:30 PM

VISITORS OR DELEGATIONS

- 1) Kirk Baeth, LRSC Booster Club

Kirk Baeth, president of the LRSC Boosters, communicated that they are asking for an extension of the permit that they requested last year for the beer garden at hockey games. They were allowed to have a beer garden in the NE corner of the Burdick Arena. They had the entire section roped and signed off. The alcohol, labor, and logistics was all donated by Lotta's. The Booster Club had a gross profit of around \$10,000. They are asking that security not be required due to it being such an expense to them. The college is okay with not having an officer there for security, as there were no issues last year. They made the same request at the Devils Lake Park Board meeting and it was approved unanimously dependent on the City Commission decision. Commissioner Uhlenkamp made a motion to approve to approve the extension of the permit for a beer garden at all LRSC hockey games and not needing to have security present. Commissioner Hach seconded the motion. Commissioner Pierce mentioned that he does not feel one year of

the event is enough to make this type of decision. President Moe mentioned that this can be reviewed at any time if something does happen. The motion was approved on a 4-1 roll call vote, with Commissioner Pierce dissenting.

2) Forward Devils Lake 2026 Budget Review

Brady Ash, Director of Forward Devils Lake, mentioned that he and the City Administrator went through some of it together. He mentioned that per their conversation, he added 3% on top of 2025's commitment. He requested the release of funds for \$53,800 for 2025. Pierce made a motion to release the funds in the amount out \$53,800. Commissioner Uhlenkamp seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

3) LR Heritage Center 2026 Budget Review

Lisa Crosby, Director of the LR Heritage Center and Art Center, communicated that she worked with a 3% increase from last year for a majority of the budget. She broke down the rent reimbursement and the additional funds for the employee that had been put in a couple of years ago.

4) LR Public Library 2026 Budget Review

Daniel Howell, Board Member for LR Public Library, and Maddie Sharpe, Library Director, went through the 2026 budget.

5) DL Regional Airport 2026 Budget Review

Dominic Eritano, Airport Manager, gave a brief overview of the airport budget. He mentioned that the revenue for the airport will be going up in 2026.

COMMISSION PORTFOLIOS

Commissioner Knowski – The City Engineer communicated that there is not an update for the Utility Department.

Commissioner Hach – The City Engineer communicated that there is not an update for the Sanitation Department. He mentioned that the Engineering Department will be working on roadways tomorrow. They are working with the contractor on their schedule so they know what will be happening when and where. They will also be doing sealcoat work later this summer.

The City Assessor communicated that he only has the Renaissance Zone to discuss, which is on the agenda.

The Airport Manager said the flight numbers are looking really good. They have a flight that holds 50 people and out of the two flights they have had over 90 people on board. The direct flight to Denver has made a difference.

Commissioner Uhlenkamp – The City Engineer said that there is not an update for the Street Department. The Cemetery roadway is not completed yet, but it will be getting worked on when they work on 14th Ave.

Commissioner Uhlenkamp communicated that Maddie's last day is going to be this Friday. The replacement will be starting in August.

Commissioner Pierce – The Fire Chief communicated that they had a firefighter resign, so they are hopefully going to open that position within the next week. The new hire has been through all his trainings, and he is enrolled in his ARFF class.

Commissioner Pierce mentioned that at the last LEC meeting, dependent on the vote tomorrow, if the police department does move out of the LEC, what are the implications to the joint power agreement. President Moe mentioned that nothing should change. The City is currently paying the LEC quarterly, but in the signed Joint Powers Agreement states that all invoices need to be paid within 90 days of the invoice date. The City Administrator communicated that it used to be paid monthly, but then after the approval of the Joint Powers Agreement, the LEC began billing for the whole year in January. Commissioner Pierce mentioned that if we want to continue doing it quarterly, the agreement is going to need to be amended to follow what will be done.

Commissioner Pierce also mentioned that he met with some individuals from CVIC about possibly opening a location in Devils Lake. They are interested in bringing their services to Devils Lake, but they are not interested in the size at the old Good Samaritan Center. They are currently short in funding, which is a reason that they cannot expand at this moment.

Commissioner Pierce gave a recap of the downtown safety meeting that took place on July 8th. He went through items that he was asked to look into and gave an update on answers that he has received.

President Moe – The Police Chief said that there is not an update for the Police Department.

The City Administrator went through the timeline for the 2026 budget and special meetings along with the special assessment timeline. He also mentioned that the special election is tomorrow and that the polls will be open from 7am-7pm.

The City Attorney communicated that he does not have an update. President Moe asked where we are at with the nuisances around town. The City Attorney mentioned that there are properties that Chief Bennett has reached out to and it sounded like things are going well. As for the other properties, they have reached out again but they do not live within the state. He mentioned that a revision needs to be done to municipal code and then the process would start over.

OLD BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

1) Interest Earnings Allocations – Devils Lake Regional Airport

Commissioner Hach made a motion to approve the interest earnings allocation for the Devils Lake Regional Airport. Commissioner Knowski seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

2) Appointment of Canvassing Board for July 22, 2025 Special Election

The City Administrator communicated that this must be done within 13 days after the election. The Canvassing Board will meet at 5pm on August 4th with the City Assessor serving in replacement of the City Administrator/Auditor, City Attorney, President Moe, Commissioner Pierce, and Commissioner Uhlenkamp. Commissioner Peirce made a motion to approve the appointment of canvassing board. Commissioner Uhlenkamp seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

3) Approval of Renaissance Zone Development Plan

The City Assessor mentioned that with the renewal application, they do need letters of support from the county and school board. He has received the letter from the county but will be going to the school board next week. Commissioner Uhlenkamp made a motion to approve the renaissance zone development plan. Commissioner Hach seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

4) Resolution for the Renewal of the Renaissance Zone in the City of Devils Lake

Commissioner Uhlenkamp made a motion to approve the resolution for the renewal of the renaissance zone in the City of Devils Lake. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

5) Downtown Picnic Tables

Commissioner Pierce mentioned that at the last downtown safety meeting it was brought up that one of the big issues downtown are the picnic tables on 4th & 4th along with the picnic tables that are in Bridgestone Park. Loitering and drinking are the main issues that have been seen. An attached letter from Todd Thompson was read to the City Commission and it states the issues that he sees with these picnic tables.

Todd Thompson, owner of Devils Lake Glass and Paint, mentioned that when the sidewalk project started everyone had a good vision. Over time, the picnic tables and benches went down the wrong direction and it is starting to deter customers from going into downtown businesses. He

mentioned that Bridgestone Park has major issues, and he calls the police department every time something happens. He also has issues in his alley way that are motion activated so he sees most of the activity. His employees have been informed to call the police department if there is an issue, but he should not have to walk his employees out to their vehicles just for them to feel safe.

Tom Reule, with Edward Jones, mentioned that he walked down to 4th & 4th and there were multiple people there drinking, he kept walking and was approached to see if he had any money and the same thing happened down by Leever's as well. He believes that the picnic tables being removed would solve some of the problem.

Sara Erickstad, representing the homeless coalition, communicated that the picnic tables and benches would be considered the downtown citizens front/back yards and they should be able to use them. She also wants to bring awareness to the homeless population. She said that each year they do a point in time count. This is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people that is done in January. Being in North Dakota, the January numbers are not going to be that great, so they do another one count in the summer. She has been a part of these counts since 2023. In 2023 the numbers are high, but this is for the entire region 3. In the summer of 2023, they had 9 sheltered and 0 unsheltered, winter of 2024 they had 29 sheltered and 13 unsheltered and summer of 2024 they had 8 sheltered and 8 unsheltered, winter of 2025 they had 23 sheltered and 3 unsheltered, and summer of 2025 they had 15 unsheltered in just Devils Lake. The sheltered numbers were not available yet. If the park benches and picnic tables are removed, it is not going to take away the fact the Devils Lake has a homeless population.

Shane Diseth, owner of Ye Olde' Tavern, communicated that we do have an issue and the downtown benches are not being treated how someone would treat their own yard. He mentioned that he would be willing to hire anyone, but they need to be able to show up for work and do they job they are hired to do.

Dan Johnson, owner of Liquid Bean, mentioned that he sees more people on these benches at 6am than he does at any other time of day. He mentioned that pulling these benches out is just giving the feeling that something is being done. He mentioned that each commissioner should sit at these benches for at least one hour a week, as this would hopefully attract good people.

Jeff Klemetsrud, president of Klemetsrud Plumbing & Heating, mentioned that he does disagree with the benches. He communicated that his daughters no longer go downtown due to the activity that is going on. He mentioned that his building has been set on fire and rocks have been thrown through their windows. He believes that in order to revitalize downtown, these occurrences need to be minimized.

Lisa Crosby, director of LR Heritage Center and the Art Center, mentioned that the benches are not the problem. She communicated that the problem is much bigger, but there is not an answer to solve them. She believes the benches should stay.

President Moe mentioned that he has spent 4 years working early mornings at the Catholic Church and he has seen people hanging around. He mentioned that he loves the benches and the atmosphere downtown, and he does agree with almost everyone that has spoken.

Commissioner Pierce communicated that starting the downtown safety task force was started to take the time to look into and listen to the issues that are going on downtown. Homeless issues, section 8 apartments, mental health issues, and police patrol presence. There is a big group of problems downtown and we are trying to find a way to fix the problem. He mentioned that removing the benches and increasing patrol could be a start to see if it helps with the issues.

Commissioner Knowski mentioned that in the past the tables have been an issue for a while. It has increased activity downtown. He mentioned that you cannot just tell people to move along just because they are there, there must be reason.

CITIZEN COMMENT

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- 1) June 2025 Financial Report

LIST OF BILLS

Commissioner Pierce made a motion to approve the list of bills as submitted. Commissioner Hach seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

SPENCER HALVORSON
CITY ADMINISTRATOR/AUDITOR

JIM MOE
PRESIDENT OF CITY COMMISSION