

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF DEVILS LAKE, ND
SEPTEMBER 29, 2026**

The special meeting of the Devils Lake City Commission was held on September 29, 2026, with the following members present: President Moe and Commissioners Pierce, Uhlenkamp, Hach, and Knowski.

MEETING ITEMS

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) 2027 Budget Discussion

The Interim City Auditor started with the General Fund budget. He said that the items that have been changed are highlighted and the wages still include a wage freeze.

- 1) Non-departmental expenses
 - a. Lake Region Law Enforcement Center
 - b. E-911
 - i. The Interim City Auditor said that historically the cost share has been lumped into one line item; this will be changed to two (2) lines items. The Joint Powers Agreement that is in place on addresses the LEC and does not cover E-911. He mentioned that he met with Starr last week so that she was prepared for this discussion. Discussion continued regarding the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center and E-911 Authority. County Commissioner Jeff Frith said that the Law Enforcement Center Board will need to have a special meeting to discuss how they will operate without their full funding. He communicated that there is not a whole lot of cutting that can be made with their budget. The Interim City Auditor said that around \$145,000 is the amount that the LEC will be shorted from their ask. He also recently learned about an Attorney General's opinion regarding E-911 in Walsh County. He has shared this opinion with the City Attorney but has not heard back. Starr Klemetsrud, Lake Region Law Enforcement Director stated that they are not only dispatching 911, but they are also doing dispatch services that are not related to 911. She said that in 2025, there were 7,361 administrative calls for the city and 2,405 911 calls. Commissioner Knowski said that the preliminary budget was approved, but it was understood that the city does not have the money.
 - c. Signal Street Light
 - i. This has been moved infrastructure.
 - d. City Commission
 - i. Commissioner Pierce said that he does not do this position for the money and he has forfeited his salary for 2027. He understands that

this is not a fix-all, but it might help a little. President Moe said that he feels this is a bad precedent to set.

e. General Fund Departments

- i. The Interim City Auditor said that he cut out of state travel for most departments. President Moe said that he noticed Education and Training was cut and that he does not fully agree with that. The Interim City Auditor said that he has reviewed those funds and feels comfortable with the budgeted items.

f. 2027 Step Increase/COLA

- i. The Interim City Auditor showed and explained what the hybrid step increase would look like per grade. It was mentioned that around 30% of the individuals who would be eligible for a step increase are already capped out. Commissioner Hach asked what a 2% cost of living would do to the budget. It was communicated that the cost-of-living increase, per percentage, is right around \$40,000. President Moe said that he feels like the cost-of-living is the best route to take.

There are a few options that the city could look into to help our budget in the future.

- 1) Sales Tax Referendum
- 2) Increasing Utility Rates
- 3) Increasing Property Tax Cap

Commissioner Pierce said that our expenses need to be looked at. He said there are funds that are being over budgeted for and should be adjusted to be more relevant.

Commissioner Knowski asked if hiring freezes have been considered. It was mentioned that they could be considered.

The Interim City Auditor said that the budget needs to be approved and sent to the County by October 10th. President Moe said he would like the budget approved at the Commission meeting on Monday, October 5th.

Commissioner Hach said that he would like to see a cost-of-living raise for every employee. Commissioner Knowski said that he would like to see nothing. Commissioner Pierce said he would like to see a grade 9 and below receive a step increase. Commissioner Uhlenkamp said she is not sure what she would like to see; it is a tough situation to be in.

Commissioner Hach said if we run into the same situation next year, we are going to have to look at cutting positions. Commissioner Knowski said that is why he believes a hiring freeze is something we should consider. If a department needs an employee, the department head can come to the Commission and express why they need to open a position.

ROB JOHNSON
INTERIM CITY AUDITOR/CITY ASSESSOR

JIM MOE
PRESIDENT OF CITY COMMISSION