

City of Melbourne  
 Regular City Council Meeting  
 February 9, 2026  
 7:00 at Library basement

Melbourne City Council met in regular session on February 9, 2026, at 7:00 pm at the Melbourne Library basement. Present were Council persons Lucas Hauser, Beth Smith, Beth Opperman, Josh Fuller and Gary Fricke. Also present were Mayor Cynthia Mansager, Clerk Mary Pothast and residents Josh Courter and Mickey Kacena. Mayor Mansager called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Motion to approve the agenda with the addition of an emergency item regarding an error on the utility billing, the minutes of three January meetings and the bills, made by Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fuller. Vote was all ayes.

Mayor Mansager addressed the audience and Council, that resident Josh Courter brought an error in the water and sewer late rate increase to the Council’s attention. He correctly stated that the increase for water purchases was actually 14%, as charged by the Iowa Regional Utilities Association (IRUA), not 17%. In the city meetings and working through the numerous calculations, the beginning price adjustment for water purchased from IRUA by the City was overstated by 3%, and that, plus the additional required 3% for sewer revenue debt financing, brought the stated increase to 20%, instead of the correct increase of 17%. Billins for water usage, excise tax and sewer charges will be recalculated for the January billings by the clerks, and the overage shall be credited to the customers’ next billing. The clerk provided the following guidelines regarding the overages incurred by usage:

GALLONS	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000
INCORRECT	\$94.63	\$127.02	\$159.40	\$191.78	\$224.17	\$256.55
CORRECT	\$92.69	\$124.27	\$155.85	\$187.43	\$219.01	\$250.59
REFUND	-\$1.94	-\$2.75	-\$3.55	-\$4.35	-\$5.16	-\$5.96

The Mayor accepted full responsibility for the error, regrets the inconvenience caused to the residents and submitted a correction to the Times Republican regarding this error.

With regard to Mickey Kacena’s question of the \$10.17 increase in sewer charges over the 1000 gallon minimum billing, the Clerk explained that the City has been engaged in an Iowa DNR mandated sewer lagoon upgrade to meet the effluent standards set by law. The City is unable to maintain the increasingly stringent ammonia and nitrogen levels set forth by permit. Due to a disadvantaged community status, the City had been able to delay the construction for 8 years; the City no longer meets the criteria and the project is mandated by the Iowa DNR to begin. In working with the engineer, the most cost effective project will

convert the current aerated lagoon to a four-cell facultative lagoon with a price of approximately \$2 million. Other options were \$4 million and above. The City was notified last Monday that they had received a \$500,000 grant through WTFAP (Wastewater and Drinking Water Treatment Financial Assistance Program) to aid in paying for the project. The City paid off one loan in June of 2025 from the original construction of the lagoon, and currently owes \$134,000 for the sewer main lining from 2013. They have utilized the debt retirement fee paid monthly to be able to pay \$178,000 up front for engineering fees that will not have to be covered by a project loan. Mayor and Clerk thanked Josh and Mickey for their attendance and questions and invited anyone to call or stop at city hall if there are any questions or would like more specifics on the lagoon project or anything.

Deputy Cecak arrived and presented the Sheriff's Department report. There were no questions or comments. Kim Elder and Matthew Vogel of Marshall County EMA presented information to the Council regarding where Melbourne stands in reference to training and the City Hazard Mitigation manual. Melbourne is one of 3 cities in the county who have their manual complete and updated. She mentioned RAGBRAI's overnight stay in Marshalltown, and the need to keep everyone in the loop. The Salamander system will be utilized, and Melbourne clerk and fire/EMS training are completed. Mansager will be on a Zoom call on Tuesday to gather more information about another bike relay across Iowa this summer.

Moler Sanitation requested a hauler permit renewal. All documentation was received and in order. Motion to approve the application made by Hauser, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Opperman. Vote was all ayes.

Mayor Mansager opened the public hearing for the budget amendment. Budget amendment included an increase of the urban renewal budget by \$25,000 to accommodate the acquisition, cleanup and demo of property at 307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, increase \$1000 to the city hall budget expense to cover dead tree removal on ROW, the transfer of \$180,000 from the 610 Sewer department to the 611 Sewer lagoon project to cover expenses prior to receiving the planning and design loan proceeds. No additional property taxes are levied to cover these expenses. They come from fund balances. Motion to close the public hearing made by Hauser, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fuller. Vote was all ayes. Roll call vote on Resolution 2026-02-01 for the budget amendment was 5 ayes, 0 nays. Motion to approve the amendment carried.

Council was notified of the receipt of the \$500,000 WTFAP grant that had been applied for in October. Clerk will proceed with the acceptance. With a large portion of sewer funds expended for the project, Clerk advised that they will need to start using the Planning & Design loan (P&D) for upcoming lagoon construction expenses. The expenses are incurred, then reimbursed by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA).

A quote from Pump Works to maintain all 5 sewer/force main pumps annually for a period of 3 years. Motion to approve made by Fricke, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Smith. Vote was all ayes. The Mayor acknowledged to the Council that the Board of Supervisors had given county approval for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) training for all its departments. Motion to approve the acknowledgement and approve NIMS training for Melbourne made by Fricke, with 2<sup>nd</sup> by Smith. Vote was all ayes. Melbourne utilizes the NIMS system, and Council members are required to take 100 & 700 level classes. Clerk will assist with logins and information for Fuller and Smith to acquire their certificates by June 30.

A quote for Metering Technology for water meter reading software and cellular read meters was presented. The city has to upgrade the software, which has become obsolete, in order to maintain the city accounting software upgrades. The software is \$8498.00. The cellular read meters cost \$375 or \$385 each, depending on the model. There is an additional \$1.03 monthly read fee per meter for each cellular meter. Beacon now also will charge a \$.14 cent monthly read fee for any meters read with our handheld. This is a new fee which will have to be passed through to the customer of each meter.. The quote expires 4/19/26, so Fricke requested to table the motion until March. All agreed.

Fricke had been working on finding funds for tree removal on the ROW. He has secured 50% of the fee, and the City will cover the remaining half. He will contact Ledford and Alliant to check into lowering the wire. He had contacted Ricken Tiling regarding an issue with tile in the 500 block of Main Street. They will proceed next week with the work. The house removal at 307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is upcoming. The fire department used the building for some smoke training on the weekend. There was no update on nuisances. The deed for the 3 acres acquired for the lagoon expansion was obtained.

Motion to adjourn made by Hauser, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fricke. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

REVENUE: General \$8459.85, Roads \$9050.46, LOST – Fire \$1375.92, LOST – 1<sup>st</sup> Responders \$1375.92, Pool \$1377.42, LOST Rec Center \$1721.98, Water \$14,948.97, Sewer \$20,303.20, TOTAL REVENUES: \$58,613.72.

EXPENSES: General \$12,315.83, Road Use -\$4008.55, Emp Benefits \$746.80, Water \$19,335.93, Sewer \$8956.27, Sanitary Sewer Lagoon \$17,849.75. TOTAL EXPENSES \$55,196.03.

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