

KETTLE RIVER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday January 6, 2026 7:00 PM

Pledge to Allegiance

Call to Order Mayor Lucas called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Present: Mayor Dave Lucas, Councilor Miya Kohmetscher, Councilor Marcia Sarvela, Councilor Patricia Lund, Councilor Elizabeth Mascarenas

Absent: none

Staff: City Administrator Kathy Lake, Deputy Clerk Carol Grutkoski, Maintenance Jeramy Hall, Fire Chief Issac Gran

Guest: Laura Simi, Anne Soumala, Garret Keinanen, Bobby Kohmetscher, Kelly Dahl, Tanner Oachs

Guest Speakers: Dan Reed, June Suomala, Kris Miller

Public Comment:

- Dan Reed
 1. Discussion about streetlights not working, outlets on streetlights not functioning and holiday decorations
 2. Major funding cuts in 2026 at the county level
- June Suomala
 1. came to meeting because of water rate increase, water debt charges have been occurring for many years so why isn't the debt paid?
- Kris Miller
 1. same concern as June
 2. Kelly Dahl asked when will debt be paid? Explanation from Mayor Lucas: debt will be paid in 2042. It is a 50-year loan to build water treatment plant that has recently been refinanced at a lower interest rate.

Consent Agenda:

Motion to accept the following was made by Councilor Mascarenas, seconded by Councilor Lund. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.

- 1) Minutes of December 9, 2025, Public Hearing and Regular City Council Meeting

- 2) Claims (7571-7590 = \$64731.32).
- 3) Cash control statement, receipts, disbursements

Reports of City Departments and Committees:

1. Administrative Department
 - A. Daily, weekly, monthly
 - B. Working with Bollig to determine if the City of Kettle River is eligible for a grant for updates to City Hall
 - C. 2025 materials have been sent to auditors, will continue to work with them
 - D. Working on 2025 W-2s
 - E. Kathy will be attending MCFOA Annual training March 24 – 27, 2026
 - F. Two residential water meters were replaced, and the City has purchased two new meters
2. Utilities Department
 - A. Brush pile was cleaned up
 - B. Number 2 filter was leaking out of the lower hatch, the seal was bad, Lakehead will replace it
 - C. Christopher Novy's water meter read high at the beginning of November (37,000 gallons), normal at the beginning of December and high again at the end of December (77,000 gallons), the City replaced the water meter, but it still is sporadically reading high.
3. Fire and First Responder Department
 - A. 4 medical calls, 1 mutual aid call, 1 miscellaneous non-emergency call, 1 fire call
 - B. Will sell the old brush rig truck on auction
 - C. Fire equipment failures – need to look at reports and talk to the person who performed the tests.
 - D. 2026 Fire Commission meeting will be Feb 17
4. Personnel Committee
 - A. Employee reviews are completed
 - B. Job descriptions are being updated – will vote on them in February
 - C. Job posting for part time maintenance will be in the Jan 8th Star Gazette
5. Planning and Zoning
 - A. No December meeting
6. City Council
 - A. Replacing streetlights, repairing outlets on streetlights and new holiday decorations
 - a. 2029 – State will be making improvements to 73 (from Hwy 27 through Kettle River) including replacing streetlights
 - b. How many outlets are not working? Jeremy will check

Correspondence:

Old Business:

1. Replace desktop computer in City Hall

- A. Get quotes for laptop vs desktop
- B. Motion to table discussion was made by Councilor Kohmetscher, seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.
2. Approval of playground repairs
 - A. Motion to table discussion was made by Councilor Lund, seconded by Councilor Kohmetscher. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.
3. Holiday decorations - \$700 - \$1000 apiece, we have 15 decorations currently (Kelly Dahl)
4. Quotes for installing security cameras
 - A. Will wait until it's closer to spring and the cameras can be installed
5. Water and Sewer Rate Increase
 - A. Kathy consulted Mike Bubany at David Drown Associates regarding the City's current water and sewer funds and possible rate increases
 - B. Water & sewer funds continue to lose money; the water fund lost about \$12,000 in 2024 and the sewer fund lost about \$19,000
 - C. There has been a substantial increase in costs to maintain and operate the water/sewer plant
 - D. A water/sewer rate increase public hearing was in held on December 9, 2025, but because of poor weather very few people were able to attend. The Council decided to have further discussion at the January City Council meeting where residents could make comments and voice opinions
 - E. Mayor: follow advice and go with Option 2: \$45/\$25 increase
 - F. Motion to implement the following rates for water and sewer was made by Councilor Sarvela, seconded by Councilor Lund. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.
 - Water: \$45.00 (first 1,000 gallons) per month
 - Water usage charge \$10.00 (after first 1,000 used) per month
 - Water Debt Service: \$33.00 per month
 - Water Debt Surcharge: \$0.00per 1,000 gallons
 - WHP (Wellhead Protection Plan) \$.83 per month
 - WTF (Water Testing Fee) \$.99 per month
 - Sewer: \$25.00 (first 1,000 gallons)
 - Sewer Usage Charge \$10.00 (after the first 1,000 gallons used) per month
 - Sewer Debit Charge: \$10.00 per month
6. Old brush rig truck will be sold on the Moose-Bid Auction

New Business:

1. The Cloquet American Legion would like to donate a bench to the city
 - A. Rita Lowe talked to Kathy, but more information is needed to write resolution to accept the donation
2. Resolution 2026-01 Adopting 2026 Appointments
 - A. Keep the 2026 Appointments the same as the 2025

- a. Acting Mayor: Councilor Elizabeth Mascarenas
 - b. Official Newspaper: Moose Lake Star Gazette
 - c. Bank Depositories: First National Bank of Moose Lake
 - d. City Attorney: Kennedy & Graven
 - e. Fire Commission: Mayor Dave Lucas
 - f. Building/Utilities Safety Committee: Councilor Elizabeth Mascarenas and Councilor Miya Kohmetscher
 - g. Personnel Committee: Councilor Elizabeth Mascarenas and Councilor Patricia Lund
 - h. Planning and Zoning Committee: Mayor Dave Lucas and Councilor Marcia Sarvela
 - i. Auditing Firm: CarlsonSV
- B. Motion to accept Resolution 2026-01 was made by Councilor Sarvela, seconded by Councilor Kohmetscher. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.
1. Job Descriptions
 - A. All staff received job descriptions to review; motion to table discussion was made by Councilor Kohmetscher, seconded by Councilor Lund. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.
 2. Policy for the new Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave
 - A. Motion to accept the Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave was made by Councilor Kohmetscher, seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.
 3. Christopher Novy water bill
 - A. The December meter reading showed a usage of 77,000 gallons and the November reading was 37,000 gallons. Other monthly readings range from 3000 gallons to 6000.
 - B. The City installed a new meter, but it is still sporadically reading high
 - C. Mr. Novy would like the City to reduce his bill to reflect a lower usage
 - D. Jeramy is checking meter every couple of day, so far one 24-hour reading was 3000, other readings have been normal
 - E. The City will charge Christopher Novy for 6000 gallons used in December, and the same for January and February until the cause of the high reading is determined. No late fees will be applied. The City will read the meter at least once a week. The City Council will discuss further in February and March.
 4. Motion to approve the MCFOA annual training for Kathy for March 24 – 27, 2026 was made by Councilor Kohmetscher, seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Sarvela, Councilor Lund, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: none. Motion carries.

Adjourn: motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Mascarenas. Meeting was adjourned by Mayor Lucas at 8:33.

Next meeting is February 10, 2026 @ 7:00 PM