

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Braidwood City Council Tuesday, April 28, 2026.
Braidwood City Hall 141 W. Main St., Braidwood, IL 60408**

I. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the Braidwood City Council on April 28, 2026 was called to order at 7:17 p.m., by Mayor Lyons in the Council Chambers of the Braidwood City Hall.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Lyons requested all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call by City Clerk

Upon Roll Call by the Clerk, the following members of the corporate authorities answered "Here" or "Present":

Elected Officials:

Present: Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons

Absent: Warren Wietting

Appointed Officials:

Present: City Consultant Manager Steve Gulden, Chief of Police Eric Allen, City Clerk Sarah Weaver, City Engineer Sean Kelly, and City Attorney Bryan Wellner

Absent: None.

Quorum: There being sufficient members of the corporate authorities in attendance to constitute a quorum, the meeting was declared in order.

IV. Public Comment

None.

V. Public Hearing

A. PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD, THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING MAY 1, 2026 AND ENDING APRIL 30, 2027.

B. Motion to open Public Hearing

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons) at 7:19 pm.

Mayor Lyons delivered a budget statement prior to the formal presentation, highlighting the collaborative nature of the budget process and extending special thanks to Commissioner Dixon, all department heads, and the City's consultants. He noted that the FY2026–2027 budget delivers on the Council's vision to improve parks, invest in aging infrastructure, enhance public safety, and ensure city employees have the tools necessary to serve residents.

Key priorities highlighted by Mayor Lyons included:

- Funding to hire one additional police officer, bringing total full-time uniformed officers to 15.
- \$300,000 for a new dog park at the Park District, with the goal of also funding pickleball courts.
- Over \$60,000 in grocery tax revenue dedicated to improving existing parks and supporting new park development.
- Over \$2,000,000 allocated toward capital improvements, including street resurfacing, new water line installation for fire suppression, treatment plant upgrades, roof repairs on City Hall, the Police Department, the salt dome and public works campus flat roofs, and sidewalk extensions and repairs.

City Management Consultant Steve then formally presented the proposed budget. He clarified at the outset that two versions of the budget were before the Council: the version previously placed on public display, and the revised version being considered for approval. The difference between the two versions is \$220,260, attributable to a TIF fund expenditure that was inadvertently omitted from the display budget due to a typographical error. The bottom-line total for the budget being considered for approval is \$16,165,410, compared to the \$15,945,150 shown in the display version. The overall bottom line on capital outlay remains \$3,088,000 and was not altered between the two versions.

Consultant Steve explained that the revised budget also broke out water and sewer projects into separate line items for greater transparency, whereas the display budget had combined them. He confirmed the bottom-line dollar amounts for capital projects did not change as a result of this reorganization.

Revenue and Expenditure Overview: Total projected revenues for FY2026–2027 are approximately \$12,979,150, up from \$11,452,000 in FY2025–2026. Expenditures are projected at \$16,165,000, compared to \$11,859,000 the prior year. The significant increase in expenditures reflects the planned drawdown of existing fund balances in the water and sewer, TIF, and Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds to finance capital projects. The general fund was noted to be balanced, with a fund balance of \$5,720,215—only approximately \$2,000 more than the prior year—after accounting for raises, health insurance, and IMRF increases.

Departmental and Capital Budget Highlights:

- All union employees are set to receive a 3% raise per their contract.
- The \$60,000 grocery tax revenue estimate was described as conservative, taking into account expected activity at the forthcoming Mastodon development.
- The police department budget was restructured to separate overtime by division (patrol, control, investigation, administration) for improved tracking and future budget accuracy.
- One new police officer was added to the budget, representing the second such addition in two years, bringing the total to 15 full-time uniformed officers.
- The streets department budget includes 5 full-time employees with no new equipment purchases. A notable shift was made to reflect cross-trained employees performing more water department work.
- Capital projects include security cameras funded through a Will County grant, the Route 66 Selfie Wall (to be billed after May 1), Phase 1 of the Safe Route to School sidewalk grant, the City Center OSLAD grant project at \$1,300,000 (comprising a \$600,000 OSLAD grant and a \$700,000 city match), interchange cleanup at \$45,000, Light House Cove Lift Station improvements at \$100,000, sewer spot repairs at \$35,000, storm sewer work at \$30,000, smoke testing and flow monitoring for an inflow and infiltration (I&I) study, manhole lining at \$50,000, water main improvements at \$800,000 for the West Eureka/Walnut/English waterline area, and a \$110,000 water meter replacement program.

During the presentation, Commissioner Walsh asked about a line item showing \$0 for tools and equipment in the streets budget. After discussion, it was confirmed this was likely a typographical error, as \$10,000 had been budgeted for that line item in the prior year. City Management Consultant Steve and Commissioner Dixon agreed to add \$10,000 back into that line item and make corresponding adjustments within existing line items to maintain the overall budget bottom line.

Commissioner Walsh also raised a question regarding the OSLAD grant figure, noting the grant was \$600,000 and questioning why the project total was listed at \$1,300,000 rather than \$1,200,000. Consultant Steve confirmed that the city intends to spend \$100,000 more than the grant match, for a total project expenditure of \$1,300,000.

Consultant Steve also provided a detailed explanation of the I&I (inflow and infiltration) study, noting that a significant volume of rainwater and gravel is entering the sanitary sewer system and is being treated at the wastewater treatment plant unnecessarily. The smoke testing and flow monitoring expenditures are intended to identify the sources of infiltration so that the most egregious problems can be addressed first.

C. Motion to close Public Hearing

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons) at 7:59 pm.

- D.** Motion to approve Ordinance 2026-24 Approving the Annual Budget and Appropriations for the City of Braidwood for the Fiscal Year Beginning May 1, 2026 and Ending April 30, 2027.
Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon made a motion, seconded by Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

VI. Approval of Minutes

- A.** Approve Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Braidwood City Council, Tuesday, April 14, 2026.
Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

VII. Reports by City Officials

A. Mayor

Mayor Lyons then provided several additional updates and recognitions:

Flower Planting Volunteers: Mayor Lyons recognized volunteers who participated in a recent Main Street flower pot planting effort, including Karen Hart, his wife Cheryl Lyons, City Clerk Sarah, City Management Consultant Steve (who also provided pizza for volunteers), and George. He also specifically recognized two high school sophomore volunteers, Josh Creger and Colin Hakey, commending their initiative in performing community service well ahead of their senior year.

Route 66 Selfie Wall: Mayor Lyons spoke enthusiastically about the newly installed Route 66 Selfie Wall, describing it as a beautiful addition to the community, particularly timely for the upcoming Red Carpet Corridor 100th anniversary celebration. The project was a collaboration between the Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition and the City of Braidwood. Design was by Danita, the coalition's community outreach coordinator; the wall was fabricated by AJ Signs of Wilmington; brickwork was done by Jeremy McPherson; concrete was poured by Bob Williams; and Ed Pagliano and Alex Serena hung the sign. Funding was supported in part by a Union Pacific Community Ties grant. Lighting for the wall is planned but was not completed in time for the weekend event. Landscaping and mulching are also planned. Discussion was had regarding the possibility of adding a QR code linked to a curated social media page where visitors could share their selfie photos.

- 1.** Request a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-25 Authorizing the Mayor of Braidwood to enter into and execute an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Braidwood and Braidwood Park District regarding the Grocery Tax and park District Infrastructure
Mayor Lyons requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-25 authorizing him to enter into and execute an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Braidwood and the Braidwood Park District regarding the Grocery Tax and Park District Infrastructure.

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon, to Approve. Motion Passed with 3 ayes; 1 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Todd Lyons)

- 2.** Request a motion for Resolution 2026-05 to approve pay increases for non-bargaining employees for the City of Braidwood
Mayor Lyons requested a motion to approve Resolution 2026-05 to approve pay increases for non-bargaining employees for the City of Braidwood, noting the matter had been discussed in executive session two weeks prior.

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Accounts & Finance

Liz Dixon, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

B. City Management Consultant

Consultant Steve also provided the following additional updates:

- Infrastructure Repairs: The Shadow Lakes lift station repairs are complete. Pheasant Run repairs are ongoing and now expected to be complete around June 1, having been pushed from the initial May 1 target.
- Water Well: The city's water well has been chlorinated and is now fully operational.
- Vacant Structure / RFP: The city intends to issue a Request for Proposals for demolition and potential redevelopment of a vacant city-owned structure. The fire department assessed the building and determined it cannot be safely burned as a training exercise due to structural instability. City Attorney Brian is working on the RFP specifications, and it is expected to be released within the following month.
- TIF Vehicle Payback: The city's TIF attorneys (Bryan's firm) have advised that vehicles previously purchased with TIF funds constitute an improper expenditure. The attorneys have recommended the city develop a formal payback plan to reimburse the TIF fund from the general fund. While no plan has yet been formally presented to the Council, the attorneys have signed a letter confirming that a commitment to create such a plan is sufficient for present purposes. Consultant Steve noted that a full review of TIF expenditures over the last several years will be conducted to identify any allowable administrative charges that could offset the amount owed before a payback plan is finalized.

1. Request a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-26 Amending the City of Braidwood Code of Ordinances as it pertains to Professional Fee Agreements

City Management Consultant Steve requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-26 amending the City of Braidwood Code of Ordinances as it pertains to Professional Fee Agreements. He explained that the ordinance corrects an omission from the prior version (a \$100 figure was removed) and broadens the scope so that any project generating revenue for the city allows recovery of costs for outside services such as engineering, not solely PUDs or large projects.

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Streets & Public Improvements Dale Walsh, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

2. Request a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-27 Approving and Authorizing the execution of an additional permit conditions agreement between the City of Braidwood and Matthew Daniel Graf

City Management Consultant Steve requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-27 approving and authorizing the execution of an additional permit conditions agreement between the City of Braidwood and Matthew Daniel Graf. He explained that the subject property cannot connect to city water because the nearest water main is approximately 400 feet away—well beyond the 75-foot threshold required before a well is permitted. The ordinance allows Mr. Graf to install a private well in the interim, while memorializing his obligation to connect to the city water system if and when a main is extended to within 75 feet of his property.

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Streets & Public Improvements Dale Walsh, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

C. Clerk

No report.

D. Engineer

No report.

E. City Attorney

The City Attorney briefly reported on pending state legislation that would remove local municipal authority over zoning density and housing lot sizes, effectively requiring municipalities to permit high-density residential development wherever residential uses are allowed. The Attorney noted the bill is supported by the Governor and is being advanced in part by large homebuilder lobbyists. He stated he is drafting a resolution opposing the bill and supporting the preservation of municipal zoning authority for the Council's consideration. He encouraged residents to contact their state legislators to oppose the measure, emphasizing that the bill would disproportionately affect downstate municipalities, as it does not apply to Cook County.

VIII. Reports by City Commissioners

A. Accounts and Finances

Commissioner Dixon also reported that the TIF audit is complete and the report has been filed with the State Comptroller's office. A TIF review meeting is being targeted for May, to be held prior to a regularly scheduled City Council meeting. The FY2025 annual audit is in its first review stage, with a draft copy potentially available by the end of the week. Commissioner Dixon noted this puts the audit approximately one month ahead of schedule, which will help reduce ongoing fines from the Comptroller's office.

1. Approve Payment of Bills in the amount of \$266,878.37

Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon made a motion, seconded by Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

2. Approve Payroll in the amount of \$103,993.40

Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon made a motion, seconded by Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes; 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

B. Streets and Public Improvements

Commissioner Walsh reported that the City is seeking part-time junior laborer summer help, particularly for high school-aged students. Interested applicants were directed to contact Commissioner Walsh at dwalls@braidwood.gov or Streets Foreman Scott Howard. Mayor Lyons noted that such a position was not budgeted and directed that any hiring follow the City's formal hiring policy, including applications processed through City Hall. The matter was tabled for further administrative review.

Commissioner Walsh additionally reported that a new pump was installed at the EZ Pond and is illuminated at night. He also noted that recent heavy rainfall has generated more drainage and puddling concerns than in recent years and encouraged residents to contact the City if they believe an issue falls within city's responsibility.

C. Public Buildings & Property

Commissioner Walsh gave the report:

- 1 new MXU installed
- 3 final meter reads
- 102 utility locates
- 1 water leak repaired
- Sink repair completed
- 7 meter repairs
- Monthly water readings completed

1. Motion to approve Ordinance 2026-28 waiving competitive bidding and approving quotes from Adler Roofing and Sheet Metal Inc. regarding roof and related repairs

In the absence of Commissioner Weitting, Commissioner Walsh read the summary for Ordinance 2026-28, which waives competitive bidding requirements and approves quotes from Adler Roofing and Sheet Metal, Inc. for roof and related repairs in the total amount of \$169,390. The ordinance was authorized pursuant to Section 2-38 of the Illinois Municipal Code. The rationale for waiving competitive bidding was the limited availability of qualified union roofing contractors in the region, which has historically resulted in insufficient qualified responses to formal bid solicitations.

City Management Consultant Steve elaborated, noting that the City had previously gone through a competitive process for similar work and found only two responsive union bids. Adler Roofing has performed satisfactorily on prior projects. Additionally, Adler agreed to forgo approximately \$7,300 in flashing work as part of the negotiated award. Consultant Steve expressed confidence that the negotiated approach yielded a better price than a formal bid process would have, particularly given the limited pool of qualified bidders. Commissioner Dixon raised concerns about the practice of routinely waiving competitive bids, cautioning against making it a standard approach. Consultant Steve acknowledged the concern but maintained that in markets with very few qualified bidders, direct negotiation often saves money.

Comm. Streets & Public Improvements Dale Walsh made a motion, seconded by Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays: 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

D. Public Health & Safety

Report:

- Calls for service: 275
- Case reports: 30
- Arrests: 4 (11 total charges)
- Traffic stops: 99
- Citations: 29
- Written warnings: 61
- Semi-truck violations: 1
- Parking tickets: 21
- Code enforcement: 18 abandoned/inoperable vehicles brought into compliance

Commissioner Mikel noted that Officer Ashton Harvey graduated from the 16-week police academy on Thursday, April 23, 2026, and has begun his 16-week field training program.

Additionally, effective Friday, May 1, Code Enforcement Officer Ricky Cornelli will transition to the role of Community Service Officer (CSO), with code enforcement being one of several duties in his expanded role.

1. Motion to approve Ordinance 2026-29 Authorizing the execution and approval of a Side Letter Agreement between the City of Braidwood and the Policemen's Benevolent Labor Committee to modify the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement

Commissioner Mikel presented Ordinance 2026-29, authorizing the execution of a Side Letter Agreement between the City of Braidwood and the Policemen's Benevolent Labor Committee to modify the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement. The side letter amends only Section 14.1 (wage schedule). Under the current agreement, officers take 15 years to reach top pay—a timeframe Commissioner Michael described as both unreasonable and uncommon in the industry. The proposed amendment reduces the time to reach top pay from 15 years to 6 years, bringing Braidwood in line with comparable neighboring agencies. Starting pay and top pay are unchanged. The measure was characterized as a retention tool to keep qualified officers from being recruited away by larger departments. The amendment was confirmed to be reflected in the approved FY2026–2027 budget.

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Streets & Public Improvements Dale Walsh, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays: 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)

E. Planning & Zoning

1. The next Planning and Zoning Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 7:00 pm. City Management Consultant Steve reported that the next Planning and Zoning meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 7:00 PM, and will include a variance request related to signage for the Mastodon development.

IX. Old Business

Commissioner Dixon reported that the Braidwood Fire Department is holding a public input meeting the following evening at Reed-Custer Elementary School cafeteria at 6:00 PM. The committee is soliciting community input on the future of the fire department, including the potential need for additional funding. Mayor Lyons encouraged residents to attend, noting the fire department is one of the community's most important assets

X. New Business

- A. Proposed Sign variance for Mastodon at upcoming Planning and Zoning Meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 7:00 pm.

City Management Consultant Steve briefed the Council on an upcoming sign variance request from Mastodon. The developer is requesting an increase in pole sign height to 28 feet 4 inches (from the previously approved 20 feet) and an increase in sign area to 150 square feet (from the previously approved 100 square feet). Staff indicated it would recommend approval of the variance contingent on the inclusion of a brick base for the sign, given its prominent location at a gateway entrance to Braidwood. The item will go before Planning and Zoning on May 27, 2026, and will return to the City Council for final approval.

Consultant Steve also updated the Council on the new Welcome to Braidwood entrance signs. Two locations are being pursued: one on Route 66/Kankakee Street near the existing sign, and one at the Mastodon property. A draft agreement has been reviewed by City Attorney Bryan, and comments are expected to be returned to the developer in the near term.

XI. Executive Session

- A. Motion to go into executive session to (5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (21)) Review of closed session minutes. Comm. Accounts & Finance Liz Dixon made a motion, seconded by Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel, to Approve. Motion with 4 ayes: 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons) at 8:44 pm.
- B. Motion to close executive session
Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Streets & Public Improvements Dale Walsh, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays; 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons) at 8:56 pm.

XII. Next Meeting

- A. The next Committee of the Whole Meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2026, at 6:30 pm.
- B. The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 7:00 pm

XIII. Adjournment

Comm. Public Health & Safety James Mikel made a motion, seconded by Comm. Streets & Public Improvements Dale Walsh, to Approve. Motion Passed with 4 ayes: 0 nays: 0 Abstain (Liz Dixon, James Mikel, Dale Walsh, Todd Lyons)



Mayor



City Clerk

