



CITY OF  
**GRAND RAPIDS**  
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

## **CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION MINUTES**

**Monday, February 09, 2026**

**4:00 PM**

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Tasha Connelly, Councilor Molly MacGregor, Councilor Tom Sutherland, Councilor Rick Blake, Councilor Dan Mertes

**STAFF:** Tom Pagel, Kimberly Gibeau, Chad Sterle, Erik Scott

**Guests:** Senator Keri Heintzeman, and Representative Ben Davis and Momentum Advocate Will Waggoner

### **BUSINESS:**

#### 1. Legislative Updates - Senator Keri Heintzeman and State Representative Ben Davis

The City Council recently met with Senator Keri Heintzeman, Representative Ben Davis, and the City's legislative lobbyist, Will Waggoner, to review the City's 2026 legislative priorities and discuss expectations for the upcoming session.

The City outlined the following key priorities:

Old Central School: The City expressed appreciation for previously secured funding and emphasized the importance of continued support for the project.

Local Government Aid: The City is advocating for an inflationary adjustment to LGA funding to help offset rising costs and reduce pressure on property taxes.

Property Tax Equity: Although the City did not increase its levy for 2026, residential property owners are experiencing significant tax increases due to rising home values and stagnant commercial valuations. The City is requesting legislative changes to commercial property class rates to create a more equitable tax distribution.

Highway 169 Expansion: The City continues to support expansion of the Highway 169 Cross-Range corridor from two lanes to four lanes, citing safety concerns and regional economic importance. Legislative advocacy for state and federal funding remains a priority.

Library Funding: Minimum library funding levels have been frozen since 2011, resulting in reduced services. The City is requesting action to unfreeze funding and improve equity. The local library is currently operating three days per week.

Housing: Projected to need approximately 1,200 additional housing units by 2029, with 220 currently under construction. The City is requesting continued support for the Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Program and preservation of local zoning control.

Legislators shared that:

- \* The upcoming session will be short.
- \* The House is evenly divided, which limits the number of bills that can advance.
- \* Bipartisan agreement will be required to move legislation forward.

Both legislators identified addressing government fraud as a major priority for the session and emphasized the importance of meaningful accountability solutions without reducing critical services for communities.

The City appreciates the ongoing partnership with state legislators and will continue advocating for policies that support Grand Rapids residents, businesses, and long-term community growth.

#### REVIEW OF REGULAR AGENDA:

Upon review, no changes or additions are noted.

#### ADJOURN:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

*Kimberly Gibeau*  
Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk