

CITY OF LYNDEN



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

January 20, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Korthuis called to order the January 20, 2026, regular session of the Lynden City Council at 7:00 p.m. in the city council chambers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

ROLL CALL

Members present: Councilors Gary Bode, Lee Beld, Gary Vis, Brent Lenssen, Nick Laninga, Kyle Strengholt, and Mark Wohlrab.

Absences: None.

Staff present: Community Development Director Heidi Gudde, Finance Director Laura Scholl, Parks Director Brent DeRuyter, Public Works Director Jon Hutchings, City Clerk Pam Brown, Administrator John Williams, and City Attorney Luke Phifer.

OATH OF OFFICE – Jeremy Bos sworn in as Police Chief.

SUMMARY REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilor Vis moved, and Councilor Bode seconded, to approve the January 5, 2026, regular council meeting minutes. Motion approved on 7-0 vote.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Marsha Belvo, Lynden

- Expressed concerns about the increasing cost of water and asked for staff to explain the costs listed on the utility bill.

Cynthia Ripke-Kutsagoitz, Lynden

- Concern with unlawful opposition to ICE.
- Expressed concern for the people affected by the flood.

2. CONSENT

Parks Department Advisory Committee Re-appointments

The Parks Department, the Berthusen Park Advisory Committee, and the Park & Trail Advisory Committee are pleased to offer the reappointment of another term to several members.

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Those wishing to continue to serve are Karen Steensma, Larry McPhail, Joel Vander Hoek and Dave Timmer for Berthusen Advisory and Jeff Davis, Len Vander Velden, and Pam Holladay for Park & Trail Advisory.

RES-26-1140 Request to Cancel Check #34036

RES-26-1141 Amending the Revolving Cash Fund

The City of Lynden maintains a Revolving Cash fund that is administered by the Finance Director and issued to various departments in amounts necessary to make change when receiving cash payments. Due to a reduction in staffing in 2026, the total amount of cash required in the Revolving Cash Fund is reduced by \$200 for a total of \$2,950.

Councilor Vis moved, and Councilor Lenssen seconded, to approve the consent agenda. Motion approved on 7-0 vote.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

ORD26-1724 Amend LMC Chapters 3,16,17,18 and 19 – Comprehensive Plan Consistencies

The State of Washington has passed extensive legislation that requires cities to modify development regulations. Most of these changes are aimed at reducing hurdles to the construction of housing and facilitating childcare opportunities. These amendments coincide with the recent Comprehensive Plan update and had a State-imposed deadline of December 31, 2025.

Amendments to the land use regulations were recommended by the Planning Commission following their October hearing and reviewed by the Community Development Committee (CDC) at their November 19th meeting. Public comment was submitted for Council consideration. These suggested changes are not currently included in the amendment as proposed. The Department of Commerce also provided comment on the amendments. Staff has included supplemental information on these comments to provide context to these comments.

Finally, City Administration has asked that some proposed amendments related to the function of the Planning Commission such as attendance requirements be considered for other committees. As such, staff requests that the Council consider delaying changes to LMC Chapter 2 until additional discussion can be had. These changes are not subject to the December 31st deadline.

Mayor Korthuis opened the public hearing at 7:16 p.m. There were no comments. Mayor Korthuis closed the public hearing at 7:16 p.m.

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Councilor Lenssen moved, and Councilor Beld seconded, to approve ORD-26-1724 amending Chapters 3,16,17,18, and 19 of the Lynden Municipal Code with no proposed changes to Chapter 2 and authorize the Mayor's signature on the document. Motion approved on 7-0 vote.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Mountain Summit Ventures Easement Proposal

Mountain Summit Ventures LLC has developed plans for a townhome community on the property addressed as 8683 Benson Road. This property is located on the west side of Benson Road near the cross street of Sunrise Drive. SEPA conditions for this property required that the applicant seek to create an access point which aligns with Sunrise Drive because misalignment could create a dangerous traffic condition on Benson Road.

Aligning the access requires that the developer seeks an easement to cross the city-owned property located at 8691 Benson Road. Generally, the proposal anticipates that in exchange for the perpetual access over the city-owned property the developer would be responsible for demolition, fill, grading and construction of the access and will benefit the city's property with connections to those utilities within the easement. In addition, reciprocal access across the Mountain Summit Ventures property must be permitted when the access connects to the future Pepin Parkway corridor.

Development of the access drive and utility connections may be beneficial to the future use of the city-owned property but careful consideration of the value of each element of the proposal is warranted. At this time the Council is asked to confirm the concept of access alignment with Sunrise Drive and authorize City Administration to negotiate terms. Final terms of the agreement will be brought to the Council for approval at a later date.

Councilor Lenssen moved, and Councilor Bode seconded, to authorize City Administration to negotiate the value of an access and utility easement on the city-owned property located at 8691 Benson Road. Motion approved on 7-0 vote.

ORD-26-1725 Amending LMC Section 3.29 Admission Tax

RCW 35.21.280 authorizes cities to levy a tax on admission charges up to one cent on twenty cents, or 5%, and the funds may be used for any lawful government purpose. As part of the preparation of the 2026 budget, and Administration and Council are considering alternate sources of revenue, staff were asked to bring back an Admissions Tax for review in Q1 2026.

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Initial estimates from Administration are that this additional revenue would generate approximately \$100,000 for the City's General Fund. ORD-26-1725 creates Section 3.29 of the Lynden Municipal Code and imposes a 5% tax on admissions effective April 1st, 2026. Draft Ordinances were reviewed at the Finance and Community Development committees in November 2025. Specific exemptions include activities and sports put on by elementary and secondary schools, charitable and non-profit organizations if the activity does not have compensated performers or operators, and any organization whose annual activities would result in less than \$2,500 in Admission charges or \$125 in tax

Councilor Strengholt moved, and Councilor Beld seconded, to approve ORD-26-1725, amending the Lynden Municipal Code, and creation of an Admission tax effective April 1, 2026, amended at 3.29.030(C) and authorize the Mayor's signature. Motion approved on 7-0 vote.

6. REPORTS

Councilor Strengholt reviewed agenda items discussed at the Finance Committee meeting:

- **Sales tax update**
- **OT review for 2025**
- **Approval of Payroll and Claims**
- **January 20 council items**

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council adjourned into executive session at 8:05 p.m. per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to discuss with legal counsel litigation that has been specifically threatened to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency. The session is expected to end at 8:15 p.m. without a decision.

The January 20, 2026, regular session of the Lynden city council adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Scott Korthuis, Mayor

Pamela D. Brown, City Clerk