Willows City Council
Regular Meeting
Action Minutes

September 22, 2026
Willows City Hall
6:00 PM

201 North Lassen Street
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-7041

City Council
Evan Hutson, Mayor
Richard Thomas, Vice Mayor
Gary Hansen, Council Member
Lorri Pride, Council Member
John Lowe, Council Member

City Manager
Marti Brown

City Clerk
Karleen Price

1. **CALL TO ORDER – 6:01 PM**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL**

   Councilmembers Present: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Pride, and Councilmember Lowe
   Councilmembers Absent: None

4. **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

   Item #8c was moved to be heard immediately prior to item #8b.

5. **CEREMONIAL**

   a. **Proclamation:** Breast Cancer Awareness Month

   b. **Proclamation:** Fire Prevention Week – received by Fire Chief Nathan Monck

   c. **Proclamation:** Global War on Terrorism/Desert Storm Veterans Appreciation Day – received by Carol Lemenager

6. **PRESENTATION**

   a. **Annual Library Presentation**
   Action: Received the annual Library Presentation from City Librarian Christine Watson.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT & CONSENT CALENDAR FORUM**

   Councilmember Pride pulled Item #7d for discussion

   Public Comments
   Public Comment #1: Carol Lemenager

   a. **Register Approval**
   Action: Approved general checking, payroll, and direct deposit check registers.

   b. **Minutes Approval**
   Action: Approved the minutes of the September 8, 2026, City Council Meeting.

c. **Northern California Cities Self Insurance Fund Board of Director Appointments**
Action: Adopted Resolution 43-2026 approving the appointment of the Finance Director to the Northern California Cities Self Insurance Fund (NCCSIF) Board of Directors to represent the City's insurance interests, and the City Manager as the Alternate.

Motion to approve the consent calendar items #7a, 7b, and 7c.

Moved/Seconded: Vice Mayor Thomas/Councilmember Hansen
Yes: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Pride, Councilmember Lowe
No: None
Absent: None

d. **Commercial Sewage Utility Billing**

Public Comments
Public Comment #1: Joyce Ksander
Public Comment #2: Maria Ehorn

Motion to accept California Water Service Company's letter terminating sewer billing services on behalf of the City of Willows and approve the staff recommendation to use the Tyler Utility Module for in-house commercial sewer billing on a quarterly basis.

Moved/Seconded: Vice Mayor Thomas/Councilmember Lowe
Yes: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Lowe
No: Councilmember Pride
Absent: None

8. **DISCUSSION & ACTION CALENDAR**

a. **Cannabis Dispensaries - Hours of Operation**

Public Comments
Public Comment #1: Margaret Sharkey, WWCRS
Public Comment #2: Stefan Crespo, WWCRS
Public Comment #3: Melissa Wight, CaliLove - written comment read by Mayor Hutson
Public Comment #4: Michelle Knight
Public Comment #5: Maria Ehorn
Public Comment #6: Tom Kelly

No motion was made; no action was taken

c. **Permanent City Manager Recruitment (Moved to be heard prior to #8b)**

Public Comments
Public Comment #1: Michelle Knight
Public Comment #2: Maria Ehorn

Motion to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to execute a contract with Bob Murray & Associates executive recruiting firm to recruit for the permanent City Manager position in an amount not to exceed $30,000**.**

Moved/Seconded: Councilmember Hansen/Vice Mayor Thomas
Yes: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Pride, Councilmember Lowe
No: None
Absent: None

b. **Interim City Manager Appointment**

Public Comments
Public Comment #1: Maria Ehorn

Motion to appoint Joseph Gorton as Interim City Manager effective Monday, October 19, 2026, and authorize the City Attorney and City Manager to execute an employment agreement in an amount not to exceed $80,000 for FY 2026-27, as amended to require Mr. Gorton to work in the City office at least two days per week and to correct the cited code sections in the employment agreement.

Moved/Seconded: Councilmember Pride/Vice Mayor Thomas
Yes: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Pride, Councilmember Lowe
No: None
Absent: None

d. **2026 Personnel Rules**

Action: Mayor Hutson continued the item to the October 13, 2026, City Council Meeting.

e. **2026 Executive and Mid-Management Handbook**

Action: Mayor Hutson continued the item to the October 13, 2026, City Council Meeting.

f. **City of Willows Donation Policy**

Motion to adopt Resolution 44-2026 approving the City of Willows Donations Policy, as amended to require that restricted donations be tracked, establishing uniform procedures for the acceptance, administration, and recognition of donations made to the City**.**

Moved/Seconded: Vice Mayor Thomas/Councilmember Hansen
Yes: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Pride, Councilmember Lowe
No: None
Absent: None

g. **Community Facilities District to Fund Rebuilding the Police Department**

Motion to terminate the contracts relating to establishing a Community Facilities District to fund the re-establishment of the Willows Police Department while the City explores alternative funding options**.**

Moved/Seconded: Councilmember Hansen/Councilmember Lowe
Yes: Mayor Hutson, Vice Mayor Thomas, Councilmember Hansen, Councilmember Pride, Councilmember Lowe
No: None
Absent: None

9. **COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

a. **Council Correspondence**

b. **City Council Comments & Reports**

Councilmembers reported on various community events and meetings attended.

Councilmember Pride announced a Willows Community Yard Sale on October 3, 2026.

Councilmember Lowe reported that he met with City department staff.

Mayor Hutson requested that staff investigate grant opportunities to fund a school resource officer and consider developing a job description for the position. Hutson also requested that staff replenish the mulch in the City-owned park playgrounds as a safety precaution.

c. **City Manager's Report**

City Manager Marti Brown reported that incoming Interim City Manager Joe Gorton would attend the October 13, 2026, City Council meeting.

Councilmember Pride requested a meet-and-greet reception with Joe Gorton to be held prior to October 13, 2026, Council Meeting.

10. **ADJOURNMENT – 9:05 PM**

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Karleen Price, City Clerk