



# MEETING MINUTES

## GRAND RAPIDS COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION



Held: March 9, 2026

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The Council of The Village of Grand Rapids convened in regular session from 6:00 P.M. to 7:02 P.M. in the Town Hall. Mayor John Berry called the meeting to order with the following members and visitors present:

Rachel Smith – Present      Sean Thiebaut - Present  
Doug Grey – Present      Rick Tolles – Present  
Louise Estep – Present      Jody Donsbach – Present

**EMPLOYEES:** Kristel Beyer

**VISITORS:** Joe Pemberton, Michelle Nagle and Lynn Sylvain

**MINUTES:** Donsbach made a motion, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 23, 2026. Mayor stated if there are no questions they will be accepted as presented.

**BILLS:**

Smith made a motion, seconded by Thiebaut to approve the bills from February 20 – March 5, 2026 in the amount of \$25,657.81.

Votes were:    Donsbach – yes      Grey – yes      Estep – yes  
                         Tolles – yes      Smith – yes      Thiebaut – yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Mayor welcomed the visitors and let them know they will be allowed three minutes on their topics.

Joe Pemberton came to discuss the most recent natural gas bills that came in higher than usual for customers. Joe stated this is due to the increased price of gas and for many customers having higher usage due to extremely cold weather. Joe said gas companies are only required to obtain actual meter readings once a year per the Ohio Administrative Code. The Suburban handout will be attached to the minutes for reference.

Estep made a motion seconded by Grey to allow Mr. Joe Pemberton six additional minutes to speak.

Votes were:      Grey – yes      Estep – yes      Tolles – yes  
                         Smith – yes      Thiebaut – yes      Donsbach – yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Mayor was concerned about the customers that have automatic withdrawal with such large bills. Joe Pemberton said those that had automatic withdrawal directly from a checking account, their customer service was able to halt that and then follow-up with those customers. The customers with credit card payments,

customer service will be reaching out to them. Estep asked which number should customers call, the Cygnet or Lewis Center, Joe said both numbers will go to their customer service team. Estep asked if all of Grand Rapids was estimated, Joe said that is his understanding. Smith's concern is how they determine the estimates, they were considerably lower than what is normally billed for those months. The customers are receiving bills that are quadrupled and that is shocking. Joe stated when customers call in, the customers service team is truing these customers up. These are audited by their regulator. Grey's concern is the rate that customers were charged if the usage was used during the lower rate. Joe said they go back and take an estimate on prior billings, then take heating degree days which is an industry standard to do the adjustment to true them up at the lower rate. Estep asked if he is asking every resident to call in or is the staff doing an audit? Joe said he would call in and know all does get audited by their regulator. Smith asked if this has happened in other municipalities, Joe said yes. Thiebaut asked if the estimations are requested from Suburban or the third-party provider, Joe said it would be from the third-party provider not being able to read the meters. Estep asked if Suburban is working with customers with high bills so they do not have to pay all at once, Joe said yes they are offering payment plans. Thiebaut made a motion seconded by Donsbach to allow time for questions from the audience.

Votes were:           Estep – yes           Tolles – yes           Smith – yes  
                                   Thiebaut – yes       Donsbach – yes       Grey – yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Tom Huth has called several times and has yet to hear back, Joe took his name and number. Sylvain asked if the distribution charge of \$37 has gone up during this time, Joe said no. Sylvain asked how often can they change it, Joe said they are in the process of a rate change request, which if gets approved could be late summer or early fall. Derrick Proffitt stated he knows his bill personally should be higher usage during the prior months because he was painting during these months and kept the heat up higher than usual. He does not know how a bill can be accurate when they were estimated. Why did Suburban wait until the rates were the highest to do an actual read, Joe stated it was not Suburban, it was their third-party meter reader that reads the meters. Derrick would like to see the math on how they are retroactively reconciling everything in a way that is fair for both sides. Smith said people are getting calls back with an adjusted number, can Suburban show to the customer how they came to that number? She feels that is what the residents need to see. Donsbach agreed this would be helpful since so many people got different answers. Derrick asked how they plan on going from an estimate to retroactively reconciling with actual usages or how close can they get within a margin of error. Joe feels they can get very close because they use heating degree days that is industry standard to get very close. Joe said they are not making any markup or profit off this, this is a straight pass through and audited by the regulator. Joe said Suburban can provide how we will do the reconciliation. Joe thanked Council for their time and they are very grateful to serve the residents in Grand Rapids.



**ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:** Mayor gave third reading of Ordinance 2026-1: Ordinance Establishing Mobile Food Truck Policy And Permit Application Process Within The Village Of Grand Rapids.

Estep made a motion seconded by Tolles to approve Ordinance 2026-1: Ordinance Establishing Mobile Food Truck Policy And Permit Application Process Within The Village Of Grand Rapids.

Votes were:	Smith – yes	Thiebaut – yes	Donsbach – yes
	Grey – yes	Estep – yes	Tolles -yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Mayor stated Ordinance 2026-1 has passed.

Mayor gave the first reading to Resolution 2026-03: Resolution Authorizing the Village of Grand Rapids to Enter Into an Agreement and Become a Member of Lake Erie West Regional Council.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Estep asked about the flashing light for the stop signs. Mayor knows we cannot use the one we found and thinks Jeremy was looking into it. Estep asked if we heard from the pavement analysis company, Fiscal Officer stated he stopped out a week ago and has started. Estep said we discussed last week about the quarterly newsletter, she thinks we need to include the food truck policy. Fiscal Officer stated she can send to Council and then they can give their thoughts on changes. Grey asked if we mention where the designated storm shelter is in Grand Rapids in the newsletter, Fiscal Officer can check, if not can add it. Mayor said we have had questions on the siren, Mayor said it is something from the Sheriff Office that is not interconnecting with it. Thiebaut talked with the Sheriff last week, Jeff Klein the EMA director and two of the township trustees. Thiebaut said in the last two years they have spent upwards of \$6,000 on repairs to the siren, the company they had do the repairs cannot find any problems but the County states the problem is not on their end but on the townships. Thiebaut said in talking with the EMA director the siren system itself is very old technology and really not that effective, most people have cell phones with early warning apps. Thiebaut said trustee Ken Knaggs was going to find out what the best options are.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Estep saw online about a new revitalization partners group says it is connecting organizations and strengthening community. There is a puzzle piece that lists history, business, community, arts and government. Estep asked since it states government she wondered if anyone knew what this group is. Grey said he actually attended a couple of meetings. Grey was invited initially and the ideas was to get various heads of organizations throughout the area to collaborate and avoid working against each other while planning events or how they can assist each other. Smith asked if he was asked to be apart of the committee, Doug said no he just attended. Estep wanted to let the residents know that there is no government from Council involved with this group. Lynn Sylvain interrupted and

stated that is not true Doug Grey is part of the steering committee. Doug said he was unaware. Lynn Sylvain stated Doug attended the last two meetings representing government. Smith asked if he knew he was apart of the committee, Grey said no he just thought he was attending out of interest and curiosity.

Mayor gave Council a resume/work history from Ken Taylor to be the Village Zoning Inspector at a rate of \$365/month. Mayor stated he also does this for Grand Rapids Township, Weston Township, Weston Village and Center Township. Mayor stated he worked at the City of Bowling Green prior as well. Estep made a motion seconded by Grey to allow the Mayor to hire Ken Taylor as the Village Zoning Inspector on April 1, 2026 at \$365/month.

Votes were: Thiebaut – yes      Donsbach – yes      Grey – yes  
                  Estep – yes            Tolles – yes            Smith – yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Thiebaut stated with the warm weather coming, we currently only have two employees to work in the field, he would like to post a job opening for a third individual so we do not get behind. Thiebaut made a motion seconded by Tolles to post a job opening for a full-time Village employee.

Votes were: Donsbach – yes      Grey – yes            Estep – yes  
                  Tolles – yes            Smith – yes            Thiebaut – yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

Estep asked if we are all signed up for the Otsego students to come help in the Village? Fiscal Officer stated we should hear more when it gets closer.

**COMMENTS:** Grey stated he would like to congratulate the Otsego Athletes that recently participated in the State Indoor Track Championship this past weekend. They had a couple finish on the podium and some of them will be continuing on at a National level in Virginia beach in a couple weeks. Grey also just heard that one of the Otsego wrestlers just qualified for state as an alternate. He wanted to congratulate all the local athletes. Estep said we were looking at changing the state championship sign, we should start looking into that again.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

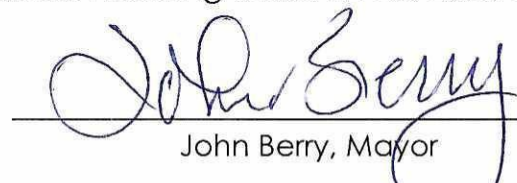
Estep made a motion, seconded by Smith, to adjourn.

Votes were: Grey – yes            Estep – yes            Tolles – yes  
                  Smith – yes            Thiebaut – yes            Donsbach - yes

**MOTION APPROVED**

The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting is March 23, 2026 at 6:00 P.M. at the Town Hall.

  
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Kristel Beyer, Fiscal Officer

  
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John Berry, Mayor

## February 20, 2026 - March 5, 2026 Bills

Toledo Edison	4711.92	Electric Bill
Grand Rapids Chamber	\$543.33	1/3 Share of Advertising - January
Luckey Farmers	\$434.54	Fuel
MASI	\$808.70	Water & Sewer Testing
Huntington Credit Card	\$865.71	Quikrete, fuel, flashing traffic light, propane tank recertification, tax forms, toner, address labels, paper, desk calendars
WC Sheriff	\$8,882.16	Contract Service
Jim Palmer	\$427.50	Valve Repair
Culligan	\$16.99	Water Testing Supplies
Jones & Henry Labs	\$395.00	Water Testing
Kleinfelder	\$2,499.72	Master Meter Upgrades Project
Michael Bailey	\$85.39	Webcam for recording meetings
Kleinfelder	\$1,594.80	Back-up Wastewater ORC
Rumpke	\$104.88	Monthly Trash Service
Aim Media	\$19.54	Annual Financial Report Legal Notice
M2X	\$44.95	Town Hall Internet
Suburban	\$3,810.38	Natural Gas
BissNuss	\$412.30	Troubleshoot meter supplying flowrate
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,657.81</b>	