

City of Palco/McKenna Center Meeting

January 14, 2026

City Office

Call the Meeting to Order

Mayor Kyle Karlin called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Those present included Mayor Kyle Karlin; Council Members Stephen Desaire, Don Steeples and Joan Underhill; City Clerk Larissa Wilson; Treasurer Patricia Wendling; Superintendent Marvin Keller; visitors present included Deanna Hammerschmidt. The following individuals arrived after the meeting began: Council Members Brandon Kuhn (7:16 PM) and Koleson Hubbard (7:34 PM); McKenna Tenant Manager/Fire Chief Gregg Whisman (8:17 PM); McKenna Center Director Brenda Lucas (10:00 PM.)

Approve Agenda

The agenda was presented. Don motioned to approve the agenda; Stephen seconded. Motion carried 3-0. (The Meeting Minutes were approved later in the meeting, due to two of the council members not being present and the other two were not officials at the time of the meeting.)

Recognize Visitors

Deanna Hammerschmidt presented on behalf of the Heartland Community Foundation (HCF). She explained that February is match month for grant donations; Dane G. Hansen will match every \$1 donation with \$2. Don motioned to donate \$1,000.00 to HCF next month, during local match month. Joan seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Deanna departed at 7:12 PM.

New Business

The building permit for constructing a lean-to at 704 Cedar Avenue was presented. Brandon arrived as it was being discussed. Stephen motioned to approve the permit on the condition that it be enclosed. Don seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

The building permit for a chicken coop at 602 Ash Avenue was presented. Don motioned to approve the permit; Stephen seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Resolution 2026-01 was presented. Don motioned to adopt the resolution for the GAAP waiver. Brandon seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Brandon motioned to approve the meeting minutes from December 9, 2025. Stephen seconded. Motion carried 3-0. (Don and Joan abstained.)

Stephen motioned to approve the meeting minutes from December 17, 2025. Brandon seconded. Motion carried 3-0. (Don and Joan abstained.)

Return to New Business

Copier quotes were presented. Brandon motioned to approve the lease of a new Sharp BP-51C26 Copier from Northwestern Office Suppliers. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The Rooks County EMS Director is going to be providing CRP classes soon. Don motioned to require the Full-time city employees, McKenna Center Director and uncertified firefighters to attend the class. Stephen seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Stephen motioned to offer to pay half the cost of the CPR class for citizens within Palco, Damar and Zurich; certification card cost not included. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The 2026 Holiday Schedule was discussed. Koleson motioned for the following holidays to be observed as holidays for this year: Good Friday, Independence Day (office closed in observance on July 3rd), Memorial Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The full-time employees will also receive a floating holiday for their birthday. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Don motioned to send Larissa to the City Clerk Municipal Finance Officer Association Conference on March 11-13, the Municipal Court Clerk Conference on March 26-27, and Marvin to the Kansas Rural Water Association Conference March 23-25.

No date was set for the special meeting, as the city must wait to approve the disbursement request documents and pay application until weekly payrolls have been received and approved, per CDBG guidelines.

Executive Session

At 8:15 PM, Brandon motioned to go into an executive session for 30 minutes to discuss employee medical insurance benefits. Koleson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Executive session ended at 8:45 PM. Koleson motioned to renew the current insurance policy, add vision, short term disability and life insurance as optional coverage, but employees will be responsible for 100% of the cost. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Old Business

Website options were discussed. Don motioned to table the approval of the Locable proposal until next month's meeting. Koleson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The TextMyGov proposal was reviewed. Don motioned to approve the contract for the software; Joan seconded. Motion carried 3-2. (Ayes: Don, Joan, Koleson; Nays: Brandon and Stephen)

Kyle provided an update on the building permit submitted last month for the storage container on West 2nd. The property was reclassified in April 2023; therefore, the requirements have been met, and the container may be placed on the property. Brandon motioned to approve the building permit; Koleson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

There was discussion regarding the proposed Vrbo/Airbnb located at 204 West 1st Street. Stephen motioned to require that the property be rezoned to commercial and establish ordinance specifications regarding the limit of short-term rental properties allowed within city limits. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Brandon motioned to pursue the BUILD grant opportunity for our streets, reaching out to Wilson & Company to request a quote for concrete streets. Stephen seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The quote for the animal confinement facility from Hamel Construction was reviewed. Don motioned to accept the bid; Joan seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Brandon motioned to contract with Bretz Auto Salvage for the removal of vehicles found in violation of city code. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Fire Department Report

Gregg informed the council that the Fish Fry is scheduled for March 20, 2026. The Fire Department Appreciation Dinner has been scheduled for January 24, 2026.

Gregg brought Don and Joan up to speed regarding the future purchase of the fire truck. He requested that the city code be changed regarding the tanker truck not being able to leave city limits. Koleson motioned to use the pumper truck as a tanker truck; Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Stephen motioned to remove Heather and Scott from the Fire Department, due to lack of attendance and response to fire calls; Don seconded. Motion carried 4-0. (Brandon abstained.)

The department needs 3 new pagers and 5 batteries. He will have Wise Fire come out and conduct pressure tests on the trucks in April.

McKenna Land Report

Gregg informed the council that the following land is required to have terraces built by the end of the year: Cody Howland, Chris Lambert and Melvin Keller (east side of waterway). Due to the crops planted, Cody Howland's should be built in the spring, Melvin Keller's may be built in July/August, Chris Lambert's will be built in the fall. Gregg estimated it would cost \$24-27K out of pocket.

Cody Howland and Rick Lewis are not renewing their contracts. Some changes were made to the contracts; prices did not change. Mark Keller's and Chris Lambert's contracts have been updated to require that one half mile of fencing be replaced per 3-year contract. Gregg forgot to include the land tenants will be required to have liability insurance on the land and provide it annually in March. He will get it added and get contracts sent out by next week.

Don motioned that the McKenna Land Manager put the USCS programs in their name, not the tenants. Brandon seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Gregg will check the necessary steps to be taken for Carl Acheson to be removed as the POA for the land he is renting.

Kyle and Larissa contacted Kathy Desaire regarding the Land Tenant Appreciation Dinner. She has agreed to cater. The cost per plate will be \$20.00. The McKenna will provide plates, napkins, silverware, cups, and drinks for the event. Gregg will get a headcount.

McKenna Director Report

Brenda stated that the open house and craft show was not well attended, but those that did attend purchased.

The movie attendance was good. Damar K of C and Redline Church sponsored *David*. *Avatar* will be shown this weekend, *Housemaid* will follow, then *Song Sung Blue*. Brenda will try to find sponsors for *I Can Only Imagine 2* in February.

The food safety license has been renewed. Brenda has reached out to a few parents regarding interest in serving on the McKenna Advisory Board.

The Mid-America Bank reconciliation and unpaid bills were presented. (Astra Bank's reconciliations were not completed.) Brandon moved to approve the Mid-America Bank reconciliation; Koleson seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Brandon motioned to pay the bills; Stephen seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Brenda and Gregg departed at 10:53 PM.

City Superintendent Report

Marvin worked on the street repairs; he filled in potholes near the post office. A load of shale was delivered, but he needs more. He went on to share that he has replaced a few more water meters. He and Rick conducted inventory on meters, setters, pits and lids.

Marvin let the council know that the trash truck's DEF injection port in the exhaust is dripping and that some of the Christmas lights' electrical wires were ruined from the high winds on December 18th. Marvin will try to fix them.

There was discussion of trading in the tractor for a new one; Marvin is to get quotes.

City Clerk Report

Larissa let the council know that she will need to purchase postcard stamps soon. The AED has been registered; electrodes are expired, she will order them.

\$60,000 was transferred from the Money Market Account to the General Account. The ARPA funds were expended in 2025; the following grant funds were received and expended in January: KDHE DW03 (\$561,770.00), KDHE DW11 (\$149,934.90) and CDBG (\$75,000.00).

The 2026 dog tags have been received, one issued. Larissa explained that she will require owners to provide a photo of each animal, making it easier to determine owners of animals running at-large.

Corina (NWKSP&DC) and Jason (CDBG) will be inspecting the Nitrate Plant files on January 22, 2026. Larissa met with Cody from Insurance Planning to go over the renewal. Larissa is almost finished with the KDHE Waste Tire Grant application. She explained that KDHE has another grant opportunity opening soon for a recycling program; she has discussed partnering with the school on the project. The KMIT Audit is due February 11, 2026; she will start on that soon.

New chairs were purchased for the city office and nitrate plant office; the old chairs were purchased over 20 years ago; several were broken or ruined.

Larissa shared the letter from Rooks County Economic Development (RCED) regarding the city's contribution amount for 2026. (It was not listed on the unpaid bills as Larissa wanted clarification on paying the dues in full or half now and half later.) Koleson motioned to pay the dues in full; Stephen seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The Treasurer's Report was provided. Larissa will send it in for publication in next week's issue. Reconciliations for Petty Cash and all three Mid-America Bank accounts were presented, along with the unpaid bills. Koleson motioned to approve the reconciliations and pay the bills, including the RCED contribution. Don seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Adjournment

Stephen motioned to adjourn at 11:34 PM. Koleson seconded. Motion carried 5-0. The next regular meeting will be held on February 11, 2026, at 7:00 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Karlin', written over a horizontal line.

Kyle Karlin, Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Larissa Wilson', written over a horizontal line.

Larissa Wilson, City Clerk