MEETING MINUTES
City of Polk City
Work Session

5:00 p.m., May 11, 2026
City Hall Council Chambers

A City Council Work Session was held on May 11, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the City Hall Council Chambers in Polk City, Iowa. Mayor Karsjen and City Council Members, Rob Sarchet, Jeff Savage, Dave Dvorak, James Hill, and Nick Otis were present.

Minutes

Sidewalk Repair Program discussion

City Manager Huisman provided an overview of the City's Sidewalk Repair Program, noting it had been discussed previously and approved by Council in December, with the purpose of addressing sidewalk safety concerns and reducing municipal liability following recent Iowa Supreme Court rulings that shifted sidewalk liability to cities. Staff reviewed the August 2025 sidewalk inventory, which identified 304 repair locations and 29 curb stops requiring attention. The program includes annual inspections, notification to abutting property owners, defined repair timelines, and the option for residents to participate in a citywide contracting program to reduce costs. Staff recommended implementing the program using a phased, district-based approach rather than citywide notification, beginning with the Pine Ridge, Deer Haven, and Marina Cove neighborhoods due to the volume and condition of identified repairs. Council discussed liability considerations, communication strategies, permitting requirements, financial assistance options, staffing capacity, and the importance of consistent public messaging. General consensus supported proceeding with a phased rollout, pursuing bids for a citywide sidewalk replacement contract, and enhancing public education through the City's website and future communications.

Polk City Economic Development Policy discussion

City Manager Huisman discussed the City's Economic Development Incentive Policy in light of recently passed state property tax reform legislation scheduled to take effect January 1, 2027. Huisman explained that the new legislation may significantly impact Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and abatement incentives by limiting general fund revenue growth, potentially reducing the City's ability to realize returns on incentivized projects. Huisman recommended that Council consider a formal moratorium on new TIF rebate agreements until additional guidance becomes available from the State and organizations such as the Iowa League of Cities. Council discussed the potential impacts on existing and future development, developer expectations, and appropriate terminology to avoid signaling temporary delays that could discourage investment. No formal action was taken, and the matter will return to a future council agenda once the legislation is finalized and further clarification is obtained.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Hill and seconded by Dvorak to adjourn at 5:51 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.

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Steve Karsjen, Mayor

Attest

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Susan Lawton, City Clerk