



The City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, met on Monday, February 23, 2026, for a Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall located at 711 West Main Street, Festus, Missouri.

I. Call to Order

Mayor Richards called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Councilman Boyer
Councilman Collier
Councilwoman Templeton
Councilman Wehner
Councilman Dennis via Zoom
Councilman Venz
Councilman Cook
Councilman Tinnin
Mayor Richards

Absent:

None

Also in attendance:

City Clerk Leah Smith, Finance Director Michelle Vaughn, Building and Planning Director Jim Walker, Police Chief Doug Wendel, Fire Chief Jeff Broombaugh, Interim City Administrator/Public Works Director Michael Christopher, Recreation and Tourism Director Barb Lowry, Finance Assistant Miranda O'Haleck, and City Attorney Brian Malone.

Pledge of Allegiance

Recited

II. Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the Minutes

- a. February 7, 2026 – Special Meeting
- b. February 7, 2026 – Closed Session
- c. February 9, 2026 – Work Session
- d. February 9, 2026 – Regular Meeting

2. Approval of Bills



Mayor Richards asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mayor Richards announced the bills were in the amount of \$422,357.19.

Motion to approve the consent agenda, the bills, and minutes was made by Councilman Venz, seconded by Councilwoman Templeton.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Motion carried.

3. Correspondence

III. Remarks of Visitors

- a. Lori Merriman, 11530 Ten Point Lane – spoke in opposition of massive industrial centers; they do not belong in neighborhoods.
- b. Aaron Meyers, 516 Roy Street – spoke of indifference about data center; grab the tax revenue while available.
- c. Sherman Doyle, 6 Glenkee Court – spoke of City Councilmembers and Mayor and petition.
- d. Austin Jackson, 141 Dublin Lane – discussed challenging times and creating growth for the future.
- e. Travis Layton, 2916 High Ridge Drive – discussed the First Amendment and Rules of Decorum.
- f. Anthony Hodge, 11694 Gamel Cemetery Road – shared that benefits outweigh concerns on a data center.
- g. Alexander Bischoff, 884 Woodridge Drive – addressed water and electric concerns and location of data centers in relation to Festus.
- h. Cody Vogel, 6704 Sycamore Landing – spoke of pragmatic technology implementation and long-term future benefits.



- i. Hunter Williams, 7499 Gravois Road – shared that data centers would invest in futures of students, school programs and high demand careers.
- j. Kirk Hilzinger, 5225 Fairview Avenue – visited 30+ data centers and addressed concerns.
- k. John Youmans, 921 N 4th Street – discussed timing of decisions, predetermined outcome and petition.
- l. Charlie Goodwin, 3303 Platin Road – understands both sides; addressed concerns with water and tax benefits.
- m. Mary Fakes, 9 Cedarbrook – does not condone family attacks; spoke of sunshine requests.
- n. Oscar Harrell, 1015 Utility Drive – distributed handouts; discussed lessons from locomotives in 19th century in relation to data centers.
- o. Joseph Hunt, 316 Sunshine Drive – spoke of benefits data center would bring to school and first responders.
- p. Jesse Cordova, 702 Huber Street – discussed the First Amendment.
- q. Mary Youmans, 921 N 4th Street – discussed Olive Garden and breadsticks.

IV. Bids
None

V. Ordinances and Resolutions

Clerk Smith read the following:

Resolution No. 4871.5 - A Resolution Determining The Intent Of The City Of Festus, Missouri To Reimburse Itself For Certain Capital Expenditures And Selecting Special Tax Counsel And An Underwriter In Connection With The Potential Issuance And Sale Of Obligations To Finance The Capital Expenditures.

Finance Director Michelle Vaughn reported the resolution is for reimbursement authorizing the City to reimburse itself for prior and future capital expenditures using proceeds from up to \$11.5 million in anticipated certificates of participation (COP). This is a non-binding procedural step required under IRS regulations to preserve the City's eligibility for tax-exempt financing of already committed or near-term project costs.

Councilman Boyer made a motion to approve Resolution No. 4846.5, seconded by Councilman Collier.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Abstain



Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Resolution No. 4871.5 has passed.

Clerk Smith read the following:

Bill No. 4873 - An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, adopting the Standard Specifications and Details for Infrastructure Improvements, and Standard Details; amending Chapters 510, 515, and 705 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Festus, related to Excavations; repealing all ordinances in conflict therewith; and establishing an effective date.

Public Works Director Michael Christopher proposes the adoption of newer and more stringent specifications and construction details for water main installation. These updates are intended to improve consistency across projects, ensure compliance with state and federal drinking water regulations, reduce the likelihood of premature failures in the system, and provide clearer guidance to contractors and inspectors. The revised standards will also improve management of the distribution system by promoting durable materials, proper installation techniques, and thorough inspection and testing procedures.

Councilman Collier asked whether this would apply to contractors developing land for building construction, and Christopher confirmed that it would. Councilman Cook then asked if it would be included as part of the water master plan; Christopher confirmed it would be, noting the project is divided into two phases—Phase 1 is complete, and Phase 2 will be finalized with these specifications.

Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4873 a second time was made by Councilman Venz and seconded by Councilman Collier.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye



Councilman Cook: Aye
Councilman Tinnin: Aye

Motion carried. Clerk Smith read Bill No. 4873 a second time.

Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4873.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer: Aye
Councilman Collier: Aye
Councilwoman Templeton: Aye
Councilman Wehner: Aye
Councilman Dennis: Aye
Councilman Venz: Aye
Councilman Cook: Aye
Councilman Tinnin: Aye

Bill 4873 finally passed.

Clerk Smith read the following:

Bill No. 4874 - An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri; authorizing the Mayor to enter into and execute an Economic Development Agreement with Olive Garden Holdings, LLC; incorporating said agreement as a part of this ordinance; and establishing an effective date.

Public Works Director Michael Christopher reported that in April of 2025, the City began discussions with Brad Vincent of the Ryan Corporation regarding Darden Restaurants, Inc.'s plan to build a new Olive Garden on Shapiro Drive in Festus. The project includes a 6,500-square-foot restaurant with an estimated \$4.5 million investment, creating 3–4 manager-level jobs and 50–60 full-time equivalent positions. It is expected to generate approximately \$523,600 in annual sales tax and \$58,000 in annual property tax revenue.

Councilman Venz inquired about the location, and Chief Wendel confirmed the Olive Garden will be located south of, and to the right of, Texas Roadhouse.

Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4874 a second time was made by Councilman Boyer and seconded by Councilwoman Templeton.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer: Aye



Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Motion carried. Clerk Smith read Bill No. 4874 a second time.

Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4874.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Bill 4874 finally passed.

VI. New Business

a. 2026 Roadblock Schedule

Motion to approve the 2026 Roadblock schedule, was made by Councilman Wehner, seconded by Councilman Collier.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye



Motion carried.

b. Festival Request – Twin City Little League Opening Day Parade on April 18, 2026

President of Twin City Little League Steve Reynolds reported that the parade will include approximately 560 children and 50–60 floats, beginning at the Elementary School at 9:00 a.m., followed by a ceremony at 10:00 a.m. Chief Wendel stated he has no issues with the parade.

Motion to approve the Twin City Little League Opening Day Parade on April 18, 2026, was made by Councilman Wehner, seconded by Councilman Collier.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Motion carried.

c. Boards and Commissions – Library Board Appointment of Ashley Green

Mayor Richards asked the City Council to consider the appointment of Ashley Green.

Motion to approve the appointment of Ashley Green to the Library Board, was made by Councilman Collier, seconded by Councilwoman Templeton.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye



Motion carried.

d. Boards and Commissions – JCWA Temporary Appointment of Shain Dollar

Mayor Richards asked the City Council to consider the temporary appointment of Shain Dollar to the Jefferson County Water Authority.

Motion to approve the temporary appointment of Shain Dollar to the Jefferson County Water Authority, was made by Councilman Venz, seconded by Councilwoman Templeton.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Motion carried.

e. No Kings Protest on March 28, 2026 – Maranda Akers

Maranda Akers and Luke Adams asked for City Council permission for a peaceful protest walk from the Library to Jokerst Park (rented pavilion), stating participants will remain on sidewalks. Approximately 600 participants are expected, and the event is planned to be peaceful and well organized, with coordination underway with the Police Department. Questions were raised about whether permits would be required for amplified sound, use along roadways, and possible use of a portion of the library parking lot due to the anticipated crowd size. Luke also suggested using the event to support small businesses by providing a list of businesses that donate to homeless efforts, places to visit, and a location to gather donations.

Motion to approve the No Kings Protest on March 28, 2026, including use of the Library lot, was made by Councilman Collier, seconded by Councilwoman Templeton.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye



Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Motion carried.

VII. Old Business

None

VIII. Mayor and City Council Reports

Councilman Boyer nothing to report.

Councilman Wehner reported that the stairs by the bathrooms and pickle ball courts in Jokerst Park are almost complete.

Councilman Dennis nothing to report.

Councilman Cook inquired with City Attorney Brian Malone about whether personal travel and expenses must be reported for Sunshine Requests, and Malone advised he is not aware of any city ordinance requiring it. Cook added that many projects discussed early on do not move forward and that private property owners are free to have those conversations as needed.

Councilman Collier thanked former City Administrator Greg Camp for his service in lieu of his absence at his dinner Friday, wishing him luck in the future. He also clarified that, despite inquiries from citizens, he has not moved into an apartment and has lived in the same house for many years.

Councilwoman Templeton nothing to share.

Councilman Venz asked for a Shapiro Drive light update. Public Works Director Michael Christopher shared that materials were ordered and while checking for footings, there was bedrock immediately under soil. Suppliers have a solution to pour larger pad footings and bolts.



Councilman Tinnin An update was requested on Grayhawk with Ameren, and Public Works Director Michael Christopher stated he would check into it. An additional inquiry was made about service agreements with McConnell and Associates for pickleball court maintenance, which Christopher also said he would review.

Mayor Richards reported that a set of stairs were being installed (in Sunset Park) from the street to the sidewalk around the tennis courts, consisting of 4-foot-wide steps with a handrail from the street parking, providing an alternative to walking through the parking lot. Regarding Greg Camp's departure, it was clarified that his decision was personal—his sister lives half an hour from Silverthorne, he learned of the opportunity last spring, and it had nothing to do with the data center; while he hates to see his departure, he is wished well. He emphasized his familiarity with First Amendment rights, noting that he is undisturbed by public comments or criticism, and he did not spend 23 years in the Marine Corps to break it.

IX. Adjournment

Councilman Cook made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Collier.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Aye
Councilwoman Templeton:	Aye
Councilman Wehner:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Venz:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Tinnin:	Aye

Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

3/9/2026

Date - Approved by Council


Leah Smith
City Clerk
City of Festus, Missouri

