



The City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, met on Thursday, February 26, 2026, for a Special 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
Councilwoman Templeton
Councilman Wehner
Councilman Dennis via Zoom
Councilman Venez
Councilman Cook via Zoom
Councilman Tinnin via Zoom
Mayor Richards

Absent:

Councilman Collier

Also in attendance:

Public Works Director and Interim City Administrator Michael Christopher, City Clerk Leah Smith, Finance Director Michelle Vaughn, Police Chief Doug Wendel, Building and Planning Director Jim Walker, and City Attorney Brian Malone.

II. Ordinances and Resolutions

Clerk Smith read the following:

Bill No. 4875 - An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri; authorizing the Mayor to enter into and execute an agreement with MarksNelson Advisors LLC.; incorporating said agreement as a part of this ordinance, and establishing an effective date.

Public Works Director and Interim City Administrator Michael Christopher reports that staff recommends engaging MarksNelson Advisors, LLC, represented by Steve Etcher, to provide economic development consulting for a major potential development in Festus. Their services would include incentive strategy, program evaluation, negotiation support, and fiscal analysis to ensure alignment with City goals and compliance. This support will help the City prepare for discussions with a prospective developer involving



significant investment, infrastructure needs, and long-term employment, leveraging MarksNelson's extensive experience with similar projects in Missouri.

Councilwoman Templeton asked City Attorney Brian Malone about his role in advising the City, and Malone confirmed while noting that Steve Etcher has specialized expertise in financial modeling and these types of agreements. Templeton also inquired whether the City would lose \$20,000 if the deal falls through, and Malone clarified that the City would only be responsible for hours actually worked under Missouri law.

Councilman Wehner asked Steve Etcher of MarksNelson Advisors to provide an overview of his background and projects. Etcher shared that he has 40 years of experience in community development, 25 years on planning commissions, and has worked with rural communities in Missouri, including Warren and Montgomery counties. He highlighted experience with large-scale developments, including three data center projects (one fully completed), and emphasized his approach of aligning projects with community goals, starting with workshops to understand priorities and objections.

Mayor Richards asked Mr. Malone to clarify the timeline of CRG approaching the City, to which Mr. Malone shared that he was contacted Tuesday afternoon that CRG was prepared to negotiate, which was after the City Council Meeting.

Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4875 a second time was made by Councilman Venz and seconded by Councilman Boyer.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Absent
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. 4875 a second time.

Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4875.

Vote:

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

Bill 4875 finally passed.

III. Adjournment

Councilman Venz made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Boyer.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Collier:	Absent
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 6:14 p.m.

3/9/2026

Date - Approved by Council


Leah Smith
City Clerk
City of Festus, Missouri