The City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri met during a Work Session on Monday, May 26, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at Festus City Hall located at 711 West Main Street, Festus, Missouri.

I. Call to Order

Mayor Richards called the Work Session to order at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:
Councilman Boyer
Councilman Weekley
Councilman McCarthy
Councilman Dennis
Councilman Moore
Councilman Cook
Councilman Belleville (arrived at 5:11pm)
Mayor Richards

Absent:
None

Also in attendance:
Mayor Richards, Deputy City Clerk Jen Filkins, Interim City Administrator and Public Works Director Michael Christopher, Finance Director Michelle Vaughn, Building Director Jim Walker, Parks Director Josh Whaley, Recreation and Tourism Director Barb Lowry, Police Chief Doug Wendel, Fire Chief Jeff Broombaugh, Treasurer Lori Eisenbeis, and City Attorney Brian Malone.

II. Mayor & City Council Discussion

Michael Christopher introduced the topic of the City Treasurer appointment process. City Attorney Mr. Malone explained that, in the absence of a qualified successor, the incumbent remains in office until a successor is appointed and qualified. He further advised that the Mayor may appoint a Treasurer with the advice and consent of the Council, requiring a five-vote majority for approval. If appointed, Lori Eisenbeis would serve until the next regular election in April, completing a one-year term. Following discussion among Council Members, the Mayor, and the City Attorney, Mayor Richards announced that the appointment of Lori Eisenbeis as City Treasurer would be placed on the June 8 City Council meeting agenda for a vote.

Michael Christopher raised the topic of conducting a new resident survey, noting that Councilman Belleville had requested a 2026 survey for Festus residents. Councilman Belleville prepared a draft survey for Council review and discussion. Council discussed survey formatting, distribution methods, responsibility for compiling responses, and how resident concerns would be addressed. Following discussion, Council agreed to postpone further consideration until the new City Administrator has an opportunity to review the proposal and provide input.

Michael Christopher raised the topic of tabled Bill No. 4878 regarding an engagement letter with Armstrong Teasdale and asked City Attorney Mr. Malone whether it was appropriate for discussion during the work session. Mr. Malone advised that discussion would be appropriate; however, because Matt Ray of Armstrong Teasdale would be joining the meeting later, he recommended postponing the discussion until Mr. Ray was present to address any questions from the Council. The matter was deferred for later discussion during the work session.

Michael Christopher discussed the possibility of a budget-focused work session and asked whether Council members had met with Finance Director Michelle Vaughn to address budget-related questions. Councilman Belleville commended Mrs. Vaughn for her willingness to educate others on the budget process and suggested that newer Council members meet with her as a group to minimize disruptions to her regular duties. Mr. Christopher noted that the budget development process for the next fiscal year is already underway, with departmental meetings scheduled to review anticipated capital and operating expenditures. Mrs. Vaughn also discussed developing informational materials on the City's finances for publication on the City's website to help educate residents about the budget process.

The Council resumed discussion of tabled Bill No. 4878 following the arrival of Matt Ray of Armstrong Teasdale. City Attorney Mr. Malone reiterated details regarding the recall petitions, representation by Stinson Law Firm for the Mayor and three Council members subject to the petitions, and distinctions in the City Attorney's role. He also referenced his prior recommendation to appoint special counsel to advise the City on both the recall petitions and the CRG development agreement. Councilman Belleville inquired about billing practices for special counsel, specifically whether attorney fees for the recall petitions and the CRG development agreement could be separated. Councilman Moore requested Mr. Ray provide background on his professional experience and trial work. The Council discussed the possibility of amending the Armstrong Teasdale agreement to limit their role to just the CRG development agreement, while Mr. Malone would continue advising on the recall petitions.

Mr. Malone introduced Resolution No. 4878.5 regarding proposed amendments to the Rules of Decorum and the Request to Speak form, noting that several Council members had contacted him regarding the proposed updates. He outlined the rationale and scope of the proposed changes. Councilman Belleville asked about incorporating more open dialogue between speakers and Council members, to which Mr. Malone responded that such language could be added to the Rules of Decorum with an amendment, or revised in a subsequent draft. Council members discussed the desired changes and areas of concern. Councilman Moore stated he did not believe it was the appropriate time to amend the Rules of Decorum and suggested tabling the item. Mr. Malone confirmed that tabling was an option if a motion was made. The Mayor emphasized that the intent was not to restrict First Amendment rights of speakers, but to promote civility. This comment led to a pointed exchange between Councilman Moore and the Mayor regarding expectations of civility among residents, Council members, and the Mayor.

III. Adjournment

Councilman Cook moved to close the Work Session and was seconded by Councilman Boyer.

Vote:

Councilman Boyer:	Aye
Councilman Weekley:	Aye
Councilman McCarthy:	Aye
Councilman Dennis:	Aye
Councilman Moore:	Aye
Councilman Cook:	Aye
Councilman Belleville:	Aye

Motion carried and the work session adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

________7/13/2026_________
Date - Approved by Council

Jennifer Filkins
Deputy City Clerk, Festus, Missouri