



The City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, met on Monday, May 26, 2026, for a Public Hearing at 5:50 p.m. followed by a Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall located at 711 West Main Street, Festus, Missouri.

**I. 5:50 PM – Public Hearing**

**a. Regarding Rezoning Parcels 11-7.0-36.0-0-000-015.03 and 18-1.0-01.0-1-006-001.01 from I-1 Industrial to R-1 One Family**

Mayor Richards opened the Public Hearing for the rezoning at 5:51p.m.

Building and Planning Director Jim Walker presented his report.

Mayor Richards asked if there were any citizens who wished to speak. Councilman Belleville and Councilman Dennis both asked questions regarding the property. No citizens spoke on the property.

Mayor Richards asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing.

**Motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Councilman Dennis and seconded by Councilman Moore.**

**Vote:**

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

Motion carried.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Call to Order**

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

**Roll Call**

Present:

Councilman Boyer (Zoom)



Councilman Weekley  
Councilman McCarthy  
Councilman Dennis  
Councilman Moore  
Councilman Cook  
Councilman Belleville  
Mayor Richards

Absent:  
None

Also in attendance:

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

**Pledge of Allegiance**  
Recited

**III. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**a. Approval of the Minutes**

- 1. April 13, 2026 – Regular Meeting**
- 2. April 21, 2026 – Special Meeting & Closed Session**
- 3. April 22, 2026 – Special Meeting & Closed Session**

**b. Approval of Bills**

Mayor Richards asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mayor Richards announced the bills were in the amount of \$477,740.33.

**c. Correspondence**

None

**Motion to approve the consent agenda, the bills, and minutes was made by Councilman Cook, seconded by Councilman Dennis.**

**Vote:**

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Councilman Boyer:    | Aye |
| Councilman Weekley:  | Aye |
| Councilman McCarthy: | Aye |
| Councilman Dennis:   | Aye |



Councilman Moore: Aye  
Councilman Cook: Aye  
Councilman Belleville: Aye

Motion carried.

#### IV. Remarks of Visitors

- a. Christy Stites, 11800 County Rd CC – spoke on stop sign request where County Rd CC splits and becomes Gamel Cemetery, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> stop sign coming from Ashford Pl on Gamel where Gamel meets County Rd CC and asked for increased traffic enforcement due to speeding concerns. She also raised questions regarding Armstrong Teasdale, questioned who's paying for the Hatfield attorney for Mayor and Council members under recall petition, and concerns with electric, power and water usage among other things mentioned. Thanked community members involved in grassroots efforts concerning data center.
- b. Mary Fakes, 9 Cedarbrook – Comments on the Mayor's response in Leader newspaper article on recall petitions and 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights.
- c. Erica Carter, 14 Ashford Pl – Discussed efforts to collect recall petition signatures, the Mayor's response to the petitions published in the Leader newspaper, and the formation of a new group, Festus Alliance for Government Change. Also presented a City ward map showing the locations of petition signatures by address.
- d. Andrew John Smreker, 54 Jackson Cir – Spoke about the United States' competition with China in the data center industry and expressed concerns regarding differing public and City perspectives on the issue. Raised questions about the potential future impacts of data centers, including water usage, agricultural effects, and other unknown consequences. Also discussed ongoing recall petition signature efforts.
- e. Laura Harris, 1817 Valley View Cir – Inquired about the Ward 2 vacancy not being included on the agenda, the possibility of using a larger venue for Council meetings, and whether City funds were being used in matters related to the recall petitions.
- f. Tom Vogel, 112 Summerset Ln – Tom, President of the Festus Main Street Association, discussed a proposal to install string lights over Main Street. He outlined the purpose of the project, installation plans, funding sources, ongoing maintenance responsibilities, and estimated annual electrical costs, including how those expenses would be covered.
- g. Mary Youmans, 921 N 4<sup>th</sup> St – Asked the Mayor how he was doing and addressed the Ward 2 vacancy, expressing interest in being considered for the seat. She also stated her desire to bring a woman's perspective to the Festus City Council.
- h. Ally Schwartz, 2310 Peterein Ct – Spoke of concerns with data center's impacts on the environment and health through her own research.



- i. Judy Ivery, 1952 Anchorage Dr – Spoke regarding her personal contributions to efforts opposing data centers, comments on the City Treasurer position, and Resolution 4878.5. She also raised concerns about the need for a larger Council chamber or meeting venue to accommodate attendees, and referenced “war theory” in relation to residents’ efforts to protect their homes.
- j. John Youmans, 921 N 4<sup>th</sup> St – Spoke of importance of checks and balances, and the vacant Ward 2 council seat appointment process.
- k. Gwen Mercer, 121 Blue Ridge Trace – Related local developments in Festus to trends occurring in small towns nationwide. Directed comments specifically to the Mayor, referencing recent remarks published in the Leader newspaper regarding the recall petitions.
- l. Vaughn Hogan, 1000 Savanna Pl – Comments focused on the Mayor’s recent Leader newspaper article regarding the recall petitions and referenced several first names of Festus residents involved in the recall efforts.
- m. Andrew Shelley, 730 Vine St – Comments to the Mayor regarding handling of the data center, questions on proposed Rules of Decorum language, and inquiry into the status of the Ward 2 Council vacancy.
- n. Matt Drinen, 1332 Melvin Dr – Had concerns over proposed Rules of Decorum updates, commented on the Mayor’s Leader newspaper recall petition article, and discussion regarding Armstrong Teasdale’s engagement.
- o. Lori Merriman, 11530 Ten Point Ln – Spoke on concerns regarding data center impacts on residents and spot rezoning. Stated she is not opposed to economic development but believes new industrial or commercial projects should be located within existing zoned areas. Also referenced potential impacts on daily life and property values, and thanked community members who have supported efforts opposing data centers.
- p. Gabe Cotton, 11764 Kingston Dr – Spoke on First Amendment rights and freedom of speech, and discussed recall efforts and the recall process. Directed comments to Councilman Boyer, Dennis, and Cook, as well as the Mayor. Also thanked new Council members Moore, Belleville, Weekley, and McCarthy.
- q. Charles Holmes, 104 Doctrine Dr – Thanked women involved in the recall efforts and those who have made sacrifices enabling public participation in civic forums. Also reflected on how residents have come together in opposition to the proposed data center.
- r. Sherman Doyle, 6 Glenkee Ct – Spoke on First Amendment rights and referenced the Mayor’s recent Leader newspaper comments regarding the recall petitions.
- s. Matt Stout, 1308 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St – Spoke regarding speeding traffic concerns on N 3rd Street, specifically in the 1300 block.



- t. Sharon Valish, 4 Glenkee Ct – Stated she is one of the 11 residents who had a buyout of her home negotiated on her behalf without prior notification. Reiterated comments from prior speakers, the overwhelmingness of the data center situation and impact on her personal life. Would like to see a pause and vote on data center project.

## V. Bids

### a. 2026 Watermain Improvements – Burns & McDonnell Design Proposal

Public Works Director and Interim-City Administrator Michael Christopher gave a staff report. The proposal is to design three separate sections of water main improvements throughout the City. Watermain improvements are normally done in-house by our City crews. These improvements require horizontal drilling of which our City crews are not able to do. Two of the areas requiring drilling are stream crossings, and one is a MODOT right-of-way. The hope is to have this proposal approved and designed so construction can begin by next fiscal year.

Councilman Cook asked who would be handling the permitting for the work. Mr. Christopher responded that Burns & McDonnell would be as outlined in the proposal.

**Motion to approve the 2026 Watermain Improvements - Burns & McDonnell Design Proposal bid for \$99,900 was made by Councilman Cook and seconded by Councilman Moore.**

#### Vote:

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

Motion carried.

### b. 2026 Street Improvements Project – Concrete Pad Replacement and Asphalt Overlay

Mr. Christopher provided a staff report regarding the upcoming paving project, noting that work originally planned for 2025 was delayed due to scheduling issues and has been combined with the current year's project, resulting in a significantly larger scope of work. He recommended awarding the bid to Spencer Contracting, stating that, based on the City's experience with Jokerst Paving, he did not believe awarding the



project to Jokerst would be in the City's best interest. However, he noted that the final decision rests with the Council.

Councilman Belleville asked about performance requirements within the contract, prompting discussion regarding bid bonds and performance bonds. Mr. Christopher cited several specific issues the City had previously experienced with Jokerst Paving. Councilman Belleville also inquired whether the contract prohibited the successful bidder from subcontracting the work to another company.

**Motion to approve the 2026 Street Improvements Project – Concrete Pad Replacement and Asphalt Overlay bid with Spencer Contracting for \$1,434,676.37 was made by Councilman Dennis and seconded by Councilman Cook.**

**Vote:**

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

Prior to the gavel coming down, an interruption came from the audience from a member of Jokerst Contracting. A representative of the company asked for the ability to meet with city staff and defend their prior work history with the city prior to making a final decision. Mr. Christopher said he would meet with Jokerst at an upcoming date to discuss. Councilman Cook requested that information regarding prior insurance claims, traffic-related concerns, and other relevant issues involving Jokerst Contracting be compiled and shared with the appropriate parties to help address outstanding concerns. Councilman Dennis noted that he had previously discussed concerns about Jokerst's performance with Mr. Christopher concerning issues raised by residents within his ward.

**Motion to table the 2026 Street Improvements Project – Concrete Pad Replacement and Asphalt Overlay bid until June 8<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting was made by Councilman Belleville and seconded by Councilman Cook.**

**Vote:**

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Councilman Boyer:   | Aye |
| Councilman Weekley: | Aye |



|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Councilman McCarthy:   | Aye |
| Councilman Dennis:     | Aye |
| Councilman Moore:      | Aye |
| Councilman Cook:       | Aye |
| Councilman Belleville: | Aye |

Motion to table carried.

## VI. Ordinances and Resolutions

Deputy Clerk Filkins read the following:

**Bill No. 4878 – An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, authorizing and directing the mayor to execute an engagement letter on behalf of the City of Festus with Armstrong Teasdale, LLP, to act as special counsel for the city; incorporating said engagement letter as a part of this ordinance; and establishing an effective date.**

City Attorney Brian Malone provided a staff report.

Councilman Belleville proposed to the Council an amendment to the ordinance to eliminate in section 1, small roman numeral i, "recall petitions for any elected official of the City".

**Motion to amend Bill No. 4878 to strike in section 1, roman numeral i, "recall petitions for any elected official of the City" was made by Councilman Belleville and seconded by Councilman Moore.**

### Vote:

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

**Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4878 as amended a second time was made by Councilman Cook and seconded by Councilman Moore.**



**Vote:**

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

Motion carried. Deputy Clerk Filkins read Bill No. 4878 as amended a second time.

**Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4878.**

**Vote:**

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

Bill 4878 finally passed.

Deputy Clerk Filkins read the following:

**Resolution No. 4878.5 – A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, amending the Rules of Decorum and amending the Request to Speak Form; adopting such amendments; and establishing an effective date.**

**Motion to table Resolution No. 4878.5 until the next meeting was made by Councilman Dennis and 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 |





Deputy Clerk Filkins read the following:

**Bill No. 4879 – An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, rezoning two parcels within the City of Festus located at Jefferson County Parcel Identification Number 1170360000001503 and Jefferson County Parcel Identification Number 1810010100600101, from the I-1 Industrial District, respectively, to the R-1 Single-Family Dwelling District; directing the City Clerk to update the Zoning Map of the City; and establishing an effective date.**

Building Director Jim Walker provided a staff report.

Councilman Belleville asked if there were restrictions on home sizes. Councilman Cook asked if there were any traffic concerns.

**Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4879 a second time was made by Councilman Cook and seconded by Councilman Moore.**

**Vote:**

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

Motion carried. Deputy Clerk Filkins read Bill No. 4879 a second time.

**Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4879.**

**Vote:**

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

Bill 4879 finally passed.



Deputy Clerk Filkins read the following:

**Bill No. 4880** – An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, approving the Updated Planned Unit Development Overlay for 1381 Shapiro; incorporating “Exhibit A,” attached hereto as a part of this ordinance; and establishing an effective date.

Building Director Jim Walker provided a staff report.

**Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4880 a second time was made by Councilman Moore and seconded by Councilman Belleville.**

**Vote:**

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

Motion carried. Deputy Clerk Filkins read Bill No. 4880 a second time.

**Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4880.**

**Vote:**

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

Bill 4880 finally passed.

Deputy Clerk Filkins read the following:

**Bill No. 4881** – An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Festus, Missouri, approving a Minor Subdivision of a parcel located within the City of Festus located at 2000 Pounds



Road, Parcel Identification Number 18101200004015; and establishing an effective date.

Building Director Jim Walker provided a staff report.

Councilman Belleville asked a question concerning current utilities on the property.

**Motion to suspend rules to read Bill No. 4881 a second time was made by Councilman Dennis and seconded by Councilman Belleville.**

**Vote:**

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

Motion carried. Deputy Clerk Filkins read Bill No. 4881 a second time.

**Mayor Richards called for a vote to finally approve Bill No. 4881.**

**Vote:**

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

Bill 4881 finally passed.

Councilman Boyer (Zoom) left the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

**VII. New Business**

**a. The Barn Phase 2 & New Park Shed Presentation**

Dustin Roberts from Navigate Building Solutions and Michelle Wells from Bond Architects gave an informational presentation on Phase 2 of The Barn and new



park shed. It was mentioned that the next phase of work will be the construction phase; of which bidding will be a 2-3 month process, and construction & close out taking approximately 13 months. Back and forth discussion ensued between presenters and Council members. Councilman Cook inquired on the use of rain guards if they could be looked at to potentially save money on storm water retention costs and to help recharge the lakes with water.

**b. Planning & Zoning Commission – Officers**

Mayor Richards made the nomination of Jim Tinnin for citizen representative on P&Z Commission and asked if any other Council Member would be interested in the Council representative position on P&Z Commission. Councilman McCarthy said he would get back with the Mayor at a future time on the opportunity.

**Motion to approve the appointment of Jim Tinnin as a citizen representative on the Planning & Zoning Commission was made by Councilman Dennis and seconded by Councilman Cook.**

**Vote:**

|                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Councilman Boyer:             | Absent |
| Councilman Weekley:           | Nay    |
| Councilman McCarthy:          | Aye    |
| Councilman Dennis:            | Aye    |
| Councilman Moore:             | Nay    |
| Councilman Cook:              | Aye    |
| Councilman Belleville:        | Nay    |
| Mayor Richards (tie breaker): | Aye    |

Motion carried.

**c. Fireworks Sales License Application – Jake's Fireworks**

**Motion to table the Fireworks Sales License Application for Jake's Fireworks was made by Councilman Dennis and seconded by Councilman Moore.**

**Vote:**

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Councilman Boyer:    | Aye |
| Councilman Weekley:  | Aye |
| Councilman McCarthy: | Aye |



|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Councilman Dennis:     | Aye |
| Councilman Moore:      | Aye |
| Councilman Cook:       | Aye |
| Councilman Belleville: | Aye |

Request was tabled.

**d. Liquor License Request – Tanglefoot Dance Hall**

Owner Thomas Vogel briefly spoke to Council regarding his liquor license request. Police Chief Doug Wendel had no concerns with Tanglefoot Dance Hall obtaining a liquor license.

**Motion to approve Liquor License Request for Tanglefoot Dance Hall was made by Councilman Dennis and seconded by Councilman McCarthy.**

**Vote:**

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

Motion carried.

**VIII. Old Business**

None

**IX. Mayor and City Council Reports**

**Councilman Boyer** no comments.

**Councilman Weekley** no comments.

**Councilman McCarthy** no comments.

**Councilman Dennis** no comments.

**Councilman Moore** no comments.

**Councilman Cook** addressed a comment to Festus resident, Mrs. Valish, where he owned the fact that he pushed for the buyout option in the contract with CRG, and that it was done with good intentions and as protections for homeowners. Commented on



operations of Festus Splash Pad directed to Parks Director Josh Whaley. Commented on needing to keep an eye on and support County t-tax. T-tax it is what provides revenue for a lot of the City's infrastructure and road improvements and looking at historical trends, it's been decreasing in support. Commented on road residue getting on vehicles during road work. Commented that he does not support Jake's fireworks tent being in the same location in Wal-Mart parking lot due to it being a heavy traffic area.

**Councilman Belleville** wanted to follow-up on topic of Pounds/Gamel Cemetery Rd, and its use by semi-trucks causing hazardous driving situations with other traffic, pedestrians or kids on bikes. Questioning what the City could do legally to prevent semi-trucks from using the roadway. Police Chief Wendel commented it would be possible but would need an ordinance. City Attorney Brian Malone commented that he would have to do some research on it. The Mayor echoed the need to do research on the topic.

**Mayor Richards** commented that June 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> was MML Elected Officials Training Conference and that our new council members would be attending.

**X. Adjournment**

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

**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 meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

7/13/2026  
Date - Approved by Council

Jennifer Filkins  
Deputy Clerk  
Festus, Missouri