

City of Gilbert  
Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting  
Tuesday, January 27, 2026  
Council Chambers

Mayor Oberstar, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:01P.M.

Quorum determined.

Present: Councilors Pontinen, Skrbec and Vertachnik, Mayor Oberstar, Jr., Deputy Clerk Lynn Lorey and Police Chief Ty Techar. City Attorney Bryan Lindsay arrived at 6:21 P.M.

Absent with notice: Councilor Redepenning

Pledge of Allegiance

**Additions to the Agenda:**

**Consent Agenda:**

City Council Minutes

- January 13, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes – omit a couple of sentences under the Mayor’s report.
- January 13, 2026 City Council Working Session Minutes

Invoices from Previously Approved Projects

Boards and Commissions Minutes

**Motion** by Skrbec, seconded by Vertachnik to approve the Consent Agenda with changes. MCU

**Public Participation:** None

**Reports – Mayor & Council**

**Councilor Pontinen:** Visited the library and noted there is a pickle ball net set up and inquired who was using it. It was noted that the Police Department had set it up and was using it. Councilor Skrbec stated everyone should follow the proper procedures whether it is city staff or otherwise, for using the space. Discussion took place regarding accessibility and marketing the space better. Councilor Pontinen would like to see some sort of policy in place for public use. Skrbec spoke about other facilities in other towns that are making areas more useful and open to the public. Once the HVAC project is done, we could actively market the building and update the fees. Pontinen stated this would be a good time to update the fee schedule.

**Councilor Skrbec:** February 3<sup>rd</sup> is Caucus night. Skrbec listed various locations for the caucus and noted you could find other locations by going to the Secretary of State website.

**Councilor Vertachnik:** Conference room at the library and various other areas need to be cleaned up. Vertachnik would like to see it get cleaned up as to not delay the contractors and the work they need to do. Would like to see the lights get switched to LED at the community center. Vertachnik made a schedule to give to Public Works for the cleanup of the Community Center. Mayor

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Oberstar said the Deputy Clerk could help to work with Public Works and the Contractors. Discussion took place on the various ways to dispose of old property. A date of February 20<sup>th</sup> is set to make sure everything is cleaned up in the Community Center room.

Councilor Vertachnik made a sample of a vacation planner to give to Public Works, utilities and office staff.

Vertachnik inquired about credit card fees. Discussion took place on convenience fees and what sort of fees the city has in place. Deputy Clerk Lorey will look into the credit card fees and get back to the council.

**Mayor Oberstar:** Would like to make sure the light that was discussed during the working session could be fixed.

**Reports – Staff, Boards & Council:**

**Cemetery Board:** There is an opening on the Cemetery Board, Keith Shatava has moved away.

Board members are needed for many of the commissions/boards. Councilor Skrbec suggested getting the current listing and status of the boards and commissions, would like to see some advertisements to encourage others to join a board.

Councilor Pontinen expressed frustration with trying to get people to join some city boards. Mayor Oberstar agreed and discussed the interest is not there.

**Fire Chief :** Fire Chief Marc Kwiatkoski stated he wanted to come to the meeting to give an update to clear up some things that were wrongfully said during last few council meetings by Clerk Skrbich. The annual roster with officers was submitted at the beginning of December to be approved. It was not brought forward by Clerk Skrbich for council approval.

**Motion** by Skrbec, seconded by Mayor Oberstar, Jr. to approve the elected officials of the volunteer fire department for 2026. MCU

Counselor Pontinen inquired about the wages of the fire department officers. Kwiatkowski ran through the various wages and the multiple responsibilities that each officer has. Members are paid \$8 per call, which is below minimum wage, and PERA, which is the lowest in the region at \$2,000 per year vested, after 20 years.

Currently at 19 members. 66 paged called for 2025, there are 7 so far already in January. Pontinen inquired about a monthly report from the department. Reports/minutes were given to Clerk Skrbich but never passed on to the council.

Kwiatkowski also cleared up some misinformation that was given by Clerk Skrbich at a previous meeting regarding the \$10k that was put in the budget for unforeseen events along with the truck repair that was needed during a wildland fire, eluding the City paid for the repairs. Whenever the \$10k was not used, it would go back into the fund. What was not told to the council is that the fire truck made \$275/hour during the wildland fires, which pays each firefighter \$25, which means that fire truck is making \$175. The truck was at the fires for 3 days, after paying the fire fighters, the

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truck made the city \$9,825. \$4,200 of that went into replacing the 22-year-old tires with brand new tires.

Kwaitkowski spoke of some repairs that are needed and has been waiting to see where the budget is. He inquired where the money would come from during emergency repairs. Mayor Oberstar, Jr. stated you can't budget for breakdowns, and he does not want to see the department not being operable. Kwiatkowski wants to have opportunity to be transparent with the council, unlike the last 2 years.

He will gather a list of all old SCBA air tanks that can either be disposed of or sold and will have it ready for the next meeting. Old air packs that are outdated would get disposed of, others that do work will be sold.

**Attorney Bryan Lindsay:** Nothing at this time.

**Police Chief Ty Techar:** Nothing at this time.

**First Responder Director Pete Makowski:** thanked everyone for their support and great work, specifically mentioning the Police and Fire Departments of Gilbert.

In 2025, the first responders had 192 First Responder calls. There are currently 6 very dedicated First Responders in Gilbert.

For 2 years Makowski has been working towards getting automatic defibrillators to the First Responders. The University of Minnesota gave (free of charge) 3 automatic defibrillators. They will be carried by the most active responders. He hoped to keep working towards making sure all First Responders will have one to carry. Each unit is around \$700 each. They are easy to operate and are recertified and will be checked on a regular basis.

Mayor Oberstar, Jr. thanked Makowski for working on the grant to acquire the defibrillators.

Counselor Skrbec inquired about the battery life of the units. Makowski stated they should last 18-24 months. If in a cold car, the battery life will go down. Batteries are replaceable. Makowski will work with officer Jarvela to keep up with them. He also mentioned Scott Ankley is very dedicated paramedic and will train the first responders with the defib. And offers to do community CPR training etc.

Makowski wants the public to know that when there are heart issues that require CPR, compression only CPR is the standard now and very effective.

Police Chief Ty Techar mentioned the department has received a grant for 5 automatic defibrillators for the squad cars. When the defibs are opened up, it gives a signal to cardiologists. It has saved 3 individuals so far in Gilbert, all have survived.

**Deputy Clerk Lynn Lorey:** Nothing at this time.

**Old Business:**

Check Register:

- a. Check register 1/14/2026 – 1/21/2026
- b. Check register 1/26/2026 – 1/27/2026

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**Motion** by Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec to approve the January 2026 check registers. MCU

Discussion took place regarding the heat and costs for various city owned buildings, needing better clarification on the billing regarding heat costs.

Counselor Vertachnik inquired about the fees and Visa invoices. Accounts Payable Administrative Assistant Marion DeLage stated she is looking into online access for those invoices. With the delay in the postal service and the effect it has on receiving the invoices and sending payment, online access would allow her to get the checks done early enough to send it in the mail to avoid any extra charges. Counselor Skrbec stated the delivery from the postal service is estimated to be anywhere between 20-25% longer in terms of getting the checks there and invoices to the city and these are changes completely out of the City's control. Skrbec would like to see more changes to make things more efficient by making an electronic process. Discussion took place with Deputy Clerk Lorey and the council on various ways to improve many things throughout the city including invoicing, coding, etc.

AFSCME contract negotiations will continue on February 10<sup>th</sup> at noon.

Resolution will need to be made for supporting the landfill.

Community Center updates from Jonathon Balmer: now testing for hazardous material through the month of February. Construction will start in March. Existing boiler will be offline in April. Mechanical room all done by Memorial Day. ADA toilet going into the bathroom. HVAC and cooling system. The abatement part – will come back next month to give an update on it, everything will align with that. Pontinen inquired about asbestos. The contractor was unsure yet but will find out in the next month. Any work that needs to be done, will make sure things will be sealed/protected accordingly. Subcontractor is testing for asbestos. Counselor Skrbec would like to make sure there is communication for the library so nothing is damaged etc. Staying in close contact with the staff. Relocating the whole library collection will be too much. If the Library were to close due to the HVAC installation, they are looking at it being closed for a couple days, possibly a week. They plan to minimize the disruptions. The library opening up at 10am helps the contractors.

Pontinen inquired if the radiators will all be removed. Holes will be patched. Overhead duct work on both levels will give the library more space. Where the old air conditioners were located, is old window frames, and it will now be replaced with new windows.

**New Business:**

**Motion** by Skrbec supported by Vertachnik to approve the pump replacement for \$4,337.96 with MN Pump Works. MCU

**Motion** by Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec to approve the JK Mechanical cost of \$3440 for a spool. MCU

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**Motion** by Vertachnik, supported by Pontinen to approve a gambling permit for Ladies Rock Off-Road Club. MCU  
Councilor Skrbec abstained from the vote.

**Motion** by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to suspend the normal meeting at 7:56PM for closed session discussion/performance review. MCU

**Motion** by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to end the closed session and resume the regular council meeting at 8:59PM. MCU

All present.

**Motion** by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik for the city staff and attorney to follow through with direction that was discussed during the closed session regarding a performance review. MCU

**Motion** by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik for a closed hearing on Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4PM. MCU

**Motion** by Vertachnik, seconded by Skrbec to adjourn meeting at 9:03PM. MCU.  
*\*These minutes are paraphrased and are not written word for word.*

ATTEST:

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Lynn Lorey, Deputy Clerk

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Karl Oberstar Jr., Mayor