

BROOKINGS CITY COUNCIL
February 24, 2026

The Brookings City Council held a meeting Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 6:00 PM, at the Brookings City & County Government Center, Chambers, with the following City Council members present: Mayor Oepke Niemeyer, and Council Members Wayne Avery, Brianna Doran, Lisa Hager, Bonny Specker, Holly Tilton Byrne, and Nick Wendell. City Manager Paul Briseno, City Attorney J. Vince Jones, and City Clerk Bonnie Foster were also present.

Agenda. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that the agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

Consent Agenda. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that the consent agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

A. Action to approve the February 10, 2026 City Council Minutes.

B. Action on Temporary Alcohol / Special Event Alcoholic Beverage Licenses from existing alcohol license holders: Sodexo Catering (License Holder RB-28249 and RW-28251): SDSU TL26-034.

C. Action on appointments to the Business Improvement District #1 Board: Lisa Marotz and Elena McKeown (terms expire 1/1/2029).

D. Action to abate Property Taxes in the amount of \$\$1,195.23 for Parcel #40175-00200-014-00.

Report: SDSU Student Association. Anna Hundt, SDSU Student's Association Government Affairs Chair, provided an update on SDSU current affairs. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented by the Mayor & City Council to Anna Hundt for her work behalf of SDSU and the City of Brookings this past year.

Mayor's State of the City Address. Mayor Niemeyer's message: "I'm privileged to present the 2025 State of the City address. This address is more than just a list of accomplishments, it's the story of our city, a reflection of who we are, how we respond when tested, and how we continue to grow. With purpose. That story begins on December 30, 2024.

Many of us woke up that Tuesday morning to the news that a fire had broken out in our historic downtown. It was more than just a building at risk. It was a reminder that our downtown is not only an economic center – it is a pivotal part of Brookings' identity. In the days that followed, what stood out was not only the quick response of our first responders and mutual aid partners, but the overwhelming care and response of our community. Businesses stepped up to support and make room for one another. Residents showed up with patience, care and encouragement. And city staff immediately began working behind the scenes to help stabilize (establish), plan and find

a path forward. That moment became a turning point – not defined by loss, but by resolve.

In 2025, Brookings chose not just to recover, but to invest intentionally in our future. For the first time, the City launched Downtown Incentive Programs, reinvesting \$140,000 in downtown businesses in 2025. The programs are designed to encourage reinvestment, redevelopment, and long-term vitality. They send a clear message: Brookings believes in its downtown, and we are willing to partner with those who believe in it too. Those downtown incentive programs will reinvest in more businesses in 2026. As our downtown businesses rebuild and reinvest, we are building a stronger identity together.

That same spirit of partnership and growth carried into one of the most visible developments in our community – the Marketplace. As we welcome Target, Aldi, and Kwik Star into our community, the Marketplace is not just about retail. It represents confidence in Brookings as a regional hub. It reflects years of planning, infrastructure investment, and strong collaboration between the City, developers, and the private sector.

To responsibly and intentionally support growth, over the last couple of years, the City created new Tax Increment Financing districts to encourage workforce housing and sustainable development. This includes the Marketplace, the Branch Creek neighborhood, Trails Head, Solventum Expansion, and the 6th Street Development.

In the last three years alone, with these TIF Districts, we've been able to add 378 housing units and 86 jobs in our community. With the opening of Interchange 130 in 2023, we are already seeing new opportunities emerge along 20th Street South. In 2025, we welcomed the City's first Kwik Star and our newest Starbucks to 20th Street South. We're expanding Brookings in a way that is deliberate, connected, and forward-looking. Growth, however, only works when it's supported by strong infrastructure – and much of that work happens quietly.

Throughout 2025, the City continued its commitment to maintaining and improving the systems that keep our community moving. We completed street maintenance and overlay projects, including the use of slurry sealing, an innovative and cost-effective approach to maintaining our many miles of roadway.

We also completed sidewalk improvements, drainage projects, intersection upgrades at 22nd Avenue and 20th Street South, and the addition of a shared-use path along 20th Street South, all the way from Main Avenue to 22nd Avenue. All of these reflect a City that thinks carefully about safety, accessibility, and longevity.

At the Brookings Regional Landfill, we continued work on the leachate force main project at the Brookings Regional Landfill and built a new equipment storage building. We also created a new residential drop-off area, making the landfill easier for residents to use. The life of the landfill has been expanded through recycling programs, including

our holiday light recycling and our Household Hazardous Waste event. That event broke records with 431 participating vehicles.

At the Brookings Regional Airport, the completion of the parallel taxiway and taxi lane extension ensures Brookings remains connected and competitive. This is not flashy work – but it is essential work.

We've also continued to modernize how the City operates. In 2025, the City updated its annual digital budget book, expanded our online performance dashboards, and implemented new software systems to improve transparency, efficiency, and service delivery. These tools help our residents better understand how Brookings functions and help ensure accountability in how City resources are used.

At the same time, we never lose sight of the fact that a city is, ultimately, about people. Our Police Department ramped up its community policing efforts and continued the Citizens First Responder Academy for another year. They also began the process of seeking CALEA accreditation – a nationally recognized standard that reflects professionalism and best practices.

We hosted community conversations about the future location of the police station. We also selected the future site for our main fire station – just west of its current location on Third Street. Financing the future locations of these facilities has been top-of-mind for the City Council for many years. The City has reserved \$18.5 million to pay for the construction of these important facilities. That's \$18.5 million that now does not need to be financed through increased property taxes for Brookings residents. These decisions are about resiliency and readiness for today and decades from now.

Our commitment to sustainability has also continued in meaningful ways. City staff treated and removed ash trees across Brookings to stay ahead of the Emerald Ash Borer. They hosted a prescribed burn at the Dakota Nature Park, and continued stormwater incentive and tree voucher programs.

In October, the City also launched a Food Waste Compost Pilot Program in partnership with the State of South Dakota. In only three short months, nearly 7,400 pounds of food waste was collected. We can't wait to see how much we can collect by next October.

We also invested in mobility and access by beginning the Master Transportation Plan, partnering with SDSU students on a solid waste route optimization study, and hosting another successful Spring Bulky Item Pickup event where we collected over 400 tons of waste, metal, and branches.

Community life in Brookings remains vibrant and deeply connected. The Brookings Activity Center expanded its membership in 2025. The City took over ownership and operations of the 5th Street Gym – now home to the Brookings Winter Farmers Market – and we continued renovations at the skatepark. In a single summer weekend, our parks

system held a record 40,000-plus people in our parks for multiple sporting tournaments and the Brookings Summer Arts Festival.

At the Brookings Public Library, over 1,000 readers participated in the summer reading program. The library also received a \$120,000 Lowe's Hometown Grant to improve shelving, furniture, and create a mural.

Thousands gathered for concerts, community celebrations, carnivals and events like Uncle Sam Jam at the Dacotah Bank Center – reinforcing that Brookings is a place where people come together. And throughout the year, our staff continued to grow professionally – attending local, state, regional, and national conferences, bringing new ideas and best practices back home to Brookings.

Our community also received national recognition again this year, being named #2 Most Affordable College Town in the US, #4 Best Place to Live in South Dakota, #4 Best Place for Young Professionals in South Dakota, and #9 Best College Town in the Midwest. While rankings don't define us, they do reflect what many already know – that Brookings is a community that invests in quality of life.

Finally, I want to recognize the people who make all of this possible – our City departments. Our staff show up every day to keep Brookings running. Their work is thoughtful, professional, and often unseen. They are planners, problem-solvers, and public servants who care deeply about this community. And they understand deeply that what we do is bigger than us.

As we look ahead, know that Brookings is not growing by accident. We are expanding intentionally, supporting businesses and people, investing in infrastructure, and planning for the future in a way that reflects our values. The story of Brookings in 2025 is not about a single project or event. It's about resilience after challenge, innovation through partnership, and steady progress guided by purpose. It's a story written by a community that shows up, by staff who serve with pride, and by leaders committed to stewarding our community into its next chapter.

Thank you for being part of that story, and for continuing to help Brookings grow in a way that we can all be proud of.”

FIRST READING – Ordinance 26-006. Introduction and First Reading was held on Ordinance 26-006, an Ordinance Authorizing Budget Amendment No. 10 to the 2025 Budget. Second Reading and Action: March 10, 2026.

FIRST READING – Ordinance 26-007. Introduction and First Reading was held on Ordinance 26-007, an Ordinance Authorizing Budget Amendment No. 1 to the 2026 Budget. Second Reading and Action: March 10, 2026.

FIRST READING – Ordinance 26-008. Introduction and First Reading was held on Ordinance 26-008, an Ordinance Amending Chapter 94, Article VI, Division 5, Section

94-473, Related to Projecting Signs in the Business B-1 Central District. Public Hearing and Action: March 10, 2026.

FIRST READING – Ordinance 26-009. Introduction and First Reading was held on Ordinance 26-009, an Ordinance Amending Chapter 6, Section 6-8, and Chapter 74, Section 74-40 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Brookings. Second Reading and Action: March 10, 2026.

On-Off Sale Malt License. A public hearing was held on a request for an On-Off Sale Malt License, for KJN Investments LLC, dba Shorty’s Burgers & Brew to be located at 1224 6th Street, Suite A. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Specker, that the On-Off Sale Malt License be approved. Public Comment: Kim Dokken-Nelson. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

Resolution 26-010. A public hearing was held on Resolution 26-010, a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a 10-year On-Sale Wine Operating Agreement with KJN Investments LLC, dba Shorty’s Burgers & Brew, owners Joshua and Kimberly Nelson. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that Resolution 26-010 be approved. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

RESOLUTION 26-010 - ON-SALE WINE OPERATING AGREEMENT –
10-YEAR AGREEMENT: KJN Investments LLC, dba Shorty’s Burgers & Brew

BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Brookings, South Dakota, that the City Council hereby approves an Operating Alcohol Management Agreement for Wine between the City of Brookings and owners Joshua and Kimberly Nelson, KJN Investments LLC, dba Shorty’s Burgers & Brew, for the purpose of an alcohol manager to operate the on-sale establishment or business for and on behalf of the City of Brookings at 1224 6th Street, Suite A. Legal description: Lot 1A, Block 4, Hill Park Addition, City of Brookings, Brookings County, South Dakota.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager be authorized to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City, which shall be for a period of 10-years, with a 5-year mid-term renewal.

Resolution 26-019. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that Resolution 26-019, a Resolution Amending the Consolidated Fee Schedule, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

RESOLUTION 26-019 - RESOLUTION AMENDING
THE CONSOLIDATED FEE SCHEDULE

WHEREAS, the adopted Municipal Code and City Policies make references to fees charged; and

WHEREAS, it is prudent that the fees be reviewed for cost effectiveness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Brookings hereby adopts the following amendment to the Consolidated Fee Schedule:

Landfill: Electronics Waste (e-waste) \$1.25 per pound

Preliminary Plat. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that a Preliminary Plat for Block 1 of South Haven Addition, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

Preliminary Plat. A motion was made by Council Member Specker, seconded by Council Member Tilton Byrne, that a Preliminary Plat for Lots 1 & 2 in Block 2, and Lots 1 - 3 in Block 3 of Legacy Addition, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

Sales Tax Incentive Grant – Sequitor Edge LLC. A motion was made by Mayor Niemeyer, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that a Sales Tax Incentive Grant for Sequitor Edge LLC, be approved. Public Comment: Greg Jorgenson. The motion failed by the following vote: No: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

Progress Report. Samantha Beckman, Assistant to the City Manager, provided a progress report highlighting the City's initiatives and projects.

City Council Member Introduction of Topics for Future Discussion. A motion was made by Council Member Specker, seconded by Council Member Tilton Byrne, to direct city staff to review residential noise ordinances (not industrial). The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: 7 - Avery, Doran, Hager, Niemeyer, Specker, Tilton Byrne, and Wendell.

Adjourn. A motion was made by Council Member Tilton Byrne, seconded by Council Member Wendell, that this meeting be adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

CITY OF BROOKINGS, SD

Oepke G. Niemeyer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Bonnie Foster, City Clerk

City of Brookings Volunteer List – as per Resolution 16-025

(Addendum to the February 13, 2024 City Council Minutes.)

Brookings City Library Volunteers – Updated February 2026: Elise Fornia – NEW – Effective 02/24/2026, Cheryl Riley, Sarah Schultz, Diane Smart, Taryn Yttrie; Brookings City Fire Department Volunteers: Major Anderson, Preston Anderson, Kevin Banken, Alex Berkness, Derek Brown, Dan Bruna, Nick Casstevens, Tom Coughlin, Mandi Cramer, Roger DeBates, Scott Hallan, Bill Hardin, Drew Harding, Marty Hendricks, Troy Herrig, Justin Heyer, Kevin Hilmoie, Dalton Holm, Dave Koch, Jim Kriese, Brett Lawrence, Brandon Long, Garrett Mann, Logan Melberg, Gatlin Miller, Nick Oines, Steven Rensink, Connor Ringling, Tim Rynearson, Peyton Schaeffer, Rob Schuneman, Jesse Seas, Joseph Sheeley, Lucas Speakman, Curt Teal, Anthony Teesdale, Adam Vaux, Nicholas Voichahoske, Rainer Westall. Brookings City Park & Recreation Volunteers: Matthew Albritton, Tynna Bain, Matthew Bowman, Cody Burggraff, Samuel Clement, Woodrow Dahl, Travis Erickson, Matthew Filed, Nathan Harrington, Nathan Hilbrands, Dillon Howe, Matthew Hupf, Cameron Jones, Brandon Karels, Connor Landberg, Bo McCloud, Chad Nicola, Cody Miller, Lisa Robinson, Seth Saylor, Joseph Schumacher, Christina Silva, Andrew Wright, Nicole Yseth.