



Neighboring fires

West Branch Fire Department responded to a field fire Monday afternoon around 3:45 p.m. that threatened buildings about five miles south of the city at 2353 Baker Avenue. West Liberty Fire assisted as the fire spread to about four acres and burned right up to one steel machine shed, WBFD Chief Kevin Stoolman said. WBFD called for the assist due to the wind and dry conditions and put the fire out in a bit more than an hour. This fire burned on the west side of the road. At the same time, a landowner conducted a controlled burn on the east side of Baker, right across the street. However, that eastside fire remained under control. Gregory R. Norfleet/West Branch Times

BRIEFS

WBHS releases perfect attendance

The following students had perfect attendance for the first quarter of the 2025-2026 school year. Ninth grade: Lincoln Beckman, Madison Brand, Cahetel Chekpo, Eloise Guhl, Paden Janssen, Harper Jeffries, Motley Johnston, Peter Koenig, Charlie Krall, Ava Lacina, Evan Petersen, Kincade Rios, Levi Rodgers, Madelynn Sand, Brooks Seydel 10th Grade: Maksim Fernandez, Lila Finzel, Kendall Hudson, Mason Janssen, Lander Malloy, Dilan Schenkel, MaryAnn Stubbs, Mason Vargason, Hudson Wolfe 11th Grade: Connor Davidson, Eli Farmer, Anthony Heitzman, Cael Nelson, Emalyn Poe, Logan Revis,

Garrett Sotzen, Emma Wolf, Joshua Zoulek 12th Grade: Logan Christoffel, Logan Heick, Carter Hetrick, Kenzie Kirkpatrick, Tate Lynch, Griffin Seydel, Kennedy Simpson, Audrey Watt The following students had perfect attendance for the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year. Ninth Grade: Ayla Gingerich, Paden Janssen, Gavin LeMay, Kincade Rios, Levi Rodgers, Madelynn Sand, Brooks Seydel 10th Grade: AJ Dresden, Lila Finzel, Carson Gingerich, Karlee Hansen, Kendall Hudson, Mason Jansen, Noah Noble, Alexander Reardon, Broderick Reardon, Raelyn Wilcher

11th Grade: Grace Hamann, Anthony Heitzman, Grace Vincent, Stone Wildman 12th Grade: Ewan Arlen, Alex Moss, Madelynn Tygrett The following students had perfect attendance for first semester of the 2025-2026 school year. Ninth Grade: Paden Janssen, Kincade Rios, Levi Rodgers, Madelynn Sand, Brooks Seydel 10th Grade: Lila Finzel, Kendall Hudson, Mason Janssen 11th Grade: Anthony Heitzman 12th Grade: (No seniors recorded perfect attendance)

Senator

From Page 2

for rural Iowa, for farmers, and for hard-working Iowa families,” said Senator Gruenhagen. “Since being elected to represent Senate

District 41, I have proudly supported historic tax cuts for Iowans, implementing a 3.8 percent flat tax. I also supported eliminating taxes on retirement income, provided farmers a first-time pension exemption, and the largest teacher pay increase

in Iowa’s history. This year, we’ll be working on a property tax overhaul to bring more relief to Iowa’s families and make living in Iowa more affordable. I am proud of how far we have come in the last four years, and I’m looking forward

to continue talking with my constituents about our successes and how we can make our state even better in the years to come.”

Senator Kerry Gruenhagen, a former Muscatine County Farm Bureau president, operates

a grain farm with his father and son in rural Scott and Muscatine counties and is a small business owner. He has one son and three grandchildren.

Senator Kerry Gruenhagen currently serves as Government

Oversight Chair. He also serves on the Agriculture, Appropriations, Commerce, Education, and Ways and Means committees.

Senate District 41 consists of Cedar County and parts of Muscatine, and Scott counties.

LEGALS

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Library and Nikki Scheel of Clarence Library addressed Board regarding impact a 25% reduction in funding would have on Cedar County libraries. Moved by Barnhart seconded by Gaul to approve Board Minutes of February 24, 2026. Ayes: All Absent: Bell, Bixler Moved by Barnhart seconded by Gaul to remove \$11,000 from Board of Supervisors budget as follows: reduce wages by \$1,000 per Board member, reduce mileage by \$5,000, reduce printed legal by \$500 and reduce printed minutes by \$500. Ayes: All Absent: Bixler, Bell Finance Director Dauber provided a handout to Board members showing each department’s attempt to cut 4% as directed at last meeting. Each department head had opportunity to speak about what cut, if they didn’t reach 4% and why. Grave markers will be removed from Veterans Affairs budget and added back into department 99. Board reminded everyone that all these cuts are being made to minimize increase in levy. Discussion of office hours held and possibility of 40-hour work weeks being cut to 37.5 hours. Consensus of Board that entities are going to be paired next year same as everyone else. Moved by Gaul seconded by Barnhart to implement reduction of Environmental & Zoning, two part-time staff members and revised figures that were submitted and reviewed today. Ayes: All Absent: Bell, Bixler Consensus of Board to have a meeting with HR Attorney Galloway before May 1, 2026 for FY27/28 and start budgeting process earlier. Moved by Barnhart seconded by Gaul to adjourn at 10:25 a.m., to March 3, 2026. Ayes: All Absent: Bixler, Bell Jeff Kaufmann, Chairperson Pro-Term Nicki Welch, Auditor WBT 10

Legal Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON A CERTIFICATION AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN IOWA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER AND THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH. PLEASE BE ALSO ADVISED that a public hearing on the proposed Certified Local Government Agreement with the Historic Preservation Commission will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18th, 2026 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 110 N. Poplar Street, West Branch, Iowa 52358. At that time, the Historic Preservation Commission will receive comments for or against said Agreement. In addition, written comments can be forwarded to the City Clerk. /s/ Alysia Friis, City Clerk WBT 10

West Branch city council

(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection at westbranchiowa.org. The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.) West Branch, Iowa; City Council; March 2, 2026 Council Chambers; Regular Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Mayor Laughlin called the West Branch City Council regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call: Council members present; Colton Miller, Mike Horihan, Jerry Sexton, Chantry Noel and Tom Dean. City Staff present: City Administrator Adam Kotofo, City Clerk Alysia Friis, City Attorney Kevin Olson, City Engineer Dave Schechinger Attending by Zoom: Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken, Deputy City Clerk Jessica Brown and Library Director Jessie Shaffer APPROVE THE AGENDA Motion to Approve the Agenda made by Miller, 2nd by Noel. Motion carried on a voice vote. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA Approve Minutes from the February 17, 2026 City Council meeting. Approval of a Block Party Request - 427 Green St. Approve January Financial Report Approve Claims for March 2, 2026. EXPENDITURES - 3/2/2026 AMAZON.COM-YOUTH PROGRAM SUPPLIES & BOOKS - LIB-473.49 GOERDT INSPECTION-BLDG INSPECTIONS-1,092.00 IOWA LAW ENFORCEMENT-VARIOUS TRAINING FOR PD-400.00 MISCELLANEOUS VENDOR-RMK DEVELOPMENT:REIMBURSEMENT -350.00 STERICYCLE-SHREDDING SERVICES-98.98 VAN AUKEN, HEIDI-MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT-119.92 TOTAL--2,534.39 PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS - 2/27/2026 72,014.63 PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS AMAZON.COM-VARIOUS ITEMS - LIBRARY-436.32 BMI-ANNUAL MUSIC LICENSE-459.00 BOUND TREE MEDICAL-MEDICAL SUPPLIES - FIRE-72.97 CORRIDOR ENERGY COOP-STREET LIGHTS-350.34 CULLIGAN WATER-WATER SOFTENER SERVICE-75.23 FRONTLINE PLUS FIRE & RESCUE-WARNING SIRENS MAINT SERVICE-750.00 HD SUPPLY-CLEANING SUPPLIES - TH-31.36 HEIMAN FIRE EQUIPMENT-INTERCEPTOR HOOD - FIRE-991.14 HI-LINE-SHOP SUPPLIES - PW-246.06 INTERSTATE POWER SYSTEMS-LIFT STATION GENERATOR REPAIR-5,264.38 IOWA CITY TIRE & SERVICE-TIRES FOR EXPLORER - PD-745.95 MENARDS-SHOP CLEANING SUPPLIES - PW-56.72 MOPPY MO'S-JANITORIAL SERVICE - FIRE-17.50 OLSON, KEVIN D-LEGAL SERVICES - FEBRUARY 2026-1,500.00 OVERDRIVE-DIGITAL & AUDIO

BOOKS-428.18 PAPAS TRUCK & TRAILER-TRUCK REPAIR - FIRE-1,139.50 PYRAMID SERVICES-CHAIN & REPAIR - FIRE-488.26 QUILL-OFFICE SUPPLIES - CITY, PW-646.91 RACOM CORPORATION-WIRELESS DOWNLOAD FIX - PD-390.00 WEST BRANCH ANIMAL CLINIC-ANIMAL CONTROL - STRAY CATS-135.00 WEST BRANCH REPAIRS-LIGHT BULB - PD-70.90 WEST BRANCH TIMES-LEGAL PUBLICATIONS-432.80 AMAZON.COM-VARIOUS MISC. ITEMS - LIBRARY-1,174.82 GOLD MEDAL CENTRAL-CUBBY POPOORN MACHINE - P&R-1,415.95 HAWKINS-CHEMICALS-3,067.08 IOWA CODIFICATION-JANUARY 2026 SUPPLEMENT-351.00 LEAF CAPITAL FUNDING-COPIER LEASE - CITY OFFICE-396.00 MEDIACOM-CABLE SERVICES -41.90 US BANK CORPORATE CARD-CREDIT CARD PURCHASES-4,197.59 VERIZON WIRELESS-VERIZON WIRELESS-424.81 WEST BRANCH ANIMAL CLINIC-ANIMAL CONTROL - STRAY CAT-75.00 SISCO-HEALTH & FLEX CLAIMS-2,224.66 SISCO-HEALTH CLAIMS 2-23-2026-1,139.47 MISCELLANEOUS VENDORS-UB REFUNDS-92.87 METLIFE-INSURANCE PREMIUM-2,387.38 SISCO-INSURANCE PREMIUM -16,567.77 TOTAL--48,344.82 GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES--122,893.84 FUND TOTALS 001 GENERAL FUND-46,560.14 022 CIVIC CENTER-31.36 031 LIBRARY -6,580.33 110 ROAD USE TAX-5,938.67 112 TRUST AND AGENCY-33,834.49 600 WATER FUND-13,561.22 610 SEWER FUND-15,691.80 740 STORM WATER UTILITY-695.83 GRAND FUND TOTAL--122,893.84 Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve the Consent agenda. AYES: Miller, Dean, Noel, Horihan, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried. PRESENTATIONS / communications / open forum - None Discussion Lexus Nexus vendor discussion- This system would be utilized to help with collecting the data needed to work with residents that move out with delinquent accounts and to get refund checks to rental customers when they move outside of West Branch, but still within the state of Iowa. Single user access to this system will cost \$150/month, so the proposal is to subscribe to this system for one year to go through current records and collect what is needed to be able to reach out to these customers and then to close out the program until needed at a later time. This will be on the next

Agenda for further action. Red Lion Solar Energy Proposal/ Discussion- Terry Dvorak shared information on his privately funded solar business. The proposal would add solar arrays to 10 of the 18 city properties that make the most sense. A list of these areas is: City Hall Roof, Town Hall east facing roof, Library roof, Fire Department roof, Streets Shop roof, North Water Tower (elevated ground mount or fenced in area), Well Pumps (ground array north of the cemetery), South Water Tower (small ground mount square), Cubby Park (small ground square), WW Treatment Plant (north of ponds if dust control is used or north of the overall property). Further discussion was had on the timeframe, logistics and feasibility of this project. A committee will meet to talk about options and how to proceed with this potential project. PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA Public Hearing - Hearing on proposal to enter into a Sewer Revenue Loan and Distribution Agreement. / Move to Action. Mayor Laughlin called the Public Hearing to order at 7:39pm. With no questions or comments, the Public Hearing was closed by the mayor at 7:40pm. Resolution 2026-06 Approving a Five-Year Agreement for Maintenance and Repair of Primary Roads in Municipalities between the City of West Branch and the Iowa Department of Transportation. / Move to Action. Mitchell Wood with the IA DOT, attended the meeting to answer any questions on the agreement for the Mayor and Councilmembers. After discussion, it was determined that this agreement will not change any responsibilities of the DOT versus the city’s public works staff within road maintenance on the bridges, on and off ramps and sidewalks along the bridge. This is renewed every 5 years. Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2026-06. AYES: Miller, Dean, Sexton, Horihan, Noel. NAYS: Motion carried. Resolution 2026-17 Approving and Authorizing a Loan and Disbursement Agreement and providing for the issuance and securing the payment sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2026 / Move to Action. Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2026-17. AYES: Dean, Miller, Noel, Horihan, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried. Resolution 2026-18 Approving the Application for the purpose of receiving benefits from the Washington County Riverboat Foundation. / Move to Action. Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2026-18. AYES: Miller, Dean, Horihan, Sexton, Noel. NAYS: None. Motion carried. Resolution 2026-19 Approving the Matching Funds for an Application for the purpose of receiving benefits from the Washington County Riverboat Foundation. / Move to Action. Motion by Miller, second by Noel to approve Resolution 2026-19. AYES:

Miller, Noel, Sexton, Horihan, Dean. NAYS: None. Motion carried. Resolution 2026-20 Approving the City Admin. to request the \$20,749.00 from West Branch Schools for the purpose of Grant Funding and Building the trail in the right of way, in front of the High School property. / Move to Action. These funds were incorporated into the purchase of the right of way in front of the High School during the roundabout construction project. The City needed to purchase this property in line with the funding for the roundabout project and gave the funds to the school with the agreement that the funds would be given to the City to be used as matching funds within the further development of this area with the addition of a trail. Motion by Dean, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2026-20. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Miller, Noel, Horihan, Miller. NAYS: None. Motion carried. Resolution 2026-21 Approving the Deputy City Clerk Job Description. / Move to Action. Motion by Noel, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2026-21. AYES: Noel, Sexton, Horihan, Dean, Miller. NAYS: Motion carried. Resolution 2026-22 Approving the Finance Officer Job Description. / Move to Action. Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2026-22. AYES: Miller, Dean, Horihan, Noel, Sexton. NAYS: Motion carried. Resolution 2026-23 Approving the City Administrator Job Description. / Move to Action. Motion by Miller, second by Noel to approve Resolution 2026-23. AYES: Miller, Noel, Sexton, Horihan, Dean. NAYS: Motion carried. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT - Kotofo shared that he would be planning to submit the Heritage Hill Redevelopment project into the following awards and organizations: Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA)- Program of the Year Award, International City/County Management Association (ICMA)- Local Government Excellence / Good Governance Award, Iowa League of Cities- All-Star Community Award. He will show the leadership in redevelopment and long-term planning, recognize effective collaboration within the areas involved, showcase fiscal responsibility and strategic infrastructure investment, elevate the City’s reputation at the state and national level and increase community pride and external visibility for economic development efforts. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT The Sale of the Nuisance Property on Main Street, fell through. Olsen will be submitting the official citation for recording tomorrow, to move forward with the efforts to get this property cleaned up. CITY ENGINEER REPORT Schechinger presented the proposal amount for the road work on W Main Street from the roundabout to the Pedersen St. bridge. There was a proposal with the work on the existing road

and adding 5’ shoulders and an option of adding a turning lane as well. Adding the turn lane would add approximately \$230,000.00 to the project total. One of the main areas of concern was the widening of the shoulders for safety reasons and to utilize asphalt shoulders to reduce the rutting and maintenance of the shoulders. This will be added to the next council meeting to firm up a decision on the direction that the city will go with. The pickleball court that the Lion’s Club is working on has been staked off and will be starting soon. Boomerang has reached out and they will be back in the area within the next couple weeks to begin the finishing work on the Cedar-Johnson Road project to complete this. The work on the Wapsi Creek Widening will also restart soon. STAFF REPORTS- None Comments from mayor and council members - Mayor Laughlin and Councilpersons Sexton and Dean will all be out for the March 16th meeting. adjournment Motion to adjourn by Miller, second by Dean. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m. Roger Laughlin, Mayor ATTEST: Alysia Friis, City Clerk WBT 10

Advertisement for Darren Miller Photography. Includes a logo with a camera icon and the text 'DARREN MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY'. Below the logo is the website 'http://ddmiller.zenfolio.com/' and a QR code.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED BUDGET Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027 Assessing Jurisdiction: CEDAR COUNTY ASSESSOR

The Conference Board of the above-named Assessing Jurisdiction will conduct a public hearing on the proposed fiscal year budget as follows: Meeting Date: 3/24/2026 Meeting Time: 08:00 AM Meeting Location: Assessor’s Office At the public hearing any resident or taxpayer may present their objections to, or arguments in favor of, any part of the proposed budget. This notice represents a summary of the supporting detail of receipts and expenditures on file with the Conference Board Clerk. Copies of the Supplemental Budget Detail will be furnished to any taxpayer upon their request. Contact Name: Cari Dauber Contact Telephone Number: (563) 886-6413

	FYE 2025 Actual	FYE June 30, 2026 Re-estimated	FYE June 30, 2027 Proposed	Transfers Out	Estimated Ending Fund Balance FY 2027	Estimated Beginning Fund Balance FY 2027	Estimated Other Receipts	Transfers In	Estimated Amount To be Raised By Taxation
1. Assessment Expense	600,234	519,090	597,329		1,403,925	1,331,184	25,264	0	644,806
2. FICA				0	0	0	0	0	0
3. IPERS				0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Emergency				0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Unemployment Comp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Tort Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. TOTAL	600,234	519,090	597,329	0	1,403,925	1,331,184	25,264	0	644,806

Proposed taxation rate per \$1,000 valuation: \$ 0.40417 Virtual Meeting Information: -

At said Public Hearing, any person present, and so wishing, will be given the opportunity to be heard, for or against, said petition. Any person so wishing may file a document with the Cedar County Zoning Administrator prior to the time of the hearing should the person wish the document to be read for them at the time of the hearing. /s/ Philip LaRue Zoning Administrator WBT 10