



Thursday, December 4, 2025

## Special Session Focuses on Goal Setting for 2026-27

The city's elected and appointed leaders held a work session in the Ericson Public Library meeting room on Monday to begin the annual process of identifying and prioritizing goals for the next two years.

City administrator Ondrea Elmquist, who led the session, began by presenting a summary of accomplishments during the past two years as identified by Mayor Elijah Stines, council members and city department heads. Noteworthy achievements during the past two years included attracting the 750,000-square-foot Daisy Brands dairy processing facility to Boone, attaining Main Street Community status, the construction of new housing developments, downtown improvements, and successful efforts to strengthen communications with citizens. Departmental highlights also noted successful law enforcement investigations and prosecutions, continued park improvements, and upgrades to the utility systems.

Elmquist emphasized the importance of establishing broad, achievable objectives identified and collectively supported by council members.

Prior to the work session, Stines, council members and department heads were each asked to complete a preliminary questionnaire. They were asked to list specific issues and concerns they have about future city services, policies or operations. They did not need to identify potential answers or solutions. They were also asked to list any initiatives, programs, policies, capital projects or equipment purchases they believe the City should consider in the next two years.

Elmquist read the information from the individual questionnaires to launch discussion. The approach is designed to elicit a wide range of ideas and spark a broader conversation of goals and ways to achieve them. Items listed within the questionnaires are of one's own opinion, beliefs, understanding, and may contain inaccurate information.

This year's goal-setting session focused on four areas: personnel, quality of life for the community's residents, economic vitality and growth, and infrastructure improvements.

Topics discussed under each goal included:

- **Personnel:** emergency services; applying for a federal Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for the potential hiring of three new firefighters; a staffing/salary study; the hiring of one full-time parks employee; and a review of city services.
- **Quality of Life:** rebuilding of the greenspace, funding the 10-year Boone Municipal Parks Comprehensive Plan, and increasing activities for children, teens and older residents.
- **Growth:** economic development priorities, housing needs, debt service utilization, downtown building improvements and incentives, and updating the city's comprehensive plan.
- **Infrastructure:** water, sanitary sewer, and street improvements.

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