

**Approved**  
**03/25/25**



**MEETING MINUTES**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**February 25, 2025**

**Present:** Mayor Dresel, Council Member Battles, Rivers, Anderson and Meyers

**Absent:**

**Staff:** City Administrator Pechman, Attorney Doran, Associate Planner Nelson, City Engineer Stanley, Parks Superintendent Zacho, Fire Chief Reed, Police Chief Schlumbohm

**Public Attendance:** Leilani Freeman, Grant Prentice, Justin Kral, Steve Curtis

**REGULAR MEETING-CALL TO ORDER 6:30**

Mayor Dresel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**1a. "Pledge of Allegiance"**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Action**

**1b. Roll Call**

All members are present.

**Action**

**AGENDA**

Mayor Dresel asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

Administrator Pechman added 7i under new business for pull tabs for the Hockey Association in the Clutch Golf LLC building on Karmel Avenue.

Council Member Rivers made the motion to approve the agenda as amended, Council Member Meyer seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**3a. Minutes of January 14, 2025**

**Action**

**3b. Payment of Bills/Finance Information**

**Action**

**3c. Committee Reports**

**Discussion**

**3d. RES – 25-02-02 Labor Agreement**

**Action**

Council Member Meyer stated the Fire Department had discussed the water rescue group and adding that to the department.

Council Member River made the motion to approve the consent agenda, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA PLACEMENT**

Mayor Dresel asked if anyone had anything which was not on the agenda.

Grant Prentice 10725 Lake Avenue stated he is the COO of Prentice Lawn and Landscaping but is not bidding on the parks contract. Mr. Prentice wants to discuss the position we are at since he has been fighting this since July. Mr. Prentice would like to discuss the RFP and how people are being treated. Mr. Prentice had found out the RFP had been sent out 5 days before it was going to be closed. He dutifully called a lot of other lawn care companies to see if they were interested in getting a quote in several did. Mr. Prentice said he had put those together along with their email addresses and presented it to John Pechman. He had asked Mr. Pechman if he could send out the RFP to these people also. Mr. Pechman took the sheet and said he would think about it. Mr. Prentice stated he repeated himself and he included please, and he again said he would think about it and walked away. Mr. Prentice stated he did not appreciate being talked to like that, it was not fair to talk to me like that when all he is trying to do is get the right company. We were asking for an extension to include more people to actually have some time to put the numbers together. He said he had met with Council Member Meyers and he really appreciated his time and thanked him. Council Member Meyer had told him he had no idea the RFP had gone out. Mr. Prentice stated that it concerns him that nobody is looking at what is going on. It's not fair everyone needs to have the opportunity to look at this and bid on this. We are all professional lawn care companies. I am not even bidding on this I am just fighting for everyone else. Mr. Prentice stated he and others had asked for an extension but were refused because there was one in already. Mr. Prentice asked who's bid was in?

Administrator Pechman stated Paradise.

Mr. Prentice said exactly that is who had finished out the contract and it looks bad. He feels it has not been fair and Ground Force would have been the better company to go with they also do all the spraying for Paradise Lawn Care. Ground Force would have been the preferred choice. Mr. Prentice feels this was not fair.

Mayor Dresel asked if anyone else had any other questions, hearing none he continued.

### **5a. Fire Chief Annual Report**

On behalf of the Chisago City Fire Department, I present to you our 2024 year-end report. As always, we as a department have strived to serve our community in Fire Protection, Fire Prevention Education and continued Community Service. Our members logged over 1500 hours of training in 2024. The minimum hours required was 480 hours. Once again, we have excelled in making our Training count! As the demand continues to increase for training in Minnesota, we do our best to meet our obligations. Chisago City Fire trains on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM. We have had to add various nights and weekends for alternate drills and try to spread out training in the county to help those who need to make up credit from not only ours, but for

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other departments- in the area as well. Training included HAZMAT, SCBA Air Management, Thermal Imaging Camera basics, Ice Rescue, Hose/Nozzle Ops, Pump and Draft, Fireground Ops at SLFD Training Tower, Rural fire ground Ops, EV/Lithium Ion Battery, Right to Know, Haz-Mat, Situational Awareness. Our EMR certified Firefighters also took their continuing hours Training as well. Members attended State Fire training over the past year including Wildland Urban interface awareness and operations as well as Duties of Relief Associations and PERA. Our goals in 2025 are much the same. To continue educating our Team on the ever-changing aspects and dynamics of the current Fire Service. Active Shooter, Electric Vehicle Extrication training and continued Water Rescue Team support Training are on the plate as well as our Structural Fireground tactics. We started the year with 19 members, still 6 members short of the full staffing of 25 firefighters not including 1 floating reserve. We accepted the retirement of Jeff Hofmeister on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024. The fire service has struggled in recent years in retaining and recruiting members. We have felt that struggle for almost a decade. Minnesota ranks at 48<sup>th</sup> in the United States for Fire Service funding. We have unfortunately learned how to make do with what we have and to still follow strict OSHA and NFPA guidelines. The extreme liability due to the nature of our work and the danger that is faced at times is crucial that our members be the best at what they do. For now, our staffing has continued to be adequate and our average Daytime call yields at least 6-8 members and the Auto Aid with our Mutual Aid departments assists in our staffing. Chisago City and Lindstrom are the last in our County to hold out as 100% volunteers. The discussion of Paid On Call Firefighters at CCFD has been considered over the last decade. With the growth potential we are facing in our City, the nature of calls and the difficulties with Recruitment, we are facing implementation of a Paid structure for the City of Chisago City. Chisago City Fire Department has served the community in various ways this past year. We currently have 4 certified Water Rescue Personnel and divers on the Department. The request of Sheriff Brandon Thyen in 2019 was to expand the Stacy-Lent Fire Dive Team to include other Departments in the County to be included. The Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction over all lakes and waterways but does not have the means to support a dive team. These members have been very active in fundraising to help offset costs associated with Certifications and Equipment. Most of their equipment has been paid for out of pocket by the individual members of our department and some donations from our Charitable Gambling funds have been donated by request. I hope to include a new line item for budgeting purposes for this crucial Public Safety division in our County. This water rescue team acts along with the mutual aid agreement across the County Fire Departments and is not a county resource but a Local Resource to the citizens in the name of Public Safety. In 2024 I had the Rescue Captain and his crew get together a "Needs" vs. "Wants" assessment of the equipment and training budget required to move forward as we have become established. I would like to ask for up to \$30,000 from Fund 23 be earmarked towards a Start off to pay for required replacement and upgraded Water Rescue equipment, Boat and a Used response vehicle that will assist not only our "Niche" of Water Rescue but for the Department as well. Going forward we would like to add a Budget line for Rescue in the range of \$8-10,000 annually starting in 2026. This will cover expenses for Certifications, Trainings and equipment/maintenance. The Gateway to the lakes invites more Lake Recreation than we have seen in the past, also leading to Water related emergencies that we at Chisago City will provide. Trucks and equipment. The last year has really changed the future outlook of Truck needs of the Department. Engine 12 has exceeded our expectations in Fire Apparatus for its versatility and usage to the community. We are finding that it has become the Swiss Army knife in our day to day operations and has changed the outlook of what the Departments apparatus needs are in the future. The 2003 E1 Peterbuilt has had some crucial repairs completed in 2024 to help assist in the backup role of our Pumper Truck. New CAFS system compressor repair as well as Air line updates and pump updates. The usage of this truck has diminished so we have adjusted response to allow this Truck to roll out more often.

Rescue18 will need to be replaced within the next 5 years as we are reaching 25 years in age. We may be able to combine multiple trucks into this as we did with E12. Nonstructural trucks are easier to make multifaceted due to more room available without a Tank and Pump. Water Rescue: Updated Wet & Dry suits, SCUBA Tanks, BDV valves and masks, Ice Rescue suits, Ice Rescue and Water Rescue equipment will need updating in 2025. A used Walk in Rescue and a Response Boat have been spaced out through online Used apparatus sites and MN DNR Surplus. Our team will continue to find what is available. Radios: We have put our new Portable radios into service and are training on them currently. The new channel mapping has made use much easier than our previous units helping to make us and the county more efficient in our Communications SCBA: The new MSA SCBA have been placed into service and our membership has been training on the new units. The simplicity of usage, simple maintenance and care have highlighted these new units. February 18<sup>th</sup> 2024, this will be an important date for years to come in the MN fire service. Burnsville PD and FD responded to a domestic violence call forever changing our way we look at responding. 2 officers and 1 FF Paramedic were killed in the line of duty by gunshot. The first FF in State history to be murdered in the line of duty. I attended the Funeral and was amazed by the outpouring of the communities support to these fallen 1<sup>st</sup> responders. Sadly, violence toward 1<sup>st</sup> responders has increased. This is an added stress and liability added to our service that is unwarranted. Our training hours are precious as is but now there is more training needed for situational awareness and active shooter. We have reached a critical breaking point on being able to find "Volunteers" who want to put themselves into harms way. Calls for service, in 2024 we responded to a total of 86 calls for service compared to 101 in 2023. We have seen an increase in Mutual Aid calls this last year as we continue to assist our local agencies. Water Emergency responses have increased over past years. With our community's growth and increased traffic into our area, this will bring an even higher demand of our Services to the community.

Mayor Dresel asked about batteries going dead.

Fire Chief Reed explained what can happen to the batteries and their life cycle and problems known as thermal runaway.

Mayor Dresel said on the calls for service list is rescue different than water.

Fire Chief Reed stated they had 8 water related.

Mayor Dresel and the council thanked the Fire Chief for his report.

## **PETITIONS, REQUESTS, COMMUNICATION**

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **6a. Massage Ordinance – Second Reading**

#### **Action**

City Planner Nelson stated on October 22, 2024, City Council approved a moratorium on massage Therapy businesses through resolution 24-11-05 and ordinance 325. City Council directed city staff to conduct studies of articles and information related to massage therapy ordinance materials. The first reading was held January 14, 2025, to inform the public that the proposed ordinance will be considered and is available at city hall for review. Chisago City Council also set a public hearing for the second reading of the ordinance for February 25, 2025.

Council Member Anderson made the motion to open the public hearing, Council Member Rivers seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Dresel asked for any comments, hearing none he asked for the motion to close.

Council Member Anderson made the motion to close the public hearing, Council Member Rivers seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Dresel asked for any discussion.

Council Member Meyer stated it all had made sense.

Council Member Meyer made the motion to approve, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **7a. Lawn Care RFP – Public Works**

### **Action**

Administrator Pechman stated City staff in the fall of 2024 approached city council with the option of going out for a second lawn care RFP. City staff looked at what the cost was for hiring seasonal staff, equipment purchase and replacement. The estimate was based upon 16 weeks, but the mowing done by PW staff was not included in this calculation which should have been increased by 8-12 thousand a year. Staff emailed out RFP's to five companies. A request to send out three more was made and staff decided to send out to an additional three companies. The city received 4 bids from SBC Outdoor Services, Lawnpro Grounds Maintenance, Ground Force Property Maintenance and Paradise Outdoor Services by the February 3<sup>rd</sup> due date. Staff contacted references provided by RFP responders and gathered additional information. Staff then evaluated each RFP by the evaluation criteria contained in the proposal. As a result of that process the decision was to recommend SBC Outdoor Services for the 2025 and 2026 seasons. And transfer away from hiring a seasonal staff.

Council Member Anderson made the motion to approve, Council Member Battles seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Dresel stated he believes the process that was applied for the RFP's was consistent and fair.

### **7b. Lawn Care RFP – Parks**

### **Action**

Administrator Pechman stated City staff in the summer of 2024 were given notice that the current mowing company Affordable Lawn Care was terminating their contract. At the recommendation of Affordable Lawn Care, a replacement was selected. Staff met with the City Council and explained the situation with the understanding it was for the remainder of the season. Fall of 2024, city staff informed the city council of the intent to go out for RFP's for park mowing services. Staff emailed out RFP's to five companies. A request to send out to three more was made and staff decided to send out to an additional three companies. The city received 4 bids from SBC Outdoor Services, Mow n Snow, Ground Force Property Maintenance and Paradise Outdoor Services by the February 3<sup>rd</sup> due date. Staff contacted references provided by RFP responders and gathered additional information. Staff then evaluated each RFP by the evaluation criteria contained in the proposal. As a result of that process, the decision was to recommend Paradise Outdoor

Services for the 2025 and 2026 park mowing seasons.

Council Member Battles made the motion to approve Paradise Outdoor Services, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

Mayor Dresel stated same as his last comment which he believes the process that was applied for the RFP's was consistent and fair.

#### **7c. Old Towne Road Trail Extension – RES-25-02-04**

#### **Action**

City Engineer Stanley is present with the presentation of the trail plans and to advertise for bids to complete the project. The city was successful in receiving a regional trail connection grant for \$250,000 or up to half the eligible cost for the trail construction. Staff have been working through the grant requirements with the City Engineer. Based upon increased costs for historical preservation requirements and costs associated with the original plan was modified and approved by the DNR. The acceptance of grant revised plan with specifications are before the council this evening for consideration. The grant does have a deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 for the proposed schedule to accomplish that. The plan needs to be reviewed by the county since it is along a county road. He has spoken with the DNR and if there are any issues completing by due date to keep them in the loop of what is occurring. City Engineer Stanley stated the total cost is approximately \$443,164.00 and should take about 6 to 8 weeks for the project.

Mayor Dresel asked how many residents are along the trail impacted.

City Engineer Stanley said there are approximately 3 driveways which would be impacted and pretty minimal. It is all being done within the ROW.

Council Member Meyer made the motion to approve the plans and go out for bids resolution 25-02-04, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

#### **7d. Midco Lease Agreement**

#### **Action**

Administrator Pechman stated Tony Zwart, representative of Midco has been working with City Staff on finding a location to lease. Midco is in the process of finding a location to add a fiber head end building which will allow for increased fiber services in the area. City staff meet with Midco representatives in the fall of 2024 and identified a couple of city parcels that they were interested in. Midco has selected 29810 Sportsman Drive as their preferred location (pin 13.00669.15). In December of this year, Midco submitted and was given

design approval for the proposed 15' x 18' building. Staff has been working on the lease agreement. The City of East Bethel already had a new lease agreement in place and that was used for the basis of this lease. The lease has been reviewed by the City Attorney. Staff has one condition on the approval. Midco requested the property be surveyed. The property was surveyed, and the cost of the survey was \$1,900. Midco agreed to reimburse the city that amount. The lease is 2,500 per year. The property is zoned Medium Density Residential (R-3) and is in the Shoreland Overlay District (SLOD). The property is owned by the City of Chisago City and is roughly 0.6 acres.

Council Member Meyer made the motion to approve the lease, Council Member Battles seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

**7e. Chisago County All Hazards Mitigation – RES – 25-02-03**

**Action**

Administrator Pechman stated the county has been working with all the local governments in the county over the last year and a half on the required update to all county hazard mitigation plan.

LAPD Chief Schlumbohm stated the last plan was approved by FEMA in 2017. Emergency Management Director Sellman has done a good job in including local governments through the process to ensure the updated plan was approved by FEMA. FEMA has indicated plan approval once each jurisdiction has passed the attached resolution. Staff will have a copy of the Plan Mitigation Tool and Fully updated Mitigation Plan document that has been approved by FEMA. Staff would like authorization for the Mayor and Administrator to sign a resolution accepting the mitigation plan and being an authorized participant. The resolution would make the city eligible for FEMA disaster relief.

Mayor Dresel asked how large this plan is.

LAPD Chief Schlumbohm stated it is a large plan and a lot of work has gone into it.

Council Member Meyer made the motion to approve resolution 25-02-03, Council Member Battles seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

**7f. Park Board Membership Appointment Renewal**

**Action**

Parks Superintendent Zacho stated Commissioners Lydon and Mack have expired terms as of the end of 2024. Both would like to continue another 4-year term on the Chisago City Park Commission, park commission approved.

Council Member Anderson made the motion to approve the appointments, Council Member Rivers seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

**7g. Personnel Policy Update**

**Action**

Administrator Pechman stated on February 3rd, 2025, was when the labor agreement for the Local 49ers was approved. The labor agreement was for public works and parks maintenance workers. The changes in the union contract would mirror the changes requested in the personnel policy. This will help eliminate confusion amongst employee benefits and payroll discrepancies across all departments. Attached are the highlighted changes requested in the personnel policy to make a more uniform benefits package amongst all staff. There were also minor changes to the policy that needed to be addressed.

It is also requested to add an Equipment Use Policy (as Exhibit “A” within the personnel policy) to establish better guidelines of City equipment use in all departments.

Council Member Meyer made the motion to approve the update and changes, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

**7h. Request - Gas Franchise Fees**

**Action**

Administrator Pechman stated City Staff have been working with Xcel Energy to upgrade gas line capacity into the city. Several areas of the city need gas capacity upgrades. The first capacity upgrade required is to

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service the Sportsman Drive. The estimated cost for the upgrades is \$200,000 but based on projected future gas use \$164,835 of the project costs will be covered. The \$35,165 of uncovered costs is requested to be paid out of the gas franchise fees. Future upgrades to other gas mains will be required which will be extended from the Sportsman's Drive upgrade. Public Works staff have been remodeling the public works building. The renovations included upgrading the lights that were installed in the office area when building was built in 2008. The building lights will be upgraded to LED. The estimated cost to upgrade should not exceed \$1,000.00. Fund 30 has a current balance of more than \$100,000.

Council Member Rivers asked if there are any rebates for the lighting.

Administrator Pechman said there are not many lights being changed out.

Council Member Battles made the motion to approve the use of the gas franchise fees in the amount of \$35,165, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

### **7i. Lakes Area Hockey Association at Clutch Golf LLC**

Administrator Pechman stated the Lakes Area Hockey is seeking approval of holding gambling at Clutch Golf LLC. They had come in this afternoon requesting the approval of gambling at the premise. Staff informed them we could see if council could add the item tonight versus waiting until next months meeting. They were hoping to get a resolution into the state.

Council Member Meyer made the motion to approve, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

### **ADJOURN**

Council Member Meyer made the motion to adjourn, Council Member Anderson seconded, all in favor, all ayes, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Paula Oehme,  
Deputy City Clerk