

Approved



**MEETING MINUTES
December 09, 2025**

Present: Mayor Jeremy Dresel, Council members, Marie Rivers, Mark Anderson, and Craig Meyer. Nikki Battles was present via Zoom.

Absent: None

Staff: City Administrator John Pechman, Deputy Clerk Alisa Bodell, Finance Director Cassie Gemuenden, and Chief of Police Bill Schlumbohm

Public Attendance: Leilani Freeman, Philip Demunk, and Chris Dubose

1. REGULAR MEETING-CALL TO ORDER 6:30

Mayor Dresel called the meeting to order.

1a. "Pledge of Allegiance"

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1b. Roll Call

All members are present.

2. AGENDA

Mayor Dresel asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Council member Rivers made a motion to approve the agenda; Council member Anderson seconded; all ayes; motion carried.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

3a. Minutes of November 10, 2025.

3b. Payment of Bills

3c. Committee Reports

Council member Rivers made a motion to approve the consent agenda; Council member Anderson seconded; Dresel aye, Battles aye, Meyer aye, Rivers aye, Anderson aye, motion was approved 5 to 0.

Mayor Dresel commented on the EDA Business Appreciation event that was held at Winehaven on November 20, was the first time the event was held, he is hoping it will become an annual event.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA PLACEMENT

5. PETITIONS, REQUESTS, COMMUNICATION

5a. Cindy Collins-Refund Request Ojiketa Strom Hall

Administrator Pechman presented a request from Cindy Collins, mother of the groom, seeking a refund of a non-refundable deposit for a wedding facility reservation scheduled for approximately June of next year at Strom Hall. Pechman explained that the couple chose

not to proceed with the rental due to a change in wedding plans, not due to issues with the facility, date, or unforeseen hardship. Staff noted that city policy clearly states that the deposit, equal to half of the rental fee, is non-refundable. While exceptions have been granted in the past for circumstances such as military deployment, death in the family, or COVID-related travel restrictions, this request did not meet that criteria. Staff also confirmed that the refund policy had been clearly communicated to the renter in advance. Council discussed the possibility of issuing a refund if the date were re-booked but acknowledged this is not standard practice and could create administrative complications.

Council member Meyer made a motion to deny the request for the reservation refund; Council member Rivers seconded; Dresel aye, Battles aye, Meyer aye, Rivers aye, Anderson aye, motion was approved 5 to 0.

5b. Philip Demunck-North Ave.

Philip Demunck, a resident of Lofton Avenue, addressed the council regarding a request to vacate the remaining 30 feet of right-of-way on a street where 15 feet on each side had previously been vacated in 1999. Mr. Demunck explained that the original intent for retaining the right-of-way was possible future trail development but stated that trail plans and conditions have changed significantly since that time. He provided maps and noted that alternative trail routes now exist or are planned, including along Highway 8, Liberty Lane, and near school property. He expressed concerns regarding environmental impacts, wetlands, high water levels, proximity to residences, snowmobile traffic, and the significant cost of constructing a trail in the area. He stated that all current adjacent property owners support vacating the remaining right-of-way and noted that returning the land to private ownership would place it back on the tax rolls. Council members discussed the importance of preserving property for potential future trail or public use, including long-term concepts such as a walking path around the lake. Staff clarified that no formal request had been submitted and that any vacation would require an application, fee, public hearing, and legal review. The purpose of the discussion was to gauge council interest before initiating that process. No formal action was taken. The council thanked Mr. Demunck for his presentation and indicated the matter could be revisited in the future if a formal application is submitted.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

7. NEW BUSINESS

7a. 2026 Liquor-Tobacco-Cannabinoid Licenses Resolution 25-12-01

Administrator Pechman presented the annual review and renewal of the 2026 licenses as listed in the memorandum provided to the City Council. Police Chief Schlumbohm provided background information on all submitted applications and reported that any prior compliance issues had been addressed by the affected businesses and that all license holders are currently operating in compliance with city and state regulations. There were no establishments identified as problematic or noncompliant at this time. Ongoing compliance checks will continue.

Council member Meyer made a motion to approve Resolution 25-12-01 authorizing the renewal of the 2026 licenses; Council member Anderson seconded; Dresel aye, Rivers aye, Meyer aye, Anderson aye, Battles aye, motion was approved 5 to 0.

7b. Park Commission-New Member Matt Johnson

Administrator Pechman informed the City Council that a vacancy occurred on the Parks Commission following the resignation of Dan Charpentier, who stepped down to enjoy retirement and travel. The city advertised the vacancy, and Matt Johnson applied after seeing the posting on a city sign. Mr. Johnson attended a Parks Commission meeting, was interviewed by the commission, and received a recommendation for appointment. Council member Anderson, who attended the meeting, spoke in support of the applicant. It was noted that Mr. Johnson has professional experience working in parks, is a certified playground safety inspector, and has experience with BMX track development, which aligns with current park initiatives.

Council member Anderson made a motion to approved Matt Johnson to the Park Commission; Council member Rivers seconded; Battles aye, Anderson aye, Anderson aye, Meyer aye, Rivers aye, Dresel aye, motion was approved 5-0.

7c. LED Retrofit-Chuckie Lundquist Park

Administrator Pechman presented a proposal to retrofit the hockey rink lighting at Chuckie Lundquist Park with LED fixtures. The rink has opened earlier than usual this season; however, several of the existing lights are no longer functioning. The current lighting consists of outdated 250–400-watt fixtures that are inefficient and increasingly unreliable. Pechman explained that a retrofit LED option is available, allowing the city to upgrade the lighting without replacing the entire fixtures. The estimated cost of the project is under \$6,000, and sufficient funds are available in the Gas Franchise fund. Use of these funds requires City Council approval.

Council Member Anderson raised concerns about certain LED retrofit bulbs vibrating loose over time, based on experiences in other municipalities. Staff agreed to consult with the electrician to confirm whether the proposed lighting includes anti-vibration or retention measures to prevent this issue.

Council member Anderson made a motion to approve the LED retrofit project at Chuckie Lundquist Park; Council member Meyer seconded; Rivers aye, Anderson aye, Battles, aye Meyer aye, Dresel aye, motion was approved 5-0.

7d. Adoption of 2026 Final Levy & Budget Resolutions 25-12-02 and 25-12-03

Finance Director Gemuenden presented the Truth in Taxation hearing for the adoption of the 2026 Final Property Tax Levy and the 2026 Budget. It was noted that the City Council approved the proposed levy on September 23 and certified it to the County Auditor on September 26. This public meeting was held in accordance with state law to allow for public review and comment. Gemuenden explained that the final levy amount remains unchanged from the preliminary levy at \$4,117,373. The resulting tax rate for 2026 is 35.628%, representing a 2.71% decrease from the prior year. The final levy must be certified to the County Auditor by December 29, 2025. Council discussed the importance of fiscal responsibility and the careful consideration given to balancing city services, long-term planning, and taxpayer impact.

Council member Meyer made a motion to approve Resolutions 25-12-02 adopting the 2026 Final Property Tax Levy and Resolution 25-12-03 adopting the 2026 Budget; Council member Anderson seconded; Battles aye, Anderson aye, Anderson aye, Meyer aye, Rivers aye, Dresel aye, motion was approved 5-0.

7e. Chisago Lakes Community Foundation-Sign Request

Chris Dubose, representing the Chisago Lakes Community Foundation, addressed the council regarding a request to install a Community Foundation sign in Chisago City. Mr. Dubose explained that the Foundation currently maintains similar signs in other cities within the school district and is seeking consistent signage across communities. The proposed sign is approximately 4 feet by 8 feet, mounted on treated posts, and intended for long-term placement. He spoke about the Foundation's mission, fundraising efforts, and grantmaking activities, which support a wide range of community projects.

Administrator Pechman recommended a potential location on city-owned right-of-way near Highway 8 that provides good visibility while remaining safely off the roadway and outside MnDOT jurisdiction. It was noted that the city's sign ordinance allows the council to approve signage for community organizations.

Council member Meyer made a motion to approve the Chisago Lakes Community Foundation sign request and authorize city staff to work with the applicant to determine a suitable location; Council member Rivers seconded; Rivers aye, Anderson aye, Battles aye, Dresel aye, Meyer aye, motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. Dubose also provided an update on Community Foundation-funded bike trail improvements, including custom bike racks, mileage markers, and historical features. Council members recommended that design themes and trailhead locations be reviewed by the Parks Commission. Mr. Dubose indicated he would attend a January Parks Commission meeting to discuss project details and a potential future funding request.

7f. Chisago Lakes Chamber-Lease Agreement

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Council members discussed the next two council meetings for December and January will be held on the second Tuesday of the month.

9. ADJOURN

Council member Rivers made the motion to adjourn, Council member Meyers seconded, all in favor; all ayes; motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Alisa Bodell,
Deputy City Clerk