



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE
Monday, April 06, 2026
6:00 PM

Mayor
Amada Márquez Simula
Councilmembers
Connie Buesgens
Rachel James
Justice Spriggs
Laurel Deneen
City Manager
Aaron Chirpich

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Márquez Simula at 6:10pm.

Present: Mayor Márquez Simula, Councilmember Deneen, Councilmember Buesgens, Councilmember James, Councilmember Spriggs (arrived at approximately 8pm)

Also Present: Aaron Chirpich, City Manager; David Cullen, Public Works Director, Jesse Davies, Refuse Coordinator; Jesse Hauf, IT Director; Joe Kloiber, Finance Director; Sara Ion, City Clerk; Rochelle Widmer, Facilities Director; Jason Allen, Better Futures Acting CEO.

WORK SESSION ITEMS

- 1. Group Ice Breaker: What's one productivity tool you could not live without?**
Mayor Márquez Simula led the group in an ice breaker discussion, asking participant what is one productivity tool that that they cannot live without.
- 2. Street Banners Project Update.**
Will Rottler, Communications and Engagement Coordinator led the presentation to the Council regarding street banners that the communication department has designed and the implementation of the program within the City.

Councilmember Buesgens would like to use the banners on Central Avenue and not just 37th Avenue and 37th Place. She would also like to make sure that with the Central Avenue redesign there is an opportunity to have the flags displayed.

Councilmember Deneen and James agreed with Councilmember Buesgens about using the banners on Central. Councilmember James would like to see the United States flag as a top option on the banner it is shared on and would also like to see a Palestinian Flag and Polish and Irish Flag. Council consensus was to proceed with the implementation on 37th and Central with proposed banners. Rottler will inquire about ordering approximately ninety banners.
- 3. Social Media Policy.**
Will Rottler, Communications and Engagement Coordinator led the presentation to the Council regarding the social media practice that the city currently utilizes as well as memorializing an updated policy that is in line with the League of Minnesota Policy. The objective is to have a updated policy in partnership with the City Attorney and final approval by the City Manager.

Councilmember James inquired about deleting comments on Facebook in line with the social media policy of Edina and St. Louis Park. Per page 17 of the packet, she would like to see wording related to “vulgar language and personal attacks” not being allowed. She also liked the wording of Item D of the St Louis Park Policy on Page 26 of the packet.

Councilmember Deneen would like the policy to specifically not tolerate bullying or targeting people’s appearance. She has concerns that residents would not want to participate in public meetings if they know that comments might be made online on items that the City posts to social media.

Mayor Márquez Simula agreed that she did not want to see bullying comments allowed and would like to see the removal of concerning comments by the page administrator. She would like to do better than what the League is doing. She would like to have the social media policy added to “viral posts”. Additionally, she would like to see updates on this topic prior to the next work session. She would like to see consistency in what we are posting and noted that she was disappointed with the social media postings about the grant program that the EDA was working on.

Staff will review the councilmembers’ requests with the City Attorney and work on a policy that more closely aligns with the City of Edina and St. Louis Park.

4. Solar and Lighting Improvements for Select City Facilities.

Rochelle Widmer, Facilities Director and City Engineer led the presentation to the Council regarding upcoming solar and lighting improvements that will be taking place at various city facilities.

Council consensus was that they were excited to see the program as presented move forward and were thankful for the robust procurement process that was used.

5. Organics Services Contract Extension and Billing Updates.

David Cullen, Public Works Director introduced Interim President and CEO of Better Futures Jason Allen to speak to the work that organization is doing with compost pickup. Jesse Davies, Refuse Coordinator also addresses updated billing protocol that needs to be utilized to bring the city into compliance with state statute.

City Manager Chirpich also spoke about the plans to bring the contract to the first or second meeting in April noting that staff wanted to follow proper procedure with bringing the item to the council for review and approval.

6. Reminder: 2027 Budget Process Begins April 2026.

Joseph Kloiber, Finance Director and Aaron Chirpich, City Manager, introduced the item to the council and wanted to make sure that the council consider the status of its goals and plans, upon which staff will develop proposed budgets for 2027.

Councilmember Buesgens stated that she appreciates the five-year plan that the City

Manager has developed and would like to see the council goals more visible to residents when these conversations occur.

Councilmember James would also like to see more information given to residents so they can budget for the tax increases that are projected for the next several years.

7. Coordinate Financing for Public Works Building Replacement with Statutory Deadlines.

Joseph Kloiber, Finance Director, introduced the item to the council and elaborated on the plans for the project and the timeline for bringing the item to the council for review and approval.

Councilmember Spriggs inquired about TIF District Timing, as well as the procedure for being eligible for a refund of taxes on the project. Kloiber indicated that he would circle back to the council on the TIF District and will search for information related to the sales tax exemption.

Councilmember James stated that she has concerns if this were to escalate to a ballot question. Finance Director Kloiber indicated that staff would prepare information for residents related to what the cost would be for taxpayers. The best way to explain this to residents would be to demonstrate what the impact would be.

Councilmember Buesgens would like to see information pushed to residents related to the condition of our public works building. She would like to see tours of the public safety building, and information at the June Arts and Info Fair.

Council consensus was to move forward with the plan as outlined, and if this was to move to a referendum to conduct public outreach.

8. City Manager Follow Up on Previous Work Session Topics.

City Manager Aaron Chirpich introduced the item to the council to give status updates on several items that the council had discussed at previous work sessions. The items reviewed were staffing updates, Ratio Apartment fan project updates, 3932 Central Ave. apartment updates, RTS video, flags for Council Chambers, event update regarding participation at the upcoming New Brighton Tibet Fest, upcoming Boards and Commissions Social on April 15, 2026, LMC Nominations, congressionally directed spending, municipal consent re Hwy 65.

Mayor Márquez Simula noted that she would like to schedule a proclamation for the debut of the flag from Somalia at the last meeting in June and also schedule a time for the debut of the "We Are Family" flag.

10. Council Corner.

The council reviewed the April calendar, notified each other of upcoming events and discussed proclamations for upcoming meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Márquez Simula adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Ion, City Clerk/Council Secretary

DRAFT