



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 23, 2026

5:00 PM

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

PRESENT: Mayor Tasha Connelly, Councilor Molly MacGregor, Councilor Tom Sutherland, Councilor Rick Blake, Councilor Dan Mertes

STAFF: Kimberly Gibeau, Chad Sterle, Chery Pierzina, Kevin Ott, Andy Morgan

VISITORS: Linda Harringer, Renee Ducharme, Diane Larson

PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:

1. Proclaim Fair Housing Month

Mayor Connelly read the proclamation for the record.

POSITIVE HAPPENINGS IN THE CITY:

Mayor Connelly congratulated the Thunderhawk boys basketball team on reaching the state tournament and expressed pride in their representation of northern Minnesota. Also highlighted is the rapid success of The Pines Restaurant, which has gained national attention within months of opening, including recognition for its chef as a James Beard Award semifinalist and being named one of Minnesota's top new restaurants. Mayor Connelly noted that this recognition is bringing valuable visibility and energy to the local community, particularly the downtown area.

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one from the public wished to speak.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilor Blake attended a regional event in Duluth with RAMS and testified against a housing bill that he felt would undermine local zoning authority, while still supporting the broader goal of addressing housing challenges. He provided an outline of upcoming advocacy efforts at the state legislature with the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association and the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities.

Mayor Connelly highlighted the successful launch of the Grand Rapids Government Academy, noting strong attendance, which introduced key topics like administration, elections, and Open Meeting Law. The program, designed as a nine-week series, has already sparked meaningful discussion among active community members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

2. Approve minutes for March 9, 2026 Regular Council meeting and summary for March 9, 2026 Closed meeting.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Sutherland to approve Council minutes and summaries as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

VERIFIED CLAIMS:

3. Approve the verified claims for the period March 3, 2026 to March 16, 2026 in the total amount of \$5,130,974.38 of which \$312,831.25 are debt service payments.

Motion made by Councilor Mertes, Seconded by Councilor Blake to approve the verified claims as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

CONSENT AGENDA:

4. Consider approving the purchase of a smooth drum roller for public works
5. Consider adopting an ordinance amending Chapter 2, Division 6. Human Rights Commission of the Grand Rapids Municipal Code.

Adopted Ordinance 26-03-02

6. Consider entering into an Advertising Agreement with a business at Yanmar Arena.
7. Consider approving the purchase of a mower for public works
8. Consider approval of payment to ISD 318 assistant coaches
9. Consider approval of a resolution authorizing a grant request to MN IRRR for sewer and water infrastructure to the Garden Court Chateau Assisted Living Facility.

Adopted Resolution 26-11

10. Consider Golf Course job descriptions and title changes and hiring and rehiring of seasonal golf staff.
11. Consider awarding engineering consulting services at GPZ Airport

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Seconded by Councilor Mertes to approve the Consent agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

SET REGULAR AGENDA:

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Blake to approve the Regular agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

CITY COUNCIL:

12. Consider appointment to the Human Rights Commission

Councilor MacGregor has conducted an interview with Renee Ducharme, applicant for the Human Rights Commission and recommends appointment.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Sutherland to appoint Renee Ducharme to the Human Rights Commission to fill an unexpired term through March 1, 2027. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberly Gibeau
Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk