



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

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 11, 2025

5:00 PM

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order at 5:18 PM.

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

STAFF: Tom Pagel, Kimberly Gibeau, Chad Sterle, Natalee Bushman, Rob Mattei, Chery Pierzina, Amy Dettmer, Carl Babich, Andy Morgan, Kevin Ott

POSITIVE HAPPENINGS IN THE CITY:

Mayor Connelly shared positive happenings including National Night Out, held on August 5th at Old Central School, drawing over 200 children and their families, along with council members, the Grand Rapids Police and Fire Departments, Cohasset Fire, state troopers, agencies, businesses, and community groups. The event focused on education, community-building, and appreciation for first responders, ensuring families had an enjoyable experience. The Mayor also recognized Grand Rapids Police Officer Ashley Moran, who was honored by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety at a Minnesota Twins game for her outstanding work in 2023. Officer Moran made 34 DWI arrests, contributing to saving lives, preventing crashes, and keeping families safe. The council expressed pride in her service and her recognition as one of the state's top officers.

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one from the public wished to speak.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

During council reports, an update was provided on several community matters. On July 29th, the Mayor and former library director Will Richter presented to the Itasca County Board of Commissioners regarding the library budget and future planning. A special committee, including council members, commissioners, and staff, was formed to focus on long-range planning, with the first meeting scheduled for August 20th. Additionally, the Grand Rapids Police Department has received multiple reports of coyote sightings in the southwest neighborhood near Sylvan Bay. The city is addressing the issue and urges residents to report sightings, call 911 or the police department, and keep pets on short leashes. Lastly, the groundbreaking for "Mill and Miss," a 132-unit market-rate rental housing development near West Elementary, will take place Thursday at 11 a.m. The project, expected to be completed by March 2027, aims to help address the local housing shortage, and the public is invited to attend.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approve minutes for Monday, July 28, 2025 Regular Council meeting.

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

VERIFIED CLAIMS:

2. Approve the verified claims.

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

ACKNOWLEDGE MINUTES FOR BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

3. Mayor Connelly acknowledged the following minutes for Boards and Commissions:

March 20, 2025 PCA Board

May 1, 2025 Planning Commission

May 22, June 26, and July 10, 2025 Economic Development Authority

May 28, 2025 Human Rights Commission

June 11, 2025 Library Board

June 20, 2025 Golf Board

CONSENT AGENDA:

4. Consider adopting State required budget resolution for Yanmar Arena.

Adopted Resolution 25-51

5. Consider accepting the resignation from Patrick Flaherty, from his position as Firefighter, effective July 14, 2025.
6. Consider approving temporary liquor license for St. Joseph's Catholic Church
7. Consider approving the final pay request for CP 2010-1, 3rd Avenue & 7th Street NE in the amount of \$21,545.90 and balancing change order 3.
8. Consider awarding a contract to Casper Construction for the Blandin Reservoir Trail Culvert Replacement Project
9. Consider adopting a resolution authorizing an application to the MN Dept. of IRRR Housing grant program for GREDA & Itasca Co. HRA redevelopment of the form ISD#318 Admin. Office site.

Adopted Resolution 25-52

10. Consider adopting a resolution authorizing an application to the MN Dept. of IRRR Commercial Redevelopment grant program for demolition of the GREDA owned commercial building at 900 NW 4th St.

Adopted Resolution 25-53

11. Consider adopting a resolution approving certain lender documents related to the Unique Opportunities Housing Project

Adopted Resolution 25-54

12. Consider approving temporary liquor permit for United Way of 1000 Lakes
- 12a. Consider approval of a partial release of the Subdivision Agreement, the release of Contract for Private Development Agreement and the Release of Petition and Waiver Agreement in connection with the Pillars of Grand Rapids development.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Second by Councilor Sutherland to approve the Consent agenda as amended to include the addition of item 12a. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

SET REGULAR AGENDA:

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

ADMINISTRATION:

13. Consider resignation from Lasha Karels, Assistant IT Director.

Ms. Pierzina presented resignation submitted by Lasha Karels, and provided background information regarding her years of service to the City.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Second by Councilor Blake to accept the resignation of Lasha Karels from the position of Assistant IT Director and authorize staff to begin the process of filling the position. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

14. Consider appointment of Leah King to the part-time Library Public Services Clerk I position with the Grand Rapids Area Library.

Ms. Pierzina presented background information on Ms. King and requested the Council move forward with appointment.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Second by Councilor Sutherland to appoint Leah King to the part-time position of Library Public Services Clerk I. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

ENGINEERING PUBLIC WORKS:

15. Consider adopting a resolution supporting MNDOT District 1 submittal of an FY29-30 highway freight program funding application.

Mr. Wegwerth presented a resolution to support MnDOT District 1's funding application to the Highway Freight Program for fiscal years 2029–2030. The proposed project focuses on the Highway 2–169 corridor, beginning at Highway 38, extending east along Highway 2 to the east

junction of Highway 169, and continuing south on 169 toward the bridge. Planned improvements include full roadway reconstruction, updated signals, possible roundabouts, as well as sidewalk and pedestrian upgrades. Since MnDOT is actively seeking funding, the council was asked to adopt a resolution of support, and a motion was made to approve it.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Second by Councilor Mertes to **adopt Resolution 25-55**, supporting MNDOT Submittal of FY29-30 MN Hwy Freight program funding application as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

POLICE:

16. Consider adopting a resolution accepting donations for 2025 National Night Out.

Chief Morgan reviewed background recognizing community donations, highlighting the success of the recent National Night Out, which benefited from strong community turnout and favorable weather, providing an opportunity for officers to connect with residents. The event was made possible through the generous contributions of local businesses and organizations. The council was asked to accept these donations in support of the 2025 National Night Out.

Motion made by Councilor Sutherland, Second by Councilor Blake to **adopt Resolution 25-56**, accepting donation from various local businesses for National Night Out as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

17. Consider adopting a resolution accepting donations from the Cohasset Fire Hook & Ladder for 2025 National Night Out.

In continuation of the discussion on National Night Out, Chief Morgan emphasized the importance of recognizing all contributors who made the event possible. Along with local businesses and organizations already acknowledged, special appreciation was given to Cohasset Fire Hook & Ladder, which has consistently supported the event each year through both participation and donations. The council was asked to formally recognize and accept Cohasset Fire's contribution in addition to the other donors.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Second by Councilor Mertes to **adopt Resolution 25-57**, accepting \$200 donation from Cohasset Fire Hook & Ladder for the GR Police Reserves for National Night Out expenditures. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

18. Consider approving previously authorized agreement by City Administrator with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for coyote mitigation.

Police Captain Ott provided an update on recent coyote incidents near West Elementary School. On July 24th, police responded to a report of a coyote bite and of other aggressive and unusual coyote behavior, such as approaching runners and children. Patrols were increased, and the DNR conducted extensive searches. With school starting soon and the proximity of the hospital, senior housing, and heavily used trails, the city entered into an agreement with the USDA on August 4th to address the issue. Since then, two coyotes have been captured, and

efforts are ongoing to mitigate the threat through partnerships with nearby property owners. The USDA has also located a possible den site, and mitigation efforts will continue.

Motion made by Councilor Mertes, Second by Councilor MacGregor to approve the agreement with USDA for coyote mitigation. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberly Gibeau
Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk