



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

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, May 11, 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:** Tom Pagel, Kimberly Gibeau, Chad Sterle, Carl Babich, Rob Mattei, Will Richter, Chery Pierzina, Andy Morgan

**VISITORS:** Renee Ducharme, Linda Harringer

### **POSITIVE HAPPENINGS IN THE CITY:**

Mayor Connelly stated that May is National Law Enforcement Officers Month and that the current week is dedicated to honoring American law enforcement officers. Chief Morgan presented a department report at a recent work session and noted that the department has 21 police officers. Mayor Connelly expresses gratitude and appreciation for the officers' service in keeping the community safe and encourages residents to thank officers and let them know they are respected and valued.

Councilor Blake attended the scholarship presentations at Grand Rapids High School. Scholarships were awarded by independent committees, organizations, boards, and individuals using their own selection criteria. Of note, three Forrest Wiley Memorial Scholarships sponsored by the Grand Rapids High School Class of 1966 were presented.

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

1. Minnesota Power Integrated Resource Plan Update

Todd Simmons, a lead representative for Minnesota Power's generation operations group, discussed the future of the Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset and ongoing energy transition plans. The discussion also included questions from officials about emissions reductions, energy reliability, fuel costs, and future energy infrastructure planning. A letter of support has been added to the Consent agenda.

### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

No one from the public wished to speak.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS:**

Councilor Blake attended a Minnesota Rules Advisory Council meeting in St. Cloud during the first week of May. The group discussed center lane rules and specifications for state-aid routes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

2. Approve Council minutes for Monday, April 27, 2026 Workession and Regular Meetings.

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

VERIFIED CLAIMS:

3. Approve the verified claims for the period April 21, 2026 to May 4, 2026 in the total amount of \$635,655.84.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded 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:

4. Acknowledged the following minutes for Boards & Commissions:

1. January 6, 2026 Arts & Culture Commission
2. January 15, 2026 Police Community Advisory Board
3. March 25, 2026 Human Rights Commission
4. March 26, 2026 GREDA
5. April 2, 2026 Planning Commission

CONSENT AGENDA:

5. Consider providing notice of intent regarding solid waste license agreement
6. Consider authorizing advertisement for bids for the Taxiway A North Reconstruction Phase 2 project at the GPZ Airport.
7. Consider authorizing advertisement for bids for Snow Removal Equipment -Carrier Vehicle with Bucket at the GPZ Airport
8. Consider updates to seasonal employment at Pokegama Golf Course and Public Works.
9. Consider approving fifteen updated policies for the Grand Rapids Police Department to comply with MN POST Boards mandated polices
10. Consider approving on-sale liquor license for Grand Rapids Speedway
11. Consider authorizing public works staff to obtain quotes for snow removal equipment
12. Consider authorizing public works staff to obtain quotes for building removal

13. Consider approving temporary liquor license for Thunderhawk Blue Line Club Walleye Shootout Event
14. Consider approving updates to City Social Media Policy.
15. Consider approving policy updates to City of Grand Rapids Personnel Policies relating to expense reimbursements.
16. Consider approving seasonal golf contractors
17. Consider allowing the Police Department to enter a contract with LETAC USA Policy360 / Procedures360 for the purposes establishing and maintaining Police Policy
18. Consider adopting a resolution approving updated City-wide fee schedule

**Adopted Resolution 26-21**

- 18a. Letter of Support for Minnesota Power

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Seconded by Councilor MacGregor to approve the Consent agenda as amended with the addition of 18a. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

**SET REGULAR AGENDA:**

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

**ADMINISTRATION:**

19. Consider approving a purchase agreement with Park State Bank related to PIN 91-420-1730

Tom Pagel described plans to pursue a municipal cannabis dispensary and identified a potential site located between Thousand Lakes Sporting Goods and Jack's Auto Repair. The property is currently owned by Park State Bank. Mr. Pagel indicated that the dispensary project is part of the city's broader effort to expand and diversify the local tax base through new economic development opportunities.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Seconded by Councilor Sutherland to approve purchase agreement with Park State Bank related to parcel number 91-420-1730. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

20. Consider approving proposals with Braun Intertec and Bolton & Menk for preliminary engineering services related to PIN 91-420-1730

Following approval of the property purchase agreement for the proposed municipal dispensary project, City Administrator Pagel informed the Mayor and Council that additional due diligence work is required before moving forward and provided overview of what is required.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS: (scheduled to begin no earlier than 5:00 PM)

21. Conduct a public hearing to consider vacating a portion of street right-of-way within Grand Rapids Second Addition.

Will Richter, Zoning Administrator, presented a public hearing item regarding a proposal to vacate a portion of street right-of-way within a subdivision near Blandin Beach. The area under consideration is a platted but never-developed section of Northwest Sixth Street near Blandin Beach. The vacation is needed to support a parks grant project involving MN DNR. The vacation is needed to support a parks grant project involving the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Existing utility infrastructure is located elsewhere and would not be impacted by the vacation. Only service lines currently exist within the affected area. The city's review committee, including engineering, public works, police, fire, and utility representatives, reported no concerns with the proposal. The Planning Commission found the change would not affect tax rolls because the land would shift from street right-of-way designation to parkland. Mr. Richter stated the vacation would support future improvements at Blandin Beach.

The Mayor confirmed that public notices had been sent before opening the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Mertes to open the public hearing. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

No one from the public wished to speak, therefore the following motion was made.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Mertes to close the public hearing. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

22. Consider the adoption of a resolution vacating a portion of street right-of-way within Grand Rapids Second Division.

Motion made by Councilor Sutherland, Seconded by Councilor Blake to **adopt Resolution 26-22**, vacating a portion of street right-of-way within Grand Rapids Second Division. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

COUNCIL:

23. Consider authorizing letter of support for U.S. Highway 169 Expansion from Taconite to Pengilly.

Mayor Connelly participated in Highway 169 Cross Range Expressway Committee alongside Tom Pagel. The committee requested that the city submit a formal letter of support for the

proposed highway expansion project. Mayor Connelly would sign the letter if the council agreed to support the expansion initiative.

Motion made by Councilor Mertes, Seconded by Councilor Sutherland to approve letter of support for US Highway 169 Expansion as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

*Kimberly Gibeau*  
Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk