



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

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

5:00 PM

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order at 5:09 P.M.

CALL OF ROLL:

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

STAFF: Tom Pagel, Chad Sterle, Aurimy Groom, Carl Babich, Rob Mattei, Will Richter, Chery Pierzina, Andy Morgan, Jeremy Nelson

POSITIVE HAPPENINGS IN THE CITY:

Mayor Connelly thanked the employees celebrating years of service anniversary's in the month of May for their continued commitment to the City of Grand Rapids.

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one from the public wished to speak.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

There were no reports from the Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approve Council minutes for Monday, May 11, 2026 Worksession and Regular meetings.

Motion made by Councilor Mertes, Seconded 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 for the period May 5, 2026 to May 18, 2026 in the total amount of \$385,787.48.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

3. Consider updates to seasonal employment and approval of new hires at Pokegama Golf Course and Parks & Recreation.
4. Consider separation of employment for Police Officer Phillip Murphy effective May 15, 2026.
5. Consider approving the Airport Layout Plan at the GPZ Airport
6. Consider entering into agreement with Paul Bunyan Communications
7. Consider awarding a quote to Trout Enterprises, Inc. for building removal.

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

ADMINISTRATION:

8. Consider approval of Cannabis Dispensary Manager job description and authorize Human Resources to post, advertise, and hire for this position.

Human Resources Officer Pierzina reviewed the job duties and compensation with the Council.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Blake to approve a Cannabis Dispensary Manager job description and authorize Human Resources to post, advertise, and hire for this position.

Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

9. Consider approving an Architect/Owner agreement for design and construction services related to the dispensary building.

City Administrator Pagel is recommending entering into an agreement for design and construction services with Oertel Architects who specialize in cannabis dispensaries.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Seconded by Councilor Sutherland to approve an Architect/Owner agreement for design and construction services related to the dispensary building. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

10. Consider the recommendation of the Planning Commission regarding the adoption of a Resolution granting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) amendment to Walmart Real Estate Business Trust.

Zoning Administrator Richter provided background information on the proposed amendment. LK Architecture, on behalf of Walmart Real Estate Business Trust, has requested a sixth amendment to a Conditional Use Permit originally approved in December 2006, allowing for the construction of a Walmart Supercenter, as provided for under Division 14 of the City Code (Large Scale Commercial Development Standards). The requested amendment would allow changing exterior paint colors on the building to the new Walmart brand standard of dark gray with blue accent and updating of building signage.

The Planning Commission has forwarded a recommendation to grant the requested amendment with the condition all previous conditions under CUP resolution 06-130 remain in effect.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Seconded by Councilor Mertes to adopt Resolution 26-23 granting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) amendment to Walmart Real Estate Business Trust and that all previous imposed conditions under CUP Resolution 06-130 remain in effect. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

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

11. Conduct a public hearing to consider approval of tax abatements for the GREDA Highway 2 W. Redevelopment Project – DEED Demolition Loan

Community Development Director Mattei provided a power point reviewing the tax abatement requests for the GREDA Highway 2 W Redevelopment Project-DEED Demolition Loan.

MN DEED awarded a requested \$420,000 Demolition Loan to GREDA. With this Loan Program, DEED requires the City to issue a general obligation bond in the amount of the loan, with that note provided to the State as security for the loan. This was discussed at the January 8, 2026, City Council meeting, when a resolution committing local match was adopted. Tax Abatement General Obligation Bonds can be used by the City, for this purpose. Seven properties have been selected for this tax abatement, which are along the Highway 2 Corridor and will indirectly benefit from this and other redevelopment efforts along the corridor. 91-420-2750, 91-420-2105, 91-420-2130, 91-420-2135, 91-420-2140, 91-420-2145, 91-420-1810. The total City portion of the property taxes of these seven properties is adequate to pay the annual principal and interest of the DEED Demolition Loan over the maximum 10-year term. The total annual abatement equals \$52,791. The revenues from the Abatements will be pledged to repay a Revenue Bond to be issued by GREDA to DEED to finance the principal amount of the \$420,000 Loan.

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

No one from the public wished to speak.

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

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

12. Consider the adoption of a resolution approving property tax abatement for certain improvements and providing for the issuance of a general obligation tax abatement bond.

Motion made by Councilor Mertes, Seconded by Councilor MacGregor to adopt Resolution 26-24 approving property tax abatement for certain improvements and providing for the issuance of a general obligation tax abatement bond. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

Aurimy Groom, Administrative Assistant