



City of Hinckley

City Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 09, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Council Chambers (Community Room)

106 First Street SE, P. O. Box 366 | Tel: (320) 384.7491 | Fax: (320) 384.7492 | www.hinckleymn.gov

***Mayor and Councilmembers: Mayor Don Zeman | Councilmember Tim Burkhardt
Councilmember John Frank | Councilmember Judy Hopkins | Councilmember Jace Scharpnick***

PRESENT: Mayor Donald Zeman, Tim Burkhardt, John Frank, Judy Hopkins, Jace Scharpnick. ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Leaha Jackson, Firehouse Manager Phil Taggart, Fire Chief Elliot Golly, Mike Defenbaugh and Steve Grindstiner, Hinckley Fire Department, Jacob Crispo, Bolton & Menk, Bonnie Scullard, Hinckley Elementary, Sierra Kingen, North Pine County News, Joel Virtue, Hinckley Area Chamber of Commerce, and Jon Lange, Hometown Flips.

1. Call to Order-Pledge of Allegiance

Zeman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Council in the pledge of allegiance.

2. Approve Agenda

Motion made by Burkhardt, Seconded by Hopkins, with the additions of 6E7 FEMA FY2025 Assistance to Fire Fighters and 6E8 Jay 5. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings- None

4. Public Hearings - None

5. Consent Agenda (Those items listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine by the City Council and will be acted upon by one motion under this agenda item. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless the Mayor or a Councilmember so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered under New Business.)

- A. Resolution 16-2026 Accepting Restricted Donation- Hinckley Lions, \$5,000.00 for Hinckley Fire & Rescue
 - B. North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce- Raffle Permit- Grand National Golf Course- June 18, 2026
 - C. Lakes & Pines Community Action Council, Inc.- Bingo- Hinckley Community Center- September 19, 2026
 - D. Resolution 17-2026 Accepting Restricted Donation- Daniel & Bonita Cabek, \$540.00 for Parks
- Motion made by Hopkins, Seconded by Frank, to approve the consent agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**

6. Reports of Officers, Council Committees, & Citizens Committees

- A. Pine County Sheriff- Calls were included in the packet. No deputy present.

- B. Bolton & Menk- Jacob Crispo was present but did not have anything to report.
- C. PeopleService- None
- D. Building Official/Inspector- None
- E. Hinckley Fire Department
 - 1. Monthly Run Report- Runs 40-54
 - 2. May Grant U Donation Request- Applications were submitted for: a DNR 50/50 grant application for \$5,000 in communication equipment, Pine Medical for \$ 5,000 for Rescue medical equipment and communication equipment, and State Farm Insurance for \$5,000 for Rescue medical equipment and communication equipment. Also sent out was a blanket open request for medical and communication equipment to local businesses.
 - 3. Fire Relief Association Fundraiser- Red Knights International Firefighters Motorcycle Club, Minnesota Chapter, June 26, 2027- The Minnesota Chapter of the Red Knights International reached out to Hinckley Fire and Rescue to host their 2027 dinner at the Hinckley Public Safety Building. This will most likely also require closure of a portion of 1st St SE for parking and/or seating. **Motion made by Hopkins, Seconded by Scharpnick, to approve the hosting of the MN Chapter of the Red Knights 2027 ride dinner at the Hinckley Public Safety Building. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**
 - 4. Rescue Health Screening Release- July 1, 2026, Daggett's- Defenbaugh also presented on the Rescue to explore adopting a set of Rescue Care Guidelines and aligning with a new Medical Director. Their current Medical Director is not very engaged with the Rescue, and a new one in the area is showing interest in working with departments. Council was in favor of the Rescue working on a set of Rescue Care Guidelines and coming back with them.
 - 5. Hinckley Rescue Care Guidelines
 - 6. FEMA 2024 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Notice of Non-Selection
 - 7. FEMA FY2025 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Application- FEMA finally sent a notice of non-selection for our FEMA FY24 Assistance to Firefighters grant. This was to replace our pumper. The FY25 grant is now open, and the department would like to reapply. Since the last grant round, they have researched new truck prices, and they have gone up significantly. Fire Chief Golly would like the application submitted for \$932,869.49. The City's match could be anywhere between 5 and 10 percent of the total. **Motion made by Hopkins, Seconded by Burkhardt, to submit an application to the FEMA FY25 Assistance to Firefighters grant to replace a pumper. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**
 - 8. J-5 Purchase MN DNR Surplus Equipment- Fire Chief Golly put the department's name in for a J5 many years ago through the MN excess fire equipment program. Hinckley is now next on the list. Our current J5 is a 1957, and the new one would be a 1988. The cost is \$6,800, including the trailer. This is one of the pieces of equipment that we can bill for with the DNR contract. **Motion made by Frank, Seconded by Hopkins, to approve the purchase of the J5 for \$6,800 pending inspection by the department. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**
- F. Firehouse Liquors - Monthly Report and Manager's Reports- Manager Taggart presented his report. The customer appreciation went well. He is looking at replacing the picnic tables on the patio.

- G. Library- May Branch Highlights- April highlights included 676 visitors to the library, 348 reference questions answered, 59 library program attendees, and 21 passive program participants. The summer reading program has started and will run through August 15, 2026.
- H. Standing Committees
 - 1. Planning Commission- None
 - 2. Park Board-The first Sweet Summer Sounds is June 25, 2026.
 - 3. EDA- None

7. New Business

- A. City Vision/Future Planning

Staff met with a contractor to get a cost for budgeting the replacement of the parking lot at Firehouse Liquors. The cost appears favorable, and Council could consider replacing it this year. The project's estimated cost may exceed the state threshold of \$175,000, so it is subject to competitive bidding. **Motion made by Hopkins, Seconded by Scharpnick, to look at going through the process to replace the parking lot at Firehouse Liquors. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**
- B. Hinckley Finlayson Elementary School Safety Zone Request

Bonnie Scullar, Principal of Hinckley Elementary, was present to ask the Council to consider establishing a Safety Zone at Hinckley Elementary. She noted there are some speeding issues in the area and visibility issues around crosswalks. Council is in favor of having staff work with the School to clarify the location of the Safety Zone and any sign recommendations.
- C. 2025 Audit Presentation & Acceptance, Kasey Thom of EideBailly

Staff provided the Council with the 2025 Audited Financial Statements and Executive Summary. Kasey Thom from Eide Bailly attended remotely to present the Executive Summary and answer any questions the Council may have. The City received an unmodified opinion over the Liquor Funds, Business-Type Activities, and the remaining opinion units. The City was found to have material weaknesses in the preparation of financial statements, the segregation of duties, and the recording of material journal entries, primarily due to its small staff size. These weaknesses are consistently identified and are typical of small cities. No legal compliance issues were found. The council had no concerns over the prepared statements. **Motion made by Burkhardt, Seconded by Hopkins, to approve the 2025 Audited Financial Statements and Executive Summary as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**
- D. Resolution 18-2026 Approving County Project within Municipal Corporate Limits

Pine County is planning to repave 61 from Hwy 23 to just south of 3rd St SW and Fire Monument Rd from Hwy 61 to I-35. The road is scheduled for early fall and will remain throughout the work. The north-south portion of the work along 61 would utilize state aid funding and, therefore, require a resolution supporting the portion of the project within the city limits. **Motion made by Frank, Seconded by Hopkins, to approve Resolution 18-2026 Approving County Project within Municipal Corporate Limits. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**
- E. MN Department of Transportation Letter of Support Requests (LOS) - Crossing Safety Program Funds to Update Hinkley Subdivision Railroad Crossings

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is requesting two letters of support for their applications to the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing

Elimination/Crossing Safety Program and the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. While none of the crossings included in the application are within the municipal boundary, they may be within our school district and are considered part of the Hinckley Subdivision. **Motion made by Burkhardt, Seconded by Frank, to approve sending the requested letters of support for the MnDOT applications. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**

F. Pine County Sheriff's Contract 2027-2028

Sheriff Nelson has reached out to begin the contract renewal process. The packet included the proposed contract. The changes include: moving from a three-year contract to a two-year contract; adding language to include mandated training and court time in contracted hours; changing from hours per day to hours per week; and updating the per-hour charge.

Neighboring cities have reached out to see if the Council would be interested in meeting to discuss the contract and the challenges they see in their communities. **Motion made by Burkhardt, Seconded by Hopkins, to create a committee to work on the contract renewal. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.** Zeman and Hopkins were selected as the representatives.

8. Unfinished Business

A. 2025 Budget Update

The unaudited May financials were included in the packet. Expenses are meeting budget expectations.

B. 2026 Road Maintenance- Lady Luck Drive Shoulder Work

A request for quotes was put out for Class V aggregate shoulder work on Lady Luck Drive, with work to be completed by September 18, 2026. Two responses were received: Diversified Paving for \$33,445 and Prefer Paving & Ready-Mix, Inc for \$15,500. **Motion made by Hopkins, Seconded by Frank to approve the quote from Prefer Paving & Ready-Mix, Inc for \$15,500. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**

C. 2026 Road Maintenance- 1st St & Sullivan S

Staff obtained a cost estimate through the Sourcewell Contract for the improvement/replacement of 1st St. SE/Power Ave. S. Using the Sourcewell Contract satisfies statutory bidding requirements. At the Mayor's request, staff also sought an additional quote from another contractor. Contractors met with the Mayor and Administrator to review the project scope and develop estimates. If costs are reasonable, the project is anticipated to be completed this summer or fall. A third bid was also received for the work. While the description of work was similar, the Council had a question on the installation of the geotextile fabric option. City Engineer Jacob Crispo from Bolton & Menk answered a Councilmember's question about different installation methods and whether one may be better than another. He suggested asking a clarifying question about the fabric installation. Council agreed and would like staff to reach out to get clarification on their question before moving forward.

D. Update on Meetings with Sandstone, Hinckley, and Pine City with the Fire Marshall's Office as Technical Assistance Provider

The following update was provided to the Council: As the Council is aware, fire departments across Minnesota are facing increasing challenges related to the sustainability of funding and

staffing. The cities of Hinckley, Sandstone, and Pine City have begun meeting jointly to gather information and explore what options may be available to ensure our communities continue to receive reliable fire protection service into the future.

We want to be clear; no decisions have been made. This is an information-gathering process. We are looking at a range of options and are committed to involving our councils fully before any direction is determined. We will provide updates as work progresses.

E. City Attorney Update

With the retirement of the City's Attorney, Council asked staff to develop a request for proposals (RFP) for a new City Attorney. Included in the packet was a draft RFP for Civil Attorney Legal Services. Jackson asked if Council had any feedback on the draft proposal; none was provided. **Motion made by Burkhardt, Seconded by Hopkins, to approve the RFP for Civil Attorney Legal Services. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.**

9. Presentation of Claims

- A. General Fund Payables- \$159,807.07
- B. Firehouse Payables- \$245,664.38
- C. EDA Payables- \$1,738.20
- D. Payroll Payables- \$48,104.73

Motion made by Frank, Seconded by Scharpnick, to approve the claims as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.

10. Notices and Communications

- A. The East Central Regional Development Commission has an opening on its Revolving Loan Fund Board. Candidates must reside and/or be employed in Pine County. Direct letters of application or questions to: ECRDC, 100 Park Street S., Mora, MN 55051. (320) 679-4065 ext. 29. Application deadline: June 12, 2026, at 1:00 pm.
- B. Highway 48/Fire Monument Rd Construction Request to County
- C. Pedestrian Crossing Improvements and County Construction Coordination on Old Hwy 61 Request to County

The letter to the County regarding the request, in conjunction with the construction project along Old Hwy 61, was included in the packet.

11. Presentation of Petitions, Complaints, and Requests (3 minutes each)

Councilmember Burkhardt reported that the Minnesota Association of Small Cities will hold its annual board meeting in Rochester during the League of MN Cities Annual Conference.

12. Closed Session

- A. Closed Session to Develop or Consider Offers or Counteroffers for the Purchase or Sale of Real or Personal Property Pursuant to MN Stat. 13D.05 Subd.3(c)

Motion made by Frank, Seconded by Burkhardt, to move to a closed session at 8:32 p.m. in the City of Hinckley Community Room, under MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. 3(c), to develop or consider an offer or counteroffer for the purchase or sale of real or personal property. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion made by Frank, Seconded by Hopkins, to open the closed session at 8:39 p.m. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0. Staff will contact the property owner with the update.

13. Adjournment

Motion made by Frank, Seconded by Scharpnick, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Voting Yea: Mayor Zeman, Burkhardt, Frank, Hopkins, Scharpnick. Motion carried 5-0.

Don Zeman, Mayor

Attest:

Leaha Jackson, City Administrator