



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
August 4, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Jahn Dyvik (arrived at 5:34 pm, Deirdre Kvale, and Todd Newcomer

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske; Finance Director: Amanda Nowezki; Public Works Director: Sean Diercks; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

Absent: Council: Mike Feldmann (with prior notice)

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Kvale, seconded by Newcomer, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during under Open Correspondence.

REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Discuss Addressing Diseased Trees in City Right-of-Ways

Public Works Director Diercks reported that there were several hundred trees in the City that had succumbed to the Emerald Ash Borer, and at least 100 of them were located on City property between rights-of-way and parks. He reviewed estimate examples for the removal of a few particular diseased trees and noted that the average price ranges from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per tree. He noted that he understood that the City did not have the money to remove every diseased tree and asked for direction from the Council on how they would like to move forward.

Councilmember Kvale questioned how many trees were located on park property.

Diercks stated that he had not gone out and done a count, but he believed the diseased trees were probably split about 50/50 between the parks and the rights-of-way.

The Council discussed private landowners' responsibility; who was responsible for trees planted within the right-of-way; the current ordinance language related to this issue; possible grant funding that may be available to help for the removal of the trees; potential liability if a tree located within the public right-of-way falls; the importance of checking with City Attorney Thames on the City's level of responsibility for trees located within the right-of-way; possible RFP process; possible partnerships with neighboring cities; the potential to begin the removal process with City-owned trees; the location of trees in the parks that should be the priority for removal; and the importance of reallocating funds within the 2026 budget so more of the trees can be removed.

Moeller noted that she would check with City Attorney Thames regarding the right-of-way questions, and indicated she would reach out to some nearby communities to learn how they're addressing dead ash trees and report back to the Council.

Councilmember Newcomer offered to reach out to the League of Minnesota Cities.

Moeller acknowledged that it wouldn't hurt to reach out to them.

B. Discuss the Televising of Sanitary Sewer Districts

Diercks stated that he had gotten quotes from two different vendors for televising the City's sanitary sewer lines and indicated that it will cost around \$73,000 to televise the remainder of the City. He noted that staff had received notice of the City's official Metropolitan Council treatment charges for 2026, which would be increasing to approximately \$464,800.

Finance Director Nowezki pointed out that the City's Metropolitan Council treatment charges have almost doubled in a span of two years.

Moeller noted that staff was prepared to show footage taken from the District 1 televising that shows some of the leakage that is occurring during the regular City Council meeting.

Mayor Miner asked if there were any grant opportunities to help pay for the televising project.

City Administrator Weske responded that there were no grant opportunities for the cleaning and televising, but there would be grant eligibility for needed repairs.

The Council discussed the importance of addressing the City's sewer lines; pushing for private lines to also be addressed; I&I treatment costs imposed by Metropolitan Council; and the possibility that repairs and sewer lining could lead to a reduction in the City's Metropolitan Council fees.

Moeller displayed video footage of a few example leaks detected during the televising that took place within District 1.

Mayor Miner questioned whether there was money in the Sewer Fund to pay for the televising proposed.

Nowezki replied that her recommendation is for the City to start putting money towards larger projects, for example, televising the remainder of the community.

Moeller agreed and observed that completing the televising of all remaining districts would be a smart move for the City's long game.

Nowezki added the City would be faced with a struggle in 2026 to figure out the budgetary impacts of the Metropolitan Council treatment charge increase. She noted that Funds 601 and 602 would be experiencing another \$100,000 in expenses, without any repairs being undertaken. She reiterated that the City should avoid doing that.

Moeller commented that the City would not want to continue experiencing \$80,000 increases in the Metropolitan Council bill every year because the City was not investing in its system.

The Council discussed the importance of gathering data on sewer line conditions through the televising; future lining project; importance of maintaining the system; ways they may be able to break up the lining and repairs into smaller portions that would make it more immediately affordable; bonding possibilities for this work; and that once the televising is done, the City can start making plans on how best to address the issues that were found.

C. Discuss Public Works Budget Status

Diercks advised the Council that there were major expenses coming up within Public Works that did not currently have a budget behind them, and he was bringing the discussion forward to assure the City can find a way to prioritize funding the larger projects.

Mayor Miner asked for a rundown of the projects, besides the sewer televising/lining, and the diseased tree removals that they had just discussed.

Diercks indicated that there were road projects, park maintenance items, and equipment needs that needed funding to be allocated for them.

Nowezki reviewed some of the capital funds that have been set aside, outlined some of the costs that they have incurred on the repair of used equipment, and discussed the challenges of getting ahead when it comes to the budget for a small city.

Diercks gave the example of the current mowers that the City bought used about six years ago and were now worn out.

Moeller read aloud items that had been included in the 2025 CIP that the Council had adopted in December 2024.

The Council discussed the CIP; equipment and vehicle needs within Public Works; possible creation of a separate fund dedicated to Public Works fleet; upcoming water tower repainting needs; and possible shifts that could be made within the budget process.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator