



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
March 17, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Jahn Dyvik, Mike Feldmann (arrived at 5:37 pm), Deirdre Kvale, and Todd Newcomer

Staff Present: City Administrator: Amanda Nowezki; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

Absent: None

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 Open Correspondence.

REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Updates on Engineering Services Meeting

City Administrator Nowezki updated the Council on a recent meeting she had with WSB's municipal sales representative during which they'd discussed the level of engineering services the City had received in the past, as well as addressing needs related to upcoming project planning. She shared with WSB that the Council and staff felt they had been getting mixed information about the costs of projects and had not been receiving clear guidance when trying to make decisions on projects. She highlighted an example of discussions that took place with WSB engineering regarding a grant application for the City's sewer lining project and the feedback from them that the City could expect to receive the full 50/50 match. She presented the grant award letter the City had received from Metropolitan Council which guaranteed \$50,000 and an opportunity to receive an additional \$262,000, which was not the \$1.5 million that they had anticipated. She voiced her frustration with the way the current City Engineer had communicated this award letter to the City as "great news", which was why she had ultimately scheduled the meeting to discuss WSB's engineering services. She had also contacted Metropolitan Council and learned that what was indicated in their letter was what their reasonable expectations should have been for the grant award. She requested the Council support a decision she'd made for the City to no longer work with Jeff Oliver as the primary engineer from WSB, and instead, to work with Rachel Scheu supported by a high level engineering mentor from WSB. She added that the City had been very happy with the planning services from WSB and was confident that with a change in engineers, the City would be able to get the service that it deserved.

Councilmember Feldmann recalled that the City used to work with Alex Mollenkamp, and when the City was assigned a new engineer, there was a pay jump that the City was essentially forced to take.

City Clerk Moeller mentioned that the City had been very happy with City Engineer Mollenkamp's services, but she'd ended up leaving WSB to take a position within the City of Chaska. Subsequently, the City had been assigned a series of engineers that staff had not been satisfied or pleased with. She shared examples of issues staff had experienced with engineering services and noted that she felt the City had not clearly communicated its lack of satisfaction over the years with WSB. She noted that she felt that City Administrator Nowezki sitting down with WSB had most likely been very eye-opening for them.

Nowezki reviewed her discussion with WSB and what they were planning to do to make things right for the City, including assigning new engineers to the City and also doing a complete reset of the City's Pavement Management Plan, at no cost to the City. She emphasized that it was very important that the City have accurate information so they are able to make educated decisions.

Mayor Miner expressed his appreciation to City Administrator Nowezki for taking the bull by the horns and handling this.

Council and staff continued to discuss the Metropolitan Council's grant program, award system, and the miscommunication that had occurred.

Councilmember Feldmann agreed that the City needed accurate information in order to make good decisions, so if City Administrator Nowezki felt that a change in engineers would make it possible to do so, he was supportive.

B. Discuss I&I Grant Application Award, Identify Project Priorities

Nowezki commented on the impact of the I & I grant award on the scope of project planning. She reviewed estimates prepared put together by engineer Scheu outlining the City's cost of a sewer lining project by district, and pointed out that there are a few districts where the City would be able to use TIF funds to cover sewer lining in those areas. Her recommendation was that the City proceed with a project to line District 3 and District 5 in 2026 because that would most likely offer the largest impact. She added that Public Works Director Diercks had also recommended including a specific sewer line located in District 1. A sewer lining project for Districts 3 and 5 would end up costing close to \$800,000, along with some additional costs for the one section of District 1. She reviewed a possible financing scenario for the project, allocating \$580,000 in TIF funds for lining Districts 3 and 5, and applying \$210,000 out of the budgeted CIP fund, along with the grant funds received.

Councilmember Kvale wondered whether there may be any additional grant funds the City could apply for from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

Nowezki indicated that she could check and see if there may be other grants available. She recalled that a resident had offered to look into some of the issues the City has had with Metropolitan Council and mentioned that she may take them up on their offer. She asked the Council if they agreed with the proposal to move forward with a sewer lining project with Districts 3 and 5, or if they wanted to see something different.

Councilmember Kvale asked when the City needed to make that decision.

Nowezki responded that she would be meeting with engineering staff on Friday and would then plan to have a professional services agreement approved at the next City Council meeting. She reiterated her budget plans for paying for the sewer lining project for Districts 3 and 5 and noted that the Metropolitan

Council offers the I & I grant every two years and the City could reapply. She explained that because the City was misinformed about the grant and how to prepare and plan, she could not justify a \$3.5 million project for the City this year and would definitely need to spread it out over a few years.

Councilmember Kvale asked how much staff felt it would cost to do the portion of District 1 that they had discussed.

Council and staff continued to discuss the potential for finding other grant funding opportunities; the importance of metering flows at the Orono connections in a manner to assure the data is accessible to Long Lake; and briefly touched on spending for temporary flow metering now versus holding off to pursue permanent meter installations.

C. Discuss Grand Avenue Project Design Goals

Nowezki sought direction from the Council regarding an upcoming street project in preparation for her upcoming engineering meeting on Friday. She asked if the Council wanted WSB to quote the Grand Avenue projects with sidewalks and noted that the top three streets she was planning to focus on were Grand Avenue, Upper Lea Lane, and Lakeview Avenue.

It was the consensus of the Council that the top three streets for project estimate and design should be Grand Avenue, Upper Lea Lane, and Lakeview Avenue.

The Council briefly discussed some of the other streets that had recently been suggested for inclusion.

Councilmember Dyvik voiced that he liked the idea of including sidewalks on Grand Avenue and making the roadway a bit narrower, but felt the City should welcome input from the residents on the street on what they would like to see.

Councilmember Kvale stated that she didn't feel sidewalks needed to be included for Grand Avenue because none of the streets off of Grand Avenue have sidewalks.

Nowezki stated that she would request that project estimates include options with and without sidewalks on Grand Avenue.

Council and staff discussed the City's current assessment policy, when it can be used, and the trend for many cities to move away from assessments.

OTHER BUSINESS/WORK SESSION COUNCIL REPORTS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Moeller
City Clerk