



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

December 08, 2025 at 6:30 PM

7701 County Road 110 West Minnetrista, MN 55364

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Whalen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

- a) Pledge of Allegiance
- b) Introductions: City Council: Mayor Lisa Whalen, Cathleen Reffkin, Claudia Lacy, Peter Vickery, Brian Govern Staff: City Administrator Jasper Kruggel, Finance Director Brian Grimm, Director of Public Safety Craig Squires, Assistant City Administrator Paula Bauman, Director of Public Works Gary Peters and City Clerk Ann Meyerhoff
Consultants: City Attorney Pete McHale, Kennedy & Graven and City Engineer Alyson Fauske, WSB Engineering
- c) Approval of Agenda
Motion made by Councilmember Reffkin, Seconded by Councilmember Vickery to approve the agenda as presented.
Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

2) SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

- a) Public Comment on 2026 Budget - Overview and Presentation

The City Council received a presentation regarding the final 2026 tax levy and budget following several work sessions held since August. Staff explained that the levy has been carefully reviewed to ensure only the minimum necessary amount is being collected to maintain services and support city operations. Finance Director Grimm presented an overview of the proposed gross levy of \$7.838 million, which includes funding for the general fund, debt service, road improvements, and the capital equipment plan. After fiscal disparities, the net levy to residents is approximately \$7.689 million. The average city tax impact for homeowners is estimated to increase between \$60 and \$130 annually, depending on home value—equating to roughly \$5 to \$10 per month. Staff reviewed the factors influencing the budget, including labor contracts, equipment needs, and road maintenance projects. The council also discussed Hennepin County's property valuation process and the timing for residents to question their assessments. No members of the public were present for comment. The council will take formal action on the levy and budget later in the meeting.

3) PERSONS TO BE HEARD

4) CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Approve Work Session Meeting Minutes from November 17, 2025
- b) Approve City Council Regular Meeting Minutes from November 17, 2025

- c) Res. No. 103-25 Approve Claims
- d) Res. No. 104-25 Accepting Donations
- e) Res. No. 105-25 Approve 2025 Budgeted Transfers
- f) Res. No. 106-25 Approve Front Yard Setback Variance at 5995 Loring Drive
- g) Res. No. 107-25 Approve Lakeshore and Side Yard Setback Variances at 5415 Cedar Point Road
- h) Res. No. 108-25 Approve Guest Home Conditional Use Permit at 7655 County Road 15
- i) Res. No. 109-25 Accept Improvements and Authorize Final Payment for the drilling and development of new City Well #8 and Well #9
- j) Approve 2026 City Council Meeting Calendar
- k) Approve 2026 Personnel Policy effective January 1, 2026
- l) Approve Offer of Employment for Zachary Vidmar for the position of Police Officer
- m) Approve 2026 Pay Plan Adoption and Employee Placement
- n) Approve Paid Family Medical Leave Memos of Understanding with Various Union Groups Employed at the City of Minnetrista
- o) Approve Whale Tail Lake Alum Treatment Cost Share Agreement Amendment

Councilmember Vickery had a question about item i asking how the wells turned out.

Public Works Director Peters provided an update on the well project, reporting that test pumping and installation work were completed successfully and that the project will finish approximately \$500,000 under budget. Several tasks—such as site preparation, site cleanup, and transporting and reusing the removed fine “sugar sand” for future utility repairs—were completed in-house, reducing project costs. Staff noted that one well screen experienced a slight twist during installation; however, it is not expected to cause operational issues, and the contractor has provided an extended warranty covering any necessary repairs. Although the project took longer than anticipated, there is no impact on operations since the treatment plant is not yet online. Council members expressed appreciation for staff’s work and the resulting cost savings.

Motion made by Councilmember Lacy, Seconded by Councilmember Reffkin to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

5) PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a) 2026 Fee Schedule
 - i. Adopt Ordinance No. 503 Adopting 2026 Fee Schedule
 - ii. Res. No. 110-25 Approve Publication of Ordinance No. 503 by Title and Summary

Staff and the Mayor reviewed the proposed updates to the city’s fee schedule, noting that the most significant changes involve increases to water rates driven by the need to support the new well infrastructure and the forthcoming third water treatment plant in Woodland Cove. Minor adjustments are also proposed for sewer and recycling rates.

The Mayor emphasized that, despite the water rate increases, the city continues to provide high-quality, safe drinking water and remains comparable to or less expensive than neighboring communities when considering both water and sewer charges. The city's sewer fee remains a flat quarterly rate—lower than nearby cities that charge both a base fee and usage fees. The Mayor also announced that the city will transition to monthly utility billing by July to help residents better manage household budgets. No members of the public were present for the hearing, and the council was invited to ask questions or offer additional comments.

Mayor Whalen opened the public hearing at 6:54 p.m.

No members of the public were present.

Mayor Whalen closed the public hearing at 6:54 p.m.

Motion made by Councilmember Govern, Seconded by Councilmember Vickery to adopt Ordinance 503 Adopting 2026 Fee Schedule.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

Motion made by Councilmember Vickery, Seconded by Councilmember Reffkin to adopt Res. No. 110-25 Approving Publication of Ordinance No. 503 by Title and Summary.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

6) BUSINESS ITEMS

a) LMCD Applicant Approval to Two-Year Term and Remaining Term

Staff reported that one application was received for the city's open position on the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District following notification from current representative Michael Kirkwood that he would be stepping down at the end of December after six years of service. The applicant, Jane Anderson-Thomas, was interviewed by the council during the work session and was determined to be highly qualified. The council expressed support for appointing her to the position.

Motion made by Councilmember Lacy, Seconded by Councilmember Govern to approve a Two-Year Term and Remaining Term to Jane Anderson – Thomas.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

b) 2026 Budget Approvals

i. Res. No. 111-25 Adopt and Approve 2026 Tax Levy

ii. Res. No. 112-25 Adopt and Approve Budgets (General Fund, Special Revenue, Debt Service, CIP Funds and Enterprise)

Motion made by Councilmember Reffkin, Seconded by Councilmember Vickery to adopt Res. No. 111-25 Adopt and Approve 2026 Tax Levy.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

Motion made by Councilmember Reffkin, Seconded by Councilmember Vickery to adopt Res. No. 112-25 Adopt And Approve Budgets (General Fund, Special Revenue, Debt Service, CIP Funds and Enterprise)

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery,
Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

7) ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a) Staff Reports

- Administrator Kruggel shared that the 3rd Annual Tree Lighting went very well despite the cold temperatures
- Kruggel also suggested looking at the calendar early next year with the possibility of moving the date around for 2026
- Kruggel provided an update regarding recent earthwork activity occurring west of City Hall, explaining that the City has entered into a three-year lease with Xcel Energy for use of the property. Under the agreement, Xcel Energy is using the site to stockpile construction materials related to nearby power line projects and is constructing a small storage shed that will become City-owned upon completion. Extensive grading is also being completed, which is expected to significantly improve the usability of the site in the future, including potential use as a parking area. While the lease revenue is minimal at approximately \$3,600 annually and comparable to prior agricultural lease rates, the City will benefit from substantial site improvements, estimated to be several hundred thousand dollars in value. The work is part of previously approved easements, complies with all applicable regulations, and acknowledged increased activity at the site during construction.

b) Council Reports

i) Mayor Lisa Whalen

- Will be attending Northwest League of Cities and all representatives representing this whole area will be in attendance
- Next week will be attending the Holiday Rotary luncheon
- Mayor Whalen addressed the Council and staff to express appreciation for their service and collaboration over the past year. Remarks highlighted the effective integration of a new council member, the respectful and thoughtful contributions of all council members, and the importance of differing viewpoints handled professionally. She emphasized that the Council's effectiveness is directly tied to the strength and dedication of City staff, offering specific commendation to department heads and employees across administration, finance, planning, police, public works, and support staff for their expertise, responsiveness, and commitment to residents. Particular recognition was given to leadership transitions that occurred smoothly, strong financial management, and staff efforts to serve the community while upholding City ordinances. The remarks concluded with appreciation for the mutual respect between Council and staff, noting that this collaboration has enabled continued improvements to infrastructure, services, and overall quality of life in Minnetrista.

ii) Cathleen Reffkin

- Council Member Reffkin provided an update about the St Bonifacius Fire Commission from its November 20th meeting. The department reported approximately \$85,000 remaining in the 2025 payroll budget and 127 calls completed to date out of 2024 budgeted calls, with higher than expected call volume largely attributed to nuisance calls in the Laketown Township and Crown College areas. A spring fundraising mailer generated approximately

\$20,000. Staffing updated included the addition of two firefighters earlier in 2025, both Firefighter 1 certified with EMR training completed, and two more firefighters expected to start immediately, bringing total staffing to 27 with a goal of 28. Discussion continued regarding hiring a new Fire Chief, tentatively targeted for July 1, 2026, though a possible delay until October 1, 2026. The current Chief has offered to remain until a replacement is hired. The commission reviewed capital purchases, including the proposed purchase of two fully outfitted Chevy Tahoes at an estimated cost of \$85,000 and planned acquisition of skid tanks and pumps for the grass rig and UTV. Fire partnership discussions noted no January meeting due to ongoing audits and actuarial reviews, with further discussions expected in February: pension structure differences, particularly monthly pension payouts, remain a significant barrier to consolidation. Additional updated included minor operational discussion, electric vehicle fire response considerations and upcoming community events such as Breakfast with Santa.

iii) Claudia Lacy

- Attended the Gillespie Center Holiday Boutique, noting it was exceptionally well attended and considered a major success despite being held over a shortened Monday-Saturday schedule due to Sunday church use of the facility.
- Attended Westonka Community and Commerce meeting at the Voyager facility. Shared information about the organization's strong financial position and its after-school program, which operates five days a week from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. providing transportation from schools, a hot meal, and programming at no cost to families. Concern was expressed that the program is underutilized and may be discontinued due to lack of awareness, and it was suggested that the City could assist in promoting this valuable community resource. Additionally, Westonka Community and Commerce is rebranding as Connect Westonka with a new logo and increased membership fees adjusted to better align with similar organizations, and that the organization is positioned for positive growth under new leadership.

iv) Peter Vickery

- Attended the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed meeting, noting that final approval was granted for the alum treatment of Whale Tail Lake. This approval is significant as it is expected to remove Whale Tail from the impaired waters list, a designation affecting many lakes in the region. The project represents a major investment, totaling nearly half a billion dollars, and is described as delivering substantial environmental benefit compared to other watershed projects underway in neighboring member cities.
- Attended the Planning Commission meeting, noting there were no major items of significance discussed.

v) Brian Govern

8) ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Councilmember Reffkin, Seconded by Councilmember Vickery to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern