



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

November 17, 2025 at 4:30 PM

7701 County Road 110 West Minnetrista, MN 55364

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Whalen called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Council present: Mayor Whalen, Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Lacy, Govern. Staff present: City Administrator Kruggel, Community Development Director Abel, Public Works Director Peters, Assistant City Administrator Bauman, Director of Public Safety Squires, City Clerk Meyerhoff, City Engineer Fauske, City Attorney Sonsalla.

2) DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Water Rate Discussion

During the discussion on upcoming water rate adjustments, staff reviewed proposed residential and commercial rate structures intended for adoption on December 8. The residential proposal includes quarterly rates for Q1 and Q2 of next year, with a transition to monthly billing starting in Q3. Council members reviewed tiered rate increases and clarified that the larger percentage jumps in higher tiers reflect both the creation of an additional tier and the goal of discouraging excessive irrigation use, especially during peak summer months. Staff confirmed that the proposed rates would generate sufficient revenue in both wet and dry years and fit within long-term financial planning that anticipates further increases in 2027 due to bond obligations. Council also discussed average residential usage and expected impacts on typical bills, noting that most residents will see modest increases except for high-volume users. For commercial and school accounts—of which there are only about 20—staff recommended mirroring the residential structure, as usage varies significantly but the revenue impact is minor. Council confirmed that apartment buildings are billed under the residential structure because they have a single meter, and no concerns have been raised by those properties. The council reached general agreement on the proposed residential and commercial structures, and staff will present quarterly rates for formal adoption on December 8, with monthly rates to be added through a future amendment closer to implementation.

b) 2026 Pay Plan Discussion

The Council continued its discussion on updates to the non-union employee pay plan, following prior review by the Personnel Committee. Staff provided an overview of compensation fundamentals, including job evaluation methods, pay equity requirements, and the structure of grades and steps. The Council reviewed several proposed pay plan options, each using a new structure of 13 grades and 15 steps, with differences based on the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Members discussed goals of market competitiveness, retention, fairness, and maintaining employee morale. Concerns were raised about delaying action and about potential inequities if some employees saw reductions under lower-COLA options. After weighing the fiscal impact—estimated at approximately \$11,500 to the general fund for the 4% option—and recognizing the need for ongoing, annual market review, the Council reached

consensus to adopt Option 3, which includes a 4% COLA and implements the expanded grade/step structure beginning in 2026. Under this approach, employees will receive the COLA but no step increase in 2026, with both COLA and step progression resuming in 2027 following a mid-year market review. Staff will bring forward the updated non-union pay plan policy and pay table for approval on December 8.

c) Park Dedication and Tree Replacement Discussion

Staff presented the annual park review and the Park Commission's recommendations for 2026 improvements. As in prior years, \$50,000 is earmarked for future playground installation at Lyle Park, which still lacks playground equipment. Proposed projects also include re-roofing the pavilions at Linden and Perennial Parks, trail and concrete maintenance in several parks, and replacement of the basketball court surface and backboards at Linden Park. The Park Commission reviewed and supported the recommendations, noting that while there is interest in completing Lyle Park, limited funding in the parks budget requires balanced use of available resources. Council members discussed the need to update the parks packet with current photos and completed project information and acknowledged ongoing opportunities to pursue grants. Appreciation was expressed to public works staff for completing the trail connection to the Dakota Rail Trail, which has received positive feedback from residents.

d) Property Discussion (Hunter/Bosma)

Staff provided an update on two properties that have received complaints regarding code violations, including unlicensed vehicles, storage of materials, and potential nuisance activity. The discussion addressed both criminal and civil enforcement options. One property has been somewhat cooperative, providing periodic updates and removing items from the site, while the other property (9550 West Hill Road) has been largely unresponsive, with ongoing accumulation of materials and a history of scrap metal activity.

Staff outlined the potential process and costs for abatement, including legal fees and estimated removal costs of \$75,000–\$100,000 per parcel, as well as possible environmental concerns. Council discussed establishing a clear deadline for cleanup, with significant visible improvement required within six months. Consent from property owners may be needed for monitoring, including potential aerial photography or drone use.

Council directed staff to notify both property owners of the July 1st deadline for substantial progress and to provide periodic updates on compliance, with a formal status report scheduled for the first council meeting in July. Staff will also explore potential volunteer or community support options for cleanup, though one property owner is unlikely to participate voluntarily.

e) Bathymetric Survey Summary

The Council received a presentation on the recent bathymetric surveys conducted on several stormwater ponds within the city, as authorized previously for WSB to assess sediment accumulation. The ponds were selected using the surface water asset management program, which calculates anticipated sediment loads. Survey results indicated that some ponds, such as P61 near Heatherwood Glen, are functioning properly and require no action, while others, including ponds in Hunter's Crest and Jennings Bay, require excavation ranging from 2.5 to 4.7 feet, with estimated costs between \$16,400 and \$20,800. Council discussed the potential for over-excavation, the

methods for determining excavation depth, and considerations related to pond accessibility and size. The discussion also addressed the role of homeowners' associations (HOAs) in maintaining these ponds, noting that some developments, like Palmer Point, have HOAs responsible for future maintenance, whereas others, such as Jennings Cove, do not. Legal considerations under Chapter 429 were discussed regarding the city's ability to assess costs to property owners, and the importance of documenting agreements with HOAs to ensure future maintenance responsibility was emphasized. Council highlighted the need for a fair distribution of costs among beneficiaries, the timing and seasonality of pond maintenance, and the potential for special assessments if property owners do not agree to assume future costs. The consensus was to proceed with the immediate pond projects, while simultaneously engaging HOAs to discuss cost-sharing arrangements and responsibilities for ongoing maintenance, with staff directed to provide high-level cost estimates and follow up on HOA responses before finalizing further actions.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Reffkin, seconded by Councilmember Govern to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

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