



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

July 20, 2026 at 5:00 PM

7701 County Road 110 West Minnetrista, MN 55364

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.02, one or more council members may participate remotely.

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Whalen called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Whalen, Councilmembers Reffkin, Lacy, Govern. Staff; City Administrator Kruggel, Assistant City Administrator Bauman, Community Development Director Abel, Public Services Director Peters, Finance Director Grimm, Deputy Chief Cummings, City Clerk Meyerhoff (Remote) Absent: Councilmember Vickery.

Councilmember Lacy arrived at 5:15 p.m.

Mayor Whalen added she wanted to have a brief discussion about a possible moratorium on data centers.

Motion by Govern seconded by Reffkin to approve the agenda as amended.

2) DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 2050 Comprehensive Plan Task Force Interviews

During the City Council Work Session, the Council discussed forming a Comprehensive Plan Task Force to assist with updating the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is required every ten years and is due by the end of 2028. Staff explained that three Planning Commission members have already volunteered to serve and that the City has solicited additional residents through newspaper and social media announcements. The anticipated commitment includes meeting once a month for approximately one hour, typically before the Planning Commission's regular meeting on the fourth Monday of each month, beginning in the fall and continuing for approximately 18 months. Members may also have opportunities to attend public open houses, Planning Commission meetings, or City Council meetings as the planning process progresses. The Council met with the two resident applicants, confirmed their availability and willingness to attend at least 75–80% of the meetings, and indicated that appointments would be brought forward for approval at the regular City Council meeting.

b) Water Meter Reading Software Update

During the City Council Work Session, staff presented the need to replace the City's aging water meter reading software because the current Itron-compatible system will no longer be supported after the end of 2026, with a short implementation grace period into 2027. Staff explained that the proposed cloud-based Metro Advanced software would maintain compatibility with the City's existing Itron water meters while also providing the ability to support Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) technology for compatible meters. The estimated first-year implementation cost is approximately \$37,510, which includes software implementation, training, startup fees, and cellular data service for the City's existing 126 AMI-compatible meter transmitters, while ongoing annual costs are estimated at about \$9,073. Council discussed the differences

between the current drive-by Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system and the newer AMI system, including installation requirements, costs, cybersecurity considerations, and whether a full conversion should occur immediately or be phased in over time. Staff noted that newly installed meters are already AMI-compatible, allowing the City to gradually expand the system as older meters are replaced over the next several years. Council members generally favored exploring a phased implementation rather than a citywide conversion, requested pricing for a software-only upgrade without additional AMI capabilities, and discussed using AMI technology selectively for customers with recurring billing or water usage concerns. Staff will return with additional pricing options and a proposed agreement later in the year for consideration as part of the 2027 budget.

c) City Council Pay Check-In

During the City Council Work Session, the Council discussed the opportunity to adjust elected officials' compensation before the statutory deadline, with any changes taking effect on January 1, 2027. Staff presented compensation data from the League of Minnesota Cities showing that, among similarly sized cities, the average monthly compensation is approximately \$681 for mayors and \$508 for council members, compared to the City's current rates of \$500 for the mayor and \$400 for council members. Staff also noted that elected officials currently receive a \$50 monthly internet stipend. Council members discussed the time commitment required to serve, emphasizing that responsibilities extend beyond attending meetings to include preparation, committee work, constituent communication, community events, and personal sacrifices. Members also noted that competitive compensation may encourage more residents to seek elected office. After discussion, the Council reached a consensus to increase monthly compensation by \$100, bringing the mayor's pay to \$600 per month and council members' pay to \$500 per month, and directed staff to prepare an ordinance for future consideration.

d) ATV Ordinance Discussion

During the City Council Work Session, the Council discussed potential revisions to the City's ordinance regulating the operation of recreational vehicles, including ATVs, on private property. Staff reviewed the existing ordinance, which limits operation to parcels of three acres or more, prohibits use between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., limits operation to two consecutive hours and no more than three vehicles at one time, and requires operation to occur at least 300 feet from neighboring property lines unless permission is granted. Council members reviewed the history of the ordinance, noting it was originally adopted in response to repeated complaints about excessive noise and dust from recreational vehicle use on rural properties. A Council member expressed concern that the 300-foot setback unintentionally restricts residents in developed neighborhoods who use ATVs or utility vehicles briefly to access their docks, even though such use has not generated complaints. Staff explained that the ordinance is enforced on a complaint basis and that the City has received few, if any, complaints since the ordinance was adopted. After discussion, the Council reached a consensus to explore amending the ordinance to create a limited exemption allowing recreational vehicles to be used for brief trips between a residence and a dock, while maintaining the existing restrictions intended to address prolonged recreational riding. Staff was directed to draft amendment language reflecting this compromise for future Council consideration.

e) Data Center Moratorium

During the City Council Work Session, the Council briefly discussed the possibility of adopting a temporary moratorium on new data center applications. Staff noted that the City has not received any data center proposals but suggested that a moratorium would provide time to develop zoning and land use regulations addressing issues such as facility size, location, and other potential impacts before any applications are submitted. Council members expressed support for proactively addressing the issue, noting that many communities have adopted similar measures. By consensus, the Council directed staff to prepare a resolution establishing a temporary moratorium on data center applications for consideration at the August 3 City Council meeting.

f) Facility Needs Assessment Update

During the City Council Work Session, the Council discussed next steps for completing a facility needs assessment as identified during the City's strategic planning session. Staff presented preliminary information on the potential cost and scope of a facility assessment and requested direction from the Council. After discussion, Council members agreed that a full evaluation of all City facilities was unnecessary at this time and suggested narrowing the scope by excluding the relatively new Police Department and limiting the City Hall review, while focusing primarily on the long-term needs of the Public Works facility. The Council also discussed aligning any future Public Works project with the expiration of the Police Department bond around 2030–2031, allowing future debt payments to transition more smoothly and potentially reducing the impact on taxpayers by gradually increasing levy amounts in advance. Rather than beginning a comprehensive facility study immediately, the Council favored delaying major planning until closer to the anticipated construction timeline, likely around 2028.

The Council also discussed addressing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements at City Hall independently of any future building project. Staff noted that accessibility upgrades, including entrances, bathrooms, the council chambers, and the front service counter, remain areas of concern. The Council directed staff to develop a phased list of ADA improvements with preliminary cost estimates so that projects could be completed over multiple years as funding allows. Staff will return with additional information on the scope, costs, and potential implementation schedule for future Council consideration.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lacy seconded by Govern to adjourn at 5:58 p.m.

Motion passed 4-0.

Lisa Whalen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Ann Meyerhoff, City Clerk