



**JOINT CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITIES OF MINNETRISTA AND ST. BONIFACIUS
MINNETRISTA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
FEBRUARY 26, 2026
6:30 PM**

1) Call to Order

- a) **Introductions:** City Council: Mayor Lisa Whalen, Cathleen Reffkin, Brian Govern; Peter Vickery, and Claudia Lacy Staff: City Administrator Jasper Kruggel, Finance Director Brian Grimm, Community Development Director David Abel, Director of Public Safety Paul Falls, Assistant City Administrator Paula Bauman, Director of Public Works Gary Peters and City Clerk Ann Meyerhoff (Remote) Consultants: City Attorney Sarah Sonsalla, Kennedy & Graven (Remote) and City Engineer Alyson Fauske, WSB Engineering.

St. Bonifacius City Council: Mayor Tim Eiler, Randy Ebert, Terril Anderson. Staff: Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer Eurel Nwachi, Fire Chief Eric Anderson.

2) Session Topics for Discussion

- i) **Municipal Boundary Discussion**

During the joint meeting between the City of Minnetrista and the City of St. Bonifacius, council members discussed several boundary and infrastructure issues where the two cities intersect. One primary topic was a small parcel of land that is largely surrounded by St. Bonifacius and currently used for storage of older equipment on reclaimed land. Officials discussed the possibility of pursuing an orderly annexation to transfer the property into St. Bonifacius if the landowner agrees, which could support future downtown development and improve St. Bonifacius's financial and planning situation. The councils noted that St. Bonifacius would likely cover associated legal costs and that an agreement could include temporary tax-sharing arrangements during the transition.

The discussion also expanded to other minor boundary irregularities between the cities that may be worth reviewing to "clean up" jurisdictional lines where properties or small road segments cross city boundaries. One example involved a section of roadway near Wildwood Avenue and Highway 7 where heavy truck traffic currently causes road damage and speeding concerns. Council members considered potential solutions such as weight restrictions, prohibiting semi-trucks, or coordinating enforcement between the two cities, though they acknowledged logistical challenges such as delivery access and enforcement. The cities agreed that staff would further review the parcels and roadway concerns, work with legal counsel, and develop potential proposals or agreements for future council consideration.

- ii) **Sanitary Sewer Agreement**

Council Members discussed updating a sanitary sewer agreement that dates back to 2001. The existing agreement allows Minnetrista to use St. Bonifacius's sanitary sewer infrastructure to convey wastewater to the regional trunk line managed by the Metropolitan Council. City staff proposed modernizing the agreement into a broader framework that would outline the process for evaluating future sewer

connections from Minnetrista developments that may need to use St. Bonifacius infrastructure. The updated agreement would clarify review procedures, infrastructure capacity evaluations, and cost responsibilities while still requiring approval from both cities for any specific project.

The discussion focused on a potential residential development in Minnetrista that could include more than 200 housing units and may seek connection through the Wildwood or Hunters Crest area. Under the current arrangement, Minnetrista collects a sanitary access charge per housing unit and passes that fee to St. Bonifacius as compensation for using its sewer system. Council members noted that developers would be responsible for any required infrastructure upgrades—such as upsizing pipes—if capacity analysis shows the existing system cannot handle additional flow. They also discussed coordination with upcoming street reconstruction projects and possible impacts from future highway improvements near Highway 7, emphasizing the need for engineering review and coordination with regional agencies before any connections are finalized. Overall, both councils expressed general support for updating the agreement and having staff and attorneys refine the details before bringing a revised version back for approval.

iii) Water Interconnection Agreement

During the joint meeting between the City of Minnetrista and the City of St. Bonifacius, officials also discussed a proposed water interconnect agreement that would formalize how the two cities share water in emergency situations. Staff explained that the agreement has been under discussion for several years and is largely finalized, with the remaining issue being the price per 1,000 gallons charged when water is supplied through the interconnect. Both cities emphasized that the agreement is intended only for emergency use, such as system failures or preventing boil-water advisories, and would not apply to ongoing or development-related water supply, which would require a separate agreement. The agreement would also cover future interconnect locations that may be installed as infrastructure projects occur, with costs for construction generally shared between the cities.

Public works staff also provided an update on the water meter at the interconnect, explaining that it had never functioned properly since installation due to wiring and grounding issues. After inspection by a Badger meter specialist, the cities determined that the meter must be replaced. Staff coordinated with vendors to obtain a replacement unit and install proper grounding and programming so that accurate flow readings can be taken. Additional maintenance work had already been completed, including lining the meter pit and improving the cover to prevent water infiltration. Officials discussed whether the repair costs—totaling a few thousand dollars—should be split between the two cities, consistent with the joint nature of the infrastructure. Once the meter is operational, the cities plan to periodically read it, integrate it with monitoring systems, and establish a flushing schedule to maintain water quality at the interconnection points. Overall, council members indicated general support for finalizing the agreement once the remaining rate details are reviewed and approved by both city councils.

iv) Xcel Energy Discussion

Council members discussed recent electrical reliability issues affecting residents,

particularly in the Hunters Crest and nearby areas. Several residents had contacted Minnetrista officials about repeated power outages and concerns about service reliability from Xcel Energy. City staff reached out to the utility's regional representative to investigate the issues and obtain explanations for the outages and planned solutions.

According to information provided by Xcel Energy, many of the outages were caused by trees contacting overhead power lines. The utility has already begun implementing short-term fixes, such as adding redundancy to the electrical supply to reduce the likelihood of outages. In the longer term, Xcel plans to install additional infrastructure to create a more reliable backup power source for the area. Council members noted that while the cities can communicate resident concerns and advocate for improvements, the electrical grid is controlled by the utility company, limiting direct municipal control. Both cities indicated they will continue coordinating with Xcel Energy and monitoring the situation, particularly as larger infrastructure and development projects are planned in the area over the next several years.

v) Fire Partnership Discussion

Council members also discussed the future of regional fire service partnerships, particularly ongoing conversations involving the Mound Fire Department and St. Bonifacius Fire Department. Fire leadership explained that discussions about a potential joint department or partnership have been ongoing for about two years, driven by concerns about long-term sustainability, increasing call volumes, personnel strain, and the rising cost of fire equipment. Minnetrista's growth has significantly increased the call volume handled by St. Bonifacius, which in turn affects budgeting and staffing demands. Leaders emphasized that collaboration could help share personnel, reduce redundant equipment purchases, and create a more sustainable service model.

A major obstacle to forming a full joint department or fire district is the difference between the departments' firefighter pension systems. St. Bonifacius uses a lump-sum retirement payout system, while Mound historically allowed monthly pension payments that continue for the firefighter's lifetime (and partially for surviving spouses). Although Mound ended new enrollment in the monthly option in 2013, existing participants remain in the system, creating long-term financial obligations. Merging the two pension funds would likely require paying out or restructuring those obligations, which could significantly reduce Mound's pension fund balance and slow the growth of St. Bonifacius's pension benefits—something St. Bonifacius leaders view as important for recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters. Because of these differences, officials agreed to pause the full merger discussion for now, revisit it periodically (potentially in about three years), and explore whether state legislation or other solutions could help resolve pension compatibility issues affecting multiple departments across Minnesota.

In the meantime, leaders suggested exploring incremental cooperation between the departments, such as shared duty crews, joint training opportunities, and operational coordination that could improve response coverage without requiring a full structural merger. Officials also acknowledged that Minnetrista accounts for a large and growing share of St. Bonifacius's call volume, raising longer-term

questions about how fire services should be structured and funded as the area continues to develop. City administrators from both municipalities plan to meet with fire leadership to evaluate potential partnership models, legal considerations, and future governance options before bringing recommendations back to their respective city councils.

Mayor Whalen brought up transportation priorities related to Minnesota State Highway 7. Council members emphasized the importance of both cities presenting a unified message to transportation officials regarding safety and infrastructure improvements along the corridor. In particular, the intersection of Wildwood Avenue and Highway 7 was highlighted as a potential location for a roundabout or other safety improvements. Members noted that both communities have additional concerns at nearby intersections, including areas around County Road 92 and Highway 7. To strengthen advocacy efforts, officials proposed that the two cities collaborate by identifying their respective priorities, coordinating through their city administrators, and developing a joint statement or resolution supporting shared transportation goals. The intent is to present consistent recommendations to state and regional transportation representatives—potentially including officials from the Minnesota Department of Transportation—at an upcoming council meeting in April. Leaders agreed that coordinated advocacy between the two cities would carry more influence in securing future planning and funding for improvements along the Highway 7 corridor.

3) Adjourn

Motion by Reffkin, seconded by Lacy to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.
Motion passed.