



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

November 03, 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, Claudia Lacy, Peter Vickery, Brian Govern
Staff: City Administrator Jasper Kruggel, Finance Director Brian Grimm, Community Development Director David Abel, 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 Sarah Sonsalla, Kennedy & Graven and City Engineer Alyson Fauske, WSB Engineering. Absent: Cathleen Reffkin
- c) Approval of Agenda
Mayor Whalen asked to switch Business Items A & B, putting item B first and to move the Special Presentation to after the Public Hearing or whenever Senator Ann Johnson Stewart arrives.
Motion made by Councilmember Govern, Seconded by Councilmember Lacy to approve the agenda as amended.
Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Lacy, Councilmember Govern

2) SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

- a) Senator Ann Johnson Stewart Update
During the city council meeting, the mayor welcomed Senator Johnson Stewart and thanked her for taking the time to attend and discuss important issues affecting the community. The mayor emphasized that the council represents all residents, regardless of political affiliation, and expressed interest in discussing city projects, the Highway 7 Safety Coalition, potential state legislation on planning, building, and housing, as well as updates on any possible special legislative sessions.
Senator Johnson Stewart introduced herself as a civil engineer and former state senator, now serving again after redistricting. She described her background in infrastructure and her leadership with the Infrastructure Alliance, noting her ongoing commitment to supporting local projects through bonding and funding initiatives. She explained the state's bonding process, highlighting that Minnetrista's current request focuses on water and sewer infrastructure needs in its northern areas. The senator praised City Administrator Kruggel for his work on the city's project proposal and assured the council that small communities like Minnetrista would be a priority for this year's bonding funds.
Senator Stewart outlined that the bonding committee expects \$1.3 billion available statewide, with an emphasis on grants for essential infrastructure, particularly water and sewer systems. She cautioned that final funding decisions are typically made at

the end of the legislative session but encouraged the city to remain engaged throughout the process.

The discussion also addressed housing legislation. Both the senator and council members expressed support for affordable housing but shared concerns about previous state bills that could override local zoning authority. They agreed that while affordable housing is important, policies must be practical and respect local planning efforts. The senator stated she is working with Representative Patty Acomb on alternative strategies to support communities without compromising their control over zoning.

Additional discussion focused on fire district organization and funding. The mayor explained challenges related to merging departments with separate relief funds and the limitations of the state's current funding formula, which is based solely on market value. The council suggested allowing alternative formulas that include service calls as a factor. Senator Stewart agreed that this was an important issue affecting many communities and said she would look into possible legislative solutions.

Overall, the meeting was collaborative and informative, with the senator expressing strong support for Minnetrista's infrastructure and governance goals and the council emphasizing continued communication with state legislators on these and related issues.

3) PERSONS TO BE HEARD

4) CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Approve Work Session Meeting Minutes from October 20, 2025
- b) Approve City Council Regular Meeting Minutes from October 20, 2025
- c) Res. No. 94-25 Approve Claims
- d) Res. No. 95-25 Accept Improvements and Authorize Final Payment of the 2023 Street Improvement Project
- e) Approve Building Inspection Reciprocal Services Agreement with Victoria
- f) Approve Temporary Liquor License for Northwest Tonka Lions - Holiday Tree Lighting
- g) Approve City of Minnetrista "Not to Waive" the Monetary Limits on Municipal Tort Liability

Motion made by Councilmember Vickery, Seconded by Councilmember Lacy to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

5) PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a) Res. No. 96-25 Adopting a Street Reconstruction Plan and Providing Preliminary Approval for the Issuance of Bonds Thereafter

During the City Council's public hearing, Todd Hagen from Ellers and Associates, provided an overview of the proposed bond issuance and financing plan for upcoming city projects. The public hearing was held to review a five-year Street Reconstruction Financing Plan, which includes a \$3.45 million street improvement project. Mr. Hagen explained that the city will be using a general obligation street reconstruction bond instead of a typical improvement bond due to the assessment threshold requirements

under state law. This alternative approach allows the city to finance the project effectively while complying with legal limitations.

Council and staff discussed the plan to combine this bond with other financing needs—specifically, equipment certificates and funding for the security camera project—to reduce issuance costs. In addition, a separate water infrastructure bond will be issued concurrently, though it will be repaid through water user fees rather than general funds. The council also discussed potentially splitting the water bond into two phases to allow flexibility and take advantage of possible state funding.

Mr. Hagan noted that combining multiple funding purposes into a single issuance will save on administrative and underwriting costs while keeping each fund's revenue stream and expenditure distinct. The total bond issuance is expected to exceed \$5 million and will be structured to meet federal spending and arbitrage requirements. The council acknowledged that after the public hearing and preliminary approval, a 30-day waiting period will be required before final authorization, ending on December 3rd. No further public comments or questions were raised, and the council proceeded with the next steps toward bond approval and project implementation.

Mayer Whalen opened the public hearing at 6:47 p.m.

There were no public comments

Mayer Whalen closed the public hearing at 6:47 p.m.

Motion made by Councilmember Lacy, Seconded by Councilmember Govern to Adopt Resolution 96-25, Adopting a Street Reconstruction Plan and Providing Preliminary Approval for the Issuance of Bonds Thereafter.

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

6) BUSINESS ITEMS

b) Res. No. 97-25 Resolution of Support for Acquisition of 6300 Painter Road by MCWD

During the meeting, the mayor introduced a discussion regarding a resolution of support for the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's proposed purchase of property located at 6300 Painter Road. Community Development Director Abel provided background information, explaining that the property owners had approached the Watershed District about selling the land due to its environmental significance within the Painter Creek sub-watershed. The parcel is located near existing district holdings and has been identified in the 2027 Water Management Plan as a key area for water quality improvement efforts. Painter Creek flows into Jennings Bay on Lake Minnetonka, which, along with Halsted Bay, is listed as an impaired water body. The acquisition of the property would enable future watershed projects aimed at reducing phosphorus runoff into Jennings Bay.

David noted that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposal on October 27 and unanimously recommended that the City Council issue a resolution of support. Although the Watershed District is not legally required by state statute to obtain city approval for the purchase, both the Watershed District and the Park District have established policies to seek local government support as a courtesy and to maintain cooperative relationships. Representatives from the Watershed District were present to answer any questions from the council, and staff were also available for discussion.

A representative from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District addressed the council to provide background details on the proposed purchase of the 6300 Painter Road property. The speaker explained that the property owners had contacted the Watershed District in

late July after the property had been on the market for several months, recalling the district's previous interest in securing conservation easements there nearly 20 years ago. Upon re-evaluating the site, district staff determined that the property aligns well with current watershed goals and the city's environmental priorities. Recent watershed diagnostic work identified the area upstream of the property as a significant source of phosphorus entering Painter Creek, which flows into Jennings Bay—one of the impaired water bodies of Lake Minnetonka. The site presents valuable opportunities for regional water quality improvement projects aimed at reducing phosphorus runoff.

In the short term, the Watershed District plans to demolish the property's aging structures—some dating back to the 1890s—while retaining one newer shed. The land will be graded and seeded with native vegetation to stabilize it temporarily as a conservation area. This period will allow time for monitoring, data collection, and feasibility studies to determine the best long-term restoration and treatment options. Potential future projects include creek and wetland restoration, and the development of phosphorus treatment systems such as sand-iron filtration or alum injection facilities.

The representative also noted that the property's location, adjacent to publicly owned land near Painter Creek Estates Park, offers opportunities for future collaboration with the city on recreational amenities. Discussion followed about the district's evolving land acquisition strategy, which now focuses on targeted properties that support measurable water quality improvements. The council inquired whether portions of the parcel could eventually be resold for private use under conservation easements. The district indicated this could be considered after feasibility studies clarify which areas are essential for environmental restoration.

Regarding the purchase details, the district confirmed that it follows a policy requiring formal appraisals before acquisition. The 6300 Painter Road property was listed for \$850,000, and the district successfully negotiated a purchase price of \$825,000—approximately midway between the listing and appraised values. The council acknowledged the request for a resolution of support for the acquisition and expressed appreciation for the Watershed District's collaboration and transparency in the process.

Motion made by Councilmember Vickery, Seconded by Councilmember Govern to Adopt Resolution 97-25, Resolution of Support for Acquisition of 6300 Painter Road by MCWD.

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

a) AE2S Task Order 19 - Communication and Outreach Assistance Related to Water Utility Changes

During the meeting, staff presented a proposal for enhanced public communication support related to the city's upcoming water treatment plant construction, utility rate changes, and the transition from quarterly to monthly billing. The proposed agreement, not to exceed \$18,840 over a 30-month period, would provide professional communication assistance—including a dedicated project webpage with real-time updates, newsletter content, postcards, and social media messaging—to help residents stay informed and reduce confusion or frustration as major utility changes occur.

Staff explained that while the city would still handle printing, mailing, and posting, the consultant would provide professional design, messaging, and communication planning, drawing on prior experience with similar municipal projects. The intent is to

strengthen outreach and transparency during a period of significant infrastructure work and rate adjustments.

Councilmembers discussed whether the cost was justified and debated the extent of the city's responsibility to proactively inform residents. Some members expressed concern about spending funds on professional communication services, suggesting that regular mailings or website updates might be sufficient. Others emphasized that proactive, clear, and frequent communication is essential to maintaining public trust and reducing staff workload from resident inquiries.

Staff noted that during the last utility rate increase, the city received hundreds of calls from residents who were unaware of the changes despite standard communication efforts. The mayor stressed that improved communication aligns with one of the city's top strategic goals and helps prevent misinformation and mistrust.

Ultimately, the discussion reflected differing perspectives on how best to balance fiscal responsibility with the need for effective resident engagement, but there was general agreement on the importance of transparent communication during major city projects.

Administrator Kruggel explained that this will give us more ways to communicate what is going on with the project. City would be responsible for all the printing and postage.

Motion made by Councilmember Govern, Seconded by Councilmember Vickery to Approve AE2S Task Order 19 – Communication and Outreach Assistance Related to Water Utility Changes.

Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Vickery, Councilmember Govern

Voting Nay: Councilmember Lacy

7) ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a) Staff Reports

Administrator Kruggel shared that the Holiday Tree Lighting is set for December 4th from 5-7 with Fire Works at 6:30.

b) Council Reports

i) Mayor Lisa Whalen

ii) Cathleen Reffkin

iii) Claudia Lacy

- Westonka Chamber Lunch

iv) Peter Vickery

- Personnel Committee Meeting

v) Brian Govern

8) ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Councilmember Vickery, Seconded by Councilmember Govern to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Meyerhoff, City Clerk