



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

May 18, 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 5:00 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Whalen, Councilmembers Reffkin, Vickery, Lacy, Govern. Staff; City Administrator Kruggel, Assistant City Administrator Bauman, Community Development Director Abel, Finance Director Grimm, Public Works Director Peters (Remote), Director of Safety Squires, Deputy Chief Cummings, City Clerk Meyerhoff (Remote), City Engineer Fauske, City Attorney Sonsalla (Remote)

2) DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 2027 Street Improvement Project Scoping

City Engineer Fauske presented several potential areas for the 2027 street improvement project, with preliminary budget discussions ranging between \$600,000 and \$700,000. The proposed project areas included the Painters Road/Painters Creek rural residential area, Ridgewood Cove, Marina Drive near the high school, and the Island neighborhood excluding Tuxedo Road and Enchanted Lane, which were completed in 2018. Staff explained that most of the proposed areas would likely require full-depth reclamation based on pavement conditions and prior pavement core samples. Ridgewood Cove was highlighted as needing further discussion because there is currently no water main in the area, prompting questions regarding whether residents would want future water service and what installation methods might be appropriate. Staff also noted that the Island neighborhood project fit within the anticipated budget range and would likely qualify for assessments due to the age and condition of the roads.

Council discussed the city's road fund balance, which currently stands at approximately \$2 million, and debated whether additional road projects should be pursued rather than carrying a large fund balance while construction costs continue to rise. Staff explained that the city had intentionally reduced annual road spending in anticipation of larger future projects, including the Hunter's Crest reconstruction project estimated at approximately \$4.6 million or more. Councilmembers discussed balancing current spending with future bonding needs and agreed that while preserving funds for upcoming major projects is important, road costs are increasing annually. Staff also reviewed upcoming bond obligations and explained that few road-related debts will be retiring in the near future.

Councilmembers expressed support for prioritizing the Island neighborhood project, citing the roadway condition, density of homes in the area, and the amount of maintenance currently required. Staff indicated that additional pavement cores would still be needed to better define the scope of work and provide contractors with accurate information regarding pavement thickness and reclamation needs. Council also requested information regarding estimated assessments per property once unit counts

are completed. Staff noted that reconstruction projects typically result in lower per-household assessments in denser neighborhoods and explained that approximately 40 percent of assessments are often prepaid by residents.

Discussion continued regarding Ridgewood Cove and the possibility of extending municipal water service if street improvements are pursued there. Staff explained that while no requirement exists to extend water service, reconstructing the roadway without addressing water infrastructure could effectively delay future water installation for several decades. Councilmembers noted that similar neighborhoods have previously expressed little interest in city water service. Staff recommended first focusing on the Island project while continuing to evaluate Ridgewood Cove as a possible future project. Council directed staff to proceed with feasibility studies for both the Island and Ridgewood Cove areas, gather additional pavement and cost information, and determine the timeframe for validity of the feasibility study should Ridgewood Cove be delayed until the 2028 construction season.

b) Bosma Property Update

City Administrator Kruggel presented an update regarding the Basma property at 9550 W. Hill Road, including video evidence and inspection findings documenting extensive accumulations of vehicles, scrap materials and garbage on the site. Council members agreed the property likely constitutes a public nuisance under city code and discussed possible next steps, including formally declaring the site a nuisance and pursuing a nuisance abatement order. Staff explained the legal and financial implications of the process, noting cleanup costs could range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and would initially be paid by the city before being assessed against the property taxes. Council members expressed concern for the elderly property owner and his family while also emphasizing the ongoing impact on neighbors and the community. The city attorney outlined that court involvement would likely be necessary before the city could enter the property and remove materials. After discussion, the council directed staff to prepare nuisance declaration and abatement documents for the June 1 meeting, with a proposed cleanup deadline of August 1, despite some debate over whether that timeline was too short.

c) Utility Bill Process Analysis

City staff and council members discussed the proposed utility billing process changes related to transitioning water billing from quarterly to monthly statements and whether to outsource the printing and mailing portion of the process. Staff explained that outsourcing to InfoSend would streamline operations, reduce costs through economies of scale, improve turnaround times, and lessen the administrative burden on city employees, particularly as monthly billing is expected to significantly increase customer service inquiries and processing time. Staff estimated that moving to monthly billing would add approximately 672 staff hours annually, with about 96 hours related specifically to printing and mailing tasks that could be outsourced. Several council members supported the proposal, citing efficiency, redundancy concerns, and reduced operational risk if key staff are unavailable or equipment fails. Other council members raised concerns about the procurement process, questioning whether sufficient vendor comparisons and cost analysis had been presented before recommending outsourcing. The discussion also included ideas for encouraging residents to enroll in paperless billing through incentives or bill credits to reduce future mailing costs. Ultimately, the majority of the council expressed support for outsourcing the printing and mailing

services to InfoSend, and staff was directed to bring the contract back as a formal business item at the regular meeting following the work session.

d) Update of Boulevard Tree Replacement in Hunters Crest and Discuss Potential Cost Share for Replacement of Ash Trees Removed

City staff updated the council on the ongoing removal of dead ash trees throughout the city, particularly in the Hunters Crest neighborhood, where several trees located within boulevard areas have recently been removed. Staff raised the issue proactively in anticipation of potential resident or homeowners association requests for replacement trees and noted that replacement costs are estimated at approximately \$600 per tree based on prior street project data. Council members discussed possible approaches for handling replacement requests, including replacing trees only upon homeowner request, considering cost-sharing arrangements, and potentially locating replacement trees on private property so maintenance responsibility would fall to the homeowner rather than the city. Staff also noted that grant opportunities may be available through Hennepin County, although a recent grant application had been denied. The council generally supported tracking resident requests before establishing a formal replacement policy, with staff proposing to return to the council once a meaningful number of requests had been received and to provide updates on the city's ash tree removal efforts and any future grant opportunities.

3) ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Reffkin, seconded by Vickery to adjourn the work session at 6:10 p.m.

Motion passed 5-0

Lisa Whalen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Ann Meyerhoff, City Clerk