



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

September 21, 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.*

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### 1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Whalen called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Introductions:

**Council:** Mayor Whalen, Councilmembers Cathleen Reffkin, Peter Vickery, Claudia Lacy, and Brian Govern

**Staff:** City Administrator, Jasper Kruggel; Finance Director, Brian Grimm; Public Works Director, Gary Peters; Assistant City Administrator, Paula Bauman; Director of Public Safety, Craig Squires; Police Officer, Chad Griggs; Community Development Director, David Abel (Attending remotely)

**Consultants:** City Attorney, Kennedy and Graven, Sarah Sonsalla (Attending remotely)

### 2) DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Whalen amended the agenda and moved item 2g to the start of the agenda

#### g) Police Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Discussion

Chief Squires presented a proposal to establish a public safety drone/UAS program to support emergency operations, public safety response, and officer and responder safety. He discussed potential uses, including documenting crime scenes, assessing evidence, and assisting with missing-person searches, as well as required policies governing drone use and collected data.

Council discussed the number of department pilots, anticipated use, coordination with other agencies, federal restrictions on the proposed drone, and potential grant funding. Officer Griggs would serve as program administrator, with two to three additional pilots.

Squires stated that if Council proceeds, State statute requires a public notice and public hearing. Consensus of Council was to proceed with scheduling a public hearing.

#### a) City Council Meeting Day Discussion

Mayor Whalen introduced a proposal to move City Council meetings from Monday to Tuesday evenings. Council discussed the potential impact on Council and staff and reviewed individual schedules and preferences. A straw vote was taken, with Councilmembers Whalen, Vickery, and Lacy voting in favor and Councilmembers Reffkin and Govern opposed.

The item will be brought back to the October 5 Council meeting for formal approval. If approved, the change would take effect January 1, 2027.

#### b) Personnel Committee Budget Items

City Administrator Kruggel gave Council a summary of personnel committee recommendations and broke them down by action items:

**Action item 1: Consider moving the Public Safety Director step.**

The personnel committee recommended moving the Public Safety Director from Grade 12, Step 7 in the 2026 Pay Plan to a Grade 12, Step 11 in the 2027 Pay Plan as of January 1, 2027, to better align the position with comparable communities.

Consensus of Council was to move forward with the recommended change.

**Action Item 2: Consider Removal of Comparable Cities**

The Personnel Committee recommended removing the City of Victoria from the list of comparable cities used for compensation comparisons. Kruggel reviewed the current list stating they were determined in 2023 when the city completed the compensation study and created the pay plan. Council discussed the factors considered when determining comparable communities, including population, business community, and county.

Following discussion, Council agreed to remove Victoria, Waconia, Wayzata, and Deephaven from the comparable city list.

Mayor Whalen suggested conducting an independent compensation study in 2027 to provide an impartial review of City salaries and comparable communities.

**Action Item 3: Consider Setting the 2027 Non-Union Market Adjustment at 2.5%**

The Personnel Committee recommended a 2.5% market adjustment for non-union employees in the 2027 Pay Plan. Council discussed the proposed adjustment, union contract increases, prior adjustments, and the difference between market adjustments and step increases.

Personnel Committee Members Reffkin and Vickery stated they felt the proposed adjustment was fair and consistent with comparable communities. Mayor Whalen requested that Council wait until union contracts are finalized before making a decision.

No recommended changes to the proposed 2027 Non-Union Market Adjustment.

**Action Item 4: Consider setting the 2027 employer contribution toward the employee benefit cafeteria plan at either \$1,800 or \$1,900 per month for family elections, and \$900 per month for single elections.**

The Personnel Committee recommended maintaining the \$900 monthly employer contribution for single coverage and increasing the family coverage contribution. Council discussed benefit costs, medical plan coverage, and the impact of increasing benefit contributions.

Consensus of Council was to increase the family coverage contribution to \$1,900 per month, with no change to the \$900 monthly contribution for single coverage.

All discussion items will go to the October 5, 2027, regular meeting for formal approval.

c) St. Bonifacius/Minnetrista Fire Partnership Update

The council representatives will remain unchanged, with Lisa Whalen and Cathleen Reffkin continuing in their current roles.

d) Facility Use Policy Review

Jasper Kruggel stated the City periodically receives requests from outside organizations to use City-owned meeting and conference space. Staff recommended establishing a facility use policy to guide rental requests.

Council discussed facility use and agreed that City residents may use the space, while requests from non-residents would not be permitted.

e) Cell Tower Lease Update

This item was moved to the regular meeting.

f) Ash Tree Replacement Policy

This item was moved to the regular meeting.

g) Police Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Discussion

**3) ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Councilmember Reffkin, seconded by Councilmember Vickery to adjourn the meeting at 6:20pm. Motion carried. Voting Yea: Mayor Whalen, Councilmember Reffkin, Vickery, Lacy, and Govern.**

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Lisa Whalen, Mayor

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Paula Bauman, Assistant City Administrator/Recorder

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Attest: Ann Myerhoff, City Clerk