

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
August 18, 2025
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Laura Helle, Michael Postma, Oballa Oballa, and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Jason Baskin

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Director Jason Schon, City Attorney Craig Byram and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON:

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving the agenda. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving Council minutes from August 4, 2025. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Helle, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

Tree Service: S&J Tree Care, Sacramento, CA
Lodging Establishment: Alicia Harrison, 1311 8th Avenue NW, Austin, MN
Mobile: The Snack Box, Delano, MN
Mobile: Cousins Maine Lobster, Minneapolis, MN
Mobile: Carpenter Coffee Company, Alden, MN

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of Bills
- b. Credit Card Report
- c. Investment Report

Events:

Austin ArtWorks Festival, August 22 to 24, 2025

Ribfest 2025 on August 30, 2025

Carried.

BIDS AND AWARDS

Public Works Director Steven Lang received bids for the sanitary sewer structure project. He stated this is in conjunction with the sanitary lining project that they will be completing. The work will consist of the construction of two new sanitary manholes, three replacement manholes and an additional sewer repair at various locations across town.

Mr. Lang stated the low bidder for this project was Alcon Construction, Inc. at \$124,945.05. The engineer's estimate came in at \$123,650.00

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, awarding the bid for the sanitary sewer structure project to Alcon Construction Inc in the amount of \$124,945.05. Carried 6-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace relayed the planning commission reviewed a variance for a rezoning request for the property located at 900 5th Avenue NE. The petitioner is requesting to rezone this property from a R-1, single family district to a B-2 community business district. The petitioner would like to use the site for a food truck and seating area. They received no objections from the public. The Planning Commission approved the rezoning request 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the rezoning request for the property located at 900 5th Avenue NE from a R-1 to a B-2. Carried.

Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace requested approval of an amendment to City Code Chapter 11 in relation to the rezoning request for the property located at 900 5th Avenue NE. This was recently approved by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Waller, for preparation of the ordinance. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, for the adoption of the amendment to City Code Chapter 11. Carried 6-0.

Director of Administrative Service Tom Dankert presented the results from the voting for The Hormel Foundation grant requests. Mr. Dankert stated the Council rankings for The Hormel Foundation grants were as follows:

1. Pickleball Courts
2. New Municipal Swimming Pool
3. Police Chaplaincy Program

4. HRA Housing Forward Trust
5. 4th of July Fireworks
6. Nature Center Trail Repair
7. Playground Equipment
8. Veterans Pavilion/Izaak Walton Cabin
9. Jay C. Hormel Nature Center Education Programs
10. HRA WoodCHIP Program
11. Ice Resurfacer
12. Fire Prevention and Education
13. Delivering the Data: Hotspot Data Plans 2025

Mr. Dankert requested Council approval of the rankings for submittal to The Hormel Foundation.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the 2026 grant requests for submission to The Hormel Foundation. Carried.

Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace reviewed a variance for a fencing request for Riverland Community College. This request comes directly to Council and does not go to the planning commission. Riverland is requesting an eight-foot fence versus a six-foot fence. The proposed fence will be located in the interior of their property. They are looking to protect items they would be growing from wildlife.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving the fencing request from Riverland Community College. Carried.

Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace reviewed a variance request for a detached accessory structure. Ms. Wallace stated the structure is 26x36 and would be an addition to the existing garage. The Planning Commission approved the request. There were no objections from the public to this request.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Helle, approving the variance request for the detached accessory structure. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Helle, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 801 18th Street SW, Voogd Property. Carried.

CITIZENS ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL

Matt Simonson, 607 7th Avenue SE, stated the dams are wreaking his neighborhood. He stated in 1903 that during the floods, the water wasn't as high as it was in 2004. He believes there needs to be more grass or concrete dykes in neighborhoods to assist with the flooding occurrences in the City.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the ArtWorks festival will be this coming weekend and he is requesting Council Members to pick out an award. Council Member Oballa and Council Member Helle volunteered to pick out the artwork.

Public Works Director Steven Lang gave an update on the high water today. The City received about an inch of water in Austin, but north of us, up toward Blooming Prairie, they received considerably more. The river elevations the City is seeing right now are from that rain event. They will be keeping a close eye on the river gauge elevations tonight. They have had crews in since late Sunday evening at the treatment plant, monitoring the sewer collection system. They will also monitor the streets in the City and continue to close or open them as necessary.

Parks, Recreation, & Forestry Director Jason Schon stated the High Water Music Series will be on Thursday at the Bandshell. He invited all to attend.

Council Member Helle thanked City Staff for attending the extra budget meetings. It is assisting with understanding the budgeting. This weekend is the Austin Artwork festival. She asked that all support the local businesses. She also stated that if people are available, please volunteer at the ArtWorks Festival. They have two-hour shifts available. She thanked the Public Works and Law Enforcement staff for their work during the flood event.

Council Member Oballa thanked the City employees and the Police Department for their work during this flood event. He stated the information being put out on Facebook is very helpful to the public.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated the Library Board recently met and discussed the summer reading program. He stated it was a very strong program this year. They will be evaluating the numbers and will report back. The Library Board thanked the Council for the \$17,000 in contingency funding for the RFID tracking that will be used to help track library books.

Mayor King stated the Annual Employee Picnic will be held on August 27th at 11:30 a.m. at the Veteran's Pavilion.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adjourning the meeting to September 2, 2025. Carried.

Adjourned: 5:53 p.m.

Approved: September 2, 2025

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____