

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
September 2, 2025
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Laura Helle, Michael Postma, Oballa Oballa, Jason Baskin (arriving at 5:38 p.m.) and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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 Sehon, City Attorney Craig Byram, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald and Community Members

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 Waller, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving Council minutes from August 18, 2025. Carried.

Mayor King read a proclamation declaring September 12-21, 2025 as Welcoming Week.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Licenses:

Temporary Liquor: Austin Noon Lions Club on October 7, 2025
Temporary Liquor: Austin Area Chamber of Commerce on October 14, 2025
Temporary Liquor: Austin Country Club on October 23, 2025
Temporary Liquor: Austin Area Chamber of Commerce on November 11, 2025
Edible Cannabinoids: Star Liquor, 209 11th Street NE, Austin, MN
Lodging Establishment: Super 8, 1401 14th Street NW, Austin, MN
Sign Installer: Rose City Sign & Canopy, Eagle Bend, MN
Massage Therapist: Melissa Haven, Austin, MN

Claims:

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

Events:

Riverland Community Night on September 12, 2025
Mankato Covette Club on September 13, 2025
Liberty and Justice for All on September 20, 2025
Austin, MN Pride Festival on October 11, 2025
Downtown Trick or Treating/Fall Fun on October 25, 2025
End of Year Celebration on November 1, 2025

Appointments to Boards and Commissions:

Jeffrey King to the Library Board expiring December 31, 2026

Carried.

BIDS AND AWARDS

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Director Jason Schon presented a bid for ash tree removal at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. He stated this project is funded by a grant through the Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Schon stated the grant will also fund the planting of trees next spring. He stated they received eleven bids for this project. The bids ranged from \$50,000 to \$345,000. The lowest acceptable bid came in from Psquared, LLC at \$50,000. He recommends awarding the bid to Psquared, LLC.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, awarding the bid for tree removal at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center to Psquared, LLC. Carried 6-0.

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Director Jason Schon presented a bid for ash tree and stump removal within the boulevards of the City of Austin. Mr. Schon stated this is the third bid process the City has conducted for ash tree removal this year. This year a total of 1125 infested ash trees have been removed. He stated by the end of the year they will have removed 90% of the infected ash trees. They received eight bids for this project. The bids ranged from \$62,989 to \$170,000. The lowest bid came from Olson Timber Company LLC dba Schwebach Tree Service in the amount of \$62,988.88. He recommends awarding the bid to Schwebach Tree Service.

Council Member Oballa asked Mr. Schon what the process was to notify the public about trees being removed in their neighborhoods.

Mr. Schon stated his department held outreach meetings for the public earlier in the year to educate them on this process, and they used social media to release information. He stated they are unable to notify every homeowner, as this is a very large project.

Council Member Oballa stated the homeowners should be notified and the contractors should be notifying them.

Citizen Michael Whalen 406 13th Street NE asked what percentage of the boulevard trees are taken down by the Parks department.

Mr. Schon stated the Parks department tree crew is extremely busy with removing trees from park, and right of ways. They are focused on trees that are hazardous or dying. The bulk of the trees on the boulevard are being taken down by contractors.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, awarding the bid for boulevard tree removal to Olson Timber Company LLC dba Schwebach Tree Service. Carried 7-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Mayor King requested approval to reappoint Tom Dankert to The Hormel Foundation Board serving as the City's representative.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Helle, reappointing Tom Dankert as the City's representative on The Hormel Foundation board. Carried 7-0.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace stated the petitioners, Heather and Ryan Vossler, located at 1417 28th Street NE have requested annexation of their property from Red Rock Township to the City of Austin. Petitioner is requesting annexation due to wanting access City services. Ms. Wallace stated the petitioners would be required to pay sewer connection fees once annexed into the City.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, Seconded by Council Member Oballa, approving the annexation of the property located at 1417 28th Street NE. Carried 7-0.

Mayor King requested approval for a public hearing for the fall assessments for 2025.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, Seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution setting public hearings for October 6, 2025 for fall assessments. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried. 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 902 3rd Avenue NW, Hareid Property. Carried.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Council Member Postma stated there are many great events coming up this fall. He encouraged citizens to attend these events.

Council Member Baskin thanked everyone who assisted with the Austin ArtWorks Festival. He thanked everyone who has been involved in the budget conversations this year. He stated it is easy to send things on social media but it's much better to be a part of the process.

Mayor King read the September employee anniversaries. He appreciated all the employee that attended the annual employee picnic last week.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adjourning the meeting to September 15, 2025. Carried.

Adjourned: 5:55 p.m.

Approved: September 15, 2025

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____