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

| | |
|---|---|
| MEMBERS PRESENT: | Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Laura Helle, Michael Postma, Jason Baskin, and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin |
| MEMBERS ABSENT: | |
| 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, Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon, Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace, and Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann |
| APPEARING IN PERSON: | Austin Daily Herald, Joan Hanson (Mower County Senior Center), Craig Popenhagen (CLA) |

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

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

Moved by Council Member Waller, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving Council minutes from April 21, 2025. Carried.

Mayor King read a proclamation recognizing the Mower County Senior Center and their 50th anniversary. A celebration will be held on May 15 to commemorate 50 years. Mower County Senior Center Director Joan Hanson thanked Council and staff for their unwavering support over the years.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Licenses:

Tobacco: Austin Highway Liquor LLC, Austin, MN
Mobile: The Candy Shop, Albert Lea, MN
Mobile: Preh Soe Leh Food Truck LLC, St. Paul, MN
Sign Installer: Vector Sign Solutions, Woodbury, MN
Temporary Liquor: VFW Post 1216 on August 16, 2025

Claims:

a. Pre-list of Bills

Events:

Taste of Nations on May 17, 2025
River Rats Car Show on August 17, 2025

Carried.

BID OPENINGS AND AWARD:

Director of Public Works Steven Lang spoke about the bids for construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Levee. He relayed the bids came in as follows:

| **Contractor** | **Base Bid** | **Alternate 1** | **Alternate 2** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ulland Brothers, Inc. | $7,378,129.60 | $507,438.63 | $ 928,000.00 |
| Minger Construction Co. Inc. | $8,741,661.80 | $925,000.00 | $ 925,000.00 |
| Geislinger & Sons | $9,449,004.00 | $850,000.00 | $1,050,000.00 |

Alternate 1 involved open-cutting into the riverbed, while alternate 2 involved using a tunnel boring machine to go under the river.

Mr. Lang recommended awarding the bid to Ulland Brothers, Inc. for the base bid and alternate 1.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Helle, awarding the bid to Ulland Brothers, Inc. Carried 6-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

City Administrator Craig Clark noted at the last work session Council recommended approval of $1,560 from Contingency to be used for a weekly podcast with John Wright. Employees and elected officials will be scheduled for the podcast with Mr. Wright.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Helle, adopting a resolution approving $1,560 from Contingency for the Wright Here Right Now podcast. Carried 6-0.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert requested Council approve the off-sale liquor license application for Austin Highway Liquor LLC dba Austin Highway Liquor.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving an off-sale liquor license application for Austin Highway Liquor LLC dba Austin Highway Liquor. Carried 6-0.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert requested Council approve an off-site gambling license for the American Legion Post 91 at the Mower County fair from August 5, 2025 to August 10, 2025.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution approving an off-site gambling license for the American Legion Post 91 at the Mower County Fairgrounds from August 5, 2025 to August 10, 2025. Carried 6-0.

Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert requested participation in the Office of the State Auditor's Voluntary 2025 Performance Measurements Program. Mr. Dankert stated the city has participated in the survey for the last several years and has received an additional $4,000 in Local Government Aid by completing the survey.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving participation in the Office of the State Auditor's Voluntary 2025 Performance Measurements Program. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution accepting the donation to the City of Austin. Carried 6-0.

Moved by Council Member Fisher, 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 503 8th Avenue SE Wakefield Property. Carried.

Mayor King presented a summary of the closed meeting held on April 21, 2025 for the evaluation of the City Administrator. Mayor King noted Council expressed a generalized appreciation of Mr. Clark's skills in economic development, housing, and working with state and federal agencies. Further, Mayor King noted Council expressed the recognition of improvements since his last evaluation. It was noted there is a stark division in those department heads that experienced a positive working relationship with Mr. Clark, and those that had a difficult working relationship. The Council hopes that with continued efforts to improve communication, Mr. Clark and department heads can become aligned. The intent is to meet in July of 2025 for an update on the continued efforts, with another review by Council in October of 2025.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

City Administrator Craig Clark noted the City is accepting applications for the Third Ward City Council vacancy through May 13. Interviews will be done the week of May 26, and council members should watch for a Doodle Poll that will come from City Clerk Brianne Wolf to narrow down a date for those interviews.

Mr. Dankert noted the dangerous dog hearing has been scheduled for May 12 at 3:30 p.m. Mayor King urged all to attend.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated bids will be opened on May 29 for the Oakland Avenue/1st Avenue SW road project. These bids will then be reviewed by the state and are expected

to be on the June 16 City Council meeting for approval. This sets the time frame back a few weeks, it is possible only 5 blocks may be done in 2025, and the remaining 20 blocks in 2026 and 2027.

Council Member Helle noted the Arbor Day Celebration will be on May 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Hormel Nature Center. Council Member Helle also noted that Taste of Nations will be held May 17 at the Bandshell Park, and that 4th Avenue Fest is June 4 in the area between the pool parking lot and the library.

Council Member Postma stated Discover Austin is selling "local" playing cards for $10 that features local businesses on the deck.

Council Member Baskin updated Council on Port Authority happenings. He noted the DCA presented a status update on the comprehensive plan. The Port Authority is also working on the strategic road map for their future. Council Member Baskin noted the Port Authority received a clean audit from CLA also.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting to May 19, 2025. Carried.

Adjourned: 5:51 p.m.

Approved: May 19, 2025

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____