



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2026
5:30 PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Steve King, Council Member-At-Large Jeff Austin, Council Member Rebecca Waller, Council Member Mike Postma, Council Member Laura Helle, Council Member Oballa Oballa, Council Member Paul Fischer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Jason Baskin

MEMBERS LATE/EXITING:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Interim Police Chief Michael Hartman, Interim Fire Chief Troy Tigner, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Director Holly Wallace, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, Park, Recreation and Forestry Director Jason Sehon, City Attorney Craig Byram, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, Finance Director Emily Burns and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Representative Patricia Mueller, Members of the Community, Firefighters from the Austin Fire Department

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

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

Roll Call

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Approving minutes from May 18, 2026

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving Council minutes from May 18, 2026. Carried.

3. *Consent Agenda

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

a. Licenses

Tree Service: Adam B. Meyer Construction Co. LLC, Austin, MN

Tree Service: Yoder Industries LLC, Waltham, MN

Right of Way: Arkouda Industries Inc., Blooming Prairie, MN

Right of Way: Midwest Liquidation LLC, Grand Meadow, MN

Tobacco: Cheers Vape, Austin, MN

Mobile: I Heart Cookies, Wichita, KS

Mobile: The Snack Box, Delano, MN

b. Event Permits

Wednesday Night Car Cruise In from June 3, 2026 to September 30, 2026

High Water on June 18, 2026

River Rats Car Show from August 14 to August 16, 2026

c. Pre-List of Bills

4. Recognitions and Awards

a. New Firefighter Introduction — Matthew Hatten

Interim Fire Chief Troy Tigner introduced the new Firefighter, Matthew Hatten. He was pinned by his wife. Mayor King congratulated him.

5. Presentation

a. Representative Patricia Mueller

Representative Patricia Mueller gave an update on the legislative session to Council and to the community members in attendance.

Public Hearings

None

Bids & Awards

None

Petitions and Requests

6. Requesting approval of an ordinance amendment to City Code Chapter 11

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace stated Twin homes (also known as zero-lot-line two-unit town homes) provide attainable homeownership opportunities and utilize existing infrastructure efficiently while maintaining compatibility with single-family residential districts. These housing types have previously been utilized successfully in the community. However, the zoning code did not explicitly allow 0 lot lines to accommodate a shared wall, which is a defining characteristic of this type of home. Ms. Wallace requested an amendment to the ordinance and stated this would apply to R-1 and R-2 residential zoning districts. She stated this ordinance will be effective upon publication and apply retroactively to twin homes in the same districts.

a. For preparation of the ordinance

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

b. For adoption of the ordinance

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, for the adoption of the ordinance amendment to City Code Chapter 11. Carried 6-0.

7. Adoption of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan

a. Resolution — Adopting the 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Postma, adopting a resolution approving the 2045 Comprehensive plan. Carried 6-0.

8. Granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at the following location: 607 6th Street NW, Nguyen Property

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Waller granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 607 6th Street NW, Nguyen Property. Carried.

9. Approving an Ellis Ditch Climate Resiliency Study

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated Council recently approved a grant agreement with the MPCA for the Ellis Ditch Climate Resiliency Study. The project is identified in the 5-year CIP to evaluate stormwater flows in Ellis Ditch and develop a project to improve the storm sewer, sanitary sewer and roadway on 6th Avenue SE. The grant agreement includes the following

funding:

- Grant Funds: \$ 96,581.82
- Local SWUD \$ 9,658.18
- Total Project \$106,240.00

The Engineering Department received a proposal from WHKS to fulfill the requirements of the grant. The project will expand on the City's 2025 flood reduction feasibility study and study surface flooding impacts under extreme rainfall events in the Ellis Ditch drainage area. Mr. Lang would request Council approval of the WHKS proposal in the amount of \$96,600 with funding from the MPCA Resiliency Grant.

a. Resolution — Approving Engineering Services with WHKS

Moved by Council Member Oballa, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving an agreement for engineering services with WHKS. Carried 6-0.

10. Approving the Central Garage Roof Replacement

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated in the 2026 CIP, they identified replacement of the roof at the Central Garage. The original roof was constructed in 2003, patched in 2020 and is now scheduled for replacement with an estimated budget of \$500,000. They received a proposal from WHKS in the amount of \$9,300 to develop specifications and solicit bids for the project. Mr. Lang requests Council approval the of WHKS proposal with funding from the overall project.

a. Resolution — Approving Engineering Services with WHKS

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adopting a resolution approving an agreement for professional services with WHKS. Carried 6-0.

Citizens Addressing the Council

Members of the public may address the City Council on items that are not otherwise on the agenda. Each speaker is limited to two minutes. The Council will listen to comments but may not enter into a dialogue, take immediate action, or answer questions during this time.

Heather Novak, 611 14th Street NW, stated she recently put her home up for sale and due to the new City Point of Sale Ordinance, her sewer inspection failed. Due to this, she is in financial debt and there is no grant funding available. She would like the City to consider grandfathering prior inspections done before this ordinance was adopted.

Kris Heichel, Fairway Mortgage, stated she would like to get a work session to address issues she has seen with the new ordinance in the first three months it has been implemented.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated they have conducted 197 inspections in the first three months of the program. 85% of those have been turned around in six days or less. Mr. Lang stated of the 197 inspections, 128 or 65% of these have passed, 38 or 19% of them have failed, and 30 or 15% of them are incomplete. He stated the failures are due to illicit connections or

failures in the pipes.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated he would not be opposed to getting the working group back in session to have a discussion.

Council Member Oballa was in agreement with Council Member-at-Large Austin.

Realtor, Matt Bartholomew, requested they look at creating a priority review process.

Realtor, Molly Cass, stated closings are not happening on time due to delays. She stated plumbers are 2–3 weeks out. She also stated right now is their busiest time of the year. She would like to see a document created that shows real-time updates on the status of inspections.

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated they would have to research what would be a way they could achieve this, or if there would be a product that would suit this type of use.

Honorary Council Member Comments

None

Reports and Recommendations

City Administrator Craig Clark stated this would be his last Council meeting after being with the City for 11 1/2 years. He thanked all who supported him in his position.

Library Director Julie Clinefelter stated the Summer Reading Program started June 1st and runs through August 8th.

Finance Director Emily Burns updated the Council on progress within the Finance Department, noting that much of the past six months has been dedicated to completing the annual audit following staffing transitions and the departure of a longtime employee, resulting in a significant loss of institutional knowledge. While the department remains staffed with experienced personnel, additional time has been needed to address the learning curve and complete audit-related work. Staff are considering requesting a short extension from the State Auditor's Office, which would provide additional time to finalize the audit without penalties and would also require a corresponding extension request to maintain the City's Government Finance Officers Association reporting award. Ms. Burns also asked the Council to consider authorizing temporary outside assistance to help complete the audit and keep budget planning for 2026 and 2027 on schedule. The Council was informed that penalties would only become a concern if reporting deadlines extended beyond September, which staff do not anticipate.

Council Member-at-Large Austin was in support of bringing Tom Dankert, the previous Director of Administrative Services, back to assist with the audit.

Council Member Helle is in agreement with Council Member-at-Large Austin.

Council Member Postma stated it appears as they may need someone to be hourly to assist them

and if that may be the case he would like to get them this assistance.

Mr. Clark stated the City is committed to bringing whatever resources are necessary to complete the audit. He also stated that Abdo offers these services.

Council Member Oballa stated he would like to act now instead of waiting until the last minute.

Mayor King stated they have not waited until the last minute. There has been discussion on this and they have looked closely into Abdo.

Council Member Waller thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City.

Council Member Postma thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City.

Council Member-at-Large Austin thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City.

Council Member Helle congratulated all the high school and college graduates. She stated 4th Avenue Fest is on Wednesday at Horace Park from 4pm to 7pm. She thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City.

Council Member Oballa thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City. He thanked the Point of Sale working group for their continued work.

Council Member Fischer thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City.

Mayor King read the June Employee Anniversaries. He thanked Mr. Clark for his service to the City.

Adjourn

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adjourning the meeting to June 15, 2026. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:29 p.m.

Approved: 06/15/26

Mayor:

City Clerk: