



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 6, 2026
5:30 PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

MEMBERS LATE/EXITING:

STAFF PRESENT: Interim City Administrator Dave Unmacht, 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 Schon, City Attorney Craig Byram, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, Finance Director Emily Burns and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Staff from the Police Department, Members of the Community

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

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

Roll Call

Mayor King introduced the new Interim City Administrator Dave Unmacht.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Approving minutes from June 15, 2026

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving Council minutes from June 15, 2026 and minutes from the Dangerous Animal Hearing on June 15, 2026. Carried.

3. *Consent Agenda

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

a. Licenses

Mobile: Asian Lotus, Austin, MN

Temporary Liquor: Gravity Storm on August 29 & 30, 2026

b. Events

High Water on July 16, 2026

c. Financial Reports

Pre-List of Bills

d. Appointments

Aaron Stewart to the Police Civil Service Commission — expiring December 31, 2027

4. Recognitions and Awards

a. Dave McKichan Retirement

Mayor King recognized Police Chief David McKichan on his recent retirement from the City of Austin and presented him with a key to the City.

b. Step Up Award

Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director Jason Sehon presented Gretchen Ramlo with the July 2026 Step Up Award in recognition of her outstanding service and contributions to the Austin community.

c. New Officer Introductions

Police Chief Michael Hartman introduced the two new Police Officers, Michael Hanson and Wyatt Richardson, to the City Council.

d. New Library Staff Introduction

Library Director Julie Clinefelter introduced the new Youth Services Librarian, Staci Waltman to City Council.

Public Hearings

None

Bids & Awards

None

Petitions and Requests

5. Approving a 2026 – 2028 Labor Agreement and Memorandum of Agreement with the Law Enforcement Labor Services

- a. Resolution — Approving a 2026-2028 labor agreement with LELS

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution approving the 2026-2028 labor agreement and memorandum of agreement with Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS). Carried 7-0.

6. Approval of Revised 2026 Salary Range for the City Administrator Position

- a. Resolution - Approving the revised 2026 salary range for the City Administrator

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving the revised 2026 salary range for the City Administrator. Carried 7-0.

7. Requesting approval to amend section 10.10 of the City Code - clarifying the procedure for a dangerous dog appeal

City Clerk Brienne Wolf requested Council consider amending Section 10.10 of the City Code to provide clearer guidance on the procedure for appealing a designation of an animal as dangerous. Previously, the code stated that a hearing deposit would be refunded to an owner if the animal was not destroyed. Ms. Wolf stated the proposed amendment to the code would specify that the hearing deposit will be refunded only if the designation of the animal as a dangerous animal was not substantially justified by law.

- a. For the preparation of the ordinance

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

- b. For the adoption of the ordinance

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Oballa, approving a resolution amending section 10.10 of the City Code — clarifying the procedure for a dangerous dog appeal. Carried 7-

0.

8. Requesting approval to amend section 2.71 of the City Code for special assessments and renumbering of the City Code

City Clerk Brianne Wolf requested the City Council consider amending and renumbering City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.71 to City Code Chapter 18, Section 18.02. Ms. Wolf stated this portion of Ch. 2 needed to be relocated to Ch.18 as Ch.2 defined personnel and Ch. 18 defined assessments. She also proposed the removal of the language that states partial prepayments are only accepted during the 30 days following the approval of the assessment roll. The Clerk's Office would like this to be revised so that payments can be accepted until October 31st of the year in which the assessment roll is adopted.

Furthermore, the Clerk's Office requests City Council approve the renumbering of City Code to the following:

Section 2. Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.72 is hereby renumbered to Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.71.

Section 3. Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.73 is hereby renumbered to Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.72.

Section 4. Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.74 is hereby renumbered to Austin City Code Chapter 18, Section 18.03.

Section 5. Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.75 is hereby renumbered to Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.73.

Section 6. Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.76 is hereby renumbered to Austin City Code Chapter 2, Section 2.74.

- a. For the preparation of the ordinance

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, for the preparation of the ordinance. Carried.

- b. For the adoption of the ordinance

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Oballa approving a resolution amending section 2.71 of the City Code for special assessments and renumbering of the City Code. Carried 7-0.

9. Requesting approval to amend Ch. 5 of the City Code — clarifying and updating of brewer liquor licenses

City Clerk Brianne Wolf requested the City Council consider amending the language in Chapter 5 of the City Code to eliminate the term "growler." Ms. Wolf stated the updates aim to be more inclusive of Brewer Tap Rooms, Brew Pubs, and Small Brewers. Additionally, the revised language now encompasses off-sale and Sunday off-sale licenses.

- a. For the preparation of the ordinance

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

- b. For the adoption of the ordinance

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a resolution amending Chapter 5 of the City Code — clarifying and updating of brewer liquor licenses. Carried 7-0.

10. Approving Legacy Grant Application Request to the GMRPTC for Continuing Expanded Environmental Education Programs

Nature Center Director Luke Reese stated in March of this year, the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center applied for Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) funding for environmental education for students that live outside of Austin. They received word that their project did not get funded. They are now going to request funding from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC). Mr. Reese is requesting Council approval of a resolution to request this funding.

- a. Resolution — Approving a grant application request for the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Waller, adopting a resolution approving a request for a grant application for the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. Carried 7-0.

11. Granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at the following location: 1718 3rd St NE, Sauer Property

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Oballa, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1718 3rd Street NE, Sauer Property. Carried.

12. Granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at the following location: 705 14th Ave SW, Hemann Housing LLC

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 705 14th Avenue SW, Hemann Housing LLC Property. Carried.

13. Granting the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at the following location: 610 4th St NW, Gebisa property

Moved by Council Member Oballa, seconded by Council Member Postma, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 610 4th Street NW, Gebisa Property. Carried.

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.

Bradley Johnson, Austin Enhancement Group Committee Member, thanked the City Employees for their efforts over the 4th of July during the Freedom Festival Event.

Honorary Council Member Comments

None

Reports and Recommendations

City Administrator Council Members

Council Member Baskin thanked the Austin Enhancement Group (AEG) for their flexibility over the fourth of July due to the weather and still providing the community with a meaningful way to celebrate America's 250th birthday. He thanked Public Works Director Steven Lang and his team for all of his efforts on flood mitigation. He stated the City is better protected than it was over 20 years ago.

Council Member Postma congratulated the Chamber of Commerce on a great parade. He thanked the Austin Public Schools for allowing the Symphony Orchestra to utilize the auditorium for them to play in. Finally, he recognized all the members of the Austin Enhancement Group and thanked them for their work on the Freedomfest.

Council Member-at-Large Austin thanked the City staff for their assistance with the 4th of July events and thanked the Austin Enhancement Group for all they did over the weekend. He stated AEG did a great job of communicating with the community.

Council Member Helle echoed what all Council Members said and stated the AEG also holds a High Water Music Series at the Bandshell Park and the next one is on Thursday, July 16th. She encouraged the public to attend. She announced the Culture and Arts Commission is collaborating with the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department on a public art project that will be located at the intersection of Oakland Ave and Main Street.

Council Member Oballa thanked AEG for all of their work on the Freedomfest. He announced he would be retiring at the end of his term and would not be running for re-election.

Adjourn

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Oballa, adjourning the meeting to July 20, 2026. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:05 p.m.

Approved:

Mayor:

City Clerk: