MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 20, 2026
6:30 PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mayor Steve King, Council Member-At-Large Jeff Austin, Council Member Rebecca Waller, Council Member Jason Baskin, Council Member Mike Postma, Council Member Laura Helle, Council Member Paul Fischer
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Council Member Oballa Oballa
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 Sehon, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, Finance Director Emily Burns and City Clerk Brianne Wolf
APPEARING IN PERSON:	Austin Daily Herald

1. Code of Conduct

a. Code of Conduct Discussion

Interim City Administartor Dave Unmacht stated the discussion would build upon information presented in the 2025 organizational study. He noted approximately eight months had passed since the study was presented, and he had only been back with the City for one month. Therefore, he could not account for any related actions that may have occurred during the preceding seven months.

Mr. Unmacht explained that the City Council already has a code of conduct available on the City's website. The existing document reflects prior time and effort by the Council; however, it does not appear to be actively used as an operating guide for the Council. The meeting packet included four examples of codes of conduct and operating rules from other jurisdictions. These included the Scott County Board operating rules, which Mr. Unmacht helped develop earlier in his career, as well as examples from the City of Austin, the City of St. Louis Park, and the City of Champlin. He noted that he had previously worked with St. Louis Park on annual reviews of its governing documents and had recently completed a strategic planning process with Champlin.

Mr. Unmacht emphasized that codes of conduct vary considerably among local governments. The examples were intentionally selected to demonstrate different formats, levels of detail, and approaches rather than to represent every available option.

He stated that the purpose of the discussion was not to review specific language in detail. Instead, the Council was being asked to consider whether it wished to review or update its existing code of conduct. Based on his experience, he identified five primary benefits of an effective code of conduct:

Establishing common expectations regarding the roles of elected officials and staff.
Providing consistent and clear direction to City staff.
Preventing or minimizing confusion and misunderstandings caused by inconsistent communication.
Demonstrating leadership and supporting a positive workplace culture.
Making the work of elected officials and staff more productive, enjoyable, and rewarding.

He added that a functional code of conduct establishes standards, responsibilities, and general operating rules for elected officials and staff while promoting integrity, transparency, and public trust.

Mr. Unmacht requested Council direction on three considerations. First, he asked whether the Council wished to move forward with reviewing or updating its code of conduct. He emphasized that the Council was under no obligation to do so and noted that practices vary among local governments. Some governing bodies have codes of conduct and use them effectively, while others have them but do not use them, and some operate successfully without one.

Second, if the Council chose to proceed, he asked how it wished to conduct the review. Options included appointing a small Council committee with staff support, directing staff to prepare a draft based on Council guidance, conducting additional individual research, or scheduling a future work session for a more detailed review. The Council could also choose to retain the existing document and update or revise it rather than develop an entirely new code.

Third, he asked whether the Council had a preference regarding the document's style, format, length, or overall appearance. Council members could identify a preferred example from the packet or provide another model for consideration. Mr. Unmacht concluded by reiterating that the two primary questions were whether the Council wished to move forward and, if so, how it wanted the review process to proceed. He then invited questions and discussion.

Council Member-at-Large Austin would like to review this document and update it.

Council Member Helle would like to take a deep dive into this document. She would like to understand what happens when someone isn't meeting expectations and to be familiar with the process of how those issues would be addressed.

Mayor King asked if they would like to work on this as a whole or a subcommittee.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated subcommittee.

Mayor King would like to know if the staff have any thoughts. Mr. Unmacht stated he would work with the department heads to gather input.

Council Member Postma would like this to be a two-page document. He would like to review the document and then have it continually reviewed every two years and have it signed by the Council that they agree to it so they have something to hold them accountable.

Council Member Baskin agrees and would like to review the document. He believes this is a good time to do this as there is no backgrounds or personal histories and it would be great for everyone to review this.

Council Member Postma would like to address communication.

Council Member Helle agrees. She would like two sections, one for how they interact at meetings and one for how they conduct themselves outside of meetings.

Mayor King asked for a timeline and Mr. Unmacht stated he would like to have this completed prior to the next administrator coming on board.

2. Administrative Report

None.

3. Open Discussion

Council Member Postma asked for a financial update.

Finance Director Emily Burns reported that the audit preparation process remains on schedule and that the remaining work from the previous audit process has been completed. The City's internal target date for completing audit preparation was July 15, and that deadline was met. She stated the final reporting deadline for both the State and the Government Finance Officers

Association is August 15. CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) is currently reviewing the City's audit materials. Members of the CLA audit team were onsite the previous Thursday and Friday and were working remotely during the current week, with the possibility of returning to City offices as needed.

Ms. Burns stated departmental budget meetings would begin the following day. The Interim City Administrator and she will meet with department heads to review their proposed budgets. Although they intend to follow the general timeline used in prior years, the process may include additional steps or other changes due to the involvement of a new interim administrator and finance staff.

Mayor King stated he did speak with Mr. Dankert last week, and it was reported that the audit is expected to be completed on time. During his review, Mr. Dankert identified approximately $18,000 in additional revenue for the City.

Ms. Burns stated once the audit is complete, CLA will present its findings to the City Council. The Council will then be asked to formally accept the audit and authorize any required submissions. She noted that completion of the State report requires additional time, but work will begin as soon as the audit is finalized. The City will also proceed with the GFOA certification process during the same general timeframe.

4. Adjournment

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adjourning the meeting to August 3, 2026. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:46 p.m.

Approved:

Mayor:

City Clerk: