

**MELROSE CITY COUNCIL AND
MELROSE PUC UTILITIES COMMISSION
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026 – 7:00 A.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Melrose City Council and Public Utilities Commission met in a Special Meeting March 12, 2026 at 7:04 A.M. at the Melrose City Center pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Public Utilities Commission Members Jeremy Kraemer and Eric Seanger, City Council Members Mark Niehoff, Travis Frieler, Joeline Wieling, Police Chief Craig Maus, and Human Resources Coordinator Doris Rieland. Finance Director Jackie Niehaus was present by telephone. Public Utilities Commission Member and Mayor Joe Finken and Council Member Tony Klasen were absent. Police Chief Maus called the meeting to order.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Secretary Kraemer, seconded by Vice Chair Seanger, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda for the Public Utilities Commission.

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda for the City Council.

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling to appoint Council Member Frieler as chairperson since Mayor Finken was absent. Council Member Frieler presided for the remainder of the meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3a. AFSCME Union Negotiations

According to State Statutes, there are certain exceptions to the Open Meeting Law, which allow councils to close meetings.

Labor negotiations under PELRA Minn. Stat. § 130.03. A meeting to consider strategies for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or development or discussion of labor-negotiation proposals, may be closed. However, the actual negotiations must be done at an open meeting if a quorum of the council is present.

The following procedure must be used to close a meeting under this exception:

- The council must decide to close the meeting by a majority vote at a public meeting and must announce the time and place of the closed meeting.
- Before closing the meeting, the council must state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed.
- A written record of all people present at the closed meeting must be available to the public after the closed meeting.
- The meeting must be recorded.
- The recording must be kept for two years after the contract is signed.
- The recording becomes public after all labor agreements are signed by the city council for the current budget period.

If an action claiming that other public business was transacted at the closed meeting is

brought during the time the tape is not public, the court will review the recording privately. If the court finds no violation of the open meeting law the action will be dismissed and the recording will be preserved in court records until it becomes available to the public. If the court determines there may have been a violation, the entire recording may be introduced at the trial. However, the court may issue appropriate protective orders requested by either party.

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to close the meeting at 7:06 A.M for the City Council.

A motion was made by Secretary Kraemer, seconded by Vice Chair Seanger, and unanimously carried to close the meeting at 7:06 A.M. for the Public Utilities Commission.

The city continued to consider strategies for labor negotiations with the AFSCME union, including negotiation strategies and development and discussion of labor-negotiation proposals.

A motion was made by Secretary Kraemer, seconded by Vice Chair Seanger, and unanimously carried for the Public Utilities Commission to adjourn their participation in the meeting at 7:29 A.M. The Public Utilities Commission members then exited the meeting.

The City Council continued their portion of the meeting and continued to consider strategies for labor negotiations with the AFSCME union, including negotiation strategies and development and discussion of labor-negotiation proposals.

A motion was made by Council Member Wieling, seconded by Council Member Niehoff, and unanimously carried to open the meeting at 7:44 A.M. for the City Council.

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 A.M.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Connor Kockler", written over a horizontal line.

CONNOR KOCKLER – CITY CLERK