

**MELROSE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Melrose City Council met in a Regular Meeting on Thursday, June 17, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at the Melrose City Center pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Council Members Travis Frieler, Joeline Wieling, Mark Niehoff, Tony Klasen, Mayor Joe Finken, Police Chief and City Point of Contact Craig Maus, Community Development Director Sheila Hellermann, Finance Director Jackie Niehaus, City Engineer Dave Blommel, Fire Chief Tom Budde, and Streets/Parks Supervisor Andrew Rousslange. Mayor Finken presided thereat.

The Council then recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Council Member Wieling, seconded by Council Member Klasen, and unanimously carried to remove item 6c. and approve the rest of the agenda.

3. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Finken then opened the floor to public comment. There were no members of the public who wished to comment.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were considered for approval under the consent agenda.

- a. The minutes from the Council's May 21, 2026 Regular Meeting
- b. List of bills for the month of May
- c. List of investments for the month of May
- d. Donation Resolution No. 2026-28 from Melrose Lions for \$50,000.00 for the Melrose Fire Department
- e. On June 27, 2026, HR Generalist/Payroll Clerk, Doris Rieland will complete 10 years of service with the City of Melrose. She will receive a 10-year recognition award of \$25 as outlined in the City Personnel Policy Employee Recognition Program. Ms. Rieland is to be commended for her 10 years of service.
- f. City Clerk/Licensing Coordinator, Connor Kockler will complete 6 months of service with the city on July 5, 2026. Police Chief and acting City Administrator Craig Maus has conducted Mr. Kockler's review, and it is favorable; therefore, recommends he receive a step increase from Step 1 to Step 2 on the wage schedule.

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

5. REPORTS

5a. Police Department Report

Finance Director Niehaus presented. There was a total of 36 traffic citations, 92 verbal warnings, and no written warnings. There were 396 requests for service during the month of May. For May of last year, the Police Department had received 281 calls or requests for service. There were 28 agency assist calls in May. Council Member Niehoff asked why there were enforcement citations? Niehaus stated that she would ask Police Chief Maus.

5b. Community Development Director Report

Community Development Director Hellermann provided the following update. An action item from the Planning & Zoning Commission is on the agenda tonight. On Monday, June 29, they will be holding a public hearing on the rezoning of the old Stearns Electric headquarters parcel and permit for the Merry Moose childcare center that will go on that site. Those items will be on the Council agenda in July. The city received a daycare grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for \$100,000 towards the daycare center. This grant is currently being reviewed by the City Attorney and auditors.

The Park Board meeting that would have been scheduled for tonight has been moved to June 23rd due to the conflict with the City Council meeting. The Park Board will be looking ahead to 2027 budget planning. There has been a lot of usage of the parks in the last year which is exciting to see. Thank you again to Freeport State Bank for the new scoreboards in Sauk River Park as well. Unfortunately, some of the summer events in the parks this month such as the Farmer's Market and Pop-Up Splash Pad have been affected by rain. Building permits exceeding \$5 million have been issued to Roach Development for the 17 twin homes that will be built starting next week on Railroad West. The Streets/Parks Department will start work on installing the new city park next to Wobegon Crossings. They should be out at the site the third week of July installing the new equipment.

The city has received permits for 406 2nd Avenue NE, the old Casey's North. A tobacco and 3.2 liquor license will be applied for and will be on the Council meeting agenda for July. The gas pumps are currently being inspected preparations are being made to get the location open and operational. The closing date for the transfer of the old Jennie-O facility downtown property will be tomorrow. At the July Council meeting, a public hearing will be held to declare a TIF district for that site, which will include both sides of 5th Avenue. This is a requirement for the DEED grant. A DEED grant is also being applied for in reference to the east side of 5th Avenue.

5c. City Engineer Report

City Engineer Blommel provided the following update. The 2026 Streets Project is

currently underway. The curb and gutter that is being done has been replaced and taken care of. Workers will be in town on Monday milling up the pavement on 4th and then reclaiming it after that. That should be done by the middle or end of next week. This project should be pretty much wrapped up in another week. Plans have been finished up for the Main Street sidewalk replacement. The first six feet next to the building will be very flat, and the portion between that and the curb will be a little bit steeper. This will be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. He will be meeting with businesses to show them what the new sidewalk will look like at each building.

Council Member Klasen asked whether six inches of concrete is the standard for sidewalks? City Engineer Blommel stated that the standard used to be four inches but that changed now that we use skid-loaders to clear them with salt. Using heavier equipment in a downtown setting means the industry standard is now six inches.

5d. City Point of Contact Report

Finance Director Niehaus presented the following update. The Public Utilities Commission met on June 8, and the following items were discussed. The Electric Department is meeting with Roach Development to plan for the utility needs for their upcoming Railroad Avenue NW project. The County Road 169 project utility work is substantially complete. The Electric Department completed a generation test run, and the quarterly generation test is scheduled for June 30. Wate/Wastewater staff are working through planning items for the blower building project. Specifications and preliminary budget estimates are anticipated within the next two months. The Well 10 project continues and hopefully will be online soon.

For city updates, Receptionist/Building Permit Tech Alexandra Evenson resigned to pursue another employment opportunity, the city has applications open now to fill her position. The search process for the new City Administrator has been narrowed to four finalists, and interviews have been scheduled on June 30. Staff budget meetings have been scheduled for July 1 to begin 2027 Budget Planning. Steve Kortenbusch has resigned from the part-time Streets/Parks Worker position. We'd like to thank Steve for his contributions to the city. Neil Nathe, a seasonal employee in the department expressed interest in Kortenbusch's position and has now transitioned into that role. Recruitment efforts are now underway for a new seasonal Streets/Parks Worker to replace Nathe. Amanda Rosetti and Alex Broadwell began employment with the city as police officers during the week of June 8th. As they are both first-time law enforcement officers they are expected to be ready for independent patrol duties by August or September.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6a. Bridge Plan

The PUC recommended at the May 11, 2026, meeting to have the Ad Hoc Committee review the compensation for additional duties during the vacancy of the City Administrator. At the direction of the Ad Hoc Committee on May 20, 2026, Chief Maus is

presenting the Memorandums of Understanding. Chief Maus is recommending approval for compensation for additional duties during the vacancy of the City Administrator.

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to approve the Bridge Plan and the memorandums of understanding with Craig Maus and Doris Rieland.

6b. Mileage Reimbursement for City Administrator Candidates

The Council considered authorizing mileage reimbursement for invited City Administrator candidates who will be traveling for interviews in Melrose on June 30th. Council Member Klasen suggested having a cap of \$200. Council Member Niehoff agreed with that limit. Mayor Finken suggested that it would be a good will offering to help get good candidates to come. Finance Director Niehaus stated that the city could use the federal mileage rate and there should not be any surprises about the amount claimed.

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to authorize mileage reimbursement for invited City Administrator candidates traveling for interviews in Melrose on June 30th.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7a. Joint Powers Agreement and Court Data Services Subscriber Amendment between State of Minnesota/Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and City of Melrose/Melrose Police Department

Finance Director Niehaus presented. The Melrose Police Department utilizes the Minnesota Criminal Justice Data Communications Network (CJDN) administered by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension in the course of their duties. To access these resources, the City of Melrose on behalf of the Melrose Police Department needs to agree to a Joint Powers Agreement with the State of Minnesota, acting through the Department of Public Safety on behalf of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. This agreement creates a method by which the Melrose Police Department has access to those systems and tools for which it has eligibility, and to memorialize the requirements to obtain access and the limitations on access. The agreement will expire five years from the date that it becomes effective.

The City of Melrose on behalf of the Melrose Police Department also needs to approve the Court Data Services Subscriber Amendment with the State of Minnesota, acting through its Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and for the benefit of the State of Minnesota acting through its State Court Administrator's Office. This Subscriber Amendment modifies and supplements the Agreement between the BCA and Agency, SWIFT Contract Number 290487, of even or prior date, for Agency use of BCA systems and tools (referred to herein as "the CJDN Subscriber Agreement"). Certain BCA systems and tools that include access to and/or submission of Court Records may only be utilized by the Agency if the Agency completes this Subscriber Amendment.

A motion was made by Council Member Niehoff, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution 2026-29 Resolution Approving State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreements with the City of Melrose on Behalf of Its City Attorney and Police Department.

7b. Purchasing Policy Proposed Changes

Finance Director Niehaus presented. She has reviewed the City Purchasing Policy and has proposed a few changes. Under Section E. Credit Cards, the credit limit for credit cards issued to the City Administrator and Finance Director would be increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The credit limit for credit cards issued to Department Heads and Supervisors would also be increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. These changes would be made due to the increasing price of items since the policy was last changed, and to increase flexibility in purchasing decisions by senior city staff. The credit limits have not been increased in 10 years. Increasingly what has been happening is that staff is having to pay off the balance in the middle of the month which is a hassle administratively. The purchasing authority without Council approval for each position will not change, only the credit card limits would be increasing.

A motion was made by Council Member Frieler, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to increase the credit limit under Section E. Credit Cards of the City Purchasing Policy for credit cards from Magnifi Financial issued to the City Administrator and Finance Director from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The credit limit for credit cards from Magnifi Financial issued to Department Heads and Supervisors will increase from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

7c. FP-05-2026-201 & VAR-05-2026-102 – Medical Services Plat Three

Community Development Director Hellermann presented. The Melrose Planning and Zoning Commission acting as the Board of Adjustments and Appeals held a Public Hearing at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2026, for the purpose of giving consideration to a Variance request and approval of the Final Plat of CentraCare Health System – Melrose to split parcel 66.37009.0602. The parcel is legally described as Lot 1, Block 1, Medical Services Plat Two. The purpose of the lot split is to delineate between that property to be owned by CentraCare Health System – Melrose and that to be owned by Cura. The variance request is regarding lot setbacks.

In 2024 Cura purchased from Centracare the nursing home and assisted living portions of its business. The parties want to separate the real estate to reflect this change in operations. The plat includes land and separation within an existing building. Along with the final plat, Centracare has presented a Reciprocal Easement Agreement to address the party walls and access points, and a Variance application as with party walls there are no setbacks in parts of the Final Plat. Emergency services has toured the building. Chief Maus and Chief Budde went in so they understand for the purposes of response times what is going on with these changes.

The Affidavit of Publication of the Public Hearing Notice, which was published in the Star Post on May 6, 2026 along with the Affidavit of Posting of Notices of Public Hearing were presented at the hearing and are attached as supporting documentation. In the attached planning report, there is room for whether our building official or the Department of Health and Human Services requires anything additional to be done for licensure on the hospital or nursing home side.

A motion was made by Council Member Frieler, seconded by Council Member Klasen, and unanimously carried to approve the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Commission to approve the final plat and variance request.

7d. Hiring of Firefighters

Fire Chief Budde conducted interviews on June 15th for open firefighter positions. Contingent upon successful background checks and pre-employment physical and drug screenings, he is recommending the following individuals be hired: Ashton Thull and Aiden Matt.

A motion was made by Council Member Frieler, seconded by Council Member Wieling, and unanimously carried to approve of the hiring of Ashton Thull and Aiden Matt as Firefighters as presented.

7e. Hiring of Part-Time Streets/Parks Maintenance Worker

The City Council authorized the hiring of a Part-Time Streets & Parks Maintenance Worker. Neil Nathe is currently in the position of Streets/Parks Worker Seasonal/Temp. He is requesting to transition into the Part-Time Streets & Parks Maintenance Worker position. The Staff is recommending hiring Neil Nathe for the Part-Time Streets & Parks Maintenance Worker position at Step 2 on the wage schedule.

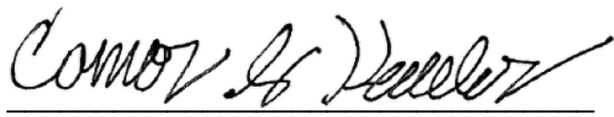
A motion was made by Council Member Klasen, seconded by Council Member Niehoff, and unanimously carried to approve of the hiring of Neil Nathe as a Part-Time Streets/Parks Maintenance Worker as presented.

8. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

8a. The next City Council meeting will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 6:00 P.M.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Council Member Wieling, seconded by Council Member Frieler, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 P.M.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Connor Kockler", written in a cursive style.

CONNOR KOCKLER – CITY CLERK