



**Regular City Council Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2025**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Comprising a quorum of the City Council, the meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm with the following members present: Mayor George Deiss, Council Members Mark Lunde, Wade Miller, Mac Nelson and Dan Sartell.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Action Motion: Approved the consent calendar items.

- A. Claims Register Summary
- B. Monthly Financial Reports
- C. City Council Meeting Minutes:
 - a. January 14, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll call vote:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

PUBLIC HEARING

Lincoln/8th/10th Street SW Improvements. Many residents in the project area appeared before the county opposed to the proposed special assessments for paving and infrastructure improvements on Lincoln Ave, 8th Street, and 10th Street. Homeowners, including Tim & Terri Muehler, Jason Allred (representing his parents, the Fullers), Wayne Betterman, and Dirk Schultz disputed that the costs were excessive placing unfair financial burdens on residents, particularly seniors on fixed incomes. Many expressed concerns over the high cost of assessments, with some exceeding \$30,000. One homeowner noted their assessment would amount to 45% of their annual income, making it financial unmanageable. Others disputed that the city should explore alternative funding options, such as tax levies, rather than placing the entire financial responsibility on affected property owners. Residents also questioned the necessity of the project, stating that dust is a nuisance but does not constitute a need. There were also concerns that paving could encourage higher traffic speeds and create safety issues. Residents John & Kathy Hanson and Darrel Pearson supported the project, contending that gravel roads within city limits are outdated and problematic. They also voiced frustration over delays in getting the project started, which leads to increased costs over time.

Questions were raised why other areas of the city have received financial assistance for infrastructure while this project is fully assessed to property owners. City officials explained that the project follows standard MN statute assessment procedures allowing a municipality to fully assess new paved construction while reconstructs do not.

A majority of residents remained opposed to the project.

Mayor George Deiss provided an alternative option to install stop signs at each intersection and 20 mph speed signs. Many agreed this would help slow traffic and mitigate the dust issue.

Public Works Director Dan Kovar stated that Calcium will be laid down this year; that it could be done twice if needed, to also help mitigate dust.
Unanimously the council agreed to not go forward with the project.

Action: Public hearing closed at 5:25 pm.

Moved by:	Miller	Seconded by:	Sartell
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

OLD BUSINESS

Action Motion: Approved to not proceed with the Lincoln Ave Utility and Paving Project.

Following the public hearing, the Council opted to not go forward with the project.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Sartell
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

Action Motion: Approved adding three-way stop signs at 8th St, and institute a 20mph speed limit on all gravel surfaces on Lincoln, 8th, and 10th Streets.

Mayor Deiss proposed adding a three way stop at the 8th Street intersection and adding a 20mph speed limit on all gravel surfaces on Lincoln, 8th, and 10th Streets. Property owners were satisfied with this. Mayor Deiss also stated that calcium chloride application will continue.

Moved By	Nelson	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote in favor:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

Ordinance 252: Amend Chapter 124. Regulating Cannabis Businesses, Second Reading.

No changes were made to buffer zones, 1,000 ft from schools, 500 ft from daycares and parks. Members agreed to keep existing restrictions, with flexibility to adjust later.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Sartell
Vote in favor:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 253: Amend Chapter 130. Section 130.08 Public Nuisance, First Reading.

The amendments were discussed with the council agreeing to move forward with no edits.

Ordinance 254: Amend Chapter 54. Section 54.02 Storage and Transporting Refuse, First Reading.

The amendments were discussed with the council agreeing to move forward with no edits.

Ordinance 255: Amend Chapter 90. Section 90.04 Ice, Snow, Streets, Sidewalks, Other Public Safety, First Reading.

The amendments were discussed with the council agreeing to move forward with no edits.

Ordinance 256: Amend Chapter 130. Section 130.18 Maintenance of Private Property, First Reading.

Council member Lunde asked how the city regulates temporary repairs for a storm or catastrophic event. Further, how residents would request an extension with this change and should it be

through the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) department. P&Z Director Uselman indicates during home construction this ordinance wouldn't apply, ordinance and policies related to construction would. It was determined Administrator Schroeder will follow up with the city's attorney to get clarification and intent of this addition.

Action 25-06: Approved replacing the Black's Grove Park south bridge.

A traditional bridge is determined to be too expensive. As an alternative, the park board proposes a flatbed semi-trailer. The park board has received approval from the DNR. Two park board members offered to donate \$2,000 each, totaling \$4,000, to help purchase a trailer if one becomes available. Semi-trailers are quick to sell when available; the council approved accepting the donations and allowing for immediate purchase of a semi-trailer without further council approval up to \$4,000. City crews will handle the removal of the old bridge and the installation of the new one, with estimated minimal costs to the city.

Moved by:	Sartell	Seconded by:	Lunde
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

Action 25-07: Approved an increase to the annual Fire Relief Assn pension benefit plan from \$3,900 to \$4,150.

At their January meeting, relief association members voted to follow Stifel's recommendation to increase annual pension contributions by \$250. As of 12/31/24, the investment account was 112% funded. A \$250 per member increase would decrease the fund balance to 105.67%. This remains in line with the 2024 council approved memorandum of understanding for the account to remain above 105%.

The relief association also noted they passed a motion at their January meeting to add \$10,000 from the calendar fund to the investment fund.

Moved by:	Sartell	Seconded by:	Nelson
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

Action 25-08: Approved Bolton & Menk to advertise for bid the Hwy 10 utilities replacement plans.

Bolton & Menk requests approval to advertise bids for the Highway 10 utilities replacement and reroute the sanitary sewer along 9th Street. To proceed with the city's portion of the project, which involves underground utilities outside MnDOT's right-of-way, the city must also go out for bids. While MnDOT plans to bid at the end of March, the city needs to do the same for its underground utility work and sewer extension project.

Moved by:	Nelson	Seconded by:	Lunde
Roll Call Vote:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 5:46 PM

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar

- The Farmers Market requested to use BN Park for a new location. The Park Board was not in favor and suggested alternative locations including the Wellness Center, Traveler's Park, and city parking lot next to Super One Foods. Sharing main concerns such as the size of the Friday market, significantly larger than the Tuesday market, potential congestion, and limited access for other BN Park users. Additionally, vendors want to drive pickups onto the park and leave their trailers permanently, which the board opposed. The Farmers Market prefers a shaded, grassy area rather than pavement. Discussions are ongoing to find a suitable location.

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- The city's water usage has increased, prompting an investigation confirming underground water leaks occurring. Using a listening device, four leaks were identified: two on 1st Street Southwest between Lincoln and Irving, one on 2nd Street near Garfield, and another near St. John's Church. Repairs will begin next week and are expected to take a couple of weeks. The leaks are in an area already identified for future replacement. However, since the leaks are on service lines, they should not impact future planned street overlays.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- The governor made an official press release that Wadena was awarded the \$195,000 childcare grant. Final paperwork needs to be completed, overall, everything looks good.
- The bakery is still working through legal issues but starting to attract some interest. The purchase price has been reduced, but no significant offers have been made yet. The estate owns the property. Wadena State Bank is handling it as the creditor and secured party, approving or rejecting any offers. A key issue is determining who is responsible for paying the delinquent utilities. There are tenants upstairs with rent currently managed by Gore's company. The city has not received any of it despite it being a receivable tied to the city's loan for furniture, fixtures, equipment, and inventory. The city is working to confirm its legal standing and is considering sending a letter to Gore's requesting the release of the rent funds. The bank holds the first mortgage on the property, while the city holds a second and a first lien on the equipment and receivables.
- Pinewood Estates is running a February Sweethearts Special, \$1,000 off a lot. Dean states they have had one purchase agreement so far as a result of the promotion.
- The County Fair Board is working to structure and voluntarily add lodging tax to the camping sites to benefit the Conventions Visitor Bureau (CVB).

Police Department – Naomi Plautz

- Kicked off Archery applications for Early Turkey hunt.
- After a few snow events, less people are parking on the wrong side of the street.

Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth Nothing to add.

Wadena Fire Department – Cody Yglesias

- The Relief Association is working on completing a new rescue truck build, having already invested around \$100,000. They are currently ordering additional equipment, side outs, and a topper, with the goal of having it ready by spring.
- Fire calls have been relatively quiet, indicating that fire prevention efforts are effective.
- Four firefighters recently completed the Instructor 1 certification. Nate Biederman organized a local class and invited surrounding departments, saving approx. \$3,000 in travel costs. The certification costs were reimbursed through the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education, helping meet training requirements internally rather than relying on outside vendors.

Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson Nothing to add.

Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross Not present.

City Administrator – Kim Schroeder

- MnDOT is preparing for the Hwy 10/71/29 Public Open House on Tuesday, February 25th. A mailing will be sent to property owners and an email to known addresses on file.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Dan Sartell: Provided a letter of resignation effective February 11, 2025, following the regular meeting, to devote more time for his personal life.

Mark Lunde: Nothing to Report.

Mac Nelson: Nothing to Report.

Wade Miller: Nothing to Report.

Mayor George Deiss: Nothing to add.

Action Motion: Unanimously Adjourned at 6:06pm.

Moved by:	Nelson	Seconded by:	Lunde
Vote in favor:	Deiss, Lunde, Miller, Nelson, Sartell		

George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: _____
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator