

**Special City Council Minutes
Tuesday, September 22, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Comprising a quorum of the City Council, the meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm with the following council members present: Mayor George Deiss, Council Members Duke Harrison, Mark Lunde, Wade Miller, and Mac Nelson.

Staff present: City Administrator Kim Schroeder, WDA Director Dean Uselman, Public Works Director Dan Kovar, Utilities Director Dave Evans.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion approving the consent calendar items as presented.

Mayor Deiss noted the retirement of Lea Ann Motschenbacher and thanked her for her many years of service. Administrator Schroeder stated that an official retirement letter was received and will be added to the record.

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

NEW BUSINESS

**Action 26-78: Motion approving the updated Planning & Zoning/WDA
Administrative Assistant job description and to advertise for a new hire.**

Energy assistance administration, including coordination with Mahube-Otwa and posting payments to utility accounts, and utility bill review will move to the administration office front desk position, keeping that portion of the wage allocated to the electric, water, and sewer funds. The updated job description adds responsibility for scanning citywide documents into Laserfiche, maintaining the system, and training staff, and designates the position as a confidential employee. Wage allocations between departments will be adjusted but remain within the General Fund. The position will be advertised on Indeed, Facebook, the League of MN Cities with a recommended hire brought to the November meeting.

Moved by:	Miller	Seconded by:	Lunde
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

**Action 26-79: Motion approving the WDA/Planning & Zoning Director seasonal
leave request at 20 hours of paid work and 20 hours of paid time off per week.**

WDA Director Dean Uselman requests the same seasonal leave accommodation as last year, from early January through mid-February. Council discussed last year's arrangement and determined the need for a firm hourly agreement given the tight budget. A written agreement will be prepared so the arrangement does not set a precedent for other staff moving forward.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Harrison
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Nelson		
Opposed:	Miller		

Action 26-80: Motion to table the WDA/Planning & Zoning Director retirement to the October council meeting.

WDA Director Dean Uselman indicated a planned retirement date between April 3, 2027, and April 30, 2027, depending on the timing of a replacement and the training period needed. Council discussed advertising the position shortly after the holidays in January, with the start date identified in the advertisement. Without a formal retirement date, the action was tabled.

Moved by:	Nelson	Seconded by:	Harrison
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

Action 26-81: Motion approving the updated EDA/Planning & Zoning Director job description.

Council discussed whether the combined EDA and Planning & Zoning Director position should be split. Director Uselman stated the combined position works well, and the budget does not support an additional department head. Council noted Allison Medeck with the Wadena County Economic Alliance could be available to temporarily assist a new director.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Nelson
Vote in Favor:	Deiss, Harrison, Lunde, Miller, Nelson		

**Resolution 2026-43: Motion approving the proposed 2027 Budget Levy: General fund operating and GO Bonds levy at \$1,689,651, a \$188,454 increase from 2026, 12.55%.
Mill rate estimated at .3856 per \$1,000 taxable market value.****Resolution 2026-44: Sourcewell Impact Funds grant support for police squad car and equipment.**

A revised preliminary 2027 General Fund budget was presented noting wages and benefits for the accounting and administrator departments were erroneously omitted from the work session draft, increasing the levy by approximately \$18,000.

Council discussed the proposed \$125,000 revenue increase from the electric fund transfer to the general fund. Utilities Director Dave Evans explained the current minimum policy transfer of \$325,000, raising concerns about equity between ratepayers and taxpayers. Council discussed revisiting the transfer policy.

A future stormwater ordinance, and potential new franchise agreements with Arvig, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative, and West Central Telephone Association were discussed as revenue sources.

Due to cuts in the police department, Schroeder presented a resolution to submit for a \$50,000 Sourcewell Impact Funds grant towards a police squad car and equipment.

Council also discussed using the one-time public safety funds to reduce the levy, which is an allowable use of the funds.

Further budget review will continue at the October and November meetings for final levy in December.

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

Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 6:08 pm.

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

George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: _____
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator