222 2nd Street SE
Wadena, MN 56482

**Regular City Council Minutes**
**Tuesday, March 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, and Mac Nelson.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

**Motion approving the consent calendar items.**

A. Claims Register Summary
B. Monthly Financial Reports
C. City Council Meeting Minutes:
   a. February 11, 2025, Regular Meeting

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

## OLD BUSINESS

**Ordinance 253: Motion approving to amend Chapter 130. Section 130.08 Public Nuisance.**

The second reading was completed.

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

**Ordinance 254: Motion approving to amend Chapter 54. Section 54.02 Storage and Transporting Refuse.**

The second reading was completed.

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

**Ordinance 255: Motion approving to amend Chapter 90. Section 90.04 Ice, Snow, Streets, Sidewalks Other Public Safety.**

The second reading was completed.

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

## NEW BUSINESS

**Resolution 2025-17: Motion accepting Council Member Dan Sartell's resignation and declaring a vacancy.**

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

**Action 25-09: Motion to proceed filling vacant council seat with advertising and question and answer process.**

At least two residents have shown interest to fill the remaining term since the resignation was announced. The council discussed whether to follow the same advertising and question and answer (Q&A) process done during the last resignation, June 2024. The consensus was to follow past practice to maintain consistency. The Q&A deadline was set for April 2nd at 4:30 pm, allowing time for council review before the next meeting. The position will be advertised through newspapers, social media, and the city website.

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

**Action 25-10: Motion approving a MIF Participation loan to Old Soul Sourdough, 210 Jefferson Street, contingent on Wadena Development Assn (WDA) approval at its Thursday, March 13 meeting.**

WDA Director Dean Uselman explained the city's participation in the loan for the purchase of the bakery. Old Soul Sourdough signed a purchase agreement with Wadena State Bank for financing. The bank will secure collateral in the first position with a $77,500 participation loan with the city, representing 25% of the total financing. The city and bank will share a pro-rata first-position claim on the collateral. The pro-rata structure ensures that if losses occur, the city will recover 25% of any proceeds, while the bank receives 75%.
The previous owner's outstanding loan will be covered from the current buyer's sale proceeds. It was noted that not all expenses may be covered entirely.
This agreement is contingent upon WDA Board approval.

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

**Action 25-11: Motion approved an updated Tax Abatement Policy to match State Statutes.**

The city's tax abatement policy is updated to align with state statute changes. The current policy requires a 30% investment of the assessed market value for a property to qualify for tax abatement. State statute has been updated to require a 50% investment. The amended policy includes verbiage referencing state statutes 469.174 to 469.1791, rather than the policy specifying a fixed percentage, eliminating the need for future policy revisions if the statute changes again.

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

**Action 25-12: Motion approving appointment of Zach Hamann as 3rd Assistant Chief pending successful background approval.**

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

**Action 25-13: Motion approving a one-time two weeks' vacation benefit added to the Wastewater Director leave balance.**

A letter was received in January 2025 from Wastewater Director Paul Moe addressing vacation balance concerns. At the time of hire February 2024, an action memorandum was presented and approved regarding the employee's request for a vacation balance modification

from the non-union policy. However, there was a misunderstanding about the request, the employee was requesting a one-time two-week balance to go into the account.
The council discussed whether granting this request would set a precedence. It was determined it would not, as the matter had been discussed and acknowledged at the start of his employment. Additionally, Paul Moe assured the city that he has no intentions of ending employment. Rather that he wants accrued time.

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

**Action 25-14: Motion approving the Social Media Policy, contingent on approval and recommendations by the City Attorney.**

The City does not have a social media policy. Administrator Schroeder received policies from other cities and found the City of Moorhead's to be a strong example. The policy has been sent to the city attorney for review, no feedback has been received yet for the council meeting.
Council members raised concerns about inconsistent social media branding and messaging across departments, as multiple staff manage social media pages independently. A recommendation was made for centralized oversight, with the Administrator or Assistant Administrator reviewing posts for consistency. Additionally, the idea of a standardized template for city-affiliated pages and posts was discussed.
The legal question of comment moderation was raised, specifically whether the city can disable certain comments or allow public interaction under First Amendment considerations. The attorney will be consulted on this matter.

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

**Action 25-15: Motion approving 2024-2026 auditing services with Abdo Solutions totaling $130,000 for years 2024-2026.**

Two proposals were received.
Brady Martz 3-year total $140,700 – 2024: $45,475, 2025: $45,865, 2026: $49,360.
Abdo Solutions 3-year total $130,000 – 2024: $42,000, 2025: $43,300, 2026: $44,700.

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

**Action 25-16: Motion approving a 5-year lease purchase of a 2025 police interceptor.**

The 2015 white squad used for training and travel is aged and due for replacement. Funds are available in the budget to lease a new vehicle for five years, increasing from three. Equipment from the current squad is not transferable due to model differences. Budget overages are expected with all new equipment and graphics. Proceeds from the sale of the current squad, drug and forfeiture funds, and a $2,000 Sourcewell grant will cover any overages. The new administrative vehicle will be silver to distinguish it from the fleet.
Quotes were received from Park Rapids Ford, $48,892.40 and Nelson Ford, $45,953.
Chief Plautz also reminded the council of budgeted plans to replace a different squad in rotation. The plan is to place an order late summer with the first lease payment due in 2026. Additional grant funding from Sourcewell may also be available for future equipment costs. Delivery is expected three to four months after ordering.

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

| **Action 25-17: Motion to proceed with a DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant application, contingent on receiving final cost estimates.** |
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| MN DNR is offering a 50% matching Outdoor Recreation Grant with a minimum request of $50,000 and maximum of $350,000. Council and city staff have discussed the possibility of another campground development on the old airport property east of Sunnybrook Park North. The new sites would include water, sewer, electric infrastructure and stormproof bathhouse. The grant requires no work to begin until the agreement is in place. Award announcement is June 2025 and signed agreement as early as fall 2025. This will delay full hook-up construction until 2026.<br>The Council discussed establishing basic campsites for this summer's use and upcoming Hwy 10/71 road construction availability. Staff will work with Planning & Zoning, Public Works, and contractors to gather cost estimates before the March 31 deadline. The Council agreed to proceed with the application, pending final cost estimates and review. |

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

**MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 5:42PM**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Public Works Department – Dan Kovar**

- Staff met with [two] County Commissioners regarding upcoming projects. The first involves addressing sewer issues at the 4-H building, which may require city involvement. One option includes insulating the existing system, requiring removal and re-paving Birch Avenue. Cost estimates and elevation data are still needed before determining the city's role. The second project involves a potential agreement related to stormwater discharge for the upcoming Hwy 10 underground utility project. Further details are expected following discussions at the County Board meeting. These projects are in the early stages, and staff will provide updates as more information becomes available.

**Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans**

- An update on the city's water system: Since the Department Head Meeting, two more water mains and one service have been repaired. As a result, daily water usage has dropped significantly from 1.1 million gallons to approximately 560,000 gallons. Of that, 166,000 gallons are still being used to keep the sewers open, meaning the actual water consumption within the city is about 400,000 gallons per day, which is on track and where the city aims to be.

**Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman**

- The demolition of the childcare area at the Astera Legacy campus began on Monday, significant progress is already visible.
- Several new businesses are opening downtown: one in the former Brinks building, another in the old backdrop building. Work is ongoing with a potential business in the old bank building. And recent action taken on the bakery. Exciting movement is happening in the community.

**Police Department – Naomi Plautz**

- This is the third year for early Turkey hunt, it's exciting to see applicants this time, there have been none in the past couple years.
- Tomorrow marks the first of five trainings in the next month. First responder and CPR trainings have also been successfully scheduled.

**Fire Department – Cody Yglesias**

- Not Present

**Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth**

- Not Present

**Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson**

- Waterslide refurbishment has been completed. Public announcement and donation credits will be placed on social media.
- A few events are planned at the center for this month.

**Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross**

- New golf carts delivered today.
- The course received #1 of top 25 best courses in MN award from GolfPass based on user reviews!

**City Administrator – Kim Schroeder**

- Attorney Grant Skoog recommends placing one of the nuisance ordinance amendments discussed last month regarding storm-damages to section 150.09, which covers building maintenance and regulations. It was determined that storm damage should be addressed separately from nuisance ordinances. The council saw no opposition, the first reading of the revised ordinance will be brought to a future meeting.

**COUNCIL REPORTS**

**Mark Lunde:** Nothing to add.
**Mac Nelson:** Nothing to add.
**Wade Miller:** Nothing to add.
**Mayor George Deiss:** Discussed council board and committee attendance for a quorum at meetings. No action taken.

**Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 5:52pm.**

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

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George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: ______________________________
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator