



**Regular City Council Minutes
Wednesday, November 12, 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 Duke Harrison, 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. October 14, 2025, Regular Meeting
- D. Action 25-68: Rural Health Day Proclamation
- E. Resolution 2025-51: Appoint Dana Damm to Planning Commission
- F. Resolution 2025-52: Appoint Brett Gagnon-Palick to Planning Commission

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to close the Hwy 10 and 71 Utilities Improvement Assessment public hearings at 6:10 pm.

City Engineer Phil Martin went over the Highway 10 and 71 utility improvement project presentation and details as part of the final assessment hearing process. He shared that the City secured the approx. \$2.1 million remainder of the \$5 million legislative contamination funds that allowed the City to significantly reduce the Highway 10 assessment costs.

The City remains to assess approximately 21% of costs to meet state statute.

The final Hwy 10 project cost is \$3,325,973.91 with the LRIP State Grant share \$1,895,000, City's share \$1,130,404.75, and proposed assessed portion \$300,569.15.

The final Hwy 71 project cost is \$1,471,287 with the City's share \$1,162,413 and proposed assessed portion \$308,874.

Martin went on to the statutory assessment process and outlined property owner rights for appeal. The hearing was then opened to the public.

Shelly Heib expressed concern that West Side Sports is not yet connected to the new services. She contacted the city in August. City staff clarified that the delay is due to the private plumber not scheduling connections, including the city's main. Heib noted they had to

install a sand point due to this. City staff committed to contacting the plumber to help resolve the situation.

Kyle Davis sought clarification regarding assessment interest rates, noting that the City's bond rate is approximately 4%, while assessed properties pay 6.49% if financed through the City. He acknowledged that the City followed all required state statutes but suggested adding courtesy notifications in future projects. Davis also asked about utility locations on his parcel near the Fairgrounds and Eastwood Inn. Staff confirmed that prior to construction the utilities were in MnDOT right-of-way on the north side of Highway 10, and they have now been relocated into a private utility easement outside the right-of-way.

Written objections from Astera Health and Tim Flanigan were also read for the record.

Craig Folkestad of 210 and 204 N Jefferson addressed the council seeking clarification on the sewer assessments for his parcels. The service replaced at 206 N Jefferson was mistakenly attributed to parcel 210, however, records show it should be assigned to the adjacent lot owned by the Folkestad/Trustee family. As a result, assessment will be reassigned from parcel 210 to 206.

John Gravelle of 217 N Jefferson St addressed the council questioning why a 2-in service line cost the amount is difficult for a small rental business. He praised the engineer and staff for their professionalism but expressed concerns that the assessment for his two-inch service is more than double that of a one-inch line. Gravel questioned why he received a two-inch service. Engineer Martin explained the city replaces what is currently in place. Gravelle asked whether the council could adjust his assessment. The council noted that while changes can be made, doing so sets precedent and would have to be considered for all assessments and affected properties. Staff explained that costs rose significantly due to bidding, contamination cleanup, and other unforeseen additions not reflected in earlier estimates. Gravelle concluded by suggesting that a frontage-based assessment method might be more equitable, but staff reiterated that service lines are individually assessed because they directly benefit the property.

Joel Beiswenger, representing Astera Health Legacy Campus at 415 N Jefferson St and the Wesley Building at 418 N Jefferson St addressed the council. In June 2023, MnDOT required removal of the tunnel between Astera's two buildings. At the time the cost was unknown and feared to be as high as one million dollars. Astera appreciates the city's willingness to partner the tunnel project as a special assessment, which provided much needed flexibility.

Ultimately, the total project cost came in far lower than expected allowing Astera to cash flow, paying the city without financing or using the assessment process. Beiswenger sincerely thanked the council and city administration for their creativity and cooperation.

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

Motion to close the Miscellaneous Unpaid Utility and Account Receivable Assessments public hearing at 6:16 pm.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance 257: 2026 Fee Schedule

The first reading was completed. The second reading will be at the December 9, 2025, regular meeting.

Resolution 2025-48: Motion approving a 10-year tax abatement up to \$20,000 to Merickel property, 832 6th St NW.

The abatement for the Merickel property at 832 6th Street is up to \$20,000 over a 10-year period, whichever comes first.

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

Resolution 2025-49: Motion approving to certify Highway 10 (Ash Ave) & 9th Street Utilities Improvement Assessments to the County Auditor.

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

Resolution 2025-50: Motion approving to certify Highway 71 (Jefferson St) Utilities Improvement Assessments to the County Auditor.

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

Action 25-69: Motion approving the request from St. Ann's Church to close Franklin Ave SE for block parties through April 2026.

Nikki Fink of St Ann's Church requests to close one block of Franklin Avenue on the second Wednesday of each month, November 12, December 10 of 2025, and January 14, March 11, and April 8 of 2026 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. for St. Ann's parish events. About 400 people attend, including approx. 300 children. There's only one house nearby who is ok with the closure. Previous closures have worked well. The church will set barricades and manage the closure themselves.

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

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND CLOSED AT 6:29 pm No one present.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar Nothing to report.

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- Lighting is getting completed along the highway projects.
- Updated the council that a key position retirement is expected in the next year in the utility department.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- Reported a busy month with permits.
- Downtown storefront's are having interest again.

Police Department – Naomi Plautz

- Recommended checking out the Chamber's Facebook page for an announcement

Fire Department – Cody Yglesias Not Present

Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth Not Present

Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson

- Councilmember Harrison requested that Lisa provide a list of upcoming events in future reports.

Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross Not Present.

City Administrator – Kim Schroeder

- Provided an update on current timelines for 2026 road construction. Mathiowetz schedules are not finalized yet and will be reviewed over the winter. The city has not been provided details for the public yet. A detailed schedule is anticipated by April.
- Noted that the old library was inspected and found to have traces of white mold. Building Maintenance LLC cleaned the old library. Both the old and new libraries were inspected and received clearance reports with lower allowable levels. The issue was age-related, not from leaks, and not black mold. The city can continue to sell the old library without mold concerns.
- The new library's HVAC system project is underway with funding available from Kitchigami to help offset costs.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Duke Harrison: Nothing to report or add.

Mark Lunde: Nothing to report or add.

Mac Nelson: Nothing to report or add.

Wade Miller: Nothing to report or add.

Mayor George Deiss: Nothing to report or add.

Action Motion: Motion to adjourn at 6:39pm.

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

George Deiss, Mayor

Attest: _____
Kim Schroeder, City Administrator