



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY APRIL 7, 2026

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brad Spencer called the meeting to order on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 6:30 PM

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Spencer led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Spencer, Betts, Fisher, Grotting

ABSENT: McCoy

STAFF: City Administrator Kaltsas, Administrative Services Director Simon,
WHPS Chief DuRose, Public Works Director Lehman

VISITORS: See Sign-in Sheet

4. ****CONSENT AGENDA****

Mayor Spencer stated that the consent agenda items would be considered routine and acted on by one motion unless someone would like to remove an item for discussion. The consent agenda

- a. Approval of City Council Minutes from the March 17, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable (Batch #1; Checks Numbered 24275-24299, Batch #2 and Checks Numbered 24300-24320). And New Look Contracting Pay Voucher #3
- c. Solicitor License:
 - i. Curbside Waste – To provide rubbish/trash removal services within Independence.

Motion by Grotting, seconded by Betts to approve the consent agenda. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy. Abstain: None. Motion Approved.
4-0

5. Set Agenda – Anyone Not on the Agenda can be Placed Under Open/Misc.
6. Reports of Boards and Committees by Council and Staff.

Council member Fisher Attended the following meeting:

- LBAE

Council member Betts Attended the following meeting:

- Hwy 12 Coalition
- LBAE

Council member Grotting Attended the following meeting:

- LBAE

Mayor Spencer Attended the following meeting:

- WHPS interviews for PT officer
- Teams meeting with Medina on the No Wake Ordinance
- Testified at the Capital with Mark for funding on the Silent Crossing at Loretto
- ABRC
- Meeting with Chief DuRose
- LBAE

7. Consider Adoption of an Amendment to the City’s Surface Water Use Regulations on Lake Independence.
 - a. **ORDINANCE NO. 2026-03** – Amending the Lake Independence Surface Water Use Regulations.

The Mayor reported that he and City Administrator Kaltsas had participated in a Zoom meeting with Medina's mayor and administrator to reach an agreement on a matching ordinance for both cities regarding Lake Independence water use regulations. He noted that Medina's agenda included approval of the same ordinance being considered by Independence.

The proposed ordinance establishes a two-tiered system for wake restrictions on Lake Independence. The first trigger would implement a 600-foot offset from shore for all wake activities when water levels reach a certain point. If water levels rise significantly higher to 959.2 feet (the 50-year flood elevation), a second trigger would engage, implementing a whole-lake no-wake restriction.

The Mayor explained that Medina would handle administration of the ordinance since most of the required signage and enforcement infrastructure is located in their city. He noted that the 600-foot offset approach is uniquely suitable for Lake Independence because it is a large, round lake that still allows sufficient area for safe recreation even with the restrictions.

The Mayor referenced studies that informed the distance determination, including a Sea Grant study with the University of Minnesota showing that wakes are minimized to levels equivalent to

normal boat traffic at 500 feet, with an additional 100-foot buffer providing extra safety. A second study by Saint Anthony Falls determined that boat wake impacts to lake bottoms are mitigated in depths greater than 20 feet, and Lake Independence is more than 20 feet deep at 600 feet from shore.

The Mayor acknowledged that the 600-foot offset does impose some limitations on recreational activities. Casual boating around the lake could exceed the 5 mph no-wake speed limit, jet skiers would be restricted to 600 feet from docks instead of the current 150 feet, and water skiers would need to proceed straight toward the center of the lake from docks or shore structures.

However, he emphasized that these restrictions would only apply when the first trigger level is reached, and the lake is currently about half a foot below that trigger point. The Mayor noted that the Lake Association had worked to clear vegetation from the channel, potentially helping maintain lower water levels.

City Administrator Kaltsas added that this system provides a better alternative to complete lake shutdowns that occurred in previous summers, allowing at least a 600-foot offset usable area when the first trigger is reached.

The Mayor and Kaltsas also mentioned ongoing discussions with wake boat users about voluntarily implementing the 600-foot offshore restriction at all times, with plans for educational materials, buoys, and maps to encourage use of the lake's center area.

Motion by Grotting, seconded by Betts to approve Ordinance 2026-03 amending the Lake Independence Surface Water Use Regulations. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 4-0

8. Discussion/Consideration of the City of Maple Plain Proposed Entrance Sign Replacement.

City Administrator Kaltsas explained that the City of Maple Plain had contacted him about replacing their existing entrance sign as part of a rebranding effort that includes a new logo. The current sign is located on MnDOT property but within Independence city limits, approximately 50 feet west of the municipal boundary.

Kaltsas noted that the city's sign ordinance doesn't directly address this situation, so he brought the matter to the council for guidance. The proposed sign would be 12 feet wide by 7.5 feet tall, slightly wider but not as tall as the current sign. The new design features a stone base with a more substantial background, replacing the current Corten steel design with cutouts.

Kaltsas explained that he couldn't locate any documentation of approval for the original sign, which was installed around 2000. He noted that there isn't really an alternative location for the sign due to the topography and nearby ponds associated with the former industrial facility in the area.

Council Member Grotting asked whether Maple Plain was moving the sign to their own property, but Kaltsas clarified that they don't have property in that location and the sign would remain on MnDOT right-of-way. He explained that the proposed sign would be more visible than the current one, which is often difficult to read and sometimes becomes obscured by unmowed grass.

The council discussed that MnDOT would need to approve the sign placement and might require Independence's approval as part of their review process. Kaltsas noted that the proposed sign dimensions fall within what the commercial/light industrial district would allow under the city's sign regulations.

The Mayor indicated that the location is a good spot for the sign, and council members appeared to have no objections to the proposal.

Motion by Grotting, seconded by Betts to approve the sign placement within the City of Independence. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 4-0

9. Open/Misc.

10. Adjourn.

Motion by Fisher, seconded by Grotting to adjourn the meeting at 6:48PM. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Betts, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 4-0