



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY JUNE 16, 2026

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brad Spencer called the meeting to order on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at 6:30 PM

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Spencer led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts

ABSENT: None

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

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 June 2, Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable; (Batch #1 - Checks No. 24409-24430).
- c. Approval of Election Judges for the Primary and General Elections.

The Mayor noted that staff members Amber and Katie and Carrie had been inadvertently omitted from the Election Judges list under item (c) and confirmed they would be added.

Motion by Betts, seconded by Fisher to approve the consent agenda. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0

5. Reports of Boards and Committees by Council and Staff.

Council member Fisher Attended the following meeting:

- None

Council member Betts Attended the following meeting:

- None

Council member McCoy Attended the following meeting:

- Orono Graduation

Council member Grotting Attended the following meeting:

- Planning

Mayor Spencer Attended the following meeting:

- Planning
- Lobbyist meeting with Kaltsas
- Pre-budget meeting with Maple Plain Mayor and Chief DuRose
- NW League of municipalities
- Hwy 12 Coalition

Amber Simon Attended the following meeting:

- None

Mark Kaltsas Attended the following meeting:

- None

6. West Hennepin Public Safety – Director Matthew DuRose: Presentation of the May 2026 Activity Reports.

Director DuRose presented the May 2026 monthly activity report. He noted that calls for service year-to-date are on par with the same period in 2025. He highlighted two notable areas: a backlog of burn permits that staff is actively working through, and an uptick in administrative requests from a large Eastern Metro agency that changed its background check process. DuRose also noted four DWIs recorded in the month, all along Highway 12, and reported that speed enforcement conducted that day resulted in dozens of traffic stops. He further noted a trend of large fraud and internet-based scams occurring within the city.

Director DuRose expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming "Cops and Robbers" fishing event scheduled for July 8th. He reported that registration opened Tuesday and filled to the tentative maximum of 15 children within the weekend, generating a waiting list of four additional children. The city is exploring securing additional boats to accommodate more participants. The event is funded in part by a grant from the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Foundation, and Iron Exchange has committed to providing lunch. All participating children will receive their own fishing rod, reel, and tackle box.

7. Alex Rykken (Applicant/Owner) requests that the City consider the following action for the property located at 6605 Hillstrom Road, Independence, MN (PID No. 22-118-24-13-0001):

- a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0616-01** – Considering approval of a variance from the requisite structure setback from the OHWL of Pioneer Creek to allow the construction of a deck that is attached to the principal structure on the subject property.

City Administrator Kaltsas introduced the item. The applicant sought a variance from the 100-foot ordinary high water level (OHWL) setback of Pioneer Creek to allow construction of a deck and stairway on the rear of the home at 6605 Hillstrom Road. Staff review found that the house was originally permitted and inspected as conforming with the setback requirement; however, Pioneer Creek has meandered over time, moving closer to the structure, resulting in an approximately 10-foot deficiency. The applicant is requesting an 11-foot variance from the 100-foot setback.

Kaltsas explained that unlike lake shorelines, the OHWL of a creek is defined by the top of the riverbank at the time of survey, which is inherently subject to change. The practical difficulty, therefore, was not caused by the property owner but by natural migration of the creek. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 2nd, made findings that the request met the criteria for a variance, and recommended approval. In response to a question from Councilmember Grotting, Kaltsas confirmed there was no prior precedent for this specific property and that the variance process remains the appropriate mechanism for these exception cases.

Motion by Grotting, seconded by McCoy to approve RESOLUTION 26-0616-01 for a variance from the requisite structure setback from the OHWL of Pioneer Creek to allow the construction of a deck that is attached to the principal structure on the subject property. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0

8. Mark Bjorgum (Applicant/Owner) requests that the City consider the following action for the property located at 230 Hart St., Independence, MN (PID No. 32-118-24-42-0053):

- a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0616-02** – Considering approval of a variance to allow the construction of a new accessory structure that exceeds the height of the principal structure located on the subject property.

City Administrator Kaltsas presented the item. The applicant seeks a variance to construct a new 40-by-48-foot (approximately 1,800 square foot) detached accessory building at 230 Hart Street, which would have a gable roof with a mean height of 19 feet 4 inches — approximately 3 feet 4 inches taller than the existing principal structure.

Kaltsas explained the property's unique circumstances. The existing non-conforming detached accessory structure crosses a property line and could not be rebuilt in kind under current

standards. The subject property consists of three parcels, with the principal structure being a modest one-bedroom home with a low, single-plane sloped roof — an unusual characteristic that contributes to the height differential. Because the property has three frontages abutting public roads or public properties, the detached accessory structure cannot be located to the rear of the principal structure, making it ineligible for the city's standard Accessory Building Review Committee (ABRC) process. The variance process was therefore required.

The Planning Commission found that the three-frontage condition and the flat roof of the principal structure constituted unique practical difficulties supporting the variance. No public comments opposing the request were received. The applicant confirmed the structure would be for personal storage only, and a condition prohibiting commercial use was included. The Planning Commission recommended approval.

Motion by McCoy, seconded by Betts to approve RESOLUTION 26-0616-02 for a variance to allow the construction of a new accessory structure that exceeds the height of the principal structure located on the subject property. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0

9. Michael Keenan (Applicant) and Mark Moorhouse (Owner) are requesting the following actions for the property located at 3760 County Road 92 N. (PID No. 09-118-24-13-0001) in the City of Independence, MN.
 - a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0616-03** – Considering approval of a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow a detached accessory building that exceeds 5,000 SF.

City Administrator Kaltsas presented the item in detail. The applicant, Michael Keenan, and owner, Mark Moorhouse, requested a conditional use permit to construct three detached accessory buildings, each exceeding 5,000 square feet, on an approximately 58-acre agriculturally-zoned property at 3760 County Road 92 North. The proposed development would occupy approximately 10 acres in the northwest corner of the property. Building 1, proposed first, would be approximately 23,000 square feet and would incorporate a principal dwelling unit (a "barndominium" style structure). Buildings 2 and 3 were proposed for future phases.

Under city ordinance, properties greater than 10 acres have no maximum limitation on total accessory building square footage, but any individual building exceeding 5,000 square feet requires a conditional use permit. The applicant presented a site plan including a rock entrance off County Road 92, stormwater filtration areas, approximately 70 evergreen trees, and 3.5 acres of native prairie restoration around the site perimeter. A Pioneer-Sierra Creek watershed permit has been applied for, and the city's engineering review comments are required to be addressed as a condition of approval.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 2nd. Written comments submitted before and after the hearing were supportive of the application, while oral testimony provided at the hearing was in opposition. Primary public concerns related to the volume of truck traffic and

associated noise during construction, and concerns about potential commercial use of the property. The Planning Commission confirmed the intended use is private agricultural — not commercial — and that the hour restriction would apply only to exterior construction activities, not interior work.

Following the Planning Commission's recommendation, several key conditions were discussed and refined by the Council:

Phasing: The Planning Commission recommended approving only Building 1 under the current CUP, requiring the applicant to return for separate CUP applications for Buildings 2 and 3. The Council concurred. All site improvements, including grading, landscaping, and screening, would be completed as part of Phase 1, with a deadline of December 1, 2026. Building 1 must be completed no later than October 31, 2027.

Construction Hours: The Planning Commission had recommended 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday, for exterior construction activities. The applicant requested 7 AM to 7 PM, citing the trucking industry's preference for early morning deliveries to accept "first loads." The Council debated the matter, with Councilmember McCoy noting that 8-to-5 felt overly restrictive given the property's rural setting, and Director DuRose noting the high traffic volume on County Road 92 as a reason to avoid late-evening hauling. The Council ultimately settled on 7 AM to 5 PM for exterior construction activities. Interior construction activities would remain subject to the city's standard construction hours.

Noise Mitigation: The applicant voluntarily offered to require all equipment operating on-site to use white noise broadband backup alarms in lieu of standard tone-based alarms. Applicant Keenan confirmed this would apply to all subcontractors on the site. Additionally, signage will be posted at the site entrance requiring truck drivers to refrain from banging tailgates. The applicant also committed to using side-dump trucks wherever practicable to minimize standard rear-dump truck activity.

Security: A \$50,000 security deposit was established as a condition of approval, covering stormwater improvements, landscaping, and site restoration and erosion control.

Construction Timeline: The Council requested that once materials are sourced and a hauling schedule is known, the applicant provide advance notice to the city so the public can be informed of when hauling activity is anticipated.

Motion by Betts, seconded by McCoy to approve RESOLUTION 26-0616-03 with amended construction hours of 7 AM to 5 PM for exterior activities. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0

10. **(PUBLIC HEARING - Continued)** Consideration of the 2026 Gravel Road Project and Approving Plans and Authorizing Staff to Bid the Project.

- a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0616-04** - Approving the 2026 Gravel Road Plans and Authorizing Staff to Bid the Project.

City Administrator Kaltsas introduced this item, which had been tabled from the previous meeting to allow the plan set to be included in the council packet. The 2026 Gravel Road Project encompasses County Line Road, Valley Road, Dean Lane, Turner Road, and Maple Ponds Trail — approximately 2 miles in total length. The project will be funded through the Capital Road Improvement Plan fund, with an engineer's estimate of approximately \$291,000, within the approximately \$300,000 budgeted for the year. Because the project exceeds \$175,000, it is subject to public bidding requirements.

Kaltsas noted that although a public hearing is not technically required since the project is not being assessed to residents, the city conducts one as a transparency measure. He noted the project is considerably smaller in scope than the 2025 project, which was an \$1,800,000 effort, and involves less stormwater and grading work, allowing for a projected fall construction start. The plan set details gravel quantities, culvert replacements, and drainage ditch work. Materials will be consistent with prior reconstructions, utilizing chip granite. Staff noted that Old Post Road was moved from 2026 to 2027 due to cost overruns on that segment's planning, and that change had generated some public inquiries.

The public hearing was opened. No members of the public came forward to speak.

Motion by McCoy, seconded by Grotting to close the Public Hearing. 5-0

Motion by Fisher, seconded by Betts to approve RESOLUTION 26-0616-04 approving the 2026 Gravel Road Plans and authorizing staff to bid the project. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0

11. Open/Misc.

The Mayor noted that both he and City Administrator Kaltsas would be unavailable on October 6, 2026, the date of the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Kaltsas recommended canceling the October 6th meeting and noted that September provides three Tuesdays, allowing the Council to convene on September 29th if an additional meeting is needed. If no additional September meeting is required, the Council would next convene on October 20th. The Council agreed to cancel the October 6th meeting and adopt a wait-and-see approach regarding a potential September 29th meeting.

12. Adjourn.

Motion by Betts, seconded by McCoy to adjourn the meeting at 7:26PM. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, Grotting, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0

