



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY JULY 7, 2026

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brad Spencer called the meeting to order on Tuesday, July 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, Fisher, McCoy, Betts (via Zoom)

ABSENT: Grotting

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

VISITORS: Edward Genreux, Republican Candidate Tom McKee

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 16, Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable; (Batch #1 - Checks No. 24431-24468).
- c. Assembly Permit:
 - Independence Motor Condos Open Houses – July 9th and August 13th.
- d. 2026 Quarter 2 - Building Permits: For Information Only.

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

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:

- None

Mayor Spencer Attended the following meeting:

- City Rep at PSCWSM
- Dolores Ahlstrom Memorial with Mayor Emeritus Johnson

Amber Simon Attended the following meeting:

- None

Mark Kaltsas Attended the following meeting:

- Met with City's consultant accounting firm regarding upcoming rate study update

Kaltsas noted that additional information will be coming related to sewer rates and a capital improvement plan for the sewer fund would be brought to the Council at the next workshop.

6. Tracy Kooman (Applicant/Owner) requests that the City consider the following action for the property located at 2692 Becker Rd., Independence, MN (PID No. 14-118-24-42-0007):
- a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0707-01** – Considering approval of a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow a detached accessory building that exceeds 5,000 SF. The applicant is proposing to construct a new indoor riding arena and barn on the subject property by adding a new barn to the property which would exceed 5,000 SF. All detached accessory buildings constructed in the City of Independence that are greater than 5,000 SF can only be constructed upon issuance of a conditional use permit.

City Administrator Kaltsas presented the request, which originated from the Planning Commission's most recent regular meeting. The applicant, Tracy Kooman, sought a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow a detached accessory building exceeding 5,000 square feet at 2692 Becker Road. The existing structure on the property is 4,225 square feet, and the proposed indoor riding arena addition — connected to the existing structure via an enclosed hallway — is approximately 9,700 square feet, bringing the combined total to approximately 14,000 square feet.

Kaltsas noted that the property is zoned and guided rural residential, and at greater than 10 acres, has no maximum square footage cap for accessory structures. The proposed addition complies

with all applicable setbacks, and the City's water resource consultant confirmed that no wetland delineation was required given sufficient distance from adjacent wetlands. The architectural design of the proposed structure would match the existing building. The Planning Commission held a public hearing, during which some written comments raised concerns about potential commercial use. Kaltsas emphasized that the CUP explicitly conditions the structure for private use only by the property owner, and that any future commercial riding stable operation would require a separate conditional use permit.

The Council asked for clarification on the distinction between private and commercial use. Kaltsas explained that once an owner begins boarding horses belonging to others — regardless of compensation — the use is considered commercial under the City's ordinance, which would trigger the requirement for a separate CUP. He also noted that the property is permitted up to 11 animal units.

The Planning Commission found that all applicable CUP criteria had been satisfied and recommended approval with conditions and findings as included in the resolution.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 26-0707-01 was made by Councilmember Betts and seconded by Councilmember Fisher. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: Grotting. Abstain: None. The motion carried 4-0.

7. Tony Des Marais (Applicant/Owner) requests that the City consider the following action for the property located at 4727 Lake Sarah Dr. S. Independence, MN (PID No. 03-118-24-12-0011):
 - a. **RESOLUTION No. 26-0707-02** – Considering approval of a conditional use permit (CUP) to allow a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) to be located on the subject property.

City Administrator Kaltsas presented this request, which also came from the most recent Planning Commission meeting. Applicant Tony Des Marais sought a CUP to allow a detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) within a proposed detached accessory building at 4727 Lake Sarah Drive South. The property is zoned and guided rural residential and is 2.55 acres in size, with an existing single-family home on site.

Kaltsas outlined the key criteria governing ADUs. The proposed ADU must be located within or attached to a principal structure or within a detached accessory building on the same parcel — both conditions are met here. The maximum permitted ADU size is the lesser of 33 percent of the above-grade living area of the principal structure or 1,200 square feet. With a principal structure of 2,690 square feet, the applicant is entitled to 888 square feet of ADU space, and the proposal is for exactly 888 square feet, achieved through a demising wall within the pole barn. The total proposed accessory building is 2,176 square feet, just under the maximum permitted

2,221 square feet for the site. The ADU includes permanent provisions for cooking, living, and sanitation, and is designed as a one-bedroom unit, within the two-bedroom maximum.

The Mayor noted that a key discussion point at the Planning Commission was the need to relocate the existing sanitary system, as it occupies the optimal location for the new accessory building. Commissioners confirmed that an alternate septic site had been identified on the property, and that the applicant also owns the adjacent parcel to the northeast, providing additional future flexibility. Kaltsas confirmed that the proposed structure meets all applicable setbacks, verified by a revised survey submitted between the Planning Commission and City Council meetings. Visibility of the proposed structure from Lake Sarah Drive South was noted to be essentially nonexistent due to existing vegetation.

The Planning Commission found that all ADU-specific criteria and general CUP criteria were satisfied and recommended approval with conditions and findings as included in the resolution.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 26-0707-02 was made by Councilmember McCoy and seconded by Councilmember Fisher. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: Grotting. Abstain: None. The motion carried 4-0.

8. Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Commission - Proposed 2027 Budget Review.

City Administrator Kaltsas presented the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Commission's proposed 2027 budget. The Commission's proposed assessment for the City of Independence is \$52,718.56, representing a 2.45 percent increase — or \$1,262 — over the 2026 budget. Kaltsas noted that the Watershed Commission has consistently maintained a relatively flat budget over many years, and that only a portion of Independence's residents fall within the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed District, with those residents' assessments levied accordingly. The remainder of the city falls within the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, which levies its own separate tax.

The Mayor commended the Commission's long-standing representative, Joe Baker, for his diligent stewardship of the budget, noting that the total year-over-year increase for Independence amounts to approximately \$3,400, and that all member cities saw increases in the range of 2.1 to 2.9 percent. He attributed the Commission's fiscal discipline in part to its effective use of Board of Water and Soil Resources funding for capital improvement projects.

Motion to approve the Pioneer Sarah Creek Watershed Commission's proposed 2027 budget was made by the Mayor and seconded by Councilmember Fisher. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: Grotting. Abstain: None. The motion carried 4-0.

9. Open/Misc.

Amber Simon informed the Council that in-person voting opens on July 24th, with direct balloting into the counter available immediately. She noted that the Tuesday before the election would have extended office hours until 7:00 PM, the Monday before until 5:00 PM, and that the office would also be open the Saturday preceding the election.

Councilmember McCoy took a moment to compliment the addition of hot links to the meeting agenda, expressing appreciation for the navigational improvement.

10. Adjourn.

Motion by McCoy, seconded by Fisher to adjourn the meeting at 6:56PM. Ayes: Spencer, Fisher, McCoy, Betts. Nays: None. Absent: Grotting. Abstain: None. Motion Approved. 5-0