



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2024

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Independence City Council was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Johnson, Councilors Spencer and Betts

Absent: Councilors McCoy and Grotting

Staff: Kaltsas, Simon

Visitors: Chief Kroells, Sergeant Ebling, Ali Howe, Aaron Howe, Jeremiah Staples and JB Lloyd

4. ****Consent Agenda****

All items listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by Council and will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

- a. City Council Minutes from the October 15, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. City Council Minutes from the October 29, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting.
- c. Approval of Accounts Payable (Batch #1; Checks Numbered 23207-23218 and Batch #2; Checks Numbered 23219-23239 and Batch #3; Checks Numbered 23240-23271).

Motion by Spencer to approve consent agenda, seconded by Betts. Ayes: Johnson, Betts and Spencer, and. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy and Grotting Abstain: None.

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 3-0

5. Set Agenda – Anyone Not on the Agenda can be Placed Under Open/Misc.

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

Betts attended the following meetings:

- Workshop
- County Offered Zoom meeting on how to handle conflict with residents.
- Hwy 12 Coalition

Spencer attended the following meetings:

- Maple Plain Fire Dept Quarterly Meeting

- Independence Museum visit
- Wright Hennepin Electric EV knowledge event
- Fall LICA Meeting
- LMCC

Johnson attended the following meetings:

- Commissioner Anderson Open House at Maple Plain Library
- Haven Homes Advisory Committee
- Election Judge
- Representative Robbins Party
- Gerry Fredin 90th Birthday party (previous building inspector in multiple cities)
- Orono High School Dr Steiner program/ceremony honor of veterans.
- Maple Plain Chamber of Commerce
- Maple Plain Fire Commission Meeting
- Orono School Board
- NW League Municipalities meeting in Loretto
- Hwy 12 Coalition
- Coral Houle (former Mayor of Bloomington) funeral
- Orono musical Anastasia
- Staff Meeting

7. West Hennepin Public Safety Monthly Report for October 2024 – Chief Gary Kroells.
Through October – 3,855 incidents
218 – Independence
121 – Maple Plain

Introduced Sergeant Ebling – he promoted to Sergeant on November 1st, comes from vast knowledge, 10 years in Cottage Grove and a little over 8 years here in Independence.

View Santa is coming up, the first Saturday in December 12/7/24. For 44 years we have done this! Chance to meet our reserves, get a gift bag and food drive for local food Shelf. Starts at 3:30pm. Cookies, cider. Watch the sleigh. Last stop at Veteran's Park in Maple Plain at 4:45pm.

Congrats to Orono swimming state championship.

Johnson – dividing up responsibilities between the two sergeants.

Kroells – yes, we did that today. The goal is to (finally to 10th officer and full staff) 11th officer will start in a couple months once he is done with schooling at Hennepin Tech. 2 teams of 3. Going fairly well.

Johnson – congratulations Shawn! We seem to be getting a lot more mental health issues.

Kroells – we have had quite a few in my career. We are seeing more people expressing when they have a problem and seeking help. It is more common to report than it was 10 years ago. We are doing a good job with it and de-escalation. We have an embedded social worker when we have a mental health call that a social worker will follow up on after the call.

8. Ali Howe – Orono School Board Member Presentation of the Orono School District's New Strategic Plan.

Johnson – Thank you for representing our area on the Orono school board. Rather large group developing the new strategic plan. Sorry to hear you are retiring.

Ali – districts gratitude to Mayor Johnson for your service to the community for decades and continuing support. Strategic plan – district reviews every 5-7 years. We began in 2023 spring. We gathered input from students, staff, families, graduates, etc. over 1000 people shared their feedback. Assembly a team with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. In June 2024, the board approved SP. Desires for meeting the needs for all learners. Sense of belonging and connectedness, college preparedness, high involvement of parents. All community respondents said they would recommend Orono Schools. Our 3rd goal – connectedness, sense of belonging, strong relationships. Available for viewing on the Orono website. Majority of our students are involved in college level courses.

Johnson – PSEO 3% means they aren't at Orono at all?

Ali – part time they might be or virtually, not on campus. 84% of class enrolled in AP classes. Grades 9-12 to enroll. A significant number of families opt out of MCA which means they are reported not proficient. ACT 89% of students took this.

MCAs, ACT and OHS coursework (a or b).

Johnson – why do parents not want their kids to take the MCA?

Ali – its varied. They feel like its another requirement. It doesn't result in anything for the student. Word of mouth spreads and kids keep opting out.

Johnson – I show up to more than half of the board meetings. I appreciate this and learned something tonight. 30 people worked on this. The levy runs out in 2026?

Ali- yes, the board is trying to figure out how to proceed. No decision yet.

9. 2025 City Wide Gravel Road Improvement Project:

Kaltsas – talked about this at workshops, city anticipating proceeding with a 2025 city wide gravel road improvement project. Long range plan for maintaining and upgrading our gravel road system. We came up with a 5-year capital improvement plan for our roads. A 2025 city wide – touch 17 miles of gravel roads within the city. We identified the roads that have the most need for overall improvements and put those in the first phase of the improvements. Then we have 5 more years to go through 100% of the roads by 2030. Gravel recapping, drain tile improvement, spot soil, stormwater, culvert replacements and also some ditch grading. Bring them up to a higher standard. Sustain the next period or time and reduce amount of time we dedicate to maintenance. Proposing the plans and specifications for the 2025 plan. Projected open house in early Feb, bids in end of February and start construction in March. We would need to publicly bid this project. It is anticipated by issuing debt next year - \$1.75M road project paid by the city. No assessments to residents. Through budgeting, remaining would be paid for by using general tax levy dollars. Individual funds that pay for that in our budget. This is the last piece we need to address.

Betts – this is a contract with this company.

Kaltsas – this is the city engineer preparing the plans for us. They have done a lot of base level work. We can publicly bid in Feb. Vose will review prior to execution.

Betts- did Vose review this?

Johnson – concern about the quality of the gravel. We do bidding in the first of the year on gravel, is that going to be checked out really well or any obligation to use the same gravel pit?

Kaltsas – we will be able to specify. Our bids annually does not specify what we do in this contract. We will ensure that the gravel meets specification of what we prepared.

MJ – the closeness of where we get it is getting further away.

MK – we have discussed what material is best, class 5 or granite, conbit? We have talked to other cities and townships to see what they have seen success with.

Motion by Spencer to approve authorization to proceed with preparation of plans and specifications, seconded by Betts. Ayes: Johnson, Betts and Spencer, and. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy and Grotting Abstain: None.
MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 3-0

a. Authorization to Proceed with Preparation of Plans and Specifications.

10. Open/Misc.

11. Adjourn.

Motion to adjourn at 7:17pm by Spencer seconded by Betts. Ayes: Johnson, Betts and Spencer, and. Nays: None. Absent: McCoy and Grotting Abstain: None.
MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 3-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Solien/Recording Secretary