

PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – April 7, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, April 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Prince presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Prince, Fiskevold Gould, Peterson, Dickinson, Rivera, Eaton, Thayer.

Staff Present: City Manager Rich Spiczka, Finance Director Donna Coe, City Engineer Sam Anderson, Fire Chief Justin Sherwood, City Clerk Michelle Miller

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Mayor Prince called for any amendments to the agenda. **Motion by Thayer, seconded by Peterson, approving the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for approval:

- February 24, 2025 Work Session
- March 3, 2025 Council Meeting
- March 3, 2025 Special Meeting (Closed)

Motion by Eaton, seconded by Thayer, approving minutes as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

CONSENT AGENDA #1

Mayor Prince called for any amendments to be made to Consent Agenda. Fiskevold Gould asked to be included in the council travel authorization. The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Thayer, seconded by Dickinson, to approve Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the Amount of \$1,075,295.62
2. Claims Submitted by ASM Global for the Sanford Center in the Amount of \$147,110.14
3. 2025 Business License Approvals
4. Approve Special Event Permit for Voyageurs Banana Walk (May 15)
5. Approve Special Event Permit for Sunset Sounds
6. Approve Special Event Permit for Take A Kid Fishing (June 11)
7. Approve Special Event Permits for Annual Jaycees Water Carnival
8. Approve Temporary 1-4 Day Liquor License for Jaycees Water Carnival
9. **RESOLUTION NO. 6612:** Approving the Site and Related Requests for the 81st Annual Jaycees Water Carnival
10. Approve Services for Downtown Tree Replacement Project
11. Approve Purchase of Polycarbonate Replacement at the Diamond Building
12. Approve Professional Services Amendment #2 for Middle School Drive NW & Hannah Avenue NW Project - City Project 23-05
13. Approve Award of Quote for 2025 Alley and Lot 7 Paving
14. Approve School Resource Officer Agreement with ISD #31
15. Approve Payment Processing Agreement with CSG Forte Payments, Inc
16. Approve Council Travel Authorization-LMC Annual Conference (Duluth), June 25-27-Thayer, Fiskevold Gould

Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Prince, Fiskevold Gould, Peterson, Dickinson, Rivera, Eaton, Thayer.

CONSENT AGENDA #2

Mayor Prince called for any items to be pulled from consent agenda #2. The following Consent Agenda item was presented for approval. **Motion by Dickinson, seconded by Eaton, approving Consent Agenda #2 as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer for Visit Bemidji in the Amount of \$34,759.36

Motion carried by the following roll call vote: Yeas: Thayer, Fiskevold Gould, Prince, Rivera, Eaton, Dickinson. Abstain: Peterson due to his role as the Executive Director of Visit Bemidji.

CITIZENS WITH BUSINESS NOT ON AGENDA

- No appearance.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Engagement Letter with Baker Tilly Advisory Group for Compensation Study

Cities typically complete job classification/compensation studies every five to seven years to accomplish and address the following:

- Develop pay scale as an effective recruitment and retention tool
- Position duties and responsibilities changes
- Changes in City issues and service level complexity
- Organizational structure changes
- Pay comparison to similar external entities
- Union contract negotiation supporting documentation
- Determine pay equity compliance

The last detailed compensation study was conducted in 2018 and a review is required to considering updating City positions. The proposed review will also include the Airport positions. The previous external market comparison considered other greater MN regional centers service levels, complexity, development activity and Event Center and State University presence. Bemidji has several unique challenges including:

- Tax exempt property and related funding challenges
- Concentration of government employment
- Low median income levels
- Lower housing values
- Tourism impact
- Complex and high level of development and construction projects
- Level of rental units
- Higher level of public safety calls and crime rates
- Socio-economic issues
- Planning and expansion at City borders
- Wastewater Plant on Mississippi River and lift station volume
- Water well field issues
- Airport

Compensation Study Information Deliverables:

Baker Tilly Advisory Group provides the following documentation regarding their work:

- Aggregate Market Results
- Comparable of existing levels to the market levels, min, max and full range
- Job Evaluation Results
- Comparable existing pay range to market pay range
- Pay plan with grand assignments
- Implementation scenarios and results
- Pay plan and grade assignments for maintenance

Motion by Eaton, seconded by Fiskevold Gould approving the Consultant Service Contract with Baker Tilly Advisory Group for the Classification and Compensation Study in the amount of \$49,600 and authorize execution by the Mayor and City Manager. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Consider Design & Bidding of TH 197 Light Pole Replacement Project and Authorize Professional Services Agreement – City Project 25-06

Anderson stated that staff has been struggling the past few years keeping up with the rapidly deteriorating decorative light poles along TH 197 between the Mississippi Bridge and 1st Street E between Lake Bemidji & Lake Irving. Our understanding is that the original decorative poles installed in the early 2000's were all made of carbon steel, not aluminum or stainless steel. MnDOT snow maintenance and chlorides have rapidly deteriorated the bases of the poles and they are a fall risk.

Just in the last couple years the City has replaced 17 light poles, using up all of our aluminum/stainless steel light pole reserves, keeping up with the carbon steel light poles that are forming holes at the bases of the light pole. City staff took down six light poles in 2024 over concerns that high winds may knock them over. Those six pole locations have not been replaced and staff have no reserves to do so currently and there may be additional light poles that will need to be removed in the near future.

Through the ARPA dollar discussions last year, it was determined to not fund the replacement of some of the existing decorative "Bemidji style" light poles using that funding source. Staff have been in contact with MnDOT State Aid representatives and feel comfortable that there's as much as \$500,000 in grant funding available to the City to replace the current decorative light poles with a standard "cobra" style light pole. The proposed MnDOT funding won't cover the decorative style we currently have.

Finances

Staff have counted 63 total decorative light pole locations within the TH 197 corridor between 2nd Street NW & 1st Street E. The funding may only cover those light poles within MnDOT right of way. Of the 63 locations, we anticipate the City will need to pay for 7-8 locations that are on city owned cross streets between the eastbound & westbound TH 197 travel lanes. We anticipate the \$500,000 grant amount to be able to cover the eligible light poles and are told that can include replacement light poles with banner brackets and electrical outlets.

Staff received a professional services proposal from EAPC for \$11,500 to assist city staff with electrical design services for this project. EAPC would assist with light pole design, wiring details, and electrical specifications, with staff putting together the remaining plan and proposal. With the potential eight light poles that may be a city cost plus the design proposal fee, staff are anticipating a potential city cost of \$65,000 to cover the remaining non-grant eligible costs. Staff are proposing to use the Construction Reserves Account for those costs.

Schedule

Upon approval, design would begin immediately with the intent to have bids for Council review after July 1, 2025, as this is when the funding is available. Depending on light pole delivery lead times, it may be a late 2025 or 2026 construction season installation timeframe. The existing poles would remain until they are replaced.

Motion by Rivera, seconded by Thayer authorizing the design and advertisement of the TH 197 light pole replacement project and execution by the City Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with EAPC for \$11,500 – City Project 25-06. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES

Councilmembers provided updates on council committees.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Monday, April 14 - 5:30 p.m. - Planning Board
- Monday, April 21 - 6:00 p.m. - Council Meeting
- Monday, April 28 - 5:30 p.m. - Work Session (Lead & Copper Update)

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Peterson, seconded by Thayer, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk