

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – June 2, 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, June 2, 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 Clerk Michelle Miller

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

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

CONSENT AGENDA #1

Mayor Prince called for any amendments to be made to Consent Agenda. The Safer Grant was removed at the request of staff for additional review. The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Peterson, seconded by Thayer, to approve Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the Amount Of \$1,119,362.28
2. Claims Submitted by ASM Global for the Sanford Center in the Amount of \$39,684.85
3. Approve April Financials from ASM Global for the Sanford Center
4. 2025 Business License Approvals
5. Approve Public Arts Commission Policies and Procedures
6. **RESOLUTION NO. 6622:** Accepting Donation from Kevin and Jody Thomas
7. **RESOLUTION NO. 6623:** Accepting Donation from the National Fire Safety Council
8. Approve Special Event Permit-10th Anniversary Shaynowishkung (June 7)
9. Approve Special Event Permit for Nature Neighbors Event (June 7)
10. Approve Special Event Permit for First City Antique Flea Market (June and July)

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

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 Fiskevold Gould, seconded by Dickinson, approving Consent Agenda #2 as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer for Visit Bemidji in the Amount of \$33,405.75

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

- CT Marhula, 4524 Birchmont Dr NE, Apt. 10, urged review of fire-service costs, questioned bank lease terms, and suggested exploring alternatives to adding more full-time firefighters, such as separating from rural fire or adopting the greater Alexandria model.

PUBLIC HEARING

Conduct Public Hearing for Possible Charter Amendment

Pursuant to published notice a public hearing was held regarding input on a recommended Charter Amendment, Chapter 12, Charter Violations. Mayor Prince opened the Public Hearing at 6:08 p.m.

Mayor Prince clarified that the proposed charter amendment essentially codified an existing Minnesota Statute. Robert Kringler confirmed that citizens already have mechanisms to address charter violations, such as (1) potential legal action; (2) recall elections and (3) future elections

The following provided public testimony:

- CT Marhula, 4524 Birchmont Drive NE, #10, opposes the charter amendment.

Hearing no further public comments, Mayor Prince closed the Public Hearing at 6:12 p.m.

ORDINANCES

Consider Ordinance Amending the City of Bemidji Council-Manager Charter Amending Chapter 12 Entitled "General Provisions", Adding Section 12.17 Charter Violations

Motion by Fiskevold Gould, seconded by Thayer tabling the vote on the Ordinance until the June 16 council meeting. Motion carried with the following roll call vote: Yeas: Rivera, Thayer, Eaton, Fiskevold Gould. Nays: Prince, Dickinson, Peterson.

REPORT

Linda Lemmer, Chair of the Heritage Preservation Commission reported that the Commission launched the “Century-Old Building” recognition program; two applicants approved, with one tentatively approved and others pending. The first awards ceremony is scheduled for June 11 with a personal invitation to the council.

NEW BUSINESS**Consider Special Event Permit for Ojibwe Forests Rally Street Dance and Event**

Rally Minnesota LLC has applied for a Street Race and Event for the conclusion of the Ojibwe Forests Rally on Saturday, August 23. The event will be held in the parking lot next to the Sanford Center as well as closure of streets surrounding the parking lot. Staff have met with event organizers and have submitted their recommendations for the event.

- Parks and Recreation requires there be “No Parking” signs at the South Shore parking lot entrance, 24 hours in advance of the road closure.
- With the proposed 4-hour street closure of Central Avenue NE, staff would recommend a left turn lane closure on 1st Street E to prevent vehicles getting into the left turn lane and then needing to merge back into eastbound traffic lane. Public works staff would plan to provide additional closures to prevent parking at the Event Center Lift Station are near the finish line in the event of emergency access is needed during the event. Staff anticipate some “burn out” marks to occur from the race on the city streets, but it’s tough to predict actual scale. From the event organizers experience, these impacts haven’t been major on other street venues that have hosted in the past.
- Sanford Center staff advised there is a wedding ceremony and reception the same day. The bride is okay with the event being run on the same day.
- Scott Putnam, Chairman of Ojibwe Forests Rally connected with Carrie Strassburg of Boardwalk Mini Golf about a potential partnership with the business to help with volunteer meals, Subaru Ambassador Function and spectator flow and seating.

Councilmembers asked about potential noise levels, with organizers explaining the race would last about 45-55 minutes, starting around 5:30 PM, with one car racing per minute.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Thayer approving the Special Event Permit for the Ojibwe Forests Rally Street Race and Event. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Resolution Approving Temporary Off-Premises Alcohol Permit for the Ojibwe Forests Rally Event

RESOLUTION NO. 6624: Approving Temporary Off-Premises Alcohol Permit for the Ojibwe Forests Rally Event was offered by Councilmember Peterson, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Eaton passed by the following unanimous voice vote.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Councilmember Peterson reported on Casting with Cops:
 - Casting with Cops event received awarded
 - Next Casting with Cops event to be held again on August 8 at Diamond Point Park
- Councilmember Thayer had no report.
- Councilmember Rivera reported on HRA:
 - Awarded \$300,000 for capital improvements
 - Increased housing vouchers from 13 to 20
 - Potential significant HUD cuts could impact 115 housing vouchers
- Councilmember Eaton reported on the Library Board:
 - Accepted \$300,000 Breitenbach family donation
 - Considering a facilities assessment consultant
 - Noted reduced unsheltered population due to warmer weather
- Councilmember Dickinson reported on Visit Bemidji:
 - Positive discussions about increasing site traffic
 - Preparing for State Fair
 - Producing podcasts and Facebook posts
- Councilmember Fiskevold Gould:
 - Parks and Recreation: Algoma Park renovations; reviewed intersection safety maps
 - Beltrami County Historical Society: successful menstruation week events, encouraging business partnership fundraising
- Mayor Prince:
 - Airport: toured facilities, noted aging equipment; ongoing financial clean-up; continuing strategic planning
 - Greeted Economic Development Commission Executive Directors from HRDC event.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Monday, June 9 - Planning Board
- Monday, June 9 - Special Meeting of Council
- Monday, June 16 - Council Meeting
- Monday, June 23 - Work Session

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Peterson, seconded by Eaton, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk