

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

Regular Meeting – August 4, 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, August 4, 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, 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 Peterson, seconded by Dickinson, approving the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

MINUTES

The following minutes were presented for approval:

- June 2, 2025 Council Meeting
- June 9, 2025 Special Meeting
- June 16, 2025 BEDA Meeting
- June 16, 2025 Council Meeting

Motion by Eaton, seconded by Peterson, 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. The following Consent Agenda items were presented for approval. **Motion by Rivera, seconded by Thayer, to approve Consent Agenda items as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the Amount of \$3,103,409.84
2. Claims Submitted by ASM Global for the Sanford Center in the Amount of \$165,019.80
3. Approve June Financials from ASM Global for the Sanford Center
4. 2025 Business License Approvals
5. Approve Special Event Permit for Bemidji Downtown Alliance
6. Approve Special Event Permit for Headwaters Alliance for Suicide Prevention
7. Approve Special Event Permit for Bemidji State University Alumni
8. Declare Surplus Equipment and Authorize Disposal (Fire)
9. Approve Professional Services Agreement for Airport Fence Realignment
10. Approve Bid to Naylor Heating for History Center HVAC Improvement (\$255,454)
11. **RESOLUTION NO. 6637:** Accepting Donation from Bemidji Noon Rotary Club and Shield 616
12. **RESOLUTION NO. 6638:** Accepting Donation from Confidence Learning Center of East Gull Lake

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

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 Eaton, seconded by Thayer, approving Consent Agenda #2 as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer for Visit Bemidji in the Amount of \$54,429.63

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

CITIZENS WITH BUSINESS NOT ON AGENDA

- C.T. Marhula, 4524 Birchmont Drive NE #10, addressed the council, urging them to authorize a bonus of at least \$1,500 for monthly staff within the next 30 days. He requested the council to instruct staff to explore all options for the upcoming renewal of electric and gas utility franchises, including a potential city takeover through eminent domain, citing potential profits for economic development. He pleaded for a zero-increase budget, emphasizing the financial burden on citizens due to significant storm damage costs not covered by insurance.

PUBLIC HEARING**2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plans for City of Bemidji**

Spiczka explained that recent additions to the CIP plan are placeholders to provide flexibility for future funding for storm-related and other projects. While the Lake Bemidji North water/sewer extension has a funding source, other unfunded items include potential Sanford Center repairs (for non-storm related issues discovered during damage assessment), park restoration (for uninsured features like trees and buildings), the rail corridor project (for matching grant sources), and Nielson Reise building repairs (due to newly discovered damage). It was clarified that inclusion in the CIP does not trigger spending but is crucial for the city to seek grants and utilize other funding sources, as some grants require projects to be part of the future plan.

Pursuant to published notice a public hearing was held regarding input on the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan for the City of Bemidji. Mayor Prince opened the Public Hearing at 6:12 p.m.

- Councilmembers asked about the rationale for including certain items, such as park restoration, storm damage repairs, and the Sanford Center, and clarified that some items are placeholders for potential future needs.
- There was discussion about the process for updating the CIP, with staff noting it is typically reviewed and amended annually, and new items can be added as needs are identified.
- Councilmembers raised specific concerns, such as ensuring solar projects and park facilities (like the Gordon Falls Park shelter) are not forgotten in future updates.

Hearing no comments, Mayor Prince closed the Public Hearing at 6:27 p.m.

RESOLUTION NO. 6639: Adopting the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan for the City of Bemidji was offered by Councilmember Eaton, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Peterson passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: Yeas: Eaton, Prince, Peterson, Thayer, Dickinson, Rivera, Fiskevold Gould.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Councilmember Fiskevold Gould attended the CGMC conference and the community picnic at Nymore Park, expressing appreciation for staff and community partners involved in the event.
- Councilmember Peterson had no updates.
- Councilmember Thayer reported on the rescheduling of the Downtown Business Association event, attendance at the CGMC conference, the HRDC community picnic, noting high community turnout and engagement with citizens.
- Councilmember Rivera mentioned an upcoming public arts meeting, discussed the HRA meeting (including a retirement notice and ongoing storm damage repairs), and raised the idea of revisiting the city's fee schedule in committee or work session.
- Councilmember Eaton attended the CGMC conference. Mentioned upcoming meetings for the animal ordinance review committee, airport authority, and library board.
- Councilmember Dickinson attended some CGMC sessions, and a Visit Bemidji meeting.
- Mayor Prince attended the Nymore Community picnic, the CGMC annual conference, a ribbon cutting at ODC Day Support Services, a tour with Senator Klobuchar, a Greater Minnesota Housing Finance Committee meeting, and a League of Minnesota Cities board meeting. The Mayor also encouraged council members to consider joining League policy committees.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- August 11 - Planning Board
- August 18 - Council Meeting
- August 25 - Work Session
- September 1 – Holiday
- September 2 - Council Meeting

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 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk