CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Regular Meeting – November 3, 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, November 3, 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, Finance Director Donna Coe, City Clerk Michelle Miller

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA
Mayor Prince called for any amendments to the agenda. **Motion by Rivera, seconded by Eaton, approving the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

MINUTES
The following minutes were presented for approval:
September 22, 2025 Work Session
September 22, 2025 Sp Council Meeting

Motion by Eaton, seconded by Dickinson, 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 Peterson Gould, seconded by Thayer, to approve Consent Agenda as follows:**

1) Claims Submitted by Finance Officer in the Amount Of $1,218,152.59
2) Claims Submitted by ASM Global for the Sanford Center in the Amount of $150,488.66
3) Approve September Financials from ASM Global for the Sanford Center
4) 2025 Business License Approvals
5) 2026 Business License Approvals
6) Second Reading of On and Off Sale Beer License Renewals for 2026
7) 2026 Liquor, Sunday Liquor and Wine License Renewals
8) Approve Change Order No. 7 - WWTF Final Clarifier Project - City Project 23-03
9) Approve Bemidji Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Pension Benefit and Bylaw Amendment
10) Approve Memorandum of Agreement Regarding City Manager Termination Benefits Amendment and Amended City of Bemidji City Manager Annual Performance Evaluation Process
11) **RESOLUTION NO. 6668:** Amending Legal Descriptions to Resolution No. 6621
12) **RESOLUTION NO. 6669:** Approving Gambling Premises Permit for Lawful Gambling to Bemidji Youth Hockey at Buffalo Wild Wings

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote: 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 Dickinson, seconded by Eaton, approving Consent Agenda #2 as follows:**

1. Claims Submitted by Finance Officer to VisitBemidji in the Amount of $51,865.43

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
- No appearance.

REPORT
Jordan Lutz and Charles Biberg, Chair and Vice Chair of the Sustainability Commission presented the following report regarding sustainability initiatives.
- Progress toward Step Four in the Green Step Cities program, emphasizing the need for improved tracking of sustainability metrics. The commission suggested this could be achieved by expanding a current staff role or creating a new position.

- Successes in native landscaping efforts, including data collection with BSU forestry students and pursuing a DNR grant to enhance the city's tree inventory.
- Updates on community-wide waste and recycling initiatives: Beltrami County is preparing for organics (compost) curbside collection in early 2026 and the City is planning a recycling feasibility study, now set for 2026.
- Results of a "sphericity grant" project at Bemidji State University, which included a litter assessment showing slightly higher litter density in Bemidji versus some peer institutions, with plastic film and cigarette waste highlighted as priorities for future reduction efforts.
- Advocacy and educational efforts regarding energy efficiency and electrification, including evolving community messaging and encouraging residents to take advantage of incentives before they expire.
- The commission highlighted the offer from McKinstry Consulting to perform a no-cost preliminary assessment of city buildings and fleet for energy efficiency projects.
- They discussed the need for ongoing city staff support for tracking and benchmarking sustainability efforts, as volunteer capacity is limited.

Council members expressed appreciation and supported the commission's work.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Resolution Adopting Final Assessment Roll - 2025 Street Renewal Project - City Project 25-01

At the October 20th council meeting, staff provided the final assessment roll for our 2025 Street Renewal project and a public hearing was held and closed. There was a request for some additional options to either reduce the overall payment or extend the time frame to pay off the special assessment amount on the resident's taxes.

The 2025 project consisted of the reconstruction and paving of the following street segments:

Hannah Avenue NW	30th Street NW – 600' north of 34th Street NW
Norton Avenue NW	12th Street NW – 15th Street NW
14th Street NW	Norton Avenue NW – Delton Avenue NW
Taft Avenue NE	Mill Street NE – End of Taft
Mill Street NE	Taft Avenue NE – Lake Avenue NE

One of the options mentioned was to reduce the linear foot rate from $45/linear ft to a value of $38/linear foot from a few years ago. This would reduce the overall project total assessment amount by $36,774.50. With the average individual property special assessment amount being about $4,250, this would reduce their special assessment amount by roughly $650. That reduction in special assessment amount would need to be covered by most likely be additional tax levy funds or construction reserves added to the project. This proposal doesn't include any changes to the $1,595 per unit amount proposed for Taft Avenue & Mill Street.

Another option would be to extend the loan payoff timeframe. This could be extended from the current 15 years up to a maximum of 30 years. Below is the current term rate of 15 years compared to the 30 years using the average assessment amount of $4,250.

Term Length	Interest Rate	Amount	Total Interest	Yearly Pymt
15 Years	4.4%	$ 4,250	$1,645.27	$ 393.02
20 Years	4.4%	$ 4,250	$2,227.97	$ 323.90
25 Years	4.4%	$ 4,250	$2,841.83	$ 283.67
30 Years	4.4%	$ 4,250	$3,485.58	$ 257.85

The total project cost was $1,561,061.18 and the assessments for the project total $305,079.65, following current city policy, which is about 19.5% of the total project costs.

The council's discussion on the 2025 street renewal project focused on how to set fair assessment policies given the financial strain on residents, especially those affected by a recent major storm; as follows:

- Whether to reduce the linear foot assessment rate from $45 to $38, with some council members arguing for relief for impacted neighborhoods and others cautioning against setting confusing or inconsistent precedents.
- The implications of reducing rates on city construction reserves and overall budget.
- Extending the payment period for assessments, and adjusting interest rates to make annual payments more manageable for residents. The council weighed the tradeoff between longer terms (lower annual payments but higher total interest paid) and residents' ability to prepay if financially able.
- The legal, practical, and fairness considerations for special assessment policies, including how construction reserves are funded and used, and whether reserves could someday assist cost-burdened property owners.

RESOLUTION NO. 6670: Adopting Assessment Roll for Assessments for the 2025 Street Renewal Project - City Project 25-01 with payments amortized over 30 years at 4.4% interest was offered by Councilmember Dickinson, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Eaton was passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: Yeas: Eaton, Prince, Peterson, Thayer, Dickinson, Rivera, Fiskevold Gould

Consider Adopting Final Assessment Roll - 2025 Park Avenue NW Reconstruction Project - City Project 25-02
At the October 20th council meeting, staff provided the final assessment roll for our 2025 Park Avenue NW Reconstruction and a public hearing was held and closed. There was a request for some additional options to either reduce the overall payment or extend the time frame to pay off the special assessment amount on the resident's taxes.

The project consisted of the reconstruction and paving of the following street segments:

Park Avenue NW 15th Street NW – 23rd Street NW

One of the options mentioned was to reduce the linear foot rate from $45/linear ft to a value of $38/linear foot from a few years ago. This would reduce the overall project total assessment amount by $20,443.50. With the average individual property special assessment amount being about $3,000, this would reduce their special assessment amount by roughly $450. That reduction in special assessment amount would need to be covered by most likely be additional tax levy funds or construction reserves added to the project.

Another option would be to extend the loan payoff timeframe. This could be extended from the current 15 years up to a maximum of 30 years. Below is the current term rate of 15 years compared to up to 30 years using the average assessment amount of $3,000.

Term Length	Interest Rate	Amount	Total Interest	Yearly Pymt
15 Years	4.4%	$ 3,000	$1,161.36	$ 277.42
20 Years	4.4%	$ 3,000	$1,572.69	$ 228.63
25 Years	4.4%	$ 3,000	$2,006.00	$ 200.24
30 Years	4.4%	$ 3,000	$2,460.41	$ 182.01

The total project cost ended up being $1,838,392.93 and the assessments for the project total $139,982.50 which is about 8% of the total project costs.

RESOLUTION NO. 6671: Adopting Assessment Roll for Assessments for the 2025 Park Avenue NW Reconstruction Project - City Project 25-02 with payments amortized over 30 years at 4.4% interest was offered by Councilmember Dickinson, who moved its adoption, and upon due second by Councilmember Eaton was passed by the following unanimous roll call vote: Yeas: Dickinson, Fiskevold Gould, Prince, Eaton, Peterson, Thayer, Rivera.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Councilmember Dickinson attended a VisitBemidji meeting approving the 2026 budget.
- Councilmember Eaton reported on the airport affairs subcommittee noting aviation training and completion of the subcommittee work.
- Councilmember Rivera noted the hiring of an HRA executive director, delays in getting HUD certificate due to federal government shutdown and a presentation from Peoples Church regarding housing stabilization services. Also, finding ways, possibly through BEDA to assist with housing.
- Councilmember Thayer attended Downtown Business Alliance meeting regarding parking and upcoming downtown business events. Attended first CGMC board meeting.
- Councilmember Fiskevold Gould attended a BSU Student Senate meeting to reintroduce herself, no major updates from the meeting.
- Councilmember Peterson provided updates from the Heritage Preservation Commission, including 100-year building decal presentations and work on historic pumping station project signage.
- Councilmember Fiskevold Gould had no report.
- Mayor Prince attended a press conference with Greater Bemidji regarding development partner in the Rail Corridor, Sanford Center Advisory Board noting recruitment for the finance and operations subcommittees, and Greater Minnesota Housing Fund Loan Committee.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- November 10, 2025 (5:30 pm) - Planning Board
- November 17, 2025 (6:00 pm) - Council Meeting
- November 24, 2025 (5:30 pm) - 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 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk