

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1/7/2025

Tuesday, January 7, 2025

6:30 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mayor Matthews at 6:30 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

Councilors: X Kealy X Loeffler X Teska-Erickson ___ Towner
Mayor: X Matthews

Administrator: X Jeffries
Public Works Foreman: ___ Pink
Attorney: ___ Kearney
Engineer: X Jamnick
Fire Chief: ___ Lehman
Police Chief: ___ Manner

A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS OBSERVED IN MEMORY AND RECOGNITION OF THE PASSING OF THE 39TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, JAMES EARL CARTER, JR.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:**

A discussion concerning the description of Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) membership by the City Council will be introduced immediately following Item 7.M. on this agenda.

Motion by Kealy to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. **REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Noted that:

The city is scheduled to make a presentation to the (St. Louis County) CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) evaluation board (committee) on Wednesday, January 15, regarding the City's application for CDBG funding for the water tower project.

The application is for \$150,000 to support the water tower construction project.

Administrator Jeffries:

1. Wished a Happy New Year to all!
2. Welcomed incoming City Councilor Taunya Teska-Erickson and Mayor Jim Matthews to the council -
3. Expressed thanks to Councilor Michael Hadrava and Mayor Brandin Carter for their dedicated service to the City and wished them well in their new endeavors -
4. Noted the Buhl Winter Frolic will be held Saturday, January 18 from 3 – 7 p.m. at the Skating Rink – food, games, carriage rides, entertainment, etc.
5. Noted that Paul Bunyan Communications has announced the completion of the Communications Expansion project in Buhl – all-fiber optic network - services are now available – contact Paul Bunyan for information --
6. Noted that St. Louis County is considering adopting a Floodplain Ordinance – which Buhl would be effected by – staff is reviewing and monitoring these developments – not anticipated to effect Buhl significantly –

Councilor Teska-Erickson noted that the Buhl Fire Department recently received a call-out communication from the 911 command center regarding a water main break –

It was indicated that this was a city issue and that the instructions given (by the city on recorded information) should be reviewed and potentially modified to instruct that 911 communications should be reserved for fire department-related issues only.

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

Brandin Carter, 315 Jones Avenue, Buhl, MN

Congratulated the newly elected mayor and city councilors, wished them the best of luck in the ensuing year and term, expressed he and his family's appreciation for taking on these roles, and thanked them for the service they will provide to the City in these roles and capacities.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – December 17, 2024

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #26	\$ 14,748.90
Payroll 12 (December 2024)	\$ 2,650.00
Payroll #1A	\$ 530.00
Payroll #1.01A	\$ 210.00
ii. A/P #1	\$ 36,527.36
A/P #2	<u>\$ 4,611.78</u>

TOTAL \$ 59,278.04

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

A. Resolution 25-01 - A Resolution Appointing the Mayor Pro-Tem.

The City typically appoints a city council member as Mayor Pro tempore (Pro-Tem) to act as mayor in the absence of the actual mayor.

Resolution 25-01 has been prepared appointing Councilor Randy Towner as Mayor Pro-Tem for 2025.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-01.

Motion by Kealy to appoint City Councilor Randy Towner as Mayor Pro-Tem for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-01 concerning the same.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a;
Matthews - Aye.**

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution 25-02 - A Resolution Designating the Official Newspaper for the City of Buhl.

The City is required to designate an official newspaper at the first meeting of each year.

The Hometown Focus has been, and is recommended to be, the official newspaper of the City.

The Hometown Focus is delivered free of charge to various locations as well as City Hall on Friday of each week.

The Hometown Focus is also available online via their website, <https://www.hometownfocus.us>.

Resolution 25-02 has been prepared designating Hometown Focus as the official newspaper for the City of Buhl.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-02.

Motion by Loeffler to designate the Hometown Focus as the official newspaper for the City of Buhl for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-02 concerning the same.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a;
Matthews - Aye.**

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution 25-03 – A Resolution Designating Depositories of Funds and Accepting Assignment of Collateral.

The City must designate those financial institutions which will serve as depositories of funds, and acceptors of collateral, on an annual basis.

Resolution 25-03 has been prepared designating B2 Bank of Buhl (formerly First National Bank of Buhl), along with other strategic financial entities, as the official depositories and acceptors of Assignments of Collateral for the City for calendar year 2025.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-03.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to designate Depositories of Funds and Accepting Assignment of Collateral for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-03 concerning the same.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Resolution 25-04 – A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk/Treasurer to Sign Certificates of Indebtedness on Behalf of the City.

In the event the City needs to borrow funds from time-to-time during the course of a year to procure goods, materials, and services, it annually authorizes certain individuals to execute pertinent and relevant instruments effecting these needs.

Resolution 25-04 has been prepared authorizing the Mayor and the Clerk/Treasurer as these individuals.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-04.

Motion by Kealy to authorize the Mayor and Clerk/Treasurer to sign certificates of indebtedness on behalf of the City for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-04 concerning the same.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Resolution 25-05 – A Resolution Naming the Weed Inspectors for the City.

The City typically appoints a city employee to serve, along with the Mayor, as weed inspectors for the City.

The Mayor is statutorily obligated to be the weed inspector; typically a Public Works employee is named alongside the Mayor for this role.

Resolution 25-05 has been prepared naming Mayor James Matthews, along with Public Works employee Lyle Pederson, as these individuals.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-05.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to name Mayor James Matthews and Lyle Pederson as Weed Inspectors for the City for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-05 concerning the same.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. Resolution 25-06 – A Resolution Appointing the Elm Tree Utilization Board Member for the City of Buhl.

The City typically appoints an individual as a member of the Elm Tree Utilization Board on an annual basis.

The Elm Tree Utilization Board is a group of municipalities and townships who pool and share resources and specialized equipment, such as stump grinders, wood chippers, etc., among its members.

Resolution 25-06 has been prepared appointing Trent Pink as the City's representative to the Elm Tree Utilization Board for 2025.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-06.

Motion by Loeffler to appoint Trent Pink as the Elm Tree Utilization Board Member for the City of Buhl for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-06 concerning the same.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carries unanimously.

- G. Resolution 25-07 – A Resolution Appointing the City Attorney/Prosecuting Attorney for the City of Buhl.

The City typically appoints an individual as the City Attorney on an annual basis.

In many cases, the City Attorney may also serve as the City's prosecuting attorney.

Michael Kearney, of the firm Colosimo, Patchin & Kearney, LTD, has expressed an interest and willingness to serve in these capacities for the city in 2025.

Resolution 25-07 has been prepared appointing Michael Kearney as the City Attorney/Prosecuting Attorney for 2025.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-07.

Motion by Kealy to appoint Michael Kearney as the City Attorney/Prosecuting Attorney for the City of Buhl for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-07 concerning the same.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carries unanimously.

H. Resolution 25-08 – A Resolution Appointing the City Engineer for the City of Buhl.

The City typically appoints an individual as the City Engineer on an annual basis.

John Jamnick, of the firm JPJ Engineering Inc., has expressed an interest and willingness to serve in this capacity for the city in 2025.

Resolution 25-08 has been prepared appointing John Jamnick, P.E., and JPJ Engineering, Inc., as the City Engineer and engineering firm for 2025.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-08.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to appoint John Jamnick, P.E., and JPJ Engineering, Inc., as the City Engineer and engineering firm for the City of Buhl for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-08 concerning the same.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a;

Matthews - Aye.

Motion carries unanimously.

- I. Resolution 25-09 – A Resolution Authorizing the Signature for Disbursement of Public Funds.

The City typically authorizes certain individuals to affix their signature(s) to all disbursements of public funds for the City on an annual basis.

Resolution 25-09 has been prepared authorizing the Mayor and the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer to sign disbursements of public funds on behalf of the City for 2025.

Additionally, this resolution authorizes the Finance Manager to sign similar disbursements within the City's Utility Customer Account #08-006-9.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-09.

Motion by Loeffler authorizing the Mayor and the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer to sign disbursements of public funds on behalf of the City for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-09 concerning the same.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carries unanimously.

- J. Resolution 25-10 – A Resolution Authorizing the Signature of the Mayor Pro-Tem for Disbursement of Public Funds.

Resolution 25-09 authorized the Mayor and the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer to sign disbursements of public funds on behalf of the City for 2025.

It is recognized that there may be occasions where neither the Mayor nor the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer may be available to fulfill this need.

Resolution 25-10 has been prepared to authorize the Mayor Pro-Tem to fulfill this need in the absence of the Mayor and the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-10.

Motion by Kealy authorizing the Mayor Pro-Tem, when neither the Mayor nor the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer are available, to sign disbursements of public funds on behalf of the City for calendar year 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-10 concerning the same.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carries unanimously.

- K. Resolution 25-11 – A Resolution Designating the Official Polling Place for the City of Buhl.

The City typically designates an official polling place for the City on an annual basis.

Resolution 25-11 has been prepared designating the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center, located at 302 Frantz St., Buhl, Mn, 55713, as the official polling place for the City of Buhl for 2025.

Recommendation is for the City to adopt Resolution 25-11.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to designate the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center, located at 302 Frantz St., Buhl, Mn, 55713, as the official polling place for the City of Buhl for 2025, and to execute Resolution 25-11 concerning the same.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Roll Call Vote: Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Teska-Erickson - Aye, Towner – n/a; Matthews - Aye.

Motion carries unanimously.

- L. Consider Approving Proposed 2025 City Council Schedule.

The proposed 2025 Buhl City Council Meeting schedule was distributed.

Regular City Council meetings remain on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month, with the exception of June and July, which only have one scheduled meeting (on the second Tuesday).

City Council Working Sessions are proposed in February and August, as well.

Budget Working Sessions are proposed in September, October, and November, with additional session(s) in December, if needed.

Recommendation is for the City to approve the 2025 City Council Meeting schedule.

Motion by Loeffler to approve the 2025 City of Buhl City Council Meeting Schedule for calendar year 2025.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carries unanimously.

M. Consider Filling BEDA Board Member Vacancies.

As a result of the 2024 local elections, Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) Commissioners Brandin Carter and Michael Hadrava's terms have expired as of January 6, 2025.

As such, two (2) vacancies have been created on BEDA, beginning January 6, 2025.

These existing vacancies are to be filled with members of the City of Buhl City Council (and/or Mayor).

The term of these vacancies will coincide with the term(s) of office as members of the City Council.

Please note that current City Councilor Randy Towner presently serves as a Commissioner on BEDA.

Recommendation is for the City to appoint two (2) members of the City Council, excluding Randy Towner, to these positions.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to appoint (Mayor) City Council member Matthews to serve as a Commissioner on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA), with a term that coincides with his term of office as a member of the City Council.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Mayor Matthews indicated current BEDA Commissioner Tom Hewett has decided to resign from BEDA and vacate his seat; this would open up BEDA to three (3) vacancies –

Discussion ensued that it would be appropriate to receive written notice from Mr. Tom Hewett before filling of his current position –

- Therefore it is premature to fill this position, as it is not yet vacant –
- And publishing and opening up this vacancy to the general public would be appropriate –

Motion carried.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the makeup of BEDA as outlined in City code or ordinance –

At this time it is understood that there is an immediate vacancy for a City Council member seat, and an upcoming vacancy as a result of Mr. Tom Hewett's resignation –

Mayor Matthews indicated that the current City of Buhl proscriptions regarding the makeup of BEDA is not aligned with the State of Minnesota statutes describing councilperson participation on an EDA – that there should be two (2) councilpersons on BEDA, not three (3) -

Matthews requested, in order to preserve and protect the integrity of the City of Buhl (City) Council, that there should not be a majority of the City Council also sitting on BEDA –

Matthews also requested a motion to alter the makeup of BEDA with regard to the number of City Councilors who would sit on this board -

Motion by Teska-Erickson to amend the City Ordinance verbiage regarding BEDA makeup to reflect that two (2) BEDA commissioners be members of the City Council, and not three (3).

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question raised regarding engaging the City Attorney in this matter –

The Administrator indicated that legal counsel would definitely be engaged in this matter at the appropriate time -

Motion rescinded and re-phrased.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to direct the City Attorney to move forward into amending the City Ordinance verbiage regarding BEDA makeup to reflect that two (2) BEDA commissioners be members of the City Council, and not three (3).

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Councilor Kealy indicated that additional information would be appropriate prior to taking any action –

Discussion regarding the distinction between actions requiring BEDA action versus actions requiring City Council action ensued –

Some hesitation regarding moving forward at this time remained –

Discussion ensued regarding any additional interest in serving on BEDA – it was indicated that there are now two (2) additional expressions of interest at this time –

Conversation ensued regarding the timing of this request –

- response reflected the State of Minnesota statutes (§ 469.095) and the City of Buhl's potential non-alignment with these provisions, in order to protect the integrity of the City Council to avoid having a majority of the City Council sitting on BEDA –

Request to have a legal opinion on this matter prior to taking any action -

Motion and support rescinded and this item was tabled.

The Administrator will work with the City Attorney for consultation regarding obtaining advice on this matter -

N. Consider Personnel Committee Appointments.

It is good policy for the City to appoint individuals as members of the Personnel Committee on an annual basis.

Additionally, there is a vacancy on this committee as a result of 2024 election activity.

Councilor Denise Kealy currently is a sitting member of the Personnel Committee.

Recommendation is for the City to appoint the Mayor, a City Councilor, and the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer to the Personnel Committee for 2025.

Motion by Loeffler to appoint Mayor James Matthews, City Councilor Denise Kealy, and Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer Tony Jeffries to the Personnel Committee for calendar year 2025.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carries unanimously.

O. Consider Public Utility Commission Appointments.

It is good policy for the City to appoint individuals as members of the Public Utility Commission on an annual basis.

City Councilors Denise Kealy and Randy Towner are currently sitting members of this commission.

Recommendation is for the City to appoint two (2) City Councilors, the Public Works Foreman, and the Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer to the Public Utility Commission for 2025.

Motion by Matthews to appoint City Councilor Denise Kealy, City Councilor Randy Towner, Public Works Foreman Trent Pink, and Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer Tony Jeffries to the Public Utility Commission for calendar year 2025.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carries unanimously.

P. Consider Planning and Zoning Commission Appointments.

The City presently has four (4) current vacancies on its Long-Range Planning and Zoning Commission.

Notice of these vacancies was posted, and the public was notified and requested that anyone interested in serving in these capacities should contact City Hall for potential consideration.

Expressions of interest to serve in these capacities have been received from three (3) individuals – James Matthews, John Markas, and John Klarich.

The terms of these positions should be staggered, as follows:

One (1) expiring December 31, 2025;

One (1) expiring December 31, 2026; and

One (1) expiring December 31, 2027.

Recommendation is for the City to appoint these individuals to these positions.

Motion by Kealy to appoint James Matthews, John Markas, and John Klarich to serve on the Buhl Long-Range Planning and Zoning Commission, with terms that expire as follows:

James Mathews - December 31, 2025;

John Markas - December 31, 2026; and

John Klarich - December 31, 2027.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Thanks were extended to these individuals for their willingness to serve in these capacities.

Motion carries unanimously.

Q. Consider Recreation Board Appointment.

The City presently has two (2) current vacancies on its Recreation Board.

Notice of these vacancies was previously posted, and the public was notified and requested that anyone interested in serving in these capacities should contact City Hall for potential consideration.

This posting remains in effect until the vacancies are filled.

Kelly Girgen is a resident of Buhl and has expressed an interest in continuing to serve on the Recreation Board.

This appointment will be for a three-year (3-year) term, expiring December 31, 2027.

Ms. Girgen has most recently filled an open Recreation Board vacancy until December 31, 2024.

Recommendation is to appoint Kelly Girgen to the Recreation Board.

Motion by Loeffler to appoint Kelly Girgen to serve on the City of Buhl Recreation Board for a 3-year term, expiring December 31, 2027.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Thanks were extended to this individual for her willingness to serve in this capacity.

Motion carries unanimously.

R. Consider St. Louis County Fair Financial Support Request.

The City has received a letter (attached) from the St. Louis County Agricultural Society/Fair Association requesting consideration of a financial donation toward supporting the 2025 edition of this event.

Mn Statutes § 38.12 authorizes municipalities to financially assist their County Fair, with no cap limit on the amount of assistance.

The City has donated \$100 to this organization and event in each of the last three (3) years.

Recommendation is for the City donate a financial contribution to the 2025 St. Louis County Fair.

Motion by Kealy for the City to donate \$100.00 to the St. Louis County Agricultural Society/Fair Association, to assist in supporting the 2025 St. Louis County Fair.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carries unanimously.

S. Other Business.

None.

Question was raised by Councilor Kealy regarding the status of the Utility Rate Study being conducted by David Berg, and the potential need to revisit utility rates as a result of the findings of this study –

The Administrator indicated that the results of this study are anticipated to be received in the next month or so –

Question was raised by Councilor Kealy regarding the former Martin Hughes School and potential changes to it, such as development of apartments –

The Administrator indicated that the City has heard nothing nor received any information regarding this –

Question was raised by Councilor Kealy regarding providing water testing for the State Street Apartments as a result of alleged poor water quality at this location –

The Administrator will pursue undertaking such water testing –

T. Councilor's Comments.

None.

U. Mayor's Comments.

Thanked all (people of Buhl) for their support in the recent election;

Congratulated Teska-Erickson on her election and Loeffler on her re-election;

Noted that he is anxious to see and evaluate the results of the utility rate study and any potential recommendations on 2025 and future utility rates; and

Noted that these are changing times and that we (collectively) are looking forward to an exciting year – including the new water tower development work and construction.

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Teska-Erickson to adjourn.

Supported by Loeffler.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk