

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4/1/2025

Tuesday, April 1, 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 X Towner
Mayor: X Matthews

Administrator: X Jeffries
Public Works Foreman: X Pink
Attorney: ___ Kearney
Engineer: ___ Jamnick
Fire Chief: ___ Lehman
Police Chief: ___ Vukad
Finance Manager: ___ Thronson

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

None.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

City Public Works Foreman Trent Pink:

Noted that the Public Works Department is gearing up towards clean-up season, and that it will be a couple of weeks later this year (early June?) due to lead time on equipment needed –

Indicated that he would like to purchase a broom/sweeper that attaches to a skid steer to utilize in cleaning sidewalks, as in the past to do this the City had borrowed the City of Kinney's equipment tractor, but this piece of equipment is no longer functioning and therefore there is no sweeper available any longer –

For 2025, the City will borrow the sewer district's (CIRSSD's) broom, but it is too large to service sidewalks, and will be utilized for drive aprons instead -

A replacement piece of equipment is desired – one that would mount onto a skid steer and serve as a broom and sweeper -

Estimated cost of the equipment is \$4,500 and there is an eight (8) week lead time on procurement –

It was noted that there appears to be sufficient funds in the Public Works capital improvement portion of the budget to cover this purchase -

This item will be taken up under Other Business (Agenda Item 7.M.).

Administrator Jeffries:

Noted that a grant application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for an expansion to the Stubler Beach Campground had been submitted for consideration before the end of March –

Question was raised on whether the city has heard back from the Minnesota Department of Health regarding potential licensing of the Stubler Beach Campground; the Administrator indicated that nothing has been received as of this date -

**Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) President Councilor
Randy Towner:**

Noted that the most recent BEDA meeting (March 27, 2025) was attended by a quorum of members, and a number of items were discussed and considered, including:

- Welcoming (3) new commissioners to the BEDA Board;
- Tenancy issues at Whiteside Industrial Park;
- Maintenance issues at Whiteside Industrial Park;
- Election of Officers for 2025, which included:
 - Randy Towner, President;
 - Susan Trunk, Vice President;
 - James Matthews, Treasurer; and

Tony Jeffries, Secretary and Assistant Treasurer;

- Recognizing a new 5-year easement with Ziegler CAT Buhl for access to the heavy haul road crossing through Whiteside Industrial Park, and highlighting specific details of the same;
- Receiving an update regarding North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity who had ultimately decided to seek available properties for future homesites in another community at this time;
- Receiving an update on Road Machinery & Supplies Co. now leasing a portion of the 10115 building at Whiteside Industrial Park;
- (Re-) Considering of the scope of activities proposed at the Buhl Business Block (former South Industrial Park) potential re-development project, including completing preparation of a new plat and conducting a voluntary Phase I environmental assessment; and
- Setting a special meeting of BEDA for 5 p.m. on April 3, 2025, to act on proposed amendments to the BEDA By Laws concerning the date and time of regular BEDA meetings and the re-establishment of quorum requirements.

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

Melody Staffaroni; 321 Culver Ave.; Buhl, MN 55713

Commented on blight conditions in the city, generally throughout the city, and specifically the dilapidated property located at Forest Street and Culver Avenue (DonLee Pulford damaged/unattended garage) and the abandoned commercial property at 206 State St (former Laundromat) – and urged the city to undertake additional efforts to remedy these undesirable situations –

Inquired as to how many blight tickets were issued by the Chisholm Police Department in 2024 – and how much revenue did these actions return to the City –

Inquired as to how the court proceedings were coming along (DonLee Pulford matter) –

It was also noted that the Police Chief had been asked to record the number of blight tickets issued on the monthly police report and inquired as to whether that had been happening -

It was suggested that perhaps the City should entertain a notion regarding employing a dedicated blight enforcement individual –

It was mentioned that the Police Chief had indicated earlier that blight conditions in 2024 were lower and less than in previous years –

Noted that the chain-of -command in reporting these items is somewhat unclear (suggestion is to have residents contact the Chisholm Police Department directly) - and

Noted concerns regarding stray animals (cats, dogs, and the like -).

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. City Council Workshop Session – February 24, 2025
- ii. Regular City Council Meeting – March 18, 2025

B. Claims:

i.	Payroll #6	\$ 15,380.47
	Payroll 6.01	\$ 2,086.42
	Payroll 3 (March 2025)	\$ 2,350.00
ii.	A/P	\$ 55,539.41
iii.	Corrections to A/P	<u>\$ <0.05></u>
	TOTAL	\$ 75,356.25

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

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

A discrepancy was noticed on the Claims Report (A/P) by the Internal Audit Committee; this discrepancy was corrected as noted above -

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

- A. Presentation from Mn Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) Staff and Administration on the Programs, Assistance and Offerings of the Agency to Support Local Communities.

The Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR) is a state of Minnesota economic development agency that reinvests local taconite

production taxes back into northeastern Minnesota businesses and communities in order to strengthen and diversify the economy. Its mission is to invest resources to foster vibrant growth and economic prosperity in northeastern Minnesota.

The IRRR provides vital funding, including low or no interest loans, grants and loan guarantees for businesses relocating or expanding in the region. Additionally, a variety of grants are available to local units of government, education institutions, and nonprofits that promote workforce development and sustainable communities.

The collective mission of the IRRR is to invest resources to foster vibrant growth and economic prosperity in northeastern Minnesota, with an aim to

- Enhance livable communities;
- Maximize collaborations and partnerships; and
- Strengthen businesses and worker education.

The Agency's goals include, but are not limited to:

- Investing in foundational, business and social assets of communities to ensure quality of life for all residents;
- Responding to business needs with creative and flexible financial solutions; and
- Educating workers to develop the skills and training requisite to meet business needs.

We are extremely pleased to welcome representatives from the IRRR to deliver a community presentation regarding and related to their current programs and opportunities.

Informational only.

Discussion:

MN Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) management staff Whitney Ridlon, Community Development Director, and Janelle Greshner, Director of Business Recruitment, presented an overview of the agency and discussed in specific their current grant and load programs, including:

Community Development Resources:

Grants programs exist and are available for:

- Broadband Infrastructure;
- Business Energy Retrofit (BER);
- Commercial Redevelopment;

- Culture & Tourism;
- Development Partnership;
- Downtown Building Rehabilitation (DBR);
- Downtown Redevelopment;
- Grant Writing Assistance;
- Housing;
- Mineland Reclamation;
- Public Works;
- Regional Trails;
- Residential Redevelopment; and
- Workforce Development.

Several Buhl initiatives have been recipients of IRRR financial assistance in the past -

Business Development Resources:

Several Loan Programs exist and are available, including:

- Bank Participation Loans;
- Direct Loans; and
- Loan Guaranty Program.

The City was urged by these IRR representatives to take advantage of the resources the agency brings forth to local communities.

Copies of the 2025 IRRR Resource Guide were made available to the City and will also be available at City Hall -

Question was raised regarding program(s) applicability for consolidated municipal buildings (those which house several departments and/or functions in a single structure) – although programs exist to assist in public building improvements, repairs, or the like, it is not clear as to what may or may not be available until the specific scope and design of such a project is substantially decided upon -

B. Verify Schedule for Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) Meeting.

The St. Louis County Assessor has recently issued 2026 Valuation and Classification Notices to all property owners. This establishes Taxable Market Values for property tax assessments payable in 2026.

Property owners are allowed to appeal or question their classification and/or valuation for a prescribed period of time, but not after the County conducts its' LBAE meeting. Local LBAE meetings precede the County meeting to allow for this.

This is to inform that St. Louis County has scheduled Buhl's LBAE meeting for Tuesday, April 15th beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Buhl-Kinney Senior Center.

The city Local Board of Appeal and Equalization will hold an Open Book session jointly with representatives of the St. Louis County Assessor's office on **April 15, 2025, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Buhl-Kinney Senior Center**, located at 302 Frantz Street. Property owners may discuss or appeal their value and/or classification at this open book session.

The local LBAE Board will vote on any changes recommended by the St. Louis County Assessor to valuations and/or classifications.

The sales book for 2025 compiled by the St. Louis County Assessor will be distributed when it becomes available.

Recommendation is that the city approve the proposed date of the City of Buhl Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) meeting for April 15 at 10 a.m.

Motion by Kealy to accept and approve the proposed date of April 15, 2025 for the City of Buhl Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) meeting, and to conduct said meeting beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Buhl-Kinney Senior Center, located at 302 Frantz Street in Buhl.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The Administrator indicated that the original date of this meeting was set for April 10, 2025, but was rescheduled to accommodate St. Louis County.

Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Consider Authorizing the Administrator to Attend the 2025 League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Annual Conference in Duluth, Mn from June 25 - 27.

The League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) will be holding its 2025 Annual Conference on June 25-27 in Duluth, Minnesota.

The LMC provides valuable services to the City, who is a member.

The conference sessions will provide valuable information on energizing teams, mapping the future, building boldly, strengthening your city, and spending smart.

Cities with a population of less than 1,000 can enjoy an early bird pricing of \$275 per attendee before May 2. Pricing will be \$475 per attendee after that date.

Recommendation is to authorize the Administrator to attend.

Motion by Kealy to authorize the Administrator to attend the League of Minnesota Cities 2025 Annual Conference on the City's behalf.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Councilor Teska-Erickson noted that she was not in support of this as the Administrator may only be around until the end of 2025 and that it may not be in City's best interests to approve his attending this event, and inquired as to whether there is an option to authorize an alternative individual to attend –

Motion carried 4-1.

D. Consider Approving Membership in the Minnesota Mayors Association for 2025 and Remitting Requisite Membership Dues.

The Minnesota Mayors Association (MMA) is managed and administrated through the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), and is a nonprofit Board of Trade headquartered in St. Paul, Mn.

The purpose of the MMA is to give access to a large network of experienced mayors to support (mayors) in dealing with the unique issues they face in their role.

MMA membership dues support this and other valuable interaction among Minnesota's mayors to help them provide excellence in city governance.

Additionally, the MMA produces a handbook (the Minnesota Mayors Handbook) in cooperation with the LMC, which provides information for mayors about:

- 1) Legal powers and responsibilities within the structure of their form of city government;
- 2) Practical tips on meeting management; and
- 3) Guidelines for inspirational and ethical leadership of their council and their community.

It would be prudent of the City, as a long-standing member of LMC, to consider this membership for its mayor.

Please note that membership dues for 2025 have been set at \$ 30.00.

Recommendation is to approve membership in the Minnesota Mayors Association for 2025.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve membership in the Minnesota Mayors Association for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2025 in the amount of \$ 30.00.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Inquiry as to did this not also get approved in the recent past – the Administrator initially indicated that invoicing in 2024 was very late, but that he would look into it further - this further research suggests that this item was in fact approved previously, however this current agenda item is after the invoicing was received, and the earlier action was prior to being invoiced for this membership -

Motion carried unanimously.

- E. Consider Notice of Advertisement for 2025 Summer Beach Attendants – Authorization for Staff to Publicly Post and Publish.

The City desires additional professional services over the summer months to assist in maintaining the recreational and public safety services of the community.

Specifically, the City wants to hire summer beach attendants for the City of Buhl Public Beach at Stubler Pit.

Recommendation is to authorize staff to publicly post and publish a Notice of Advertisement to fill these positions.

Motion by Kealy to authorize staff to publicly post and publish a Notice of Advertisement for 2025 Summer Beach Attendants positions.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question was raised as to how old an applicant has to be in order to be considered – sixteen (16) years of age –

Question also raised as to whether there has/had been any increase(s) in the wages in the recent past – the Administrator indicated that these wages were increased in 2024, and an additional provision providing an “experience adjustment” was incorporated reflecting individuals whom have/had been employed by the City previously -

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. Consider Notice of Advertisement for 2025 Public Works Department Summer Street Labor - Authorization for Staff to Publicly Post and Publish.

The City desires additional labor services over the summer months to assist in maintaining the attractiveness of the community.

Specifically, the City wants to hire summer street labor for Public Works Department activities, including lawn mowing, weed trimming, and other light duties.

Recommendation is to authorize staff to publicly post and publish a Notice of Advertisement to fill these positions.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to authorize staff to publicly post and publish a Notice of Advertisement for 2025 Public Works Department Summer Street Labor positions.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question was raised as to whether these positions would require the submittal of a (City of Buhl) Expression of Interest form – the Administrator indicated that these are hired positions that require a standard (City) employment application -

Motion carried unanimously.

- G. Consider Requesting Proposals for Portable Toilet Services for 2025.

The City typically provides portable toilet services in the seasonal months at two (2) locations throughout the city as follows:

Stubler Beach Campground (1 Standard and 1 Handicapped unit);
and
Stubler Beach (1 Standard unit).

The approximate rental season is for six (6) months – from May to October.

Staff has solicited for these services, and thus far received bids from one (1) service provider - the same provider as utilized by the City in 2024.

Costs for 2024 were approved at \$2,150.00.

Staff anticipates similar service costs in 2025 to be approximately 15% higher than in 2024.

Staff will continue to receive proposals and will entertain proposals for service costs less than that currently received (\$2,486.00).

Recommendation is to approve the procurement of portable toilet services for 2025 in an amount not to exceed \$2,486.00.

Motion by Kealy to approve the procuring of portable toilet services for 2025 in an amount not to exceed \$2,486.00.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that in the past the City had procured five (5) portable toilets, and that the present proposal only includes three (3) –

Motion and support rescinded, and this item was tabled until the number of portable toilet facilities requested is updated and revised proposed costs received.

H. Consider League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT): Safety and Loss Control Workshop – Authorization for Administrator to attend April 22, 2025.

The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) is hosting their 2025 annual Safety and Loss Control workshops throughout the state in March and April.

This workshop focuses on providing practical information to help cities reduce costs and avoid losses, and will provide comprehensive information on risk management.

It is important and valuable for the City to have its leadership attend this session, in order to further gain understanding on managing municipal administrative risk.

Recommendation is to authorize the Administrator to attend.

Motion by Kealy to authorize the Administrator to attend a League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust “Safety and Loss Control Workshop” on the City’s behalf at a cost of \$20.00.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment received as to whether Public Works personnel should attend – Public Works indicated that the Minnesota Rural Water Association Technical Conference is a much more applicable event to attend than the one under this agenda item -

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Consider Sale of Unused Outdoor Basketball Hoops to a Private Party.

The City acquired or replaced certain recreational equipment at Burton Park in 2025, as a part of continuous community improvements.

Among the new equipment acquired or replaced was two (2) basketball hoops and framing.

As a result of the new equipment installation, the City has the original basketball hoops and framing available for sale to the general public.

This equipment has been available since the late summer of 2024.

The City has now received an offer for purchase of this equipment from a private party.

The offer extended is for \$10.00 for the two (2) equipment assemblies.

Staff does not anticipate additional offers to be forthcoming for this equipment.

Recommendation is that the city accept the offer for this equipment from the private party.

Motion by Towner to accept the offer for the purchase of replaced recreational equipment (2 basketball hoops and framing) from a private party in the amount of \$10.00.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question was raised as to where this was posted for sale – various individuals indicated they noted seeing this posted at a number of locations –

Question raised as to whether this should be re-posted for sale -

Motion carried unanimously.

J. Consider Resolution 25-16 Authorizing the City to Receive and Accept Various Donations to the City of Buhl Recreation Board.

The City has received a number of donations from local businesses and donors who have offered goods or currency to the City's Recreation Board as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl civic events and other related recreational activities, as well as some donations expressly earmarked for the 2025 Easter event(s).

Specifically, the City has received monetary (and other) donations from the following:

- Super One Foods - \$ 50.00 gift card;
- Walmart - \$ 50.00 gift card;
- Billy's Pub 'N Grub - \$ 60.00 cash;
- Other Guys Burgers - \$ 20.00 gift card;
- L & M Supply - \$ 27.90 candy mix; and
- Kinney Firemen's Relief Assn. - \$ 500.00 cash.

The City wishes to recognize all those who have contributed in continuing to make the City's important civic and recreational initiatives a popular success.

Recommendation is for the City to accept these donations.

Motion by Loeffler to authorize the City to accept donations from Super One Foods, Walmart, Billy's Pub 'N Grub, Other Guys Burgers, L & M Supply, and the Kinney Firemen's Relief Association to the City and its' Recreation Board as financial contributions to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl civic and recreational programs, events, and other recreation related activities, to execute Resolution 25-16 concerning the same, and to acknowledge these donations with appreciation.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

A hearty thank-you was offered up and extended to all valuable donors –

Roll Call Vote: Kealy Aye , Loeffler Aye , Teska-Erickson Aye , Towner Aye ;
Matthews Aye .

Motion carried unanimously.

K. Consider Accepting Resignation of a Member of the Buhl Recreation Board

City Resident Sheila LaBarge currently serves on the City of Buhl Recreation Board.

Ms. LaBarge has notified the City that as of April 2, 2025 she will not be able to serve on the Recreation Board, however would be able to help at events as needed (if needed).

Subsequently, Ms. LaBarge has submitted her resignation from the Recreation Board effective that date.

Recommendation is to accept the resignation of Sheila LaBarge from the City of Buhl Recreation Board with regret, effective April 2, 2025.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to accept the resignation of Sheila LaBarge from the City of Buhl Recreation Board with regret effective April 2, 2025, and to thank her for her years of loyal service to the community.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Thanks were offered to Ms. LaBarge and it was noted that she has been a great help throughout the past -

Motion carried unanimously.

L. Review of St. Louis County 4-H Summer Catalog of Opportunities.

4-H is a nationally recognized program, originating in 1902, which stands for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

When the U.S. Congress created the Cooperative Extension Service in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1914, it included boys' and girls' club work. These soon became known as 4-H clubs.

These four Hs in 4-H are the four values members work on through fun and engaging programs.

Minnesota 4-H is the largest youth development program in the state, serving over 40,000 young people every year. They offer out-of-school,

hands-on learning opportunities across Minnesota for youth in kindergarten through one-year post-high school.

In this area, 4-H activities and programming is administered by St. Louis County.

With summer just around the corner, St. Louis County 4-H is excited to share its 4-H Summer Catalog of Opportunities, which is filled with hands-on project days, virtual programs, and exciting state and regional experiences for youth!

St. Louis County 4-H is requesting assistance to spread the word about these opportunities so that more families can take advantage of these programs and opportunities.

A flyer referencing this catalog and other programming information has been created and was attached and distributed.

Informational only.

M. Other Business,

Public Works Foreman Trent Pink addressed the City Council earlier in this meeting regarding the need to procure a power broom/sweeper for sidewalk maintenance –

The desired equipment would be in the form of a detachable attachment to a skid steer, and be a maximum of 48” wide (the width of most of the city sidewalks) –

Estimated cost is \$4,500, which would be sourced from the existing Street Department capital improvements budget line item, which presently has approximately \$46k available to it –

Motion by Matthews to approve procuring a power broom/sweeper skid steer attachment for sidewalk and street maintenance from at a cost not to exceed \$ 4,500.00.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The question was raised as to the expected lifetime of such an asset; whether there is a current and ongoing asset list for the street department; whether this should be brought to budget meeting(s); and whether or not there was/is a warranty attached to or associated with this piece of equipment.

Motion carried unanimously.

N. Councilors' Comments.

Councilor Kealy –

Inquired as to when refuse cans and containers at locations that will no longer be serviced by WM Wisconsin Minnesota will be removed from those locations –

Requested that the Personnel Committee schedule a meeting to discuss certain communication topics – this will be scheduled in the near future -

Councilor Towner –

Reminded all of the 4th of July events preliminarily scheduled for the weekend of June 21-22 -

Noted that the City Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 19 at Burton Park, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Noted that Calendar Parking regulations for the 2024-25 winter season expires today -

O. Mayor's Comments.

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Kealy to adjourn.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:

Tony Jeffries, City Clerk