

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6/10/2025

Tuesday, June 10, 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: X Jamnick
Fire Chief: Lehman
Police Chief: Vukad
Finance Manager: Thronson

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Administrator Jeffries requested to place an additional item, 7.M. on the agenda, as follows:

7.M. - Consider Approving and Authorizing Staff to Pay all Claims Which Must be Satisfied Prior to the Next Regularly Scheduled City Council Meeting of July 8, 2025.

Mayor Matthews also requested to place an additional item on the agenda to officially recognize a shift in the makeup of the Internal Audit Committee for the next six-month period – this will be included as agenda item 7.N.

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as amended.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

City Public Works Foreman Trent Pink:

Indicated that summer seasonal laborer help has started and is assisting the Public Works Crew with seasonal duties -

Highlighted that the Public Works crew will be attending to the condition of the alleys in town and regrading after the conclusion of the Spring Clean-Up initiative -

Noted that alley dust control will be attended to after that -

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Noted that the bid release date for the Water Main Loop project will be on July 8, 2025 –

Indicated that with regard to the water tower project that they are getting very close to sending in additional application materials to the State of Minnesota Department of Health, and that a bid date will be set after that -

Indicated that several sanitary sewer options for the Buhl Business Block ad been suggested and will be considered as potential alternatives for the next phase of this project – it will not apply to nor effect the Water Main Loop project slated to be released for bids –

Question raised by Mr. Jamnick as to whether or not replatting of the Buhl Business Block has been approved or authorized as of this date –

The Administrator indicated that there is a BED meeting scheduled for June 11 which may answer this question -

Administrator Jeffries:

Noted five (5) items –

- 1) That the special session of the State of Minnesota legislature is over
- 2) That an estimate for the cost of paving the remaining unpaved alleys in town was developed and would be included as a part of the 2026 State of Minnesota bonding (capital improvements) request which will be submitted on June 13, 2025 –

- 3) That the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) had been advocating to the State of Minnesota for a 2025 Global Budget Agreement and Bonding package (this likely is now moot since the legislative session has concluded-) –
- 4) That staff intends to seek approval to authorize the payment of claims which must be remitted and satisfied before July 8 (the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting) later in this meeting –
- 5) That the grant application for sanitary sewage lift station improvements submitted to the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation has been denied on the basis that matching funds were determined to be deemed ineligible (sourced from the same financial source) as grant funding – it was not the City's matching funds which were contemplated in this grant application, but rather those from the Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District (CIRSSD) –

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

Cheryl Kivi; 612 Woodbridge Avenue; Buhl, MN –

Requested that a monthly update on the water tower project be placed as a standing item on the City Council agenda monthly to keep all informed as to the status of the project -

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

Regular City Council Meeting – May 20, 2025

B. Claims:

i.	Payroll #11	\$ 15,312.78
	Payroll 5 (May 2025)	\$ 2,400.00
ii.	A/P #1	\$ 111,761.04
	A/P #2	<u>\$ 1,397.62</u>
TOTAL		\$ 130,871.44

Motion by Kealy to approve the minutes as presented.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve the claims as presented.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

A. Receive Presentation on and Consider Approving Fiscal Year 2024 Municipal Financial Audit.

Sterle & Company, LTD, the City's Independent Auditor, has completed their audit of the financial statements of the City of Buhl for the fiscal year period ending December 31, 2024.

Bonnie Sterle was in attendance and presented the findings of this audit period and answered any questions that arose.

Subsequent to this presentation, the City Council should act on the acceptance of this Independent Auditor's Report and Supplemental Information.

The following information was included from Sterle & Co., LTD regarding this matter:

- 1) 2024 Buhl Governance Communication;
- 2) 2024 Buhl Management Letter; and
- 3) 2024 Buhl Financial Statements.

Recommendation is to accept and approve the Independent Auditor's Report, Financial Statements, and Supplemental Information for the fiscal year period ending December 31, 2024.

Motion by Kealy to accept and approve the Independent Auditor's Report, Financial Statements, and Supplemental Information for the fiscal year period ending December 31, 2024, prepared by Sterle & Company, LTD.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The presentation by Bonnie Sterle, highlighted by indicating that the City received an Unmodified Audit Opinion, comprises a summary compilation of the positive findings of the 2024 annual financial audit, and is available at City Hall during regular business hours for inspection and consumption -

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consider Resolutions 25-23 and 25-24 Approving Sale and Conveyance of Land from Existing Public Land Holdings to a Private Party.

On June 1, 2021, the City Council of the City of Buhl approved a request from Buhl resident Mike Anderson to purchase a small piece of City owned land adjacent to his property, which he has maintained for some time (claimed as 25+ years) and intends to utilize as green space.

The land(s) in question constitute a portion of existing Parcel No. 115-0040-00185.

As reported earlier, the City previously approved creating and describing a new parcel of land, to allow for the subsequent platting of the parcel and conveyance of the land to Mr. Anderson.

This initiative is complete and a new parcel of land has been created, and an additional existing parcel of land owned by Gabriel LaBarge has been modified, in order to allow existing conditions to become conforming with land use and/or zoning code provisions.

Subsequently, this newly created parcel is in a position to be offered for sale to Mr. Anderson, and conveyed to him contingent upon Mr. Anderson fulfilling the approved sale purchase price and applicable fees.

The “applicable fees” should include, but not necessarily be limited to, surveying fees (if necessary), (re)platting fees, and St. Louis County recording fees.

Recommendation is for the City to approve the sale and conveyance of this newly created parcel of land to Mr. Anderson in the amount of \$ (TBD).

Motion by Kealy to approve Resolution 25-23 and 25-24 conveying this newly created parcel of land from existing public land holdings to Mr. Mike Anderson, a private party, in the amount of (TBD) and other applicable fees as described herein.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Discussion surrounding how to arrive at a purchase price ensued; consensus was that the City should not bear any costs related to

arriving at these modified property boundaries, but that it rather these costs should fall to the recipients of the modified boundaries (Anderson and LaBarge) –

It was noted that the formula on cost-sharing of land conveyance pricing should be equitably proportioned between the effected parties (Anderson and LaBarge), based upon the amount of land gained by each through this process – this will take some time to calculate, and it was proposed to be brought back to the next (July 8, 2025) City Council meeting –

Comment received with regard to the additional land being unbuildable that some pricing considerations may be appropriate when calculating a purchase price -

Additional consideration will be focused toward including a provision of protecting the existing Mesabi Trail (bike path) which traverses the western portion of the lands which Mr. Anderson is slated to have conveyed to him –

It was noted that the amount of engineering work required in the process of creating and describing the modified properties was quite extensive -

Motion and support rescinded; motion tabled to conduct additional background analysis and finalize a pricing structure; No action taken.

C. Consider Draft Sewer Lateral Ordinance.

The City has been contemplating and considering an ordinance to regulate the treatment of sewer laterals for some time.

This initiative is intended as a part of ongoing controls, improvements, and measures to positively effect the impact of inflow and infiltration (I & I) on the city's sanitary sewage effluent stream.

A draft ordinance has been prepared regarding this initiative and was distributed for consideration.

Recommendation is for the City to approve the creation of this sewer lateral ordinance.

Motion by Kealy to approve modifying City of Buhl Ordinances Chapter 52 to include provisions for the treatment of sewer laterals in the city.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment received that it would have been valuable to have had this in place previously when the capital improvement project (CIP) was being done -

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consider Replacing HVAC Equipment in EMS Hall.

This item is a continuation of recent discussions of the City Council.

The EMS Hall located at 201 Forest St., and currently occupied by Essentia EMS, is presently experiencing issues with its air conditioning system, and inspection and testing suggests that it may be time to consider replacement of this system.

City staff presented certain information to the City Council at the May 20, 2025 City Council meeting; this item was referred back to staff to pursue additional due diligence.

The city had obtained proposals from two (2) HVAC firms for cooling systems that would appear to meet the needs of the EMS Hall.

The City has now obtained an additional proposal for equipment and installation – which appears to meet the needs of the EMS Hall and – after applying a Public Service Center Discount – is substantially more cost competitive than the original two proposals –

The system recommended is a 24,000 btu single-zone heat pump/air cooling wall-mount mini-split HVAC system by Daikin, with a SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) rating of up to 17.

Recommendation is for the City to accept the proposal of Mesaba Heating and Air Conditioning.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to accept the proposal of Mesaba Heating & Air Conditioning to furnish and install a 24,000 BTU Daikin Entra – 17 SEER HVAC mini-split system for the EMS Hall for a sum not to exceed \$ 4,841.00.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that funding for this unbudgeted initiative could reasonably and conceivably be sourced from reserves currently available in the Ambulance fund -

It was also noted that it may be prudent to include other maintenance and repair improvements (such as window replacement) into budgetary activities later this year –

Motion carried unanimously.

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

The City has received 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 Independence Day Celebration 2025 events and other related recreational activities.

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

- Papa Zzz's Pizza, Chisholm - (6) Discounted Menu Item Coupons;
- CEC Theatres, Mt. Iron - (10) Complimentary Theater Tickets;
- McDonald's, Chisholm - (5) Complimentary Ice Cream Cones;
- and
- Jubilee Foods, Chisholm - (24) 2-liter bottles of soda.

The City wishes to recognize 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 Pappa Zzz's Pizza, LLC; CEC Theatres; McDonald's; and Jubilee Foods to the City and its' Recreation Board as financial contributions to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl Independence Day Celebration 2025 civic activities and recreational programs, events, and other recreation related activities, to execute Resolution 25-25 concerning the same, and to acknowledge these donations with great appreciation.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Thank you offered and extended to all donors -

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

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consider Resolution 25-26 Authorizing the City to Receive and Accept a Donations to the City of Buhl Community Center.

The Buhl Curling Club Inc. has offered a donation of \$1,000.00 to the City as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the operation and maintenance of the Buhl Community Center and Curling Club.

Recommendation is for the City to accept this donation.

Motion by Towner to authorize for the City to Accept a Donation from the Buhl Curling Club, Inc. to offset operating costs related to the Buhl Community Center and Curling Club in the amount of \$1,000.00, to execute Resolution 25-26 concerning the same, and to acknowledge this donation with great appreciation.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Consider Appointing an Individual to the Buhl Economic Development Authority.

Recently, a Commissioner on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) resigned their position.

As a result, there is presently one (1) vacancy on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) board of commissioners.

This existing vacancy is an at-large vacancy which can be filled by any member of the community, and carries a current term which expires on December 31, 2025.

The City previously public noticed that Expressions Of Interest for serving on BEDA would be received by the City until 11:00 a.m. on June 2, 2025.

One (1) Buhl resident has completed and submitted an Expression Of Interest; this was attached to this memorandum for Mayoral and City Council consideration.

Recommendation is for the City to fill this available opening on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) board of commissioners as soon as practicable.

Motion by Kealy to appoint Stuart Lehman as a Commissioner on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) with a term that expires December 31, 2025.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment received that there may be another vacancy on the BEDA board that will be created in the upcoming future -

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Consider Approving Hiring of Summer Beach Attendant.

The City has previously publicly posted and published advertisements for 2025 City of Buhl Public Beach at Stubler Pit Attendants.

Posting and eligibility for these positions will remain open until sufficient personnel are sourced to cover the needs of the City.

One (1) application has been received to date for “beach attendant”, and this applicant has fulfilled pre-employment paperwork requirements.

This applicant has previously been employed by the City as a summer Beach Attendant in both 2023 and 2024.

Recommendation is to approve the hiring of the applicant as a 2025 Beach Attendant.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve the hiring of Jaeden Loeffler as a 2025 Beach Attendant contingent upon the successful completion of all employment and pre-employment requirements.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment received that a policy may be in order to address working in pairs if seasonal employees are under 18 years old –

Miscellaneous discussion regarding the maximum number of hours available to work ensued -

Motion carried unanimously; Loeffler abstaining.

I. Consider Approving Application for Volunteer Firefighter.

The City of Buhl Fire Department (the “Department”) has an ongoing desire and need to maintain sufficient manpower in its ranks to continue to serve the needs of the community.

The Department has identified and recommended an individual to be added to the existing manpower roster of Fire Fighters.

Preliminary pre-employment evaluation of the recommended individual has been conducted, with acceptable results.

The Buhl Fire Department recommends approving the placement of this applicant.

The City Council has the authority to approve the placement of Fire Fighters on behalf of the Department.

Recommendation is to approve the placement of the interested applicant pending successful drug and/or alcohol testing and completion of pre-employment paperwork.

Motion by Kealy to approve the placement of Nathaniel Pederson as a Fire Fighter, pending successful drug and/or alcohol testing and completion of pre-employment paperwork.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

J. Consider Various Requests from Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub for Street Closings in 2025.

Carla Dombrowski, of Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub, located at 124 State St. in Buhl, has provided the City with information regarding their planned summer events.

Four (4) items were included –

- 1) Request for permission to block State Street for the 2025 Summer Car Show on July 19, 2025 (barricades needed);
- 2) Request for permission to block State Street for the 2025 Honor Guard Bean Bag Tournament on August 16, 2025 (barricades needed);
- 3) Request for permission to block State Street for the 2025 Fall Car Show on September 14, 2025 (barricades needed); and
- 4) Request for permission to block State Street for a private wedding on September 20, 2025 (barricades needed) – also includes a request to provide tables and chairs from the Community Center.

It is commendable for this private business to be active in civic events which promote the community.

Recommendation is for the City to grant permission for all events and street closing requests.

Motion by Kealy to grant permission to Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub to host several outdoor events throughout the summer of 2025 and to block off State Street on July 19, August 16, September 14, and September 20, 2025, as well as to provide tables and chairs on September 20.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that a damage waiver for use of the tables and chairs may be appropriate, here – and that potentially a policy be created to address this -

Motion carried unanimously.

- K. Consider Resolution 25-27 Establishing a Leadership Committee to Develop Employment Criteria Related to Seeking Qualified Candidates for the Position of City of Buhl Clerk/Treasurer.

The existing employment agreement with the City Clerk-Treasurer-Administrator sunsets on December 31, 2025.

The Personnel Committee has determined that it is in the best interests of the City to review and evaluate the position description and compensation package for the position moving forward, as well as to strategize advertising of the position in the future.

To that end, a Leadership Committee has been proposed to spearhead this initiative.

Recommendation is for the City Council to approve forming this Leadership Committee for this initiative.

Motion by Towner to approve Mayor James Matthews and Councilor Denise Kealy to act as the Leadership Committee in spearheading the review and evaluation of the position of City of Buhl Clerk/Treasurer, and to execute Resolution 25-27 regarding the same.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment received that the overall objective of this is to formulate a plan -

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

Motion carried unanimously.

L. Update on Civil Defense Siren Status.

The City's Civil Defense warning siren has been in a state of malfunction for some time now.

At the May 6, 2025 City Council meeting, the Administrator noted that the company who had designed and manufactured as well as the company who had installed the Civil Defense warning siren on Forest St. had been (finally) verified and contacted, and it was anticipated that this device would be inspected within the next month and a half of so by the original installer –

On June 3, 2025, West Shore Services, Inc., inspected the siren and performed repair and maintenance activities on it.

A 200 amp main protection fuse was replaced, and it was determined that out of four (4) sets of brushes on the chopper motor, that at least three (3) of them were not in working order.

The four (4) sets of brushes were overhauled, and the siren passed all preliminary tests.

The battery bank (48 volt – (4) 12-volt lead-acid batteries) – which is 4+ years old, and recommended to be replaced every 4 years - tested out at just over 54 volts, so was not replaced.

On Wednesday, June 4, 2025, the siren was placed into its monthly testing and annunciation protocol, and functioned properly.

Cost for the services is estimated at under \$800 – no invoicing has been received to date.

Information regarding two (2) alternate preventative maintenance programs is included with this item.

Informational only.

M. Consider Authorizing the Payment of Claims Received Which are Due Prior to the Next Regularly Scheduled (July 8, 2025) City Council Meeting.

Subsequent to this City Council meeting, it is anticipated that there will be some invoices or bills received by the City that will need to be satisfied and paid prior to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting, currently set for July 8, 2025.

Past practice in these situations has been for the City Council to authorize staff to pay normal and necessary bills prior to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

Recommendation is for the City to authorize staff to pay all normal and necessary bills and claims.

Motion by Kealy to authorize City staff to pay all normal and necessary bills and claims which must be remitted and satisfied prior to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting of July 8, 2025.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

N. Consider Approving Internal Audit Committee Personnel Change-Over.

The City's Internal Audit Committee is comprised of two (2) City council members, who serve for a six-month period. The "term" of service is staggered, so that each six months one City Council member will rotate off of the committee, and another will rotate in –

In the recent past, the committee was comprised of Councilors Denise Kealy and Renee Loeffler; at this time City Councilor Taunya Teska-Erickson will replace Councilor Kealy as a member of this committee -

Informational only.

O. Other Business:

None.

P. Councilors' Comments.

Councilor Kealy –

Inquired as to what is meant by "we're close" with the water tower (engineering) design and bid process –

Inquired where the City is in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan, and who would potentially be at introductory public meeting(s) –

It was noted that public meetings, indeed, are to be an integral part of this process, and that the Long-Range Planning and Zoning Commission would have an active role in this initiative -

Inquired as to whether or not monthly police reports are being received (from the City of Chisholm Police Department), whether these were/are posted for public consumption, and discussed some details of the same –

It was noted that these reports are posted at City Hall on an ongoing (monthly) basis -

Conversation ensued regarding parking behaviors observed around the city, and conjecture regarding how to administer or enforce these behaviors –

Additional conversation regarding blight conditions and the manner of administration and enforcement of these issues ensued –

It was noted again that residents are encouraged to email photos to the City of Chisholm Chief of Police on these conditions for appropriate follow-up –

Question was raised as to how often additional blight citations can be issued for unresolved issues –

Further conversation regarding the administration of street parking conditions and behaviors ensued -

Councilor Towner -

Reminded all that the 2025 Independence Day Celebration, sponsored by the Recreation Board, will take place on June 28, with a parade (2 -3 pm), followed by games at Burton Park and Movies at sunset (“Independence Day”) –

Highlighted that B2 Bank has donated \$200 for each of the three (3) best float categories!

Summarized recent activities and actions of the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA), as follows:

- Great Scott Township representatives addressed BEDA regarding the possibility of acquiring land in the city for

a new township, public works, fire, and EMS facility, as well as conversations regarding potential partnering or combining of departments in the future –

- Noted that a Notice to Vacate was received from a current Whiteside Industrial Park tenant, and came to resolution on resolving some outstanding charges borne by this tenant -
- Approved advertising for the city-wide garage sale and discussed whether BEDA is the appropriate place for this –
- Discussed potentially shifting the cost burden associated with retaining the City's governmental relations and public relations (lobbying) consultant to the City –
- Named three (3) BEDA commissioners as liaisons to Whiteside Industrial Park and its tenants –
- Received an update on video recording options and capabilities for further future consideration –
- Tabled action on 2026 Whiteside Industrial Park budgeting and 2026 BEDA strategic improvement positioning plan until a later date –
- Approved expending \$3,000 on overhead crane repair at 10115 Whiteside Road in Whiteside Industrial Park.

Q. Mayor's Comments.

Noted that John Markas and himself have been helping with attempting to find funding sources for potential redevelopment to assist in getting the former laundromat on State Street demolished –

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Towner to adjourn.


Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.



James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk