

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
9/2/2025

Tuesday, September 2, 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: 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 one (1) item be added to the agenda - Create and Install a Sign Posting Hours at Stubler Beach, and Councilor Towner requested adding an item - Fire Department Grants; these will be added under Other Business.

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 Engineer John Jamnick:

A project scheduling “cheat sheet” (Projects Status Report) was generated and distributed – this report provides a schedule-at-a-glance of open and ongoing City projects –

An update on current, ongoing water projects was offered -

- 1) No further update or communication has been received from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA) regarding the review of design plans for the water tower, and its associated (State of Minnesota) funding award, and
- 2) A meeting is scheduled for September 3 with representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD) to discuss the funding status of the Congressionally Directed Spending (Federal) grant allocation -
- 3) Signed engineering design plans have been submitted to the State of Minnesota – there is an ongoing need to follow up as to where that plan review stands –

The Projects Status Report mentioned above was introduced and highlighted – Several projects have been referenced in that report, and scheduling timelines given – along with the most recent status update of each project -

In total, eight (8) projects are presently considered in-process and information on each contained in this report –

It was noted by JPJ Engineering that since the Prime Contractor has not addressed the remaining punch list items on the Damian II Addition project (named Buhl - Damian Phase III by JPJ Engineering), they recommend that an alternate (restoration) contractor be sourced to complete these remaining activities (the area does not look very good and is not that attractive presently) –

It was also noted that the (Phase 2) scope of the Buhl Business Block project needs to be finalized – hopefully soon –

The Projects Status Report will be a living document intended and designed to be accessed at any time and provide general updates regarding the status (and schedule) of ongoing projects -

Administrator Jeffries:

1. Offered an update on the Comprehensive Plan Update process – Arrowhead Regional Development Commission Planning (ARDC Planning), the consultant spearheading the update process – has completed surveying members of the Planning Commission, and should be

scheduling public input sessions for this initiative soon – that is the next step in the scheduled defined process –

This initiative is still anticipated to be completed before the end of 2025 -

2. Noted that school is now back in session for the next 9 -10 months – so everyone is highly encouraged to DRIVE CAEFULLY! as many students are likely not paying due attention to traffic conditions and safety as they make their way around the community -

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

None.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

Special City Council Meeting – August 14, 2025

Regular City Council Meeting – August 19, 2025

B. Claims:

i.	Payroll #17	\$ 16,987.11
	Payroll #8 (August 2025)	\$ 2,475.00

ii.	A/P	<u>\$ 27,151.78</u>
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TOTAL	\$ 46,613.89
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Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve the Consent Agenda minutes as presented.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Towner to approve the Consent Agenda claims as presented.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

A. Presentation from Representatives of Zenith Property Management Related to Potential Redevelopment Plans for the Former Laundromat Located at 206 State Street.

The City has been anticipating and looking forward to the demolition and removal of the existing structure located at 206 State Street, formerly the (Buhl) laundromat, for some time now (Parcel ID #115-0010-01070).

This property and the structure on it are in such condition that renewal or renovation of the structure for other commercial use is not a reasonable option.

Zenith Property Management, LLC, of Duluth, Minnesota, is the owner of this parcel.

Zenith Property Management has indicated a desire to move forward with redevelopment plans that include demolishing the existing former laundromat structure and constructing an additional multi-family residential dwelling on this location, with attendant parking facilities.

In order to accomplish this, it is anticipated that Zenith Property Management will be seeking to obtain additional land(s) in the proximity of State Street and Jones Avenue to accommodate these facilities.

It is also anticipated that these initiatives will potentially not be realizable unless funding to support this project is identified and obtained. This funding exercise, although for a private initiative, may include the City of Buhl as an agent, depending upon project specifics.

Without a solid redevelopment project, it is unlikely that funding will be obtainable, which reduces the chances that the laundromat structure will be demolished and/or removed in the foreseeable future.

Representatives of Zenith Property Management (Zenith) were in attendance at this meeting and provided an update of their concept(s) and plans to the City Council.

Informational only.

Ed Syverson and Brian Solrud of Zenith handed out updated conceptual project information, which included a rendition and depiction of an additional one-story, six-unit(?), multi-family dwelling with a streetside commercial retail space and ten (10) additional parking stalls located west of the current State Street Apartments, and includes encompassing and including the southeast corner of the intersection of state Street and Jones Avenue –

Zenith also indicated they will need City participation in this effort, as some funding being sought is ineligible for Zenith to obtain, but not for the City to attempt to obtain –

A project pro forma, including projected income, projected expenses, and mortgage amount information, as well as a projected project budget, was also distributed –

The funding piece is the most important element to solidify in order to put this project in the best position to realize project success.

No proposed schedule was introduced for this project at this time –

It was suggested that there may need to be multiple funding requests required to satisfy project needs –

Also, Zenith wants to apply for a community development block grant (CDBG) from St. Louis County to cover the existing building demolition –

Then efforts to seek additional funding will be required for the redevelopment portion of this project (re-development and potential new building construction) –

Some funding may not be available until at least next year –

The Administrator commented that the City may or may not be eligible for a CDBG grant due to the community's current average median income and how this translates to eligibility for a particular community –

It was noted that the existing State Street Apartments building is now at a full complement of tenants (and there is a waiting list!) –

JPJ Engineering will check the proposed budgetary numbers for accuracy and applicability, and to potentially offer concurrence and agreement -

It was also noted that no decision would be made by the City Council at this time – however the city remains highly favorable for re-development initiatives at this site -

B. Consider Approval of JPJ Engineering, Inc. Invoice No. 3 for the Water Storage Improvements Project No. 09-061 in the Amount of \$8,560.00.

This item is a continuation of a previous City Council agenda item.

The City has been invoiced for professional engineering services and other professional activities performed by JPJ Engineering, Inc., for services related to the Water Storage Improvements project (JPJ Project No. 09-061).

This invoice is related to services rendered for the Invoice Period of April 2025 through May 2025, and includes professional activities related to the above-referenced project.

Specifically, these charges are identified as (engineering) Design services performed and remitted by JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$8,560.00.

This amount now represents 60% of the design component of these services as complete.

This item was previously tabled with no action taken to consider entertaining additional discussion with the City Engineer.

Recommendation is to approve and remit to JPJ Engineering, Inc. invoice No. 3 for professional services related to Project No. 09-061 in the amount of \$ 8,560.00 upon validation of the services performed.

Motion by Kealy to approve payment of Invoice No. 3 for Project No. 09-061 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 8,560.00.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was indicated that the City Council has not yet seen any tangible design efforts for this project, therefore questioned where the design process actually is at this time –

John Jamnick of JPJ Engineering responded that this item is a typical partial progress invoice for the design services based upon a rough percentage of the previously approved design cost component included in the project management contract, and the design will be distributed to the City Council when design activities are complete –

JPJ Engineering also noted that at this time the design is 100% complete, and signed (design) plans have been submitted to the Minnesota Department of Health for plan review –

Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Consider Approval of JPJ Engineering, Inc. Invoice No. 4 for the Water Storage Improvements Project No. 09-061 in the Amount of \$8,560.00.

The City has been invoiced for professional engineering services and other professional activities performed by JPJ Engineering, Inc., for services related to the Water Storage Improvements project (JPJ Project No. 09-061).

This invoice is related to services rendered for the Invoice Period of July 2025, and includes professional activities related to the above-referenced project.

Specifically, these charges are identified as (engineering) Design services performed and remitted by JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$8,560.00.

This amount now represents 80% of the design component of these services as complete.

Recommendation is to approve and remit to JPJ Engineering, Inc. invoice No. 4 for professional services related to Project No. 09-061 in the amount of \$ 8,560.00 upon validation of the services performed.

Motion by Towner to approve payment of Invoice No. 4 for Project No. 09-061 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 8,560.00.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

This item is similar to the item immediately preceding this item -

Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Consider Approving USDA-Rural Development Form MN 1780, Guide 8 – Certificate of Final Approval for the City-Wide Infrastructure Improvements Project (JPJ Engineering Project 19-599) and Executing Resolution 25-33 Regarding the Same.

The City-Wide Infrastructure Improvements project (the “CIP”; JPJ Engineering Project No. 19-599) has been completed and the project is in the process of realizing close-out.

A portion of the close-out requirements includes the need to issue a Certificate of Final Approval by submitting a completed MN 1780, Guide 8 form to USDA-Rural Development, who provided funding and fiscal oversight in relation to this project.

This certificate validates that the work done by the project contractor (Casper Construction, Inc.) has been accepted by the owner (City of Buhl) and that the improvements contained therein have been accomplished.

A formal resolution of the City Council accepting this work is also required and has been prepared for consideration.

Recommendation is to approve this work as acceptable and complete and submit USDA-Rural Development MN 1780, Guide 8, along with other required documentation.

Motion by Towner to acknowledge the work of Casper Construction, Inc. for the City-Wide Infrastructure Improvements project (JPJ Engineering project 19-599) as acceptable, to complete and submit requisite documentation to USDA-RD, and to adopt Resolution 25-33 concerning the same.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that many, if not most or all, of these items were discussed at great length at the previous (August 19, 2025) City Council meeting –

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

Motion carried 4-1; Teska-Erickson voting nay.

- E. Consider Engaging City Attorney to Review and Advise on Reversion Options for Stubler Pit and Damian II Residential Property Owners Who Have Not Fulfilled Construction Timing Requirements.

The City has previously offered lands (for sale) for residential development in two (2) newer neighborhoods in the city – (the) Stubler Pit (addition) and the Damian II Addition.

Each of these residential developments contain certain covenants and restrictions associated with obtaining property in these developments – including certain time requirements related to the commencement of or completion of construction.

The specifics are different, albeit similar, for each of these neighborhoods, however in both cases there are a number of instances where current residential property owners have not fulfilled the requisite construction timing requirements.

In both of these instances, the development guidelines and documents call for property to revert back to the city when construction timing requirements have not been fulfilled.

It is desired to seek legal counsel with regard to the appropriate mechanism(s) available which the City may employ to alleviate or rectify these situations.

Recommendation is to approve engaging the City Attorney to assist in advising on these matters.

Motion by Kealy to direct the Administrator to engage the services of the City Attorney to assist and advise on appropriate courses of action regarding property reversion options available to the City of Buhl as a result of residential property owners in Stubler Pit and Damian II Additions who have not fulfilled construction timing requirements.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that this item has been discussed in the recent past -

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consider Directing City Attorney to Engage in the Process of Creating a Public Right-Of-Way on West Side of 100 Block of State Street.

Construction of two (2) single-family residential homes on the west side of the 100 block of State Street is nearing completion.

These properties will each be fitted with a single-family residence and a detached storage shed; residential garages will not be created at the present time, although each property is sized with the capacity to accommodate a garage in the future.

The only access to these properties from the rear (westerly side of the parcels) is via traversing City of Buhl property (PIN 115-0040-00190) –

Reasonable accommodation should be provided to allow these property owners compliant access to their rear yard; this may be best accomplished by creating a public right-of-way in the form of an alley extension running north and south to the west of State Street between Jones Avenue and Culver Avenue.

Additionally, it is prudent to also extend the Culver Avenue right-of-way to the west of State Street up to said alley extension so that it may service the potential soon-to-be-created alleyway.

Recommendation is to direct the City Attorney to undertake such initiatives and advise on the most appropriate course of action.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to direct the City Attorney to engage in the process of creating a public right-of-way on the west side of the 100 Block of State Street as well as the 100 block of Culver Avenue.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that this item has been discussed in the recent past -

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Consider Approving Water Tower Communications Equipment Repair Proposal.

The City recently experienced damage to a mounting pole located on the top of the existing water tower as a result of severe weather events. This mounting pole, among other things, houses radios(s) and antennae which serve the City by broadcasting broadband signals to other locations.

Specifically, internet service at the City Public Works Garage utilizes this equipment – internet (and network) signal(s) are broadcast from City Hall and sent to this equipment, which relay the signal(s) to the Public Works Garage (as well as other locations).

Thus, at a minimum, internet service at the Public Works Garage is compromised and affected; at this time there is no internet service at the Public Works Garage.

To remedy this situation, the mounting pole must be repaired/replaced, and the antennae and radios aimed and aligned.

To the best of our knowledge, the only way to accomplish this is by resetting this equipment; this will require a climb to the top of the water tower. The City is not equipped to facilitate these activities, and outside assistance is required.

Cost proposals were received from two (2) telecommunications firms, Northern Wireless and IR-North. IR-North suggests that no new equipment will be required, save for the mounting pole, but cannot guarantee this. Northern Wireless is less specific about the matter. The cost estimate for the tower climb is \$150 less for IR-North than for Northern Wireless.

Recommendation is to approve a provider to repair these communications issues.

Motion by Towner to approve IR-North for broadband communications repair services, in an amount not to exceed \$ 2,000.00.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that there may be certain information, such as the labor unit price (per hour) which was not included in the proposal(s) –

Additionally, whether certain other (work) items are or are not included in the base pricing proposal is a matter of interpretation, rather than certainty -

The Administrator pointed out that comparing the two proposals was not as clear as it first appears, as one proposal included certain equipment replacement costs (Northern Wireless) and the other (IR-North) did not –

For the proposal not including equipment replacement, contingencies were included should said equipment replacement be needed, adding to the potential “bottom line” –

Not considering these contingencies leads the two proposals to be different by \$150 (in favor of IR-North) in the proposed cost of a (water) tower climb and estimated labor needed to repair this installation –

Adding up these contingencies appears to make the proposal from Northern Wireless less expensive than the proposal from IR-North –

Discussion related to each of the proposing companies ensued –

It was noted that the Northern Wireless proposal includes an assumption that existing equipment does not have to be reset or reconfigured; should this be required, said resetting and reconfiguration would be \$ 500 (bringing the total proposal of Northern Wireless to \$3,237.70) –

Comments were received with regard to previous project interactions related to IR-North work activities, which may allow potential “leveraging” or “crediting” of the current (IR-North) proposal costs received –

It was also noted that it will not be known whether or not (broadband) equipment needs to be replaced until the (water) tower is climbed and the equipment inspected (or tested) –

It was further noted that if equipment were to be replaced, that it could be newer, more capable equipment which may not have to be replaced or changed out for a longer time into the future –

-Changing out this equipment now may provide a more comfortable feeling for the (foreseeable) future -

Several other similar and dissimilar aspects of each proposal were discussed further -

Motion and support rescinded; no action taken on this item.

Motion by Towner to approve Northern Wireless for broadband communications repair services, in an amount not to exceed \$ 3,237.70.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

- H. Consider Approving Request from North St. Louis County Habitat For Humanity (NSLCHFH) Allow the Splitting of Parcel No. 115-0010-00400 for Redistribution.

North St. Louis County Habitat For Humanity (NSLCHFH) is finalizing construction of two (2) single-family residential homes on property located on the west side of State Street between Jones Avenue and Culver Avenue.

Similar to other recent NSLCHFH projects, certain property boundaries must be modified to accommodate these newly constructed residences.

In order to compliantly locate the two new residences on the four (4) contiguous parcels owned by NSLCHFH, one of these parcels needs to be modified – split into two parcels so that other parcel consolidation can be accomplished – ultimately resulting in two (2) new residential parcels, one each with a newly constructed NSLCHFH residence.

NSLCHFH is seeking assurance that the City of Buhl approves the splitting of this property – PIN No. 115-0010-00400 – so that they can create the two (2) lots for their recently completed and soon-to-be-completed homes and submit to St. Louis County for recording.

Recommendation is to approve the splitting of this lot to allow NSLCHFH to ultimately create two (2) residential lots to record single family homes upon.

Motion by Kealy to approve the request of North St. Louis County Habitat For Humanity to allow the owner of record, North St. Louis County Habitat For Humanity, to split Parcel No. 115-0010-00400 to allow the compliant creation and recording of two new single-family residential properties.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

This was initiated at the beginning of the project development, but NSLCHF's financial institution is requesting it be re-stated – no downside to this has been identified -

Motion carried unanimously.

- I. Consider Resolution 25-34 Authorizing the City to Accept and Receive a Donation to the City of Buhl Recreation Board.

The City has received a donation from a local business who has offered goods or currency to the City's Recreation Board as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl recreational events and other related recreational activities.

Specifically, the City has received a donation of currency for recreational programming from the following:

- Jim's Sports Club, Inc.; Chisholm - \$ 45.00.

The City wishes to recognize this contribution as continuing to make the City's important civic and recreational initiatives a popular success.

Recommendation is for the City to accept this donation.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to authorize the City to accept a donation from Jim's Sports Club, Inc.; Chisholm, Mn to the City and its' Recreation Board as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl recreational programs, events, and activities, to execute Resolution 25-34 concerning the same, and to acknowledge this donation with great appreciation.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Thanks were extended to Jim's Sports Club, Inc.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

J. Notice of the Availability of the Northeast Minnesota Elected Leaders Learning Cohort Leadership Workshop Series Sponsored by the Northspan Group.

Notice has been received by the City regarding an opportunity available to elected officials across northeast Minnesota.

The program overview of the Northeast Minnesota Elected Leaders Learning Cohort (ELC), offered through the Northspan group, is to strengthen civic leadership skills, build regional connections, and gain practical tools to support sustainable and thriving communities.

This will be accomplished through a program of six (6) interactive workshops, with one offered per month between September 2025 and February 2026.

The ELC is a series of six workshops designed to add to elected leaders' knowledge and skills in:

- data-informed decision-making
- effective communication and problem solving across differences
- leveraging the power of local media and AI
- productive intergovernmental collaboration

Participation is available to (nonpartisan) elected positions, including city councils.

Application information to this cohort can be accessed through contacting alewis@northspan.org or contacting Northspan at 218-216-7530.

Informational only.

K. Other Business:

1) Consider Approving Placing a Sign Designating Open Hours at Stubler Beach.

The beach at Stubler Pit has been experiencing some problematic behaviors from guests in the recent past –

Public Safety (the Chisholm Police Department) has indicated that late night calls have been increasing as of late, and it has been noted that there are no hours posted at the beach anywhere.

Without hours being posted some legal challenges are presented when trying to enforce compliant behaviors –

Posting of regular hours will go a long way in assisting Public Safety continue to manage these behaviors, and to support enforcement initiatives –

After conversation with City staff, the hours of 8:00 a.m. – Sunset have been established for the beach. A sign has been created, and is awaiting approval so that it can be posted.

Approval of these hours and posting of this sign with these hours at the beach by the City Council is requested - the sign content has been approved by the Chisholm Police Department.

Recommendation is to approve creating and posting this sign.

Motion by Kealy to approve creating a sign establishing regular open hours at Stubler (Pit) beach, and to post this sign in a conspicuous location on the change house located on the beach proper.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was proposed that a similar sign should be placed in Burton Park near the pavilion; consensus was this should be pursued – the motion was amended to include this -

Amended Motion by Kealy to approve creating signs establishing regular open hours at Stubler (Pit) beach and near the pavilion at Burton Park, and to post these signs in conspicuous locations on the properties for which the signage is intended.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

These signs will attempt to be graffiti-proof, in as much as reasonably possible –

Motion carried unanimously.

2) Consider Applying for Fire Department Grants for Eligible Equipment.

Councilor Towner pointed out that at the City Council Working Session of August 14, 2025, discussion of obtaining additional communications equipment (radios) for the Fire Department occurred –

This item is intended to follow-up on that, and the question was raised as to who currently writes grant applications for the Fire Department (in-house or outside assistance) –

Additional discussion regarding utilizing some remaining amounts from a previously appropriated Public Safety grant monies – staff will investigate further –

Comment received that used equipment may be acceptable, rather than new equipment, resulting in substantial cost savings – this was indicated as acceptable by Fire Department representation (Councilor Teska-Erickson) –

Timing of the needs of acquiring said equipment ensued –

Reference was given to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Volunteer Fire (Department) Assistance Grants, which are open for application until December 1, 2025, and that communications equipment is eligible (among other things, however used equipment is specifically not eligible);

Staff will research and begin to assemble costs and specifications of (both used and new) equipment and report back to the City Council in the near future -

Informational only.

L. Councilors' Comments.

Councilor Kealy –

Noted that comments have been recently received regarding excess and unwanted noise by patrons of Stubler Beach Campground, and inquired whether anything can be done about this –

Rules and regulations exist for staying at the campground, which establish quiet hours beginning at 10 pm –

This unwanted noise was observed during the daytime hours, as well -

Councilor Loeffler –

Noted that it had previously been determined that there is a conflict with a scheduled City Council Budget Working Session, currently scheduled for Thursday, September 25 at 6:00 p.m. –

Motion by Loeffler to reschedule the Buhl City Council Budget Working Session set for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 25, 2025 to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 24, 2025, in the City Council chambers.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

There is a potential that other Budget Working Sessions may also need to be rescheduled in the future –

Motion carried unanimously.

M. Mayor's Comments.

Gave an update that sixty-two (62) responses from interested parties have been received with regard to the Clerk-Treasurer position, and that interviews will be conducted in the near future –

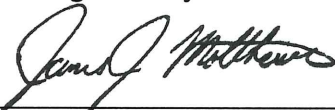
More information will be forthcoming -

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Kealy to adjourn.

Supported by Towner.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.



James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk