

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
9/16/2025

Tuesday, September 16, 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: X Kearney
Engineer: X Jamnick
Fire Chief: Lehman
Police Chief: Vukad
Finance Manager: X Thronson

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

An additional item had been requested by Mayor Matthews to be added to the agenda –

Add Item 7. J. - Consider Authorizing Range Repair Service to Perform Repair and Maintenance Services on a Commercial Range at the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center.

Councilor Towner also requested adding an item related to approval to advertise and hire Winter Seasonal Laborers (Rink Attendants). This will be taken up as Item 7.K. of this agenda.

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as amended.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

City Public Works Foreman Trent Pink:

Provided an update on the recent storm damage – Public Works has not had an opportunity to go to the campground or to the disc golf course to continue clean-up –

This may not be possible this year (in 2025) – depending upon weather –

Discussed a leakage episode from the roof at the Senior Center – this was caused by clogged roof drains that needed to be cleaned out – this has been accomplished -

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Noted that a telephone meeting was held on September 3 regarding the USDA funding appropriation for the City infrastructure project(s) and indicated that substantial headway and progress was achieved –

- Most notably in the form of being allowed to leverage State of Minnesota funding directed toward the water tower construction as a leveraged financial match toward the federal CDS (USDA) funding -

Reported that JPJ Engineering talked with review engineers at the Minnesota Department of Health and was told that everything submitted regarding the water tower construction looks good; a bid opening date of October 14, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. is scheduled at City Hall –

Indicated no new information has been received from the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority regarding the funding allocation (and its eligible elements) for the water main loop project –

Noted that the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) needs to be modified to reflect items requested by the USDA in their review, and that that updating activity is in process -

Administrator Jeffries:

1. Noted that the next step on the City of Buhl Comprehensive Plan Update process is to conduct a public input session to discuss important elements of the plan update with interested residents and stakeholders –

Two (2) public input sessions have been scheduled with Arrowhead Regional Development Commission Planning (ARDC Planning), the consultant spearheading the update process – and the public, on –

September 22 (Monday) at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall; and
September 29 (Monday) at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall.

Councilor Towner (BEDA Update):

Provided an update on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) meeting of July 25, 2025 – including:

The BEDA board requests a joint meeting be held with the City Council and the Costin Group, the City's public relations and governmental relations consultant, to highlight initiatives that the Costin Group is and has been focusing on - on behalf of the City of Buhl – this will be set up with the Costin Group;

Received an update on conditions, comments, and maintenance and repair items requested or needed by tenants at Whiteside Industrial Park;

Received information from staff on and about the City of Buhl Storefront Renovation Loan program and indicated its desire to re-establish this program before the end of the year;

Received an update on the status of tenant leases at Whiteside Industrial Park;

Inquired as to the status of establishing a position in the B2 Bank Elevate Business Savings program – this was approved by BEDA and the Administrator will establish said position with a one (1) unit commitment of \$250,000.00; and

Received an update on proposals sought and/or received for upgraded video surveillance packages potentially available for Whiteside Industrial Park.

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

Aaron Schweiger, Principal, Zenith Property Management; and
Terry Perensteiner, Project Manager and General Contractor, Zenith Property Management.

The above two (2) individuals addressed the City Council with regard to a potential project related to the State Street Apartments located at 212 State Street –

Zenith Property Management ("Zenith") is the owner of the State Street Apartments and the currently unoccupied structure known as the Buhl Laundromat located at 206 State Street.

Zenith (and the City) would like to see the demolition of the laundromat property and development and construction of additional residential space at that location (6 living units at the present time, to accommodate sufficient off-street parking), and would like to partner with the City to accomplish this –

A further phase of this project will be to renovate the existing State Street Apartments -

Zenith will be seeking funding opportunities for this project, including a housing grant with the IRRR; the City may well be the appropriate organization to seek out these opportunities – the City would act as the fiduciary -

It is anticipated that the City will seek out these funding opportunities and make applications(s) for such –

Three (3) grants have been identified at present –

- 1) IRRR Housing grant;
- 2) St. Louis County CDBG grant; and
- 3) Youth training grant (IRRR).

Zenith has asked the City to consider applying for these grants on behalf of Zenith, and to subsequently enter into a development agreement with Zenith to complete the project –

The project intends to provide workforce market rate housing units in the new building intended for middle-income working families –

Mr. Perensteiner informed the City Council that he had very recently met with Rock Ridge High School Students, and that Zenith will offer "training" opportunities to students as construction progresses – bringing youth out of the classroom and onto the job site for real-world training and class credit (an IRRR grant may be available for this initiative) -

Zenith will also look to other area schools and school districts to offer these training opportunities (and help develop careers for these students and potential future leaders) -

Zenith highlighted that they would not be looking for tax abatement or creation of a TIF district, but rather they would fund the project however are relying on the IRRR and St. Louis County grants -.

The project is preliminarily budgeted at \$1.8 - \$2.1 million, and Zenith is looking for a minimum committed level of assistance of 40% -

An IRRR Community Development grant may also need to be sought to assist with demolition (of the laundromat) costs –

Mr. Schweiger indicated that “It’s in our best interests to make State Street the best-looking street in Buhl” –

Zenith also indicated they would be looking to see if the City would consider selling to them the BEDA-held property on the corner of Jones Avenue and State Street adjacent to the existing laundromat building –

Miscellaneous discussion regarding site grade and grading, both for the new build as well as the existing building, ensued –

There is also some consideration of offering some commercial retail office space in the new building -

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

City Council Working Session – August 14, 2025

Regular City Council Meeting – September 2, 2025

B. Claims:

i.	Payroll #18	\$ 15,908.52
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ii.	A/P	\$ <u>93,212.05</u>
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TOTAL	\$ 109,120.57
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Motion by Kealy to approve the Consent Agenda minutes and claims as presented.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

A. Present Proposed 2026 Preliminary Budget.

City staff has been working on establishing a preliminary budget for fiscal year 2026 throughout the last several weeks and months.

Staff's construction of that proposed preliminary budget is now complete, and is presented here to the City Council for evaluation and review.

Staff recommends further evaluation and review by the City Council occur prior to September 30, 2025, when the Preliminary Tax Levy is due to be certified to the St. Louis County Auditor, and prior to December 26, 2025, when the final fiscal year 2026 budget is required to be approved and adopted and the final tax levy is due to be certified to the St. Louis County Auditor.

It was stressed that this is a preliminary budget only, and will change prior to becoming final.

Informational only.

B. Consider Adoption of 2026 Preliminary Budget.

Subsequent to recent discussions concerning the individual line items which comprise the Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget, the budget was presented for approval and adoption –

Recommendation is to approve the preliminary 2026 budget as presented by staff.

Motion by Towner to approve the preliminary 2026 budget as presented by staff.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The preliminary budget was presented at:

Total Revenues –	\$ 900,565
Total Expenses –	\$ 1,420,892
Preliminary Projected Shortfall -	\$ 521,000

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consider Approval of Resolution 25-35 Authorizing the City of Buhl to Adopt and Certify the Proposed Tax Levy for Fiscal Year Payable 2026.

City staff has prepared the fiscal year 2026 proposed preliminary budget, which was presented earlier in this City Council meeting.

The City needs to adopt a preliminary tax levy and certify this to the St. Louis County Auditor on or prior to September 30, 2025.

After thoughtful and detailed analysis and evaluation, staff has identified a proposed levy amount of \$ 521,000.00 required to balance the proposed 2026 General Fund budget.

Final budget and tax levy amounts are due before the end of fiscal year 2025, which sunsets on December 26.

Recommendation is to adopt the Preliminary Tax Levy for fiscal year payable 2026 in the amount of \$ 521,000.00.

Motion by Kealy to adopt the Preliminary Tax Levy for fiscal year payable 2026 in the amount of \$ 521,000.00, and to adopt Resolution 25-35 concerning the same.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consider Approval of Resolution 25-36 Renewing City of Buhl Master Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement.

The City of Buhl's current Master Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement are expiring soon. This will require executing new agreements.

The Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement, as Amended, establishes the ability for the City of Buhl, through its Prosecuting Attorney, to access and use State of Minnesota, Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) systems and tools, including but not limited to Court Records, to assist the City in the efficient performance of its duties as required or authorized by law or court rule.

The Master Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) by and between the City of Buhl and the State of Minnesota, acting through its Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), creates a method for the City to access certain BCA systems, including a criminal justice data communications network, and to memorialize the requirements incumbent on the City to obtain access to these systems and the limitations on this access.

Costs associated with the Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement are not specifically known, and costs associated with the Master Joint Powers Agreement is presumed (from prior knowledge) to be \$50/month.

Given the association and relationship between the City and the City of Chisholm Police Department, it may be reasonable to clarify if the need to be a party to either or both of these agreements remains necessary.

The City Attorney recommends executing both of these agreements.

Recommendation is to approve executing both of these agreements.

Motion by Towner to approve executing a new Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement and a new Master Joint Powers Agreement with the State of Minnesota and to memorialize these arrangements through adopting Resolution 25-36 concerning the same.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Present Proposed Scheduled Dates for Comprehensive Plan Update Public Input Sessions with ARDC Planning.

The City has retained ARDC Planning, a division of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), for consulting services related to updating the City of Buhl's Comprehensive Plan.

This Plan was most recently updated in 2015.

A portion of the scope of project activities is to engage the community and involve them in decision-making to create a community-supported plan.

This is proposed through a public open house/input session to provide information on the community conditions and proposed updates to the plan's goals and objectives.

Two (2) public input sessions have been scheduled:

Monday, September 22, 2025;	6:00 p.m.; and
Monday, September 29, 2025,	6:00 p.m.

Both sessions will be held in the City Council Chambers in City Hall.

Additional session(s) may be considered if relevant -

All residents are invited and encouraged to attend one or both of these sessions to contribute to the outcome of the Comprehensive Plan update -

Informational only.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was questioned as to whether these sessions should be videotaped –

The videographer indicated that he would be available to do so -

Motion by Matthews to have the Comprehensive Plan Update Public Input sessions with ARDC Planning scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on September 22 and September 29, 2025 video recorded and posted on the City website for access by the public.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consider Approving Proposal of North Shore HR Consulting, LLC for Professional Project Services Related to the Hiring Process for the City Clerk/Treasurer Position.

The City has received a proposal from North Shore HR Consulting, LLC, for project services related to the search and hiring process for the City of Buhl Clerk/Treasurer position.

Rovena Claxton, Principal of North Shore Human Resource Consulting, has submitted a project services proposal to manage and administer a number of items related to this hiring process.

This proposal was submitted subsequent to conversations between North Shore HR Consulting, LLC, and City of Buhl representative(s).

The project fee for the proposed services is established at \$ 1,850.00 and would be covered by the previously approved budget for the position search process.

Recommendation is to approve engaging North Shore HR Consulting, LLC for these services.

Motion by Kealy to approve the proposal of North Shore HR Consulting, LLC for project services related to the search and hiring process for the City of Buhl Clerk/Treasurer position in the amount of \$ 1,850.00.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that approximately 74 inquiries have been received by the City to date –

It was also noted that the budgeted line item for this activity has presently expended approximately \$ 1,000 to date, primarily for advertising -

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Consider Applying to the Mn Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation for a Grant Appropriation for Redevelopment of the Former Laundromat Located at 206 State Street.

The City continues to look forward to the redevelopment of Parcel ID #115-0010-01070, the site of the former Buhl Laundromat. As a portion of this redevelopment, demolition and removal of the existing structure located at 206 State Street will need to occur, as the current structure on this property is not a candidate for renewal, refurbishment, or renovation.

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

Zenith Property Management recently presented to the City of Buhl City Council their thoughts and plans for redevelopment, which include constructing an additional multi-family residential dwelling on this location, with attendant parking facilities. It is apparent that Zenith Property Management will be reliant on the City of Buhl to assist in these efforts.

In order to accomplish this, it is anticipated that the City of Buhl will have to act as the fiscal agent to manage any funding which this project may receive, since this funding would be appropriated to the City of Buhl and not to a private party (e.g. Zenith Property Management).

The City could assist in this process by being a party to any or all opportunities for funding appropriations for which this project may be eligible.

Recommendation is for the City to apply for a grant appropriation to assist these redevelopment efforts.

Motion by Towner to direct the Administrator to apply for any and all grant opportunities that this project may be eligible for from the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, and to expend these funds, if awarded, in an acceptable and compliant manner.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that there may be other agencies or organizations for which funding opportunities may be available, and perhaps this action should be modified or expanded to consider these -

Motion and support amended to include other entities not affiliated with the State of Minnesota.

Amended Motion by Towner to direct the Administrator to apply for any and all grant opportunities that this project may be eligible for from the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation and any other agencies that may be associated with these opportunities, and to expend these funds, if awarded, in an acceptable and compliant manner.

Amended Support by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Consider Resolution 25-37 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 the 2025 Halloween Party activities from the following:

- Tom & Jerry's, Chisholm - \$ 20.00 cash.

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 Towner to authorize the City to accept a donation from Tom & Jerry's, Chisholm, Mn to the City and its' Recreation Board as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl 2025 Halloween Party and associated recreational programs, events, and activities; to execute Resolution 25-37 concerning the same; and to acknowledge this donation with great appreciation.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Thanks was extended to Tom & Jerry's -

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

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Reminder of September 24, 2025 Budget Planning Working Session.

The preliminary budget for fiscal year 2026 was introduced earlier today at this City Council meeting.

The City also adopted a proposed tax levy for fiscal year 2026 earlier in this meeting.

The City must certify this proposed tax levy for fiscal year 2026 to the St. Louis County Auditor on or before September 30, 2025.

The final budget and tax levy is anticipated to be prepared and completed in December 2025, and the final tax levy must be certified to the St. Louis County Auditor by December 26, 2025.

Further evaluation and review is warranted in order to achieve a workable fiscal year 2026 budget that is acceptable to the City Council. Staff has preliminarily scheduled five (5) dedicated working sessions for further 2026 budget evaluation and review with the City Council in the near future.

These (2025) dates (if needed) are presently set for: September 24; October 16; October 30; November 13; and December 11, all at 6:00 p.m., in the City Council chambers in City Hall.

PLEASE NOTE that the Wednesday, September 24 budget working session was originally scheduled for Thursday, September 25, but has been rescheduled due to City Councilor conflicts.

Further budget working session(s) as scheduled above will be held at those times should additional evaluation and review of the fiscal year 2026 budget be necessary or desired.

Informational only.

J. Consider Authorizing Range Repair Service to Perform Repair and Maintenance Services on a Commercial Range at the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center.

The City has been made aware of operational issues with one of the commercial ranges in the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center, located at 302 Frantz St. in Buhl.

The facility is owned by the City of Buhl.

Specifically, there is an issue with the pilot light ignition system on the right-hand range in the facility – creating an issue with igniting the oven in that appliance –

It appears this situation can be rectified by adjusting and calibrating the pilot light system on that range.

The City has recently arranged for a commercial kitchen service company to engage in other service/repair to the commercial stoves/ranges at the Senior Center.

Staff has identified and recommends Range Repair Service of 108 S 15th Ave W, Virginia, Mn, as capable of providing these services.

It is estimated that these services may be realized for a cost not to exceed \$400.00, although actual costs will be realized on a time and materials basis.

Recommendation is for the City to authorize Range Repair Service to perform these services.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to authorize Range Repair Service to Perform Repair and Maintenance Services on the Pilot Light Ignition System on a Commercial Range at the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

K. Post for Seasonal Winter Rink Attendants.

This item for securing rink attendants for the winter season will be placed on the October 7, 2025 City Council meeting agenda.

L. Consider CPR Training for City Staff.

Councilor Teska-Erickson requested to address CPR certifications among City Staff –

This item to consider offering CPR training, certification, and recertification, if applicable, will be placed on the October 7, 2025 City Council meeting agenda.

M. Councilors' Comments.

Councilor Teska-Erickson –

Addressed the need for new radios for the Fire Department, and indicated that used equipment may also be eligible for grant funding, and indicated that herself and Fire Chief Stuart Lehman will get together with the Administrator to get this process underway -

Councilor Towner –

Noted that Halloween is coming up and that the Recreation Board is working hard on the parade and the party planned for that day -

Noted that the Recreation Boards will again be partnering with St. Louis County Youth-In-Action -

Noted also that the City of Kinney and Great Scott Township will also be partnering with Buhl for these festivities –

“Awesome” prizes are also anticipated to be issued!

N. Mayor's Comments.

None further.

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Towner to adjourn.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk