

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
11/4/2025

Tuesday, November 4, 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:

The Administrator noted a correction in the Consent Agenda Minutes – the City Council Budget Working Session (minutes) was for the October 16, 2025 session, not the October 30, 2025 session -

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as corrected.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Public Works Foreman Trent Pink:

Noted that he recently attended the Minnesota Power annual municipal customer meeting -

No changes or deviations in what is going on locally was identified, however -

Commented that nationally, electrical load demand is increasing for the first time in decades, primarily due to the increase in the number of (computerized) data centers and the increase in power consumption related to these facilities -

Otherwise, the Public Works Department is getting equipment and the city ready for the winter season –

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Gave an update on the water tower project –

Noted he did speak with the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority (MPFA) regarding receiving the water tower construction bid results and noted we need to let the MPFA know where the gap funding will be sourced from -

Noted he spoke with MacGuire Iron, the low bidder on the water tower construction project, regarding identifying potential value engineering items for the project, which included –

- 1) Extending the completion date to 2027 – potential savings \$45,000;
- 2) Delaying the installation of cathodic protection – potential savings \$30,000; and
- 3) Removing the underground vault below the base cone – and an upper (ground level) equipment room - potential savings \$42,000.

Noted that a heated, ground level equipment room is probably desired –

Deferred any other comments to those which may arise in individual agenda items -

Administrator Jeffries:

1. Sent a shout out and extended the City's sincerest thanks to the City of Buhl Recreation Board and all others who helped and assisted with the city Halloween celebration activities on October 25 –

It was a great day with a number of great events, and everyone involved should be very proud!

2. The next step in the City of Buhl Comprehensive Planning Update process will be to have another meeting with the City of Buhl Long-Range

Planning and Zoning Commission and ARDC, the planning consultant, to continue to incorporate residents' comments into the draft plan update, and to begin honing the language of the plan –

No date has yet been set for this meeting –

The process remains on schedule to be completed by the end of the calendar year -

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

Christopher Erickson and Jennifer Reyes; 100 Stubler Drive, Buhl, MN –

1. Noted that they are the owners of the above property, upon which no structure presently stands, and which, through the Stubler Pit covenants and restrictions, was scheduled to have a single-family home constructed upon it by this date;
2. Provided their version of the sequence of events, timeline, and potential future plans regarding this property;
3. Indicated their plans for commencing construction of the single-family home in the spring of 2026; and
4. Noted their plan is to relocate a structure from Parkville to Buhl.

A general conversation regarding aesthetic covenants ensued –

The discussed plan seems to meet with approval from the City Council.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

Regular City Council Meeting – October 21, 2025

City Council Budget Working Session – October 16, 2025

B. Claims:

i.	Payroll #22	\$ 15,666.01
	Payroll 10 (October 2025)	\$ 2,625.00
ii.	A/P	<u>\$ 31,321.72</u>
TOTAL		\$ 49,612.73

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

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

A. Update On Status of Open Commission Vacancies.

The City recently posted Notices of Vacancy for a number of openings on certain City of Buhl boards and commissions.

Specifically, the following was posted as vacant:

One (1) opening on the Buhl Long-Range Planning and Zoning Commission with a term expiring December 31, 2025;

One (1) opening on the Buhl Recreation Commission with a term expiring December 31, 2025; and

One (1) opening on the Buhl Economic Development Authority with a term expiring December 31, 2026.

The notice period for all three of these postings was closed at 11:00 a.m. on October 31, 2025.

No Expressions Of Interest were received from any individuals with regard to any of these vacancies.

These notices have been re-posted with no notice posting closing date specified; all will remain open until filled.

As Expressions Of Interest are received by City staff, they will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration and/or action at the next City Council meeting following their receipt.

Until that time, these vacancies all remain open.

Informational only.

B. Consider Resolution 25-41 Authorizing the City to Apply to the Mn Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation for a Housing Grant Appropriation for the 206 State Street Redevelopment Project.

The City has been working toward re-developing the commercial property located on the east side of State Street, and specifically the site of the former laundromat structure located at 206 State Street.

The proposed project includes the demolition and removal of the existing vacant laundromat structure, and sitework and construction activities related to an eight-unit (8-unit) expansion of the State Street Apartments to provide additional housing units.

The City seeks to apply for an \$800,000 grant appropriation from the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) Housing (Grant) Program for funding assistance to carry this project forward.

The City is working with the property owner and project developer, Zenith Property Management, LLC of Duluth, MN, who will construct, own, and operate the new residential structure.

A resolution supporting the project, authorizing making application for grant funding, and committing the City to accept potential grant funds solely for the purpose of financial support of eligible project activities is required by the IRRR.

Said Resolution 25-41 has been prepared and is presented to the City Council for consideration and potential approval.

Recommendation is to approve this application and adopt this resolution.

Motion by Loeffler to authorize the City to make application to and accept grant funds from the State of Mn Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Housing Program for the State Street Housing Re-Development project.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Update on Status of Damian Addition Phase III Residential Development Project (JPJ Project #22-059) and Consider Closing Contract with Prime Contractor.

The City entered an agreement with 2 EZ, Inc. dba Jola & Sopp Excavating, related to the Damian Addition Phase III project (JPJ Project #22-059), whereupon 2 EZ, Inc. assumed the role of prime contractor.

The starting date of this project was September 1, 2022, with substantial completion by October 15, 2022. Projected completion of the project was established at June 15, 2023.

Substantial completion was not achieved by June 15, 2023, and as of this date there remain unfinished work items related to the project, including a number of punch list related items.

At issue here are unfulfilled seeding and (land) restoration items, as well as most, if not all items on the May 14, 2025 punch list.

City Engineer JPJ Engineering, Inc., suggests that the remaining work items are not going to be attended to, and is recommending that the project be closed out with the prime contractor, and that any remaining unfulfilled work items be sourced to other vendor(s).

Recommendation is to pay 2 EZ., Inc. dba Jola & Sopp Excavating, Pay Estimate No. 5 (Final) for construction services related to Project No. 22-059 in the amount of \$ 24,572.17 and to close this project out with the prime contractor.

Motion by _____ to approve payment of Final Payment Estimate No. 5 for Project No. 22-059 to 2 EZ., Inc. dba Jola & Sopp Excavating, in the amount of \$ 24,572.17.

Supported by _____.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

JPJ's communications to 2 EZ, Inc., have not been replied to as of yet -

Engineer Jamnick indicated that there are a number of landscaping, restoration, and punch list items which have not been completed –

Engineer Jamnick recommended releasing the retainage –

After further discussion, it was recommended to hold off on this item until early next year (2026) to see whether any additional work is completed -

No motion offered; item tabled due to the lack of a motion; no action taken.

D. Consider Approving JPJ Invoice #6 for Project #09-061 – Water Storage Improvements - Engineering Services in the Amount of \$7,620.00.

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

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

Specifically, these charges are identified as Topographic Survey services in the amount of \$ 840.00, (engineering) Design services in the amount of \$ 4,280.00, and Bidding services in the amount of \$ 2,500.00, all performed and remitted by JPJ Engineering, Inc.

This amount now represents 100% completion of all project service components with the exception of Construction Management services (which will be ongoing throughout construction).

Recommendation is to approve and remit to JPJ Engineering, Inc. invoice No. 6 for professional services related to Project No. 09-061 in the amount of \$ 7,620.00 upon validation of the services performed.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve payment of Invoice No. 6 for Project No. 09-061 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 7,620.00.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Update on Proposed 2026 Preliminary Budget.

The City has been undertaking the work of establishing the 2026 city budget since early September 2025.

The preliminary budget was approved by the City Council for consideration on September 16, 2025.

Subsequently, two (2) dedicated budget planning working sessions have been conducted by the City Council; three (3) additional dedicated budget planning working sessions remain and are scheduled in November – December 2025.

Additional dedicated budget planning working sessions will be scheduled and conducted, if needed.

Presently, the process is continuing to reviewing individual expense line items for each Department of the City, in order to attempt to identify items which may be adjusted downward to reduce the overall financial impact of the City budget.

Approximately 90% of the Departments of the City have been evaluated to date. Additional subsequent activities will include evaluating the anticipated revenues to be realized in the next budget period, and finalizing budget line items to determine the amount of gap funding that will need to be generated through the city levy process.

The schedule aims to have this exercise finalized by December 16, 2025, and approve a final budget for submittal to the State of Minnesota and a final levy to be certified by the St. Louis County Auditor by December 26, 2025.

Informational only.

F. Update on Progress of City Clerk/Treasurer Selection Process.

The Mayor will provide relevant and current information regarding the status of the employment search and candidate selection process for the City Clerk/Treasurer –

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The posting for the position closed on October 15, 2025; thirteen (13) qualified candidates were identified –

A state-required 100-point scoring system has been instituted, with desired several professional categories, including:

Leadership Skills;
Communication;
Financial Acumen;
Technical Skills;
Community Focus;
Values Alignment; and
Veteran's Status.

A Special City Council meeting will be scheduled for November 10, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. to conduct interviewing sessions with two (2) candidate finalists -

Informational only.

G. Consider Resolution 25-42 Authorizing the City to Accept and Receive Various Donations to the City of Buhl Recreation Board.

The City has received various donations from local businesses 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 recreational events and other related recreational activities.

Specifically, the City has received donations of goods or currency for recreational programming from the following:

- Super One Foods - Virginia - \$ 50.00 gift card;
- B2 Bank – Mt. Iron, Buhl - \$ 650.00 valued Gift Baskets;
- Village Inn – Virginia - \$ 60.00 cash; and
- Walmart – Hibbing - \$ 50.00 gift card.

The City wishes to recognize these contributions as 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 Teska-Erickson to authorize the City to accept donations from Super One Foods, Virginia; B2 Bank, Mt Iron & Buhl; Village Inn, Virginia; and Walmart, Hibbing to the City and its' Recreation Board as financial contributions to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl recreational programs, events, and activities, to execute Resolution 25-42 concerning the same, and to acknowledge these donations with great appreciation.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Sincere thanks was expressed to all donors.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Consider Resolution 25-43 Authorizing the City to Accept and Receive a Donation to the City of Buhl Quasquicentennial (125th) City Celebration.

The City has received a donation from a local business who has offered goods or currency to the City of Buhl as a financial contribution to help offset costs

related to the City of Buhl Quasquicentennial (125th) Anniversary Celebration slated for June of 2026.

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

- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church – Buhl - \$ 250.00 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 Kealy to authorize the City to accept a donation from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church to the City as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl 2026 Quasquicentennial (125th) City-wide celebration programs, events, and activities, to execute Resolution 25-43 concerning the same, and to acknowledge this donation with great appreciation.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Sincere thanks was extended to the church!

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

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Notice of and Invitation to Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) Annual Dinner and Board Member Nominations for 2026.

The Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS) was created in 1939 by the joining together of the Range Civic Association and the Range Municipalities Committee to promote legislation beneficial to its membership.

The main function of RAMS is to monitor proposed State and Federal legislation and determine how it may affect Association member units of government and school districts. RAMS works closely with the Iron Range Delegation, the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB), and area economic development entities to further community development and quality of life for all member units.

The City is a long-time member of this organization, as are most cities, townships, and school districts throughout the Iron Range.

RAMS has announced notice of its 2025 Annual Dinner and Meeting - Please note the following:

The meeting will be Tuesday, December 9, 2025, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center located in Virginia.

Members, sponsors, and their invited guests are welcome at this meeting.

Tony Sertich, President and CEO of the Northland Foundation, will deliver the keynote address - "What Does it Mean to Serve the Iron Range".

Board member elections will also be conducted at this event. Information has been distributed on the board of directors nominating and election process.

RSVP is required by December 2, 2025 for this event.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that everyone on the council is invited to attend -

Informational only.

J. Notice of and Invitation to PathBlazers Snowmobile Club.
Snowmobile/Club Supporter/Appreciation Dinner.

The PathBlazers Snowmobile Club of Chisholm/Hibbing & Side Lake is a very active trail management and maintenance organization in this area.

The PathBlazers are very appreciative to the City for allowing them the permitted use to have a portion of their trail traverse through the City of Buhl, spurring positive winter economic impact activity for the community and its businesses.

The PathBlazers have invited the City Council to attend and participate in their 3rd Annual Snowmobile/Land Owner/Club Supporter Appreciation Dinner.

This event will be held Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., at Valentini's Supper Club in Chisholm, Mn.

There will be a (delicious) Italian buffet dinner, followed up with a very short business meeting.

This is a great opportunity to meet and network with club leadership and members, and to kick off the upcoming winter snowmobiling and holiday season!

The Administrator will complete the RSVPs for those who indicate they wish to attend.

Additional information regarding this event is attached to this memorandum.

Informational only.

K. Reminder of November 13, 2025 Budget Planning Working Session.

The preliminary budget for fiscal year 2026 continues to be reviewed and evaluated by the City Council.

Dedicated budget planning working sessions of the City Council thus far have been conducted on September 24, 2025, October 16, 2025, and October 30, 2025.

The final budget and tax levy certified to the St. Louis County Auditor by December 26, 2025.

Additional further evaluation and review continues to be warranted in order to achieve a workable and acceptable fiscal year 2026 budget. Two (2) additional dedicated budget planning working sessions remain for further 2026 budget evaluation and review with the City Council in the near future.

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

Further budget working session(s) in addition to those scheduled above will be held if needed should additional evaluation and review of the fiscal year 2026 budget be necessary or desired.

Informational only.

L. Other Business.

None.

M. Councilors' Comments.

Councilor Loeffler –

Noted that calendar parking has begun! Tickets (or at least warnings) have begun to be issued!

Councilor Teska-Erickson –

Noted that the Fire Department is desperately seeking volunteers to join the department –

N. Mayor's Comments.

Noted the process of selecting the City Clerk/Treasurer is moving into its final phases –

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Teska-Erickson to adjourn.

Supported by Towner.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.



James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk