

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3/17/2026

Tuesday, March 17, 2026,

6:30 P.M.

1. CALLED TO ORDER by Mayor Matthews at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present were Mayor Matthews, and Councilors Kealy, Loeffler, Teska-Erickson, and Towner.

Also present was City Engineer Jamnick, Utilities Foreman Pink, and Clerk-Treasurer Jaeger.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

Motion by Councilor Kealy to open the public hearing at 6:30 p.m.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passes unanimously.

A. Cannabis Ordinance Second read

With legalization of Cannabis in the state of MN, local governments are encouraged to create ordinances, zoning, and fees for cannabis use and sale. The City of Buhl has had an interested party who would like to start a cannabis microbusiness. With this business prospect a draft Cannabis Ordinance was created.

No public comment was made.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to close the public hearing at 6:31 p.m.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

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

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

5. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Utilities Foreman Pink

Utilities Foreman Pink stated that the City of Buhl has won “Minnesota’s Best Tasting Water” award for the second time in three years and in February 2027 he will be representing Minnesota in Washington DC for the chance at winning “Best Tasting Water in the Nation.” Pink also stated that there is only one other city that has won “Minnesota’s Best Tasting Water” more than once and that was over a twenty-year gap.

Councilor Loeffler stated that Buhl is making history!

Utilities Foreman Pink stated that the city has been working on cleaning up the tree damage in the campground and on the disc golf course. Pink stated that the city has been using Chisholm’s grapple and the Elm Tree Utilization Board’s woodchipper. Pink stated that the amount of tree damage that was incurred has caused a mess and that he has been working with Clerk-Treasurer Jaeger on other options. Pink stated that he would talk with contractors and loggers to see what the best option for cleanup will be.

Utilities Foreman Pink stated that the city has cleaned up the debris pile on the easement between Whiteside and Seville. Pink stated that there were still some frozen portions of the pile that won’t be able to be removed until it thaws.

City Engineer Jamnick

City Engineer Jamnick stated that he has a couple of updates on the USDA Water System Improvement Project. Jamnick stated that he has received a cost estimate for an alternative solution for the ground storage water tank. Jamnick stated that initially relining of the tank had been planned but after the assessment was completed on the ground storage tank a full replacement may be necessary. Jamnick stated that a meeting is scheduled for Friday to talk about the options and how the city should proceed with the options of refurbishing vs new build of the ground storage tank. Jamnick stated that the PER will be resubmitted to the USDA after the decision has been made on the ground storage tank.

Jamnick stated that he had received an acknowledgment from the MN State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Jamnick stated that they liked the Area of Potential Effect (APE) maps that had been submitted.

6. CITIZENS FORUM:

None

7. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Minutes:

- i. Working Session – February 26, 2026
- ii. Regular Council Meeting – March 3, 2026
- iii. Special Council Meeting – March 9, 2026

B. Claims

i. Payroll #5	\$15,605.53
ii. A/P #1	\$95,253.64
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TOTAL	\$110,859.17

Motion by Councilor Towner to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Councilor Kealy.

Motion passes unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Approve Cannabis Ordinance and Ordinance Summary for Publishing

The City Council has scheduled two Public Hearings for public comment and has had a First and Second read of the Cannabis Ordinance.

Motion by Councilor Towner to approve the City Cannabis Ordinance which will go into effect upon publication.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to approve the Summary of the Cannabis Ordinance and of the publishing of it in the Hometown Focus.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Community Roller-Skating Program

Veronica Valento the Owner/Operator of Rolling Skate Rentals LLC stated that she is looking for spaces to host community recreation events. Valento stated that they are currently in the Old School in Cotton until April and are looking at spaces for the summer.

Councilor Kealy stated that she has a concern about summer rentals because the floor in the Community Center gets wet when there is high humidity. At those times there is a lot of maintenance that needs to be done to dry the floors.

Valento stated that their group is made up of volunteers. They ask for spaces that are free and donated by the city or partnered with a recreation department. Then their volunteers do all of the labor. They set up, tear down, clean the bathrooms, and any other needs that may arise.

Valento asked if they would be able to store their skates in the Community Center, so they don't have to haul them back and forth during their event.

Councilor Kealy stated that if the city had a schedule of days, they would be able to dry the floors. Kealy stated that opening the doors and running fans helps to dry out the Community Center floor.

Valento stated that they usually run every other weekend in a month.

Councilor Kealy asked if they rent out for birthdays or other events.

Valento stated that they will work in coordination with the venue. The people would need to rent the venue and then Rolling Skate Rentals LLC would offer the same rates.

Valento stated that they are doing this as recreation for the community at an affordable price. Valento stated they don't do this to make a profit; they do this because they like what they're doing.

Valento stated that they do advertise. They do press releases for the community, podcasts, and recently had a segment on PBS North The Slice that will be airing tomorrow. They also promote the program and the city that is hosting them.

Councilor Kealy asked if there was an opportunity for the rec board or another group to sell pop and popcorn at these events.

Valento stated that it was encouraged and preferred. They like to partner with Boy Scout, Girl Scout Troops, sports teams, or booster teams because the proceeds go back to the communities. They like to make those connections because the groups get something out of it.

Mayor Matthews stated that the only concerns he had had been covered. It is a bit labor intensive to get the building open and prepared for before an event. Since you have a group that is willing to put in the time to get the floors dry for safety, the concern has been covered.

Motion by Councilor Teska-Erickson to approve rental of the Community Center and waive rental fees for Rolling Skates Rentals community roller-skating program.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. 125th asking permission to use parking lot for Polka Band

The 125th Celebration Committee would like to ask the City Council for permission for a polka band to use the parking lot of City Hall during the 125th celebration.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to approve use of a polka band to use City Hall's parking lot during the 125th celebration.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

Sheila LaBarge read a letter on behalf of the 125th Celebration Committee and would like to thank the City of Buhl for their continued support for this special milestone in our community. We are excited to bring residents and visitors together on June 26th and 27th. The Committee is asking permission to use the City Hall Parking Lot and the grassy area for potential entertainment on Friday afternoon once City Hall is closed. The committee would also like to have a bingo fund raiser at the Curling Club in May, and would the city be able to waive the fees if the committee does not have the funding to rent it. The Committee would also like to extend an invitation to the mayor and the council to join in the 125th parade. Thank you for your donation of the 125th t-shirts. The committee has ordered 150 shirts and since March 15th we have sold 54. Thank you for your time and consideration and we appreciate your continued support helping make the 125th celebration memorable.

Mayor Matthews asked if a date in May would work for the Curling Club.

Councilor Kealy stated that the Curling Club will be done but the ice will not be out by then.

Resident Mel Staffaroni suggested that the 125th Celebration Committee should use the Senior Center because they are already set up for bingo.

Councilor Kealy stated that if the committee found someone to supply the gambling license the Senior Centers bingo supplies could be used.

D. Real Estate Agents

I. Trent Carda with Mirabella Realty

Carda stated that he is not an appraiser and does not do appraisals but does comparative market analysis or is also known as brokers price of opinion. These are simplified versions of an appraisal. Carda talked about the comparative market analysis that he recently did for the City

of Chisholm to give the City Council an idea of what he could do for Buhl.

Mayor Matthews suggested not making a motion at this time and tabling this agenda item so that the council can gain more information from other agencies to make a knowledgeable decision and choice of agency to hire.

Councilor Turner asked Carda if he had a price in mind for this project.

Carda stated that typically it's \$350.00 per lot but if it were a smaller lot he would take that into consideration.

Councilor Kealy stated that Buhl's lots in the Stubler Pit and Damian II additions are already platted.

Carda stated that the price is negotiable and it is hard to make a judgment without seeing the entire scope of the project.

Councilor Towner pointed out that the city does not know at this time how many lots they will need valuations on.

The agenda item was tabled until more information was gathered.

E. Community Center Lighting Update

The City of Buhl has cleared the environmental review for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The city will not be able to complete any work on the lighting project until May 1, 2026. The city will also need to follow bidding requirements from CDBG.

The city was also selected for a \$10,000 Northeast CERT Seed Grant and an IRRR Business Energy Retrofit grant through AEOA for up to \$25,000 (they will pay 1/3 of project costs).

Councilor Loeffler pointed out that funding awards have not been finalized by St. Louis County.

Clerk Jaeger stated that is why the funding isn't reimbursable until after May 1, 2026.

Councilor Towner asked if the funds could be used towards the need of an air exchanger at the Senior Center.

Clerk Jaeger does not believe that the awarded funds could be used for the Senior Center.

Mayor Matthews stated that the Senior Center should be handled separately from the lighting issue.

Motion by Councilor Towner to approve putting the lighting renovation for the Community Center out for bid.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Motion passed unanimously.

F. Community Center Cleaning Person Job Advertisement

The City Council discussed hiring a cleaning person for the community center during the curling off season. This Person/Company would clean once monthly and before and after any rental events.

Motion by Councilor Towner to approve staff to publish a job advertisement in the Hometown Focus for a cleaning person/company to clean the community center during the curling off season.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

Clerk Jaeger asked how long the post should run for.

Mayor Matthews stated that one week would be sufficient.

Councilor Towner stated that the city could also share the posting online after it has been published.

G. Combine PINs of City Owned Stubler Lots

The City Council discussed combining the PINs of the city owned Stubler Pit properties. Each Lot is made up of two PINs and the council decided it would be easier to deal with the property and sell them if they only had one PIN.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to approve staff to consolidate each double and a half city owned lot in the Stubler Pit Addition into one PIN.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Motion passed unanimously.

H. Stubler and Damian Vacant Lot Ordinance

The Stubler and Damian Additions have three lots which the owners would like to still build on. They do not want to convey the lots back to the city, but it is unlikely that any will have homes built by the end of the year.

The attached Vacant Lot Ordinance allows the city to regulate the empty lots in these areas. Instead of having to convey the lots back to the city, the owners will pay a registration fee of \$1,500.00 annually until their dwellings are built.

Mayor Matthews stated that the registration fee of \$1,500 until the owners get a building permit.

Councilor Kealy stated that the owners then could just keep renewing their building permit which would be less expensive than paying the registration fee.

Councilor Towner pointed out that the fees for the building permits do not go to the city they go to the building inspector and state.

Councilor Kealy stated that the \$1,500 could seem low over time with property taxes going up every year.

Clerk Jaeger stated that the council could set the registration fee on the fee schedule instead of putting it in the ordinance. That way if the council wanted to change the fee it would be easier to do so. The Ordinance would just state that there is a registration fee without having the amount.

Councilor Towner stated that he would like to take out 151.100 Exemptions 2) Any Vacant Lot for which the owner possesses a valid building permit for construction of a new dwelling on such vacant lot.

Councilor Towner asked the council how the city defines a lot. The Stubler Pit addition lots are made up of a lot and a half. If a resident buys two adjoining parcels and combines them into one parcel, now they are paying a registration fee for one parcel instead of two.

Councilor Loeffler asked the council what if they built a house on one lot and then bought an adjoining lot and combined the parcels. Do the owners have to pay a registration fee or not because there is a dwelling on the combined parcels.

Councilor Kealy stated that once a resident buys their lots, they can do what they want with them.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to schedule a public hearing for the first read of the Stubler Pit and Damian Vacant Lot Ordinance as amended, striking 151.100 Exemptions, 2) and removing the registration fee amount from the Ordinance.

Supported by Councilor Towner.

Motion passed unanimously.

I. BEDA Enabling Resolution

During the City Council Working Session on February 26, 2026, the city council discussed establishing a BEDA Enabling Resolution.

Clerk Jaeger stated during the Working Session that she has found documents pointing to the enabling resolution for BEDA but cannot locate the original document.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to direct staff to draft a BEDA Enabling Resolution.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Councilor Kealy stated that this is an important document to have. The city can't find the paper copy and there isn't a digital copy anywhere. It seems unusual to not have this in a book somewhere. Councilor Kealy recommends looking at our filing system so that this doesn't happen again in the future.

Motion passed unanimously.

J. City of Buhl Semi-Parking Issue

During the City Council Working Session on February 26, 2026, the city council discussed the city semi-parking issue. The council would like to reach out to local businesses to see if they would be able to allow semi-parking overnight at their businesses.

Motion by Councilor Randy to direct staff to reach out to local city businesses on the city's semi-parking issue.

Supported by Councilor Loeffler.

Motion passed unanimously.

K. Jola & Sopp Partial Punch List

During the City Council Working Session on February 26, 2026, the city council discussed wanting to see the Jola-Sopp punch list to see what the city needs to finish.

Motion by Mayor Matthews to discuss the punch list.

Supported by Councilor Kealy.

Mayor Matthews stated that some of the items on the punch list are pretty basic and may have already been remedied by the city crews.

Mayor Matthews asked Utilities Foreman Trent if he had seen the list.

City Engineer Jamnick stated that the punch list was from May of 2026 and some things may have been done or some things may need to be added.

Mayor Matthews amends the motion to give directions to the staff and City Engineer to review the punch list after the snow is gone and revise and update it and present it back to the City Council for direction to get bids.

Motion passed unanimously.

L. On-Call Cell Phone

During the City Council Working Session on February 26, 2026, the city council discussed the purchase of an on-call cell phone for the utilities department. The cell phone would be used by the employee who is on-call for the utilities department that week. The cell phone number would be given to the 911 dispatch as the first person to call during an emergency. This would not affect the union contract or take away overtime opportunities for the union employees.

Motion by Councilor Towner to direct staff to get quotes on an on-call cell phone for the utilities department.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Utilities Foreman Pink spoke against the purchase of a on-call cell phone. Pink stated that it would be cumbersome to carry two cell phones. The way emergencies for utilities work is the residents are supposed to call 911 and the dispatchers call the employees off the list in order. Pink is called first, if he is unavailable then Laborer Lamere is called, and Laborer Pederson is called if either of the others aren't available.

Clerk Jaeger stated that during the second water tower issue this year Councilor Towner had called her to let there know there was an issue. She then called Pink who was on his way to remedy the situation. Councilor Towner, after hearing from the Clerk, was able to update the public on "What's up Buhl" on Facebook. Clerk Jaeger stated that she updated the Council and the laborers to let them know the situation. The city was updated very quickly and the 911 calls and personal calls to Pink also stopped quickly.

Councilor Kealy stated that the on-call phone can be set to forward all calls to the crews' personal phones, that way two phones wouldn't need to be carried.

Councilor Kealy also stated that the on-call phone can be used for the SCADA system when the City of Buhl installs one.

Councilor Towner asked if the SCADA system can be set to multiple phones. Councilor Kealy said there is probably a cost to have it on multiple devices.

Councilor Kealy stated that if the crew were not going to use the on-call phone then it would be a waste to purchase.

Pink stated that there are companies that can monitor the SCADA system and parameters can be set for Buhl's water system so those monitoring would know when to reach out.

Councilor Loeffler asked Pink if Owen and Lyle had been asked about their views on the on-call phone.

Pink stated that they don't like the idea either.

Councilor Loeffler stated that the council doesn't want to impose something that the staff doesn't want. The on-call phone was supposed to help with emergency situations.

Councilor Kealy stated that a reminder should be put on the bottom of the utility bills that for utility emergencies please call 911.

Aye: Councilor Kealy

Nay: Mayor Matthews, Councilors Loeffler, Teska-Erickson, and Towner.

Motion failed 3-1.

M. Letter from the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center

The Senior Center previously had renovations completed and now the building is too airtight creating an air flow issue. The Senior Center is requesting that the council approve the installation of an Air Exchange unit at the cost of \$40,000 from Iron Range Heating and Plumbing.

Mayor Matthews stated that a new stove or oven unit is not needed in the Senior Center. When the Senior Center had building updates it left the range hood with an inadequate air source while the ovens are being used. The Senior Center is in need of a makeup air system. This will also remedy the problem of the venting issue of the gas fired water heater in the basement.

Mayor Matthews stated that he had contacted Range Cornis and they understood the situation and would like to send someone to look at the Senior Center.

Mayor Matthews recommended directing staff to work with Range Cornis to get an estimate for a proper makeup air system for the kitchen.

Motion by Mayor Matthews to direct staff to get quotes for the air flow issue at the Senior Center.

Councilor Teska-Erickson suggested getting multiple quotes.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Councilor Kealy asked the Council if that could be the same issue that is happening in the Community Center. Could the contractors look at the Community Center as well?

Mayor Matthews said that would be a good idea.

Motion passed unanimously.

Clerk Jaeger asked if she was to get quotes for both buildings or just the Senior Center.

Mayor Matthews said both.

N. Barn Quilts Trail

Debbie Barker is the artist behind the Barn Quilts Trail on Main Street in Hibbing and is wondering if the City of Buhl would like to participate. She would like to have a group of resident's paint 10 Barn Quilt signs at \$135 apiece.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to discuss the agenda item.

Supported by Mayor Matthews.

Councilor Loeffler stated that the grant the Rusty Rock Guild has is for youth and this would be a great way to get them involved with history in this town. Councilor Loeffler asked if there were 10 spots to hang these signs in town and said the price seemed expensive.

Mayor Matthews said he is worried about the cost of hanging them and maintaining them.

Utilities Foreman Pink stated that brackets would need to be purchased.

Councilor Towner recommended passing this to the Rusty Rock Guild and if they are able to get sponsors then maybe the city could pay for the brackets to hang the signs.

Motion by Mayor Kealy to see if the Rusty Rock Guild, local businesses, or residents might be interested in sponsoring a painting.

Supported by Councilor Towner.

Motion passed unanimously.

O. Resolution Approving Donation from Super One to the Buhl Rec Board

Super One Foods of Virginia donated a \$50 gift card and North Super One Foods of Virginia donated a \$50 gift card to the Rec Board for the Rec Board's Easter Egg Hunt Event.

Motion by Mayor Matthews to approve Resolution 26-21 A Resolution Accepting a Donation to the City.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Motion passed unanimously.

P. Resolution Approving Donation from Great Scott Township to the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center

Great Scott Township donated \$250.00 to the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center.

Motion by Mayor Matthews to approve Resolution 26-22 A Resolution Accepting a Donation to the City.

Supported by Councilor Teska-Erickson.

Motion passed unanimously.

Q. Permission to attend Lobby Day at the State Capital

Range Municipalities and Schools is hosting Lobby Day at the State Capital. They are providing a bus for members to ride to and from the event. The event is April 14, 2026, from 6:00am -9:00pm.

Councilor Loeffler would like to ask the council for permission to attend Lobby Day on the City of Buhl's behalf.

Motion by Councilor Kealy to approve Councilor Loeffler attending Lobby Day at the State Capital on April 14, 2026.

Supported by Mayor Matthews.

Motion supported unanimously.

9. COUNCILORS COMMENTS:

Councilor Loeffler

Councilor Loeffler stated that the Rusty Rock Guild on April 12 at 1pm will be having a decoupage art project.

Councilor Teska-Erickson

Councilor Teska-Erickson stated that retired firefighter Larry Gundy had passed away and that she would like to thank him and his family for his service with the Buhl Fire Department.

Councilor Towner

Council Towner stated that the Buhl Parks and Rec Board is having their annual Easter egg hunt at the park on April 4, 2026, at 1pm. The Easter Bunny promised to show up for pictures. There will be candy and hopefully nice weather.

10. MAYOR'S COMMENTS:

Mayor Matthews said that Larry Gundy was always a friendly face and he will be missed.

11. ADJOURN:

Motion by Councilor Teska-Erickson to adjourn.

Supported by Councilor Kealy.

Motion passes unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.



James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca Jaeger, City Clerk-Treasurer