

City Council Minutes
April 7, 2025

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on Monday April 7, 2025, at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. Pastor Dale Hexum gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mayor Hicks called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm and the following council members were in attendance: Kvamme, Leighton, Kremeier, Mortenson, Rachels, Kilde, Fish and Job.

Open Forum

Duane Cookman, 543 W Stanton requested updates on the golf course, RTC and Bigwood.

Approval of Agenda

A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Job approving tonight's agenda with the removal of the Northpoint Professionals visioning proposal, and two items from the consent agenda. Mayor Hicks read a letter from Northpoint Professionals declining to work with the city to facilitate a community vision for economic development. They cited the aggressive timeline and lack of unity within the City Council, and their relationships with staff and Greater Fergus Falls as concerns that would not align with the foundation of building unity their process requires. The motion carried.

CP 5961, Junius Avenue Street & Utility Reconstruction Project

City Project 5961 is the reconstruction of Junius Avenue from Union to Cascade Street. The project includes the reconstruction of the sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, water services and bituminous street surface. The project cost is \$1,509,676.53 and would be financed by PIR Bonds, special assessments and enterprise funds. Assessments would be over 15 years at a 5.50% interest rate. This project will be combined with the Shoreview project as a bond issuance in the next few weeks. If the Junius project is approved, work will begin in two weeks with the project set to be substantially completed this summer and the final layer installed in 2026. The public hearing opened at 5:45 pm. Ruth Hystead asked about the assessment for First Lutheran Church, replacement of the lead water pipes and sidewalk replacement and staff provided the requested information. The hearing closed at 5:49 pm and Fish offered **Resolution #46-2025** adopting the assessment for CP 5961 contingent upon awarding the construction services contract, which was seconded by Kilde and was adopted. Kilde offered **Resolution #47-2025** awarding the construction services contract to C&L Excavating Inc. in the amount of \$1,041,093.95, which was seconded by Fish and was adopted. Leighton offered **Resolution #48-2025** accepting the Municipal Lighting Agreement between Otter Tail Power and the City of Fergus Falls, which was seconded by Kremeier and was adopted. Job offered **Resolution #49-2025** accepting Interstate Engineering's professional services proposal for construction administration in the amount of \$153,460, which was seconded by Rachels and was adopted.

PI 9774, Landfill Demolition Cell

Rachels offered **Resolution #50-2025** awarding the contract for PI 9774, the landfill demolition cell Phase 3B to Central Specialties in the amount of \$492,660.25, which was seconded by Fish and was adopted.

Salvation Army Update

Lt. Joshua Bowyer was not in attendance. Kilde asked if residents can donate their landfill disposal voucher to a thrift stores to dispose of unwanted items. Staff were asked to research this request as public purpose expenditure rules don't allow cities to donate to all non-profits.

Visit Fergus Falls Update

Rolando Felizola provided an update on Visit Fergus Falls. They have a new platform on their website to receive and share regional events. Their board finished their strategic sessions with Northpoint Professionals and expanded their mission from “heads on beds” to a targeted marketing campaign to attract out of town visitors. They are planning three google campaigns to promote the Bigwood Event Center, a Fergus Falls Summer Campaign and Bike, Hike & Stay. Long-term strategic initiatives include mitigating the convention center gap and completing the Otter Tail River opportunities.

Consent Agenda

The following items were approved under **Resolution #51-2025** by Fish: Motion approving the minutes from the March 17, 2025, Council meeting, the April 2, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting and the March 26, 2025, Council work session. Motion approving the following licenses: Mobile Food Vendor Taqueria Marcos LLC, Blowin’ Smoke; Mechanical Sonnenberg Plumbing & Heating, Richards HVAC & Solar, Nelson Plumbing Inc.; 3.2% Malt Liquor and Wine (Strong Beer Authorization) Tievoli LLC; Minnesota Lawful Gambling Permit Church of Our Lady of Victory for a raffle on May 3, 2025 at OLV Church; Never Alone Inc. for a raffle on June 26, 2025 at the I-94 Speedway; Never Alone Inc. for a raffle on September 10-13, 2025 at the I-94 Speedway. Paving/Sidewalk Lee Property Care; Chicken Permit Trevor Undseth, 716 E Cherry Ave; Fireworks Display Permit J&M Displays for fireworks at the I-94 Speedway on July 4, 2025. **Resolution #52-2025** approving the Fergus Falls Public Library’s Volunteer Policy and Guidelines, Volunteer Application, Library Security Camera Policy, Social Media Policy and Bylaws. **Resolution #53-2025** declaring equipment from the Information Technology and Fire Department as surplus and authorizing its disposal. Motion directing the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to repeal Ordinance 35, Eighth Series (Chapter 120) Tetrahydrocannabinol Product Sales. **Resolution #54-2025** approving a landfill professional services agreement with Houston Engineering Inc. **Resolution #55-2025** awarding the materials testing contract for PI 9774, the landfill demolition cell to Veteran Testing & Inspection LLC in the amount of \$9,965. **Resolution #56-2025** initiating PI 5381, the 2025 mill and overlay project and ordering the plans and specifications. **Resolution #57-2025** initiating PI 5382, the 2025 seal coat project and ordering the plans and specifications. The resolution was seconded by Kilde and was adopted.

Library Art Policy

Kvamme offered **Resolution #58-2025** approving the Library Art Policy with the following amendments: Delete the language (page 1 purpose): “*Provide the public with equitable access to the arts.*” Delete the language (page 1 collection development): “*The library’s collection will include diverse perspectives*”. Delete the language (page 2 permanent criteria): “*Artwork considered for the library’s permanent collection should not reflect one’s opinion or style*” and the last line “*to have a diverse art collection*”, which was seconded by Rachels. Kvamme felt references of diversity and inclusion are polarizing and not necessary. Multiple council members spoke in favor of diversity in art and thanked the Library Board for their work on these policies. Matthew Lape, President of the Library Board confirmed the council the policy in references is offering equitable access to art to everyone and invited the council to view the library’s collection. The amended art policy was called to a vote and was defeated by a 1-7 vote with Kvamme being the sole vote in favor. Job offered **Resolution #59-2025** approving the Library Art Policy as presented by the Library Board, which was seconded by Kremeier and was adopted on a 7-1 vote with Kvamme voting in opposition.

PI 5855, Lincoln Avenue Alleyway

The alleyway north of the Lincoln Avenue has been proposed for a reconstruction project with the local utility companies. Three adjacent city parking lots would be repaired or reconstructed in conjunction with the utility project to minimize disruption to one construction season. The council needs to initiate the alleyway project, and the parking lots can be added as alternates. Mortenson agreed the parking lot between Mill and Court does need repair, but he would rather use the funds to reconstruct Cavour Avenue. The council was reminded they need to decide which projects they want to pursue, in what order and to identify their funding sources through the Capital Improvement Plan which is used by the Tax Levy Committee to formulate the budget. Laurie Mullen, 2840 Lakewood Drive spoke of the community beautification/revitalization plans started 10 years ago with the Blandin Leadership Group and advocated addressing the community parking lots can drive downtown economic development. Rachels offered **Resolution #60-2025** initiating PI 5855, the Lincoln Avenue alleyway and parking lot improvement project and accepting Interstate Engineering's professional services proposal which was seconded by Fish and was adopted by a 5-3 vote. Voting in favor were Kvamme, Rachels, Kilde, Fish and Job. Voting in opposition were Leighton, Kremeier and Mortenson.

Amendment to the Sign Ordinance

A motion and second were made by Rachels and Kilde directing the City Attorney to amend the sign ordinance to allow pylon signs in B-2 and B-3 districts subject to a Conditional Use Permit. The motion carried with Mortenson abstaining.

Amendment to the Fee Schedule

Leighton offered **Resolution #61-2025** amending the 2025 fee schedule to include a \$350 per day fee for a Temporary Cannabis Event, which was seconded by Job and was adopted.

Ordinance 65, Eighth Series

Ordinance 65, Eighth Series, Repealing Chapter 120, Tetrahydrocannabinol Product Sales was introduced by Fish and declared to have its first reading.

Resolution of Accounts

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$1,256,895.35, which was seconded by Rachels and was adopted.

Several announcements were made including texts about a community survey that is a scam and was not generated by the City of Fergus Falls. Mortenson asked an employee satisfaction survey be added to a Committee of the Whole agenda. Mayor Hicks said in the absence of a Human Resources Manager, this would be more appropriate once the new person is on board. Leighton felt not enough items were being discussed at meetings and asked to have several agenda items added. Mayor Hicks reminded him that council meetings should be efficient and putting items on agendas before action is needed creates more conversation that is sometimes necessary.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm to a closed meeting to discuss a potential real estate transaction at 925 Western Avenue as allowed by MN Statute 13D.01 and did not reconvene to an open meeting.

Lynne Olson