



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 23, 2025

5:00 PM

Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

PRESENT: Mayor Tasha Connelly, Councilor Molly MacGregor, Councilor Tom Sutherland, Councilor Rick Blake, Councilor Dan Mertes

STAFF: Tom Pagel, Chad Sterle, Kimberly Gibeau, Natalee Bushman, Carl Babich, Rob Mattei, Chery Pierzina, Kevin Ott, Chris Rima-Carlson, Dale Anderson.

POSITIVE HAPPENINGS IN THE CITY:

The City of Grand Rapids introduced a new initiative to formally recognize employees for their years of service. Mayor Connelly acknowledged employees, grouped by years of completed service, ranging from 1 year up to 38 years. Moving forward, this recognition will take place monthly at the second City Council meeting of every month. The meeting also highlighted recent Minnesota Bike Tour event, which brought over 200 campers to the area. Visitors complimented the city's amenities and atmosphere, adding to a positive tone about the city's direction.

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one from the public wished to speak.

COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilor Blake commented on the Range Gateway Coalition, update focused on improvements to the crossway near Marble, which currently has a single lane section, noting significant planning and collaboration is underway.

Councilor MacGregor noted that the Human Rights Commission participated in a pancake breakfast at the Pride Festival on June 22nd, with approximately 300-400 people in attendance. Also, on Thursday, June 19th, Juneteenth was celebrated with a commemorative walk around Crystal Lake with 27 participants.

Mayor Connelly noted that Responsible Server Training was hosted by the Grand Rapids Police Department, focusing on the importance of safe and responsible alcohol sales and service. Chief Morgan would like to host multiple sessions each year moving forward.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approve minutes for Monday, June 2, 2025 Joint meeting of the City Council and PUC and Monday, June 9, 2025 Regular meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Sutherland, Second by Councilor Mertes to approve Council minutes as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

VERIFIED CLAIMS:

2. Approve the verified claims for the period June 3, 2025 to June 16, 2025 in the total amount of \$1,001,529.97.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Second by Councilor Blake to approve the verified claims as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

ACKNOWLEDGE MINUTES FOR BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

3. Acknowledged minutes for:
 - ~ May 14, 2025 Library Board meeting
 - ~ May 20, 2025 Golf Board meeting

CONSENT AGENDA:

4. Consider adopting a resolution renewing a Limited Use Permit between the City of Grand Rapids and the Commissioner of Transportation, State of Minnesota for the Mesabi Connection Trail.

Adopted Resolution 25-42

5. Consider approving a Joint Powers Agreement for a Hazmat Materials Response Team with State of Minnesota.
6. Consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the North Country Trail Association establishing the City of Grand Rapids as a 'Trail Town'.
7. Consider approving amendment 1 with SEH for the Taxiway A (North) Reconstruction – Phase 2 Design Project
8. Consider approving seasonal golf contractors

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Second by Councilor Mertes to approve the Consent agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

SET REGULAR AGENDA:

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Second by Councilor Sutherland to approve the Regular agenda as presented. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

ADMINISTRATION:

9. Consider adopting film production application process in City limits.

Megan Christiansen, Visit Grand Rapids, presented an update to the Mayor and Council regarding a new opportunity to join the Explore Minnesota Film Board as a film-ready community. While Grand Rapids is already registered with the Midwest Film Board, this new program would open the door to additional grant and incentive opportunities for hosting film productions.

Specifically noted is the economic benefits of hosting film productions, which the City of Grand Rapids has done previously, generating measurable local revenue. Grand Rapids has approximately 20 film-friendly locations that have been identified, with around half already approved for filming. Megan will serve as Film Ambassador for Grand Rapids and Itasca County.

Motion made by Councilor MacGregor, Second by Councilor Mertes to adopt film production application process. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

10. Consider accepting the retirement of Tom Foss, Firefighter.

Tom Foss has submitted his notice of retirement from the Grand Rapids Fire Department. Tom has served as a dedicated firefighter with over 14 years of service. He has served as HAZMAT Assistant, Skilled Pump Operator and is highly regarded by his fellow Fire Fighters.

Motion made by Councilor Mertes, Second by Councilor Sutherland to accept the notice of retirement from Tom Foss, Firefighter. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

CIVIC CENTER & PARKS:

11. Consider hiring John Connelly to write a Minnesota DNR Outdoor Recreation Regional Grant for improvements at Blandin Beach.

The City is planning to apply for a grant to enhance Blandin Beach, a project considered to be regionally significant. The project would consist of construction of an outdoor pavilion, addition to restroom facility and installation of a splash pad. Project cost is approximately \$1 million, with secured funding from Blandin Foundation in the amount of \$350,000. Additional funding sought is \$300,000 from DNR Outdoor Rec Grant and further support is anticipated from IRRR. Mr. Connelly has submitted a proposal to prepare the grant request for a fee not to exceed \$6,750, which will be covered by Blandin Foundation or IRRR grant. Mr. Connelly has a proven track record, having successfully written similar grants for other government entities.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Second by Councilor MacGregor to approve hiring John Connelly to write MN DNR Outdoor Recreation Regional Grant as presented. Voting Yea: Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes. Voting Abstaining: Mayor Connelly

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

12. Consider adopting a resolution supporting a proposal by the Itasca County HRA for the Waters Edge Housing Project

Rob Mattei presented an updated resolution of support for a proposed 61 unit tax credit housing project known as Waters Edge, led by Itasca County HRA in partnership with D.W. Jones. This development will be along Highway 38, adjacent to Lakeshore Place Apartments, currently operated by the HRA. Occupancy will be general, not senior specific, with mixed units including 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms. Larger units (3-4 bedrooms) will be townhomes to accommodate families. Income-restricted through tax credit, targeted households will be at 30%, 50%, and 60% of AMI. Income will be verified only at entry with growth permitted afterward.

Motion made by Councilor Blake, Second by Councilor MacGregor to **adopt Resolution 25-43**, supporting proposal by Itasca County HRA for Waters Edge Housing Project. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

POLICE:

13. Consider adopting a resolution to accept a \$250 donation from the Reif Arts Council, for the Grand Rapids Police Reserve Unit, for volunteer services at a recent music concert.

Police Captain Kevin Ott presented a resolution to accept a donation from the Reif Arts Council in appreciation of the Grand Rapids Police Reserve for providing extra security for a crowd of more than 2,100 attendees at the Hairball concert on May 16, 2025 at Yanmar Arena. The Police Reserve contributes hundreds of volunteer hours annually, assisting with crowd control, security and community safety. Donated funds will be used for equipment purchases, appreciation dinners and recognition for volunteers.

Motion made by Councilor Sutherland, Second by Councilor Mertes to **adopt Resolution 25-44**, accepting a donation from Reif Arts Council for the Police Reserve Unit. Voting Yea: Mayor Connelly, Councilor MacGregor, Councilor Sutherland, Councilor Blake, Councilor Mertes

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk