



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
March 3, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Jahn Dyvik, Mike Feldmann, Deirdre Kvale, and Todd Newcomer

Staff Present: City Administrator: Amanda Nowezki; Public Works Director: Sean Diercks; City Engineering Consultant: Rachel Scheu

Absent: None

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Kvale, seconded by Newcomer, to approve the agenda, as presented. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

REGULAR BUSINESS

Discussion of a Request by Xcel Energy to Use Hardin Park for a Project to Update Power Transmission Lines Along the Luce Line Trail

Public Works Director Diercks informed Council that a meeting was scheduled for next week with Xcel Energy. They're requesting the City grant them access to the Luce Line Trail through Hardin Park to do some maintenance on their transmission lines. He explained that he wanted to keep the Council informed about the conversations and noted that, unless Xcel offered incentives, he planned to advise them to look elsewhere for access because he felt their proposed plans would create a significant impact.

The Board discussed the difficulty of accessing the area due to its narrowness and shared ideas of other locations Xcel may be able to access.

Diercks stated that he would keep the Council updated on the discussion after the March 11 meeting.

Review Sanitary Sewer Televising Results

City Engineering Consultant Scheu presented an overview of the results of the recent sewer televising project and explained what the attachments found in Councilmembers' meeting packets depicted. She added that this information had been submitted alongside the City's grant application to Metropolitan Council. She pointed out that several clay pipes in poor condition had been found in the system.

Diercks answered Council questions regarding the information provided; and the Council reviewed the maps, results, comments from WSB, excavation costs, and recommendations from WSB for lining and/or repair projects throughout the sewer lines in the City.

City Administrator Nowezki stated that she had been working with the City's engineers on financing for this project. WSB had submitted a grant application to Metropolitan Council on behalf of the City. The City could expect to be guaranteed at least a \$50,000 award, but that was only a drop in the bucket given what the total cost of a project will be. She noted that staff is hoping the City receives the full amount they asked for. The total project is estimated to be around \$3 million, and the City would be responsible for half of that amount. Work in District 5 would be prioritized since TIF funds can be utilized for that project area, which she believed would be around \$500,000 to \$600,000. She reviewed possible project funding scenarios in the event a grant award is received.

Council and staff discussed the yellow areas depicted on the maps and the effect that lining those pipes would have on the system.

Nowezki clarified that staff was not looking for any decisions from the Council until the City receives an answer on the total dollar amount of the grant they had applied for.

Councilmember Newcomer asked if there were any areas identified where lining the pipes wouldn't address the problems.

Diercks confirmed that there were some areas that needed some spot repairs.

Councilmember Kvale questioned if there would be a timeline for the use of the grant funds.

Scheu replied that the funds would need to be used by 2028.

Nowezki added that she would like to complete a sewer lining project on a quicker timeline so she can use the approved TIF funds and reminded the Council that she felt these issues were directly affecting the City's Metropolitan Council rising sewer treatment costs.

Mayor Miner suggested that once the dust settles, he would still like staff to reach out to Orono to talk about the utility agreements.

Nowezki noted that Orono City Administrator Edwards wanted to meet with her and was very interested in having that conversation. She reflected that she would also want to schedule a meeting with the Utility Subcommittee to discuss the City's goals as part of a utility agreements review.

Councilmember Dyvik stated that he felt the City's goal was to know what was coming into Long Lake's system from Orono.

Nowezki mentioned some other details from the agreements and wondered whether there would be opportunities to simplify agreements or add items. Orono has been doing a lot of development and has expressed interest in connecting new areas to Long Lake's system, but she has told them they cannot take on any other households until they get a handle on the existing system capacity and agreements.

Proposal for Grand Avenue Project Administration

Nowezki reported that staff had been working with WSB with a goal of establishing some momentum on the City's street projects. Progress has been made in eliminating some of the 'low hanging fruit' by completing mill and overlay projects in recent years, but the City needs to work towards making important decisions about certain streets and various pavement management projects. Grand Avenue is one of the street projects that has been hanging over the City's head for years. After talking to Public Works Director Diercks, she had begun conversing with WSB about alternatives for a Grand Avenue project. She asked City Engineer Scheu to explain the options and noted that staff was seeking direction from Council about what they might wish to pursue further.

Scheu gave an overview of four options to address the issues on Grand Avenue, including a mill and overlay project, a mill and overlay with curb and gutter, a full reconstruction, and a full reconstruction with sanitary sewer and water.

The Council discussed concrete curb and gutter versus asphalt curb and gutter, how driveway aprons would be addressed, and the estimated engineering costs that would need to be added to the overall project cost.

Councilmember Kvale asked about adding Upper Lea Lane and Lakeview Avenue to the project scope, because she felt they were in really bad condition.

Nowezki indicated that staff had discussed potentially bonding for a project to include Upper Lea Lane, Lakeview Avenue, and potentially one other street.

Diercks stated that in addition to Upper Lea Lane and Lakeview Avenue, they should consider adding Greenhill Lane and Glenmoor Lane.

Nowezki commented that her initial goal was to get something moving forward with Grand Avenue, but she needed input from the Council on what they would like to see for this project.

The Council discussed the possible use of assessments, how old the pavement is on Grand Avenue, sidewalk upgrades that could be included with a road project, possible problems with speed along the road once the City fixes the street surface, and possible savings from doing a sewer lining project in this area instead of a full reconstruction/replacement.

Councilmember Dyvik voiced his support for either the third or fourth options described.

Nowezki emphasized that she just wanted the City to stop 'kicking the can down the road' on the Grand Avenue project. She also had reached out to Ehlers to talk about how quickly they could get going on bonding for a project.

Council and staff discussed funding options, capital transfers to the Pavement Management Fund, bonding options, timing, and the current balance in the Pavement Management Fund.

Nowezki noted that there is an item on the regular City Council agenda related to approving a design services agreement with WSB for a Grand Avenue mill and overlay project, but she had wanted the Council to be able to hear about all four available options in case they preferred to table that agenda item based on the work session discussion.

Councilmember Kvale questioned whether the City should focus on the sewer lining projects in 2026 and then, in 2027, do the full reconstruction of Grand Avenue with the additional streets discussed earlier.

Diercks stated that he would like to see the City do the opposite of what Councilmember Kvale had just described and do the streets first and then worry about the sewer lining.

Councilmember Dyvik stated that he agreed with Public Works Director Diercks and felt the City should focus on the streets while they try to get grant funds to help with the sewer lining costs.

Nowezki asked Scheu to look at the history of the City's streets with the thought of a possible larger street improvement project, and added that she would begin discussions with Ehlers about the possibility of bonding for one. She stated she would bring information back to the Council once the City's heard back on the grant application for a sewer lining project, and noted that the Council would also need to table agenda item 7B during the regular City Council meeting. She summarized that she would continue working with WSB and Ehlers about possible street project scenarios, costs, and funding.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Nowezki
City Administrator