



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
April 7, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.

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

Staff Present: City Administrator: Amanda Nowezki; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

Absent: None

APPROVE AGENDA

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

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a. Discuss Special Assessment Policy

City Administrator Nowezki reported that since the last meeting, she had spoken with the City Engineer Scheu and learned that the Grand Avenue, Lakeview Avenue, and Upper Lea Lane project would not be able to be completed in 2026 because of the timing for the required hearings and bid process. Despite this, she did not want there to be delays and would like the City to start making decisions now to prepare for starting construction in the spring of 2027. She reviewed the City's current assessment policy, highlighted points she felt were important, and noted that she would like the Council to discuss whether the special assessment policy was something that the Council wanted to continue to apply in the future. She mentioned that she had included some information related to the assessments for the Watertown Road improvement project in the Council packet.

The Council discussed the Watertown Road assessments, feedback the City had received at the time, how the City had chosen to apply the assessment policy in the past, the importance of consistency in utilizing the assessment policy, whether assessment by square footage was the correct approach, and reviewed summary examples of assessment policies from other cities.

City Engineer Scheu outlined the types of assessment policies she had seen in other cities and briefly explained how a fixed assessment could work.

Morgan Dawley, WSB, explained that he was the City Engineer for Excelsior. He indicated that Excelsior uses a flat rate, and one benefit to that approach is that the neighbors all pay the same rate, so it can eliminate conversations about who is paying more for the roadway. He gave a brief comparison of the difference between a unit rate and a set rate.

The Council discussed different types of assessment policies, possible issues that may arise, and the public hearing process.

Mayor Miner asked City Engineer Scheu if she had any recommendations for the Council on what formula should be used for assessment.

Scheu commented that the policy right now requires that a special benefit appraisal be completed for each individual lot, which is expensive. She felt that a benefit appraisal for the community or just for the project area would be much more cost-effective.

City Clerk Moeller suggested that perhaps the Council may want to consider a 'dust up' of the current assessment policy for correction and modernization rather than a full overhaul.

Scheu agreed that modifications would not need to be overly complicated and the existing policy could just be fine-tuned a bit.

Moeller cautioned the Council that adopting a special assessment was typically unpopular, and while people get excited about the road improvements, they are not excited about the costs.

Nowezki asked the Council if they wanted to continue with reconstruction projects utilizing an assessment policy.

Councilmember Kvale observed that it seemed like the Council would be between a rock and a hard place because while there would be money coming in for the projects, they would need to put a lot of effort into getting it, and there may be a lot of backlash from residents.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to clean up the existing special assessment policy, including support for using project area and composite benefit analysis.

Councilmember Newcomer asked about the inclusion of curb and gutter and noted that he expected people to come and tell the City that they did not want that as part of the road project.

Moeller mentioned that she needed to research whether a curb and gutter requirement was included in the City's policies.

Nowezki clarified that her goal was for the City to have an actual standard in place when they go into discussions, such as the inclusion of curb and gutter. She added that staff would bring back an amended special assessment policy for review at a future work session meeting.

b. Identify Upcoming Street Improvement Project Scope

Scheu gave an overview of recent pavement improvement projects that had been completed in the City and reiterated that the project the City had hoped to undertake for Grand Avenue would have to wait until 2027. She explained that she had invited Mr. Dawley to the meeting so he could also share some of his experience with designated project maintenance overlays at other cities.

Dawley shared an example of what North St. Paul had done when they were in a similar situation as Long Lake and wanted to make progress on road improvements, but the assessment procedures slowed things down. They had arrived at a maintenance overlay process as a solution, which provides for fully

engineered specifications but not a full plan set, then the City follows through on obtaining bids and supervising completion of the work. He noted that if Long Lake wanted to consider this approach, he would recommend taking a look at roadway cores in order to assess current conditions.

Council discussed road conditions in the City and which ones they felt may need more intense reconstruction; which may potentially benefit from a maintenance overlay; the importance of doing the Grand Avenue project the right way, even if it meant delaying it until 2027; and the importance of communication in this process.

Nowezki added that Public Works Director Diercks was not aware of this concept yet, so she would need to discuss it with him and obtain his input on the idea of a maintenance overlay. For the meeting's discussion, her primary purpose had been to update the Council about the Grand Avenue project not being able to begin until 2027; however, she would continue to move the overall process ahead.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Moeller

City Clerk