City of Blaine
City Council

February 19, 2025 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order by the Mayor

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Mayor Pro Tem Robertson followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the Roll Call.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem Jess Robertson, Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Chris Ford, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, and Tom Newland.

ABSENT: Mayor Tim Sanders.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Assistant Community Development Director Sheila Sellman; Deputy Police Chief Joe Gerhard; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Director of Administrative Services Scott Johnson; Director of Engineering Dan Schluender; Community Development Specialist Elizabeth Showalter; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

4. Awards - Presentations - Organizational Business

4.1. 2025-56 Police Department Citizen Award Recognitions
Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

Deputy Police Chief Gerhard stated several individuals from the community were present to receive recognition from the Blaine Police Department for their actions in 2024, that directly benefited a fellow citizen and our law enforcement agency. He introduced the following individuals who would be receiving an award:

Mason Nordman - for rescuing a lost child from entering a pond
Danielle Lovejoy - for performing CPR on a women at Target
Chaz Gill - for helping to save the life of a women at Target
Arthur Payne - helped save the life of a man attempting to jump off a bridge
Kelly Heidner - helped save the life of a man attempting to jump off a bridge
Joshua Guyer - helped save the life of a man attempting to jump off a bridge

A round of applause was offered by all in attendance and Mayor Pro Tem Robertson thanked each of these individuals for their selfless acts of service to the community.

5. Communications

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson encouraged the public to attend the Polar Plunge on Saturday, February 22 at Lakeside Commons Beach.

6. Open Forum

Open Forum is an opportunity for the public to present an issue or concern to City Council. There is a maximum of fifteen minutes set aside for open forum. Each presentation should be limited to no more than three minutes. If your item needs follow-up from the City, staff will arrange for that follow-up and will contact you to let you know what is being done. Thank you for coming this evening.

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson opened the Open Forum at 7:31PM.

Derek Lind, resident of Ramsey and member of the Anoka County Elections Integrity Team (ACEIT), spoke about the upcoming purchase by Anoka County of updated poll pads for elections and encouraged the city to consider returning to paper ballots due to high costs and security concerns.

There being no further input, Mayor Pro Tem Robertson closed the Open Forum at 7:34PM.

7. Approval of Consent Agenda:

All items listed under the "Consent Agenda" are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

Councilmember Massoglia and Mayor Pro Tem Robertson requested the removal of consent agenda items 7.1, 7.5, and 7.6.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Fleming, that the Consent Agenda be approved as amended removing Items 7.1, 7.5 and 7.6 for further discussion.

Motion adopted unanimously.

7.1. 2025-57 Schedule of Bills Paid

Sponsors: Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Councilmember Massoglia discussed particular bills including the sidewalk snowplow machine, the compensation study, and an RFP for the assistant finance director position. He shared concerns about the need to continue to reduce costs. City Manager Wolfe reported the city completed a compensation study several years ago and presented the information to city council on multiple occasions. She indicated the best practice is to update these studies every three or four years in order to stay current. She noted the budget proposal for 2024 included an update to the compensation study. She commented further on how the city was short-staffed at this time, which was why the city was pursuing an assistant finance director. She reported the RFP expenses would be covered by staff vacancy funding within the budget.
Councilmember Massoglia expressed concern with the lack of transparency regarding the credit card purchases that were being made by city employees. Ms. Wolfe explained the bills have been paid under her authority as part of the budget nd that other items, those over $50,000, have to receive city council approval. She reported all of the information within the bills paid was public information. Finance Director Zimmerman commented further on the process being used for credit card purchases.

Councilmember Massoglia thanked staff for the clarification and reiterated that he believed the city had to further investigate ways to control its spending. City Attorney Loonan reported the process and budgeting for expenditures is outlined in city charter. He explained the council adopts the budget, but the charter assigns the city manager the sole authority to ensure the budget is adhered to, enforced and administered appropriately. He stated it was not wholly uncommon for expenditures, such as credit cards, to be used for day to day purchases by a city. He indicated if the council was looking to review or approving more specific line items, the charter would have to be amended.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated he was simply asking that the council have more information regarding the credit card purchases given how the monthly expense was $30,000 which equated to almost $400,000 per year. Mr. Zimmerman explained the disbursement of the bills to be paid were completed by staff prior to city council meetings. He stated he was concerned with the fact the bills paid were subject to council approval, but were paid in advance to council approval. He reported if an item were pulled and the payment was rejected by council, staff would have a difficult time reversing the payment. He indicated he had recently spoken with the city attorney regarding this matter to see if an amendment should be made to the charter then shared he would be looking into the charter language further and would report back to the council at a future meeting. Mr. Loonan advised a future workshop item could take a closer look at this matter to see if a charter amendment was necessary.

Councilmember Ford explained he believed there was a need for an updated compensation study, noting this would be an important budgeting tool for the city council.

Moved by Councilmember Massoglia, seconded by Councilmember Newland, to approve the Schedule of Bills Paid.

Motion adopted unanimously.

7.2. 2025-58 Approval of Minutes

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

7.3. 2025-59 Approve Annual Payment of JLEC Shared Costs for Public Safety Data System (PSDS)

Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

7.4. RES 25-39 Resolution to Approve an Amendment to the 2025 Intensive Comprehensive Peace Officer Education and Training Grant

Sponsors: Brian Podany, Safety Services Manager/Police Chief

7.5. 2025-60 Motion to Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with Bolton & Menk for Construction Services for Lift Station 13 Force Main Project - Phase 2, Improvement Project No. 23-30

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson requested this item be postponed to a future workshop meeting in order to allow for further discussion regarding the overages.

7.6. ORD 25-2574 Second Reading

Ordinance Amending Appendix C - Franchises Article II. - Cable Television Franchise

Sponsors: Ben Hayle, Communications Manager

Councilmember Massoglia confirmed that renewing the cable franchise ordinance does not lock the city into an ongoing agreement. He indicated this ordinance addressed an agreement between the North Metro Telecommunications Commission and Comcast.

Moved by Councilmember Fleming, seconded by Councilmember Newland, to adopt the Second Reading of Ordinance No. 25-2574, Amending Appendix C - Franchises Article II. - Cable Television Franchise.

Motion adopted unanimously.

8. 7:00 PM - Public Hearing and Items Published for a Certain Time

8.1. RES 25-33 Order Improvement and Order Preparation of Plans and Specifications for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project, Improvement Project No. 25-05 (T2505)

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Director of Engineering Schluender stated council is asked to conduct the public hearing and consider ordering the improvements and preparation of the project plan and specification for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project. The proposed project will rehabilitate Lakes Parkway from Radisson Road to its terminus 120' east of Rendova Street and Baltimore Street from 300' south of 99th Avenue to 94th Lane. Both areas will include a 2.5" pavement mill, minor spot concrete curb repair, bituminous pavement overlay, and appurtenant construction. The project will also include the partial reconstruction of Baltimore Street from 120' south of 99th Lane to the east along 99th Lane to Davenport Street, and Baltimore Street from 93rd Lane to 94th Lane. This project area will include spot concrete curb and gutter replacement (Area 3), concrete ribbon curb installation (Area 4), bituminous pavement replacement, and appurtenant construction.

Mr. Schluender explained the estimated cost of these proposed improvements is $2,741,237 with $110,957 to be assessed to the benefitting properties over a 5-year period for mill and overlay and bituminous replacement and 15-year period for partial reconstruction. Replacement of existing sanitary sewer castings/rings at an estimated cost of $12,155 and adjustment of gate valves at an estimated cost of $6,864 is proposed to be paid for by City Public Utility Funds. The remaining portion of $2,611,261 is proposed to be paid from the City's Pavement Management Program Fund and the Municipal State Aid Street (MSAS) Funds. The proposed project is necessary, cost-effective, and feasible and will result in a benefit to the properties proposed to be assessed.

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson opened the public hearing at 8:04PM.

Rose Quast, 11770 Vermillion Street, asked why property owners on Lakes Parkway were not being assessed, but those living on Vermillion Street were being assessed. Mr. Schluender explained in accordance with the assessment policy, this townhome association was accessed off of Lakes Parkway and the other associations have alternate access points, which meant they woudl be assessed for the frontage of the townhome association. He reported the proposed assessments for the townhomes was around $200 per unit, which could be paid back over a five year period.

There being no additional public input, Mayor Pro Tem Robertson closed the public hearing at 8:07PM.

Moved by Councilmember Massoglia, seconded by Councilmember Newland, to Order Improvement and Order Preparation of Plans and Specifications for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project, Improvement Project No. 25-05 (T2505).

Councilmember Newland questioned if the entire section of roadway from 93rd up to 99th will be totally closed or would a portion remain open. Mr. Schluender stated as the plans are developed, staff will look into the staging for this project. He anticipated a section south of the roundabout would be constructed and, once this is done, the north side would be closed in order to keep 99th available at all times.

Motion adopted unanimously.

8.2. RES 25-35 Order Improvement and Order Preparation of Plans and Specifications for the Zest Street and Lakes Parkway Construction, Improvement Project No. 25-04 (T2504)

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mr. Schluender stated council is asked to conduct the public hearing and consider ordering the improvements and preparation of the project plan and specification for the Zest Street and Lakes Parkway Construction Project. The proposed improvements along Zest Street NE and Lakes Parkway NE will include the construction of bituminous roadway pavement, concrete curb and gutter, concrete sidewalk, bituminous trail, and concrete pedestrian ramps meeting ADA requirements. The proposed improvements will also include extension of water and sanitary sewer services to adjacent properties, adjustment of gate valves and hydrants, adjustment of manholes, construction of storm sewer systems along both roadways, construction of a stormwater basin (BMP), and construction of signal system loop detectors. The estimated cost of proposed improvements is $1,785,502 with $734,330 proposed to be assessed to the benefitting properties over a 15-year period. The remaining project cost is proposed to be funded with $17,038 from the Sanitary Sewer Fund, $69,296.37 from the Water Utility Fund, and $964,838 from State Aid Funds. Staff commented on the conversations he had with the two property owners that would be impacted by this project. It was noted the proposed project is necessary, cost-effective, and feasible and will result in a benefit to the properties proposed to be assessed.

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson opened the public hearing at 8:15PM.

There being no public input, Mayor Pro Tem Robertson closed the public hearing at 8:15PM.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to Order Improvement and Order Preparation of Plans and Specifications for the Zest Street and Lakes Parkway Construction, Improvement Project No. 25-04 (T2504).

Councilmember Larson asked if the delay in payment of the assessment meant the property owners had to pay when the road was completed, or when development occurred in the future. Mr. Schluender explained the assessments could be deferred until the time as such that the parcels develop.

Councilmember Massoglia questioned what type of interest would be charged for the deferred assessments. Mr. Schluender reported an interest rate would be set in 2026. He estimated the interest rate would be somewhere between 3% and 6%.

Councilmember Massoglia supported deferring or lowering the interest rate for these two property owners in order to encourage development at some point in the future, especially given how large the assessments would be for these two properties. Mr. Schluender cautioned the city council from changing the interest rate for a single project, as this may set a precedent. He recommended the council treat each parcel fairly and equitably. Mr. Loonan agreed stating it would be in the city council's best interest to follow the current assessment policy. While he understood there were only two impacted properties within the project area, he indicated a precedent could be set if the current assessment policy and interest rate was not followed.

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson inquired if these properties were zoned for commercial/industrial. Assistant Community Development Director Sellman reported this was the case.

Mayor Pro Tem Robertson asked if these properties were being assessed for commercial/industrial. Mr. Schluender indicated the properties were being assessed based on their current land use, which was farm residential.

Motion adopted unanimously.

9. Development Business

None.

10. Administration

10.1. 2025-61 Motion to Authorize Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with Short Elliott Henrickson, Inc. (SEH) for Professional Design and Construction Services for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project, Improvement Project No. 25-05 (T2505)

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mr. Schluender stated council is requested to approve a contract for professional services for final design and construction services for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project, Improvement Project No. 25-05 (T2505) in the amount of $269,700. On July 15, 2024 Council initiated the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project, Improvement Project No. 25-05 (T2505) with Resolution No. 24-135. At the July 15, 2024 Council meeting, SEH, which is one of the engineering firms in the pre-approved consultant pool approved by Council, was awarded a contract to prepare the preliminary design and a feasibility report. At that time, it was stated that after completion of the feasibility report and upon ordering the improvements, a contract for final design and construction services would be negotiated with SEH. The Engineering Department recently requested and received a proposal for final design and construction services for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project from SEH in the amount of $269,700. Staff has reviewed this proposal and determined that the fees are justified and reasonable. City council is also asked to approve a 10% contingency to bring the total project budget to $296,670. This project will be funded through proposed project assessments, Pavement Management Program funds, Public Utility funds, and Municipal State Aid System funds.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Fleming, to Authorize Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with Short Elliott Henrickson, Inc. (SEH) for Professional Design and Construction Services for the 2025 Street Rehabilitation Project, Improvement Project No. 25-05 (T2505).

Motion adopted unanimously.

10.2. 2025-62 Motion to Authorize Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with WSB for Final Design and Construction Services for the Zest Street Construction Project, Improvement Project No. 25-04 (T2504)
Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mr. Schluender stated council is requested to approve a contract for Professional Services for Final Design and Construction Services for the Zest Street Construction, Improvement Project No. 25-04 (T2504). If council chooses to move forward with the project and order the preparation of plans and specifications, WSB, which is one of the engineering firms in the pre-approved consultant pool approved by Council, was awarded a contract to prepare the preliminary design and a feasibility report. At that time, it was stated that after completion of the feasibility report and upon ordering the improvements, a contract for final design and construction services would be negotiated with WSB. The Engineering Department recently requested and received a proposal for final design and construction services for the Zest Street Construction Project from WSB in the amount of $311,816.50. Staff has reviewed this proposal and determined that the fees are justified and reasonable. City council is also asked to approve a 10% contingency to bring the total project budget to $342,998.15. This project will be funded through proposed project assessments, Pavement Management Program funds, Public Utility Funds, and Municipal State Aid System funds.

Moved by Councilmember Massoglia, seconded by Councilmember Newland, to Authorize Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with WSB for Final Design and Construction Services for the Zest Street Construction Project, Improvement Project No. 25-04 (T2504).

Motion adopted unanimously.

10.3. RES 25-40 Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Council Rules of Procedure and Quorum - Order of Business
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

City Clerk Sorensen stated council is asked to adopt the proposed amendment to the current rules of procedure and quorum - order of business clarifying process and intent for open forum.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Larson, to Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Council Rules of Procedure and Quorum - Order of Business.

Amendment moved by Councilmember Massoglia, seconded by Councilmember Newland, to remove Adoption of Agenda from the Order of Business.

Amendment adopted unanimously.

Amended motion adopted unanimously.

10.4. 2025-64 Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Council Code of Conduct
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated council is asked to consider the proposed amendments to the council code of conduct.

Moved by Councilmember Massoglia, seconded by Councilmember Fleming, to adopt the amendments to the council code of conduct.

Councilmember Newland stated he supported the code of conduct having additional language to address censure. Mr. Loonan recommended the additional language read: such censure may include other actions or punishment by council in conformity with the law.

Amendment moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to add language under #3 Censure to state such censure may include other actions or punishment by council in conformity with the law.

Councilmember Larson thanked City Attorney Loonan for the proposed language addition.

Amendment adopted unanimously.

Amended motion adopted unanimously.

11. Other Business

None.

12. Adjournment

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Fleming, to adjourn the meeting at 8:38PM.

Motion adopted unanimously.

CITY OF BLAINE · L'ETOILE DU NORD · ANOKA CO., MINN.

Signed by ______________________
Tim Sanders, Mayor

Signed by ______________________

Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk