



**Meeting of the City Council
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Monday, July 13, 2026**

Members Present: Mayor John Dietz, Councilmember Cory Grupa, Councilmember Mike Beyer, Councilmember, Councilmember Jennifer Wagner, Councilmember J. Brian Calva

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Cal Portner, Business Services Director/Assistant City Administrator Joe Stremcha, Public Works Director/Chief Engineer Justin Femrite, Community Development Director Zack Carlton, Building Official Mark Pistulka, Finance Manager Lori Stich, Engineering Project Manager Ryan Sandhoefner, Environmental Services and Projects Specialist Joe Hale, Wastewater Treatment Chief Operator Matt Stevens, Public Works Supervisor Chris Teff, Public Works Supervisor Mitch Litfin, Public Works Supervisor Joshua Baas, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Gary Lore, Assistant Facilities Maintenance Superintendent Butch Pelarski, Accountant Jill Knutson, Accountant Erika Pudas, City Clerk Justin Dunford, Records Specialist Dawn Robertson.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. 2027 BUDGET

3.1 2027 Budget

The Council met with various departmental staff to review budget requests for 2027.

Library

GRRL Patron Services Supervisor Burkhardt shared performance measures and goals. She noted that Elk River Library ranked third in the Great River Library system.

Mayor Dietz expressed concern with the turnover of patron services staff and thought they should work more closely with city staff in the future.

Building Safety and Community Development

Staff provided an update on the new code adoption process. The department is looking at a new plan review software and will gather feedback from other municipalities regarding its effectiveness. Building

Official Pistulka reported that the Plumbing Inspector is currently training to obtain a commercial plan review delegation from the state. Mr. Carlton shared that the current CitizenServe software for permitting and licensing is effective and working well for staff, contractors, and residents.

Code Enforcement

Mr. Carlton provided an overview of the code enforcement process. He shared the department's goal to document all in-person interactions, highlighting that face-to-face contact with residents yields higher compliance rates. Common ordinance enforcement areas include unkempt lawns, failure to shovel snow from sidewalks, and debris accumulation in yards.

Waste Water Treatment Plant

Chief Operator Stevens shared the wastewater treatment facility's projected goals. Staff reported that there has been a significant decrease in the amount of biosolids with the new centrifuge systems. JonnyPops continues to work to decrease the amount of waste they send and on a significant industrial user agreement with the city.

Engineering

Mr. Femrite shared the department's project projections, goals, and objectives.

Storm Water

Mr. Sandhoefner shared updated goals and objectives. He noted they are continuing pond cleaning projects, inspections, and maintenance. He also gave updates on several upcoming city projects that will require stormwater utilities.

Environmental

Mr. Hale shared updated goals and objectives. He is working to review and update ordinances for consistency and compliance with state laws. He noted there has been more participation in the recycling program. The contract for garbage removal with Republic Services is being reviewed. He noted the rates for the landfill have increased, stating the rates for the garbage services will likely increase.

Facilities and Maintenance

Staff shared the department's goals and objectives. Mr. Pelarski explained the reasoning behind the custodial contract for the library and stated they assist Furniture and Things Event Center staff with maintenance when requested. Mr. Lore noted the increases in budget for new staff training and computer software. Staff reported a low turnover rate in the maintenance department with an average tenure of 18 years.

Park Maintenance

Staff addressed concerns regarding downtown event garbage, explaining that bins had been removed for the parking lot improvement project. Mr. Baas has since added garbage cans to various downtown locations. Mr. Baas shared the department's goals, performance measures, and objectives. He mentioned they are working daily at Orono Park Splash Pad to keep the chemicals and equipment up to standards. Mr. Baas also talked about adding irrigation to the green space at Orono Park. Their budget request includes one new full-time hire, a sidewalk snowplowing machine, replacement of end of lifecycle tractors with more versatile Cat machines, and an increased rate for contractual services with Speedcutters.

Streets

Mr. Teff shared with the Council the amount of new growth in streets that have been developed that require services. He also mentioned the city is currently bidding to construct the RCUT lanes serving the new Oakwater Ridge Development. Mr. Teff shared some of the increases in the department's budget are for the gate into the yard waste complex, railroad quiet zone delineators to maintain safety compliance, the truck currently up for replacement, and personnel costs for new staff and a promotion to a lead position.

Fleet

Mr. Litfin shared the department's performance measures and goals. He stated the maintenance garage services whatever fleet vehicles they can, noting how they manage all fleet vehicles in a way that benefits the entire city.

4. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to adjourn the meeting of City Council. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Dawn Robertson.



John J. Dietz, Mayor



Justin Dunford, City Clerk