



**Meeting of the City Council
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Monday, July 21, 2025**

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Cal Portner, City Attorney Jared Shepherd, Economic Development Director Brent O'Neil, Business Services Director/Assistant City Administrator Joe Stremcha, Police Chief David Kuhnly, Fire Chief Mark Dickinson, Assistant Fire Chief Joe Libor Jr., Deputy Chief Casey Neumann, Human Resources Manager Lauren Wipper, Community Development Director Zack Carlton, Assistant Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Butch Pelarski, Custodian Chris Sauer, Overlook Chef Tori Lyle, IT Network Specialist Jake Tourville, Benefits & HR Specialist Mike Eichten, and Records Specialist Katie Porath

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. CONSIDER AGENDA

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Councilmember Grupa and seconded by Councilmember Wagner to approve the following consent items as outlined in their respective staff reports. Motion carried 5-0.

4.1 July 7, 2025, Minutes

4.2 Check Register

4.3 Resolution 25-40: Final Plat of Bradford Park Second Addition, Lennar

4.4 Purchase of an F-350 Truck for Fire Department

4.5 2025 Deer Herd Management Hunt Rules

4.6 FT Center - Overlook Bartender Position Description

4.7 FT Center - Event Production Worker Position Description

4.8 Hire Fulltime Liquor Store Clerk

4.9 Amendment #1 to Resolution 24-79 Amending the 2025 Compensation Plan for Non-Organized Employees

5. OPEN FORUM

No one appeared for open forum.

6. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

6.1 Introduction of New Employees

Council welcomed various staff to the city.

6.2 City of Elk River Volunteer of the Month

Mayor Dietz presented the July Volunteer of the Month award to John Jordan. He highlighted the following:

- CAER board member since 2020
- CAER board chair for two years
- Also served as Vice Chair and Development Chair for CAER board
- Past member of the security team for Riverside Church
- Former commissioner on the Planning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission
- Past member and Chair of West Oaks West Homeowners Association
- Past state representative and Brooklyn Park Councilmember
- Past member of the Brooklyn Park Planning Commission

Mayor Dietz commented that, since implementing the Volunteer of the Month award in 2011, 175 people have received an award so far.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

7.1 Conditional Use Permit: Changeable Copy Sign, Lamar Outdoor Advertising

The staff report was presented.

Mayor Dietz opened the public hearing. There being no one to speak to this matter, Mayor Dietz

closed the public hearing.

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to approve the Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions to satisfy the standards set forth in Section 30-654:

- 1. The sign shall be constructed in accordance with all applicable city and state regulations, including compliance with brightness limits and digital display transition standards.**
- 2. No additional signage shall be added without appropriate review and permitting.**
- 3. The applicant shall provide a survey confirming that the sign location is outside regulated wetlands or demonstrate eligibility for an exemption under the Wetland Conservation Act.**
- 4. Any disturbance to wetland areas shall require formal review and compliance with state and local wetland regulations.**
- 5. The applicant must apply for and receive all state and local permits prior to beginning construction.**

Motion carried 5-0.

7.2 Conditional Use Permit: Outdoor Vehicle Storage and Auto Sales, 9672 163rd Ave NW

The staff report was presented.

Mayor Dietz opened the public hearing. There being no one to speak to this matter, Mayor Dietz closed the public hearing.

Moved by Councilmember Grupa and seconded by Councilmember Calva to approve the Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions to satisfy the standards set forth in Section 30-654:

- 1. All outdoor storage shall follow Section 30-807.**
- 2. The parking and driveway area outside the fenced area shall be bound by B612 curb and gutter.**
- 3. All parking and driving areas must be finished with an approved surface - bituminous, concrete, or compacted Class 5.**
- 4. All areas not identified for parking or driving areas shall be maintained as turfgrass per city standards.**
- 5. A 100% opaque fence shall be installed along the perimeter of the outdoor storage area that is visible from the right-of-way.**
- 6. Except for short-term staging requirements, there shall be no storage of vehicles outside the approved storage area, including the city street, exterior parking area, and landscaped areas.**
- 7. Staff approval of all site and civil plans.**
- 8. All motor vehicle repairs, bodywork, or detailing shall only occur inside the building.**
- 9. Exterior doors shall be closed while any motor vehicle repair, body work, or detailing occurs.**

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- 10. The storage of damaged or inoperable vehicles shall only be allowed inside the fenced storage area.**

Motion carried 5-0.

7.3 Preliminary Plat: Oakwater Ridge, Capstone Homes - 16330 US Highway 10

The staff report was presented.

Mayor Dietz opened the public hearing.

Matt Barker, Capstone Homes, thanked the Council and staff.

Mayor Dietz closed the public hearing.

Mayor Dietz asked about the timing of improvements to the Highway 10 intersection. Mr. Carlton stated that information would be determined by how many homes are proposed on the final plat and MnDOT's recommendation. The City will work with Capstone to prepare plans through MnDOT then hire a contractor.

Moved by Councilmember Beyer and seconded by Councilmember Wagner to approve the preliminary plat for Oakwater Ridge, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The EAW for Oakwater Ridge must produce a negative finding for an EIS, and all comments from the public comment period must be addressed to the satisfaction of the representative agency.**
- 2. Billboards along Highway 10 must be removed as the subdivision is developed and in accordance with City Council resolution 25-31.**
- 3. Staff approval of all site, utility, grading, and landscape plans.**
- 4. All wet stormwater basins require a 25-foot easement in accordance with setback and buffer requirements outlined in Sec. 30-1852. The buffer must be marked with approved signs.**
- 5. Setback lines shown on the preliminary plat must reflect the 45-foot setback required for all wet ponds.**
- 6. Trails and other features within the floodplain must comply with the floodplain ordinance standards.**
- 7. All temporary dead ends included in future development plans must include signage stating "Future Through Street" and a temporary cul-de-sac when the street will have driveway access.**
- 8. Work with Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) to adjust overhead power poles to support the development and future frontage road along Highway 10.**
- 9. ERMU requires a per-lot streetlight fee.**
- 10. The subdivision must be developed in accordance with all requirements included in the Oakwater Ridge Master Plan and consistent with City Council action in their approval on April 7, 2025.**
- 11. The developer and the city must design and install access improvements at Highway 10 and 165th Ave to support the traffic needs of the proposed development.**
- 12. The DNR must provide written approval of the work proposed within the Wild and Scenic River District.**

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- 13. Along the property line with the Oliver Kelley Farm, the developer shall provide the following: vegetative screening and a private property sign every 500 feet along the non-wooded boundary, and one private property sign for each residential parcel along the wooded boundary.**
 - 14. The developer must also work with Oliver Kelley Farm to resolve any encroachment concerns resulting from the existing fence.**
 - 15. Staff and the developer shall work together to resolve addressing and street alignment concerns.**

Motion carried 5-0.

7.4 Preliminary Plat: Sherburne Meadows, Sherburne County - 10638 205th Ave NW

The staff report was presented.

Mayor Dietz opened the public hearing.

Sandy Meredith, 20687 Quincy St, expressed concern about the traffic on the roads near her home and felt that the noise and safety would be a concern with the proposed development.

Mayor Dietz stated the City is only considering the preliminary plat, but Sherburne County is responsible for the road development and plan. She could contact the County to express further concerns on the roads and safety.

Mayor Dietz closed the public hearing.

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to approve the preliminary plat of Sherburne Meadows, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A wetland replacement plan is required and must be completed prior to approval of the final plat.**
- 2. Wetland boundaries identified on the plat may need to be updated after the subject site has received a Notice of Decision from the TEP.**
- 3. If the road is not immediately constructed as a through street, a temporary cul-de-sac will be required at the dead end.**
- 4. Work with Elk River Municipal Utilities (ERMU) to secure required utility permits and coordinate overhead power lines.**
- 5. The final plat must include an easement vacation request for the existing roadway easements.**

Motion carried 5-0.

7.5 Resolution 25-41: Plat of Meadow Hills, David Held - 20189 Meadowvale Rd NW

The staff report was presented.

Mayor Dietz opened the public hearing. There being no one to speak to this matter, Mayor Dietz closed the public hearing.

Moved by Councilmember Grupa and seconded by Councilmember Wagner to adopt Resolution 25-41 approving the plat of Meadow Hills, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The boundary line adjustment establishing the north lot line must be recorded before the plat of Meadow Hills.**
- 2. All wetland permitting related to the proposed impacts must be approved prior to releasing the final plat for recording.**
- 3. The driveways must be located in accordance with Sherburne County access spacing requirements.**
- 4. All conditions related to the approval of the wetland buffer variance, Case No. V 25-08, must be met prior to issuing building permits.**
- 5. Park dedication shall be paid for two single-family lots.**

Motion carried 5-0.

7.6 Conditional Use Permit (Revocation): Carnova, 17242 Ulysses Street

The public hearing was continued from the June 16, 2025 City Council meeting.

Mr. Carlton reviewed that the applicant had begun clean-up on the property and applied for a new Conditional Use Permit. The new CUP will go to the Planning Commission on July 22, 2025, and return to the August 18, 2025, City Council meeting.

Mayor Dietz closed the public hearing.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 2026 Benefit Level for Elk River Fire Relief Association

The staff report was presented.

Mayor Dietz explained that the City maintains a balance in the fund that would pay for every firefighter if they retired today. If there is extra in the fund, it could be redistributed back to the firefighters for their benefit. Mayor Dietz added that the only negative outcome could be that some long-time firefighters may retire once the increase is in effect on January 1, 2026.

Moved by Councilmember Wagner and seconded by Councilmember Grupa to approve an increase for the Elk River Fire Relief Association (ERFRA) benefit level to \$10,750 per year of service, effective January 1, 2026. Motion carried 5-0.

8.2 Sigma Tactical Wellness Heart Testing

Police Chief Kuhnly presented the staff report and outlined the challenges facing officer health. A combination of shift work and emergency response may contribute to health issues at an earlier age than the national average. The testing would be paid for by the public safety aid grant and would be voluntary.

The Council discussed the possibility of budgeting for long-term testing every few years. Police Chief Kuhnly wanted to remain open to other wellness services instead of investing so much of the funds into

this test.

The Council will continue to receive information from the Police Chief on future uses of the public safety grant. The Council reached consensus on spending the funds on Sigma Tactical Wellness Heart Testing.

9. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m. Mayor Dietz called the work session to order at 7:34 p.m.

Moved by Councilmember Calva and seconded by Councilmember Beyer to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

10. WORK SESSION

10.1 Compensation Plan Study

The staff report was presented.

The Council agreed that Mr. Portner and Ms. Wipper are knowledgeable and equipped to conduct a compensation plan study without hiring a consultant. The study would primarily affect non-union positions.

10.2 Update on Fire Station I Architectural Design

The staff report was presented.

Brooke Jacobson, Principal at C&H Architects, gave an update on the Fire Station #1 concept design.

Mayor Dietz commented that the site address should not be mentioned.

Councilmember Wagner asked how the public space was being used. Fire Chief Dickinson stated that community groups and schools use the space.

Fire Chief Dickinson stated that they are trying to design the station for the next 80-100 years.

Councilmember Calva left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Councilmember Beyer asked if the new fire station would have training mechanisms. Fire Chief Dickinson responded that the new station would not be needed since Fire Station #3 has so many. This would help the station be more fiscally responsible.

Fire Chief Dickinson stated that the new station would have five apparatus bays for fire and three for ambulance, which would all be full on day one.

Councilmember Calva returned to the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Mayor Dietz asked if the ambulance service needed three bays and if they would contribute financially.

Mr. Portner responded that the City maintains a partnership with the ambulance service.

Mayor Dietz asked about the potential cost of the project. Ms. Jacobson responded that the next step would be to bring someone onto the project to figure out costs.

Mayor Dietz asked if the public had been informed that a new fire station is being built. Fire Chief Dickinson stated that people are talking about it, but it has yet to be publicized. Assistant Fire Chief Libor added that there was an article in the Star News a couple of months ago regarding the fire station. Councilmember Calva added that there was some negative public perception in Otsego when they began planning their fire station without informing the public. Mr. Portner felt that Elk River was different since there has been a fire department for decades, whereas Otsego is just starting its fire department.

Councilmember Wagner felt that residents wouldn't be upset about building a new station until they found out the cost. Councilmember Beyer added that he would like the Council to receive a bulleted list of information about why the City needs a new fire station, so they can be "armed". Mayor Dietz encouraged the architect to come to the meetings periodically so that the Council could address any questions or changes as soon as possible.

Fire Chief Dickinson asked for permission to go out for an RFP to hire a construction manager. Mr. Stremcha added that the City would like to use the same construction manager for both the fire station and the Cannabound/Northbound building. This may save on costs.

Councilmember Grupa stated he did not want the two projects combined when asking residents for funding.

Councilmember Wagner asked when she could provide input on the design of the Cannabound/Northbound store. She felt the design looked "neon, not classy".

II. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Councilmember Wagner encouraged the other members to do a more cohesive job of making motions.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Katie Porath.



John J. Dietz, Mayor



Tina Allard, City Clerk