



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Sara Paul
Chair

Dennis Johnson
Vice Chair

Jessica Thelander
Commissioner

Marshall Saunders
Commissioner

Patrick Meachem
Councilmember

Cassie Koecher
Commissioner

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR AGENDA
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025 @ 3:30 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sara Paul called the Economic Development Meeting to order at 3:30PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Marshall Saunders led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Kevin Schieber, Commissioner Marshall Saunders, Councilmember Patrick Meacham, Commissioner Sara Paul, Commissioner Jessica Thelander, Commissioner Cassie Koecher

Absent: Commissioner Dennis Johnson

Remote:

Others Present:

Notes:

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Provides an opportunity for the public to address the Council on items that are not on the Agenda. Please raise your hand to be recognized. Please state your name and address for the record. This section is for the express

purpose of addressing concerns of City services and operations. It shall not be used to clarify individual's views for political purposes.

Jim Swenson, County Commissioner, signed up for Public Comment.

Tim MacMillian, North Branch School Board Chair, signed up for Public Comment.

5. AGENDA APPROVAL

a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Jessica Thelander

SECONDER: Marshall Saunders

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

6. CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.

a. Approval of November 18, 2025 EDA Minutes

ACTION

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Marshall Saunders

SECONDER: Jessica Thelander

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Public Hearing - Approval of Resolution R-272-2025 - EDA Approval of the Sale of Real Property in North Branch and dispensing with review of the sale by the North Branch Planning Commission ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the Public Hearing - Approval of Resolution R-272-2025 - EDA Approval of the Sale of Real Property in North Branch and dispensing with review of the sale by the North Branch Planning Commission.

Motion to open Public Hearing at 3:45 PM.

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Patrick Meacham

SECONDER: Jessica Thelander

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

Kelly Neider and Tim MacMillian spoke in support of the sale of the property.

Motion to close the Public Hearing at 3:49 PM.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Patrick Meacham
SECONDER: Sara Paul
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher
ABSENT:
NOTES:

Motion for Approval of Resolution R-272-2025 - EDA Approval of the Sale of Real Property in North Branch and dispensing with review of the sale by the North Branch Planning Commission

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jessica Thelander
SECONDER: Cassie Koecher
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher
ABSENT:
NOTES:

8. REPORTS

a. Chisago County HRA-EDA Update VERBAL UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the Chisago County HRA-EDA Update. The HRA EDA has two new grant programs that they will be giving more information about soon. They have received the Retail Trade Analysis Report, and they will have a presentation in late January or February. County Commissioner Jim Swenson announced that Nancy Hoffman received the Executive Director of the Year for Minnesota. Kudos to Nancy for all of her hard work!!

b. North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Update VERBAL UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce update. The Chamber is in the process of getting its new Board of Directors. The Chamber also had its Holiday Party today.

c. North Branch Area Schools Update VERBAL UPDATE

Chair Sara Paul gave the North Branch Area Schools Update. She noted students sang at the Chamber Holiday Party, and also at the Tree Lighting this past weekend.

She added that the District has gone through a year-long Facilities Study and as a result of the study, the District will be moving a few programs. She noted the following move a grade level from Sunrise, and they will be creating an early learning center at the Education Center. The District Center staff will be moving to the Middle school and this does not require asking for additional money.

Sh noted the District is going out for a Technology Levy, which is a renewal that supports Technology throughout the District. There will be no change in taxes, and it is a renewal. This vote will be February 10th, 2026.

d. EDA Executive Director Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the EDA Executive Director Update.

e. Grocery Market Study

ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol introduced the Grocery Market Study. He informed ROIC Analytics completed the study, looked at different formats, including both a small and a larger format store, and looking at multiple areas of North Branch. The smaller market store, such as Aldi or a Walmart Neighborhood store, would be the best fit for North Branch after looking at the impact on sister stores and the demographics of North Branch.

Motion to accept the Grocery Market Study Reports from ROIC Analytics.

RESULT:

MOVER: Patrick Meacham

SECONDER: Jessica Thelander

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

f. Consider Approval of the 2026 Budget

ACTION

Finance Director Sharon Wright presented the 2026 Budget for the EDA. The 2026 budget includes an improvement program, debt payments, and an increased amount for marketing, and includes a reduction in the amount being transferred from the city's general fund. She noted there is an overall increase in revenue from the 2025 budget. She added that State Statute allows cities to establish EDA and HRA tax levies for the purpose of economic development; both of these are levied by the North Branch EDA. The Statutory maximum for the EDA levy is 0.01813% of the City's Estimated Market Value (EMV); the HRA levy is 0.01850% of the same EMV. For payments in 2026, the North Branch EMV is \$1,707,171,700. Based on those factors, the maximum EDA and HRA levies are \$309,510 and \$315,827, respectively, for a combined total of \$625,337. The EDA and HRA levies are considered special-purpose levies, meaning those funds may only be used for specific purposes as allowed by State Statute.

Motion was made to accept the 2026 Budget.

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Marshall Saunders

SECONDER: Jessica Thelander

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

g. Consider Approval of Residential Lease Agreement - Interstate Business Park ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the consideration for approval of the Residential Lease Agreement for the Interstate Business Park. The North Branch Economic Development Authority (EDA) approved a residential lease agreement effective January 2, 2025, with Barry Engdahl that allows for the use of the property including the house and outbuildings located on the property (PID 11.01072.02) located at 6247 410th Street. The property was previously included a life estate that allowed the Engdahl family the use of the property. Mr Engdahl is currently also in a lease agreement with the EDA to farm the land within the Industrial Park. The current rental lease includes a one (1) year term effective through January 15, 2026, and a month-to-month term thereafter. The current rate for the term is \$5,200/month. The property at 6247 410th Street is located within the boundary of a potential purchase agreement and is scheduled to be removed with the closing of the property. The purchase agreement is scheduled to allow for a 180-day due diligence period (June 7, 2026) to allow for closing. The closing could take place any time prior to this. Mr Engdahl has expressed a desire to continue with the residential lease, but at the current rate and uncertainty of the state of the property for the upcoming year, he would only be interested at a reduced rate of \$3,500/month during the due diligence period. If the property were not to close during the due diligence period, the rate would go back to an effective rate of \$5,200/month. The tenant would continue to be responsible for utilities and insurance on personal property, and the EDA would continue to pay for the insurance on the buildings.

Motion made to approve the amendment to the lease agreement to continue the lease with Mr. Engdahl on a month-to-month basis at the reduced rate of \$3,500/month and to return the rate to \$5,200/month in the event the property does not close during the due diligence period.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Marshall Saunders
SECONDER: Jessica Thelander
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher
ABSENT:
NOTES:

h. Consider approval of Minnesota Rail Service Improvement (MRSI) Grant ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the consideration of approval of the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement (MRSI) Grant. The EDA has received a purchase agreement for the sale of 120 acres of land in the Interstate Business Park. One of the key components of the land sale is rail access to the site. The Minnesota Department of Transportation has a Minnesota Rail Service (MRSI) Grant currently available, providing grants for freight rail service improvement projects that support economic development. City staff have been in contact with members of the local rail authority, and they have been successful in obtaining funding through this program in the past with the use of the consulting company, Prime Focus LLC. City staff have contacted Prime Focus LLC, and they have provided a flat fee amount of \$7,500 for their services to submit a grant application. The maximum amount of funding available is \$1 million per grant application and does not require matching funding.

The grant application deadline is January 9, 2026

Motion authorizing approval of staff to submit an application to MRSI and to authorize an amount not to exceed \$7,500.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Marshall Saunders
SECONDER: Jessica Thelander
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

- i. Consider Support of Approval of Resolution R-273-2025 approving engineering service contract with WSB for the Fletcher Ave Street and Utility Extension Project ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented considering the support of approval of Resolution R-273-2025 approving engineering service contract with WSB for the Fletcher Avenue Street and Utility Extension Project.

He noted that the Fletcher Avenue Road and Utility Extension Project will include the extension of Fletcher Avenue North from its current terminus North of Fletcher Court to the segment of Fletcher Avenue that extends south from 410th Street. The road will be designed to match the existing section and include an 8' bituminous trail on either side. The roadway is planned to be designated as a Municipal State Aid Street and will be designed to MSA Standards.

Utility extensions will include a 20" water main in Fletcher Avenue and an 18" sanitary sewer line from the current Goodview Avenue terminus at 402nd Street.

The design project will also include the development of plans to extend Goodview Avenue 800' and include two 8' wide bituminous trails on each side of the roadway. A 12" water main will be included for the length of the road extension. This roadway and water main is planned to be bid as an alternate. Construction costs for the alternate have not been included in the \$4,108,846.35 budget.

This roadway and utility extension provides important infrastructure connections within the industrial Park. It is being proposed at this time to support the LP Siding project that is moving forward concurrently. The proposed scope of services includes all necessary surveying, preliminary and final design, development of construction documents, including final plans and project specifications, and bidding assistance. This work also includes construction administration, construction inspection, and materials testing as required by the city.

Motion to recommend providing support to the city council to approve Resolution R-273-2025 approving the engineering service contract with WSB for the Fletch Avenue Street and Utility Extension Project.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jessica Thelander
SECONDER: Marshall Saunders
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Koecher

ABSENT:

NOTES:

9. NEXT MEETING - January 20, 2026

10. ADJOURNMENT

The Economic Development Authority Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Patrick Meacham

SECONDER: Jessica Thelander

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Keocher

ABSENT:

NOTES: