



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

Robert Canada
Councilmember/Acting Mayor

Jeff Goulet
Councilmember

Jim Ibinger
Councilmember

Patrick Meacham
Councilmember

**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR AGENDA
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2025 @ 7:00 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, October 28, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kevin Schieber called the North Branch City Council Meeting to order at 7 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Kevin Schieber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Kevin Schieber, Councilmember Jeff Goulet, Councilmember Jim Ibinger, Councilmember Patrick Meacham, Councilmember Robert Canada

Absent:

Remote:

Others Present:

Notes:

4. AGENDA APPROVAL

a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

Mayor Kevin Schieber requested that 7e under the Consent Agenda be moved to 9a in Staff Reports for discussion.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Kevin Schieber
SECONDER: Robert Canada
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada
ABSENT:
NOTES:

5. PRESENTATION & PROCLAMATION

6. 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.

Charley Klopp, Lisa Thackeray, Jeff Tentiger, and Connor Landry signed up for Public Comment.

7. 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.

Mayor Kevin Schieber requested that 7e under the Consent Agenda be moved to 9a in Staff Reports for discussion.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jim Ibinger
SECONDER: Patrick Meacham
AYES: Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada
ABSENT:
NOTES:

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| a. | Claims Summary | ACTION |
| b. | Minutes - City Council Meeting - October 14th, 2025, 7:00 PM | ACTION |
| c. | Approval of LG220 Application for Exempt Permit for St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church | ACTION |
| d. | Approval of Resolution R-245-2025 authorizing payment #6 for the CSAH 30 Project. | ACTION |
| e. | Approval of Letter of Understanding between the City of North Branch and Chisago County for the CSAH 14/Hemingway Avenue/Lincoln Trail Roundabout project. | ACTION |

Mayor Kevin Schieber requested that 7e under the Consent Agenda be moved before 9a in Staff Reports for discussion.

Mayor Kevin Schieber shared that this is an approval of a letter of understanding between the City of

North Branch and Chisago County for County Road 14 and Hemmingway Avenue, also known as Lincoln Trail roundabout project. City Administrator Matthew Hill shared a letter of understanding regarding the roundabout project. This would be a 50/50 partnership for the cost of the construction of the project.

Motion and Second to approve the Letter of Understanding between the City of North Branch and Chisago County for the CSAH14/Hemingway Avenue/Lincoln Trail roundabout project as presented.

RESULT: **Passed**

MOVER: **Patrick Meacham**

SECONDER: **Robert Canada**

AYES: **Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada**

ABSENT:

NOTES:

- f. Approval of Letter of Support for Chisago County's Local Road Improvement ACTION
 Program application for funding for the CSAH 14/Hemingway Avenue/Lincoln
 Trail roundabout

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Public Hearing regarding New Comfort Massage business license ACTION

The City Council started the Public Hearing at 7:18 pm to discuss the revocation of the therapeutic massage business license of New Comfort Massage. The City of North Branch, Minnesota, initiated proceedings to revoke the therapeutic massage business license of New Comfort Massage LLC due to multiple credible accusations of City Code violations. The North Branch Police Department investigated complaints. The City Administrator recommended revocation, a recommendation supported by the Chief of Police, due to the ongoing threat to public health and safety.

City Administrator, Matthew Hill explained that he first received information regarding a formal complaint from the Police Department concerning alleged violations related to a specific massage establishment while he and Chief Dan Meyer were contemplating next steps, a second complaint was brought to the attention of the police department, prompting the revocation process from his office in a formal investigation by the police department. He reached out to a representative of the licensee, Darwin, he was supported to explain the complaints, and also included the fact that the person that was performing massages at the business was not approved or licensed therapist. We did reach out to our city attorney's office, and the complaints and local investigation information were then forwarded to our city attorney's office for their review. The legal department provided an assessment of the case, including an opinion on the legal grounds for revocation and adherence to due process requirements at this public hearing this evening. This review by our city attorney's office does ensure that any subsequent actions would be legally sound based on complaints, and the legal counsel's review, a recommendation for the revocation of the massage license was presented by me to the City Council. This recommendation outlined the specific reasons for revocation and the relevant city ordinance and statutes that were violated.

Police Chief Dan Meyer explained that the criminal case is currently in the hands of the Chisago County Attorney's Office. They're still reviewing the matter.

Robert Kringler, North Branch City Attorney from Flaherty and Hood, explained that per our City Code, the City does have options listed out directly regarding violations of this licensing ordinance, which are

suspension, revocation, or administrative penalties. Robert explained that there are multiple options in the city code for dealing with code violations under the massage business ordinance. City staff have brought it forward, recommending revocation.

The business owner, Darwin, addressed the City Council and stated that he had no interest in keeping the business. He does have a lease with the building and is looking for someone to take over the lease.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:34 PM.

Motion for Resolution R-246-2025, including findings, conclusions, and order from the City of North Branch regarding the revocation of the therapeutic massage business licensed to New Comfort Massage, LLC .

RESULT: **Passed**
MOVER: **Patrick Meacham**
SECONDER: **Jim Ibinger**
AYES: **Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada**
ABSENT:
NOTES:

9. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Consider approval of Resolution R-248-2025 concerning Bond Reimbursement Regulations **ACTION**

Finance Director Sharon Wright asked the City Council to approve R-248-2025 concerning bond reimbursement regulations. There has been discussion with City Council to utilize bonds to purchase equipment that has become obsolete. The resolution would allow the City to move forward with ordering the items that are listed on the staff report. The importance of this is due to the significant lead time required for the larger equipment. Once the equipment is received, then the City can use the bond proceeds to reimburse itself for the purchases that were completed prior to the final bond sale.

Shane Rudlang from Ehlers Public Finance Advisors explained to the Council that what the resolution does is buy you time. It allows you to pay for things and then bond finance them later. As you go and move through the process of potentially issuing bonds in the first quarter of next year, one thing to keep in mind is that your interest cost, depending on how you look at it, we estimate that to be around 4% and we all know that the cost of these cars, fire trucks, and all those other things are increasing at a rate that's quite a bit higher than that. And there's the possibility that 4% is even a little bit lower. We do add a buffer into the bond estimates at this stage, because we're four to six months out from issuing the debt, and so we have a buffer in there. We all know that the Fed is likely to reduce interest rates even this week, and sometimes that's already priced into the market, but there's a potential to have even lower interest costs. So the point is, you all borrow for a rate that's well in excess of what inflation is.

Councilmember Goulet asked if other cities bond their police cars. Shane responded that many do. Mayor Kevin Schieber asked if the Council could take more time and think, and ask more questions as they arise.

Councilmember Jim Ibinger made a motion to table this Resolution until the next City Council meeting.

RESULT: **Passed**
MOVER: **Jim Ibinger**

SECONDER: Jeff Goulet

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada

ABSENT:

NOTES:

b. Municipal Finance 101

INFO

Shane Rudlang from Ehlers Public Finance Advisors gave a presentation on Municipal Finance 101 regarding Property Taxes and Levy Dynamics to the City Council. The process used by the State of Minnesota to calculate property taxes is one of the most complex systems in the U.S. Because of this complexity, the presentation is to help us break this down into a presentation for the City Council and our taxpayers.

c. Consider approval of proposal for completing the Part 1 Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan Amendment ACTION

City Administrator Matthew Hill presented the proposal for completing the Part 1 Wellhead Protection (WHP) Plan Amendment. Cities need to complete a Part 1 amendment of their Wellhead Protection Plan (WHPP) for several reasons, primarily to ensure the continued safety and quality of their public drinking water supply. WSB has requested a proposal from Spheros Environmental, well known for its integrated water resource strategies, to assist in completing the required update. When Part 1 is completed, you will move on to Part 2, more than likely, in 2026. I am asking for a motion and a second to accept the proposal from Spheros, to complete Part One of the Wellhead Protection Plan Amendment as required by the Minnesota Department of Health.

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Kevin Schieber

SECONDER: Robert Canada

AYES: Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada

ABSENT:

NOTES:

d. Approval of Resolution R-242-2025 approving the Cannabis Retail Registration Application for Wild River Cannabis LLC ACTION

Wild River Cannabis LLC submitted a Cannabis Retail Registration Application to open a cannabis microbusiness at 4628 Isanti Trail, North Branch, MN 55056. The City Council discussed this at the October 14, 2025, meeting and tabled the item to October 28, 2025, to obtain the following information: legal opinion on compliance, traffic statistics/impact, and crime statistics.

The City Council received five letters of opposition regarding the application. City Attorney Robert Kringler from Flaherty and Hood gave a high-level overview. He stated that we've seen a lot of frustration from the public around the state regarding the municipal cannabis law, and I think the message to convey to the city council from your legal team is that the city's options here are quite limited. When the state passed these laws in the past few years, they really only gave the city a very narrow framework in which they actively regulate and be a part of the business regulation. The City did take initial action regarding working within that statutory framework when it set up the zoning protocols that I believe were passed last September, approximately. That was one of the biggest steps the city was able to take. That's where those buffer requirements came in. The City imposed its initial requirements of a 1000-foot buffer from a school, a 1000-foot buffer from another cannabis retail business. The city also took action to limit the number of businesses that could operate within the city. In that ordinance, the city also restricted the hours of operation in that ordinance in line with state statute. So from our perspective, what is in front of the city today is a limited decision. You have a pending business registration request in front of you. The

question to the council is, should this business be registered? And, does it comply with your enacted local ordinances? I believe it's the staff's recommendation that it does comply with local ordinances you've enacted, and that is in front of you today.

Councilmember Ibinger made a motion for the approval of Resolution 242-2025 approving the cannabis retail registration application.

RESULT: **Passed**
MOVER: **Jim Ibinger**
SECONDER: **Patrick Meacham**
AYES: **Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham**
ABSENT:
NOTES: **Robert Canada voted Nay**

10. MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

- a. Advisory Committee member updates - Public Safety, Personnel, Public Works, **VERBAL**
 Finance, Liquor Store **UPDATE**

Councilmember Canada gave the Public Safety Committee update. There was a meeting on October 14th. The Fire Chief has elections this year, which start in December. Some of the fire calls that they are conducting, they are not charging, so they're going to try and look at that. The Fire Chief is doing his best to increase funding for his department. The police department talked about the PD Staff updates. Councilmember Canada thanked Chief Dan Meyer for his help on the Grand Avenue traffic concerns and the volunteers who are stepping up. Starting to discuss Christmas things, like stuff the squad. The next meeting is on November 4th.

Mayor Schieber discussed Parks and Trails. This past Saturday, they had a space race disc tournament. They had illuminated tee boxes and disc gold baskets. They had 48 registrations.

Councilmember Meacham gave the EDA update. EDA met last week. The EDA welcomes Cassie Keocher to the Council. The EDA board is now full. Nancy Hoffman from the Chisago County HRA EDA talked about lots of classes that they are providing at their office. Shields Plaza is doing lots of renovations inside and outside. There had been a closed session discussing potential sales of property in the industrial park.

City Administrator Matthew Hill gave Public Works updates. County Road 30 is now open. We are currently working on franchise fees updates for our utility providers. This is the last week for leaf pickup and leaf vacuuming. The Compost site will also be closing this week.

Councilmember Ibinger gave the Liquor Store updates. The net revenue is up about 10 1/2%. Setting some sales goals for next year. We also talked about some Marketing ideas.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Kevin Schieber adjourned the meeting at 9:13PM.

RESULT: **Passed**

MOVER: **Kevin Schieber**

SECONDER: **Patrick Meacham**

AYES: **Kevin Schieber, Jeff Goulet, Jim Ibinger, Patrick Meacham, Robert Canada**

ABSENT:

NOTES: