



# 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, JANUARY 27, 2026 @ 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, January 27, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kevin Schieber called the North Branch City Council meeting to order at 7:00 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**

**RESULT:** Passed

**MOVER:** Kevin Schieber

**SECONDER:** Robert Canada

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

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

5. PRESENTATION & PROCLAMATION

- a. Chisago County presentation of the Roundabout at Hemingway Avenue and Lincoln Trail (CoRd 14) INFO

Chisago County Public Works Director Joe Triplett and Ben Holbert from Chisago County gave a presentation about the County Road 14 Roundabout Project at Hemingway Avenue and Lincoln Trail (County Road 14).

- b. North Branch Schools presents information about the February 10 vote to renew the Capital Projects Levy. INFO

North Branch Schools Superintendent Sara Paul presented information about the February 10th vote at Main Street Church to renew the Capital Projects Levy.

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.*

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.*

City Councilmember Jeff Goulet made a comment that he has no objections to Ordinance Amendment 406-25, to change the days and times of the City Council meetings to the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 6 PM, but that it will be a slightly tighter schedule-wise, and that there may be some conflicts in the future.

**RESULT:** Passed

**MOVER:** Robert Canada

**SECONDER:** Jim Ibinger

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

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

- a. Claims ACTION
- b. Approval of Minutes - Regular Council Meeting - January, 13, 2026, 7:00 PM ACTION
- c. Approve the LG240B Application to Conduct Excluded Bingo - St. Gregory Knights of Columbus Council 10016 ACTION
- d. Approve Gambling LG220 for Exempt Permit - Full Count ACTION
- e. Approve Gambling LG220 Permit - North Branch American Legion Riders Post 85 ACTION
- f. Approve 2026 Massage Therapists Licenses - Shauna Lopez and Tiffany Christian ACTION
- g. Approval of Road Maintenance Agreement with Stacy MN ACTION

- h. Approval of Ordinance Amendment #406-26 to change the days and times of the City Council meetings to the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at 6:00pm. ACTION
- i. Approval of the Ordinance Amendment 408-26 to add low-potency hemp products to the list of required licensing fees to our fee schedule. ACTION
- j. Approval of Contract with BS&A Software for 2026 Implementation ACTION
- k. Approval of Resolution R-285-2026 approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Wireless Communications Tower at PID: 11.00223.00 ACTION

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. STAFF REPORTS

- a. 2025 Police Department Activity Report INFO

Police Chief Dan Meyer presented the 2025 Police Department Activity Report. Our police department provides 24/7 police coverage and currently consists of 15 sworn officers, including the police chief, two patrol sergeants, one investigator, one school resource officer, and ten patrol officers. In addition to our sworn staff, we have an office manager and an administrative assistant, along with four volunteer police reserve officers.

During 2025, the police department handled a total of 16,030 incidents/calls for service. Our department issued 538 citations and made 162 arrests during the calendar year. Our police reserve unit also volunteered 911 hours last year, helping out at our community events and assisting our sworn staff on calls such as medicals, public assists, vehicle lockouts, motor vehicle crashes, and prisoner transport.

We continue to expand and build upon our community engagement initiatives. We were involved with several community events during 2025, which included:

- North Branch High School Career Fair (May)
- North Branch Area Schools Vehicle Fair (May)
- North Branch American Legion Annual Midsummer Days Celebration (June)
- Bike MS: MS150 MN 2025 (June)
- Annual "Walk and Roll to School" Events (May and October)
- Law Enforcement Special Olympics Torch Run (June)
- Coffee/Cone/Cocoa with a Cop Events (July and December)
- Night to Unite (August)
- North Branch Area Chamber's Fall Harvest Festival (September)
- NBHS Homecoming Parade and Events (September)
- Special Olympics Truck Convoy (October)
- Chisago County Operation Community Connect (October)
- North Branch Arts Fest 2025 (November)
- McDonald's McHero Night (November)
- Annual "Stuff the Squad" Event at County Market (November)
- Public Safety Parade and Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony (December)

- b. Consider Resolution R-284-2026 approving a variance from minimum lot depths for Lots 5-7, Block 2, Fairway Field ACTION

City Planner, Ryan Saltis, presented the consideration of Resolution R-284-2026 approving a variance from minimum lot depths for Lots 5-7, Block 2, Fairway Field. Larry Beach Construction, Inc. (Applicant) has submitted a request for a Variance and preliminary plat approval for a new residential

subdivision known as Fairway Field, located generally at the intersection of 412th Street and Flink Avenue. The Subject Property is currently undeveloped and is guided and zoned for Rural-Residential.

The Preliminary Plat proposes the creation of 13 residential lots (each exceeding 1 acre in lot size), new public streets, stormwater facilities, and associated utilities. Access to the subdivision is provided via 412th Street with two new internal public roadways, including Fairfax Lane and Fairway Court, as shown on the Preliminary Plat and Site Plans. The applicant has applied for a variance from the required minimum lot depths for lots 5-7 within Block 2 of the plat due to irregularity in lot dimensions/shapes, road configurations, and elevations of the site.

The applicant has submitted a complete application, including preliminary plat drawings, grading and erosion control plans, utility plans, landscaping, and tree preservation. Final Plat approval is subject to City Council action and completion of all required conditions.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, and received general comments regarding access, lot size, density and groundwater impacts. The Planning Commission recommended approval (4-0) of the variance for a reduction in minimum lot depths for the Fairway Field development with the following conditions.

- The minimum lot depths for Block 2, Lots 5, 6, and 7 must be at least 200 feet.

Motion to approve Resolution R-284-2026 approving a variance from minimum lot depths for Lots 5-7, Block 2, Fairway Field.

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

c. Consider Approval of Resolution R-283-2026 approving the Fairway Field Preliminary Plat ACTION

City Planner, Ryan Saltis, presented the consideration of approval of Resolution R-283-2026 approving the Fairway Field Preliminary Plat. Larry Beach Construction, Inc. (Applicant) has submitted a request for Preliminary Plat and Variance approval for a new residential subdivision known as Fairway Field, located generally at the intersection of 412th Street and Flink Avenue. The Subject Property is currently undeveloped and is guided and zoned for Rural-Residential.

The Preliminary Plat proposes the creation of 13 residential lots (each exceeding 1 acre in lot size), new public streets, stormwater facilities, and associated utilities. Access to the subdivision is provided via 412th Street with two new internal public roadways, including Fairfax Lane and Fairway Court, as shown on the Preliminary Plat and Site Plans. The applicant has also applied for a variance from the required lot depths for lots within Block 2 of the plat.

The applicant has submitted a complete application, including preliminary plat drawings, grading and erosion control plans, utility plans, landscaping, and tree preservation. Final Plat approval is subject to City Council action and completion of all required conditions.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, and received general

comments regarding access, lot size, and density. The Planning Commission recommended approval (4-0) of the preliminary plat for Fairway Field with the following conditions.

1. The Applicant shall address and comply with the City Engineer's memo dated December 2, 2025.
2. All public improvements shall be constructed in accordance with City of North Branch standards.
3. A Development Agreement shall be executed prior to Final Plat approval.

Motion to approve Resolution R-283-2026 approving the Fairway Field Preliminary Plat.

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

d. Human Resource Report INFO

The Human Resource Generalist gave the Human Resource Report. The last few months have been busy for Human Resources. We onboarded four new employees. Matt Fraley started as the Director of Public Works and Utilities in December. We also brought on board Jessica, Ella, and Ryan as Warming House Attendants. Two employees are currently on leave, and we are looking forward to their return this spring. Angela Tveit resigned from her position, and her last day was January 16th. We appreciate her three years of service to the City of North Branch.

The close of 2025 saw a change in our employees' insurance plan. I do want to recognize all the employees for their timely response and communication, which allowed us to be able to make this change in a short amount of time.

The fire department is currently interviewing applicants to join their team. We will be starting interviews for an Administrative Assistant in the next few weeks. Currently, we have postings for a Police Officer and a Building Official. I would also like to highlight the staff's ongoing commitment to learning through continuing education. In 2026, among all departments, we have a combined 30 classes that staff members signed up for. Courses range from maintaining the safety of drinking water to planning and emergency response. All these classes ensure the staff maintain their required certifications.

e. Consider Council Consensus on 2026 Equipment Bond ACTION

Finance Director Sharon Wright presented the 2026 Equipment Bond. Over the past several months, the City has been evaluating the potential issuance of an Equipment Bond. Multiple structuring options are available, and City staff is requesting guidance regarding both the bond structure and the total amount to be issued.

### **Bond Structure**

One option is to structure the Equipment Bond so that principal payments begin after the final payment on the 2022 Equipment Bond, which is scheduled to be completed in 2032. Under this approach, principal payments on the proposed 2026 Equipment Bond would be deferred until that time. While this structure would result in higher total interest costs over the life of the bond, it would maintain debt service payments at levels consistent with the City's current obligations. An alternative structure would require principal payments to begin immediately upon issuance of the bond. This option would reduce total interest costs but would increase near-term debt service payments, resulting in higher annual expenditures during the initial years of the bond.

## **Bond Amount**

The total amount of Equipment Bonds to be issued will depend on which equipment is ultimately selected for funding through this financing method.

During the December 9, 2025 meeting, City Council directed staff to proceed with financing the Fire Department ladder truck and three (3) Public Works snow plows through the Equipment Bond, for a total amount of \$2,050,000. This is the first option presented.

The second option includes additional equipment purchases consisting of a one-ton truck and a mini-excavator for the Water Fund; a Fire Department tanker truck; and, for the Public Works Department, a front-end loader and a one-ton four-wheel-drive plow truck. The total cost of these items is \$1,345,000. When combined with the first option, the total amount of Equipment Bonds issued would be \$3,395,000.

The final equipment option under consideration includes a half-ton four-wheel-drive pickup and a three-quarter-ton cargo van for the Public Works Department, as well as a three-quarter-ton pickup for the Sewer Fund. The total cost of these items is \$220,000. The two pickup trucks have an estimated useful life of ten (10) years, while the cargo van has an estimated useful life of fifteen (15) years.

Financing for these three items may be structured in one of two ways. First, the City could utilize an interfund loan from the Generation Fund to fund these purchases. An advantage of this approach is that interest payments would remain within the City, as interest paid by the borrowing funds would offset interest earnings otherwise forgone by the Generation Fund.

Alternatively, these items could be included in the Equipment Bond issuance, resulting in a total bond amount of \$3,615,000.

Consensus was for the total amount of the bond to be \$3,075,000.

## 10. MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

- a. Notice of Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting - Thursday, April 16, 2026, 6:00pm at North Branch City Hall INFO

The Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 6:00 PM at the North Branch City Hall. Two assessor's from the County will be in attendance to support any questions that people might have in regards to their evaluations for 2027.

- b. Cannabis Ordinance Review

VERBAL  
UPDATE

City Administrator Matthew Hill presented the Cannabis Ordinance Review. It was the consensus of the City Council to review City Ordinance No. 381-24 to address specific concerns raised during the recent license approval process and provide direction to staff on any necessary amendments or clarifications.

City Ordinance No. 381-24 was adopted on September 24, 2024. Discussion at the October 2025 Council meetings brought up questions regarding:

- Clarity on Buffer Zones: Potential ambiguity in the measurement or application of distance requirements from sensitive uses (e.g., schools, parks, and daycare facilities).

The purpose of this review is to provide an opportunity for the City Council to receive the existing

Ordinance, address the specific items of concern identified in October 2025, and provide policy direction to staff. The outcome of this discussion may include a directive to the City Attorney to draft amendments to the Ordinance.

Consensus was for Councilmember Canada to come back to the Council with some recommended changes that they can discuss further.

c. Advisory Committee reports

VERBAL  
UPDATE

Councilmember Canada gave a Public Safety update. The Fire Chief went to the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association, and different Fire Chiefs complimented the North Branch firefighters. A group of City of North Branch firefighters drove to Chicago to look at a ladder truck that is for sale. The Fire Department is looking at some new signage in front of the fire hall and is trying to incorporate the bell that has been currently used. The Chief and HR are exploring the possibility of offering counseling services to the Police and Fire Department.

Councilmember Goulet gave a Finance update regarding the liquor store, saying sales have been a little soft, but their cost management side has been keeping the profit coming in. For Public Works, 2026 projects are being discussed. The Old Town Street and utility project was pushed out until 2027. The Viking Meadows development utility extension will be postponed until 2027. There were also quite a few applicants for the Public Works Administrative Specialist position.

Councilmember Ibinger mentioned that we kind of discussed the Finance Advisory Committee information with the bonding. We haven't had an official liquor store advisory committee meeting since November, so it would be good to get one of those on the books.

City Administrator Matthew Hill discussed that the water and light building had a fire last Sunday evening. There is extensive damage to the roof and to the mechanical equipment within that facility. The inspectors are coming up to take a look at it, but they estimate that the ceiling caught fire from the exhaust system.

Mayor Kevin Schieber gave a quick Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces update. The Christmas lights look great, both on the trees and on the streets. The Commission talked about vendors coming in for Concerts in the Parks and hoping to get more vendors. The Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Commission is in the process of receiving 40 acres from the Max Malmquist property and figuring out exactly what that's going to look like. Most of the mayors throughout Chisago County got together to meet. A large part of the discussion was on local control and the state trying to mandate some of the City requirements, such as zoning and high density. There is a 2nd meeting tomorrow with Senator Koran and Representative Rymer.

Councilmember Meacham gave an update regarding the Planning Commission. We're going to have a public hearing on cleaning up two areas of code. The requirement to have paved driveways, and currently looking back, it is written that the surfacing section only specifies paving requirements for residential properties that are 2 acres or smaller. There are some questions about whether it's required in commercial or industrial developments, and if they should be paved. In the Planning Commission, we're talking about it because 2 acres doesn't line up with residential minimums. The conversation got into allowing some side parking areas for your recreational vehicles. For the EDA, Nancy Hoffman said that the retail trade analysis is completed, and the presentation is going to be on February 19th at the Senior

Center from 2-4 pm. Director Nathan Sondrol brought up during the EDA meeting is an initial drawing of the potential or the replanting proposal of the business park with LP coming in.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The City Council meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.



# 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, JANUARY 13, 2026 @ 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, January 13, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kevin Schieber called the North Branch City Council Meeting to order at 7:00 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**

Motion to move 7F, Approval of Resolution R-281-2026 authorizing budget carryovers to Staff Reports, 9A.

**RESULT:** Passed

**MOVER:** Patrick Meacham

**SECONDER:** Robert Canada

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

5. PRESENTATION & PROCLAMATION

- a. City of North Branch Legislative Review for 2025 from Larkin Hoffman Public Affairs - Margaret Vesel, Brandan Strickland, and Andrew Carlson VERBAL UPDATE

Margaret Vesel, Brandan Strickland and Andrew Carlson from Larkin Hoffman Public Affairs gave a presentation regarding the City of North Branch Legislative Review for 2025.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

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Paul Willard and Ben Hedberg 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.*

Consent agenda 7F has been moved to 9A under Staff Reports.

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

- a. Claims ACTION  
b. Minutes - City Council Meeting - December 9, 2025, 7:00 PM ACTION  
c. Minutes - City Council Workshop - November 18, 2025 ACTION  
d. Minutes - Truth in Taxation - December 03, 2025 ACTION  
e. Approve 2026 Tobacco, Massage, and ROW Licenses ACTION  
f. Approval of Resolution R-281-2026 authorizing budget carryovers ACTION

Finance Director Sharon Wright presented Resolution R-281-2026 authorizing budget carryovers.

During the 2025 fiscal year, certain circumstances arose that prevented departments from expending their budgets as originally planned. This information was not available at the time that the 2025 budget was developed. Accordingly, we are requesting City Council approval to carry forward a portion of these funds into fiscal year 2026 to ensure that the associated projects can be completed.

The 2025 budget carryovers to be approved.

General Fund - Fire Station Roof Repairs \$50,000  
General Fund - Fire Public Safety Money \$57,700  
General Fund - Park Trails Maintenance \$175,000  
General Fund - Building Official Training \$5,000  
Water Fund - Water Tower #2 Cleaning \$10,000

Motion for Resolution R-281-2026 authorizing revised budget carryovers.

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

- g. Approval of Resolution R-278-2026 authorizing official signatories and declaring official depositories ACTION
- h. Approval of Audit Engagement Letter with Abdo for 2025 audit ACTION
- i. Recieve monthly legal report from City Attorney INFO
- j. Approval of Resolution R-282-2026 regarding the support of a Minnesota Forward Fund Application ACTION
- k. Approve Gambling LG220 Permit - Minnesota Deer Hunters Association - Wild River Chapter ACTION
- l. Approve Gambling LG220 Permit #2 - Minnesota Deer Hunters Association - Wild River Chapter ACTION
- m. Approval of Commission members for 2026 ACTION
- n. Approval of election results and officer appointments for the Fire Department in 2026 ACTION
- o. Consider approval of job description for Building Official ACTION

## 8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Public Hearing Continuation for the NW Old Town Street and Utility Project INFO

Due to the snow event on December 9, the City Council made the decision to continue the Public Hearing for the NW Old Town Improvement Project to the January 13, 2026 Council meeting. Heidi Hamilton of WSB presented the project information for the Council and residents.

The city's 2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes the Northwest Old Town Street and Utility Improvements, including:

- Cedar Street (Elmwood Terrace Apartments to Branch Avenue)
- Elm Street (Oakview Avenue to 8th Avenue)
- 10th Avenue (TH 95 to Cedar Street)
- 11th Avenue (Elm Street to Cedar Street)
- 12th Avenue (TH 95 to Cedar Street)

The project involves the reconstruction of streets in the Old Town area along with drainage improvements, storm water detention, water main improvements and sanitary sewer remediation.

Sidewalks could be included in the project along Elm Street and Ninth Avenue, and street parking along Elm Street, at the Council's direction.

The City Council considered proceeding with this project in 1995, 2006, and again in 2016. In all instances the project did not go forward due to high assessment costs. A new assessment policy was adopted in August 2025 and used in developing the proposed financial plan for the project.

A neighborhood meeting to discuss the project was held on November 17, 2025. Notice of the December 9, 2025 public hearing was mailed to property owners on November 19, 2025 and published in the official newspaper on November 27, 2025 and December 4, 2025, meeting the statutory guidelines. Due to the snowstorm that occurred on the day of the Public Hearing, the Hearing was continued to January 13, 2026.

A notice of the January 13 continued public hearing was sent to all residents and property owners on December 18, 2025, and notice was published in the official newspaper on January 1 and January 8, 2026. A project information sheet was included with the mailing and a website has been created (<https://nwoldtown-wsbeng.hub.argis.com>) to share information about the project more widely. The revised project schedule proposes to begin construction in July 2026 and complete the work in the summer 2027

The proposed improvement cost is estimated to be \$5,547,400 , which includes 10% contingency and 20% indirect costs.

The next step for this project to move forward is to order the improvement, direct the preparation of plans and specifications, and approve the engineering services contract with the City's Engineering Firm, WSB. The contract for services includes the preparation of the project design plans and specifications, bid preparation and publishing, creating the bid tabulation and bid verification with letter of recommendation for award of the project, materials testing, and construction observation. The total cost to complete these services is proposed to be completed at a cost of \$579,039 (plus \$8,875/parcel if additional right-of-way acquisition is needed). A copy of the full scope of services is attached for your review.

Public Hearing was reopened at 7:51 PM from the December 9th, 2025 meeting.

Kathy Blomquist, Bob Streater, Char Plattner, Josh Graham, Jordan Gobely, and Janelle Moore addressed the City Council at the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing was closed at 8:46 PM.

- b. Approval of Resolution R-279-2026 Authorizing WSB to prepare plans and specifications for the NW Old Town Project ACTION

Motion was made to table Resolution R-279-2026 to the 1st regular City Council meeting in February 2026.

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

9. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Approval of Resolution R-280-2026 accepting the Annual Appointments and Designations ACTION

Motion to approve Resolution R-280-2026 accepting the Annual Appointments and Designations.

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

- b. Consider approval of Council Meeting calendar for 2026 ACTION

City Administrator Matthew Hill presented the consideration of approval of the City Council Meeting calendar for 2026. Changing the date and time requires an ordinance change. Consensus of the City Council to change the time to 6:00 PM on Wednesday evenings. City Administrator Matthew Hill will draft an ordinance amendment for the next City Council meeting.

- c. Finance Update INFO

Finance Director Sharon Wright presented the Finance Update.

**Cash and Investments**

The City currently holds approximately \$5.2 million in checking accounts and money market funds that are readily convertible to cash. These funds support day-to-day operations. Our target balance is closer to \$6.0 million to avoid penalties associated with larger invoices or pay applications. While balances were slightly below this level at the end of November, the second installment of property taxes is typically received during the first week of December. In addition, the City holds \$17.5 million in investments, including Agencies, U.S. Treasuries, Certificates of Deposit, and Bonds. The average earnings rate for these investments in November was 3.836%, generating approximately \$50,000 per month in interest income.

**Liquor Store Report**

Liquor store revenue continues to trend slightly below prior periods; however, expenses have also declined. Net income before transfers remains strong at approximately 10.6%. Gross margin is averaging 30.3% across both stores, which exceeds the statewide average of approximately 27%.

**November Finance Update**

We are nearing final year-end figures and have begun preparing accruals for both revenues and expenses. Invoices related to 2025 expenditures are often received through February and will be recorded in the appropriate fiscal year. All funds are currently projected to exceed their 2025 budgeted revenue amounts, and expenses remain below budget as we approach year-end.

- d. Consider Approval of Viking Meadows Preliminary Development MOU ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the Viking Meadows Preliminary Development MOU. Due North Homes LLC (“Developer”) requests City Council approval of a

Preliminary Development Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the proposed Viking Meadows, Edition 1 residential subdivision. The proposed Viking Meadows development is located directly east of the wastewater treatment facility on Ash Street and west of Hemingway Avenue. (PID: 11.00343.00) The MOU establishes a non-binding framework outlining the parties' mutual expectations related to land use entitlements, infrastructure coordination, special assessments, utility extensions, and key terms to be incorporated into a future binding Development Agreement. Approval of the MOU provides procedural clarity and predictability for both parties while preserving the City's authority during subsequent formal approvals. The proposed development consists of approximately 27.75 acres planned for residential use, including a minimum of 101 units comprised of 35 single-family homes and 66 twin-home units. Development density will be calculated based on net developable acreage. The project will proceed through standard entitlement processes, including preliminary and final plat approvals.

### **Entitlement Process**

The City agrees to process preliminary and final plat applications in accordance with adopted ordinances and statutory timelines, without imposing unreasonable or ad hoc conditions.

### **Special Assessments**

The parties agree in principle to utilize Minnesota Statute § 429 to assess up to \$850,000 in eligible on-site infrastructure improvements, with assessments rebated to the Developer over a seven-year period, subject to final terms in a Development Agreement at no expense to the city.

### **Utility Extensions**

The City agrees to extend municipal water, sewer, roadway, and related utilities to the development boundary from Ash St. Utility capacity or improvements exceeding project needs to serve future growth would be funded by the City.

The engineers estimated total cost for the extension of the municipal water, sewer, roadway, and related utilities is \$1,525,832.96. Below is a breakdown of the costs.

|          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| Total    | \$1,525,832.55 |
| Sanitary | \$453,186.72   |
| Water    | \$279,565.29   |
| Storm    | \$203,285.70   |
| Street   | \$589,794.84   |

The funding for the sewer and water would be through trunk fees collected from the development and the water and sewer funds. The funds for the roadway and fifty percent of the drainage improvements would be through the city's municipal state aid street account, and possible assessments to the property to the north. The remaining fifty percent of the drainage improvements would come from the stormwater fund.

### **Engineering Coordination**

The parties will evaluate the use of WSB as project engineer, with cost responsibilities to be defined in the Development Agreement.

### **Park Dedication and ROW**

The City will evaluate potential park dedication fee credits in exchange for dedication of right-of-way along the western boundary for a future north/south roadway corridor as identified in the city's comprehensive plan.

### **Developer Protections**

The MOU identifies vested rights, limitations on future exactions, phasing flexibility, dispute resolution,

and assignment rights to be addressed in the binding Development Agreement.

Motion to approve the preliminary development memorandum of understanding. MOU between the City of North Branch and Due North Homes, LLC, which is the developer, and dated January 13, 2026.

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

10. MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

- a. City concerns for state funding impact to cities/unfunded mandates INFO

Mayor Kevin Schieber presented the letter of concern created by one of the Minnesota Mayors, in which concerns have been expressed for problems with past and ongoing state budget, allegations of massive fraud of taxpayers' dollars, and anticipated state budget deficit in 2028/2029. There is also a generalized statement of unfunded state mandates and the negative impact to city budgets that these types of state requirements will cause. This letter was initially signed by 98 mayors, and the last reported number is up to 241. The Mayor brought it to the City Council to get some feedback regarding the letter. Consensus among the City Council was for the Mayor not to sign the letter.

- b. Consider sending a letter to local gas stations related to the consistently higher prices of fuel in the North Branch community. ACTION

Mayor Kevin Schieber instructed the City Administrator to draft a letter to the local gas stations regarding the seemingly high fuel prices in our City. The consensus was to try to figure out who the contacts are with the three gas station brands in town and invite them to have a conversation about the higher gas prices.

- c. State of the City Address INFO

City Administrator Matthew Hill gave a brief overview of the State of the City Address that was presented at the Chamber of Commerce meeting. The overview covered all the improvements that have happened in 2025.

11. CLOSED SESSION

- a. Closed meeting pursuant to Minn Stat 13D.05, subd. 3, (c) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase of real property identified as 38791 Forest Boulevard ACTION

The meeting went into closed session pursuant to Minnesota statute section 13D.05 subd 3c, for the City Council to consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase of real property identified as 38791 Forest Blvd at 10:47 PM.

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

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

Motion to go back into open session at 11:03 PM

**RESULT: Passed**

**MOVER: Kevin Schieber**

**SECONDER: Robert Canada**

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

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

Motion to accept the purchase agreement for the City-owned property at 38791 Forest Blvd, North Branch, pending review by the Planning Commission for consistency with the comprehensive plan.

**RESULT: Passed**

**MOVER: Patrick Meacham**

**SECONDER: Jim Ibinger**

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

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

The City Council meeting was adjourned at 11:03 PM.

**RESULT: Passed**

**MOVER: Kevin Schieber**

**SECONDER: Jim Ibinger**

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

**ABSENT:**

**NOTES:**