



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

Robert Canada
Councilmember/Acting Mayor

Jeff Goulet
Councilmember

Jim Ibinger
Councilmember

Patrick Meacham
Councilmember

**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR AGENDA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026 @ 6:00 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

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kevin Schieber called the North Branch City Council meeting to order at 6:00 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: Robert Canada

SECONDER: Patrick Meacham

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

ABSENT:

NOTES:

5. PRESENTATION & PROCLAMATION

- a. Recognition and Appreciation for Years of Dedication and Commitment to the City of North Branch - Gary Schaefer VERBAL UPDATE

The City of North Branch City Council gave a plaque to Gary Schaefer in recognition and appreciation for years of dedication and commitment to the City of North Branch.

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.

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Patrick Meacham

SECONDER: Robert Canada

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

ABSENT:

NOTES:

- a. Claims ACTION
- b. Approval of Minutes - Regular Council Meeting - February 11th, 2026, 6:00 PM ACTION
- c. Approve 2026 Application for Right-of-Way License for ECE ACTION
- d. Approval of LG230 Application to Conduct Off-Site Gambling for the Northwest Area Jaycees ACTION
- e. Approval of Resolution # R-291-2026 authorizing the addition of Ash Street to the City of North Branch Municipal State Aid Street System ACTION
- f. Consider Resolution R-288-2026 Providing for the Issuance and Sale of \$3,280,000 General Obligation Equipment Certificates, Series 2026A ACTION
- g. Approval of Resolution R-292-2026 approving the Hemingway Meadows Minor Subdivision ACTION
- h. Approval of Resolution R-293-2026 approving a variance for lot size for PID 16.00482.10 ACTION
- i. Approval of City Specifications Update ACTION
- j. Authorize the Mayor to sign GORAIL's Railroad Transportation Reauthorization letter of support ACTION

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Consider approval of Resolution R-294-2026 approving the vacation of a portion of Fletcher Ave Street right-of-way and drainage and utility easements for the Essby Business Park 5th Addition plat **ACTION**

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented Resolution R-294-2026 to approve the vacation of a portion of Fletcher Avenue Street right-of-way and drainage and utility easements for the Essby Business Park 5th Addition plat.

The North Branch Economic Development Authority (EDA), has submitted a request for a Preliminary Plat for Essby Business Park 5th Addition. The site is located within the City's established industrial park area, generally west of CSAH 30, east of I-35, and south of 410th Street.

The purpose of the proposed plat is to consolidate and reconfigure existing lots, outlots, and public right-of-way areas to allow for the development of a large-scale manufacturing facility. The Preliminary Plat proposes the creation of a 120-acre lot intended to accommodate a future LP Siding manufacturing facility, along with additional industrial lots, outlots, drainage and utility easements, and associated right-of-way adjustments. The subject property consists of approximately 220.14 total acres and is zoned I-Industrial.

The proposed action includes the vacation of the existing ROW and property boundary Drainage and Utility Easements (Easements) within the existing platted North Branch Industrial Park and Essby Business Park 2nd and 3rd Additions. The proposed replatting of the lots would allow for dedicating new Right of Way and drainage and utility in alignment with the new lot lines. This is a cleaner approach from a title perspective.

Mayor Kevin Schieber opened up the Public Hearing at 6:11 PM.

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

There was a question whether this resolution was in preparation for the factory that is currently being proposed in the Business Park. Mayor Kevin Schieber answered that it is part of it.

Mayor Kevin Schieber closed the Public Hearing at 6:15 PM

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

Motion to approve R-294-2026 approving the vacation of a portion of Fletcher Ave Street right-of-way and drainage and utility easements for the Essby Business Park 5th Addition Plat.

RESULT: Passed

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

9. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Consider approval of Resolution R-295-2026 approving the Essby Business Park 5th Addition Preliminary and Final Plat ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented Resolution R-295-2026 approving the Essby Business Park 5th Addition Preliminary and Final Plat. The North Branch Economic Development Authority (EDA), has submitted a request for a Preliminary Plat for Essby Business Park 5th Addition. The site is located within the City’s established industrial park area, generally west of CSAH 30, east of I-35, and south of 410th Street.

The purpose of the proposed plat is to consolidate and reconfigure existing lots, outlots, and public right-of-way areas to allow for the development of a large-scale manufacturing facility. The Preliminary Plat proposes the creation of a 120-acre lot intended to accommodate a future LP Siding manufacturing facility, along with additional industrial lots, outlots, drainage and utility easements, and associated right-of-way adjustments. The subject property consists of approximately 220.14 total acres and is zoned I-Industrial.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on February 3, 2026, and there was no public comment. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the request.

Motion to approve Resolution R-295-2026 approving the Essby Business Park 5th Addition Preliminary and Final Plat.

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

- b. Consider approval of Resolution R-296-2026 to approve a Conditional Use Permit for Outdoor Storage for Louisiana Pacific ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented Resolution R-296-2026 to approve a Conditional Use Permit for Outdoor Storage for Louisiana Pacific. Louisiana-Pacific Corporation (LP) has submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit to allow outdoor storage of raw materials and finished products associated with a proposed 120- acre industrial site within the City of North Branch.

The proposed facility will receive unpainted OSB-based siding products by truck and rail, which will be temporarily stored outdoors prior to being processed inside the building. Finished

products will also be stored outdoors in designated storage areas prior to shipment. Outdoor storage is a required operational component of LP's ExpertFinish facilities and is necessary due to the volume, variety, and logistics of the materials involved.

The proposed outdoor storage areas are shown on the submitted site plan and will consist of large paved storage yards, internal forklift aisles, and truck circulation routes. Product stacks will generally be approximately 16 feet in height for inbound materials and less than 12 feet in height for finished products. Other outdoor storage will include pallets, empty paint totes, and related materials. Trash compactors and dumpsters will be located outdoors but under roof.

The site is planned to operate 24 hours per day, though shipping activities are currently anticipated to occur primarily during weekday day shifts . The Planning Commission held a public hearing on February 3, 2026, for the request, and there was no public comment.

Motion to approve Resolution R-296-2026 to approve a Conditional Use Permit for Outdoor Storage for Louisiana Pacific.

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

c. Consideration of support for a TIF Application for the Herzog Apartments (Unique ACTION Opportunities LLC)

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the consideration of support for a TIF Application for the Herzog Apartments (Unique Opportunities, LLC) for the construction of a 236-unit multifamily residential development in North Branch. The site would include (2) 88-unit buildings and (1) 60-unit building. The proposed project is planned for the area located on the East side of the intersection of Falcon Avenue and 382nd Drive and is immediately south of the Ecumen site. The property in consideration is approximately 10 acres and is currently utilized as vacant land that is zoned and guided as High Density Residential.

Rebecca Kurtz from Ehlers gave a preliminary review of the TIF application for the Herzog Apartments. The consensus of the City Council was that they would not consider support for the TIF Application for the Herzog Apartments.

d. Finance Update INFO

Finance Director Sharon Wright presented the Finance Update.

Cash and Investments

The City maintains a strong liquidity position to support daily operations and financial stability.

- Operating Cash: Approximately \$8.3 million is held in checking and money market accounts.
- Target Balance: \$6.0 million to ensure adequate liquidity while minimizing exposure to penalties associated with large invoices or pay applications.
- Variance: Year-end cash exceeded the target due to the timing of the second installment of property tax collections received in early December.

In addition, the City holds \$17.6 million in diversified investments, including U.S. Agencies, U.S. Treasuries, Certificates of Deposit, and Bonds.

- Average Earnings Rate (December): 3.9%
- Monthly Interest Income: Approximately \$50,000
- The investment portfolio continues to generate stable returns while maintaining a conservative approach focused on safety and liquidity.

Liquor Store

The Liquor Store Fund showed significant financial improvement compared to the prior year.

- Revenue: Increased 0.8% over 2024; \$109,000 below 2025 budget.
- Expenses: Decreased 6.7% from prior year; approximately \$341,000 under budget.
- Net Income Percentage:
 - 2025: 6.86%
 - 2024: 1.35%

Improved performance is largely attributable to expense control and wage savings resulting from a vacant position during the latter half of the year. Year-end figures include accruals for depreciation, wages, and compensated absences in preparation for the annual audit. Additional adjustments may occur prior to the issuance of the final 2025 financial statements.

General Financial Update

The preliminary year-end figures reflect the same accrual methodology used for the Liquor Store, with the key distinction that the General Fund does not record depreciation.

The December 31, 2025 financial results are preliminary. Additional accruals and audit adjustments remain in process, and final figures will be presented following completion of the annual audit in April.

Overall Financial Position

- Liquidity remains strong and above target levels.
- Investment earnings continue to provide steady supplemental revenue.
- Liquor Store operations demonstrated improved profitability due to expense control and wage savings.
- All figures remain preliminary pending audit completion.

- e. Consider approval of Resolution # 297-2026 Authorizing Preliminary Design Services contract of Northwest Old Town Street and Utilities Improvement Project **ACTION**

Heidi Hamilton, Senior Project Manager with WSB, presented Resolution R-297-2026 Authorizing Preliminary Design Services contract of Northwest Old Town Street and Utilities Improvement Plan. 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. Public Hearings on the project were held at the City Council meetings on December 9, 2025, and continued to January 13, 2026.

Notices of the public hearings were sent to residents and property owners, and notice was published in the official newspaper as required by Minnesota Statute 429. A project information sheet was included with the most recent mailing, and a website has been created (<https://nwoldtown-wsbeng.arcgis.com>) to share information about the project more widely. At the January 13 Council meeting, the Council delayed project construction until 2027 and directed staff to gather additional public input and address questions that were raised at the public hearing.

The next step for this project to move forward is to complete additional engineering design to address questions and meet with community members to provide additional opportunity for input prior to asking the Council to consider moving forward with the final design. The city's engineering firm, WSB, has prepared a scope of work to complete the next necessary steps.

The proposed scope of work includes:

- Review of the trunk water main needs in Cedar Street
- Review of MSA designation on Cedar Street and 12th Avenue
- Review of alternative stormwater management options
- Two public meetings, in March and in May
- Two mailings to notify residents of the meetings
- Project website updates
- Preparation of ownership and encumbrance reports to determine right-of-way acquisition needs for the project
- Preparation of a project benefits appraisal to determine the value of the proposed improvement to adjacent properties.
- Returning to Council in mid-summer with a design update and opportunity for the Council to direct the preparation of Final Plans and Specifications. If approved at that time, the project could be bid in December 2026 for 2027 construction.

The estimated costs for this work are \$70,787.

- Motion to approve Resolution R-297-2026 Authorizing Preliminary Design Services contract of the Northwest Old Town Street and Utilities Improvement Project.

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

Councilmember Robert Canada gave the Public Safety Update. For the Fire Department, the ladder truck is expected to arrive during the month of May. The existing ladder truck that was out of service has been fixed and is back in service. The next item that they would like to purchase is a tanker, which is needed if a structure is on its own well and septic, as it won't be enough water to fight the fire if there isn't a fire hydrant located nearby. Having a second tanker would close the gap, so once the water is used from the first tanker, there isn't a gap of waiting for water; the second tanker would relieve that gap in water supply. For the Police Department, there was a meeting with the FLOCK representative regarding FLOCK Cameras. Rush City, Wyoming, Chisago, and Forest Lake currently utilize FLOCK cameras, so it's definitely catching momentum.

Mayor Schieber discussed that he and some staff members were at the State Capitol. There was a public hearing regarding the LP project and its application to the Minnesota Forward Fund. The application now moves to the DEED (Department of Employment and Economic Development) Commissioner for review and hopefully approval, which should take no more than 30 days. Once that happens, then DEED and LP can start to finalize the terms of the load agreement. Mayor Schieber and City Administrator Matthew Hill to visit with the MNDOT Legislative Affairs Manager and the co-vice chair of the capital investment committee. Overall, good positive feedback.

Mayor Schieber gave an EDA update. There was a purchase agreement proposal that was submitted, but the EDA Committee decided that it didn't meet the value criteria.

Councilmember Meacham gave a Planning Commission update. Nate Ehalt was voted chair of the Planning Commission for this year.

Councilmember Meacham gave a PTO Commission update. Summer Concerts in the Park are all scheduled. Kick off on June 23rd, and runs through August 8th.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The City of North Branch City Council Meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

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



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

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Mayor

Robert Canada
Councilmember/Acting Mayor

Jeff Goulet
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Patrick Meacham
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**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR AGENDA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 @ 6:00 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

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor Robert Canada called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Acting Mayor Robert Canada led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Mayor Kevin Schieber

Remote:

Others Present:

Notes:

4. AGENDA APPROVAL

a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Jeff Goulet

SECONDER: Jim Ibinger

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

ABSENT: Mayor Kevin Schieber

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.

John Wagner signed up for Public Comment to talk about a free event, Skills for Disagreeing Better. It will be on Thursday, February 26, 2026, from 5 pm-7 pm at the North Branch Area Library. This is brought to you by the Braver Angels, St. Croix Valley Alliance.

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.

7i (Approval of Resolution R-288-2026 to authorize the Sale of Equipment Bonds) has been removed from the consent agenda due to not having received adequate information for the City in time for the City Council meeting.

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

- a. Claims ACTION
- b. Approval of Minutes - Regular Council Meeting - January 27, 2026, 7:00 PM ACTION
- c. Approve Gambling LG220 Exempt Permit - NWTF Long Spurs of Sunrise River ACTION
- d. Approval of Resolution R-287-2026 Authorizing Payment For Pay Request #8 for CoRd 30 Street Improvement Project ACTION
- e. Approval of the Financing Agreement with KS State Bank for the Purchase and Upfitting of Four Squad Cars ACTION
- f. Approval of Resolution R-286-2026 Accepting 2025 Donations to the City of North Branch ACTION
- g. Approval of Resolution R-289-2026 to apply for a DNR Local Trail Connections grant for Flink Ave Phase II Trail ACTION
- h. Approval of Resolution R-290-2026 to submit a capital funding request for the Circle of Honor Regional Veterans Memorial ACTION
- i. Approval to utilize interfund loans for purchase of equipment ACTION
- j. Receive Legal Report from City Attorney's office INFO

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Consider approval of Ordinance 407-26 allowing the procurement of charitable gambling proceeds for park and trail additions and maintenance funding. ACTION

City Administrator Matthew Hill presented the consideration of approval of Ordinance 407-26, allowing the procurement of charitable gambling proceeds for park and trail additions and maintenance funding. The City has been investigating revenue opportunities to enhance public service while being budget-neutral for the residents. One opportunity that has been implemented in many communities throughout the State is utilizing the ability of collecting 10% of the charitable gambling net income derived from local pull tabs. The City is proposing an ordinance that can ensure the long-term sustainability and enhancement of our city's public green spaces and recreational infrastructure. It establishes a necessary and dedicated funding mechanism by collecting 10% of the charitable gambling net income derived from local pull tabs.

This new revenue stream would be specifically earmarked to fund the following:

- Additions and Expansion: New development and expansion of parks and trails within the city.
- Maintenance: Essential ongoing maintenance and necessary repairs to our existing parks and trails network.

City Administrator Matthew Hill read a letter from Mayor Kevin Schieber regarding other surrounding cities utilizing the opportunity to collect charitable gambling proceeds to support community-wide initiatives. Mayor Schieber stated that he is in full support of the City of North Branch utilizing a percentage of charitable gambling proceeds, as the focus of this type of additional funding will benefit many facets of community interests and activities.

Commissioner Goulet asked if this would just be pull tabs and how we would track this, and City Administrator Hill answered that it would be all charitable gambling. Quarterly reports would be submitted with their financials to substantiate their findings. Commissioner Goulet asked Sharon Wright, the City's Finance Director, if she sees any concerns about tracking all this. She responded that she didn't foresee any issues. Commissioner Meacham asked when this would go into effect. City Administrator Hill responded that it would go into effect upon its passage and publication.

Motion to approve Ordinance 407-26, allowing the procurement of charitable gambling proceeds for park and trail additions and maintenance funding.

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

10. MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

Fire Chief Pat Heinen and Firefighter Becca Ackermann presented that the Fire Department has partnered with the MN State Fire Marshal's office to hand out free carbon monoxide alarms to all homes in need in the City of North Branch, up to 100 that the Fire Department has received. If you would like to request one, please contact pheinen@northbranchmn.gov.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The City Council Meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.

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