



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, MARCH 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, March 11, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kevin Schieber called the North Branch City Council 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

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: Robert Canada

SECONDER: Patrick Meacham

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

ABSENT:

NOTES:

- | | | |
|----|---|--------|
| a. | Claims | ACTION |
| b. | Approval of Minutes - Regular Council Meeting - February 25, 2026, 6:00 PM | ACTION |
| c. | Approval of Application for Cannabis Retail Registration - Low Potency Hemp Retailer - AM Tobacco | ACTION |
| d. | Approval of Application for Cannabis Retail Registration Low Potency Hemp Retailer - North Branch Liquor Stores | ACTION |
| e. | Approval of Application for Cannabis Retail Registration - Low Potency Hemp Retailer - King Tobacco | ACTION |
| f. | Approval of Mobile Food Truck License - Chick-fil-A Tri-State Food Truck | ACTION |
| g. | Receive Legal Staff Report | INFO |
| h. | Approval of Resolution R-300-2026 approving Plans and Specifications and authorizing KLM Engineering to advertise for Bids for Water Tower # 3 Reconditioning Project | ACTION |

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. STAFF REPORTS

- | | | |
|----|----------------|------------------|
| a. | Finance Update | VERBAL
UPDATE |
|----|----------------|------------------|

Finance Director Sharon Wright gave the Finance Update.

Finance Update – January 2026

Cash and Investments

The City continues to maintain a strong liquidity position to support daily operations and overall financial stability.

- Operating Cash: Approximately \$7.6 million is held in checking and money market accounts.
- Target Balance: \$6.0 million, which provides sufficient liquidity while minimizing the risk of penalties associated with large invoices or pay applications.
- Variance: The January cash balance remains above the target; however, the first debt payments occur at the beginning of February.

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

- Average Earnings Rate (January): 3.95%
- Monthly Interest Income: Approximately \$50,000

The investment portfolio continues to generate stable returns while maintaining a conservative investment strategy focused on safety and liquidity.

Liquor Store Fund Performance

The Liquor Store Fund reflects a stable start to the new year. While revenue decreased compared to the prior year, it is slightly higher than the three-year average. January typically represents a slower start to the year.

- Revenue: Increased 1.1% compared to the three-year average but was \$21,569 lower than January 2025 revenue.
- Expenses: Decreased 41% compared to the prior year.
- Net Income Before Transfers: \$107,485 profit.

The improved performance is largely attributable to stronger expense control and recent staffing changes.

General Financial Update

January 31, 2026, financial results remain preliminary as staff continue preparing for the 2025 financial audit.

- Technology Department: Approximately 30% of the annual budget is spent, which is typical due to annual software licenses that renew each year on January 1.
- Department Expenditures: Some departments show lower spending compared to the prior year due to Property & Casualty Insurance and Workers' Compensation Insurance allocations, which occur later in the year and require additional processing time. These allocations will be completed and reflected in the February report.
- EDA Fund: Currently, it shows a negative net position, which is expected as its primary revenue source—property taxes—is not received until July.

All other funds remain stable.

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.

b. Discussion regarding the Installation of Flock License Plate Reader (LPR) INFO
Cameras Within the City Limits

Police Chief Dan Meyer presented the discussion regarding the installation of Flock License Plate Reader Cameras within the City limits. License Plate Reader technology has been used by law enforcement agencies for several years and has proven effective in reducing and solving crime. LPR cameras capture still images of vehicle license plates and automatically compare plate numbers against national, state, and local databases. This process assists law enforcement in identifying stolen vehicles, missing persons, AMBER Alerts, and individuals who may be wanted or involved in criminal activity. When a match is detected, the system sends a real-time alert to on-duty officers.

Currently, nearly 100 law enforcement agencies in Minnesota utilize automated LPR technology, including the following local agencies within Chisago County:

- Chisago County Sheriff's Office – 15 cameras throughout the townships and within the City of Rush City
- Wyoming Police Department – 4 cameras within the City of Wyoming
- Lakes Area Police Department – 4 cameras serving the Cities of Lindstrom and Chisago City

Law enforcement agencies throughout the county have reported several successful outcomes using their Flock LPR cameras. Sheriff Thyen recently presented statistical information to the Rush City Council, noting that 68 documented cases were successfully resolved with the assistance of the Flock camera system. The Lakes Area Police Department solved a hit-and-run incident at a local business, and the Wyoming Police Department solved a harassment/stalking case using information obtained through the Flock system. In addition, officers and deputies have recovered multiple stolen vehicles and located several wanted individuals within the county solely because of information provided by the Flock cameras.

I have met with representatives from Flock Safety on several occasions to discuss the potential installation of license plate reader (LPR) cameras within the city. Following these discussions, Flock Safety has provided both a quote and a tentative deployment plan. The proposal includes the placement of seven (7) Flock Safety cameras at key strategic entry points into the city. These locations were identified to help monitor primary ingress and egress routes:

- Highway 95 at the Isanti County line
- Highway 95 and Keystone Avenue
- Forest Boulevard and 420th Street
- Forest Boulevard and 360th Street
- Northbound I-35 south of Highway 95
- Southbound I-35 north of Highway 95

- Lincoln Trail at 360th Street

The current pricing structure is as follows:

- \$3,000 per camera per year
- One-time installation fee of \$650 per camera (\$4,550 total for seven cameras)

Flock Safety has indicated they would waive all installation fees if the City agrees, resulting in an annual cost of \$21,000 for seven cameras over the three-year contract term.

Chief Dan Meyer suggested that the City hold a Public Hearing to hear from the public and address any concerns with the FLOCK cameras, as they are different than some of the other traffic cameras that are utilized around the country.

Mayor Kevin Schieber pointed out that there was recently an article in the County News Review on March 5th regarding the FLOCK cameras in Rush City.

Councilmember Jeff Goulet asked if Chief Meyer could ask if we could somehow get data that could help with our traffic study analysis. Chief Meyer responded that he will ask the vendor if this would be possible.

City Council gave their consensus to move forward with a Public Hearing for the Community to give their feedback regarding the FLOCK cameras.

- c. Consider amending Compensation Personnel Policy ACTION

Human Resource Generalist Travis Miles presented the consideration to amend the Compensation Personnel Policy. North Branch Personnel Policy Section 19 Compensation outlines setting salaries and pay dates. It states in 19.01 Setting Salaries: Salaries for all City employees, not covered by collective bargaining agreements, are set in accordance with the wage and salary scales outlined in the Labor Agreement for the employees governed by the Minnesota Teamsters Public and Law Enforcement Employees' Union Local No. 320 (City Employees Unit), as per applicable employment contract or in the absence of an employment contract by the City Council, based on the recommendation of the City Administrator.

Section 19 doesn't specifically address Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) when it comes to employees not covered by the CBA. COLA is in the CBA as "General Wage Increase." This amount is agreed on for each year for the life of the contract during negotiations. For example, the current contract has the "General Wage Increase" set at 3% for 2025, 3.5% for 2026, and 3.25% for 2027.

City staff recommends adding a subsection to section 19 as 19.03 Cost of Living Adjustments to state Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for all City employees who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement shall be consistent with the "General Wage Increase" established in the Labor Agreement applicable to employees represented by the Minnesota Teamsters Public and Law Enforcement Employees' Union Local No. 320 (City Employees Unit).

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. Advisory Committee updates: Personnel, Finance, Public Works, Public Safety VERBAL UPDATE

Councilmember Jeff Goulet gave a Public Works Update. Currently, the Public Works Committee is talking about the snowplow policy; there are a lot of projects going on, quotes for the water tower, and some street projects. There was also some equipment that was just ordered.

Mayor Kevin Schieber discussed that this past Monday, a handful of mayors from Chisago County met with Representative Max Reimer. Part of the reason for that meeting was to discuss some policy initiatives currently being considered during the legislative session. One of the main topics was an organization called Housing First. They've been advocating for policy changes that could impact cities and townships across Minnesota. These proposals have been discussed in different forms for the past five or six years, although the scope has been scaled back over time.

Representative Reimer shared a lot of helpful information with us, and the mayor of Wyoming, Lisa Iverson, was also part of the conversation. She's been closely following this issue for quite a while and brought some valuable insight.

One of the proposals currently being discussed is called the Starter Homes Act. The general sense right now is that it may be gaining some positive momentum this year. In previous years, it never made it to a vote because there wasn't enough support from either Republicans or Democrats. This year, because the proposal has been scaled back somewhat, it appears there's a possibility it could move out of committee. I believe the committee deadline is March 27, so in a couple of weeks. If it clears the committee and is recommended forward, it would eventually go to a vote.

For reference, the House version of the bill is HF 3895, and the Senate version is SF 4123. I can get copies of the current language if anyone wants to review it. What I have here is the version as it's currently written.

The mayor said he wanted to bring this to the council's attention and highlight a few sections, although I would strongly encourage everyone to read through the full bill. Some of the provisions could impact local control, which is why the League of Minnesota Cities has opposed similar proposals in past years. I'm not sure where they currently stand, so we'll need to gather a little more information on that. At this point, the bill is still being discussed in committee.

- b. Registration available for the Annual League of Minnesota Conference INFO

Mayor Kevin Schieber presented that the League of Minnesota Cities conference is June 24-26, 2026, in Rochester. If members of the council haven't gone, he encourages them to attend. There are training sessions and networking with other City representatives. It's not just for elected officials, it's for City officials, City Clerks, City administrators. If anyone on the board is interested in attending, contact the City Administrator, Matthew Hill.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The North Branch City Council meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

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