



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 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, March 25, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

The North Branch City Council met in REGULAR and Mayor Kevin Schieber called the 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

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.

Paul Johnson, Lauren Beach, and Scott Ruther gave 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.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jeff Goulet
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 - March 11,2026, 6:00 PM ACTION
- c. Approval of LG220 Application for Exempt Permit for the Sons of the American Legion Post 85 ACTION
- d. Approval of Application for 1 day Temporary Consumption and Display Permit for Chisago County Board on Aging ACTION
- e. Approve Transient Merchant License - Plant Place, Inc. ACTION
- f. Approve Transient Merchant License - Paragon Square LLC - Dog Waste Removal ACTION
- g. Approval of Resolution R-305-2026 Releasing the Letter of Credit and Developer Obligations for Grand Point and Grand Point 2nd Addition ACTION
- h. Consider approval of Resolution R-307-2026 Authorizing Bid Award for the 2026 Pavement Improvement Project ACTION
- i. Approval of Resolution R-308-2026 Accepting low bid for 2026 gravel materials ACTION
- j. Approval of Resolution R-309-2026 authorizing the BDPI Grant Application ACTION

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Consider Approval of Resolution R-310-2026 approving a Modification to **ACTION**
Development District No 1, proposed establishment of TIF District 2026-1 and
adoption of TIF Plan

Rebecca Kurtz from Ehlers presented the summary of the TIF plan that is being established for the Louisiana Pacific project. The project involves the development of an approximately 200,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility by Louisiana-Pacific to produce siding materials. To support the project, the city is proposing an Economic Development TIF district, which allows for manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution uses, with a maximum term of nine years. Construction timing is still to be determined, with the first tax increment anticipated in 2028 and decertification in 2036. The site consists of five parcels currently owned by the EDA, which will be replatted and sold to LP, with the TIF district boundary identified within the overall project area.

Estimated annual property taxes for the development are about \$729,700, of which approximately \$134,700 (state portion) and \$20,000 (market value taxes) are not eligible for capture. The base taxes are estimated at \$21,600, resulting in an annual gross TIF increment of about \$553,230. It is important to note that TIF reimburses only the incremental increase in taxes, not the full property tax amount.

The maximum TIF budget is projected at approximately \$4.8 million, including interest, with 10% increment retained for administrative costs such as staff time, reporting, and consultants. Any increase beyond this amount would require a formal amendment process and public hearing.

Key development agreement terms include construction of a minimum 200,000 sq. ft. facility with an estimated value of \$23.5 million, creation of at least 100 jobs paying a minimum of \$30 per hour in compliance with Minnesota business subsidy law, and provision of up to \$2.5 million in TIF assistance at a 6% interest rate. The developer must document eligible costs, which are expected to be met through land and site acquisition expenses. While future expansion has been discussed, it is not included in the current agreement.

To date, the City has not received any written or verbal public comments specific to the TIF request. Upon completion of the public hearing, City staff and Ehlers are recommending approval of the TIF District. After the development agreement is executed, the EDA and the developer will close on the land sale, which we are looking at for the end of April.

Motion to open the public hearing at 6:28 PM.

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

North Branch Area High School's principal, Clint Link, spoke at the Public Hearing, saying that this is a game-changer for our community. Most of our students will live and work here, so access to livable-wage jobs—around \$23.50 an hour—is critical. Bringing 100 jobs at \$30 an hour into our industrial park is an incredible opportunity with room to grow. As a school district, we're focused on aligning education with these career pathways while building strong community pride—so people who live and work here stay engaged in local, school, and civic activities. I also serve as Chamber president, and this is a big step forward for our local businesses. When industry, schools, and small businesses work together, our entire community thrives. With 600 new homes coming and many workers currently commuting

elsewhere, we want to keep that talent here. This is just the beginning of growing our industrial park and strengthening North Branch.

Lauren Beach spoke at the Public Hearing, saying I work for a trucking company here in North Branch that is 100% women-owned. We really value that LP Siding supports businesses like ours, and this presents a great opportunity for us to potentially partner and create new avenues for growth. I also want to say thank you—to LP Siding and to everyone here who has worked so hard to make this happen. We truly appreciate it.

Steve Cich, Planning Commission Vice Chair, spoke at the Public Hearing, saying I just want to echo what's already been said. We reviewed this at the Planning Commission and passed it with very few questions because it was presented so well. It's ready to go, and I'm excited to see us take this final step and get things moving. This is a big win for our industrial park. I've seen it in other communities—like Chippewa Falls—where one business comes in, and it sparks major growth. That's the kind of momentum this can bring us. I also want to recognize the Planning Commission for the thoughtful work on design standards. You've helped position the city to be ready for opportunities like this. That said, I do think we should stay mindful of keeping standards practical. Lowering costs—as we've seen in the past—can make a big difference in attracting and retaining businesses. If we can reduce barriers and keep things flexible, we'll continue to grow in a smart, sustainable way. Overall, this is a great step forward—so congratulations to everyone involved.

Gregg Fuerstenberg spoke on behalf of Louisiana-Pacific and Jones Lang LaSalle. I want to say you have a best-in-class economic development partner. Nathan has been outstanding—after hundreds of hours working together, I can confidently say that. From top to bottom, this community has been incredibly welcoming and supportive. Projects like this usually take years of searching and due diligence, but this site stood out from day one because of your strong infrastructure, schools, and economic development efforts. I also want to recognize Cassandra for her great work. From a site selection perspective, it's clear North Branch is ready for business. We look forward to continuing this partnership. Thank you.

Motion to close the public hearing at 6:46 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 Resolution R-310-2026 approving a Modification to Development District No. 1, proposed establishment of TIF District 2026-1, and adoption of TIF Plan.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jeff Goulet
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-306-2026 to award a bid for the sale of 2026A ACTION Bonds

Rebecca Kurtz from Ehlers presented the approval of Resolution R-306-2026 to award a bid for the sale of 2026A Bonds. We accepted bids for approximately \$3 million in general obligation equipment certificates to fund Public Works and fire equipment. Before the sale, Standard & Poor’s affirmed the city’s AA rating with a stable outlook—a strong reflection of the council and staff’s responsible financial management. The rating highlights North Branch’s stable finances, growing population, strong management practices, and manageable debt levels.

We received seven bids today. The lowest came from the Baker Group, with a true interest cost of 3.66%, slightly better than our earlier estimate. Due to a premium bid, we were able to reduce the bond amount by \$200,000 while still fully funding the equipment—saving on interest. The bonds are structured over 15 years, with a call date in 2036 for flexibility. Annual debt service will remain level, starting around \$180,000 and increasing to about \$350,000 after 2032 as existing debt rolls off. Closing is scheduled for April 16. We recommend awarding the bonds to the Baker Group. I’m happy to answer any questions.

Motion to approve Resolution R-306-2026 to award a bid for the sale of 2026A Bonds.

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

10. MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

- a. Modification to charitable gambling ordinance 407-26 VERBAL UPDATE

Mayor Kevin Schieber presented the modification to the charitable gambling ordinance 407-26. The Mayor proposed modifications to the charitable gambling ordinance to ensure funds are used for community benefits, including city-owned athletic fields and complexes. The second area of focus involves new language to require charitable gambling organizations to establish the City of North Branch as their primary place of business and to conduct at least 50% of their activities within the City.

The President of the North Branch Area Hockey Association had some questions/concerns about how they would be impacted with the 50% of their activities having to be in the City. Mayor Schieber said that he had changed it to conduct more than 50% of its business operations or have an impact on community engagement activities within the city of North Branch.

After some discussion, the council agreed to refine the language to ensure it supports both community needs and the activities of organizations like the Hockey Association. The Mayor will work on putting some language together and bringing it back to the Council at the next meeting.

- b. Discussion and recommended changes to various zoning ordinances and building design standards VERBAL UPDATE

Mayor Kevin Schieber proposed a discussion and recommended changes to various zoning ordinances and building design standards. He stated that since the summer of 2025, the City Council and various commissions have discussed potential updates to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. During this period, the

city has received several development proposals in both conceptual and formal stages.

Based on recent city meetings, the Mayor said he believes leadership desires changes that may reduce conflict with these upcoming developments. The Mayor created a spreadsheet outlining these basic change requests. The first one is a side setback interior lot. The City is currently at 6 feet, and the proposal is 10 feet. This is listed as a high priority because we have a lot of growth coming, and we don't want developers to feel like they got caught in this crossfire. The next proposed change is changing the max density of R3 zoning to 18 dwellings per acre; currently, there is nothing set. We could have a developer who could request a variance, but I don't think we need to look at 25 or 30 dwellings per acre for apartment size. We know we need apartment complexes for people to live, and we just need to find the right balance. The next proposed change would be design standards. I would like to reduce required material percentages and allow additional materials that meet our goals, with a focus on materials that may provide less expensive building costs. We want it to be aesthetically pleasing with long-lasting durability, but also provide cost-effectiveness for the average development. We need to try to find that balance. The next proposal would be regarding the Central Business District. It currently extends to Grand Avenue. I would like to propose removing the section of properties between 4th Avenue and Grand Avenue, from Maple to Elm Street. Putting this area into a new zone that allows current businesses to stay, single-family housing to stay, and also allows medium and high-density dwellings. The last proposal regarding the business zone North of 392nd, between Flink and I-35. It's currently zoned commercial, the proposal would be to create a flex zone to allow light industrial permitted uses in the Eastern half of the property that is adjacent to I-35. Any changes require the public hearing process. We will want to have as many conversations as we can leading up to a planning commission meeting, which would be helpful for everyone.

c. Discussion on Cannabis Ordinance No. 381-24

VERBAL
UPDATE

City Administrator Matthew Hill gave some background regarding the discussion on Cannabis Ordinance No 381-24. On January 27th of this year, the Mayor and City Council took a look at the ordinance review that Member Canada commented on in the buffer zones that could be included for vulnerable adults, daycare, recreation parks, and residential areas. The consensus at that meeting was to have Canada come back, providing additional buffer zones that constrict legitimate businesses that, by the State of Minnesota statute, are legally able to create a business to distribute cannabis. Member Canada has provided some details that he will be addressing, along with some maps to support his discussion.

Council member Canada identified 3 facilities that have vulnerable adults in North Branch. He showed a map of the Facilities and also showed a map of Parks and Recreation Areas to the Council. He brought two different options to add buffer zones around option 1, vulnerable adults, and option 2, to include parks and recreation areas, of 500 feet from cannabis retail operations.

Information was provided to the City attorney's office to assist in defining vulnerable adults and what facilities within the City of North Branch would qualify. The Community Development Director, Nathan Sondrol, said that we asked the attorney to define residential treatment facilities to define what that means. The attorney did provide opportunities for the city to provide ways to address those, but there is potential for litigation on some of those as well. Councilmember Goulet suggested that, instead of buffer zones, adjusting hours of operation may be a similar way to go, but that this also should be consistent standards for alcohol and cannabis regulations, as they are both legal. There was some discussion about whether this is a use discussion or where you can use cannabis. Consensus was that more time is needed to think about this, and maybe this discussion will help with what Council member Canada should bring back to the City Council next time.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The North Branch City Council meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

RESULT: **Passed**

MOVER: **Kevin Schieber**

SECONDER: **Robert Canada**

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

ABSENT:

NOTES: