

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, October 6, 2025

6:30 PM Central

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent

Councilor John Geissler: Present

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Present

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Present

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Present

CITY STAFF: John Mulder, City Administrator; Alissa McClure, City Clerk; Eric Johnson; Community Development Director; Joe Wicklund, Assistant City Administrator; Chad Ronchetti, Economic Development Director; Jim Crace, Director of Public Safety; Zach Graves, Fire Chief; Trish Crego, Utility & Infrastructure Director; David Bolf, City Engineer; Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney

VISITORS: 99

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL**
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
5. **PUBLIC HEARING**
6. **COMMUNICATIONS**
 - A. Correspondence 25-143 through 25-455 placed on file
7. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. **2026 Preliminary Debt Service Budgets**
Kevin Orme, Director of Finance & Administration
(Pre-Agenda Only)
 - B. **Paid Family Medical Leave**
David Huntley, Terch & Associates
(Pre-Agenda Only)
8. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

9. **MOTIONS**

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of September 15, 2025 City Council Continuation Minutes
- B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from September 16, 2025 through September 30, 2025 in the amount of \$879,380.28

Motion to the approve the Consent Agenda. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor LeBlanc, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Nay

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

11. **ORDINANCES**

- A. **2025-17 An Ordinance Amending Title 2 Of The Hermantown City Code By Amending The Official Zoning Map**

(first reading)

Joann Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Road: Expressed opposition to the rezoning; questioned the developer's identity, confidentiality agreements, and potential water usage; requested a more thorough environmental review.

Mickey Pearson, 3231 E 4th Street (APEX): Expressed support for the project, noting that water and power concerns are being addressed and that data centers represent critical modern infrastructure.

Sarah Winter, 3658 Birch Road: Expressed opposition; cited lack of public information, concerns about corporate influence, and potential legal and community impacts.

Lynn Bradford, 3525 Solway Road: Expressed concern as an adjacent property owner regarding potential noise, lighting, and employment impacts on local tradespeople.

Todd Pelkey, 3609 Midway Road: Spoke in support of rezoning, stating the area is suited for business and industrial growth.

Barb Harris, 4017 Stebner Road: Expressed opposition, citing lack of transparency, water use concerns, and the potential for unforeseen project changes.

Tom Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Road: Expressed opposition; questioned the use of an AUAR rather than an Environmental Impact Statement and raised concerns about water usage data.

Kim Parmeter, 5590 Stark Road (Hermantown Chamber of Commerce): Spoke in support; stated the project would create long-term employment, strengthen the regional economy, and expand infrastructure.

Rebecca Grandorf, 4198 Solway Road: Expressed opposition; said the proposal conflicts with the comprehensive plan and negatively affects rural character and nearby farms.

Pete Taylor, 4198 Solway Road: Expressed opposition; stated the AUAR does not meet state legal requirements and raised concerns about noise impacts.

Clarissa Ek, 3505 Solway Road: Expressed opposition; raised concerns about property and environmental impacts and requested a buffer and water system review.

Anna Estep, 5861 St. Louis River Road: Expressed opposition due to potential noise, decreased property values, and disruption to neighborhood character.

Dennis Lofald, 5464 Hermantown Road: Expressed opposition; raised concerns about noise, company identity, and limited resident benefits.

Sara Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road: Expressed opposition, citing lack of transparency and environmental concerns; urged protection of the rural landscape.

Chance Lasher, 807 N 57th Avenue W: Expressed opposition; questioned project data and motives, citing concerns about utility rates and corporate influence.

Tom Huneke, 3797 Keene Creek Lane: Expressed opposition; questioned financial risk and urged additional community engagement before approval.

Lori Johnston, 5154 Lavaque Junction: Expressed opposition; cited transparency issues, traffic, construction impacts, and environmental concerns.

Rachel Johnson, 5702 Oneida Street (APEX): Spoke in support, emphasizing economic development and the importance of technological infrastructure for the region.

Dan Olson, Superior, WI: Spoke in support on behalf of union workers, noting the availability of a local workforce and the potential for labor agreements.

Clayton Childs, 4318 Tioga Street: Spoke in support on behalf of Local 11 building trades.

Nate Rickard, 4878 Trails End Drive: Spoke in support; said the project could strengthen the tax base and local schools; supported union labor participation.

Tim Resberg, 3646 Midway Road: Expressed opposition; cited environmental, water, air, and noise concerns, and potential effects on wetlands and nearby farms.

Jeanne Wartman, 5180 Lavaque Junction: Expressed opposition; raised noise and wildlife concerns and requested additional information.

Elijah Hoffman, 552 W Winona: Expressed opposition; emphasized protecting natural resources, wildlife, and outdoor recreation.

Ty Sundberg, Two Harbors: Spoke in support; stated that technological growth is necessary and encouraged balanced dialogue.

Owen Lyons, 5143 W Arrowhead Road: Expressed opposition; cited environmental, tax, and light pollution concerns and suggested alternative locations.

Abhi Devireddy, 4958 Greystone Street: Spoke in support; said data centers promote jobs, infrastructure, and economic growth.

Amelia Soriano, 333 N 1st Avenue W: Expressed opposition; urged preservation of natural resources and environmental protection.

Miranda, 5744 Jamebard Road: Expressed opposition; said non-residents benefit most and urged consideration of community voices.

Dr. Noah Johnson, 4938 Greystone Street: Provided neutral comments; encouraged careful evaluation of the project and balanced decision-making.

12. **RESOLUTIONS**

A. **2025-147 Resolution Adopting The Final Hermantown Industrial Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Document And Mitigation Plan**

(motion, roll call)

Dan Olson, Superior, WI: Expressed support; said the resolution could be amended and encouraged approval.

Jonathan Thornton, Hermantown Road: Expressed concern about the AUAR process and requested the resolution be tabled for further review.

Tom Huneke, 3797 Keene Creek Lane: Requested clarification on what the resolution authorizes.

Rebecca Grandorf, 4198 Solway Road: Expressed opposition; raised concerns that the AUAR can be amended without further public input and requested environmental testing.

Lori Johnston, 5154 Lavaque Junction: Expressed opposition; cited projected increases in utility costs and carbon emissions.

Tim Resberg, 3646 Midway Road: Requested additional information from the DNR and about water usage at the site.

Adam Harris, 4212 Lavaque: Expressed opposition; criticized the lack of transparency and requested the process be slowed.

Sara Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road: Expressed opposition; said residents need more time and information to provide meaningful feedback.

Nate Rickard, 4878 Trails End Drive: Encouraged the Council to use its authority responsibly and seek more information.

Dennis Lofald, 5464 Hermantown Road: Expressed opposition; said the location is unsuitable and recommended an Environmental Review.

Jeanne Wartman, 5180 Lavaque Junction: Expressed opposition; questioned why the issue is not subject to a public vote and requested further discussion.

Motion to approve 2025-147 Resolution Adopting The Final Hermantown Industrial Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Document And Mitigation Plan. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent
Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

B. 2025-148 Resolution Approving The Employee Handbook For The City Of Hermantown

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-148 Resolution Approving The Employee Handbook For The City Of Hermantown. This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent
Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

C. 2025-149 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 35 (KA Change Order #11) For The NorthStar Ford Arena In The Amount Of \$25,475.35

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-149 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 35 (KA Change Order #11) For The NorthStar Ford Arena In The Amount Of \$25,475.35. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent
Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

D. 2025-150 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 16 For The NorthStar Ford Arena To Kraus-Anderson Construction Company In The Amount Of \$1,540,475.58

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-150 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 16 For The NorthStar Ford Arena To Kraus-Anderson Construction Company In The Amount Of \$1,540,475.58. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor LeBlanc, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler:	Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle:	Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc:	Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson:	Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher:	Absent

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

E. **2025-151 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For Grading And Filling Within A Natural Shoreland Overlay Area**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-151 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For Grading And Filling Within A Natural Shoreland Overlay Area. This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler:	Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle:	Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc:	Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson:	Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher:	Absent

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

F. **2025-152 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For The Construction Of A Two-Family Home (Twinhome) In A R-3 Residential Zoning District**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-152 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For The Construction Of A Two-Family Home (Twinhome) In A R-3 Residential Zoning District. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor LeBlanc, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler:	Yea
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Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent
Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

G. **2025-153 Resolution Approving The Allocation Of \$100,000 To The Housing Trust Fund**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-153 Resolution Approving The Allocation Of \$100,000 To The Housing Trust Fund. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent
Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

H. **2025-154 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 1 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$19,328.00**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-154 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 1 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$19,328.00. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea
Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea
Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea
Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

13. **CLOSED SESSION**

- A. Motion to close the meeting of the Hermantown City Council pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § Section 13D.03 to consider confidential information related to labor negotiations strategy. Following this closed session, the Hermantown City Council will re-convene in an open session.

(motion, roll call)

Motion to recess at 9:16 p.m. Motion to close the meeting of the Hermantown City Council pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § Section 13D.03 to consider confidential information related to labor negotiations strategy. This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

Motion to reconvene into open sessions at 9:46 p.m. This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

14. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 9:46 p.m. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Absent

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk