

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, October 20, 2025

6:30 PM Central

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON & VIA ZOOM

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Present

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

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: > 250

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL**

4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**

6. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence 25-456 through 25-538 placed on file

7. **PRESENTATIONS**

8. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

9. **MOTIONS**

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of October 6, 2025 City Council Continuation Minutes

B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from October 1, 2025 through October 15, 2025 in the amount of \$2,212,130.21

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

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

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**

Frankie Felegy, 1908 E 3rd St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Spoke about transparency concerns and the data center project based on comments from the public.

Matt Baumgartner, Duluth Chamber – In favor. Cited community and job benefits.

Katie Hawkins, 3683 Stebner Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Raised concerns about secrecy, FOIA findings, and alleged backdoor meetings. Urged council to vote no.

Lynn Bradford, 3525 Solway Rd, Solway, MN – Opposed. Concerned about environmental impacts and lack of proper study. Asked council to slow down.

Michael Koppy, 5124 Beaver Creek Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Believes the AUAR is incomplete and an EIS should be done before proceeding.

Eric Palmer, 3712 Linda Rd, Hermantown, MN – In favor. Supports job creation, tax revenue, and local opportunities.

Nick Rhinehart, 4976 W Arrowhead Rd, Hermantown, MN– Opposed. Worried about large-scale industrial impact on Hermantown’s character.

Megan Elling, 5969 Morris Thomas Rd, Solway, MN– Opposed. Alleged manipulation of the process and staff bias. Concerned about property values and urged a no vote.

Clarissa Ek, 3505 Solway Rd, Solway, MN – Opposed. Cited long-standing community opposition to development in Adolph. Asked council to represent residents, not corporations.

Deb Flynn, 5863 St. Louis River Rd, Hermantown, MN– Opposed. Recently built home and does not want the project nearby.

Nate Rickard, 4878 Trails End Dr, Hermantown, MN – In favor. Supports rezoning to grow tax base and wants more public information shared.

Carrie Herron, 37 4th St, Proctor, MN – Opposed. Criticized secrecy and lack of transparency; raised environmental concerns.

Kirk Elinda, 3913 N 21st St, Superior, WI – In favor. Spoke for Lakehead Constructors, citing jobs for local tradespeople.

Joann Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Expressed distrust of promises and urged a no vote.

Mandy McDonald, 3904 Reinke Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Concerned about deforestation and environmental harm.

Mark Hummel, 5195 Lavaque Junction Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Called the process secretive; urged postponing the vote for more public input.

Dale Cich, 5195 Lavaque Rd, Canosia, MN – Opposed. Criticized secrecy and potential environmental and quality-of-life impacts.

David DiPasquale, 5332 Norwood St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Questioned long-term impacts, energy use, and exit plan if the data center closes.

Andy Pelland, 5831 St. Louis River Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Asked council to vote no for the good of the community.

Cathy Hannon, 1501 3rd Ave, Proctor, MN – Opposed. Questioned promised job numbers and suggested water-saving landscaping.

Allison Hafften, 5971 St. Louis River Rd, Solway, MN – Opposed. Objected to the rezone and SUP process, citing moral and environmental concerns.

Andrea Dingmann, 4204 Ugstad Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Requested more studies and raised health and safety concerns.

Mickey Pearson, 3231 E 4th St, Duluth, MN – In favor. Represented APEX, said project brings opportunity and will follow environmental laws.

Amanda, 1116 N Central Ave, Duluth, MN – In favor. APEX representative supporting job creation and retention of local graduates.

John Soshea, 4095 Reinke Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Cited lack of transparency and concerns about NDAs.

Nathan Barda, Rolling Rd, Esko, MN – Neutral. Shared surrounding communities' concerns and requested communication.

Richard Hilton, 5502 Hermantown Rd – Opposed. Criticized lack of transparency and ethics; urged a no vote.

Sarah Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Cited family history in Hermantown; urged preserving rural character and requiring an EIS.

Matthew Murphy, 2210 Cottage Hill Cir, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Concerned about AI industry instability and long-term economic risk.

Kyle Bukavich, 2284 E Foxboro Rd, Foxboro, WI – In favor. Represented IBEW; emphasized job creation and local economic benefit.

Dan Olson, 6001 Cumming Ave, Superior, WI – In favor. Stated the project supports economic growth.

Nicki Norland, 4419 McCulloch St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Emphasized listening to residents and protecting community character.

Cathy Colmeyer, 5757 St. Louis River Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Concerned about environmental impacts and long construction disruption.

Jackie Dolentz, 5842 Old Hwy 2, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Criticized secrecy, loss of trust, and urged preserving rural Hermantown.

Rebecca Grandorf, 4198 Solway Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Criticized limited public engagement and development transparency.

Mike Ralph, 5781 St. Louis River Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Expressed frustration with the project and urged a no vote.

Sadie, 925 E 5th St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Presented petition and questioned job automation.

Dave Thornton, 5861 Hermantown Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Concerned about process flaws and transparency.

Tom Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Spoke about potential water use and pollution from the project.

Jack Carlson, 8482 Swan Lake Rd, Alborn, MN – In favor. Represented Duluth Construction Trades Council; emphasized local employment benefits.

Donald Smith, 342 E Locust St, Duluth, MN – In favor. Said project brings jobs, tax revenue, and community investment.

Kelsey Mack, 3608 Midway Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Lives near the site; said residents were not properly informed.

Kim Parmeter, 5590 Stark Rd, Midway Township, MN – In favor. Chamber of Commerce president; promoted thoughtful growth and future investment.

Bill Olson, 408 W Superior St, Duluth, MN – In favor. Highlighted construction, local business, and economic benefits.

Peter Taylor, 4198 Solway Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Criticized process transparency and connection between comp plan and project.

Lynette Ralph, 5781 St. Louis River Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Concerned about noise, wells, and property impacts near her home.

Nick Smith, 2973 Exeter St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Cited environmental harm, water use, and loss of community identity.

Bryan Johnson, 4060 Sangstrom Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Raised concerns about transparency and rate increases.

Amanda Marciniak, 3221 Restormel St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Environmentalist citing NDAs and lack of democracy; urged investment in green energy instead.

Bob Kohlmeier, 5757 St. Louis River Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Lives 350 feet from project site; concerned about noise and loss of quality of life.

Tim Resberg, 3646 Midway Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Argued project is heavy industrial and should be relocated elsewhere.

Emma Rickman, 5215 Chris Dr, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Criticized AUAR, secrecy, and long-term environmental harm.

Rebecca Gilbertson, 5854 Hermantown Rd – Opposed. Said site violates siting recommendations for data centers.

Christina Gallop, 1114 Kirby Dr, Duluth, MN – Opposed. UMD professor; raised sustainability and noise law concerns.

Saul Helgeson, 4006 Five Corners Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Urged a pause and greater transparency before proceeding.

Rocky Russo, 4884 Midway Rd, Canosia, MN – Opposed. Cited health and environmental concerns from EMFs and long-term impacts.

Nicole Kearney, 7740 Birch Rd, Canyon, MN – Opposed. Asked to table decision pending full environmental review.

Jim Klukkert, 206 N 11th Ave W, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Criticized lack of representation and corporate influence.

Patrick Mally, 4691 Vaux Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Said too many questions remain and urged tabling the issue.

Paul Paczynski, 5381 Morris Thomas Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Believes comp plan was changed to fit project; questioned financial impacts and fairness.

Miranda McKay Chambers, 5744 Jamebard Rd – Opposed. Urged postponement for more information; said company can wait.

John Grillo, 5317 Split Rail Dr, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Spoke about land acquisition concerns and urged the council to do the right thing.

Sara Yokel, 3867 Ugstad Rd, Hermantown, MN – Opposed. Linked project concerns to school funding and community priorities.

Lily Hall, 4516 Pitt St, Duluth, MN – Opposed. Criticized lack of disclosure and urged sustainable, transparent planning.

(second reading)
(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-17 An Ordinance Amending Title 2 Of The Hermantown City Code By Amending The Official Zoning Map. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor LeBlanc. Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

B. 2025-18 An Ordinance Amending Hermantown Code Of Ordinances Section 270 - Fee Schedule

(first reading)
(motion, roll call)

12. RESOLUTIONS

A. **2025-155 Resolution Authorizing The City Of Hermantown To Waive Municipal Consent To The Minnesota Department Of Transportation For The State Project 6908-68 On Trunk Highway 2 Improvements**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-155 Resolution Authorizing The City Of Hermantown To Waive Municipal Consent To The Minnesota Department Of Transportation For The State Project 6908-68 On Trunk Highway 2 Improvements. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor LeBlanc, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

B. **2025-156 Resolution Approving Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) And Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver MOU With Law Enforcement Labor Services Local 47 (“LELS”)**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-156 Resolution Approving Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) And Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver MOU With Law Enforcement Labor Services Local 47 (“LELS”). This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

C. **2025-157 Resolution Authorizing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute A Ten-Year Multi-Jurisdictional Agreement Between The City Of Hermantown And The City Of Duluth To Create A Regional Tactical Response Team**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-157 Resolution Authorizing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute A Ten-Year Multi-Jurisdictional Agreement Between The City Of Hermantown And The City Of Duluth To Create A Regional Tactical Response Team. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

D. 2025-158 Resolution Approving DEED Contamination Clean-Up And Investigation Grant Application

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-158 Resolution Approving DEED Contamination Clean-Up And Investigation Grant Application. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor LeBlanc, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

E. 2025-159 Resolution Approving A Consent Related To The Development Contract Between The Hermantown Economic Development Authority, The City Of Hermantown And KTJ 360, LLC For The Pillars Of Hermantown Senior Living Project

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-159 Resolution Approving A Consent Related To The Development Contract Between The Hermantown Economic Development Authority, The City Of Hermantown And KTJ 360, LLC For The Pillars Of

Hermantown Senior Living Project. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

F. **2025-160 Resolution Approving Consent To Assignment Of Development Agreement Among KTJ 360, LLC, Pillars Of Hermantown, LLC, And City Of Hermantown, And Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver The Agreement On Behalf Of The City Of Hermantown**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-160 Resolution Approving Consent To Assignment Of Development Agreement Among KTJ 360, LLC, Pillars Of Hermantown, LLC, And City Of Hermantown, And Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver The Agreement On Behalf Of The City Of Hermantown. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Absent

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

13. **CLOSED SESSION**

14. **RECESS**

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk