

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, December 1, 2025

6:30 PM Central

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON & VIA ZOOM

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Present

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; Kevin Orme, Director of Finance & Administration; Jim Crace, Director of Public Safety; Zach Graves, Fire Chief; David Bolf, City Engineer; Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney

VISITORS: 47

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL**
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
5. **PUBLIC HEARING**

A. Truth In Taxation Hearing

This public hearing opened at 6:33 p.m. and closed at 6:36 p.m. with the following public comment:

Jackie Dolentz, 5842 Old Hwy 2 - Ms. Dolentz expressed concern about the significant increase in her property's market value since 2019.

A. 2025-176 Resolution Adopting The Final 2025 Property Tax Levy Collectible In 2026 In The Amount Of \$10,112,191

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-176 Resolution Adopting The Final 2025 Property Tax Levy Collectible In 2026 In The Amount Of \$10,112,191. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

B. 2025-177 Resolution Adopting The Final 2026 City General Fund Budget In The Amount Of \$9,864,686 And The Overall Budget Of \$28,022,830

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-177 Resolution Adopting The Final 2026 City General Fund Budget In The Amount Of \$9,864,686 And The Overall Budget Of \$28,022,830. 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Correspondence 25-700 through 25-737 placed on file

7. PRESENTATIONS

8. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Jeffrey Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road, Midway Township - Mr. Donahue stated his opposition to the proposed data center, arguing that the project is incompatible with a residential area and should not have been rezoned. He cited anticipated noise levels, environmental concerns, and the scale of electrical use. He noted that the majority of residents do not support the project and urged the Council to rezone the property back to its previous classification.

Allison Hafften, 5971 St. Louis River Road - Ms. Hafften described the rural qualities of her neighborhood that influenced her decision to live there and expressed concern that

the data center would negatively affect quiet nights and dark skies. She stated that her home is less than a mile from the rezoned area and fears the project will harm her property and quality of life.

Alethea Montgomery, 5713 St. Louis River Road - Ms. Montgomery stated that she has lived in Hermantown since 2006 and that her property borders the proposed project area. She expressed concern about stormwater impacts, potential flooding, and declining property values. She stated that she has worked to support local wildlife on her land and believes the data center is incompatible with the area. She voiced her opposition to the project.

Derek Strom, 5853 Hwy 194 - Mr. Strom expressed dissatisfaction with city leadership and concerns about financial management, including the use of stormwater fees. He stated that he has requested public data regarding the data center and emphasized that such information must be released under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. He stated that residents feel uninformed and that he intends to hold officials accountable.

Annette Ralph, 5781 St. Louis River Road - Ms. Ralph expressed concern that residents near the project area are being disregarded. She questioned the impact on wetlands and suggested that increased tax revenue is the primary motivation for the project. She stated that the financial benefit is minimal compared to the impact on neighboring residents and suggested the facility could be located elsewhere.

Noel Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road - Ms. Donahue stated that although she lives in Midway Township, she is concerned about the negative impacts the data center would have on surrounding communities. She expressed frustration that Midway Township was not included in discussions and argued that the project benefits Hermantown at the expense of neighboring residents. She stated that moving forward with the project would harm people's homes and lives.

Emma Richtman, 5215 Chris Drive - Ms. Richtman stated that many residents are feeling exhausted and unheard. She expressed disappointment that council support for the rezoning does not reflect the views of all voters. She stated that the issue has been emotionally taxing and asked for more meaningful dialogue with the Council.

Bob Kohlmeier, 5757 St. Louis River Road - Mr. Kohlmeier expressed concern about transparency and the use of nondisclosure agreements related to the project. He referenced a recent editorial discussing the issue of "silence" in public decision-making and stated that he is worried about the effect on democratic processes.

9. **MOTIONS**

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **2025-178 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 2 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$345,937.75**

- B. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of November 17, 2025 City Council Continuation Minutes, and November 25, 2025 City Council Work Session Minutes
- C. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from November 16, 2025 through November 30, 2025 in the amount of \$1,518,272.92

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

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

11. **ORDINANCES**

- A. **2025-20 An Ordinance Renewing A Franchise Granted To Mediacom Minnesota, LLC To Construct, Operate And Maintain A Cable Television System In The City Of Hermantown; Setting Forth Conditions Relating To The Continuation Of The Franchise; Providing For The Regulation And Use Of The Cable Television System; And Prescribing Penalties For The Violation Of Its Provisions**

(second reading)

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-20 An Ordinance Renewing A Franchise Granted To Mediacom Minnesota, LLC To Construct, Operate And Maintain A Cable Television System In The City Of Hermantown; Setting Forth Conditions Relating To The Continuation Of The Franchise; Providing For The Regulation And Use Of The Cable Television System; And Prescribing Penalties For The Violation Of Its Provisions. 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

- B. **2025-21 An Ordinance Granting To Minnesota Power A Nonexclusive Franchise To Construct, Operate, Repair And Maintain In The City Of Hermantown, Minnesota, An Electric Distribution System And Transmission Lines, Including Necessary Poles, Lines, Fixtures And Appurtenances, For The Furnishing Of Electric Energy To The City, Its Inhabitants, And Others, And To Use The Public Ways And Public Grounds Of The City For Such Purposes; And Prescribing Certain Terms And Conditions Thereof**

(second reading)

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-21 An Ordinance Granting To Minnesota Power A Nonexclusive Franchise To Construct, Operate, Repair And Maintain In The City Of Hermantown, Minnesota, An Electric Distribution System And Transmission Lines, Including Necessary Poles, Lines, Fixtures And Appurtenances, For The Furnishing Of Electric Energy To The City, Its Inhabitants, And Others, And To Use The Public Ways And Public Grounds Of The City For Such Purposes; And Prescribing Certain Terms And Conditions Thereof. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

- C. **2025-22 An Ordinance Imposing A Franchise Fee On Minnesota Power**

(first or second reading)

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-22 An Ordinance Imposing A Franchise Fee On Minnesota Power. 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

- D. **2025-23 An Ordinance Of The City Of Hermantown, Minnesota, Amending Chapter 18 Of The Hermantown Zoning Code By Adding A New Section 1830, Accessory Dwelling Units**

(first reading)

12. **RESOLUTIONS**

- A. **2025-179 Resolution Authorizing The Publication Of A Summary Of An Ordinance Renewing A Franchise Granted To Mediacom Minnesota LLC**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-179 Resolution Authorizing The Publication Of A Summary Of An Ordinance Renewing A Franchise Granted To Mediacom Minnesota LLC. This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Geissler, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

- B. **2025-180 Resolution Authorizing The Publication Of A Summary Of An Ordinance Granting To Minnesota Power**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-180 Resolution Authorizing The Publication Of A Summary Of An Ordinance Granting To Minnesota Power. 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

C. **2025-181 Resolution Adopting Assessment Roll For Delinquent Utility Charges For 2025**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-181 Resolution Adopting Assessment Roll For Delinquent Utility Charges For 2025. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

D. **2025-182 Resolution Approving Application Of Assessment Roll Number 541A-55 For Deferral Of Assessment Against The Property For The Construction Of Road Improvement District No. 541 & 542 ("Hardship Deferral")**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-182 Resolution Approving Application Of Assessment Roll Number 541A-55 For Deferral Of Assessment Against The Property For The Construction Of Road Improvement District No. 541 & 542 ("Hardship Deferral"). 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

E. **2025-183 Resolution Authorizing The City Of Hermantown To Participate In The St. Louis County Maintenance Programs**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-183 Resolution Authorizing The City Of Hermantown To Participate In The St. Louis County Maintenance Programs. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

F. **2025-184 Resolution Authorizing A Contract For Managed IT Services With Computer Integration Technologies, Inc. (“CIT”)**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-184 Resolution Authorizing A Contract For Managed IT Services With Computer Integration Technologies, Inc. (“CIT”). 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

G. **2025-185 Resolution Approving Preliminary And Final Planned Unit Development With JLG Enterprises Of Hermantown LLP For The Peyton Acres Planned Unit Development**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-185 Resolution Approving Preliminary And Final Planned Unit Development With JLG Enterprises Of Hermantown LLP For The Peyton

Acres Planned Unit Development. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Geissler, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

H. **2025-186 Resolution Approving Preliminary And Final Plat Of Peyton Acres Phase 4 And Imposing Conditions On The Final Plat**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-186 Resolution Approving Preliminary And Final Plat Of Peyton Acres Phase 4 And Imposing Conditions On The Final Plat. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Geissler, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

I. **2025-187 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For Grading And Filling Within A Natural Shoreland Overlay Area**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-187 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: Abstain

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Abstain

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Abstain: 2

J. **2025-188 Resolution Naming Softball Field At Rose Road “Tom Bang Field”**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-188 Resolution Naming Softball Field At Rose Road “Tom Bang Field”. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

13. **CLOSED SESSION**

14. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 7:34 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk