

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, December 15, 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; Jim Crace, Director of Public Safety; Zach Graves, Fire Chief; David Bolf, City Engineer; Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney

VISITORS: 25

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL**

4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**

6. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence 25-738 through 25-751 placed on file

A. **25-751**

From: Eric Johnson

To: Dan Lessor

Re: 150 Day Extension

7. **PRESENTATIONS**

A. **2025 Employee Recognition**

5 Years of Service - Samantha Knapp, Lindsay Townsend, Olivia Gottschald

10 Years of Service - Jake Williams, Kevin Orme, Alicia Dahlin, Dana Ross

15 Years of Service - Christopher Durovec

20 Years of Service - Jason Salo

(Pre-Agenda Only)

B. Section 14 Update

David Bolf, City Engineer
(Pre-Agenda Only)

8. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Tom Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Road – Mr. Bates cautioned the Council to proceed carefully with the proposed data center. He stated that based on his research of similar facilities nationwide, developers are highly sophisticated and profit-driven. He encouraged the Council to conduct thorough research on comparable projects in other communities and to proceed with full awareness of potential risks.

Kiera Simmons, 5112 Eagle Lake Road – Ms. Simmons urged the Council to halt the project, stating that neither the City nor the State has sufficient experience or regulatory framework to oversee hyperscale data centers. She expressed concerns about lack of transparency, use of NDAs, and denial of an EIS/EAW. She cited potential environmental impacts including trout streams, impervious surfaces, runoff, tree removal, wildlife habitat loss, and possible health effects for nearby residents.

Emma Richtman, 5215 Chris Drive – Ms. Richtman expressed frustration that public opposition feels dismissed while support for the project is validated. She stated that the project is significant in size and scale, may be one of the last major undeveloped areas in Hermantown, and involves considerable uncertainty. She asked Council members to continue asking questions and to recognize the seriousness of their responsibility.

Jeffrey Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road, Midway Township – Mr. Donahue stated that the project has mobilized widespread opposition in the northern area, citing approximately 5,000 people involved in SHDC. He asserted that community values oppose locating a data center in this area, criticized the AUAR process, and opposed the use of public funds to defend litigation. He characterized the project as heavy industrial use near residential neighborhoods and requested rezoning back to its original designation.

Peter Hafften, 5971 St. Louis River Road – Mr. Hafften shared a conversation with a data center manager who expressed concerns about the Hermantown project's location and impacts on nearby residents. He stated that both agreed the site was not appropriate for the project. Mr. Hafften opposed the data center, citing wetlands, land use, and community protection concerns, and requested rezoning reversal.

Noel Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road, Midway Township – Ms. Donahue questioned reliance on a generalized AUAR rather than a site-specific environmental review. She expressed concern that the City declined to pursue an EIS or EAW and stated that residents do not want the project located here.

Sara Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road – Ms. Lofald expressed concerns about lack of transparency and insufficient public communication. She requested a public question-and-

answer forum and stated that information has been limited due to NDAs. She emphasized that the scale of the project is unprecedented for Hermantown and questioned the erosion of public trust and whether strong public opposition could alter the project's course.

Joann Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Road – Ms. Bates stated that an AUAR is not reasonable without a clear understanding of the project details and requested the Council reconsider its approach.

Lynn Bradford, 3525 Solway Road – Mr. Bradford cited canvassing results from the SHDC group indicating that a large majority of residents contacted opposed the data center. He stated that only a small number of respondents supported the project and expressed concern about the lack of public support.

9. **MOTIONS**

- A. Motion to approve or deny the following Tobacco License Renewal Applications effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, contingent upon complete applications being received, successful background checks and license fees being paid in full:

Adolph Store	3710 Midway Road
Atlantic Gas, LLC	5691 Highway 2
Fleet Farm Fuel	4181 Loberg Avenue
Korner Store #100	4704 Hermantown Road
Kwik Trip #216	4805 Miller Trunk Highway
Kwik Trip #220	4978 Miller Trunk Highway
Kwik Trip #572	4145 Haines Road
MN CStore	4221 Haines Road
Pure Pleasure/DIMA Corp.	5193 Miller Trunk Highway
Speedway #4602	5601 Miller Trunk Highway
Stokke's Liquor Store	3706 Midway Road
Turning Leaf	4120 Richard Avenue
Walmart #1757	4740 Loberg Avenue
Dollar General	4678 Vaux Road

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve the license application(s) effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026 contingent upon complete applications being received, successful background checks and license fees being paid in full. 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

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of December 1, 2025 City Council Continuation Minutes
- B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from December 1, 2025 through December 15, 2025 in the amount of \$709,918.16

Motion to 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. **2025-23 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**

(second reading)
(motion, roll call)

Motion to table 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. 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

12. **RESOLUTIONS**

A. **2025-189 Resolution Requiring Write-In Candidates To File A Written Request For Votes In Their Name To Be Counted**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-189 Resolution Requiring Write-In Candidates To File A Written Request For Votes In Their Name To Be Counted. 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. **2025-190 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Agreement With NASCAR Towing, LLC For Wrecker Service And Vehicle Storage For The City Of Hermantown Police Department**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-190 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Agreement With NASCAR Towing, LLC For Wrecker Service And Vehicle Storage For The City Of Hermantown Police Department. 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

C. **2025-191 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver A Cooperative Agreement Between St. Louis County And The City Of Hermantown For 2026 Maintenance Striping CP 0000-712914**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-191 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver A Cooperative Agreement Between St. Louis County And The City Of Hermantown For 2026 Maintenance Striping CP 0000-712914. 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

D. **2025-192 Resolution Authorizing The City Of Hermantown To Support St. Louis County For The 2030 Project CSAH 56 (Morris Thomas Rd) Sidewalk**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-192 Resolution Authorizing The City Of Hermantown To Support St. Louis County For The 2030 Project CSAH 56 (Morris Thomas Rd) Sidewalk. 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

E. **2025-193 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute A Second Amendment To Engineering Agreement For Consulting Services With Short Elliot Hendrickson (Independent Contractor)**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-193 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute A Second Amendment To Engineering Agreement For Consulting Services With Short Elliot Hendrickson (Independent Contractor). This motion, made by Councilor Geissler and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Paul Fish 3935 Solway Road – Mr. Fish asked if this resolution has anything to do with the proposed data center. Mayor Boucher responded that it does not.

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. **2025-194 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 18 For The NorthStar Ford Arena To Kraus-Anderson Construction Company In The Amount Of \$274,779.73**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-194 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 18 For The NorthStar Ford Arena To Kraus-Anderson Construction Company In The Amount Of \$274,779.73. 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. **2025-195 Resolution Purchasing Mary Murphy House & Property**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2025-195 Resolution Purchasing Mary Murphy House & Property. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Geissler, Carried.

Paul Fish, 3935 Solway Road – Mr. Fish expressed support for the purchase of the Mary Murphy House and property but raised concerns about the lack of additional funding. He questioned whether there is a guarantee the house will be preserved long-term and not demolished for future redevelopment, and asked how the City will ensure preservation. Joe Wicklund – Mr. Wicklund responded that restrictive covenants will require the City to maintain the original structure, with only limited changes permitted. He stated that the City of Hermantown will preserve the house in its current form in perpetuity.

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 7:24 p.m. 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

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk