

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, January 5, 2026

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: Absent

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: 30

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL**

4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence 25-752 through 25-766 placed on file

6. **PRESENTATIONS**

A. **Tobacco & Alcohol License Compliance Checks**

Jim Crace, Director of Public Safety
(Pre-Agenda Only)

B. **Trails Update**

David Bolf, City Engineer
(Pre-Agenda Only)

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Derek Strom, 5853 Highway 194, Hermantown, MN - Mr. Strom commented on the proposed data center, stating that he believes the project is intended to address inadequate

services and past financial mismanagement by the City. He expressed concerns about incomplete responses to a data request for council member communications, rising stormwater fees, taxes on electric bills, and other city fees. Mr. Strom stated that residents feel treated as a source of revenue and noted that citizens have the ability to overturn votes and pursue recall of elected officials.

Sarah Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN - Ms. Lofald expressed opposition to the proposed data center, stating that residents attempted to obtain information earlier in the process and felt the project was further along than disclosed. She noted that despite significant public opposition, residents received little information and were forced to research impacts independently. Ms. Lofald stated she has lost confidence in elected officials and asked whether the project would be stopped if residents continue to oppose it.

Jeffrey Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road, Midway Township, MN - Mr. Donahue commented on the large scale of data centers, citing national examples and their significant power, water, and infrastructure demands. He raised concerns about limited information due to a non-disclosure agreement, potential wetland impacts, and the size, number, and noise of diesel generators. Mr. Donahue urged the Council to reconsider the rezoning and overall approach to the proposed data center.

8. **MOTIONS**

- A. Motion to approve or deny the following Tobacco License Renewal Application(s) effective January 6, 2026, through December 31, 2026, contingent upon complete applications being received, successful background checks and license fees being paid in full:

Holiday Stationstore #2746190 4795 Miller Trunk Highway

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve the license application(s) effective January 6, 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 Geissler and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

9. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of December 15, 2025 City Council Continuation Minutes
- B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from December 16, 2025 through December 31, 2025 in the amount of \$1,168,271.51

C. **Motions**

- I. Appointment of Official Newspaper – Hermantown Star
- II. Appointment of Depositories — Multi Bank Securities; Moreton Capital Markets, LLC; Wells Fargo Securities, RBC Dain Rauscher; US Bank; PMA Financial Network, Inc.; Bell Bank; National Bank of Commerce; 4-M Fund; Pershing Advisor Solutions LLC (Custodian)/Ehlers Investment Partners (Advisor)
- III. Appointment of Mayor Boucher as the City's designated representative to the Hermantown Area Chamber of Commerce
- IV. Appointment of Andy Hjelle as the City's designated representative to the Hermantown Legacy Fund
- V. Appointment of Mayor Boucher as City Representative on the Metropolitan Interstate Council with David Bolf, City Engineer on the Transportation Advisory Committee, with Trish Crego, City Utility and Infrastructure Director as alternate
- VI. Appointment of the following for a three-year term:
 - Park Board**
 - Jim Nelson
 - Michael Miller
 - Board Of Appeals & Adjustments**
 - Cyndy Reno
 - Jim Nelson
 - Michael Boese

D. **Resolutions**

- I. **2026-01 Resolution Appointing Council Member John Geissler As The Acting Mayor**
- II. **2026-02 Resolution Appointing Council Ex Officio Members To Various Boards, Commissions, And Other Appointments For 2026**
- III. **2026-03 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor Wayne Boucher And City Administrator John Mulder To Sign Checks And Drafts For The City**

Of Hermantown With Alternates Acting Mayor John Geissler And Director of Finance & Administration Kevin Orme

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

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

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

10. 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

(first or second reading)
(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 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 Geissler and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

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

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

11. RESOLUTIONS

A. 2026-04 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For Cannabis Cultivation At 4599 Abrahamson Road, In A C1-A Office And Light Industrial/Adult Use Zoning District

(motion, roll call)

Sarah Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN - Ms. Lofald spoke in support of the proposed cannabis cultivation project, noting the applicant's detailed presentation, commitment to exceeding state regulations, and willingness to address public concerns. She stated that the Police Chief had no concerns and expressed confidence in the applicant. Ms. Lofald also separately raised concerns regarding recent changes to the public comment portion of City Council meetings.

Motion to approve 2026-04 Resolution Approving A Special Use Permit For Cannabis Cultivation At 4599 Abrahamson Road, In A C1-A Office And Light Industrial/Adult Use Zoning District. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Geissler, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

B. 2026-05 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 2 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$6,044.49

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-05 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 2 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$6,044.49. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

C. 2026-06 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 3 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$47,806.37

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-06 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 3 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$47,806.37. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Geissler, Carried.

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

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

D. **2026-07 Resolution Approving The 2026 City Of Hermantown Standard Specifications For Construction**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-07 Resolution Approving The 2026 City Of Hermantown Standard Specifications For Construction. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

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

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

E. **2026-08 Resolution Approving A Contract With Budget Blinds Of Duluth For Replacement Of Blinds In The City Training Center**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-08 Resolution Approving A Contract With Budget Blinds Of Duluth For Replacement Of Blinds In The City Training Center. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler:	Yea
Councilor Andy Hjelle:	Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

12. **CLOSED SESSION**

- A. Motion to close the meeting of the Hermantown City Council pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § Section 13D.05 Subd. 3 (b) to consider attorney client privilege information related to pending litigation. Following this closed session, the Hermantown City Council will re-convene in an open session.

(motion, roll call)

Motion to recess at 7:09 p.m. Motion to close the meeting of the Hermantown City Council pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § Section 13D.05 Subd. 3 (b) to consider attorney client privilege information related to pending litigation. This motion, made by Councilor Peterson and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

Motion to reconvene into open sessions at 8:00 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: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

13. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 8:00 p.m. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler and seconded by Councilor Hjelle, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Absent

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk