

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 20, 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: Present

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Present

CITY STAFF: John Mulder, City Administrator; Alissa McClure, City Clerk; Joe Wicklund, Assistant City Administrator; Jim Crace, Director of Public Safety; David Bolf, City Engineer; Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney

VISITORS: 15

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

Mayor Boucher recognized several long-term Hermantown residents who have recently passed and acknowledged their contributions to the community, including Steve Archambeau (71), former Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission and former Assistant Fire Chief; Irene Edith Shaw (82), wife of Gene Shaw, who serves on the Park Board; Jim Sathers (84), who was responsible for the construction of Jamebard Road; and Olive Kirkland, who recently turned 100 years old on Christmas Eve.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence 26-001

6. **PRESENTATIONS**

A. 2026 Work Session Schedule

John Mulder, City Administrator
(Pre-Agenda Only)

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Karen Harmon 5279 West Arrowhead Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that she is hearing impaired and, even with assistive devices, has difficulty hearing what is said during City

Council pre-agenda and regular meetings. She noted that many churches broadcast meetings and use closed captioning and advocated for similar accessibility accommodations for City meetings. Ms. Harmon also asked whether the Fortune 50 company involved with the proposed data center could be identified and requested that this information be made available to the community.

Sarah Lofald 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – stated that she did not prepare formal remarks, noting it has been a difficult year. She expressed concern about current events at the state, community, and national levels and stated she is proud of Minnesota for standing up on certain issues. She emphasized that she does not view the Council as bullies but as having a different perspective. Ms. Lofald expressed hope for future collaboration between the Council and the community. She stated that while the Council may view the proposed data center as a financial opportunity, she views it as a large corporation taking advantage of the community and feels the project was not presented to residents appropriately. She requested that the Council consider forming a citizen advisory group to work with the Council on this issue.

Ben Nissen 1015 N 6th Ave E, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition to the proposed data center and the current AUAR. He identified three areas he believes lack sufficient detail: wastewater treatment, noting concerns about the volume of domestic wastewater and lack of pretreatment for higher salt and mineral content from cooling systems; greenhouse gas emissions calculations, stating they are based on light industrial use rather than data center use; and electronic waste, noting the lack of detail regarding server replacement and responsible disposal over the life of the project.

Emma Richtman 5215 Chris Drive – Spoke in opposition to the data center and expressed appreciation for having a platform to voice concerns. She stated she is concerned about the speed at which data centers are being developed, the lack of sufficient legislation, and what she described as a race to maximize profits for a Fortune 50 company. Ms. Richtman expressed hope that the Council will prioritize the best interests of Hermantown residents and stated that an Environmental Impact Statement would more fully address the scope and scale of the proposed development than the AUAR.

Clarissa Ek 3505 Solway Road, Solway Township, MN – Addressed the Council to again request reconsideration of its position on the data center. She encouraged the Council to join other cities that have rejected hyperscale data centers after listening to constituents. She cited concerns including impacts to trout streams and wetlands, noise pollution, and potential legal challenges. Ms. Ek questioned how much the City is willing to spend on legal fees to defend its position and stated that community members are closely monitoring the issue.

8. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **2026-09 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 19 For The NorthStar Ford Arena To Kraus-Anderson Construction Company In The Amount Of \$143,711.56**

(motion, roll call)

- B. **2026-10 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 20 For The NorthStar Ford Arena To Kraus-Anderson Construction Company In The Amount Of \$523,940.54**

(motion, roll call)

- C. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of January 5, 2026 City Council Continuation Minutes

- D. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from January 1, 2026 through January 15, 2026 in the amount of \$822,661.81

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: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

9. **RESOLUTIONS**

- A. **2026-11 Resolution Authorizing The Purchase Of A Bobcat Tool Cat For Parks And Trail Maintenance In The Amount Of \$89,270.55**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-11 Resolution Authorizing The Purchase Of A Bobcat Tool Cat For Parks And Trail Maintenance In The Amount Of \$89,270.55. 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. 2026-12 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Agreement For Professional Services With Northland Consulting Engineers, LLP (City Engineering Services)

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-12 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Agreement For Professional Services With Northland Consulting Engineers, LLP (City Engineering Services). 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. 2026-13 Resolution Approving An Update To The City Of Hermantown Minnesota Government Data Practices Act City Hall Procedures

(motion, roll call)

Emma Richtman 5215 Chris Drive – Ms. Richtman asked whether this resolution had been discussed at a recent City Council meeting and was advised that it had not. She asked a question regarding the section addressing the creation of data. City Attorney Gunnar Johnson responded that the language is a clarification of state statute and that the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act does not require the City to create data if it is not already maintained. Ms. Richtman then asked whether, related to the specific form or arrangement of data, such a request could be considered out of order. Attorney Johnson responded that the law does not require the City to modify or rearrange data from the manner in which it is already maintained. Ms. Richtman asked whether any further questions could be directed to the City Clerk, and Attorney Johnson confirmed that they could.

Motion to approve 2026-13 Resolution Approving An Update To The City Of Hermantown Minnesota Government Data Practices Act City Hall Procedures. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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

D. **2026-14 Resolution Approving Final Plans And Specifications And Ordering Advertisement For Bids For The Improvement District No. 323 Water System Connection And Booster Station Project**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-14 Resolution Approving Final Plans And Specifications And Ordering Advertisement For Bids For The Improvement District No. 323 Water System Connection And Booster Station Project. 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

10. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 7:00 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