

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, March 16, 2026

6:30 PM Central

MEETING CONDUCTED IN PERSON

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; 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: 125

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

Councilor Geissler shared that he is excited to know the entity behind the proposed data center and acknowledged the news and information that came with the announcement. He stated that he, as an elected official of the City of Hermantown, did not sign an NDA on this project or any other projects.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence 26-11 through 26-18 placed on file

6. **PRESENTATIONS**

A. **4th Quarter Financials**

Kevin Orme, Director of Finance & Administration
(Pre-Agenda Only)

B. **Fire Department Year – End Report**

Zach Graves, Fire Chief
(Pre-Agenda Only)

C. Minnesota Power Update – Google Electric Service Agreement

Frank Frederickson, VP, Minnesota Power

(Pre-Agenda Only)

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Walch, 4112 Meadow Parkway, Hermantown, MN – Stated that she is from a multigenerational family who originally helped to settle Hermantown. She spoke about Hermantown being known as the city of quality living and questioned it will still be true with the proposed data center. She questioned if the public was not made aware of the data center because they would not agree to it. She asked Council if they are not in their position because the residents of Hermantown voted for them. She stated she wonders who benefits from the agreement and reminded Council it's not too late to make it right.

Tim Resberg, 3646 Midway Road, Hermantown, MN – Shared that the main reason people are against the proposed data center is because the site is in a residential and rural area. He stated that he once had a Council member tell him the development is Business Light Manufacturing and it would be the size of the current Adolph Store. He shared concern of the project getting rid of homes and values of homes going down in the area. He stated to put the proposed data center in an industrial zone not a residential and rural area. He shared that Hermantown attracted individuals to live in a rural and residential area but now they do not care what happens to the people that did. He expressed that trades can still have work if it is rezoned in an industrial area.

Kyle Bukovich, 2284 E Foxboro Chaffey Road, Foxboro, WI – Spoke in support of the data center project. He stated that he is the President of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 242. He shared that this project is about local union jobs that will employ hundreds personal from Hermantown and the surrounding communities. He emphasized that the data centers require on going work that would provide employment for members and keep future apprenticeship opportunities in the area. He stated that building a data center is about providing families with sustaining wages and benefits, more money spent locally, and a stronger middle class in Hermantown. He acknowledged that any project comes with concerns but the regional building trade councils have a record of delivering safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible projects. He stated that growth without a plan is just sprawl and this project is a chance to bring lasting opportunity to local workers to keep Hermantown moving forward.

Emma Richtman, 5251 Chris Drive, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about known financial risks associated with hyperscale data centers regardless of specifics or parent company. She referenced a publication from the University of Michigan, and materials from a former VP at Microsoft that the short lifespans of AI data centers bring great risk to small cities and communities. She stated that trust in local government being lost for a 15-25-year lifespan data center and mystery promises. She asked Council what plans are in place when Google leaves and what requirements are there to remove building components as

data centers are built specific needs making it difficult for retrofitting them down the road. She questioned who is holding google accountable and what is presenting them from abandoning the project. She expressed concern about the City's ability to negotiate with Googles resources. She stated that a short life span means that the AI data center will be entirely exempt from owning any sales tax on computer equipment or software as well as getting depreciation rates that reduce property tax basis. She shared that tax revenue from Google will decline but residents have still not been told if there is a sales tax abatement clause for Google. She emphasized that tax abatement deals would only reduce tax revenue for Hermantown and centralizing it will bring financial risk to the area. She expressed to Council that they are prematurely relying on tax revenues from Google and if Google leaves residents will be forced to make up the revenue gap until a new buyer is found. She shared that regardless of Googles reputation and hyperscale data centers lifespans residents will be financially impacted.

Dawn Lapointe, 4731 Portland Road, Hermantown, MN – Thanked Council for service to community and acknowledged challenging time. She stated that this was her first time at the podium to speak. She shared that she has lived in Hermantown for 20 years and had thoughts of moving to the south west rural corner of the city but changes in zoning and threat of data centers have made it too risky to move to. She shared her concerns about the relationship Hermantown is in and how it is not just about the partners involved, but how the situation is affecting the community and straying from its intended future. She encouraged Council to review information with an open mind. She stated that residents would like to hear Councils honest thoughts on the project. She asked Council to not sell out resident's health, quality of life, and the natural beauty and resources in our area, for the hope of temporary construction jobs and a temporary economic boost.

Jackie Dolentz, 5842 Old Highway 2, Hermantown, MN – Thanked Council for service to the community during a difficult time. She asked the room of attendees to raise their hand if, they were a Hermantown resident, lived within 2-mile radius of proposed data center site, if they wanted to live next to the site during construction, and if wanted to live next to a data center. She asked Council if they would be willing to put this on the ballot to let the Hermantown residents vote on it come midterms.

Jeffery Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition about building a hyperscale data center on the specific site. He expressed his frustration about the site for the data center being in a residential area next to people's homes. He emphasized to Council that if they want to do the right thing to do an EIS. He questioned why Council is not listening to the community that is telling them no. He shared that it is not about being against data centers but no data centers in a residential community. He shared that the data center with Google will lead to property value loss and lessen quality of life.

Noel Donahue, 5540 Pine Hill Road, Duluth, MN – Questioned why an EIS is not being done instead of an AUAR in regards to the proposed data center when the community is asking for an EIS. She stated that if an EIS comes back positively than community

members would not have anything to comment on. She expressed that she is not a resident of Hermantown but still would be affected by the downsides of a data center. She stated that Council voted to change the zoning to light industrial but would argue that a hyperscale data center of the proposed size does not match the zoning. She asked Council to reconsider what they are doing.

Jack Carlson, 8482 Swan Lake Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that he is the President of the Duluth Building and Construction Trades Council. He shared that union members are forced to travel far away from their families to work. He emphasizes that projects like the data center allow the opportunity to stay home with families, provide a steady income, and good retirement. He shared that jobs provided by the project will allow construction opportunities for a young and upcoming workforce. He stated that their union builds projects with quality while usually on time and under budget. He spoke about how creating local jobs would positively impact the local economy and expressed the need for forward progress. He asked that misinformation be put to rest and stated that people want to work on these projects.

Sarah Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that Hermantown citizens are not against development and support union trades. She spoke in opposition of secrecy from city staff and elected officials and Council's abandonment of the Adolph neighborhood small area plan. She spoke in opposition to the City of Hermantown's relationship with Google. She expressed frustration with lack of information and answers from City staff regarding citizens' concerns. She shared that the people should have been involved from the beginning. She asked if Council will listen to the residents of Hermantown if they show up at a city council meeting and oppose the data center development.

Rich Hilton, 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – Shared that even though none of the City Councilors signed NDAs there were individuals who are sitting alongside Council that did. He shared that the reason a lot of them are there to oppose the data center is due to the City's lack of transparency, and citizen involvement. He expressed frustration with how changes in zoning happened and how the original AUAR submitted was not for a hyperscale data center. He emphasized that supporting this project supports secrecy in local government and corporations.

Dave Lislegard, 720 Arrowhead Street, Aurora, MN – Stated he is the Executive Director of Job for Minnesotans. He spoke in favor of the proposed data center and partnership with Google. He shared that experience as a Mayor, City Councilor, and State Representative leads him to believe in supporting opportunities like this project for the region. He expressed gratitude to Council and Google for resetting the process and doing so should build trust back. He stated the project matters to Minnesota's economy and wants a company like Google to come into the state to improve our lives. He shared he is looking forward to civil dialogue and engagement from both sides driven by fact and opportunity.

Rebecca Grandorf, 4198 Solway Road, Hermantown, MN – Spoke regarding concerns about a new AUAR. She stated that the reason the City is doing a new AUAR is because it was inadequate the first time. She expressed that an AUAR is being done because the design of the project will change over time and the AUAR can be shifted. She shares that her worst-case scenario from this project is a water pipeline going through her neighborhood with development being less than a block away from her home and farm. She expressed worry about how the development will affect her farm. She asked if the development changes and the new water supply though the pipeline doesn't fulfill the needs will there be drilling of wells and will there be a public comment period to ask her questions.

Nate Rickard, 4878 Trails End Drive, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in favor of the data center project as a member of the union trades. He shared that projects like this one create job opportunities in the region and give local trades work close to home. He shared that concerns residents have raised are valid but can be addressed with good planning solutions. He stated concerns can turn a bad project into a good one. He shared that this project would also generate tax revenue for services without raising taxes for residents. He stated that if done correctly the project should be something that helps Hermantown. He expressed that everyone in the room can agree on wanting something good for Hermantown and hopes to work together.

Joanne Bates, 5369 Morris Thomas Rd, Hermantown, MN – She shared that Council tells her not to worry about the hyperscale data center because Minnesota has good laws to protect residents. She expressed concern about data centers size and operation as well as developers creating workarounds to cause damage. She shared she first heard of hyperscale data centers in September 2025 when announced a proposed one would be 2.5 miles from her home. She stated their neighbor had sold their property and was not at liberty to discuss the sale. She shared that there was confusion after visiting neighbors and attending the October 6th council meeting. She stated that the Mayor promised they will not need to pay connection fees with new water lines coming through but voiced concern that her property value will go down as new owners would have to.

Eleanor Dolan, 806 North 23rd Avenue West, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the data center and shared that she lives 7 miles from proposed data center site. She asked Council to conduct a full environmental impact statement and not just an AUAR. She shared that the State is considering new regulations for hyperscale data centers and requested that the City takes the time to fully understand the projects. She stated that the project is not worth losing trust in government and the risks the community faces. She expressed concern that the need for jobs and affordability cannot be a quick fix with the proposed project. She stated she hopes to see a world where workers and neighbors can come together on projects that make the community a better place without corporations taking advantage.

Bob Kohlmeier, 5757 Saint Louis River Road, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the data center. He asked if the whole City is under NDA as said by Economic Development Director Ronchetti. He expressed appreciation the questions Councilor Geissler is asking in meetings and wishes he could ask the same but is not given a public forum to do so. He shared that Councilors will not know how he feels until their home is affected by one of these projects. He stated to the Mayor that families in the Adolph area have been impacted by this proposed project and are now subjected to go through more uncertainty. He addressed a comment made by the Mayor regarding Google that lead to laughter at the State of the Cities and stated that to those effected it is not a laughing matter.

Karen Harmon, 5279 Arrowhead Road, Hermantown, MN – Shared questions regarding the proposed data center project. She shared feeling torn when learning Google is the owner of the proposed data center. She asked what the terms for the 5-million-dollar energy affordability and efficiently program is for residential customers. She stated that the information from Minnesota Power's pre-agenda presentation was informative but the information from states they were using to comparing Minnesota to was not clear. She asked why there were not comparisons made to other states on the great lakes and why comparisons were made with Texas who has an unregulated power grid.

Tom Bates 5569 Morris Thomas Road, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition to the data center. He stated he was in unions for 30 years. He shared his idea to move the data center to the iron range that has plenty of water and room. He stated that international corporations such as Google and BlackRock do not have allegiance to the United States. He expressed concern that the project will cause Hermantown and Minnesota to lose tax money and costs in property values. He expressed concern for pollution and fine particulate being in the air from generators used in data centers. He stated that he doesn't think we have to lose on this one and can fight for a different location so everybody can win.

Hannah Ballavance, 5491 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated is a Hermantown resident of 28 years and raising her family here. She shared that she and her significant are union workers. She stated that her household is 100% in support of the data. She emphasized that it would provide stability for union individuals to raise families in Hermantown. She shared that many of the union members are having to travel, working overnights, or not work at all due to the lack of local work. She expressed that this project would supply work and economic growth in Hermantown.

Clarissa Ek, 3505 Solway Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that the data center project will be in her back yard. She describes the surroundings near her home that would be affected if the data center would be there. She stated that she is not afraid and does not have the wrong facts as they are from residents across the country when data centers are built in their back yards. She shared the reason she would not have the facts is because they were hidden behind NDAs. She stated that this not about facts but about values and

that she values her home and children among other things. She expressed respect the want for local jobs and unions as she was a member of AFSCME but opposes the idea of a data center being built. She identifies members of Yes MN! executive committee and their associations. She stated that it is easy to say you would live next to a data center and construction if you are not the one being affected by it. She asked to not say you would want this in your back yard unless you are a home owner near the project.

Lynn Anderson, 4001 Getchell Road, Hermantown, MN – Shared that Council should think about the long-term impact of the data center project on the area. She stated that her home is 2-3 years old and purchased it because they saw on the City website that Hermantown is small country living next to accessible city life and amenities. She urged for an in-depth environmental study to rebuild credibility and sway residents that are deeply concerned. She shared that the jobs are for the short term to build the data center but they are staffed by 1-2 IT personnel often work remote, a job her brother use to have. She once again urged the Council to do a thorough environmental review.

Travis Drayna, 5757 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that he lives within one mile of the proposed data center site. He shared that he is an aerospace engineer who worked at Los Alamos (Los Alamos National Laboratory) and that he is knowledgeable in computers, servers, and data centers. He asked if the new AUAR will replace and nullify the old AUAR completely or if the new AUAR results will be mixed with old one. He asked if the new AUAR will address waste water since the old one only considers domestic waste water and the new one can still get through on the exclusion. He questioned if the new AUAR will have the proper number for water usage and stated it should show what the new cooling technology is. He requested clarification on the turbines and diesels with Minnesota Power since the previous AUAR says it was not applicable, including estimated amount on site, fuel type, and if they will be equipped with particulate DEF capturing systems. He asked if the AUAR will address the noise that is generated by the cooling towers and downside power generation. He stated that cooling towers give off a low frequency hum and neighbors can currently hear the transformers that currently isn't under much load. He referenced how Los Alamos and others handle disposal of servers, and asked what the disposal plan is for a data center here. He asked when can residents expect their power bills to decrease and with revenue coming in can they expect a decrease in property taxes. He expressed that the revenue coming in should from the project should do something for the residents that live by it. He questioned why the decision doesn't get put to a vote by the people.

Cathy Kohlmeier, 5757 Saint Louis River Road, Hermantown, MN –She expressed that along with the added value of the data center project it will also have regionwide effects that are not positive. She questioned whether Minnesota Power will be able to continue providing electricity in a green way. She shared concerns about water quality with use of a closed loop system and if WLSSD is equipped to handle its contaminants. She stated that the space alone involved for a data center will be an eyesore for those in the residential

area. She expressed local concerns regarding noise, air quality, and lights. She urged Council to not to be in a race to the bottom but in a race to the top and to know what Google is contracting it for.

Ed Montgomery, 5713 Saint Louis River Road, Hermantown, MN – Referenced a survey that was in the news last week and stated that 3 of 4 constituents said they do not want a data center. He expressed to council that it is not too late to change this, and that other projects have been cancelled due to local leaders stopping it in 12 states. He stated that communities across the country are actively fighting data centers, and referenced the community members who have used their own time and money to fight this. He shared that bills have been filed to regulate and restrict data centers making their way through state legislators. He stated that there are other lawsuits in multiple states highlighting the legal and environmental risk to cities like Hermantown. He urged Council to find the courage to not allow this, as other local leaders have said no. He asked Council to do the right thing.

Sarah Winter, 3685 Birch Road, Hermantown, MN – Thanked Council and Mayor for service to the community and hard work in their role with a big thing like a proposed data center. She shared there has been much said in regards of how this data center will be different in regards to its environmental and economic affects. She expressed to Council that the claim of this data center being different should make them stop and think. She shared that she has family living near data centers dealing with the problems that this proposed data center says it won't cause. She shared that she is glad it's being considered to do a better AUAR and encouraged Council to question things. She stated that she moved to Hermantown because of the quiet rural values not a hyper scale data center. She shared support for growth in Hermantown but as it was stated previously in the Adolph Small Area Plan when the 2045 comprehensive plan was made. She urged to get a guarantee that this project will use local building trades.

Eric Enberg, 5425 Morris Thomas Road, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in regards to the proposed data center. He shared that low frequency sound is detrimental to human health. He stated he is not entirely opposed to the data center. He urged to not allow an air-cooled system but a water-cooled system as it is much quieter and can lend itself to district heating opportunities. He asked Council to consider passing an ordinance to claim the waste heat, and organize a task force for the coordination of a heat district with surrounding communities. He emphasized that this would be a huge for the region if done right. He recommended the union members work together on this with those in the community, stating that putting down a heating system would bring work for decades if done right and if they work together.

Brandon Parker, 621 Atlantic Ave, Duluth, MN – Shared that Minnesota Power presentation during pre-agenda shared no new details. He expressed concern that economic incentives are overriding concerns of community impact. He spoke in favor of an EIS over an AUAR. He shared that states are in the process of reviewing how data

centers are approved by banning NDAs, forcing EIS reviews, and moratorium on data center projects entirely. He asked Council why the project can't slow down when there's an overwhelming consensus against it. He expressed concerns about AI in regards to its effect on society, individuals, and its industry bubble. He expressed frustration that corporations are denying access to local government and signal union support to counter a grassroots campaign. He asked Council to reflect on why our communities should be involved in this project and to say no to the data center.

Brian Bergeron, 5164 County Lane, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition to the proposed hyper scale data center. He stated that although large tech projects promise economic development and tax revenue the Hermantown project raises concerns about transparency and environmental impact to the area. He shared that the project is unprecedented for the community and the quiet rural area. He stated that the creation of jobs and expansion of local tax base will be short lived since hyperscale data centers are not large employers once construction is complete. He questioned Council about a stranded facility and if there was an off ramp to the project. He referenced a survey conducted in which results heavily show opposition to the project, especially the closer they lived to the proposed site. He spoke in regards of how dismissive it feels for Council to quickly vote after hours of testimony against the project have been given. He told Council that at a minimum a full and transparent EIS should occur before any further permits are granted. He expressed that serious discussion about whether this project belongs somewhere else would be even better.

8. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of March 2, 2026 City Council Continuation Minutes
- B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from March 1, 2026 through March 15, 2026 in the amount of \$854,197.34

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda. 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

9. **RESOLUTIONS**

A. 2026-35 Resolution Authorizing The Director Of Finance & Administration To Amend Selected Budgets And Make Transfers

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-35 Resolution Authorizing The Director Of Finance & Administration To Amend Selected Budgets And Make Transfers. 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

B. 2026-36 Resolution Establishing Procedures Relating To Compliance With Reimbursement Bond Regulations Under The Internal Revenue Code

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-36 Resolution Establishing Procedures Relating To Compliance With Reimbursement Bond Regulations Under The Internal Revenue Code. 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

C. 2026-37 Resolution Accepting Minnesota Department Of Employment And Economic Development Contamination Cleanup Grant And Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute Subrecipient Agreement

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-37 Resolution Accepting Minnesota Department Of Employment And Economic Development Contamination Cleanup Grant And

Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute Subrecipient Agreement. 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. **2026-38 Resolution Approving An Amendment To An Agreement For Consulting Services To Provide Review Of An Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) With Braun Intertec Corporation In An Amount Not To Exceed \$23,000.00**

(motion, roll call)

Councilor Geissler asked if the new AUAR would replace the current one. Economic Development Director Ronchetti confirmed the update will supersede and nullify the previous AUAR. The Mayor asked about opportunity for public comment during the five-year update and was told there would be an opportunity by Director Ronchetti. The Mayor also asked what the time limit of an EIS is, Director Ronchetti stated that to update it an EIS would require a 120-day minimum amendment process.

Emma Richtman, 5251 Chris Drive, Hermantown, MN – Stated that there is no trust in the new AUAR being sufficient due lack of transparency. She stated that doing an AUAR benefits the developer and Google as it allows for faster implementation and can lead to building before legislative efforts get passed. She shared that an EIS is necessary for the project. She expressed concern that as a resident it all feels so immediate and must spend her own time to make sure she's not being taken advantage of. She asked if public will have access to the master plan project so they can accurately comment during public period.

Sarah Lofald, 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – Shared emails acquired from a data request relating to early knowledge of data center project. She states that every change for this project including 2045 Comprehensive Plan, zoning language, area zoning, and the AUAR has been to support Googles massive data center. She expressed the AUAR should not continue since the land was rezoned in bad faith. She asked again if residents of Hermantown show up at a city council meeting to oppose the development by Google, will Council listen.

Pete Taylor, 4198 Solway Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that improvement with transparency and public involvement are needed in the AUAR process. He

recommended that the City do more than the legal requirements for public involvement. He shared different ways the City could do so such as sending post cards, emails to previous commenters, and provide a press release all on or before day zero of the comment period.

Rachel Johnson, 5702 Oneida Street, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of a reopened AUAR. She shared that the AUAR process meets same rigor as an environmental impact statement under Minnesota law. She explained that an AUAR requires updates and allows for more forward community planning. She stated that a reopened AUAR allows to run new analysis on resident concerns and multiple agencies, commissions, and tribal nations to go through and comment. She shared the agencies that will continue to monitor the project and project Minnesota Powers customers. She expressed that APEX knows why companies choose Northeast Minnesota and that the project is an opportunity to strengthen the region

Karen Harmon, 5279 W Arrowhead, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about concerns with transparency and how citizens have not been heard or informed. She asked why do an AUAR if it is the same as an EIS. She expressed concern about a potential indigenous cemetery on the land that has not been evaluated due to nobody being available to evaluate the land for remains. She stated that it should be followed up on to help with the 1854 treaty because they are our neighbors. She shared that it would be nice to have a voice to text at meeting for those with hearing difficulties as it is hard to understand Council. She stated that a lot of good information is passed at pre-agenda but it is not available on the website.

Jackie Dolentz, 5842 Old Hwy 2, Hermantown, MN – Asked Council to vote no on the data center project. She urged council to listen to residents and community members that are directly affected. She shared that the location is inappropriate and does not belong in the rural and residential area. She spoke on the hundreds of correspondence and people speaking at city council meetings. She stated the it is the worst kind of hubris that Council keeps plowing forward as residents are begging them to stop. She shared that the City using escrowed money should not matter as it is their time residents are paying for. She expressed that the AUAR is being completed because of input and feedback but the community still does not feel heard. She stated that not a person in this room wants to live next to a data center.

Sarah Winter, 3685 Birch Road, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about questions the average citizen has about the AUAR plan. She asked if building stops during a comment period or approval process if the impacts exceed the mitigation plan or does it continue. She asked if a neighbor notices an instance of something that exceeds the mitigation plan, what is the process for it to be reported and addressed. She stated that when she read the AUAR as an average citizen there was a left blank or had ditto marks. She expressed that she would love to see it fully filled out. She urged council to ask questions and not to trust the most comprehensive process answer whether it is

the most comprehensive process. She stated that this affects the communities lives significantly and has little trust in the statements being made.

Richard Hilton, 5502 Hermantown Road, Hermantown, MN – Stated that zoning changes were made to fit a heavy industrial facility into light industrial zoning without citizen input. He shares that the proposed data center should be under heavy industrial and that if it was an AUAR would not be able to be done and an EIS should be done instead. He expressed concern over the differences of an AUAR and EIS. He stated that if you want to know the real and true impacts of this actual data center an EIS needs to be done.

Clarissa Ek, 3505 Solway Road, Hermantown, MN – Shared that she doesn't understand the legality of going forward with a new AUAR while there is an active lawsuit involving the current AUAR. She expressed concern that Economic Development Director Ronchetti is not a lawyer but is going through state statute. She stated it is an unauthorized practice of law and should be done by a lawyer. She questioned how Council could responsibly vote on the resolution. She asked how it can be good for Hermantown that Council never votes no.

Councilor Geissler asked about notification for the 30-day review period, staff shared that updates will be posted on the city's website project page with associated press releases. Councilors Geissler and Leblanc had questions on public comments. Community Development Director Johnson explained that substantive comments are forwarded to consultants, and Braun Intertec determines which are addressed. Councilor Geissler confirmed legal consultation has occurred, in which Director Ronchetti assured Council that legal consultation has happened with multiple parties. Councilor LeBlanc wanted to know what changes would trigger a new comment period. Director Ronchetti and Johnson explained only changes that would increase or alter impacts in a significant way it would. Councilor Geissler asked if the current lawsuit determines an EIS must be done will the updated AUAR have to be thrown out which Director Ronchetti confirmed.

Motion to approve 2026-38 Resolution Approving An Amendment To An Agreement For Consulting Services To Provide Review Of An Alterative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) With Braun Intertec Corporation In An Amount Not To Exceed \$23,000.00. 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

10. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 9:03p.m. 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

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk