

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, June 1, 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; Trish Crego, Utility & Infrastructure Director; Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney

VISITORS: 175

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL**
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
5. **COMMUNICATIONS**
 - A. Correspondence 26-327 through 26-336 placed on file
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Rick Davis, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared that he does not approve of the location. He expressed concern about data centers causing temperatures to rise and additional environmental pollution concerns.

Karen Pionk, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project. She shared that he has trust in Council and expressed importance of economic growth.

Dave Chura, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project. He shared the importance of a high value commercial tax base and reshaping the community.

Chris Aepelbacher, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in support of comprehensive plan amendments. He shared that identifying where growth can occur allows the city to thoughtfully prepare for its future.

Carol Valentini, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in support of proposed data center project. She emphasized the use of modern-day technology that uses data centers. She shared the need for a townhall to allow for proper information to be shared and distributed.

Nate Wisehart, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of proposed data center project. He emphasized that the data center industry has vastly changed and is continuing to make advancements.

Sarah Yokel, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of proposed data center project. She expressed frustration that conversations with the community are not happening and not enough money going to the schools.

Peter Hafften, Solway Township, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He questioned Council regarding the effects on residents in regards to the utility extension and well water pollution from data centers.

Emma Richtman, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns about Councilors showing support for the YES MN organization and questioned their motivation for supporting the proposed data center.

Rebecca Gramdorf, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project and comprehensive plan amendment. She expressed frustration with language used in the amendment and location of the waterline development.

Nate Rickard, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project. He emphasized that the developer needs to come in to listen and have conversations with opposition and community.

Candi Mock, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns regarding the lack of trust and transparency with the current city Council. She asked Council to table the resolution amending the comprehensive plan.

JoAnne Bates, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared a message from a friend inspired by first nation the Lakota Tribe.

Tom Bates, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He sang a version of the song Convoy and emphasized to Council that the community needs answers.

Sarah Lofald, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared appreciation for the community and nationwide response in opposing hyper scale data centers.

Owen Lyons, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared with Council to not white wash information regarding the utility connection.

Alexis Scarbrough, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding threats that AI data centers can bring to the area.

Ed Marsman, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project. He shared his perspective as a retired educator, trusting the systems in place and looking forward to development.

Dave Thornton, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He stated that the decision is a huge responsibility and should be put to a referendum.

Nicole Karnowski, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project. She shared information learned from experts regarding safeguards in place for Hermantown and the Northland

John Klukkert, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared with Council that they are the last line of defense to protect Hermantown from Google and its data centers.

Ed Montgomery, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding lack of transparency and honesty with elected officials.

Molly Blomdahl, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared that Minnesota has already experienced a loss in projecting the boundary waters and to not let our fresh water be taken for profits.

Derek Strom, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He stated he will be filing a recall vote on all five Council members.

Jill Anderson, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concern that Hermantown residents should be properly represented by elected officials.

Irene Apane, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns and questions regarding utility connection, location being on native land, tax agreements, and lack of communication with the residents.

Tim Resberg, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concern that residents are not getting answers to their questions and brought them up to Council.

Ashley Anderson, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns about the environmental impact a data center would bring to northern Minnesota and Hermantown's wetlands.

Nick Rhinehart, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about concerns regarding development in Hermantown. He shared concerns about waiving set backs for projects and the lack of affordable housing in Hermantown.

Joycenne Busche Hoyem, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concern that Council is not listening to the residents of Hermantown and the community of the Northland.

Tom Hawley, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared that the data center should go to a public vote.

Jackie Dolentz, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared perceptions of Council members that are being formed and reinforced regarding their decision on the data center project.

Sasha Drayna, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding the process the project has followed and stated it should be put up to a public vote.

Rochelle Modean, Canosia Township, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared insight as someone who works with artificial intelligence and said the project should be put up to a public vote.

Clarissa Ek, Solway Township, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She read through documents that were released during data requests regarding project.

Julie Maruer, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns regarding the environmental impact and lack of communication with Council.

Adam Airis, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed frustration regarding how Council has been treating their constituents.

Miranda McKay Chambers, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared that there has to be another location for the project and suggested Council think about other development such as a library.

Gail Johnnejack, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared that Council should take a community survey to have a better understanding of why the community is against this and get a chance to be heard.

7. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of May 18, 2026 City Council Continuation Minutes
- B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from May 15, 2026 through May 31, 2026 in the amount of \$646,624.88

Motion to the 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

8. **RESOLUTIONS**

A. **2026-55 Resolution Approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Chapter 4 – Land Use, Chapter 6 – Transportation and Utilities and Chapter 7 – Implementation As Prepared By Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.**

(motion, roll call)

Mayor Boucher asked if the amendment obligates the city to build utility lines. Community Development Director Johnson explained that it does not but it allows for them to be constructed for any development project. Councilors Geissler and LeBlanc had comments about this not being a rezoning and dropping a 400-foot requirement, which City Administrator Mulder explained that a rezoning would be an ordinance change.

Sarah Lofald, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed resolution. She expressed concern regarding the language surrounding the amendments changing from when it was voted by Planning and Zoning. She requested Council table the resolution to get more input from the community.

Johnathan Thornton, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed resolution. He expressed concerns on how the steering committee was not consulted on changes made to the 2045 Comprehensive Plan in 2025. He stated that the plan was changed to match the needs of Google.

Peter Taylor, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed resolution. He shared he is not sure why this amendment is being voted on now versus waiting for a decision on the proposed data center and AUAR.

Nick Rhinehart, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed resolution. Asked Council to consider the fact that this did not pass through Planning and Zoning will full support.

Clarissa Ek, Solway Township, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed resolution. She shared emails between the city, WLSSD, and data center developer requesting an NDA be signed and proof of meeting in 2024. She expressed concern about not responding and being untruthful to long time residents about the data center project when they asked about it in 2025.

Councilor Geissler clarified that wells will be a part of the future permitting process and asked if there are any public meetings set for the summer. Economic Development Director Ronchetti confirmed the first meeting for June 24th regarding AUAR scenarios with a potential venue of the AAD Shrine meeting center. Councilor LeBlanc asked if the city will promote the events, which Assistant City Administrator Wicklund explained the city will to their part once the developer has it. Councilor Geissler clarified that the County Assessors value property no differently if it has city water versus a well or septic.

Motion to approve 2026-55 Resolution Approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Chapter 4 – Land Use, Chapter 6 – Transportation and Utilities and Chapter 7 – Implementation As Prepared By Hoisington Koepler Group, Inc. This motion, made by Councilor Hjelle 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: Nay

Yea: 4, Nay: 1

B. 2026-56 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver A Mediated Settlement Agreement And Release Of Claims Between The City Of Hermantown And Gilbertson, Et Al.

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-56 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver A Mediated Settlement Agreement And Release Of Claims Between The City Of Hermantown And Gilbertson, Et Al.. This motion, made by Councilor Geissler 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. **2026-57 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver A Mediated Settlement Agreement And Release Of Claims Between The City Of Hermantown And Nicole And Travis Anderson, Et Al.**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-57 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver A Mediated Settlement Agreement And Release Of Claims Between The City Of Hermantown And Nicole And Travis Anderson, Et Al.. 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

D. **2026-58 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Development Agreement With JLG Enterprises Of Hermantown, LLP For Peyton Acres Phase 4**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-58 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Development Agreement With JLG Enterprises Of Hermantown, LLP For Peyton Acres Phase 4. 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. **2026-59 Resolution Approving Wetland Replacement Plan For Peyton Acres, 39xx Stebner Road**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-59 Resolution Approving Wetland Replacement Plan For Peyton Acres, 39xx Stebner Road. 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

F. **2026-60 Resolution Approving Wetland Replacement Plan For Hawklane Business Park**

(motion, roll call)

Emma Richtman, Hermantown, MN – Asked questions regarding the project process and timing for wetland replacement plan applications. Questions were answered by Community Development Director Johnson.

Motion to approve 2026-60 Resolution Approving Wetland Replacement Plan For Hawklane Business Park. 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

G. **2026-61 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown**

From Hermantown Economic Development Authority For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-61 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Hermantown Economic Development Authority For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project. 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

H. 2026-62 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Dalstar Partners, L.L.P. For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-62 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Dalstar Partners, L.L.P. For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project. 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

I. 2026-63 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown

From Peace In Christ Lutheran Church For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-63 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Peace In Christ Lutheran Church For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail 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

J. 2026-64 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Joshua John Toms And Adrienne R. Ritchie Toms For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-64 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Joshua John Toms And Adrienne R. Ritchie Toms For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project. 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

K. 2026-65 Resolution Accepting Petition To Vacate Public Street And Setting Public Hearing

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-65 Resolution Accepting Petition To Vacate Public Street And Setting Public Hearing. 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

L. **2026-66 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 3 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$23,977.80**

(motion, roll call)

Councilor LeBlanc and Geissler asked how many benches have been purchased for memorial, which Director Johnson answered somewhere in the low teens.

Motion to approve 2026-66 Resolution Approving Change Order Number 3 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$23,977.80. 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

9. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 9:48 p.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