

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, July 20, 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; 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: 45

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL**
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
5. **COMMUNICATIONS**
 - A. Correspondence 26-409 through 26-493 placed on file
6. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. **Second Quarter Financials**
Kevin Orme, Director of Finance & Administration
(Pre-Agenda Only)
 - B. **CIP Presentation**
Kevin Orme, Director of Finance & Administration
(Pre-Agenda Only)
 - C. **Utility Maintenance/400 Foot Rule**
John Mulder, City Administrator & David Bolf, City Engineer
(Pre-Agenda Only)
7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tom Bates, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He urged Council that Google cannot be trusted as a neighbor and partner. He asked Council to slow down the approvals and take time to discuss what they have learned in the last few weeks.

JoAnne Bates, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns about Google's transparency and forever chemical leak risks affecting the environment. She urged Council to let residents vote on the issue.

Cindy Olson, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared stories from around the United States on the negative impacts of data centers. She shared concerns about Googles claims regarding economic impact and local jobs, which included the current shortage of local trades workers, use of non-local workers and housing that would need to be provided.

Karen Harmon, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed frustration that Council has not had open communication or discussion at a meeting with residents regarding the data center. She shared that it needs a different location.

John Munter, Warba, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared reports about job displacement and asked Council what jobs are at risk from the Hermantown Data Center by 2030, emphasizing that the data center will create job displacement.

Julie Pierce, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project as a representative of Minnesota Power. She shared insights regarding new customer benefits, local sales tax revenue on electricity and property tax revenue for new electric infrastructure that would benefit Hermantown.

Travis Drayna, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He spoke about statements made by Minnesota Power and went through electricity usage of the data center. He urged Council to get clarification regarding on-site temporary power from Google.

Jill Dryke, Solway, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared her concerns on how the proposed data center will affect her agricultural business. She spoke about the effects of data center noise on central nervous systems of humans and livestock urging Council to preserve the land for future generations.

Mickey Pearson, Duluth, MN – Spoke in support of Minnesota Power having Google as an investment customer. He shared information on climate goals set by state law that Minnesota Power needs to reach by 2040 regardless of having Google come to the area.

Dawn LaPointe, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She spoke about concerns with the city's Council and administration

accommodating Google through rezoning, NDAs, and revision of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. She spoke about negative impacts on Hermantown and urged Council to institute a moratorium on hyperscale data centers including this one.

Rick Davis, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. Spoke about a City controversy from 45 years ago regarding the police department. He emphasized to the Mayor that the data center will be his legacy over everything else. He expressed concerns for residents, the environment, and water contamination.

Cliff Davis, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared concerns about evolving technology leading to the Hermantown data center being obsolete in 5-10 years.

Kirk Ilenda, Superior, WI – Spoke in support of proposed data center project as a representative of Lakehead Constructors. He spoke about the need and benefits of construction projects in the state of Minnesota and the local work force in north eastern Minnesota.

Derek Strom, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concern regarding loss of jobs and Minnesota Power rates. He submitted and read a resolution for Council authorizing the community to receive compensation for property value loss and health protection due to the Google hyperscale data center.

Dennis Flynn, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared that they are unable to sell their home that is behind the arrowhead substation due to buyers concerns about what will happen with the data center.

Peter Taylor, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about recommendations for project design and mitigation plan of the proposed data center. He expressed that if Council is going to move forward they should work harder on the project design.

Rebecca Gramdorf, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns about air quality and AUAR not addressing a heat island. She urged Council to make sure the AUAR mitigation plan protects Hermantown.

Sarah Lofald, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about the Charter Commission. She shared what lead her to apply for the Hermantown Charter Commission and that the decision was not taken lightly. She spoke about how she wants to work towards an inclusive and transparent Hermantown.

Nate Rickard, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in support of the proposed data center project. He shared that there are union trades that support the project but don't want it to hurt Hermantown. He expressed belief in a way to work together and figuring it out.

Emma Richtman, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She urged Council that it is not too late to say no and to not let Google take advantage of Hermantown. She spoke about other states and cities that have enacted

moratoriums and other protections for residents against data centers. She questioned council about their decision approving ordinance 2025-10 in April of 2025. She shared that Council cannot let rural Hermantown become a memory.

Andrea Dingmann, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She discussed concerns about the data center.

8. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of July 6, 2026 City Council Continuation Minutes

B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from July 1, 2026 through July 15, 2026 in the amount of \$674,509.67

Motion to the approve the Consent Agenda. 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

9. **RESOLUTIONS**

A. **2026-84 Resolution Approving Insurance Coverage And City Does Not Waive The Monetary Limits On Municipal Tort Liability For The City Of Hermantown**
(motion, roll call)

Mayor Boucher asked if the monetary limit declination is something the City has to do annually to comply with state law, which City Administrator Mulder answered yes it does.

Karen Harmon, Hermantown, MN – Spoke about concerns for lack of information provided regarding the Cities new deductible. She expressed frustration that Council did not ask for a dollar figure regarding the rates. She asked if this coverage was put up for bid and how much the deductible change would be.

City Administrator Mulder explained the changes in insurance companies and bidding process.

Motion to approve 2026-84 Resolution Approving Insurance Coverage And City Does Not Waive The Monetary Limits On Municipal Tort Liability For The City Of

Hermantown. This motion, made by Councilor LeBlanc and seconded by Councilor Peterson, Carried.

Councilor John Geissler: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Abstain

Councilor Brian LeBlanc: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1

B. **2026-85 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Trustees Of The Diocese Of Minnesota, Inc For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-85 Resolution Authorizing And Directing Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Acceptance Of Easement Agreement To The City Of Hermantown From Trustees Of The Diocese Of Minnesota, Inc For The Hermantown Lightning Drive Improvements And Trail Project. 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

C. **2026-86 Resolution Approving A Request For Proposals For City Attorney Civil Services**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-86 Resolution Approving A Request For Proposals For City Attorney Civil 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

D. **2026-87 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 4 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$299,394.02**

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-87 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 4 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$299,394.02. 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

10. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 8:06 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