

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

City Council Meeting

Monday, August 17, 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; David Bolf, City Engineer; Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney

VISITORS: 161

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **CLOSED SESSION (4:30 p.m.)**

- 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 potential litigation. Following this closed session, the Hermantown City Council will re-convene in an open session.

(motion, roll call)

Motion to recess at 4:30 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 potential litigation. 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

Motion to reconvene into open sessions at 4:50 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

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

4. **ROLL CALL**

5. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

6. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence 26-582 through 26-597 placed on file

7. **PRESENTATIONS**

A. **Stebner Road**

David Bolf, City Engineer
(Pre-Agenda Only)

B. **Project & Community Engagement Update**

Google Representative(s)

8. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. **Minutes** - Approval or correction of August 3, 2026 City Council Continuation Minutes

B. **Accounts Payable** - Approve general city warrants from August 1, 2026 through August 15, 2026 in the amount of \$1,358,968.06

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. **ORDINANCES**

A. **2026-01 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 9, Of The Hermantown Code Of Ordinances By Amending Chapter 9, Utilities And Services**

(second reading)

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-01 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 9, Of The Hermantown Code Of Ordinances By Amending Chapter 9, Utilities And Services. 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

10. **RESOLUTIONS**

A. **2026-96 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 5 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$339,201.47**

(motion, roll call)

Councilor LeBlanc asked if there will be parking and access to trails on Stebner Road this fall. City Engineer Bolf responded that there is currently a gravel lot that will be paved by the end of October.

Motion to approve 2026-96 Resolution Approving Pay Request Number 5 For Keene Creek Trail Segment 4 Construction To Veit & Company In The Amount Of \$339,201.47. 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

B. 2026-97 Resolution Approving Final Plans And Specifications And Ordering Advertisement For Bids For The 2026 Construction Of Reinke Road Sanitary Sewer Extension In Section 22

(motion, roll call)

Councilor LeBlanc asked if there are any other situations similar to this in the City as he was under the impression that it is up to the developer to continue the pipe. City Engineer Bolf responded that there are two different scenarios where new pipe has gone in and the city requires developers extend it or give the city the funds to do so in the future.

Motion to approve 2026-97 Resolution Approving Final Plans And Specifications And Ordering Advertisement For Bids For The 2026 Construction Of Reinke Road Sanitary Sewer Extension In Section 22. 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: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

C. 2026-98 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Utility Service Agreement With Jarrod And Julia Rabey

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-98 Resolution Authorizing And Directing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute And Deliver Utility Service Agreement With Jarrod And Julia Rabey. 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. 2026-99 Removing Brandon Holmes As The Building Official Effective The End Of The Business Day On August 17, 2026

(motion, roll call)

Motion to approve 2026-99 Removing Brandon Holmes As The Building Official Effective The End Of The Business Day On August 17, 2026. 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: Abstain

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jackie Dolentz, Hermantown, MN – Read portions of the August 13th press release published by the Stop the Hermantown Data Center group. She expressed concern regarding comments made by city administrations and neutrality in the development process of the proposed hyperscale data center.

Tom Bates, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and asked if an EIS can still be done.

Rick Davis, Hermantown, MN – Expressed concern regarding comments made by city administration. He emphasized how everyone in the police department has been professional to work with.

Cliff Davis, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns about fraud and corruption related to data centers.

Jim Klukkert, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and addressed comments made about himself.

Rich Hilton, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. He shared information on measurement and regulation of sound caused by data centers.

Sarah Lofald, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. She shared frustration at the impact of NDAs, lack of an EIS, and previous drafted agreements.

JoAnne Bates, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and the AUAR not being sufficient.

Jeffery Donahue, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. He shared the difference between an AUAR and an EIS.

Alicia Navetta, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and the AUAR not being sufficient.

Candi Mock, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concern about the use of an AUAR and requested an EIS or 2-year moratorium.

Jim Phillips, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concern about the updated AUAR and requested an EIS or moratorium.

Sasha Drayna, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared a New York Times article about the unseen cost of AI data centers with Council.

Bob Kohlmeier, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He shared support for a 2-year moratorium and an EIS.

Derek Strom, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed frustration regarding comments made by city administration.

Rebecca Gramdorf, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns about vagueness and flexibility of an AUAR.

Peter Taylor, Hermantown, MN – Expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. He shared concerns regarding deficiency of the AUAR.

Heather McCarthy, Duluth, MN – Addressed comments made by city administration. She expressed that the comments will be used as a teaching moment for the community.

Clarissa Ek, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and the inadequacy of the AUAR.

Tim Resberg, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns about well water supply and the lack of a project labor agreement.

Amelia Cohoes, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration.

Barbara Opal, Duluth, MN – Expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration.

Kirk Deen, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration.

Jonathan Thornton, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. He shared the timeline of project loon and changes made to the Comprehensive Plan.

Michael Koppy, Hermantown, MN – Expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. He spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project.

Jill Dryke, Solway MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed frustration regarding comments made by city administration

David Krueger, Berkley, CA – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concern that continuing building AI may lead to a loss of control over their systems and humanity. He shared his first-hand experiences working as a professional in AI, and explained other researchers are trying to stop what they have built.

Gretchen Krueger, Cambridge, MA – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns about the dangers of AI and how rapidly it is evolving. She urged council to take a pause.

Nate Rickard, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in favor of the proposed data center project. He shared it will be good for skilled trades jobs and that Google should explain how this can be done without harm to the community.

Julie Ernst, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She shared concerns with evolving technology and requested an EIS be done. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration.

Meagan Elling, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and the updated AUAR.

Brea Schminski, Duluth, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. She expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration. She asked questions for Google that were unanswered at the last meeting.

Peter Haffen, Solway, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding comments made by city administration and potential road construction.

Travis Drayna, Hermantown, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He expressed concerns regarding traffic control and disruption of road construction.

Michael Tegefloff, Esko, MN – Spoke in opposition of the proposed data center project. He questioned the lack of support for the project and how it still moves forward.

12. **RECESS**

Motion to recess at 9:34 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: Yea

Councilor Joseph Peterson: Yea

Mayor Wayne Boucher: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Clerk