

City Council Meeting Proceedings
Tuesday, May 19, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting is officially called to order at 5:30 pm on May 19, 2026. This meeting is being presided over by Mayor Mike Lorenson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

The following Council members were present: Aarestad, Pream, McCraw, Arlt, Lorenson, Narverud and Pream. Bolduc was absent. Mayor Lorenson chaired the meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

Zehlans - Art & Wine Walk

Natasha Reiersen and Carol Ihle informed the council of their annual Art & Wine Walk event scheduled for June 18th. The event will be downtown showcasing 25+ businesses and over 30 local artists. The theme this year is "jungle."

Carol also noted hanging baskets are planned to be hung up the beginning of June.

Curtis Zoller - TRF Rentals

Curtis addressed the council regarding the proposed rental ordinance. He expressed concerns and requested the opportunity at the May 26 meeting to have a working group-style meeting where everyone can work collectively to ensure the ordinance is complete and covers all the needs of the city, renters and rental owners.

PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS/PUBLIC INFORMATION
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elizabeth Wilde (Visit TRF) - Film Ready Certification

Elizabeth reviewed the Film Ready Certification program with the council. She noted there is no cost to the city. Through an application process, this program would allow the city to be listed through Explore Minnesota as a location for potential movie/TV filming opportunity. After discussion, she asked the council to approve the following RCA in new business.

APPROVE AGENDA

Councilmember Pream motioned being seconded by Councilmember Aarestad to approve the agenda with the removal of 7.4 and 7.5 to New Business.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

RESOLUTION NO. 05.92.26: Approval of May 5, 2026 Council Proceedings

Presented as part of the Consent Agenda, Councilmember Jason Aarestad introduced RESOLUTION 05.92.26, being seconded by Councilmember Megan Arlt, that:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council to approve the May 5, 2026 Council Proceedings.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.93.26: Approval of City of Thief River Falls Bills and Disbursements

Presented as part of the Consent Agenda, Councilmember None introduced RESOLUTION 05.93.26, being seconded by Councilmember Megan Arlt, that:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council, to authorize payment of bills and disbursements in th total amount of 1,758,326.57. A printout of the approved payments and disbursements are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.94.26: Approve TRF Chamber of Commerce Beer in the Park Permit for LaFave Beach Park Bash

Presented as part of the Consent Agenda, Councilmember Jason Aarestad introduced RESOLUTION 05.94.26, being seconded by Councilmember Megan Arlt, that:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council to approve the Beer in the Park Permit for LaFave Beach Park Bash June 25, 2026.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION NO. 05.95.26: Approve Pennington County Fair Parade Application

Following discussion, Councilmember Jason Aarestad introduced Resolution 05.95.26, being seconded by Councilmember Scott Pream, that:

WHEREAS, The Pennington County Fair Board submitted the Parade Application for Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council to approve the Parade Application submitted by the Pennington County Fair Association with their \$20 payment made 4/29/2026.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed. Langness abstained.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.96.26: Approve Pennington County Fair Temporary Intoxicating Liquor License Applications

Following discussion, Councilmember Aarestad introduced Resolution 05.96.26, being

seconded by Councilmember Pream, that:

WHEREAS, The Pennington County Fair Board submitted a Temporary Intoxicating Liquor License Application for the Pennington County Fair July 15-19, 2026.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council to approve the Temporary Intoxicating Liquor License Application with the \$140 paid fee.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed. Langness abstained.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.97.26: Approve the City of Thief River Falls to be a film-ready certified through Explore Minnesota

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 05.97.26, being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED to authorize the City Administrator to create a film permit application for the City of Thief River Falls with a \$100 permit fee to be a film-ready certified city with Explore Minnesota.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.98.26: Authorize the City Administrator to proceed with finalization on the Energy Systems Group contract and financing.

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 05.98.26, being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

WHEREAS, The City of Thief River Falls has had a failing geo-thermal heating system at City Hall. The improvements to the building include replacing the heat pumps, installing a cooling tower and ventilation. It would also include replacing flat roof sections, sealing the facia, and window replacement.

Council members asked if there was any way to move City Hall staff to another building or buildings. ESG evaluated existing space. It was determined that remodeling other existing buildings would cost at or above estimated costs of this project.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED To authorize the City Administrator to proceed with selection of Energy Systems Group (ESG) as the City's qualified provider via Sourcewell as well as notices per MN statute; and finalization of ESG contract agreement and financing agreement.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.99.26: Approve contract for services from Flaherty & Hood PA to represent the City of Thief River Falls

Following discussion, Councilmember Megan Arlt introduced Resolution 05.99.26, being seconded by Councilmember Jason Aarestad, that:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED to authorize the City Administrator to enter into a contract with Flaherty & Hood PA to provide services to include reviewing the GLOBAL SPECTRUM, L.P. d/b/a Oak View Group OVG ("OVG") contract and relevant correspondence, claims, documents, and evidence, consulting with City staff, officials and members of the public, advising the City on its legal options under such contract, taking all actions necessary or convenient to protect the City's interests regarding such contract and the management and operation of the City-owned facilities subject thereto, and advocating for the City's interests as necessary and directed at an hourly rate range of \$215-270.

On vote being taken, the resolution was passed. Narverud and Pream voted nay.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.100.26: Approve the remote interface setup with Eaton

Following discussion, Councilmember Kelly Langness introduced Resolution 05.100.26, being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

WHEREAS, On February 17th, 2026 the Thief River Falls Council approved the removal of the Harris Smartworks software from our current process for reading and calculating utility bills. Eaton has to recreate the reading file to be sent to Tyler Technologies instead of Harris Smartworks.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED to authorize the City Administrator to execute the Eaton documentation to proceed with the remote interface setup for Electric.

On vote being taken, the resolution passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.101.26: 2026 Water Treatment Plant PAC and Intake Improvements

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 05.101.26, being seconded by Councilmember Michele McCraw, that:

WHEREAS, The City of Thief River Falls Water Systems Department has had the PAC and Intake rehabilitation projects in the CIP for several years. The Raw Water Intake was last upgraded in 1972, and the PAC feed room in 1983.

WHEREAS, Currently, the WTP receives Powder Activated Carbon in 50# bags, which are getting difficult to get bids on. The new system will accommodate the industry standard one ton super sacks. The raw Water Intake pumps are Jacuzzi brand that are no longer manufactured or supported, and the ventilation system is also outdated and inoperable. There is asbestos insulation on the interior walls that is deteriorating and need to be abated. The new electrical controls will be moved to an above ground precast building next to the intake structure.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Approve Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services advertising bids for the 2026 Water Treatment Plant improvement projects, with bids to be opened June 11th, 2026.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.102.26: Approve the Purchase of 6 Wireless Routers for Squad Vehicles

Following discussion, Councilmember Megan Arlt introduced Resolution 05.102.26, being seconded by Councilmember Jason Aarestad, that:

WHEREAS, With increasing technology in squad vehicles, 5G wireless routers are needed to support body cameras, laptops, and in-car cameras. These routers will reduce delays, upload failures, and current connectivity issues.

Verizon is currently offering an Equipment Incentive Credit (EIC), making this a cost-effective time to upgrade. The purchase also aligns with our transition to cloud-based camera software later this year.

WHEREAS, • Costs:

- o Router cost: \$899.10 each; Verizon EIC (\$730.00) reduces costs to \$170.00 per router
- o Total cost: \$1014.60 for 6 wireless routers, plus installation
- o Future savings of \$300-400.00 per laptop by eliminating built-in modems
- o Monthly service change: currently \$175.00 to \$180.00 per month

• Issues Addressed:

- o Supports wireless upload of video
- o Resolves existing connectivity challenges
- o Reduces delays and upload failures
- o Ensures readiness for upcoming system upgrades

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Approve the purchase of 6 Wireless Routers for our Squad Vehicles.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.103.26: Volunteer Firefighter Hiring

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 05.103.26, being seconded by Councilmember Michele McCraw, that:

WHEREAS, The Fire Department has had several recent retirements from its volunteer ranks. This hiring will bring them back to normal staffing levels.

WHEREAS, The Thief River Falls Fire Department is a combination department made up of seven full-time firefighters, and twenty-five volunteer firefighters. Due to recent retirements of volunteer firefighters, the Fire Department needs to fill vacant spots to keep adequate staffing levels for emergency response.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Approve the hiring of two new Volunteer Firefighters, Elliot Dahlen, and Cody Sather. Start date is effective June 1st, 2026, pending successful completion of background checks, drug tests, and physicals.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.104.26: Internal Posting of Assistant Fire Chief position.

Following discussion, Councilmember Steve Narverud introduced Resolution, 05.104.26 being seconded by Councilmember Jason Aarestad, that:

WHEREAS, Council previously approved the Assistant Chief position at the 5/20/25 council meeting. The position has been created in order to ensure succession planning, leadership, and a chain of command should the Chief be absent. It will be a Grade 7 position with a salary range of \$38.19-\$48.44. This will be a Teamsters #320 Firefighters position.

WHEREAS, This is an internal position only and not an additional employee.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED To approve the Internal Posting of the Assistant Fire Chief position.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.105.26: Conditional Use Permit Request - Dan Zemcik

Following discussion, Councilmember Jason Aarestad introduced Resolution 05.105.26, being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

WHEREAS, The proposed use is consistent with the comprehensive plan and allowed in the Central Business District (C-3) with a Conditional use Permit. Sec. 152.032 – Central Business District (C-3), 3. Conditional uses: d. Services: automobile sales, automobile service station and repair garage, on/off sale liquor establishments, printing, publishing, and wholesale outlets. At one time in the history of this property, it was used as a gas station and auto repair shop, so there is a history of an auto repair garage usage on this property.

WHEREAS, • Sec. 152.032.3.d of our zoning code requires a Conditional Use Permit to conduct an automotive service station and repair garage in the Central Business District (C-3) zoning district.

- At one time in the history of this property, it was used as a gas station and auto repair shop, so there is a history of an auto repair garage usage on this property.
- There is some concern about the potential lack of on-street parking by an adjacent business owner, but random observations have not shown 100% of the parking spaces on 2nd Street ever being full. And there is a Public Parking lot one block to the west on the corner of 2nd Street and Labree Ave.
- The eight criteria for granting a conditional use permit have been met.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Approve a Conditional Use Permit application by Dan Zemcik to operate an automotive repair shop at 102 2nd Street E, Thief River Falls, MN 56701 based upon meeting the eight criteria for granting a Conditional Use Permit. On street parking to obey Thief River Falls parking ordinances.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.106.25: Conditional Use Permit Request - Pennington Fast Lube

Following discussion, Councilmember Kelly Langness introduced Resolution 05.106.26, being seconded by Councilmember Jason Aarestad, that:

WHEREAS, The proposed use is consistent with the comprehensive plan and allowed in the Central Business District (C-3) with a Conditional use Permit. Sec. 152.032 – Central Business District (C-3), 3. Conditional uses: d. Services: automobile sales, automobile service station and repair garage, on/off sale liquor establishments, printing, publishing, and wholesale outlets.

This additional business will share space with the existing auto repair business.

WHEREAS, • Sec. 152.032.3.d of our zoning code requires a Conditional Use Permit to conduct an automobile sales business in the Central Business District (C-3) zoning district.

- The proposed use is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- The eight criteria for granting a conditional use permit have been met.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED Approve a Conditional Use Permit application by Jeffrey Wengeler to operate an automotive sales and rental business at 201 Main Avenue South, Thief River Falls, MN 56701 based upon meeting the eight criteria for granting a Conditional Use Permit.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 05.107.26: Elk's Park Water Fountain Repair

Following discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream introduced Resolution 05.107.26, being seconded by Councilmember Steve Narverud, that:

WHEREAS, The Fountain located at Elks Park has been rapidly deteriorating and needs major repair. The new proposed repair includes a 14' liner for an improved maintenance function.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED To approve work order estimate on repairing the water fountain at Elks Park for a total of \$2,395.00 with Dan Benoit.

On vote being taken, the resolution was unanimously passed.

COUNCIL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS REPORTS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- May 26 - Rental Ordinance Information Meeting at 5 pm in Council Chambers

- June 2 - City Council at 5:30 pm in Council Chambers
- June 3 - Planning & Zoning Commission at 5 pm in Council Chambers
- June 8 - Public Utilities Committee at 7 am in Room 101
- June 8 - Public Safety Committee at 4:30 pm in Room 101
- June 9 - Administrative Committee at 4:30 pm in Room 101
- June 10 - Public Works Committee at 4:30 pm in Room 101
- June 16 - City Council at 5:30 pm in Council Chambers

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Offices will be closed May 25 for Memorial Day. There will be no garbage pickup.
- City Hall Summer Hours begin Week of May 25. Hours: M-Th 7a-4:30pm and F 7a-noon.
- Garbage Bag Handout - June 1-5 from 7am-5pm at the Public Works Facility Building (1121 Atlantic Ave N). If you miss the handout, bags can be picked up at City Hall Utility Billing (call 681-4145 with any questions).
- Investment Summary
- Mayoral Update

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Councilmember Scott Pream motioned being seconded by Councilmember Kelly Langness to adjourn at 6:44 pm. On vote being taken, the Chair declared the motion unanimously carried.

Mike Lorenson

Attest: City Administrator Angela Philipp _____