

**Harris City Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 14, 2025**

- I. **Call to Order:** Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Everyone joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **Roll Call:** City Clerk Shannon Geier conducted roll call. Present were Mayor Randy Carlson, Councilmember Craig Moline, Councilmember Chell Borash, Councilmember Al Siedow, and Councilmember Garret Pearson. Geier announced that a quorum was present.
- IV. **Consent Agenda:**
  - Siedow made a motion to amend the Regular Agenda to add line item “M” - Bollig Task Order #3. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
  - Siedow made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 9, 2025, the Special Meeting Minutes of June 16, 2025, and Accounts Payable. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
- V. **Public Comment:** None.
- VI. **Regular Agenda:**
  - A. **Fire Department** – Fire Chief Drew Chapeau was present to review the written report. Total calls for the year are at 67. Moline inquired with Chapeau about their attempt to secure a fire service contract with Fish Lake, specifically asking what amount had been proposed. Chapeau explained that the requested price was \$18,000 per year, matching what North Branch currently charges Fish Lake Township for similar coverage. He added that he would maintain this rate, including medical calls, for at least the first couple of years. Fish Lake Township declined the offer.
    - Polaris Ranger - Polaris has offered to sell Harris a fully equipped 2025 Fire Ranger 6 h.p. sales model, complete with lights, a fire rescue skid, and a water tank, for \$20,000. Chapeau sought grant funding for the purchase but was unsuccessful, so he has started fundraising efforts. To date, \$8,000 has been collected. The intended uses for the vehicle include fire rescue operations, wildfire response, and participation in community events such as parades.

Meanwhile, the fire department currently has a fire rescue skid listed for sale. The mayor has suggested that, since public works needs this type of equipment, the skid be transferred to that department instead. There is ongoing discussion regarding how much money public works should transfer to the fire department in exchange for the skid.
    - FireCatt hose and ladder testing – Siedow made a motion to approve the hose and ladder testing, not to exceed \$3,200. Moline seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
    - Engine 2 maintenance check – Rouse presented an estimate from Emergency Apparatus Maintenance, Inc. for a complete emergency vehicle safety inspection and

full service for engine 2. Rouse advised that the brakes also need repairs because they have been “sticking.” Siedow made a motion to approve the inspection and maintenance for engine 2 as requested, not to exceed \$3,000. Borash seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- B. **2024 Audit Sara Oberloh** - Sara Oberloh attended the meeting to present the 2024 audit report. She noted that the audit received a clean opinion, with the sole exception being the lack of separation of duties, a standard remark for small cities, as achieving such separation would require eight to ten staff members, which is not feasible.

While reviewing the city’s assets and liabilities, Oberloh highlighted issues with certain funds, cash flow statements, and the levels of unassigned fund balances. The cash flow statements indicated that the water and sewer funds are low on cash and operating at a deficit. On the other hand, there is currently an excess of cash in the unassigned fund balance. Oberloh recommended maintaining an unassigned general fund balance equal to 50-75% of the next year’s budget, to safeguard against possible reductions in local government aid (LGA) or unpaid taxes. She cautioned that the funds received in December from LGA, taxes, and the Small Cities Assistance Program should not be counted in this calculation, as they pertain to the current year’s budget. The remaining unassigned funds, estimated to be around \$1.2 million, should be designated for future needs and allocated to improvement or project funds. Carlson agreed, adding that many of these set asides are required by the Public Facilities Authority (PFA).

In response to whether it is better to finance major purchases or pay cash, Oberloh advised first to develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). She emphasized the importance of formally documenting the plan, maintaining a consistent levy, and starting to set aside funds. A CIP, she explained, is fundamental to both budgeting and planning for a city. Unlike private businesses, a city cannot access additional resources and must strictly adhere to its budget, making it crucial not to spend money without a CIP in place.

- C. **Public Works** - Robert Pearson from Public Works brought several items to the council’s attention for action:

- He proposed hiring Andy Sutcliffe as a contract worker to assist with larger projects when necessary. Sutcliffe has his own liability insurance and charges \$35 per hour. Moline made a motion to approve hiring additional help as needed, with expenses not to exceed \$1,400. G. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
- Pearson recommended removing the footings at Railroad Park, which remain from the old potato scale house but are located on railroad property. Clerk will contact the railroad to obtain permission prior to removal.
- He requested to increase compensatory (comp) time to a maximum of 200 hours, with the ability to carry over this time for use in January and February, except during snow plowing. G. Pearson made a motion to approve this request, capping comp time at 200 hours. Borash seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- The roads at Oak Grove Cemetery require six loads of gravel, totaling approximately \$1,900. Siedow made a motion to approve the purchase. G. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
  - Pearson set the maximum offer for the fire department skid at \$1,200, noting this figure is generous since he estimates it may be worth less than \$600.
- D. **Trees on City property by 6805 Sunrise (by Doug Chaffe property)** – Chaffe originally wanted one tree trimmed and now he wants three trees removed before they fall on his garage. Public Works will confirm whose property the trees are on before anything is done.
- E. **Sheriff's Contract** – Siedow made a motion to approve an Agreement with Chisago County to provide Law Enforcement Services from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, at a cost of \$78.68 per hour for an average of 48 hours per month. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
- F. **Beaver trapping** – Calvin Stenberg traps beavers for Chisago County and charges \$200 for set up and \$100 for each beaver trapped. Pearson made a motion to hire Calvin Stenberg to trap beavers on 460<sup>th</sup> and Holman, with expenses not to exceed \$1,000. Siedow seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
- G. **Capital Improvement Plan Information** – Explains What a Capital Improvement Plan is and Why One is Needed.
- Siedow Parks Plan – Siedow highlighted the importance of enhancing local parks, mentioning the addition of a trail and picnic area at Schoolhouse Park, upgrades to Stark Field, and repairs to the shelter at Firemen's Park. He emphasized that both residents and newcomers deserve nice spaces and suggested developing a plan while seeking grant funding. Drawing on the success and growth of Harris Days since its inception, Siedow expressed his confidence in leading these improvements, provided there is clear direction, whether the objectives are for the next five or ten years. However, he noted a lack of backing from others. Meanwhile, Carlson argued that the focus should be on paving roads and expanding sewer and water infrastructure.
- Additionally, a community member attended to address safety concerns about parking at the ballfield, where vehicles parked on both sides of the road reduce it to a single lane and create hazardous conditions. The suggestion was made to install "no parking" signs on one side and "children at play" signs to encourage safer driving behavior in the area.
- H. **Parks -**
- Ballfield Gates – The two ballfield gates have been installed at a cost of \$300.
  - Ballfield culvert – Moline made a motion to approve the installation of drain tile from third base and across the road, not to exceed \$600. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
  - Concession stand – Pearson made a motion to approve the purchase of a chest freezer for the concession stand, not to exceed \$700. Borash seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- I. **AV for Council Chambers** – Carlson will get estimates and bring back next month.
- J. **Flagpole** – Pearson made a motion to approve Northland Custom Ironworks, Inc. to supply and install a 20-foot tall, three-inch pipe aluminum flagpole with base plate at City Hall, not to exceed \$1800. The City will install the footings. Moline seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
- K. **Budget workshop dates** – Budget workshop dates have been scheduled for Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.
- L. **The Fuse Lower Potency Edible retailer application** – Siedow made a motion to approve the Lower-Potency Edible retailer license for The Fuse contingent upon receipt of the application fee and Chisago County Sheriff's approval. Borash seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
- M. **Bollig Task Order #3** – Pearson made a motion to approve Task Order #3 for Bollig Engineering to provide City Planning Services on an interim basis while the current City Planner, Claire Stickler, is on maternity leave. Siedow seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

**VII. Staff/Department Reports:**

- A. **PeopleService Report** – Written report.
- B. **Clerk's Report** – Written report.
- C. **Treasurer Report** – None.
- D. **Mayor and Council Reports** – None.

- VIII. Adjourn:** Siedow made a motion to adjourn. Pearson seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. There being no further business, Mayor Carlson adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

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City Clerk – Shannon Geier

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Randy Carlson - Mayor

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Date Approved