

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

December 1, 2025

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Gary Tibbitts, Council Members Chris Dotzler, Jason Henke, Julie Miller, Justin Cartie

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Police Chief Colter Riedel, Fire Chief Brian Pisarek, Tami Jacobs, Scott Miller, John Heins, Todd Hagen – Ehlers

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Amended Minutes included in Consent Agenda for 11/17/2025 Minutes.
- Move Resolution No. 2025-12-01A Issuance, Sale, & Delivery GO Sewage Disposal Bonds after Mayor's Report.

A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were included in the consent agenda:

- Minutes – Regular Council Meeting 11/17/2025 (Amended)
- Accounts Payable
 - City
 - Liquor Store
- 25.10.21 PUC Minutes

A motion to approve the consent agenda with the amended Council Minutes was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC HEARING

- None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- Fish House Parade brought a great crowd to Aitkin. Thank you to the Chamber for the successful celebration.

Resolution No. 2025-12-01A Issuance, Sale, & Delivery GO Sewage Disposal Bonds

- Todd Hagen presented to the Council. The MN Credit Enhancement Rating resulted in S&P Global Ratings "AAA" and the underlying rating as S&P Global Ratings "A+" with Stable Outlook. The City has strong operations supportive of the current rating although the population is small and has lower income levels. The lowest bid was Baird from Milwaukee, Wisconsin at 3.6571%. The principal amount of the bond is \$2,915,000.00. After bid opening, the issue size was decreased by \$190,000.00 due to a reduction in the costs of issuance and the receipt of a premium bid. The closing date is scheduled for December 18, 2025.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-12-01A Issuance, Sale, & Delivery GO Sewage Disposal Bonds was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- Mayor Tibbitts called the Truth-in-Taxation Hearing to order at 6:30pm. City Administrator Thompson explained that the preliminary levy, set on September 15, 2025, was established at a 6.94% increase. Since then, staff has reviewed their department budgets in detail. The primary factor allowing for this adjustment was the recent confirmation of 2026 health insurance rates, which came in lower than the estimates used when preparing the preliminary budget. The proposed final levy increase is 5.18%, representing a \$107,576 increase over 2025. The increase in property taxes this year is mainly due to a change in the taconite homestead credit. The Minnesota Legislature approved a higher credit for taxes payable in 2025, but only for properties located on the Iron Range. The Legislature increased the taconite homestead credit but did not increase the supplemental taconite homestead credit (which applies to the city of Aitkin). As a result, this issue affects all homesteads in the Aitkin School District, Crosby-Ironton, and arts of the Grand Rapids area.

Mayor Tibbitts called for public comments. None were heard. No written comments had been received as of the time of the meeting. The Truth-in-Taxation Hearing was closed at 6:41 pm.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-12-01B Adoption of 2025 Final Tax Levy and Resolution No. 2025-12-01C Adoption of 2025 Final Tax Levy & Budget was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Chris Dotzler. Motion carried with all voting aye.

- Thank you to our Street Department and Police Department for all the help during the Fish House Parade.

OLD BUSINESS

- None.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Aitkin Police Department Biennial 2025 Body Camera Audit**
 - Rampart Audit LLC reviewed the Police Department’s policies, procedures and operations for compliance with Minnesota Statute 626.8473, which sets forth the requirements for creating and implementing a body-worn camera (BWC) program, and Minnesota Statute 13.825, which governs the operation of BWC programs. The Aitkin Police Department received a successful completion of the Biennial 2025 Body Camera Audit.

- **MOA – LELS PFML**

A motion to approve the MOA for LELS PFML was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Pay Application No. 1 – WWTF**

- Pay Application No. 1 in the amount of \$302,836.55 for the WWTF.

A motion to approve Pay Application No. 1 for the WWTF was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS

- None.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

- None.

PLANNING & ZONING

- None.

PARK COMMITTEE

- None.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

- None.

AIRPORT COMMISSION

- None.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- None.

EDA

- None.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

- John Heins wants to know what we are doing to try and attract new industry in this community. There has been shovel-ready land for 25 years. Is the City working with an Economic Development Company to try and bring in industry to create more jobs and housing in the future.
- Tami Jacobs with Growth Innovations stated that it took over 3 years for the 44-unit apartment complex that is being built now. The problem that Growth Innovation has right now is there are no incentives right now to move to Aitkin. There are no incentives for industries to move here. The City and the County need to put packages together to bring industries into Aitkin. Everyone needs to work together and be on the same page.
- Scott Miller stated that while the new Apartment Complex is great, they have a tax abatement and that will not help our tax base for the next 20 years. The only incentive to offer is tax abatement. There is not a lot of land to build new properties in City limits. Miller appreciates the Police, Street, and Fire Department but does not feel that he has a whole lot more than someone who lives in a township. The Council needs to expand the tax base. Annexation is the only immediate relief.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 pm was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

X 
 Gary Tibbitts
 Mayor

X 
 Jennifer Thompson
 City Administrator