

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

February 17, 2026

6:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Justin Cartie

ALSO PRESENT: Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, City Clerk Samantha Sass, Police Chief Colter Riedel, Kat Robb, Tami Jacobs, Troy Holcomb, Phil Martin

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Additions under New Business: Water Storage Improvements Pay Request No. 7

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 2/2/2026
- Accounts Payable
 - City
 - Liquor Store
- Financial Reports as of: 1/31/2026
- Special Event Permit; STAY: Run, Walk & Rally 8/1/2026
- Resolution No. 2026-02-17C Renew MMCU CD -0846

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC HEARING

- **Aitkin, MN 5-Yr CIP Utility Improvements Facility Plan**
 - Phil Martin with Bolton & Menk presented a five-year CIP for utility improvements. The plan includes five projects consisting of Air Park Drive sewer lining project, Ripple River siphon replacement project, Third St NW street and utility project, Second St NW and NE utility project and Minnesota Ave. S utility project. Martil went over the existing conditions of each project and provided estimated project costs along with potential funding sources.
- 1. **Opening:** The public hearing was called to order by the Mayor at 6:02 PM.
- 2. **Public Comments:** No comments from the public were heard.
- 3. **Closing:** The Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:34 PM.
- Resolution No. 2026-02-17A Adopting 5-Yr Utility Improvement Facility Plan & Authorize Submittal to MPCA

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-02-17A Adopting 5-Yr Utility Improvement Facility Plan & Authorize Submittal to MPCA was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

NEW BUSINESS

- Mayor Tibbitts read a Conflict-of-Interest Statement with no conflicts to be heard.
 - Resolution No. 2026-02-17B Adopting SCDP Citizen Participation Plan & Calling for Public Hearing
 - A public hearing to consider citizen input on the SCDP application will be held at the March 16, 2026 City Council Meeting.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-02-17B Adopting SCDP Citizen Participation Plan & Calling for Public hearing was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- Liquor Store Flooring Resurface Project
 - The proposed project includes resurfacing the main sales area flooring using a Flex-Coat poly system, as well as the repair and infill of damaged or broken tiles as needed to restore a durable, level surface for \$6,200.00. The liquor store would need to be closed on a Sunday and Monday to allow the flooring installation and curing process to be completed.

A motion to approve the \$6,200.00 quote from Janssen Painting & Service, LLC and authorize the closure of the Municipal Liquor Store to the public on Sunday and Monday to accommodate the flooring installation was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- WWTF Pay Application No. 3 - \$97,862.66
 - Pay Application No. 3 in the amount of \$97,862.66 for the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

A motion to approve Pay Application No. 3 for WWTF was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Update
 - Minnesota Department of Agriculture confirmed the presence of infested ash trees within the City of Aitkin by EAB. Once EAB populations begin building in a community, it typically takes 12-15 years to kill the majority of all mature ash trees that aren't being treated with insecticide.
 - The City was awarded \$314,000.00 from the Minnesota DNR 2025 ReLeaf Community Forestry Grant to assist city residents with the removal of ash trees located on private property. The primary focus of the grant is intended to provide cost-free or low-cost tree removals and replacements for private property owners, particularly low-income residents.

▪ Resolution No. 2026-02-17D Accepting Grant Funds & Authorizing Implementation

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-02-17D Accepting Grant Funds & Authorizing Implementation was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- COA & DPS Lease No. 12640
 - The Department of Public Safety (DPS), Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS), contacted the City of Aitkin and inquired about renting office space to be used as a DVS Driver Exam site one day per week (Fridays). The Park Committee reviewed the request and proposed lease agreement to rent the Community Room at the Fieldhouse to DPS every Friday for \$500.00/month. The lease agreement is for a one-year trial term. Rental fees will be credited to the 802 Park Fund.

A motion to approve Lease No. 12640 between the City of Aitkin and Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- Water Storage Improvements Pay Request No. 7
 - Pay Request No. 7 in the amount of \$250,277.50 for the Water Storage Improvements.

A motion to approve Pay Request No. 7 for Water Storage Improvements was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- Mayor Gary Tibbitts attended the PUC Meeting and noted the Water Tower project is right on schedule.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- Kaleb with Farmer's Cannabis Co. contacted the City Office and informed staff that they passed their inspection with the Minnesota Office of Cannabis Management (OCM). Kaleb shared that OCM representatives expressed that the City was the best OCM has seen and was pleased with the great communication and the smooth process between the City and Farmer's Cannabis Co. The City of Aitkin has set a high standard for OCM visits across the state.
- State Patrol has decided to go another direction. They will be billed for the month of storage that has already occurred.
- ICS has provided the City with a copy of the 2026 Board Book – April 2026 Referendum. A copy of the binder will be available for viewing at the City Administration Office.
- Annual Township Meeting with the Budget Committee is set for March 4, 2026 at 5:30PM at the Fire Department.

OLD BUSINESS

- None.

PUBLIC WORKS

- None.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

- None.

PLANNING & ZONING

- 2/18/2026 Mtg. Canceled

PARK COMMITTEE

- Draft Minutes; 2/10/2026 Mtg.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

- None.

AIRPORT COMMISSION

- None.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- None.

EDA

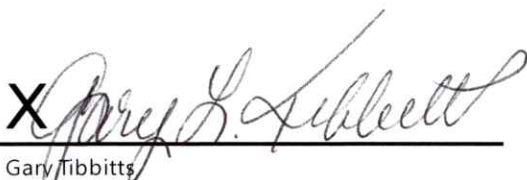
- None.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

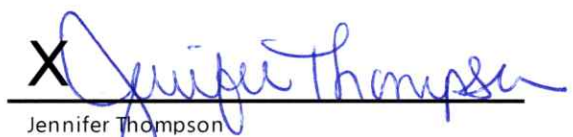
- None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 pm was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

X 

Gary Tibbitts
Mayor

X 

Jennifer Thompson
City Administrator