

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

March 16, 2026

6:00 p.m.

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Council Member Jason Henke

**ALSO PRESENT:** Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Police Chief Colter Riedel, Kat Robb, Stephanie Mollet, Phil Martin, Mike Hills

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- Addition: MOA Teamsters Police Chief Wage Adjustment

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The following items were included in the consent agenda:

- Minutes – Regular Council Meeting 3/2/2026
- Accounts Payable
  - City
  - Liquor Store
- Financial Reports as of: 2/28/2026

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

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- City of Aitkin 2026 Small Cities Development Program Application – Summary of Activities
  - The City of Aitkin submitted a preliminary proposal for the 2026 SCDP in November 2025 and has been invited to make a full application for a single purpose grant to provide funding for public facilities improvements. If awarded the funds would be utilized to assist with replacement of a siphon segment in the City's sanitary sewer system, that runs underneath the Ripple River. The project is expected to cost approximately \$1,581,340 and the maximum grant amount of \$600,000. The application must be submitted by April 15, 2026.
- 1. **Opening:** The public hearing was called to order by the Mayor at 6:01 PM.
- 2. **Public Comments:** No public comments were received.
- 3. **Closing:** A motion to close the Public Hearing at 6:08 PM was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

• Resolution No. 2026-03-16A A Resolution in Support of a Small Cities Development Program Project  
A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-03-16A A Resolution in Support of a Small Cities Development Program Project was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

- Mayor Gary Tibbitts, City Administrator Jen Thompson, City Clerk Samantha Sass, and Police Chief Colter Riedel presented to a Home-Schooling Group about City Government.

**ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

- Reminder: Next City Council Meeting is on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 due to the Easter Holiday.
- City Administrator Jen Thompson and City Clerk Samantha Sass attended City Day on the Hill on March 11, 2026. Thompson and Sass sat in on Committee Meetings at the Capitol. One of the topics that pertained to City Government was a conversation prohibiting municipalities from entering into Non-Disclosure Agreements.
- Three candidates were interviewed on March 10, 2026 for the Street Maintenance Worker position. A recommendation for hire is expected to be presented at the next Council meeting after some clarification is received.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Special Event Permit – Aitkin Chamber Riverboat Days 7/31/26 – 8/1/26**
  - Stephanie Mollet with the Aitkin Chamber presented that the Riverboat Days Event will honor veterans, active military, and first responders. Riverboat Days 2026 will proudly commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American Independence.

A motion to approve a Special Event Permit for the Aitkin Chamber Riverboat Days 7/31/26 – 8/1/26 was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Police Department Purchase; 2-Equipped Squads**

- Police Chief Riedel requested approval to purchase two new squad vehicles to replace aging units currently in the fleet. The Police Department previously received funding through the USDA Community Facilities Program. The program is not currently federally funded; however, staff remains hopeful that funding will become available again in the future. The two vehicles where replacement is recommended due to mileage, reliability, and increasing maintenance costs include Squad #181 and the 2015 Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk (current SRO Squad). Aitkin Motor Company has offered to purchase the two outgoing vehicles outright: 2018 Ford Police Interceptor at \$3,000 and the 2015 Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk at \$4,500. Total proceeds of \$7,500 would be deposited into the 404 Police Department Capital Account. Chief Riedel and the Budget Committee met on two occasions to review fleet needs, equipment options, and costs. Chief Riedel and the Budget Committee recommend purchasing two 2026 Ford Explorer Police Interceptors from Aitkin Motor Company and completing outfitting through Autosmith for a total purchase price of \$144,255.38.

A motion to approve the Police Department purchase of two 2026 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor squad vehicles from Aitkin Motor Company, with outfitting and installation by Autosmith, in addition to decals, radar, and camera systems, for a total cost of \$144,255.38 and authorizing the sale of Squad #181 (2018 Ford Police Interceptor) and the 2015 Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk to Aitkin Motor Company for \$7,500, with the proceeds to be deposited into the 404 Police Department Capital Fund was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

**PUBLIC WORKS**

- None.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE**

- None.

**PLANNING & ZONING**

- 3/18/2026 Mtg. Canceled

**PARK COMMITTEE**

- None.

**LIBRARY COMMITTEE**

- None.

**AIRPORT COMMISSION**

- Draft Minutes; 2/26/2026

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

- None.

**EDA**

- None.

**COMMENTS FROM VISITORS**

- None.

A motion to close the open meeting at 6:27 pm was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

**CLOSED MEETING**

- The Council closed the public session pursuant to discuss Labor Negotiation Strategy; Minnesota Statute 13D.03 and excused all members of the public.

A motion to re-open the meeting at 6:38 pm was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Teamsters (Supervisory) 2026-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement**


A motion to approve the Teamsters (Supervisory) 2026-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

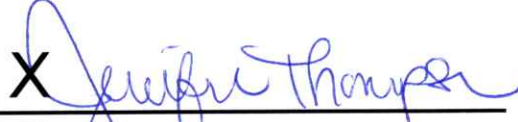
- **MOA Teamsters Police Chief Wage Adjustment**

A motion to approve the MOA Teamsters Police Chief Wage Adjustment was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

X   
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Gary Tobitts  
Mayor

X   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Thompson  
City Administrator