

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

April 20, 2026

6:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Chris Dotzler

ALSO PRESENT: Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Police Officer Daniel Merrill, Fire Chief Brian Pisarek, City Clerk Samantha Sass, Tami Jacobs, Kat Robb, Terry Betley, Doug Fark, Peter Rollinger, Aitkin County Assessor Mike Dangers, Attorney Joe Krueger (Virtual)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Additions:

- Advanced Acquisition – Nuisance Abatement Discussion first under New Business
- Special Event Permit – Moose Lodge/Sjaarda Benefit; 5/1/2026

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

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were included in the consent agenda:

- Minutes – Regular Council Meeting 4/7/2026
- Accounts Payable
 - City –
 - Liquor Store
- Financial Reports as of 3/31/2026
- Resolution No. 2026-04-20B Approving 2026 Election Judges
- Special Event Permit – Scotty Johnson Classic; 5/8/2026 – 5/10/2026

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

PUBLIC HEARING

- None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- Proclamation – Declaring May 13, 2026 City of Aitkin Arbor Day.
- Mayor Tibbitts, alongside other Mayors in the State of Minnesota, will be signing a letter regarding their growing concerns on the rollout of PFML written by Mayor Purfeerst of Crosslake, Minnesota.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- City Administrator Thompson visited the State Capitol on April 14 and attended the Capital Investment Committee Hearing for the transportation bonding funds. There is potential for additional funding for LRIP in the 2026 bonding bill, which the City's application was not awarded. The City provided a written letter that was included in the committee's packet.
- The Street Department Position has been posted with first round review of applications due by April 30, 2026 at noon.

OLD BUSINESS

- None.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Advanced Acquisition – Nuisance Abatement**
 - The City's Nuisance Attorney, Joe Krueger, updated the Council on the status of the hazardous buildings located at 768 and 780 4th St SE. The property owner's attorney had been in touch with Krueger and agreed to have the property cleaned, graded, filled, and seeded as necessary by June 30th. The Council asked for bi-weekly updates and for all the associated legal fees to be collected from the property owner.
- **Peter Rollinger – Protestors & Distracted Driving**
 - Peter Rollinger discussed his frustration with the weekly protests by the stoplight and the potential for distracted driving. The council explained that those gathered at the stoplight on Monday afternoons are expressing their First Amendment rights.

- **CBP Loan Application for Aitkin Motor**

- Aitkin Motor submitted an application for a Community Business Partnership (CBP) Loan in the amount of \$15,000.00 for replacing all the exterior tin on their building located at 19 5th St NE. The EDA met on April 16, 2026 and recommend the approval of the CBP Application for Aitkin Motor for \$15,000.00.

A motion to approve the CBP Loan Application for Aitkin Motor was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **SFL Application for Aitkin Motor**

- Aitkin Motor submitted an application for a Store Front Loan in the amount of \$15,000.00 for replacing all the exterior tin on their building located at 19 5th St NE. The EDA met on April 16, 2026 and recommend the approval of the SFL Application for Aitkin Motor for \$15,000.00.

A motion to approve the SFL Application for Aitkin Motor was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Board of Appeal/Presentation by Mike Dangers, Aitkin County Assessor**

- Aitkin County Assessor, Mike Dangers, presented the 2026 assessment summary, highlighting that apartment values had the largest increase this year with a portion of that value coming from the new apartment building on Bunker Hill Drive. Since last year, the residential homestead class share was reduced by 1% and the apartment share has increased by 1%. The Open Book Meeting for the City of Aitkin is scheduled for May 6, 2026 at the Aitkin County Government Center.
- **Resolution No. 2026-04-20A Transferring Local Board of Equalization Duties to the Aitkin Co. Board**
 - The Council could not renew the agreement with Aitkin County. This would require at least 1 Council Member be trained prior to February 1, 2027 and a Quorum is required for the Board of appeal and Equalization Meeting.
 - The Council could also choose between Option A – Three-Year Period for the years 2027, 2028, and 2029 or Option B – Ongoing/Permanent beginning with the 2027 assessment year.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-04-20A Transferring Local Board of Equalization Duties to the Aitkin Co. Board – Option B Ongoing / Permanent was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Liquor Store – Resignation of Employee #127**

- The City received a resignation from Part-Time Employee #127 at the Liquor Store.

A motion to accept the resignation of Employee #127 was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Liquor Store – Post Part-Time Liquor Store Clerk Position**

A motion to post a Part Time Liquor Store Clerk Position was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Ordinance 420: Amending Chapter 152: Zoning & Subdivisions of the City Code**

- **Ordinance 420: Summary for Publication**
 - The Planning Commission recommends amending language in Chapter 152 of the City Code. The amendments include defining Clinic and Office, Professional, and updates to the land matrix.

A motion to approve Ordinance 420: Amending Chapter 152: Zoning & Subdivisions of the City Code & Summary for Publication was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Justin Cartie. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Special Event Permit – Moose Lodge/Sjaarda Benefit; 5/1/2026**

- A Special Event Permit for the Sjaarda Benefit on 5/1/26 was submitted to acknowledge the extension of their liquor license to be outdoors the day of the event.

A motion to approve the Special Event Permit – Moose Lodge/Sjaarda Benefit was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS

- Draft Minutes; 4/13/2026 Mtg.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

- None.

PLANNING & ZONING

- None.

PARK COMMITTEE

- None.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

- None.

AIRPORT COMMISSION

- None.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- None.

EDA

- None.

TREE BOARD


- None.

COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

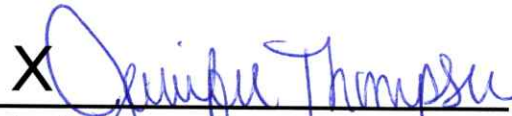
- Scott Miller thanked the Council for the support of the First Amendment. Miller expressed his desire for the Council to expand the footprint of the City of Aitkin in order to expand the tax base and hopes to start having those conversations soon.
- Street Supervisor, Lon Nicko reminded the Council that the County has reopened the free-of-charge yard waste drop-off site for the public.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 pm was made by Justin Cartie, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

X 

Gary Tobitts
Mayor

X 

Jennifer Thompson
City Administrator