# PARKERS PRAIRIE CITY COUNCIL
# REGULAR MEETING
# MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025 7:00 pm

## MEETING MINUTES

**Council Members in Attendance**: Mayor Kevin Birkholz, Council Members Glenn Cornish, Cody Mathues, Linda Martinson Bates, and Tony Woodworth.

**Others in Attendance:** City Administrator Beth Wussow, Police Chief Joey Rud, Fire Chief Carl Larson, City Attorney Tom Jacobson, David Drown Associates Financial Advisor Jason Murray, PartnerSHIP 4 Health Representative Patrick Hollister, Parkers Prairie Independent Managing Editor Jen Marquardt (by interactive technology).

**7:00 pm Pledge of Allegiance and Call to Order.**

**Meeting Agenda.** ***Motion was made by Woodworth*** to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Cornish and carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing: Creation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District #2-2.** Mayor Birkholz opened the public hearing at 7:01 pm. Hearing no comments from the public, the hearing was closed at 7:02 pm.

**Resolution #2025-28: Creation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District #2-2.** ***Motion was made by Cornish***, and seconded by Bates, to approve Resolution #2025-28. The motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution #2025-29: Approving a Contract for Development with CSNP Parkers Prairie LLC and Revering Group LLC.** ***Motion was made by Woodworth***, and seconded by Mathues, to approve Resolution #2025-29. The motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution #2025-30: Approving a Contract for Private Development with Blue Spruce Properties LLC.** ***Motion was made by Cornish***, and seconded by Mathues, to approve Resolution #2025-30. The motion carried unanimously.

**Patrick Hollister – PartnerSHIP 4 Health:** Hollister stated that he had been contacted by Jen Marquardt regarding concerns over the safety of the alley behind her property. A speed bump that had been in place for approximately nine years has recently been removed due to deterioration. Hollister discussed a MNDOT Planning Assistance Grant that is available. The grant would aid with planning safer alternative transportation routes in select locations in the City. While Hollister stated that the alley itself will likely not be a large enough project to warrant the grant, other areas within the City could be addressed at the same time with a City-wide plan. Wussow suggested that, due to the upcoming construction of new housing developments, the Council could identify other areas that could be added to the plan before submitting a grant application. Council directed Wussow to review the grant application to see what the time commitment will be, and the item will be revisited at the November Council meeting.

**Community Fund Committee: Event Center Remodel Plan Phase 1.** Councilmember Woodworth presented the Event Center remodel plans recommended by the Parkers Prairie Community Fund and stated that enough funding had been raised for Phase 1 of the project, which is approximately $91,000. Phase 1 includes new flooring, painting the ceiling and walls, removing the stage, and shifting the storage closet to the east. Improvements should be completed by January. If additional funds can be raised, phase 2 will consist of installing windows to let in natural light, and improvements to the building's exterior. Wussow mentioned, while the remodel project is exciting, the original plan had been to raise funds to create a maintenance fund for future repairs, and using up the entire amount on the remodel would not leave anything set aside for maintenance or repairs. ***Motion was made by Mathues*** to approve phase 1 of the Event Center remodel project. The motion was seconded by Bates and carried unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

- Council Meeting Minutes from September 15, 2025

- Resolution #2025-24 – Winter Sand & Salt Materials from Otter Tail County
- Resolution #2025-25 – Accepting Donations to the City
- Resolution #2025-26 – Approving Hazard Mitigation Grant Application
- LMCIT Annual Waiver Form
- Resolution #2025-27 – Traffic Marking from Otter Tail County

***Motion was made by Bates*** to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Woodworth and carried unanimously.

**Utility Rates for 2026.** Wussow stated that she spoke with City Engineer Jeremy Anderson about setting the rates with no increase for 2026. Staffing changes have resulted in slightly lower water and sewer operating costs, even with the increase in debt service payments. Anderson had stated that leaving the rates the same as 2025 may be okay for 2026, but the Council should keep in mind that a zero increase one year may mean greater increase in subsequent years. ***Motion was made by Mathues*** to keep the utility rates the same for 2026. The motion was seconded by Woodworth and carried unanimously.

**Police Department**. Chief Rud reported that there have been several critical incidents in the past month. One incident resulted more than 100 phone calls and text messages from residents – most occurring during the incident, which created unnecessary distractions for officers. Rud acknowledged that residents are curious and sometimes concerned about the incidents, but opined that a more effective source of information is the Smart911 app. Residents can sign up for the Smart911 app for free, and they will then receive alerts about weather or other safety concerns directly from Otter Tail County. Rud informed the Council that he is looking at the next lease contract for tasers from Axon, which will also include body camera equipment with transcription capabilities. The new equipment will save time and improve efficiency as reporting requirements continue to become more burdensome on Police departments everywhere.

**Fire Department.** Chief Larson reported that the Department had recently responded to a motorist fatality incident. The Department will host the Otter Tail County Fire Chief's meeting in Parkers Prairie on November 18th. An offer was received for the 1995 GMC 2,000-gallon tanker truck, which has been advertised for sale for nearly a year. Gavin Ahlbrecht, of Central Minnesota Utilities LLC, submitted an offer for $4,500. ***Motion was made by Woodworth***, and seconded by Mathues, to sell the 1995 GMC tanker to Gavin Ahlbrecht, Central Minnesota Utilities, for $4,500. The motion carried unanimously.

**Softball Field Use Agreement with Parkers Prairie Schools.** The school is considering making improvements to the softball field area, which may include a press box, concessions stand, and storage area. As the softball field is located within the City Park, the school proposed a 50- year Agreement for Use of the softball field. Attorney Jacobson stated that it is a good idea for an agreement to be in place, but some things should be added to the proposed agreement. Jacobson recommended working with Attorney Mike Cass on the agreement, to which the Council agreed.

**2026 Health Insurance Proposal.** Wussow stated PEIP health insurance premiums for single and family coverage increased 11.1% for 2026. The current city-paid benefit is $809.94/month for single coverage and $1,939.57/month for family coverage, which covers 94% and 85% of the single and family coverage premiums, respectively. Wussow presented the Union's proposal for health insurance coverage for 2026, which will keep the percentages the same. The City's portion will then be $896.82/month for single coverage and $2,165.02/month for family coverage. Mathues stated that the employees should keep in mind that insurance costs are unstable, and if Council approved the Union's offer the same benefit may not be possible in future years. ***Motion was made by Cornish*** to approve the Union's proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Bates and carried unanimously.

**MN Paid Family Medical Leave**. Attorney Jacobson provided a brief overview of the new Minnesota law that goes into effect January 1, 2026, and stated that most employers are opting for the 50%/50% cost share for employer/employee. Wussow stated she had researched private companies that provide state-approved equivalent insurance plans that offer a more cost-effective option, and found the ARCH Insurance plan, through the AT Group, which offers their plan at .82% of the employees' gross wages. The cost of the plan through the State is currently .88%, and while the savings are not large, Wussow opined that the service from ARCH, a company with experience dealing with paid-leave plans, may offer

superior service. The Union already agreed to the 50% employer/50% employee cost share. ***Motion was made by Woodworth*** to go with the private ARCH plan. The motion was seconded by Mathues and carried unanimously. ***Motion was made by Cornish*** to authorize the supplemental pay option to employees under the Minnesota Paid Leave Law. The motion was seconded by Bates and carried unanimously. ***Motion was made by Cornish***, and seconded by Woodworth, to update the personnel policy to reflect the above-mentioned changes. The motion carried unanimously.

**New Bank Account for the Economic Development Authority Revolving Loan Fund**. In September, the EDA/City was awarded a grant from USDA Rural Development in the amount of $81,300 to assist in the creation of a Revolving Loan Fund. A condition of the grant is that all Revolving Loan Fund transactions must be made through a separate bank account. The Economic Development Fund Checking Account balance is $27,841.44, of which $27,100 is set aside specifically for the Revolving Loan Fund. Wussow requested Council authorize opening a Revolving Loan Fund Checking Account, transferring $27,100 from the EDA Checking to the new account. $741.44 will remain in the EDA Checking Account for EDA expenses. ***Motion was made by Cornish***, and seconded by Bates, to permit the opening of the EDA Revolving Loan Fund account. The motion carried unanimously.

**Prairie Event Center Lease Agreement with Nate & Toni Reed.** The term of the current Lease Agreement with Nate & Toni Reed is from May 1, 2024, and runs through April 29, 2027 (2 years +364 days). Recent discussions about the remodel of the Event Center prompted discussions about next lease agreement. Wussow stated that improvements are a huge investment, both for the Community Fund/City and the Reeds. The Reeds have stated their desire for a longer lease agreement - possibly up to ten years. Attorney Jacobson recommended the City work again with Attorney Mike Cass on the next lease agreement. Council established a committee of Woodworth, Mathues, and Wussow, to work with Attorney Cass and the Reeds on the next lease agreement.

**Transfer of Local Board of Appeal & Equalization Duties to the County**. At the Council meeting held on May 19th, Council voted to discontinue the Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meetings at the City Level. Before this action can be taken, the Council is required to hold a public hearing to permit the public to speak. The public hearing is scheduled for the November 17th Council meeting.

**West Central Initiative Membership for 2026.** ***Motion was made by Bates*** to approve the annual WCI membership amount for 2026 for $640.00. The motion was seconded by Woodworth and carried unanimously.

**Disbursements.**

Payments in September 2025

- ACH Payments # 3207e through # 3217e (General Checking Account)
- Written Checks # 38353 through # 38398 (General Checking Account)
- Voided E-Check # 3218e – for $10,000 - Reason: payment was recorded twice

Payments in October 2025

- Written Checks # 38399 through # 38436 (General Checking Account)

***Motion was made by Mathues***, and seconded by Woodworth, to approve the disbursements. The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn.** ***Motion was made by Mathues*** to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Woodworth and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Wussow
City Administrator

Attest:

Kevin Birkholz
Mayor