

**City of Nashwauk
January 14, 2025
City Council Meeting**

Mayor Heyblom called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.
Mayor Heyblom led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Mayor Greg Heyblom, Councilor Sheila Jensen, Councilor Terry Sullivan, Councilor Tom Martire, Councilor David Bruns.

Also present: Administrator/Clerk April Kurtock, Police Chief Lee Longoria, Public Works & Utilities Lead Jason Martire, Attorney Andy Borland, Fire Chief Joe Martire.

Adoption of Agenda

*Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to adopt the agenda of the January 14, 2025, City Council Meeting, with the change of moving two items from the New Business agenda forward to address immediately after adopting the agenda, which were the resolution declaring vacancy in the position of city councilor and discussion regarding how the vacancy would be filled.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-01

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded Councilor Martire to approve Resolution 2025-01 Declaring a Vacancy in the position of City Councilor.

Roll call: Ayes—Councilor Martire, Councilor Jensen, Councilor Sullivan, Mayor Heyblom.

City Councilor Position

Mayor Heyblom stated that he wanted to fill the vacancy in the position of City Councilor with the next highest vote receiver from the November 5, 2024, General Election, which was David Bruns.

*Motion by Mayor Heyblom, seconded by Councilor Martire to appoint David Bruns to the vacant City Councilor position.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Mayor Heyblom swore David Bruns into the office of City Councilor, and he took the podium with the Council.

Reorganizational Meeting

Civil Attorney

*Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Bruns to appoint Sellman, Borland & Simon PLLC as City Attorney for civil matters.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Criminal Attorney

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Jensen to appoint John Dimich as the attorney for criminal prosecution.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Official Newspaper

Councilor Sullivan questioned appointing Scenic Range News Forum as the official newspaper because he was concerned about the coverage of the periodical and if it met the needs of the City to get information out. Council determined they would review it again later.

*Motion by Councilor Martire, seconded by Councilor Bruns to appoint Scenic Range News Forum as the official newspaper.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Depository

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Bruns to appoint Park State Bank as the official depository.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

City Insurance Agent

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Jensen to appoint Dynamic Insurance as the City insurance firm.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Engineering Firm

*Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to appoint JPJ Engineering as the City's engineering firm.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Council Meetings

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Jensen to set the meetings for the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 5:30 p.m.; however, rescheduling the November 11, 2025, City Council meeting to Monday, November 10, 2025, to accommodate the Veterans Day holiday.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Council Representative on NPUC

*Motion by Mayor Heyblom, seconded by Councilor Bruns to appoint Tom Martire to the Nashwauk Public Utilities Commission as the Council representative.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Nashwauk Public Utilities Commission

There were four applicants for three positions on the Nashwauk Public Utilities Commission. Two vacancies were from expired terms and one vacancy was from Tom Martire being appointed as the Council representative. Mayor Heyblom said he would prefer to appoint Michael Anderson and E. Milton Latvala and then let the Nashwauk Public Utilities Commission have input on how the other vacancy should be filled. Councilor Jensen questioned why the Council wouldn't appoint for all positions, as there were enough applicants to consider.

*Motion by Councilor Martire, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to appoint Michael Anderson, E. Milton Latvala to three-year terms, which will run from 1-1-2025 to 12-31-2027; further appointing Brian Ekholm to fill the remainder of a term, which will run from 1-1-2025 to 12-31-2026.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Police Commission

There was a vacancy on the Nashwauk Police Commission, which was a three-year term. There were no applicants.

East Itasca Joint Sewer Board

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Jensen to appoint Greg Heyblom as the Council representative on the East Itasca Joint Sewer Board.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Acting Mayor

*Motion by Mayor Heyblom, seconded by Councilor Martire to appoint David Bruns as acting Mayor to act in the absence of the mayor when he is not able to perform his official duties.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Assistant Weed

*Motion by Mayor Heyblom, seconded by Councilor Jensen to appoint Jason Martire as the Assistant Weed Inspector.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to appoint Sheila Jensen as the City's representative for the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to appoint Terry Sullivan as the alternative representative on the Western Mesabi Mine Planning Board.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Library Board

*Motion by Councilor Martire, seconded by Councilor Jensen to appoint David Bruns to the Library Board.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

RAMS Representative

*Motion by Councilor Heyblom, seconded by Councilor Bruns to appoint Sheila Jensen as a RAMS representative and Terry Sullivan as the alternate representative.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Personnel Committee

Mayor Heyblom asked for Council's feedback regarding the Personnel Committee. He says the Council used to address issues as a whole prior to having a Personnel Committee. He remarked that it used to be that way for the Negotiation Committee, too. Councilor Martire said it was always the full Council. Councilor Jensen questioned why it would be changed because things were working well. Mayor Heyblom said there had been issues with the negotiations. Councilor Jensen remarked that the issues were rare and having a committee versus the full Council was easier for scheduling because they didn't have to figure out dates that worked for a full Council.

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Jensen to appoint Greg Heyblom and Terry Sullivan to the Personnel Committee.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Fire Relief Association Board of Trustees

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to appoint Greg Heyblom and April Kurtock to serve on the Nashwauk Volunteer Fire Relief Association Board of Trustees.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Fire Department

Councilor Sullivan stated he had issues with the appointment of positions within the Fire Department. He stated according to the Fire Department's SOG document, it says the employees are already in the positions, as their selections take place January 1st. Sullivan said it was inappropriate for membership to be voting on positions, as he had read the League of Minnesota Cities memo regarding membership, promotions, and liability. He referenced an example of a fire department facing a discrimination case because they voted in membership and there were popularity vote issues. He said it puts the City in a situation of liability which is hard to defend in court because it is a popular vote.

Councilor Bruns asked Joe Martire about the process that was used by the fire department to determine this year's appointees; if the department took applications and held interviews. Martire stated that the department did call for applications and held interviews. Martire said the SOG document was approved by the League. Councilor Sullivan stated he highly doubted it was approved by the League. Councilor Bruns said that he had a conversation with the League's Troy Walsh, who reviewed the document. He stated he and then Councilor Heyblom had multiple meetings with the Fire Department membership to work through the document. Councilor Sullivan asked for clarification on how the selection process worked. Joe Martire said there is a form, interested people apply for positions, the department can review them, and the group comes up with the selection process. Martire said this is why people didn't apply for positions because of this kind of treatment. Councilor Sullivan read the process as stated in the Fire Department's SOG document. Councilor Tom Martire said that Councilor Sullivan didn't know the firefighters, so he wouldn't know how to appoint from within them. Councilor Sullivan contended that there are hiring committees that hire people all the time and they don't know those people personally, but hiring is still effectively completed. Councilor Sullivan said that the SOG document says if there is a tie in who gets a position, if one person is a veteran, the veteran gets preference and breaks the tie. He referenced that if the document says there is a tie, then that is a voting situation. Councilor Martire said that in the past the department chose their chief through a nomination process, but now it is an application process, and everyone has the opportunity to apply for any position.

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to appoint the following for the Fire Department:

1. Fire Chief: Joe Martire
2. 1st Assistant Chief: Robert Coughlin
3. 2nd Assistant Chief: Mark Marinaro
4. Training Officer: Kevin Bodin, Brenden Johnson
5. Secretary: Anthony Marinaro

Ayes: Councilor Bruns, Councilor Martire, Mayor Heyblom.

Nays: Councilor Sullivan.

Not voting: Councilor Jensen. Motion approved.

Notable Items

Itasca Economic Development Corporation

Dan Giles, from Itasca Economic Development Corporation, was present to give an update regarding the organization's 2025 goals. They have a reduced staff and have changed their focus. They are doing community outreach and are heavily involved in the energy transition efforts.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Brian Ekholm stated that he was the new president of the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Shelf, and he provided the Council with a list of board members and a request. He stated there are two office rooms in the basement area and the food shelf wanted access to them. They needed to be cleaned out. He also said that the City Hall garbage can is sometimes full and can't fit the Food Shelf's garbage. He requested the City put a larger garbage can at the building to accommodate their waste. Council asked how much more it would be to have a 2-yard dumpster at city hall versus the existing canister. Administrator/Clerk Kurtz said it would increase from \$26 a month to approximately \$70 a month. He stated that the Street Department has been doing a better job of removing snow from around the building. Ekholm said the Food Shelf wants better lighting in the bathroom, water needed to be put down the drain because it smelled like sewer, and the bathroom needed to be cleaned. Also, he said there was a recent food donation, and someone had left food outside the Food Shelf's door. He stated that the Food Shelf needed to be notified if that happened.

Ekholm said that if the Food Shelf didn't have the space within City Hall, they didn't think they would be able to continue providing the food shelf services. Councilor Sullivan asked if the food shelf was just serving just Nashwauk. Ekholm said the food shelf served people from Calumet, Goodland, Stingy Lake, Keewatin, and other areas. Their policy is that if people show up and say they need food, they provide them food. Councilor Sullivan asked if they solicit funds from other communities, as it was easy to continue asking Nashwauk for assistance because we're here. Ekholm said he didn't know if other communities have been asked for support in the past.

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to change the garbage at City Hall from a canister to a the two-yard dumpster.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Mayor Heyblom said regarding the bathroom that the city could provide paint for the bathroom, install an outlet for a light in the bathroom, and the street department could clean the bathroom. The Street Department could clean out the two offices and be used by the food shelf.

Approval of Consent Agenda

*Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- a. Approve the minutes of the December 23, 2024, City Council meeting.
- b. Approve claim register #1142025 Claim 1 in the amount of \$38,874.47.
- c. Approve claim register #1142025 Claim 2 in the amount of \$53,439.93.
- d. Approve April Kurtz to attend the LMC Loss Control workshop in Virginia, MN on April 22,

2025, Course fee \$20.00.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Unfinished Business

Small Cities Development Program

City Administrator/Clerk Kurtz stated that there were approximately 5 openings left for residential projects and 3 or 4 commercial projects within the Small Cities Development Program. A postcard would be circulated soon to remind people of the opportunity and encourage applications.

East Itasca Joint Sewer Board Update

Administrator/Clerk Kurtz said the Board will hold their reorganizational meeting in January.

Mesabi Metallics Update

Mayor Heyblom said there was no update regarding the appeal and amicus brief. He noted that there was a recent press release by Mesabi Metallics and the appeals court upheld the ruling that cancelled the Cleveland Cliff leases, which is a different issue than the amicus brief.

Public Safety Building Follow-up

Mayor Heyblom said he and Administrator/Clerk Kurtz met with ICS last Friday to discuss the services that ICS could provide regarding the proposed public safety building. ICS will provide a proposal for Council's consideration at the next meeting. Councilor Sullivan asked for a file on the project so that he can review and understand the history of the project.

Hazardous Conditions

Regarding the hazardous properties at 302 1st Street and 211 Central Avenue, Attorney Andy Borland said there is a hearing date of February 3, 2025, which will be a default hearing.

New Business

Resolution 2025-02 Gambling Permit

*Motion by Mayor Heyblom, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to approve Resolution 2025-02 Approving a Gambling Permit.

Ayes: Councilor Martire, Councilor Jensen, Councilor Sullivan, Mayor Heyblom.

Abstain: Councilor Bruns. Resolution approved.

Councilor Bruns noted that he abstained because the gambling permit was by request of the Spartan Booster Club, and he was the president of the club.

Criminal Legal Services

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Jensen to approve the contract with John Dimich, Attorney at Law, for a monthly fee of \$1,000.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Thrive Consulting LLC

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Bruns to approve the Professional Services Agreement with Thrive Consulting LLC.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Department & Committee Reports & Requests

Ambulance Service

EMT Resignations & Hire

*Motion Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Jensen to accept the resignation of Matthew Rice from the Nashwauk Ambulance Service effective December 31, 2024.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

*Motion by Councilor Martire, seconded by Councilor Jensen to accept the resignation of Cassidy Kampsula from the Nashwauk Ambulance Service effective January 23, 2025.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

*Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to approve the recommendation from EMS Coordinator Katie Foy to approve the hire Tisha Gayhart as a part-time EMT.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Fire Department

Review of 2024 Incidents

Fire Chief Martire shared the 2024 incidents. The department had 78 calls in 2024, which consisted of 10 structure fires, 6 wildland fires, 25 EMS assists, and 6 mutual aid calls. Councilor Jensen asked about the coverage area for the Fire Department. Councilor Sullivan asked for a breakdown of the location of the calls, and he asked about the fire department employees that live in the township. Sullivan stated he was curious about the locations of the calls because Nashwauk was paying for everything. Martire said he'd provide a breakdown and send it to the Administrator.

Councilor Sullivan asked about training records for the Fire Department. Fire Chief Martire said the first responder was completed every two years.

Councilor Sullivan questioned why the fire department did a separate Halloween party when the City was also holding a Halloween party at the Rec. Sullivan said it was not helpful to the student group that held a haunted house fundraiser at the Rec because there were less people there to participate in their fundraiser. Martire said he wasn't at the Fire Relief meeting when the group decided to hold a separate party and he said he wasn't involved. Councilor Sullivan asked that whoever approved it should come to the next meeting, as that should have been communicated to and approved by the Council. Councilor Bruns agreed that the Council should be approving the events. Fire Chief Martire said the ambulance was involved, too.

Fire Chief Martire said he wanted to circle back to the Fire Department SOG conversation. He said that the SOG was worked on with two members of the Council and the process of working on it was hell. He thought it was a resolved issue. Martire said that Sullivan was new to the Council and didn't know what had gone on before. Joe Martire announced that 2025 was his last year as chief and he would be working toward the transition to another chief.

Police Department

Police Chief Lee Longoria provided a review of 2024 calls for service. The department had 891 calls for service, but he stated that the calls would likely be around 1,200 for 2025 because the department was fully staffed, and they would be able to be more proactive and have more self-initiated calls for service.

Councilor Sullivan said he wanted a more comprehensive plan for the department. If the City wanted to fix those problems, like blight, he thought it needed to be addressed differently.

Street Department

Recommendation for Hire

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Jensen to approve the recommendation by Public Work & Utility Lead Jason Martire to hire Teegan Bodin as a rink attendant for the 2025 ice season; rate of pay \$15.00/hour.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Committees & Commissions

4th of July Committee

Councilor Bruns asked if anyone would want to serve on the 4th of July Committee. No member of Council committed.

Public Comment

Aryssa Sirjord, full-time EMT, was present. She said she had been working for the city for about 6 months now and wanted to introduce herself.

Mayor and Council Updates

Councilor Sullivan brought up cameras and stated he thinks there should be cameras in certain areas, like the Rec Center, City Hall, playground, street, front and back of safety complex. He said Paul Bunyan has cameras and security solutions. Councilor Bruns stated he wants the city to purchase some speed limit flashing signs.

Adjourn

*Motion by Councilor Jensen, seconded by Councilor Martire to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

City Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer