

City of Nashwauk
April 8, 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: Councilor David Bruns, Councilor Tom Martire, Councilor Sheila Jensen, Councilor Terry Sullivan, Mayor Greg Heyblom.

Also present: Administrator/Clerk April Kurtock, Police Chief Lee Longoria, Attorney Jackie Simon, Public Works & Utilities Lead Jason Martire, Fire Chief Rob Coughlin, Fire Secretary Anthony Marinaro.

Public Comment

Peggy Hagen was present and stated that the display within City Hall had been updated with new information and encouraged everyone to check it out. She also shared that there would be a Community Potluck this week and encouraged everyone to attend.

Adoption of Agenda

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Bruns to adopt the agenda of the April 8, 2025, City Council Meeting.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Notable Items

Vickie Harrington from the Beautification Committee stated that the benches that were purchased last year needed to be placed permanently and wanted to know if they could be placed on privately owned property if the property owner was agreeable to them being installed. The exact location of the proposed bench installation was not identified yet. Councilor Jensen requested a diagram or map of where the maps were proposed for installation and could not commit due to that information not being known. Jason Martire said there was no reason as to why the benches could not be placed on the grassy City lot along Central Avenue and placed with stakes so they could be removed when needed. Harrington also requested use of the Mesabi Metallics funds for a water tank so they could water flowers on the streets if they were to put hanging flower baskets back on the streetlights. Councilor Sullivan suggested getting the committee a golf cart to use while watering. Harrington asked about the brackets for the poles and if they had been ordered yet. Jason Martire said they were not ordered because a decision was not made last year. Mayor Heyblom asked for quotes for pole brackets for the next meeting. Harrington asked if the summer laborers could help with watering flowers and clean-up in the Veteran's Park. She said the Committee also wants to save the old police pavilion; boards need to be replaced and it needs to be painted. Mayor Heyblom said the painting has already been approved and the city needs to provide the paint. Jason Martire suggested it be a Day of Action project in June.

Approval of Consent Agenda

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to approve the consent agenda as follows:

a. Approve the minutes of the March 25, 2025, City Council meeting and minutes of the March 10, 2025, Special City Council meeting.

b. Approve claim register #482025 Claim 1 in the amount of \$112,799.44.

c. Approve claim register #482025 Claim 2 in the amount of \$9,991.67.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Councilor Sullivan asked about guidelines for purchasing without Council approval. He noted that he saw a claim in the last packet that was over \$1,000 and wanted to know the threshold for purchases. Councilor Martire said the threshold was \$1,000 unless it was an emergency. Councilor Jensen asked if department heads can make purchases that are within their budget.

Unfinished Business

Small Cities Development Program

Administrator/Clerk Kurtock shared that there are more residential applicants. However, the grant administrator Jessica Pellinen stated that she is struggling to get contractors to provide quotes on the projects.

East Itasca Joint Sewer Board Update

No update.

Public Safety Building Follow-up

Two proposed designs for the public safety building with corresponding cost estimates were within the packet. The cost estimates were between \$5.9 and \$6.9 million. Councilor Jensen questioned the next steps. Mayor Heyblom stated he did know but finding and securing funding was next. He further said the city didn't know if the project they did would be the public safety building, as it could be a city garage building or renovation of the high school. He noted that the School Board was getting an estimate for leaving the gym standing and reconfiguring the HVAC. Mayor Heyblom stated he would like to see the options first.

Councilor Martire said that the Fire Department had met and reconsidered the design, which would be a 3rd design option. Fire Chief Coughlin said he removed EMS from the building, as they could stay within the existing building. He said the 3rd design option should reduce the project cost.

Councilor Martire said that EMS could be in the building until the project was active because the project was a few years out. Mayor Heyblom said that the taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for EMS quarters in a new building for a service that will not be run by the city. Councilor Sullivan questioned the purpose of excluding EMS; Coughlin said it would save space and cost on the new project. Sullivan questioned why space was an issue for the FD because he was on the Council when the existing building was built, and the population was larger then and the department fought more fires back then. Sullivan said the city doesn't have the tax base to support the fire department to the level that they want to be at; furthering that the city with a population of 900 can't afford this project. Sullivan said if the city had to bond for \$3 million, the taxpayers in the new addition would be paying another \$800 a year. He suggested that the fire department downsize the amount of equipment it has. Coughlin said the project was likely going to take 7-8 years to secure funding, but the City Council needed to make up their minds on what they were going to do.

Councilor Martire said the whole point of getting the cost estimates was to move on and get funding. Councilor Bruns said that a new city garage is what is needed, which is how we got to this point. Jason Martire said a new city garage estimate was up to \$3.4 million. Councilor Sullivan questioned if the city garage could be built for cheaper. Councilor Jensen again asked what the next steps were. Mayor Heyblom stated grants and aid needed to be identified and applications submitted. Councilor Jensen asked again who does the work and what the next steps were. Administrator/Clerk Kurtock suggested securing a lobbyist who would have a sole focus on this project. Councilor Jensen wanted to know who secures the lobbyist. Councilor Sullivan pointed out that financial consultant Mike Bubany stated that

the city needed to make sure the community was supportive of the project before continuing. He questioned if the city was going to secure the funding before knowing if there is community support? It was suggested to talk with ICS about seeing what other cities have done.

Hazardous Building Follow-Up

Asbestos testing will be completed next week. An inquiry has been made to the bank regarding the 211 Central Avenue property. Councilor Martire asked if the property at 10 4th was on the blighted building list. It was confirmed it was not. Mayor Heyblom stated there should be others on the list. However, Councilor Jensen questioned addressing the 302 1st Street and 206 3rd Street because they didn't pose an immediate safety threat. Sullivan refuted and said they do pose a safety issue. Councilor Bruns stated he agreed with Jensen regarding prioritizing the 211 Central Avenue building, as it abutted city property. He asked why the bank can't be held accountable; Attorney Simon stated she researched it, and the city cannot pursue the bank.

Day of Action

Canvassing for Day of Action was held the previous day and there is one more session scheduled for later this week.

Unpaid Utility Bill

Mayor Heyblom requested that the unpaid utility bill for the 202 2nd Street be on the agenda. He asked that another engagement be attempted to try to collect the bill through our attorney. Councilor Bruns noted that looking at the parcel information, the Entrepreneur Fund is now listed as the property owner. The Council supported reconsidering the assessments and starting the process over for the public hearing required before adopting the assessment.

New Business

Ordinance 2025-01 Community Garden

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-01 an ordinance of the City of Nashwauk, Minnesota amending Nashwauk City Ordinances by adding Chapter 95 entitled "Community Garden."

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

Ordinance 2025-02 Cannabis Regulation

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-02 an ordinance of the City of Nashwauk, Minnesota amending Nashwauk City Ordinances by adding chapter 118 entitled "Cannabis Regulation."

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

Ordinance 2025-03 Garbage

*Motion by Councilor Martire, seconded by Councilor Sullivan to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-03 an ordinance of the City of Nashwauk, Minnesota amending Nashwauk City Ordinances by amending Chapter 50 entitled "Garbage;" sections 50.01 through 50.03 and adding sections 50.04 through 50.07.

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

Department & Committee Reports & Requests

Ambulance Service

Administrator/Clerk Kurtcock stated that the County had approved publication of the RFP early at their April 1, 2025, Board meeting.

EMT Hire

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to approve the recommendation from City Administrator/Clerk Kurtcock to hire Alexia Marx as a full-time EMT effective April 2, 2025.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Fire Department

Anthony Marinaro said the siren wasn't working and he was working with the Street Department regarding repairs.

Police Department

Chief Longoria stated the department was ramping up traffic enforcement. Also, now that calendar parking was expiring, the department would focus on blight enforcement.

Longoria shared that a girl scouts group had asked to do a public safety building tour and he'll be arranging that.

He noted that the new squad would be ready for use after graphics were applied.

Councilor Martire said the next best step regarding the ordinance for ATVs and snowmobiles was to change out the speed limit signs to align with what the ordinance stated.

Mayor Heyblom asked about vehicles parked on sidewalks; Longoria stated it needs to be enforced through the summer months, too. Mayor Heyblom said he would like to see notification to the residents regarding parking not being allowed on the sidewalks and that the ordinance would be enforced.

Street Department

Public Works & Utilities Lead Jason Martire stated that the plow trucks that were approved last year were not complete quotes, as they did not include the chassis. Chassis quotes were an additional \$60-80k each. Martire said he scrapped the idea of getting plow trucks and has asked Itasca County if they had any graders for sale. He confirmed that the County does have one for approximately \$37,500, which would be available to the City after the snow plowing season. Martire noted the need to keep a plow truck or some other vehicle for sanding, so he wanted to keep the sanding unit until it is no longer usable and then consider putting a sanding unit within a pickup truck.

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Jensen to rescind the motion to approve the purchase of the two previously approved plow trucks from Crysteel Truck Equipment.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

RV Park Electrical Issues

Public Works and Utility Lead Jason Martire said that two-thirds of the RV Park was out of electrical service. He had JK Mechanical & Electrical Contractors look at the park and they figured that there was a large surge at the end of the previous camping season that took out the majority of the electrical within

the park. It was not discovered until the park opened this year. JK Mechanical provided a quote for rewiring, meter, and panel upgrade in the amount of \$125,730.

*Motion by Councilor Martire, seconded by Councilor Bruns to approve the quote from JK Mechanical & Electrical Contractors for meter and panel upgrade with rewiring of the entire RV Park in the amount of \$125,730.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Jason Martire said that a lot of money has been invested in the city hall building and the boiler system needs to be replaced. Mayor Heyblom asked for cost estimates for a boiler system upgrade.

Mayor and Council Updates

Mayor Heyblom said the DNR determined that an environmental impact study is not required for Mesabi Metallica. He stated that the governor is in support of getting the project completed.

Councilor Bruns shared a 4th of July update and stated that more activities would be arranged. There will be activities at the Nashwauk pavilion.

Closed Session

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Martire to convene to a closed session as permitted by Minnesota Statute 13D.03 for the purpose of labor negotiation strategizing at 7:19 p.m.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

During the closed session the Council discussed the proposed AFSCME MOU related to the EMS Coordinator collective bargaining agreement.

*Motion by Councilor Bruns, seconded by Councilor Martire to convene from closed session at 7:57 p.m.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Council determined they would decline consideration of the proposed AFSCME MOU related to the EMS Coordinator collective bargaining agreement, which established successor language, binding any successors or assigns of the ambulance service to the terms and provisions of the agreement.

North Memorial Management Agreement

The Council reviewed a proposed interim management agreement with North Memorial Health Care, which had a term of approximately three months. The Council discussed the pros and cons of entering into the agreement versus having the Administrator/Clerk continue in an interim role as EMS Coordinator. Mayor Heyblom stated that the City has been very transparent for two years regarding its intent for the ambulance service. He indicated a preference in considering the management agreement because the EMS staff need to be provided with work-related guidance, especially since there are three brand new EMTs. Councilor Sullivan stated that the agreement protects our city because it provides resources and meets the needs for the EMTs. It is the responsibility of the City to provide good medical service to the PSA. Councilor Bruns said the management agreement is the best way to help employees.

*Motion by Councilor Sullivan, seconded by Councilor Bruns to approve an Interim Ambulance Services Management Agreement with North Memorial Health Care for approximately three months of services with a rate of \$4,160 per month.

Ayes: all present. Motion carried.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer