

# EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

October 27, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on October 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. for the regular City Council meeting at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT:           Ardie Anderson           Suzanne Erkel           Brian Mundle  
  Tim Miller                 Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT:             Matt Look, City Administrator  
  Jacob Saufley, City Attorney  
  Grace Gerard, City Planner  
  Jeff Cielocha, Fire Chief

## 1.0 Call to Order

The October 27, 2025, City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 7:00 p.m.

## 2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## 3.0 Adopt Agenda

**Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt tonight's agenda. Miller stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

## 4.0 Presentations and Public Hearings

### 4.0 A Anoka County Sheriff's Report

Lieutenant Derek Peters presented the September 2025 Sheriff's Report, stating the Sheriff's Department responded to 389 calls for service, 7 thefts, 13 assault reports, 45 arrests, 179 traffic stops, 38 traffic citations, and discussed a few notable calls from September.

Peters noted that ASCO and East Bethel Fire have responded to multiple water rescues on Coon Lake, primarily involving the community hunters. Peters urged anyone out there to wear life preservers, share their plans with others, and prepare for unexpected water immersions.

Peters encourages safe practices for all parents/guardians and trick-or-treaters, to use reflective or light-up gear to increase visibility on roads, inspect treats before consumption, and call 911 if any suspicious behavior is noticed.

**Informational; no action required.**

### 4.0 B Fire Department Monthly Report

Fire Chief Cielocha presented the September 2025 report and noted that they responded to 75 calls, of which 39 were medical, 18 good intent, and 3 fire-related calls. He stated that since the last meeting, they have implemented Duty Crew, and they have answered 8 calls so far that have not resulted in an all-call.

Cielocha noted that one of the calls the duty crew responded to was an EV car fire, and Deputy Chief Uden was able to jump into the engine and were able to keep the fire to an engine compartment fire and not allow it to get to the battery.

Cielocha discussed a few of the notable incidents that occurred during the month of September.

Cielocha noted that Fire Prevention was at the beginning of October, and they went to schools and interacted with over 400 students and staff, and had great participation and questions.

Cielocha noted that 200-300 people attended the open house, and they had a few different demonstrations for participation.

Cielocha stated that they are still looking for 3 more firefighters before the Academy in February.

Cielocha stated that 3 of their new firefighters completed EMR, and they will hopefully get them out on the trucks soon.

Erkel asked what the East Bethel Fire Department has that is better than other surrounding cities, which can help with recruitment. Cielocha stated that it will be driven by the job description that the City has.

Thanked Cielocha for putting together the duty crew and also thanked Peters for finding ways to tweak the system to help the City.

**Informational; no action required.**

#### **4.0 C Public Hearing: Ordinance No. 2025-07 - Liquor Consumption on City Property**

Look stated that at the 8/25/2025 Council Work Meeting, Council directed staff to prepare an ordinance change specifically allowing liquor consumption at the Senior/Community Center during reservations.

Look noted that in Minnesota, there are Statutes that place some limitations on a City Council's discretion regarding liquor consumption in a community center (or other "public facility").

Look discussed the State Statute that states, M.S. § 340A.414 ("Consumption and Display Permits"), "No business establishment or club which does not hold an on-sale intoxicating liquor license may directly or indirectly allow the consumption and display of alcoholic beverages... without first having obtained a permit from the commissioner." However, it also says: "Rental of a public facility does not make a subdivision or the facility a 'business establishment' for the purposes of this chapter." That suggests that simply renting a community center by itself doesn't trigger the "business establishment" rules of the statute.

Look stated that if the city wanted to allow unrestricted liquor consumption in the community center without obtaining any permit, that might conflict with § 340A.414's requirement for a consumption/display permit (if the activity constitutes "consumption and display of alcoholic beverages" by a "business establishment or club" without an on-sale license).

Look noted that the City Council still has power: municipalities can regulate more strictly than the state (but not less strictly) under § 340A.504(6) and other enabling statutes for local regulation. Nevertheless, if consumption/display occurs, the permit process (and local consent) may still apply, because § 340A.414 says the governing body (city/county) must approve the permit. Thus, the City Council has a role in approving.

Look stated that the attached suggestion to amend Section 6-64 of the City Code may allow Council to pass a resolution permitting on-site alcohol consumption with the prerequisite of obtaining a reservation agreement approved by the managing authority for the City-owned property (Seniors for the Senior/community center, Public Works Manager for the ice arena, or City parks, etc).

Erkel asked for clarification on what the reservations and the contract signed entail.

Anderson opened the public hearing at 7:19 p.m.

No comments received.

Anderson closed the public hearing at 7:19 p.m.

Saufley stated that the process the City uses to reserve the community spaces would not change. Saufley stated that what would be required as part of an application that would allow the sale and consumption of liquor in a City space would be looked at.

Look stated that this does open the City up to liability. Look asked if there is enough gain compared to the potential risk.

Erkel stated that other Community Centers allow people to have alcohol if they are renting rooms for events, but is not sure what they went through to get that.

Mundle asked if this would just be for the senior center, or would it open up the potential for alcohol on any City-owned property.

Look stated that, as it is currently written, it would be for any City-owned property.

Erkel noted that she is fine with it opening up for other places as well.

Anderson asked if this reservation form is something the City has. Look stated that the seniors run the reservations, so they would be permitting the seniors to put restrictions on sales.

Erkel stated that she had to get a one-day insurance policy in the past, and they do require the renters to get insurance.

Saufley noted that the ordinance is written in an agnostic sense that applies to everybody, so any group could come up and make an application. Saufley stated that he would be cautious in taking the approach of restricting certain groups, because they have to make decisions based on the merits of the application.

Saufley stated that if the intention is to restrict it to a particular public center rather than all City-owned buildings, then they need to be specific about that requirement.

Mundle noted that they have not had the conversation to allow alcohol at all City-owned properties, and this was brought forward mainly for the seniors at the Senior Center.

Mundle stated that if they pursue this, he thinks it needs to be pursued just for the Senior Center.

Erkel stated that she changed her mind and agrees with Mundle.

Look noted that he does not know if they can just limit this to the seniors.

Mundle asked if they could limit it just to the seniors.

Saufley stated that he would have to look into it because he is unsure if that is an avenue they want to go down as a City.

Erkel stated that the seniors would have oversight of insurance, applications, etc.

Saufley stated that he is not familiar with how the senior center is run daily, but can connect with City staff. Saufley noted that at some point, the City has oversight in approving applications for its spaces.

Mundle asked if the appropriate process at this point should be to table this item.

Anderson asked if they should table it or continue the public hearing to a later date.

Saufley noted that either can be done, and this public hearing was just for the ordinance changes that were presented tonight, but the ordinance might change in the future.

Anderson reopened the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

**Erkel stated I'll make a motion to continue the public hearing for Ordinance No. 2025-07, Liquor Consumption on City Property, until the November 24, 2025, City Council meeting. Miller stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

**Erkel stated I'll make a motion to table Ordinance No. 2025-07, Liquor Consumption on City Property until the November 24, 2025, City Council meeting. Miller stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

## **5.0 Public Forum**

No one appeared.

## **6.0 Consent Agenda**

Item A: Approve Bill List

Item B: Approve Meeting Minutes October 13, 2025 City Council Meeting

Item C: Hire of Seasonal Ice Arena Attendant

Item D: Continuation of Public Hearing: 4462 Channel Lane Easement Vacation to 11/10/2025

Item E: Fire Department of Job Descriptions

**Mundle stated I'll make a motion to approve Consent Agenda as presented. Erkel stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

## **7.0 New Business. Commission, Association, and Task Force Reports**

### **7.0 A Planning Commission**

None.

### **7.0 B Economic Development Authority**

None.

### **7.0 C Park Commission**

None.

## **8.0 Department Reports**

### **8.0 A Community Development**

#### **8.0 A.1 2025 System Statement for 2050 Comprehensive Plan Cycle**

Gerard stated that last month, the Met Council published the 2025 System Statement for East Bethel, which officially kicks off the planning cycle for the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

Gerard stated that the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, a state law first passed in 1976

and amended several times since, requires local governments in the seven-county Twin Cities area to prepare and adopt local comprehensive plans. The law specifies required plan elements. Cities are required to prepare and adopt the 2050 Comprehensive Plan by December 31, 2028. The City's Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed for substantial conformance with regional systems.

Gerard stated that by 2050, East Bethel's population is forecasted to increase by 3,614, resulting in a total of 15,400 residents. Of this, it is forecasted that 3,196 of those residents will be served by the Metropolitan Council's wastewater infrastructure. Staff has determined that this growth forecast is generally appropriate and does not plan to dispute it.

Gerard noted that East Bethel has received the community designations of "Rural Center" and "Diversified Rural". Gerard noted that the full description of those is included in the agenda packet.

Gerard stated that these community designations are consistent with the community designations assigned to the City during the 2040 Plan cycle.

Gerard noted that one difference between the 2040 and 2050 Community Designations map is that, in 2040, the entire Highway 65 corridor and area along the southern boundary of East Bethel extending to the East was designated as a rural center. This Southeastern portion of the Rural Center designation was disputed in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In the 2050 Community Designation, only the areas within the 2050 MUSA are designated as rural centers. All other areas are designated as Diversified Rural.

Staff has identified one error between the 2040 Plan and 2025 System Statement community designation, LTSA, and Regional Sanitary Sewer System maps in the northwest corner of the City and will bring this inconsistency up for correction with the Metropolitan Council.

Gerard noted that staff have determined that the community designations, LTSA, and 2050 MUSA are appropriate, though a discussion is planned with the Metropolitan Council to get further information on these changes and their implications on the 2050 Plan.

Gerard stated that with each comprehensive planning cycle, the Metropolitan Council determines a regional need for low-income housing and provides each jurisdiction with an affordable housing need allocation. The regional need for future affordable housing units from 2031-2040 is 39,700 new units. East Bethel's share of this number is 108 new units.

Gerard stated that to accommodate this, East Bethel's 2050 Comprehensive Plan is required to guide an adequate amount of land, using the Metropolitan Council's formula, that could be developed at densities that support affordability at less than 30%, 31-50%, and 51-60% Area Median Income.

Gerard noted that cities are not required to produce their share of the future affordable housing allocation but must guide land in a manner that could facilitate the development of the prescribed number of units.

Gerard stated that a 2023 update to the Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires all comprehensive plans to acknowledge statewide targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, include a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and identify climate mitigation and adaptation strategies within their community. The Metropolitan Council has provided guidance on acceptable strategies, and communities may decide which strategies are appropriate for them.

Gerard stated that planning staff will be meeting with the City's Metropolitan Council Sector Representative later this week to discuss the 2025 System Statement, resolve inconsistencies, and discuss requirements of the 2050 Plan. Planning staff will also be seeking more information on eligibility for a grant from the Metropolitan Council to assist with the cost of updating the Comprehensive Plan.

Gerard noted that staff anticipates formally beginning the process of drafting the 2050 Comprehensive Plan in early 2026. During this planning cycle, staff will engage residents, local businesses, and East Bethel's Council and Commission members in the planning process, seeking input and providing frequent updates on ongoing efforts.

Erkel asked how many of these changes are mandatory rather than optional. Gerard stated that the Met Council provides a checklist of things that are mandatory.

Erkel noted that she thinks the public needs to be involved with input, and asked what opportunities for input there will be. Gerard stated that it can be shaped by the City Council, and she is thinking of ways to work on community engagement starting in 2026 as well.

Mundle stated that for the 2040 plan, they had multiple meetings where they invited residents to see presentations and give feedback.

Look stated that changing the 2040 to 2050 will not be a huge change, but minor adjustments. Gerard stated that there are new requirements to consider.

#### **8.0 B Engineer Report**

None.

#### **8.0 C City Attorney**

None.

#### **8.0 D Finance**

None.

#### **8.0 E Public Works**

None.

#### **8.0 F Fire Department**

None.

#### **8.0 G City Administrator Report**

##### **8.0 G.1 Review of Facility Needs Study Proposals**

Look noted that the Council approved and directed Staff to start the process of soliciting Requests for Proposals for a facility needs study.

Look presented the summary of firms and costs associated with each respective proposal.

Look stated that this roadmap will allow staff to plan for upcoming expenses to existing facilities and determine if levy dollars are necessary to bank for future projects.

Erkel asked where this money is coming from. Look stated that they will have this money budgeted, and they have money banked for facility needs already, and they levy about \$50,000 a year for that.

Look noted that there would need to be a motion on this, whoever they choose, and the dollar amount.

**Erkel stated I'll make a motion to approve ICS Wold as the company to conduct the Facility Needs Study. Mundle stated I'll second.** Anderson asked any discussion?

Miller stated that it is ironic to be taking money from a possible future capital improvement need to get a study done to tell them what their capital improvement future needs will be, but he thinks it should be done.

Anderson noted that he has worked with ICS Wold, and a few of the other companies before, and they are all good, but thinks ICS Wold will be excellent for the City.

To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

#### **9.0 – Other Items**

##### **9.0 A Staff Report**

Look stated that staff were given direction to work with the seller of 1347 Sims Road, the seller decided to withdraw from working with the City, and the deal fell away. Look stated he received a call from the realtor that they would like to come back to the table and negotiate with the City.

Look noted that there will need to be a commercial appraisal done, and they will need a title commitment, a survey on the property, and it would be a cash deal to purchase the land.

Look asked if the Council is still favorable to pursue this or not.

Look stated that this is on the corner of the nexus where they are looking at the water treatment, wells, etc., going into the schools.

Smith asked what the price they were negotiating on the last time was. Look stated that he believes it was \$230,000, lower than the assessed value.

Saufley stated that they could go to a closed session to discuss the extent to which they intend to develop offers to purchase property.

Erkel noted that she is still interested in pursuing this forward. Miller agreed but noted they still have questions that need to be answered.

Smith asked if they are currently renting out the property or living in it. Look noted that they are trying to determine that, and the septic system may or may not be operational.

Look noted that the propane tanks are above ground, not in the ground.

Smith stated that he thinks they should pursue it through.

Look stated that the Senate Bonding Tour is coming tomorrow at 5:20 p.m. to the Sims and I-65 corner, and they will provide them with water samples and flyers on the project. Look noted that on November 13, 2025, there will be a House Bonding Tour.

#### **9.0 B Council Reports**

Erkel noted that she attended two airport meetings.

Erkel noted that this Friday is the Senior Halloween dance and will have a trunk-or-treat at 4:30 p.m.

Erkel reminded that the Fall Town Hall meeting will be on November 13, 2025.

Mundle wished everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

Miller noted that **we had a good parks meeting, major part of the discussion was involving the park fees, and what we are going to do to them, they have been sent to the parks commission, and look for some ideas from those guys. It's time East Bethel charges what we are supposed to charge. We are buffer between cities and the county and our properties are one of kind and hopefully they agree with the changes at the parks committee.**

Miller stated that he **had the privilege of doing a ride-along this week with the Anoka County Sheriff's office, touring our city. Thank you to Derek Peters. I have a new outlook on what they do at night around here. It was four hours of learning, it really was....and I did not have to sit in the back seat (laughter)...they do a lot...a lot of driving. That all I have.**

#### **10.0 Adjourn**

**Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Erkel stated I'll second.** To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Anderson asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*