

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

October 27, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on October 27, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. for the regular City Council Work meeting at City Hall.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Matt Look, City Administrator
 Jeff Cielocha, Fire Chief

1.0 – District Chiefs and Captains Discussion/Update

Fire Chief Cielocha noted that their officers, not including the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, serve 2-3 year terms, but recommended that they move away from terms and appoint 2 of their 3 officer levels, which are district chiefs, to captains for continuity of the officer board.

Cielocha stated that he recommends the lieutenant stay for a term so they can get a chance for upward mobility.

Erkel asked if they would be there indefinitely if they did not enforce the term limits. Cielocha noted that they would stay there until they no longer wanted to be there, retired, or faced some kind of disciplinary action.

Erkel stated that she believes Cielocha knows what his department needs most.

Mundle asked how long a captain stays in that position once it has been reached. Cielocha stated that the current members have been in those positions for multiple terms.

Mundle asked if there is the same opportunity for promoting or demoting. Cielocha noted that district chiefs and captains could request demotion if they wanted to go back to being firefighters.

Mundle asked if there had been feedback from the Fire Department. Cielocha noted that the Officer Corps is on board with it.

Erkel asked if the wrong person got to the position, how would it be handled. Cielocha stated that they have their disciplinary section in their policy and would address the issue.

Smith asked Anderson what his opinion is.

Anderson noted that they had terms in place since around 2018. Anderson noted that he agrees with Cielocha and the need to discuss leadership more heavily in the interview process.

Erkel asked if he would take into consideration what has been seen in their performance. Cielocha noted that it is the case.

Miller noted that he likes the idea and wants to support Cielocha.

Mundle asked if there a yearly reviews of officers. Cielocha stated that he would have to figure out if they would do them.

Cielocha stated that he is in favor of yearly reviews for all members of the Fire Department.

2.0 – Proposed Modification of Officer Core

Cielocha discussed the hierarchy of the fire Department and noted that the Officer Core change he is requesting is to have a captain at each station.

Cielocha noted that if they got enough people at Station 3, they could add a lieutenant there, but for right now, they are not there.

Mundle asked if he would have to come back before the City Council to open that lieutenant's role at Station 3. Cielocha noted that any Officer Core change he would bring back to the City Council so that everyone is on the same page.

Erkel asked for the pay difference between a lieutenant and a captain. Cielocha noted that he has those numbers at his desk and can send them to the Council.

Anderson asked about the Capstone report that put emphasis on leadership, and asked why there is no mention of leadership in the requirements anymore.

Cielocha stated that it was brought to his attention that the Basic Pumps Class is no longer offered in-house, so he replaced it with the Fire Apparatus Operator course.

Cielocha stated that Leadership 1, 2, and 3 are no longer offered, and there are many different routes they can take.

Cielocha stated that the certifications give them a good foundation to build off of, but that does not mean they stop there. Cielocha noted that he pushes his men to learn from men who are in the service, and there are lots of great leadership conferences outside of the Minnesota Fire Department.

Erkel asked if the classes were advertised to the firefighters and asked who paid for them. Cielocha noted that they do advertise, and if the firefighters request to attend, the Fire Department pays for them.

Mundle stated that he has no issues with the new captain position.

3.0 – Proposed Senior Firefighter Duty Officer Creation

Anderson noted that under position requirements, there is nothing really there, and there should be some kind of medical requirements. Cielocha noted that it was an oversight on his part.

Anderson asked for the differences between the Duty Officer and the Senior Firefighter and stated that he thinks that should be included in the document. Cielocha stated that he would like to table this item until he can bring a proper and corrected document before the Council.

Anderson noted that it does seem broad and needs a better description. Cielocha stated that he agrees.

Cielocha stated that the policy set forth would not change, and is also in the document before the Council.

Cielocha stated that before his arrival, the chief, deputy chief were on rotation to help answer calls from 1700 to 0500. Anderson clarified that the Chief was not in that rotation.

Cielocha proposed this senior firefighter duty officer program for those who are interested and meet the requirements to fill that role for a week and be compensated, and it stretches out the rotation.

Cielocha stated that it would fill a need with no financial impact. Cielocha stated that he does not anticipate it being a problem, just some questions arising.

Erkel asked about the schedule. Cielocha stated that officers rotate on a week-long basis, and it occurs on Monday night. Captain 1 takes the response vehicle from Monday night to Monday morning at 0500, and then it would rotate all the way through.

Erkel noted that this seems like a good idea. Cielocha noted that if it gets approved here, then they can bring it to everybody and see who is interested.

Cielocha stated that they work with their people to get coverage figured out in the case of a personal emergency arising.

4.0 – Short-Term Rental Ordinance (19520 West Tri-Oak Circle Northeast)

Look presented the staff report indicating that they do not have code for short-term rental properties and noted that there have been complaints regarding gatherings at the rental property at 19520 West Tri-Oak Circle Northeast.

Look stated that there are Health Department complaints that could exist, and inspections are needed for safety and wellness. Look asked if this is something the Council would like staff to look into further.

Look stated that if there are going to be ordinances that treat these properties as somewhat commercial business-like operations, and put some parameters around them to ensure safety as far as the structure is concerned.

Erkel stated that they have parking ordinances for not parking on the street overnight or towing vehicles that are parked on the lawn. Look noted that they may be parking on the street and right-of-way, but is unsure.

Mundle noted that the neighbors are entitled to quiet enjoyment of their property. Mundle asked if there was anything in their current rental ordinances that would apply to this property.

Look noted that nothing in their Code restricts rental properties from hosting gatherings. Look noted that it is hard to enforce complaints when there is no ordinance that prohibits it.

Erkel asked how big the lot is. Anderson noted that it is a lake lot and is 0.78 acres.

Look stated that a short-term rental ordinance probably would not prohibit this from happening, but could put some parameters on parking and things.

Mundle asked if there are two different issues they are trying to solve here. Look stated that short-term renters usually come in for a weekend, then leave, but long-term renters usually coexist in a neighborhood and may have more respect for neighbors compared to short-term renters.

Miller noted that they need to look out for their residents first and foremost.

Mundle asked if the Sheriff's department could handle some of this stuff. Mundle stated that if there is a way to curb this behavior so that it does not affect other VRBO renters, he would like to look into that.

Look stated that Gerard will look into the model ordinances other cities have. Mundle stated that he does not want the good renters to have to jump through so many hoops, if possible.

5.0 – Adjourn

Work Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.