

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

November 24, 2025

The East Bethel City Council met on November 24, 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
 Nate Ayshford, Public Works Director

1.0 – Park and Trail Dedication Discussion

Ayshford stated that in the spring of 2023, the Park Commission and City Council approved a change to the park dedication fees that set a fixed rate per lot in new developments. The current park dedication requires a 10% donation of land for parkland or park dedication fees in lieu of land equal to \$2,000 per lot in single-family developments and \$1,500 per unit for multi-family

Ayshford noted that at the September 22, 2025, City Council Work Meeting, the City Council discussed the need to raise the park dedication fees to an increase in single-family lot fees from \$2,000 to \$4,000. At the October 14, 2025, Park Commission meeting, the Commission revisited the fee amount and voted to recommend that the fee be increased to \$3,500. Any change to the park dedication fee can be reflected in the 2026 Fee Schedule. The addition of a trail dedication fee would require a code change and public hearing.

Ayshford noted that the Planning Commission also recommended the \$1,500 per unit trail dedication fee at their October 28, 2025, meeting.

Erkel stated that she knows trails are expensive, and she is surprised that they have not been monitored more since 2008, and that none of the new developments seem to have sidewalks. Ayshford noted that the only sidewalks that they required were Viking Preserve, Viking Meadows, and Elevage.

Erkel asked if the \$1,500 would be enough. Ayshford noted that \$1,500 would not be enough to build a trail, but they could build up a fund to build trails where they actually need them, and also make the cost reasonable to developers.

Miller stated that it is important that the City acknowledge that they are a buffer for the metro, and they need to not cut themselves short. Miller stated that they have seen the wonderful work the Parks Commission has been able to do with limited funds, but they need to start building up these funds so that they have something to work with when they need the money.

Erkel noted that she is all for this change, but just does not think it is enough, so that the taxpayers are not being used to supplement.

Miller asked if Ramsey is the highest. Ayshford stated in the area they are.

Ayshford stated that the Council can also require that developers construct the trails, per the City Code. Erkel stated that she thinks the developers would just choose to pay the \$1,500 over constructing the trail.

Miller asked for clarification on enforcing that the developers put in the trails and have them pay the \$1,500. Ayshford noted that they cannot be both, just one or the other.

Erkel asked if there is still a plan for Anoka County to connect all the cities to all the parks and river. Ayshford noted that they have a County-wide Master Trail Plan that is funded through the lottery money.

Ayshford noted that the North Regional Trail connects Lake George to Martin Lake Park.

Anderson clarified that trails also include sidewalks. Ayshford stated that it was correct.

Smith asked if, for the three developers who have been putting in the trails, there are any negatives for them. Ayshford noted that it is a benefit for the developments to have trails there.

The Commission agreed that they are in favor of going forward with the changes to the Park and Trail fees. Ayshford noted that they will draft a red-line ordinance, schedule a public hearing, and bring it back to the City Council for approval.

2.0 – Holding Tank Discussion

Look noted that Brad Slawson is in the process of renting out a portion of the building that has a failing septic system. Look stated that the options are to require a hookup to the City sewer and water, a holding tank for around \$10,000, which would be a temporary solution.

Look stated that to help out Mr. Slawson, they can install a temporary holding tank until a time when City sewer comes through, at which point he wants to hookup.

Miller asked what he is doing right now if the septic system is failing. Look stated that the septic system there was put in in the 1950s, and everyone is sure that if tested, it would fail.

Erkel clarified that the City would not be paying for the holding tank. Look noted that the installation of the holding tank would be a cost to the developer.

Look noted that the challenge is that when holding tanks are not pumped regularly, it becomes an issue. Look noted that he will find out if the holding tank is for all the buildings, or just his.

The Commission agreed that they have no problem with the holding tank.

3.0 – Fire Grant Opportunities

Cielocha outlined a few grant opportunities for the Fire Department. Cielocha noted that CenterPoint has a 50/50 match grant for equipment purchases every two years that they could potentially be in line for. Firefighters Charitable Foundation is continually open and is for purchasing equipment. AFG is a federal grant that the City has gotten before, and there have been updates since COVID, so he has been preparing to make sure they are ready for the next round when it opens.

Cielocha asked the Council if they want him to be chasing grants, and if so, how/how often they would like to be notified about them.

Look noted that there are easy and federal grants that are available. Look stated that some of the federal grants require hiring professionals to draft them.

Erkel stated that she is all for grants, but would like to make sure they are used for things they actually need, not frivolous wants.

Cielocha stated that there are some things that are in need of replacement/upgrading, so it would be wise to try and pursue grants for some of these purchases.

Miller stated that if there are needs that can be shown to them, they will work to make sure those needs are met.

Anderson stated that federal grants are great for big-ticket items, and they got one back in the early 2000s, but writing them is a technique, so Jerry Streich would be a great help.

4.0 – Officer Appointments

Cielocha stated that he would like the upper levels of the Office Core to be appointed and eliminate the 2-year term, which would provide security/continuity and upward mobility within the Department.

Erkel asked what happens at the end of the 2-year term. Cielocha noted that they would have to reapply and go back through the interview process.

Smith noted that he would be okay with extending the term to 4 years, rather than appointing them. Smith stated that the other guys coming up then do not lose their motivation to reach the upper-level positions.

Erkel stated that she thinks the 3/4 year term would be beneficial.

Anderson stated that he thinks that they should be staggered, so they are not all brought up all at once.

Cielocha noted that he asked the lieutenants to stay on for another year so that they could stagger them.

The Council agreed that they would like to see 3-4 year terms with staggering.

5.0 – Veteran Hunt Discussion

Look stated that the City of Anoka has Waterfalls for Warriors for Veterans to hunt as a thank you for their service, but Look noted that there is always more demand than there is supply.

Look stated that they have a firefighter, guide, and other people who are potentially interested in helping make this happen.

Look noted that they have a pond behind City Hall that is home to about 100,000 geese, and there might be a possibility to set up a blind there for this event.

Look stated that this would be an all-around thank you for Veterans if the City is interested in trying to get this set up.

Miller noted that these things fill up quickly, and it could be good PR to the City, but more so, a gift to these Veterans to get out in the field with other Veterans and even win a few things.

Erkel asked how many Veterans would be expected to show up. Look noted that there were 20-30 spots to be filled at the Anoka one.

Look noted that they currently have an ordinance that prohibits guns in City Parks except by permit, but there is an allowance for it, so they would just have to handle that.

Miller noted that he thinks it is a wonderful idea, and they should move forward with making the event happen.

6.0 – Adjourn

Work Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.