

# EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

January 12, 2026

The East Bethel City Council met on January 12, 2026, 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

## 2.0 – Garbage Haulers RFP Discussion

Look noted that he has friends at ACE who are here today to give a perspective on how this impacts cities and the laws that pertain to it.

Chris DeLaForest, former State Representative, stated that there is a law that governs all of this, and it is very complex. He noted that it is a very involved process that will take a lot of staff hours and money to accomplish.

Mr. DeLaForest noted that it is about 25-35 pages of dense legal contract, and noted that the City should take their time to make sure they can do it well, and know that it will be very controversial if they decide to do this.

Mr. DeLaForest noted that he has never seen a City implement this without having to hire additional FTE to deal with it, even the cities that are very enthusiastic about the change.

Dave Wiggins, ACE, noted that in Richfield, they have said they spend 40 hours a week with hauling issues, and there is more to it than meets the eye.

Mr. Wiggins discussed the details regarding what Ham Lake has done to manage its garbage service. He noted that the group of haulers got together and created the Ham Lake Haulers, and the city got divided up into zones.

Look stated that Ham Lake is paying a \$17 range per can, and checked with their City Administrator, and they noted that Ham Lake utilizes their score dollars to subsidize the recycling cost for residents.

Look stated that the City could use its score dollars in a similar way.

Mr. DeLaForest stated that there are a lot of factors that go into this, and to keep in mind that a lot of the costs the haulers bear 100% of are taken on by the City and spent out of the General Fund.

Smith asked what kind of weight the garbage trucks are. Mr. Wiggins noted that their sideloader dump trucks are around 60,000 lbs.

Mr. Wiggins stated that he did a study where they measured a bunch of tires, and found that a fully loaded garbage truck puts less weight on the road on a per square inch basis than a school bus.

Mr. Wiggins stated that the new Amazon battery-powered vans have drawn his attention, but he is unsure what it weighs.

Mr. DeLaForest stated that the trucks will be heavier on the roads because the same amount of trash still has to be taken out of East Bethel. He noted that the real enemy of the roads is the harsh climate here, which they have no control over.

Mr. DeLaForest also noted that he has never seen a city actually save on its road budget by making a change like this.

Mundle asked if the cities that have developed a 1 or 2 garbage supplier system, do they actually see cost savings in the monthly bill for the garbage service.

Mundle also asked how much of a cost they have seen for cities to put together a program like this.

Mr. Wiggins stated that they have seen that some people will pay more, some less, and some about the same, and currently, the City has 4 haulers.

Mr. Wiggins stated that Anoka estimated that they would add \$2 per home for the rate for the city's piece of it. Mr. DeLaForest noted that he would estimate the initial cost to be around \$40,000 on legal fees alone.

Mr. DeLaForest noted that the City would be taking on some increased level of responsibility with a change like this.

Mr. DeLaForest noted that there is more that goes into the choice of a hauler for residents besides only price.

Mundle asked what unique circumstances came to be for cities choosing to go into a limited hauler contract.

Mr. DeLaForest noted there are three reasons why cities usually want to look into the limited hauler option: savings on the road budget, too many garbage trucks on the road for safety concerns, and the belief that the government can negotiate a better price for residents.

Mr. DeLaForest stated that HaulersForChoice.com has lots of information online if people want to learn more.

Miller asked if they have any suggestions to help keep their roads looking new besides the morning pickups.

Mr. Wiggins noted that geographically, the City gets a benefit because it is further from the transfer station, so routes with full trucks are not being finished in the City.

Anderson noted that in his area, he has all the haulers, 5 days a week, and he cannot believe how different the rates are.

Mr. DeLaForest emphasizes that customers be smart shoppers, and if they do not think they are getting the right price, call and demand to be heard.

Mr. Wiggins stated that the Council makes sure to work through this because it will be their name on this if they decide to go this route.

Erkel asked how fines for putting the wrong things in the bins go into a monopoly like this. Mr. Wiggins noted that it would be written in the contracts, and the fine will come from the dump when the load comes to the recycling center, and then they must get paid for it.

Mundle noted that the City should look at making small changes before jumping into a large change like the limited hauler system. Mr. Wiggins and DeLaForest noted that they are both here to help and answer questions.

Anderson noted that he thinks they will need more information. Look noted they can add this back to a future work session.

## **1.0 – Tax Burden Video and Ideas**

Look presented the videos produced by Anoka County that provide an overview of the property tax system and the various factors that can impact what property owners pay each year.

Look noted that they had a discussion on how to take the tax burden off the residents.

Look stated that the cost of government increases 6% annually, and this Council had a 3.7% levy increase, so they have actually reduced in terms of the cost of government.

Look noted that the message needs to be that they are focusing on development in the corridor.

**2.0 – Garbage Haulers RFP Discussion**

This item was discussed prior to item 1.

**3.0 – Adjourn**

Work Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Submitted by:

Lilian Rokosz

*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*