CITY OF GRANT
MINUTES

DATE	**: September 1, 2026**
TIME STARTED	**: 6:30 p.m.**
TIME ENDED	**: 7:46 p.m.**
MEMBERS PRESENT	**: Councilmembers Cornett, Rog, Cremona, Anderson and Mayor Giefer**
MEMBERS ABSENT	**: None**

Staff members present: City Engineer Veronica Kubicek, City Attorney Amanda Johnson, and City Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer Lacey Smieja. Attending virtually: City Planner Jennifer Haskamp.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Giefer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC INPUT

George Connolly, 9860 Indigo Trail, addressed the council along with six neighbors to express concern regarding Resolution 2026-20, passed on July 7th, which authorized a feasibility study at a cost of $15,000 for Indigo Trail improvements. Mr. Connolly stated that the city engineer's characterization of neighborhood sentiment at the time was, in his view, incomplete, and that the majority of residents at a prior neighborhood meeting had not expressed strong support for a full street reconstruction. He respectfully requested that the council consider rescinding the motion, while affirming that the neighbors would participate fully in the upcoming process.

Jack Smith, 10244 67th Lane North, Indian Hills subdivision, raised concerns about a safety hazard at the intersection of 67th Street and 67th Lane, where overgrown brush along a retention pond has encroached into the roadway, limiting visibility and vehicle clearance. He also noted the location of a partially obscured fire hydrant and described the deteriorated condition of a double-pronged concrete culvert in the area. Mayor Giefer acknowledged Mr. Smith's concerns and indicated that city staff, including the roads department, were attentive and responsive, and encouraged Mr. Smith to share additional details directly with staff.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. August 2026 Bill List, $212,451.92 – *pg 1-3*
B. August 2026 Receipts, $73,437.28– *pg 4-9*
C. Allied Blacktop Company - check #17108, invoices 15167 and #15277 totaling $66,110 (amount included in Bill List above) – *pg 10-12*
D. August 4, 2026 City Council Work Session Minutes – *pg 13-14*
E. August 4, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes – *pg 15-24*

F. Approval of LG220 Exempt Gambling permit – Wildwood Lions Club Foundation, November 21 – *pg 25*
G. Resolution 2026-24: A Resolution Approving the Request for Conditional Use Permit for the Property Located at 11020 60th St. N – *pg 26-29*
H. Resolution 2026-25: A Resolution Approving a Variance from Side Yard Setback Standards to Construct an Attached Garage with a Second-story Addition at 6174 Inwood St. N – *pg 30-31*

Council Member Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Council Member Cremona seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

A. Draft Feasibility Study – 2027 Roadway Improvements – *City Engineer Kubicek*

City Engineer Veronica Kubicek presented the draft feasibility report for the 2027 roadway improvements, emphasizing that it remains in draft form and no resolution or approval was being sought at this time. She noted that the feasibility report covers four streets: McKusick Road North, Lofton Avenue North, Indigo Trail North, and Dellwood Road Court North. The latter two streets were added to the feasibility study at the July 7th council meeting.

Engineer Kubicek reviewed the funding structure for each street segment. McKusick Road and Lofton Avenue have three funding sources: contributions from the Stillwater Oaks development, the City, and special assessments, reflecting the regional nature of those roadways. Dellwood Road Court North and Indigo Trail North are funded through a combination of city and special assessment contributions.

The project schedule was outlined, with two virtual neighborhood meetings planned: September 9th for McKusick and Lofton residents, and September 10th for Indigo Trail and Dellwood Road Court North residents, both at 6:00 PM. The formal feasibility report would be presented for acceptance at the October council meeting. A first public hearing was noted for the November 10th council meeting — Administrator Smieja clarified the date, noting the originally mentioned November 3rd date was not possible as it falls on Election Day. If the project is ordered, design work would proceed through the winter, bids would be called for and opened in spring 2027, with a second public hearing in May to adopt assessments, and construction running from June through early fall 2027.

Council Member Anderson acknowledged the concerns raised by Indigo Trail residents during public input, reiterated that the council intends to gather community feedback through the neighborhood meetings before making any decisions, and confirmed that the project does not need to proceed as an all-or-nothing package — individual street segments can be evaluated separately. Mayor Giefer added that future notices would be sent in city envelopes, rather than the engineers envelopes, to avoid confusion.

No vote was taken; this item was informational only.

B. FINAL PLAT APPLICATION for the SRC Family Trust Subdivision and Draft Resolution 2026-26 – *City Planner Haskamp*

City Planner Jennifer Haskamp presented the final plat application for the SRC Family Trust Subdivision, describing it as a straightforward matter of confirming consistency with the preliminary plat approved approximately six weeks prior. The preliminary plat had consolidated three existing lots into two: a reconfigured Lot 1 of approximately 25 acres containing an existing home, and a vacant Lot 2 of approximately 48.49 acres. The final plat was confirmed to be a mirror image of the preliminary plat, with no material changes.

Conditions carried forward from the preliminary plat included the requirement that any future development of the vacant lot comply with all applicable standards and demonstrate primary and secondary septic system capacity. An agricultural fence certificate of compliance was noted as pending until the final plat is recorded.

Administrator Smieja confirmed with City Planner Haskamp that no public hearing is required for a final plat. The council proceeded to a roll call vote.

> **Motion to approve Resolution 2026-26 was made by Council Member Cremona and seconded by Council Member Cornett.** Upon roll call: Council Member Cremona – Aye; Council Member Anderson – Aye; Council Member Cornett – Aye; Council Member Rog – Aye; Mayor Giefer – Aye. **The motion carried 5-0.**

C. PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration for an application for a Preliminary Plat to create four lots and one outlot on the properties located at 9135 and 9215 Ideal Ave. N, and draft Resolution 2026-27 – *City Planner Haskamp*

City Planner Haskamp presented a preliminary plat application to subdivide two existing parcels at 9135 and 9215 Ideal Avenue North — a 10-acre and a 70-acre parcel — into four lots and one outlot, within the A-2 Rural Residential Agricultural zoning district.

The proposed configuration creates four lots ranging from approximately 15 to 33 acres. There is an existing home on the 10-acre lot as well as a home on the 70-acre lot with most of the lot being undeveloped with some agricultural use. The proposed lot density at approximately one dwelling unit per 20 acres was confirmed to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. All four lots have frontage on Ideal Avenue and would be served by private septic systems; septic testing has been completed for the two vacant lots, and a Washington County Environmental Services preliminary review is recommended as a condition prior to final plat approval.

Outlot A was identified as a wetland-covered remnant parcel along the west side of the roadway curve, separated from Lot 1 by road right-of-way and therefore designated as an outlot rather than merged with the lot. City Planner Haskamp noted that because there would be no homeowners association, the outlot's ownership and tax responsibility would need to be addressed as a condition of the final plat.

A key issue identified by staff is access to Lot 2, which has extensive wetland coverage along its road frontage. Current code does not permit shared driveways but does allow shared access. Staff recommended that a permanent shared access or shared driveway easement agreement between Lots 1 and 2 be established and recorded with the final plat to ensure perpetual access.
Council Member Anderson raised the concern of the outlot becoming "lost" and generating unresolved tax liability. Planner Haskamp indicated someone would have to take ownership of that outlot to avoid this issue and it would be a condition of the final plat. Council Member Anderson also confirmed that any driveway or other access would be formally recorded with the property.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Council Member Rog and seconded by Council Member Cremona. The motion carried unanimously.

Keith Morrison, 9270 Ivy Avenue North, asked whether future easements for utilities or roadways were contemplated as part of the subdivision.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Council Member Cornett and seconded by Council Member Rog. The motion carried unanimously.

Following the close of the public hearing, City Planner Haskamp addressed Mr. Morrison's question, clarifying that no new roadways are proposed. All lots have frontage on the existing public road but they will need to secure the access as discussed. Utility easements along shared lot lines and around wetland areas are identified on the plat. Wetland delineation areas establish the buffer and setback requirements but are not necessarily easements taken by the city.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-27, including staff's recommended conditions and the condition requiring the applicant to work with staff to identify a shared access solution for Lot 2, was made by Council Member Anderson and seconded by Council Member Cornett. Upon roll call: Council Member Rog – Aye; Council Member Cornett – Aye; Council Member Anderson – Aye; Council Member Cremona – Aye; Mayor Giefer – Aye. **The motion carried 5-0.**

D. PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of certain amendments to Chapter 32 Zoning related to existing lots of record, variance processes and procedures, and the Table of Uses in the City Code – *City Planner Haskamp*

City Planner Haskamp presented draft ordinance amendments addressing three distinct topics following several months of council workshops.

Existing Lots of Record / Undersized Lots
Amendments to both Chapter 30 (Subdivision) and Chapter 32 (Zoning) were proposed to resolve inconsistencies in how undersized and existing lots of record are defined, conveyed, and deemed buildable. Chapter 30 describes and/or regulates them in terms of conveyance, while Chapter 32 establishes the dimensional standards to determine buildability. The proposed changes reduce the current conflict between the sections and add clarification between platted and unplatted lots, when and how such lots are deemed buildable, and establishes new regulations as well as existing regulations that are applicable to the determination. The updated language requires that the original creation of any undersized lots of record be verified through some form of past official city action —

a recorded plat, resolution, or similar — and that it must have complied with the standards in place at the time of its creation. The April 21, 1961 reference date from the existing ordinance was retained for historical continuity.

A minimum of one acre of buildable area and the ability to support a primary and secondary septic drain field and any associated improvements is established for any lot to be conveyed and deemed buildable. For platted lots, the one-acre minimum applies, and lots below that threshold would require a variance to be considered buildable. For unplatted (metes and bounds) lots, a higher minimum of 2.5 acres applies before an exemption from the variance provision can be recognized; unplatted lots below 2.5 acres must go through the variance process regardless. In all cases, the one-acre buildable minimum applies as well as meeting the other dimensional standards in the ordinances.

The $100 fine for illegal lot conveyance, a provision dating to the 1960s, was also proposed for removal as it has not been enforced in modern times and is not a practical deterrent.

The contiguous lot provision — which previously required undersized lots to be combined with adjacent parcels if they were under common ownership — was proposed for removal. Staff explained that this provision has become increasingly difficult to enforce due to the use of separate LLCs — which have become much easier to create in the digital age — for individual lots and varying ownership structures.

Variance Process
The ordinance updates the variance criteria from the former "hardship" standard to "practical difficulties," consistent with a 2009 update to state statute. The revised language is drawn from the League of Minnesota Cities template ordinance and requires applicants to demonstrate: (1) the proposed use is reasonable and not otherwise permitted; (2) the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property, not created by the landowner; and (3) granting of the variance will not alter the essential character of the locality. Economic considerations alone cannot justify a variance. All three criteria — the 'three-prong test' — must be met.

Data Centers – Table of Uses
A definition for "data center" was added to Chapter 32, and data centers were explicitly listed as a prohibited use throughout the city, citing the absence of municipal utilities or the infrastructure to support the intensity of such uses.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Council Member Cremona and seconded by Council Member Anderson. The motion carried unanimously.

No members of the public — in person or online — came forward to speak.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Council Member Cremona and seconded by Council Member Anderson. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Giefer noted that the ordinance would be placed on the October agenda for a roll call vote, and that any members of the public wishing to provide comment prior to that vote may do so by contacting the council or staff directly. No additional public hearing would be held.

E. Preliminary budget, levy, truth in taxation hearing date and draft Resolution 2026-28 – *City Administrator Smieja*

City Administrator Smieja presented the proposed preliminary 2027 budget and levy following several prior work sessions. She noted that once the preliminary levy is set, it may be reduced but not increased before the December deadline.

Key components of the proposed budget include: contracted service increases for police and fire; estimated annual increases in fees and charges; additional planning fees in anticipation of the next comprehensive plan process; a two-year averaged cost for road maintenance (to smooth significant year-to-year variation in crack sealing and fog seal cycles); a $50,000 contribution toward a county road project (subject to further refinement); and approximately $66,000 set aside in the capital projects fund for city road improvements.

City Administrator Smieja noted that Grant had the 12th lowest local tax rate in Minnesota in 2024 — the most recently available data — at 10.33%, well below the next lowest peer city at 16%.
The council discussed the Truth in Taxation hearing timing. It was determined that the hearing would be held within the regular December council meeting at 6:30 PM, rather than as a separate earlier session, as past practice had in fact followed this format.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-28, establishing the preliminary 2027 budget of $2,577,266, a preliminary 2027 levy of $2,057,500, and setting the Truth in Taxation hearing date for 6:30pm on December 1, was made by Council Member Cremona and seconded by Council Member Rog. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Administrator Smieja noted that Jack's report was included in the council packet and that no significant items required discussion.

Council Member Rog asked if reinstating the Planning Commission was going to be discussed. Mayor Giefer indicating Administrator Smieja sent an email indicating the timing was not ideal to reinstate the Planning Commission.

Mayor Giefer then asked that Administrator Smieja follow up with roads staff regarding the culvert and brush concerns raised by Jack Smith during public input and noted that at least one culvert issue in that area may already be under review. Administrator Smieja indicated she will follow-up with Mr. Smith.

Mayor Giefer reported on his participation in the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Policy Committee. He noted that a special meeting with LMC senior intergovernmental relations staff was scheduled later in the week to address concerns that the league's draft policy positions do not adequately represent smaller member cities. Specific concerns raised included the Minnesota Starter Home Act, which contains density provisions, and the state cannabis mandate requiring cities to permit certain cannabis operations. Mayor Giefer stated his intent to advocate for policy language that would protect cities of Grant's size and expressed dissatisfaction with the LMC's response to date,

which had focused on minor statutory language changes rather than substantive protections for smaller cities.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council Member Cremona, seconded by Council Member Cornett to adjourn at 7:46 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

These minutes were considered and approved at the regular Council Meeting on October 6, 2026.

Lacey L. Smieja
Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer

Jeff Giefer
Mayor