

CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
DAKOTA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Held Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regular meeting of the City Council, City of Mendota Heights, Minnesota, was held at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights, Minnesota.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Levine called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Councilors Lorberbaum, Mazzitello, and Maczko, were also present. Councilor Paper was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council, the audience, and staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Levine presented the agenda for adoption. She requested to add an item to the agenda, Resolution No. 2026-16, Transferring City Funds to Support Independent School District 197 Community Food Support Operations.

Mayor Levine moved adoption of the agenda as amended.
Councilor Lorberbaum seconded the motion.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 1 (Mazzitello)

Mayor Levine noted the new item will be considered as Item 9C.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one from the public wished to be heard.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Levine presented the consent agenda and explained the procedure for discussion and approval. Councilor Lorberbaum moved approval of the consent agenda as presented, pulling item D.

- a. Approval of February 4, 2026, City Council Minutes
- b. Approve Resolution 2026-13 Accepting Donations to the City of Mendota Heights and the Mendota Heights Police Department
- c. Authorize Out of Metro Travel Request for SOTA Conference
- d. ~~Resolution 2026-14 Enter into Agreement with the Metropolitan Council for the 2023 Inflow and Infiltration Grant~~

- e. Authorize the Purchase of a Replacement Truck
- f. Approval of Claims List

Councilor Mazzitello seconded the motion.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

PULLED CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

D) RESOLUTION 2026-14 ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL FOR THE 2023 INFLOW AND INFILTRATION GRANT

Councilor Maczko referenced the work that was mentioned and the amount that was considered reimbursable. He asked for more information on the amount that is anticipated to be awarded.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie stated that the Metropolitan Council dedicated a certain amount of funds towards the grant for the noted period and explained that some expenses are reimbursable at 100 percent while others are only reimbursable at 50 percent. He stated that the Metropolitan Council then reviews the submissions by the cities during that period to determine the funds that will be awarded to each community.

Councilor Maczko asked if this funding is considered as an anticipated funding source or whether it simply replenishes funds that have been spent.

Assistant City Engineer Lucas Ritchie replied that the City does not include this in its funding sources for projects.

Councilor Maczko moved to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2026-14 ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL FOR THE 2023 INFLOW AND INFILTRATION GRANT.

Councilor Mazzitello seconded the motion.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

PRESENTATIONS

A) CITY COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson provided an overview of the City of Mendota Heights' communications efforts in 2025, including print, digital, and brand initiatives, and highlighted how these efforts support public engagement, transparency, and City Council strategic priorities.

Councilor Lorberbaum thanked staff for a job well-done and thank you.

Councilor Maczko thanked staff for their work and congratulated them on the awards that were received. He asked for more information on the *Mendota Heights Living* magazine.

Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson stated that it is a private magazine that the City does not have control over, and it is not distributed to all community members, but the City does use that platform for advertising to reach more residents.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson added that it is more of a real estate magazine that targets certain areas

Councilor Lorberbaum offered to bring a copy, noting that each copy features a Mendota Heights resident on the front page. She stated that anyone can reach out and request to be included or recommend a resident to be included.

Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson stated that the City has received critical feedback on the magazine, as some thought that the magazine was City-generated. She noted that the City logo and branding help to differentiate whether a publication is coming from the City.

Councilor Maczko appreciated surveys but noted that only 33 responses were received from this year's survey and therefore did not want to place too much significance on the priorities identified. He recognized that they can only use the feedback they receive from residents.

Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson recognized that it was a small group of people, but it is at level two feedback and recognized that some residents do not want to engage at that level.

Councilor Maczko commented on the high-quality communications and materials generated by City staff.

Councilor Mazzitello stated that when there is low participation in a survey/feedback, it typically means that the City is doing a great job.

Mayor Levine echoed the comments from the previous speakers and also thanked Town Square TV for the service it provides as a partner to the City.

PUBLIC HEARING

No items scheduled.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) RESOLUTION 2026-12 SPONSORING AN OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT FOR VALLEY PARK

Parks and Recreation/Assistant Public Works Director Meredith Lawrence provided background information and stated that the Council was being asked to approve Resolution 2026-12, sponsoring an outdoor recreation grant for Valley Park.

Councilor Lorberbaum moved to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2026-12 SPONSORING AN OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT FOR VALLEY PARK.

Councilor Mazzitello seconded the motion.

Further discussion: Councilor Maczko thanked staff for reaching out to TRAA and bringing in an additional partner to the grant process and project.

Mayor Levine commented that this is a great opportunity to look at the parks as a whole, as was the intent of the Parks Master Plan process. She also recognized TRAA and Dakota County as partners.

Ayes: 4
Nays: 0

B) MUNICIPAL CAMPUS PROJECT

1) Resolution 2026-15 Appointing Residents to the Municipal Campus Project Oversight Committee

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson provided a brief background on this item. The Council was being asked to consider adopting Resolution 2026-15, appointing residents to the Municipal Campus Project Oversight Committee.

Councilor Mazzitello moved to adopt RESOLUTION NO. 2026-15 APPOINTING RESIDENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CAMPUS PROJECT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

Councilor Lorberbaum seconded the motion.

Further discussion: Councilor Maczko commented that he was excited and encouraged to see the number of residents and new faces who were willing to participate in this process, recognizing that this is a large project for the City and its residents. He asked how they can keep the people who were not selected involved and engaged.

Councilor Mazzitello thanked staff and all those who applied to be on the Committee. He also thanked the other members of the Council who participated in the interviews. He noted that while he was unable to attend, he was able to provide his input and believed that those chosen would do a great job.

Councilor Lorberbaum commented that Mendota Heights is fortunate to have an abundance of engaged and skilled residents who are willing to serve their community.

Mayor Levine commented that everyone was highly qualified and it was an incredibly hard choice.

Ayes: 4
Nays: 0

2) ICS Project Update

Kristen Duerr, ICS, provided a project update, including the selection of a project architect.

C) RESOLUTION 2026-16 TRANSFERRING CITY FUNDS TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 197 COMMUNITY FOOD SUPPORT OPERATIONS

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson provided background information and stated that the Council was being asked to consider Resolution 2026-16, Transferring City Funds to Support Independent School District 197 Community Food Support Operations.

Councilor Maczko asked for more information on the contribution provided by West. St. Paul.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson replied that the City of West St. Paul is providing a grant to multiple school PTA organizations and 360 Communities on behalf of the early learning center in the amount of \$2,500 each, for a total of \$10,000.

Councilor Lorberbaum noted some blanks within the draft resolution.

Mayor Levine moved to approve RESOLUTION NO. 2026-16 TRANSFERRING CITY FUNDS TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 197 COMMUNITY FOOD SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000.

Councilor Lorberbaum seconded the motion.

Further discussion: Councilor Maczko stated that there was quite a bit of discussion about this during the workshop. He recognized that this is a different request as the City collects funds from taxpayers for identified purposes within the City budget. He stated that this could open up questions as to whether this is an action that residents were not informed about. He noted the contingency funds held by the City, recognizing that this could be classified as an emergency situation, but also wanted to ensure that the funds would be used as allocated. He stated that personally he could support this but recognizes that he is acting as a member of the Council. He recognized that staff have stated that the Council has the authority to do this but also recognizes that this is not personal money and is community money collected from residents. He did not believe that there were members who do not support the concept but may be unsure of whether this is a fiscally responsible thing to do. He stated that he would want to see guardrails added through conditions to ensure the funds will be spent as identified.

Councilor Maczko suggested the following amendment to the Resolution to include the following language following item one to state, with the following conditions: A) ISD 197 provides written acceptance of the funds and shall agree to administer and expend the funds lawfully, B) The City shall develop criteria governing the eligible use of the funds and provide criteria to ISD 197, C) define and document the process that will be used and how funds will be disbursed, D) ISD 197 shall notify the City when all funds are expended; and Item Two: the funds that are allocated be distributed to schools within the district that were not included in the appropriation made by the City of West St. Paul.

Councilor Mazzitello asked if the conditions would need to be met before the funds are transferred.

Councilor Maczko confirmed he would like those conditions met before the funds are transferred.

Mayor Levine and Councilor Lorberbaum agreed to the amendment.

Councilor Lorberbaum asked for information on the process that would be involved for notification, whether that would be to the staff or the Council.

Mayor Levine asked and received confirmation that staff can act in the liaison role.

Councilor Maczko reiterated his conditions as proposed and noted that staff could be provided with that information to release the funds once the information has been provided. He clarified that the notification is not of which families receive the funding, but when the funding is exhausted.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson asked if the Council would support a first come first serve method of disbursement, or whether Councilor Maczko would want to see income and/or address verification.

Councilor Maczko replied that he would support whatever criteria the schools use, noting that there would not have to be a criterion for the recipient to be a resident of Mendota Heights, but a student or family of the school.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson clarified that this is not an ISD 197 program and, therefore, they will use the criteria desired by the City. She stated that there are teachers and residents purchasing and delivering supplies to those in the community who have been impacted by ICE actions. She suggested that the criteria be a need for food support. She noted that much of this data is private and therefore would not be provided.

Councilor Maczko explained that he needs information on how the funds will be used and something showing that the funds have been used as requested.

Mayor Levine stated that the criteria could be as simple as a need for emergency food support.

Councilor Mazzitello asked how that would be proven.

Mayor Levine stated that this is an emergency situation, and while she understands the desires of Councilor Maczko, the School District knows how to do this work. She recognized that someone could potentially abuse the system, but she believed this was a need, and the \$10,000 would not even come close to solving that need. She stated that the District is not going to release private information.

Councilor Mazzitello did not believe that was what Councilor Maczko was requesting and explained that he believes Councilor Maczko would like the district to explain how they are going to safeguard the money to ensure it goes to those who need it.

Councilor Maczko stated that he simply wants information on the criteria that would be used to disburse the funds/resources.

Mayor Levine commented that the funds would be distributed based on a request to fulfill a need for emergency food. She stated that if the funds are not requested, the City would get the funds back.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson stated that the school is the avenue to provide a connection to the community members who are in need. She explained that it is not a program of the schools, but those working within, and the criteria the school may use is a request for assistance from a teacher, counselor, or parent.

Councilor Maczko stated that when there is a request for \$10,000 of public funds, he wants to see guardrails in place in writing.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson asked if the Council would accept first-come, first-served as the criteria.

Councilor Lorberbaum stated that she does not want to develop the criteria and wants the District to provide the criteria that would be used.

Councilor Mazzitello stated that he agrees that the City should dictate the criteria but recognized that the City is being asked to donate money to someone with no criteria. He did not believe first-come, first-serve is a fair criterion, as this is meant to serve those with a need.

Mayor Levine commented that this is for emergency food support.

Councilor Mazzitello asked how someone would show suffrage under an emergency. He stated that perhaps if there is a staff referral, that could be a satisfactory criterion.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson stated that households that have been impacted are not coming out and asking the city directly for support and are instead working through networks they know, which can be a school counselor, teacher or friend.

Councilor Maczko stated that he would rather have those closest to the program deciding what the criteria would be. He stated that he is fine with a referral but simply wants to know the process.

Mayor Levine stated that perhaps the criteria is the need as identified by a school staff member.

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson asked if the need would need to be identified by a staff member or whether it could be a member of the community, who is working within the schools.

Mayor Levine stated that a community member could communicate the need to a staff member of the school. She confirmed that would be the appropriate criteria for a request.

Councilor Mazzitello recognized the balancing act the Council is attempting to perform in being good fiduciary stewards while also assisting in an emergency situation. He stated that he has separate issues with this because of the process that it followed, and it is not that people on the Council or staff do not care. He stated that if there is a neighbor who needs help, then a neighbor could simply help them rather than petitioning the government.

Mayor Levine agreed that this is exactly what the community is doing and what the people in this state have been doing since the beginning of this operation. She stated that they continue to ask and do things for others, and at this point, more help is needed. She stated that \$10,000 is going to help, but is not asking the government to solve this problem. She commented that this will provide another tool for the schools to help families who need help. She stated that these funds, coming from contingency, will assist in fulfilling a public need. She noted that the Council has received 31 comments in support of this request and has not received one comment of opposition. She commented on the high standards the District operates under but recognized that Councilor Maczko wanted to see guardrails in place. She agreed to the guardrails and wanted to see the money disbursed as the need is now, not in two weeks.

Councilor Lorberbaum agreed with the comments of Mayor Levine. She hoped that additional funds would be contributed in addition to the City's contribution. She recognized that this is a time of emergency, where contingency funds come into place.

Councilor Maczko commented that he fully supports helping but wanted to ensure that the Council is also being good fiduciary stewards of public funds. He recognized that the School District is a pass-through, and the real heroes are those involved in the PTA and those that are helping others that are asking for help. He stated that he asked the School District if they were contributing funds and was told the School District

does not have funds to give but recognizes that the staff and volunteers are the ones doing the work. He stated that he simply wants to ensure that the funds are going where they are needed.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 1 (Mazzitello)

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson announced upcoming community events and activities.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Mazzitello stated that he spent the previous week in Florida and visited the community center. He noted that he provided staff with a brochure with their programming and pricing. He commented that the previous day was Presidents' Day and shared some thoughts on the topic of public service. He shared a historical fact from this day in 1776.

Councilor Lorberbaum stated that on Thursday, there will be story time at the Par 3 from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., noting that she will be the storyteller. Today is Mardi Gras, and wished everyone a fun day. Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday and Ramadan started at sundown and wished those who observe these a meaningful holiday. She stated that today is National Day of Kindness and encouraged everyone to be a bright spot in someone's day.

Councilor Maczko recognized that today is known as Fat Tuesday, leading into 40 days of Lent. He noted that there will be some good fish fries on Fridays and encouraged residents to visit local restaurants.

Mayor Levine thanked all the residents who have contacted the Council or attended the workshop today.

ADJOURN

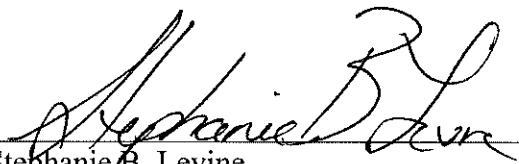
Councilor Mazzitello moved to adjourn.

Councilor Maczko seconded the motion.

Ayes: 4

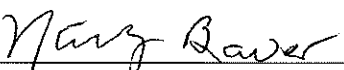
Nays: 0

Mayor Levine adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.



Stephanie B. Levine
Mayor

ATTEST:



Nancy Bauer
City Clerk