



City of Hill City Minutes
March Council Meeting
March 10, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Hill City Community Room

Note: Please silence your electronic devices during the meeting. Thank you.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Lange called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm. Everyone joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

Mayor Dave Lange
Council Member Lin Benson
Council Member Tom Semler
Council Member Kenny Hilton

ABSENT

Council Member Amanda Goodrich

2. Additions or Corrections to the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Hilton.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler, Council Member Hilton

3. Guest Speaker

Merrill Lowney informed the council that Hill City High School is starting a Golf League and that he is the head coach. He will be contacting Fire Chief Nelson about using the fire hall for practice until it gets nice enough to be outside.

4. Consent Agenda

- a. Approve minutes of the Regular Council Meeting
- b. Approve

Account Balances as of 3/2/2026 Checking \$352,437.03, MM \$29,037.27. CD \$515,970.94

Claim's - 2/12 \$167,135.00, 3/6 \$195,078.42, 3/10 \$3,184.43

EFT's - 3/2 Withholding tax \$1,303.86, 3/10 Campspot \$97.30, 3/9 Payroll \$15,116.98, 3/10 PERA \$3,063.12, 3/10 Fed Tax \$3,747.96

Transfers None

- c. Reports – Public Works, Fire, Police, Clerk

Maintenance - Nothing to report.

Water

- On going work with Bolton & Menk on the Water Treatment Plant.
- Working on Training at the water treatment plant – week of the 16th online

- High water usage lately. Possibly a leak somewhere

Sewer - Nothing to report

Parks - Nothing to report

Airport

- Working with Bolton & Menk on the Fencing project.

Streets

- They are holding up pretty well.

Trail

- Cut some trees due to blow down.

Fire

- There were 11 medical calls in the past month.
- Firefighter J. Gillson has submitted his retirement letter effectively on 4/30/26. He has been in the fire department for 51 years.
- The Annual Fish Fry is planned for April 18th

Clerk

- Working with Bolton & Menk on multiple projects.
- 2025 Audit boxes have been picked up and the audit is underway.
- Fund Balance and Investment Policies are ready for approval
- Working with Jessica on various projects
- Submitted Funding Request to Pete Stauber
- Attended the following meetings/activities
 - March 4th – 2 zoom meetings with the auditors

There was a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Hilton.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

5. Public Forum – 3-minute limit

No public spoke

6. Reports:

a. Mayor and Council

Mayor Lange informed the council that he talked with the resident that a letter that was sent to about blight. The resident stated he didn't receive it, Mayor Lange asked Clerk Meyer to send another letter and to send certified mail. Clerk Meyer stated that as of today he has not picked up the letter. Clerk Meyer will check with the post office to make sure he was notified of a certified letter. If he hasn't picked up the letter she will have the police dept. hand deliver it.

Council Member Benson is going to touch up the paint on the Community Garden sign.

There is a property on the lake that would like to split the property into two parcels. Mayor Lange asked them how they wanted to split the property. As of the meeting they have not replied as to how it will be split.

The Aitkin County Engineer was upset about the county being blamed for the Lake Ave issue from a month ago. Mayor Lange apologized and he said that it wasn't anyone or company's fault. He was asking for a correction in the newspaper.

b. Engineer

Force Main Reroute Project

- Waiting to close out project until spring once turf has established.
- Working with the SCDP for a grant reimbursement for pay application number 4 approved last month.

Water Treatment Plant Project

- Began various equipment start-ups in the new plant towards middle to end of February.
- Filter media installed
- March we will finish equipment start-ups and move towards water treatment plant start up middle to end of the month.
- Once plant is up and running the contractor will cease work for the remainder of winter until the ground thaws in the spring.
- Project and site wrap up spring of 2026.

Hill City Airport

- Airport Layout Plan
 - Submitted ALP to MnDOT Aeronautics for comment before we finish the final ALP Document.
- Airport Fence Project
 - Worked with Aitkin County discussing the missing section corner that is making it difficult for us to establish property boundaries at the airport. Aitkin County surveyor is going to make a section corner determination for the city for the benefit of the public.
 - Completed plans and specification for the city's airport Security & Wildlife Fencing Project.

There is a business item on the agenda to approve plans and specs and authorize Bolton & Menk Inc. to solicit bids for the project. Project Funding Request to Representative Pete Stauber

- Was approached by mayor and city staff to put together a project to submit to Representative Stauber's Project Funding Request.
- After discussion with Council Member Semler, George, and Mayor Bolton & Menk Inc. prepared figures and cost estimate information for a Water System Improvements and Watermain Looping Project.

- Total project estimate is \$1.1 million dollars. If selected, these grants typically require 20% local funds for the project and 80% grant.
- Assisted Tami Meyer with filling out the request.

c. CEDA

1. Park and Rec

- Worked on Outdoor Rec Grant.
 - Submitted draft application to DNR for review.

2. Veterans Commemoration Grant

- Working on completing the stencils for the helicopter.

3. Events Committee

- Worked with Sue at the food booth.
- Researched activities for 4th of July.
- Asked to attend Lion's Club for continued conversation on events.

4. Blandin

- Full proposal submitted.
- Working with a business owner.
- Created flyer for Easter Egg Hunt.

The Grand Rapids Players Club had reached out stating the group had received some funding from the Blandin Foundation. The club would like to bring a family-friendly traveling stage/show to Hill City this summer at no cost. They would need a stage and would like at least 50 audience members. The council is all in favor of having them. Pellinen will reach out to them on a date and get more details.

Next Wednesday Pellinen will have a couple of interns with her.

d. Land Use Committee has not met

e. Events & Planning Committee

There were several people in attendance from the Lions Club. They discussed the easter event and 4th of July. Jess will be attending the Lion's Club meeting tomorrow night to see if they are willing to take over the events committee.

f. Personnel Committee have not met

g. Park Committee

The new street banners arrived.

7. Old Business

a. Quote for raised beds for the Community Garden.

We have not received the quote yet.

8. New Business

a. Drinking Water Revolving Fund - PPL Submittal

The deadline to submit projects to the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) - Project Priority List (PPL) is March 13, 2026. This is the same federal funding source that was used to fund the City's Water Treatment Plant Project. There are two projects the city should consider.

1. The Watermain Improvement & Looping Project submitted to Pete Stauber's Project Funding Request is also a good candidate to receive funding through the DWRF. If the funding request through Representative Stauber does not succeed this would be another way to fund the project.

2. There are also Lead Service Line Replacement grants available to help fund the replacement of galvanized or lead service lines in the city. The grants cover 100% of the cost to replace a service from the water meter at the home to the curb stop near the city right of way. We would need submit a LSLR Project to the PPL by the same March 13th deadline.

There are no financial implications at this time for either project with the submittal to the PPL. If the Watermain Improvement & Looping Project was to be deemed fundable in fall of 2026 the project would qualify for a low interest loan with the hopes of receiving up to 80% of the project in Water Infrastructure Fund Grant. The project is estimated at \$1.1 million dollars. For the LSLR Project this would directly benefit the homeowners that currently have a know galvanized service line. These pipes are beyond their useful life and possibly have lead solder in the fittings. The replacement of these water service lines would be 100% grant funded with little to no cost to the city.

Motion to approve to submit to the PPL for both projects.

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Semler.

Voting Yea: Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler, Council Member Hilton

b. Airport Fence Project bid schedule

The project costs based on the current engineer's estimate is listed below: Engineer's Estimate: MnDOT Aeronautics Share (90%): Local Share (10%) \$ 254,520.00
\$229,068.00 \$ 25,452.00

The bid schedule for the Hill City – Quadna Mountain Airport Wildlife and Security Fencing project is as follows:

March 10: Receive approval on bid documents and approve advertising for bid

April 2: Open Bids

April 14: City Council Meeting, review and accept bids

April 15: Submit grant request to amend grant to include construction

April-May: Execute grant documents and contracts

Summer 2026: Complete construction

Motion to approve the Airport Fence bid schedule

Motion made by Council Member Hilton, Seconded by Council Member Semler.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

- c. Approve pay application # 15 to McGough Construction in the amount of \$92,248.00 and Draw Request # 15 in the amount of \$127,336.00.

Motion made to pay application # 15 to McGough Construction in the amount of \$92,248.00 and Draw Request # 15 in the amount of \$127,336.00.

Motion made by Council Member Hilton, Seconded by Council Member Semler.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

- d. DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Resolution 2026-3

Motion to approve Resolution 2026 – 3 for the DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant application. A roll call vote was held.

Motion made by Council Member Hilton, Seconded by Council Member Benson.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

- e. Approve the Investment Policy and the Fund Balance Policy.

Motion to approve both the Investment Policy and Fund Balance Policy.

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Hilton.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

- f. FY27 Interior EPA-STAG Clean Water/Drinking Water Community Project

This was discussed during the Engineers Report.

- g. Approve LG 220 Application - Woodland Chapter MN Deer Hunters Association for Bingo on May 2nd at the Fire Hall.

Motion made to approve the LG220 Application for the Woodland Chapter – MN Deer Hunters Association for Bingo on May 2nd at the Fire Hall.

Motion made by Council Member Hilton, Seconded by Council Member Benson.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

- h. Approve Northland Portables for the 4th of July

Motion to approve Northland Portables for the 4th of July.

Motion made by Council Member Hilton, Seconded by Council Member Semler.
Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler,
Council Member Hilton

- i. Approve A & W Bleacher rental for the 4th of July

Motion to approve A & W Bleacher rental for the 4th of July.

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Semler.

Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler, Council Member Hilton

j. HCFD Gambling Profit Tracker

Public Safety Director/Hill City Fire Department Gambling Manger Saxton reviewed the HCFD Gambling Scorecard/Profit Tracker.

k. Accept resignation letter from J. Zempel.

Motion made to accept Jordan Zempel's letter of resignation. With the hopes to fill the position soon.

Motion made by Council Member Hilton, Seconded by Council Member Semler.

Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler, Council Member Hilton

l. Approve February Council Pay

Motion made to approve the February Council Pay.

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Semler.

Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler, Council Member Hilton

m. Dumpsters for Clean-up Thursday, May 14 - Sunday, May 17

The dumpster for annual clean-up will be here Thursday, May 14th – 17th. Aitkin County is still working on getting a recycling dumpster. It will be located at the new entrance to the Sewer Pond.

9. Upcoming Meetings

Water Treatment Plant Meeting, March 11

City Day on the Hill at the State Capitol, March 11

Easter Egg Hunt, Hill City School, March 28,

Tuesday, April 14, 6 p.m., council meeting, city hall

Annual Fire Relief fish fry is planned for April 18

Woodland Chapter MN Deer Hunters Association bingo, May 2 at the fire hall

City cleanup days, Thursday, May 14-Sunday, May 17

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourned the meeting at 7:06 pm.

Motion made by Council Member Benson, Seconded by Council Member Semler.

Voting Yea: Mayor Lange, Council Member Benson, Council Member Semler, Council Member Hilton

Dave Lange, Mayor

Tami Meyer, Clerk/Treasurer