

City of Gilbert
Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
Council Chambers

Mayor Oberstar called the meeting to order at 6:27P.M.

Quorum determined.

Present: Councilors Rudy Vertachnik and Dylon Horne, Mayor Karl Oberstar, Jr., Councilors Paul Skrbec and Bob Pontinen, Clerk Mike Skrbich, Public Works Operation Director Sam Lautigar, Clerk Attorney Bryan Lindsay and Police Chief Ty Techar

Absent with notice: None

Pledge of Allegiance

Additions to the Agenda: Resolution 2025-06 Library Donation; Resolution 2025-07 Library Donation; Cemetery Board appointment, Anton Udovich; Cemetery Board resignation, Robert Kivela.

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Horne to approve the additions to the Agenda. MCU

Approve Consent Agenda:

City Council Minutes

- February 25, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
 - Correction to the minutes, under Councilor Pontinen's report: last sentence should state "Clerk Skrbich," not Skrbec.
 - Correction to the minutes, under New Business, Mayor Oberstar. Jr. appointed himself to the R.R.C.C. Board, not the R.O.C.C.Board.
 - Remove Cemetery Board Minutes from this Consent Agenda and add Water & Light Board Meeting Minutes and Cemetery Board Minutes to the next meeting.
- February 25, 2025 City Council Working Session Minutes

Invoices from Previously Approved Projects

Boards and Commissions Minutes

- Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes
- Library Board Meeting Minutes

Payment of Bills and Payroll upon proper audit of Clerk and Mayor

- Check register 2/26/2025 – 2/27/2025
- Check register 2/28/2025 – 3/6/2025

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Horne to approve the Consent Agenda with the corrections. MCU

Public Participation: Leonard Kochevar, citizen, was wondering if the city had any plans in case of another rain/flood season. Public Works Operation Director Sam Lautigar stated a couple grants are out there right now. One of the grants will be for ditching. The City also received a \$500,000

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grant for manhole rehab that should do about 12-15 manholes, to help inflow of water. Another grant was also just applied for, a planning grant, to look at the front end of the sewer plant, to get the water to the sewage plant quicker, to prevent backing up. Kochevar stated this was positive news and shared some more ideas. Lautigar did state there are MPCA guidelines and protocols that must be followed.

Kochevar stated he's concerned if the plant is under-designed for catastrophic events or it was put on automatic to handle whatever load or flow comes through and stated he thought the old plant never flooded. Mayor Oberstar spoke of the old plant flooding many times. He also spoke of various things that are in the works and will be better this year (including the sump pumps put in).

Leo Skrbec, Water & Light Board, stated at the Working Session, it was discussed to delay the contract for Residential garbage. The Water & Light Board recommends the City renew the contract with East Mesabi Sanitation. Skrbec's concern is the longer the City waits to renew the contract, the more it will cost the City as East Mesabi Sanitation is working under the old contract, for 792 residents versus the new contract with 749 residents. Cost to the City would be about an extra \$1200 a month.

Jamie Gardner, East Mesabi Sanitation, offered to come in and make a presentation on how garbage works on the Range (bag model, bin model, etc.), sharing they are more than willing to work with their partners (City of Gilbert).

Clerk Skrbich stated the contract will be brought up at the next Council Meeting.

Reports – Mayor & Council

Councilor Pontinen: Nothing at this time.

Councilor Skrbec: Attended the League of Minnesota Cities "Day at the Capitol," and spoke with Senator Farnsworth and Representative Warwas and was able to highlight some of the projects for the City of Gilbert. Skrbec felt it was a good overall experience with a lot of value.

Councilor Horne: Asked Public Works Operation Director Sam Lautigar for an update on the dump/plow truck. Lautigar stated it's now at the Dealer's to install some wiring harness that did not get put in from the factory. Expecting to see it in the next few weeks.

Councilor Vertachnik: Nothing at this time.

Mayor Oberstar: Oberstar stated there have been some concerns about the volume (sound) of council meetings. He would like to look into the cost of a clip-on Bluetooth microphone system.

Mayor Oberstar would like to get a meeting set up between the Council and School Board and talk about the school property again. Clerk Skrbich will look into setting up a meeting.

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Mayor Oberstar would like to talk to S.E.H. on working on some streets and alleys and look into the blight in town. Police Chief Techar mentioned there are a few places in town that will be condemned soon, three on Broadway. Another property is set for 2 trials, and one for abatement.

Mayor Oberstar thanked the Chief for the update. Councilor Pontinen wondered why we aren't working on the blight "in-house." Chief Techar stated, we are trying that soon, with abating the property. City Attorney Bryan Lindsay also spoke on the court process of handling blight issues.

Reports – Staff, Boards & Commissions

City Attorney Bryan Lindsay: No official report.

Police Chief Ty Techar: Nothing at this time.

Public Works Operation Director Sam Lautigar: The Rec is closed for skating; temps are too warm to keep the ice. Crews are working on Spring cleanup.

The mayor asked for an update on the water on Main Street. Lautigar described how excessive frost contributed to the material on the trenches to dip more causing the water to pool.

Mayor Oberstar inquired about the new campground hosts. Clerk Skrbich stated everything is moving forward.

Clerk Mike Skrbich: Nothing at this time.

New Business:

First reading of Ordinance 31.20 and Ordinance 31.24. Clerk Skrbich will post the ordinances on the boards outside City Hall.

Motion by Vertachnik, seconded by Pontinen to approve when a member of the council goes/meets with others on *behalf* of the council, they go in "pairs" and get authorization of the council. 4 yays, 1 nay – Councilor Horne. Motion carries 4 to 1.

Motion by Pontinen, seconded by Skrbec to approve Councilor Vertachnik and Councilor Pontinen, to explore public safety options. The motion includes gathering information regarding the police department, to check costs of merging with the Eveleth police department, costs for using the Sheriff and the costs if Gilbert operated on its own. Pontinen stated it would be for fact-finding information, and they will report back to the city with what they find. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Horne to allow Councilor Skrbec and Mayor Oberstar to talk with School Board representatives regarding the school property in Gilbert. MCU

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The Civic Systems software purchase agreement was tabled, until the Clerk receives a proposal and presentation put together from Civic Systems.

Motion by Horne, seconded by Skrbec to approve the resignation of Robert A. Kivela from the Cemetery Board. MCU

Motion by Vertachnik, seconded by Pontinen to approve Mayor Oberstar's appointment of Anton Udovich to the Cemetery Board. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Horne to accept Resolution 2025-06, accepting a donation from the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation to the Library in the amount of \$6,207.71. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Horne to accept Resolution 2025-07, accepting a donation from the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation to the Library in the amount of \$1,301.57. MCU

Miscellaneous:

Motion by Horne, seconded by Vertachnik to adjourn meeting at 8:22P.M. MCU.

**These minutes are paraphrased and are not written word for word.*

ATTEST:

Mike Skrbich, Interim Clerk/Administrator

Karl Oberstar, Jr., Mayor