

City of Gilbert
Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting
Tuesday, September 9, 2025
Council Chambers

Mayor Oberstar called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

Quorum determined.

Present: Mayor Karl Oberstar, Jr., Councilor Rudy Vertachnik, Paul Skrbec and Bob Pontinen and Clerk Mike Skrbich, Police Chief Ty Techar and Attorney Noelle Berkelman for Bryan Lindsay.

Absent with notice: Councilor Dylan Horne

Pledge of Allegiance

Additions to the Agenda: Adding under New Business: item D. Councilor vacancy plan; item E. Labor negotiations. Adding under Old Business: item B. Setting a date for budget meeting.

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Pontinen to approve the Additions to the Agenda. MCU

Consent Agenda:

City Council Minutes

- August 26, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
 - Correction: On Page 2, under Reports, Motion regarding Mesabi Mountain Trail should be stricken. This was from a previous meeting/minutes.
- August 26, 2025 City Council Working Session Minutes
- September 2, 2025 Special Council & Budget Meeting Minutes
 - Correction: On Page 1; under New Business, Developer Discussion, Councilor Pontinen's name is spelled wrong.

Invoices from Previously Approved Projects

Boards and Commissions Minutes

- September 7, 2025 Cemetery Board Minutes

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

- Check register 8/25/2025 – 8/26/2025
- Check register 9/5/2025 – 9/8/2025

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Vertachnik to approve the Consent Agenda with changes. MCU

Donna Sadar, Cemetery Board Member, presented a copy of what their board is suggesting for a new cemetery sign.

Motion by Councilor Skrbec, seconded by Pontinen to approve the new cemetery signage with these changes: Artificial flowers are mentioned twice, therefore Councilor Skrbec suggested removing the shorter language under number one and moving number seven, with the longer language, up to number one and to make it bold. Under the new number seven, adding: Pets must be on a leash per Gilber City ordinance. MCU

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Public Participation: Jamie Gardner from East Mesabi Sanitation let the City Council know that he did respond to the RFP and submitted a proposal by August 29th.

Joseph Pulles, former council member for 6 years, representing support for the Gilbert Police Department and Gilbert Fire Department. Pulles asked the city council if it is true what he is hearing about the police department being demolished. Mayor Oberstar, Jr. stated it was not true, and they are looking at partnerships, not abolishment.

Councilor Pontinen stated he asked the council if Counselor Vertachnik and himself could look into seeing if there were different ways to police Gilbert. They looked at various options to see if we can afford what we are doing now or save money to go elsewhere. Pontinen reiterated that it was never to abolish the police department.

Councilor Skrbec stated there are current problems in the police contract and believes the best path forward is to get more revenue from Biwabik so that they are paying for their fair share. Skrbec believes this is the best model for the City right now as it has been working for a long time with the exception of Gilbert citizens having to pay the burden for coverage in Biwabik. Skrbec would not favor other potential solutions at this time.

Councilor Vertachnik stated he doesn't think they will ever abolish the Gilbert police department. Pulles inquired if they are abolishing the Gilbert Fire Department to which Vertachnik responded that it was looked into to combine with other entities and there is always a cost involved in everything we do therefore they are looking at all costs and how the City can save money.

Clerk Skrbich reminded everyone that overall, as they look at the budget and everything that they are doing, they have to consider the costs of everybody involved and it's premature to say anything about what your absolute future plans are until you get them budgeted into the system and know what it's going to cost the city.

Gilbert resident Tamara Gulbranson inquired about the City of Biwabik's estimate for police services that were sent to the City of Gilbert. Clerk Skrbich stated they had just received the estimate back from Biwabik with numbers that do not agree with what their initial discussion was, therefore, the council will have to look long and hard at it and evaluate the offer and see if it fits in with that Gilbert's budgeted figures are for Gilbert's Police Department. He continued stating whether somebody wants to pay their share or not is a whole other issue, but at the current time, it's not where it needs to be. No decisions will be made this evening. More discussion took place on coverage between the towns and concerns were voiced.

*Gilbert City Council Meetings can be viewed on Mesabi Community TV on YouTube.

Reports – Mayor & Council

Councilor Vertachnik: Nothing at this time.

Councilor Skrbec: Thanked the Cemetery Board for their work.

Councilor Pontinen: stated he doesn't think the City is ADA compliant. Paint was purchased months ago and handicap areas need to be painted.

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Reports – Staff, Boards & Council:

City Attorney Berkelman: Nothing at this time.

Gilbert Fire Chief Kwiatkowski: Counselor Skrbec stated the Fire Chief was out of town. Skrbec gave a little update on the Fire Department. The pump truck is having some issues and will need some work done to it. They are working on some estimates and will need to get some parts ordered.

Police Chief Ty Techar: There have been 4 arrests in the last 3 weeks for thefts from vehicles and garages. Still trying to recover some stolen property. A search warrant was executed recently on New Jersey Ave., some stolen property was recovered.
Techar gave an update on blight.

Clerk Mike Skrbich: Nothing at this time.

Motion made by Oberstar (stepped off Chair to make motion), supported by Skrbec (to open for discussion) of a church using the rental facilities, free of charge. Roll call vote; Oberstar – yay; Vertachnik, Skrbec and Pontinen – nay. Motion fails 3 to 1.

Motion by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to set the Special Session budget meeting at 2:00 on the 17th. MCU

Motion by Counselor Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec to accept Council member Dylan Horne's letter of resignation from the council seat. MCU Clerk Skrbich thanked Dylan for his work.

Motion made by Counselor Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to post for the vacant council member seat, posting from September 12th – 30th. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, supported Vertachnik to post for a council member's vacant seat. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Oberstar to adjourn meeting at 7:20P.M. MCU.

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

ATTEST:

Mike Skrbich, Interim Clerk/Administrator

Karl Oberstar Jr., Mayor