

City of Gilbert
Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Council Chambers

Mayor Karl Oberstar, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:10P.M.

Quorum determined.

Present: Councilors Bob Pontinen, Paul Skrbec and Rudy Vertachnik, Mayor Karl Oberstar, Jr., Deputy Clerk Lynn Lorey, Administrative Assistant Marion DeLage, and Police Chief Ty Techar.

Absent with notice: Councilor Ryan Redepenning

Pledge of Allegiance

Additions to the Agenda: Under Old Business: H. ABDO services for completing 2023 & 2024 Audits; I. Enterprise Trail Construction Agreement. Under New Business: B. Onsite IT; C. Toro purchase for campground; D. Ice issue on New York Ave. West; E. Pump replacement for the lift station at Rock and Pines and in Sparta; F. Letter of support for Bois Forte Application for a build grant; G. Email from the HRA regarding fee increase; H. Board and Commission discussion.

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

Consent Agenda:

City Council Minutes

- January 27, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Deputy Clerk Lynn Lorey will add minutes from the 2/2/26 meeting to the next City Council meeting on 2/24/26.

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Pontinen to approve the Consent Agenda with the minutes from 2/2/26 added to the 2/24/26 City Council meeting. MCU

Public Participation: None

Reports – Mayor & Council

Councilor Vertachnik: Nothing at this time.

Councilor Pontinen: Nothing at this time.

Councilor Skrbec: Expressed concern with learning Circle K had raised the prices of the orange city garbage bags to \$8.75 for the 14 gallon size and \$17.25 for the 33 gallon size. At City Hall, they are currently \$6.50 and \$13.00. Skrbec stated it was not in the best interest of our citizens to have a markup. The office staff will look into why they are marked up. Discussion took place that there are other opportunities to sell the bags at other locations if the mark up at that location continues. City staff will bring an update at the next council meeting.

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Skrbec said Minnesota Firewood is looking to see what the springtime demand will be so they can be prepared. Last year we went through a whole semi-truck load. Councilor Pontinen stated we should buy it in bulk.

Mayor Oberstar: Reminder to everyone in Gilbert that Saturday, February 14th at the Rock Ridge Gym at 1:30PM will be the 75th Anniversary of the Gilbert's Class of 1951 Basketball Championship.

Reports – Staff, Boards & Council:

Police Chief Ty Techar: Councilor Skrbec stated there have been some citizen complaints regarding parking on sidewalks. Under city ordinance you cannot park on city sidewalks. There is nothing in the ordinance to prevent parking on the boulevard, however they just aren't wide enough for vehicles so technically they are on the sidewalks. Techar stated there is a handful of people that park on the boulevard. The streets are very full on Wisconsin Avenue and New Jersey Avenue because of all the rental properties, so people are parking on the boulevard and in front of each other. The parking issues also includes snow removal issues. The City does not enforce people to clean their sidewalks in front of their house, by ordinance citizens should. Only about 10% of citizens shovel their sidewalks. Littering of snow is also an issue this year. Under statute, if you plow, or throw snow into someone else's yard to make a parking spot it is considered littering, which is a misdemeanor. Approximately 15-20 people are parking on sidewalks.

Techar stated most of the issues are with the rental properties. Many rental property owners do not live in the area. Rental properties account for 56% of the disturbances in town and it's becoming a big issue. And they make up approximately 15% of the actual residences. Parking is also one of the issues, for example there are duplexes now and everyone seems to have two cars per household, which makes it four cars per residence. Skrbec gave the idea of looking at the ordinance and possibly modifying it. Techar will take a closer look at this and help define the different parking issues during snow season.

Councilor Vertachnik inquired about the cardboard crusher that was sold. Techar stated the last he heard, it was sold but not picked up yet. Will update at the next meeting.

Deputy Clerk Lynn Lorey: Nothing at this time. Mayor Oberstar requested Deputy Clerk Lorey to reach out to LELS Union for an update.

Old Business:

Check Register:

- a. Check register 2/4/2026 – 2/9/2026

Motion by Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec to approve the February 4th thru 9th, 2026 check registers. MCU

Motion by Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec for council support the Landfill, St. Louis County, Senate File 330/House File 573, by resolution. MCU

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Motion by Skrbec, supported by Pontinen to move forward with League of Minnesota Cities for insurance and not waive the tort liability. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to move forward with the agreement with Jason Hale and his services for Northshore Development upon review and/or modifications by the city attorney. MCU

Mayor Oberstar directed Deputy Clerk Lorey to give the agreement to the city attorney and for everyone to bring things to the next Working Session for Jason to work on.

There are two portions to the agreement. Hale will give advice and services to help look at the city ordinances, for example, free of charge under the TA group agreement. Anything that's working with a specific development fall under the retainer portion of the agreement. There is a \$5,000 retainer for when Hale will help with any upcoming projects.

Motion by Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec to repair the light pole on New Jersey Avenue, after May 1st. MCU

Discussion took place on the current credit card fees the City pays. A variety of options were discussed and will continue at the next meeting.

Motion by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to approve the ABDO proposal to complete 2023, 2024 and 2025 audits. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, supported by Pontinen to approve the agreement for professional services with S.E.H. for the Enterprise Trail Construction. MCU

New Business:

Motion by Skrbec supported by Pontinen to approve employee timesheets. MCU
Going forward, this will now go under Old Business.

Motion by Vertachnik supported by Pontinen to terminate the current IT contract, effective February 11, 2026. Roll call vote: Vertachnik – yes; Pontinen – yes; Skrbec – yes; Oberstar – no. Motion carries.

Discussion took place on purchasing a UTV for the campground. More information will be brought to the next meeting.

Deputy Clerk Lorey shared with the council that a shut-off was broken in front of 107 New York Avenue and needed to be replaced. Public Works Director Sam Lautigar was able to get a contractor to dig up the curb and replace the shut-off successfully.

Motion by Vertachnik, supported by Skrbec to approve pump replacement for the lift station at Rock and Pines. MCU and in Sparta at a later time. MCU

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Motion by Skrbec, supported by Pontinen to approve pump replacement for the lift station in Sparta at a later time. MCU

Motion by Skrbec, supported by Vertachnik to approve the letter of support for Bois Forte application for a build grant. MCU

Discussion took place regarding an email from the HRA regarding utility rates. The HRA utility rates increased over 3 years to match what the rest of the residents pay in Gilbert: \$34.40 per rental unit in April 2024, an additional \$34.40 per rental unit (to \$68.80) in January 2025 and an additional \$34.40 per rental unit (to \$103.20) in January of 2026. Shelly Huffman, Executive Director has voiced concerns regarding the last increase, noting it puts a major strain on their budget that is already strained. Huffman asked the council if they could continue to pay the 2/3 amount instead of the 100%. The council remained status quo and are inviting Huffman to attend the next Working Session on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

Discussion took place on needing citizens to volunteer to be on a variety of boards and commissions for the City. Administrative Assistant DeLage and Councilor Skrbec will work on this.

Motion by Skrbec, seconded by Vertachnik to adjourn meeting at 7:51 PM. MCU

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

ATTEST:

Lynn Lorey, Deputy Clerk

Karl Oberstar Jr., Mayor