



**Regular City Council Meeting
March 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Sturgeon Lake City Hall**

The following council members were present at the hall: Mayor Scott Helfman, Councilmember Todd Booker, Councilmember Nick Dagal, Councilmember Ken Grey, and Councilmember Mark Noyes

The following council members were absent:

The following city employees were present at the hall: City Clerk/Treasurer Sandra Osterdyk and Fire Chief Al Cekalla

The following city staff members were absent: none

Members of the public who were present: Amanda and Josh Cisar

Call to order: Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Helfman called the Public Hearing to order at 6:01 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Guests and Visitor Comments

Amanda Cisar was present to share with the city council the idea of adding a community skating rink to the park for the 2026-2027 winter season, along with a possible winter market. The skating rink would be managed by volunteers. Amanda is to get additional information and report back to the city council in a few months with an update.

Fire Department Report

Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Cekalla shared that the department responded to 2 fire calls and 5 first responder calls in the last month. The Moose Lake Fire Department will be helping because the County Road 46 bridge is under construction, causing 20-minute delays for some volunteers getting into town. The updated Standard Operating Procedures and By-Laws have been provided for review and discussion at the April 14, 2026, meeting. The new procedure includes a new tornado plan. They will be updated as of March 16, 2026, and will be available for all members to review for 30 days.

The Lakes and Pines Energy Audit has been completed, and results have been provided for review. The largest items for the City Hall are updating the lighting and adding mini-splits. For the Fire Hall, insulation and weatherstripping would be the top priorities.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the February 10, 2026, Public Hearing on Subdivision Ordinance # 100 and the Regular City Council Meeting, and the March 3, 2026, Public Hearing on Subdivision Ordinance # 100, were submitted for approval.

Mayor Helfman has one change request for the February 10, 2026, Public Hearing Subdivision Ordinance # 100, and Regular City Council Meeting minutes under the Mayor's Department Report to be changed to already discussed.

Councilmember T. Booker motioned to approve the minutes, with changes to the February 10, 2026, Public Hearing Subdivision Ordinance # 100, the Regular City Council Meeting minutes, and the March 3, 2026, Public Hearing on Subdivision Ordinance # 100 minutes, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Financial Report

Claims Paid: The Clerk/Treasurer presented the claims paid to the council. Any questions the council had about the Claims Paid were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk/Treasurer.

Councilmember N. Dugel made a motion to approve the Claims Paid, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion was carried with all members present voting in favor.

Unpaid Claims: The Clerk/Treasurer presented the Unpaid Claims to the council. Any questions the council had about the Unpaid Claims were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk/Treasurer.

Councilmember N. Dugel made a motion to approve the Unpaid Claims, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion was carried with all members present voting in favor.

Financial Report/Review: The Clerk/Treasurer presented the Financial Report/Review. Any questions the council had were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk/Treasurer.

Councilmember N. Dugel made a motion to approve the Financial Report/Review, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion was carried with all members present voting in favor.

Reports of Departments

Park Committee: The park has been plowed. The inclusive full support swing seat has arrived.

Public Works: There is something wrong with the Public Works truck. Transmission issues are not worth fixing. Put it up for auction and sell as is. The truck is currently at the Wellhouse. The zero-turn lawn mower is currently in for service.

Roads: Mike Buetow was out plowing. Will need \$5,000 in gravel in the spring to touch up the roads. Complaints from residents about people parking on the roads. Mayor Helfman and Councilmember T. Booker attended a preconstruction meeting on the bridge reconstruction. Pine County's target date for completion is the middle to the end of June; this is subject to change.

Solid Waste: Nothing new currently.

Storage Facility: The check was received from the last auction.

Water/Sewer Operator: Lift Station #3 quote received. Mayor Helfman to reach out to the vendor to get clarification on the quote. He will also check the risers for the water values and raise them at the hydrants. As well as estimates for manhole coring to be completed.

Zoning: One property in town did not get a permit and will need a letter issued. Councilmember N. Dugel to forward the address and details to the City Clerk/Treasurer, so that the letter can be sent.

City Clerk/Treasurer: All month-end reports and PFA have been completed on time. Focus has shifted towards prep for the MCFOA conference and audit preparation.

Mayor: Nothing that wasn't already discussed.

New Business

The Ordinance # 100 Summary for Publication was not received from legal counsel before the meeting for review. Mayor Helfman checked that this could not be preapproved. Will be discussed at the April 14, 2026, meeting.

Resolution No. 2026-9: A Resolution to Adopt the 2025 Pine County Hazard Mitigation Plan was presented for adoption. The council discussed the Pine County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Councilmember N. Dagele made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-9: A Resolution to Adopt the 2025 Pine County Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion was carried by roll-call vote, with all members present voting in favor.

The council discussed the 2026 Mowing season and reviewed the price from Eaton's Mowing, which remained the same as in 2025.

Councilmember N. Dagele made a motion to have Eaton's Mowing remain doing the mowing for the City of Sturgeon Lake for 2026, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion was carried by roll-call vote, with all members present voting in favor.

The City Clerk/Treasurer shared that the 2026 Farmers Market will start the first week in May. This year, it will be run by David Lingle.

Service Fee Connection Fee Increase: The City Clerk/Treasurer met with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to understand why the city received this increase on the quarterly connection invoice. It was then discovered that other cities had also not received notification from MDH last fall, which alerted them to the upcoming Service Connection Fee Increase.

The 2025 Minnesota Legislature passed a law that amends Minnesota Statutes 144.3831 to increase the safe drinking water service connection fee. Effective January 1, 2026, the fee will be \$15.22 per water service connection, per year. Increasing from \$0.81 a month to the new amount of \$1.27. This is the annual service connection fee charged to your drinking water system customers and passed through to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) since 1993, under Minnesota Statute 144.3831, to help provide safe drinking water everywhere in Minnesota. Revenue from this fee is used to fund activities of MDH's Drinking Water Protection program related to training and supporting public water systems, to help maintain compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and protect the health of all Minnesotans. Some of these activities include sanitary surveys, sample collection and analysis, compliance determination, source water protection, enforcement, and various technical assistance and training services.

The council discussed the impact on the City of Sturgeon Lake, noting an increase from \$0.81 to \$1.27. They agreed that this would be effective on the April 2026 utility billing cycle. A notice would be posted on the city website and on the billing postcards, alerting the residents of the increase.

Councilmember N. Dagele made a motion for the 2026 Service Connection Fee Increase at the new rate of \$1.27 to be effective on the April 2026 utility billing cycle, seconded by Councilmember T. Booker. The motion was carried by roll-call vote, with all members present voting in favor.

Unfinished Business

Councilmember N. Dagele brought up the topic previously discussed in July 2025 of paying councilmembers for volunteer time. As discussed at that time, the rate mentioned was \$15.00 per hour for up to 19 hours per week. Additional information will be brought to the April 14, 2026, meeting for further discussion.

Announcements

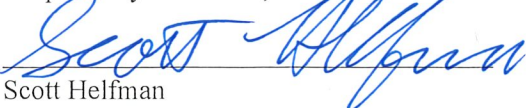
The City Hall will be closed during the week of March 23-27, 2026.

The next Regular City Council Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Councilmember K. Grey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagele. The motion carried, with all members present voting in favor. The meeting adjourns at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Scott Helfman

Sturgeon Lake Mayor


Sandra Osterdyk

Sturgeon Lake City Clerk/Treasurer