



**Regular City Council Meeting
May 13, 2025, at 6 pm
Sturgeon Lake City Hall**

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

The following council members were absent: none.

The following city employees were present at the hall: City Clerk/Treasurer Sandra Osterdyk.

The following city staff members were absent: Fire Chief Al Cekalla.

Members of the public who were present: Emily Danelski.

Call to order: Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Helfman called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Guests and Visitor Comments

The meeting packet includes letters of interest received to fill the vacant council seat. The council briefly discussed candidate Ken Grey, who was present at the meeting.

Mayor S. Helfman motioned to appoint Ken Grey to the vacant council seat under Resolution No. 2025-13, A Resolution Filling a Previously Declared Council Vacancy, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion carried with a roll call vote, with all members present voting in favor.

The City Clerk/Treasurer swore in Ken Grey as a Sturgeon Lake City Council Member.

Fire Department Report

Fire Department Report: Mayor S. Helfman provided an update on the recent feasibility study that provided estimates for a new fire hall between \$8-\$9 million and \$11.5 million with the addition of the city hall. Consideration of a Fire District would provide for taxation over the district, requiring approval from Sturgeon Lake Township and Willow River. Discussion continued regarding the six lights at the front of the fire hall. The bid is approximately \$2,000 for the lights. Additional information is required.

Councilmember K. Grey moved to get a quote for a test to see if it's feasible to put lights in before installing new lights at the front of the fire hall, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagel. The motion carried with a roll call vote, with all members present voting in favor.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for February 27, 2025, City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes, March 18, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes, and April 15, 2025, City Council Meeting were submitted for approval.

Councilmember N. Dagel motioned to approve the February 27, 2025, City Council Work Session Meeting Minutes, March 18, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes, and April 15, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes with the edits as noted, seconded by Councilmember T. Booker. 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. Dage! motioned to approve Claims Paid, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion 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. Dage! motioned to approve the Unpaid Claims, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion 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. Dage! motioned to approve the Financial Report/Review, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

The City Clerk/Treasurer mentioned receiving an insurance cancellation notice regarding the Sturgeon Lake Pizza Pub Insurance. A message has already been sent to the insurance contact for clarification, and we are waiting for a response.

Councilmember K. Grey motioned to verify that insurance is in place for the Sturgeon Lake Pizza Pub, seconded by Councilmember N. Dage!. The motion carried, with all members present voting in favor.

Reports of Departments

Park Committee: Mayor Helfman discussed that CIP called and rescheduled the May 8, 2025, visit due to being short-staffed. At this time, it is scheduled for July. Once more information will be shared later. The Sturgeon Lake Lions Club is coordinating a new City Park sign; they are also working to clean up the Welcome to Sturgeon Lake signs at all entrances into the city. Councilmember N. Dage! volunteered to remove the dead trees at the northbound sign. Councilmember T. Booker provided an update on the second Lion Foundation in the works, as the first one was damaged once unwrapped.

Public Works: The City Dodge truck taken to Cloquet has been fixed. Eaton's Mowing has been selected as the 2025 contractor and will mow every two weeks.

Roads: Mike Buetow was out grading. He has not put any gravel out yet. To pack it in better, he is waiting until it rains. Councilmember M. Noyes was out cutting ditches with the flail mower. A recent complaint was received on L&L Granite about right-of-way issues. Streets and sidewalks are being blocked.

Solid Waste: Pine County received a complaint on 3025 Farm to Market and just forwarded notification to the City Clerk/Treasurer right before the meeting regarding a smell of septic and visual, concluding that the septic system is noncompliant. Pine County is asking the city to investigate this matter. Mayor Helfman volunteered to report back to Pine County.

Councilmember N. Dage! motioned to have Mayor Helfman look into 3025 Farm to Market and report back to Pine County, seconded by Councilmember T. Booker. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Councilmember N. Dage! was contacted by Pine County Commissioner JJ Waldhalm regarding the matter at 3025 Farm to Market as well and would also like an update on how the city plans to resolve this issue after the meeting.

Councilmember M. Noyes is the new Blight/Nuisance Director. The City Clerk/Treasurer will work on a draft SOP and reach out to surrounding cities to locate a contractor list of places to assist with clean-up and provide it to Councilmember M. Noyes to review. A notice will be sent to all residents on utility billing statements either in June or July, depending on what information is gathered, a letter to the top offenders, once a list is provided, and a posting on the City of Sturgeon Lake website stating that City Ordinances are being enforced. Those not compliant with the ordinances can expect to receive violation notifications clearly defining the necessary actions required to bring them into compliance within the timeline. If this does not occur, the consequences can result in the City and Pine County cleaning up the issues with the cost being applied as a special assessment on property taxes for the year.

Councilmember N. Dagel motioned to send a notice to all residents on their June or July 2025 utility billing statement, a letter to the top offenders, and a posting on the City of Sturgeon Lake website, seconded by Councilmember T. Booker. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Storage Facility: Councilmember K. Grey is the new Storage Facility Director. To handle the outstanding storage lockers, one of the first tasks will be to research a storage auction house to get the items currently being held for sale placed online for bidding and sale.

Councilmember N. Dagel motioned to contact a storage auction house to get the items currently being held for sale placed online for bidding and sale, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Water/Sewer Operator: The chlorine booster pump still needs work. The RIB's are not performing as well as had hoped. Today was the first day it was able to be discharged. The ditch is flowing nicely. Back in 2018, Mayor Helfman mentioned he had similar issues. Review of the Schwing BioSet, Inc. WWTP Lagoon Cleanup quote, which has options ranging from \$13,000 for VE115 Boom truck, \$37,000 for hauling and disposal, to \$85,000 for full mobilization & demo. Discussion continued around the dumpers. Waste Hauler Contractors will not be renewed for 2026; they will expire on 12/31/2025. The mound could potentially resolve itself over time without dumping. There is one 2025 contract that has not been signed. This hauler was informed of this and has been asked to sign the 2025 contract.

Councilmember K. Grey motioned to notify Robbins Septic that they must sign the 2025 contract before May 15, 2025. If not, they have no contract and are done immediately. The waste haulers will be notified that their contractors will end on December 31, 2025, and they will no longer be allowed to dump at the Sturgeon Lake ponds. Furthermore, no additional gallonage for the remainder of the 2025 contract year will be granted, seconded by Councilmember M. Noyes. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Effective immediately, as of May 14, 2025, all loads are counted as full loads. The measuring system or counts must be sent in daily, along with pictures if available. The council stressed exploring land applications.

Councilmember N. Dagel made a motion that full loads with pictures are now in place, effective May 14, 2025, seconded by Councilmember T. Booker. The motion carried, with all members present voting in favor.

Zoning: Logan from Widseth responded that he will have a working draft of the subdivision ordinance available for the June 17th meeting. The biggest issue is private roads. Additional information is needed; potentially, the city attorney will need to consult on the water sewer connection line length. Mayor Helfman would like to review the sewer line distances more.

City Clerk/Treasurer: Experiencing major computer issues with lag and shutdown issues recently. At least 3-12 complete lockups and shutdowns each day, regardless of whether one or five applications are open. One vendor's access database causes a glitch that impacts open applications and locks them solid to the point that a hard reboot is the only resolution. The City Clerk/Treasurer spent several hours on the phone with three techs to troubleshoot and restore our credit card processor with the credit card company and Banyon. The two systems did not take the residents' payments, did not send them to our account, or update the databases for almost three weeks. Reporting has been restored, but we are still experiencing random issues with line items not always capturing the data correctly and having to allocate some entries manually. Councilmember T. Booker recommends pricing out new software and computer systems.

Mayor: Tim Korby has provided a contract agreement for \$1,500 that will allow him to assist with writing bonding bills on behalf of the city for the road and fire hall projects. The council discussed this topic and would like the Fire Chief to be present to provide his input before a final decision is made. This has been moved to the June 17, 2025, meeting for follow-up. Mayor Helfman also shared that Tim Korby shared that the League of Minnesota Cities has \$5,000 in funding for cities to help with grant writing for bonds and earmarks. He will contact him later in the week to complete the paperwork to get this submitted.

New Business

The rental fee for the Pine County Animal Welfare Society (PCAWS) Pet Clinics on August 20th and September 17, 2025, has been covered by two donations by Councilmember T. Booker and Mayor Helfman.

Resolution No. 2025-14 A Resolution Designation of the Official Depository & Corporate Authorization for the City of Sturgeon Lake

Councilmember N. Dage! motioned to approve Resolution No. 2025-14, A Resolution Designation of the Official Depository & Corporate Authorization for the City of Sturgeon Lake, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with a roll call vote, with all members present voting in favor, and Councilmember M. Noyes absent.

Resolution No. 2025-15 A Resolution Authorizing Todd Booker as A Signatory on City of Sturgeon Lake Account, Woodlands National Bank

Councilmember N. Dage! motioned to approve Resolution No. 2025-15, A Resolution Authorizing Todd Booker as A Signatory on City of Sturgeon Lake Account, Woodlands National Bank, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with a roll call vote, with all members present voting in favor, and Councilmember M. Noyes absent.

Resolution No. 2025-16 A Resolution Authorizing Ken Grey as A Signatory on City of Sturgeon Lake Account, Woodlands National Bank

Councilmember N. Dage! motioned to approve Resolution No. 2025-15, A Resolution Authorizing K. Grey as A Signatory on City of Sturgeon Lake Account, Woodlands National Bank, seconded by Councilmember T. Booker. The motion carried with a roll call vote, with all members present voting in favor, and Councilmember M. Noyes absent.

Old Business

Paperwork has been submitted to the Lions Club for extending the fence at the city park. Hope to hear something this week.

Several residents have called Lakes and Pines regarding the Sturgeon Lake Small Cities Development Program Housing Rehabilitation. They were told conflicting information about when and if they would reach someone or get a call back from the brochure. We need more information to clarify. The City Clerk/Treasurer will investigate this and get back to the residents.

Announcements

JUNE 2025

- City Council Work Session Meetings for the Summer. Once the Subdivision ordinance is ready to be reviewed, a date will be provided.
- The next Regular City Council Meeting will be Tuesday, June 17, 2024, at 6:00 pm.
- The 2026 Fire Contract Meeting is June 24, 2025, at 6:00 pm
- City Hall will be closed on Thursday, June 19, in observance of Juneteenth Day

JULY 2025

- City Hall will be closed on Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day
- The next Regular City Council Meeting is July 15, 2025, at 6:00 pm
- The 2026 Budget Meeting is July 22, 2025, at 6:00 pm

AUGUST 2025

- 2025 National Night Out, August 5, more information to follow on June 17, 2025.

Adjournment

Councilmember K. Grey motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember N. Dage!. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Osterdyk
City Clerk/Treasurer, City of Sturgeon Lake



Scott Helfman
Mayor, City of Sturgeon Lake