

MINUTES
Lake Crystal City Council
Monday, December 1, 2025, 7:30 pm
City Council Chambers
100 E. Robinson St.

Mayor Todd Wiens called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. Members present: Councilors Brett Hanson, Gina Cooper, Michael Windsperger, and Jennifer Bierma.

Staff members present: City Administrator Angela Grafstrom; Kenzie Doering, Administrative Assistant; Megan Kurkowski, Finance Director; and David Paul, Fire Chief

Others present: Tyler Eckert, Fire Department; Tom Goodrum, Founder of Goodrum Land Planning LLC; Sarah Swedburg, Bolton & Menk AICP and Planner; Jessica Green, Northland Securities; Jerris Barents and John Turgeon, members of the public

Public Hearing

Mayor Wiens opened the Truth in Taxation public hearing at 7:32 p.m. Residents Jerris Barents and John Turgeon addressed the Council with concerns regarding their property taxes. Mr. Barents noted that statements appear to show the City of Lake Crystal with the highest percentage increase. City Administrator Grafstrom explained that the City's portion increased is lower than many surrounding cities, and that market value increases are determined by the County Assessor, not the city. She also noted the city has five outstanding debt obligations supported by taxpayers. Mr. Turgeon asked why the city cannot levy less. Administrator Grafstrom explained that the increase does not keep pace with inflation or rising operating costs, and that a 0% levy would create a negative budget and require service cuts. Mayor Wiens adds that the Council works to keep increases minimal to avoid large spikes in future years. Administrator Grafstrom reported that 23% of taxpayer dollars go toward debt service and provided levy comparisons with nearby cities. Grafstrom encouraged Mr. Turgeon to meet with her for a detailed explanation of the County's valuation data. With no further questions, Mayor Wiens closed the public hearing at 7:54 p.m.

Mayor Wiens reopened the regular meeting of the city council at 7:54 pm

Staff Reports

Ambulance Service Update: City Administrator Grafstrom provided an update on the ambulance service. The transition is moving forward smoothly, and the ambulance will continue to work with Madelia Health.

Fire Department: Fire calls have been quiet. On Saturday, December 6th, the Fire Department will be participating in their bell-ringing campaign for the Red Kettle Salvation Army. The Salvation Army stated that any funds donated within the City will remain in the local community. A reminder was also given about the upcoming Rural Fire Association meeting.

Police Department Update: No report

Street & Maintenance: No report

Parks Department Update: No report

City Administrator Update

Written report provided in the packet.

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Consent Agenda *(The following agenda items are considered to be non-controversial and routine innature. They will be handled with one motion of the City Council. Councilors may request that specific items be removed from the Consent Agenda and be acted upon separately)*

1. Minutes November 17, 2025, Regular Meeting of the City Council
2. Payment of bills totaling \$284,445.52
 - reviewed by Councilor Windsperger and Councilor Bierma prior to the meeting
3. Approve 2026 Fee Schedule
4. Approve 2026 Salary Schedule/Pay plan, fire pay plan
5. Approve Duck's Unlimited Gambling Permits for January and March Events, Dates are TBD
6. Approve Resolution 2534 Accepting Donations of \$56,023.35 for Lake Crystal Area Rec Center and \$100 for Steven and Dary Larvick
7. WEB Construction Pay Request #10 Final for LCARC \$56,023.35
8. Approve Liquor Licenses: The Lakes and On the Rocks
9. Approve Fire Dept Officers with expired terms: Tyler Eckert, Captain; Joe Kuduk, Lieutenant, Jacob Quade, Board of Review

Motion made by Councilor Windsperger to approve consent items 1 through 9, motion seconded by Councilor Bierma and carried unanimously.

Action Items

Resolution 2535 Certifying Final Tax Levy and General Fund Budget

Council was presented with the proposed 2026 Tax Levy and General Fund Budget. The Council reviews the information, including the Debt Service Fund allocations.

Motion made by Councilor Cooper to approve Resolution 2535 Certifying Final Tax Levy and General Fund Budget of \$1903,977, motion seconded by Councilor Hanson and carried unanimously.

Resolution 2536 Concurring Issuance & Ratifying the Sale of Revenue Bond

The City Council reviewed the Lake Crystal Public Utilities Commission's plan to issue \$3,550,000 in Electric Revenue Bonds, Series 2025A, to finance improvements to the City's south substation and acquire a new transformer. The Council finds that the Bonds benefit the city, and together with the Utilities Commission, will not exceed the City's \$5,000,000 aggregate limit for tax-exempt bonds in 2025. The PUC approved the same day during their meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Hanson to approve Resolution 2536 Concurring Issuance & Ratifying the Sale of Revenue Bond, motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.

Zoning Contract- Bolton-Menk or SCSC hourly

The city received planning support proposals from Bolton & Menk and from the South-Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) in partnership with Goodrum Land Planning LLC. Sarah Swedburg with Bolton & Menk informed the Council that Bolton & Menk would provide ongoing planning

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support to the city, including zoning reviews, compliance checks, ordinance guidance, and attendance at Planning Commission and City Council meetings. Their team uses senior planners for complex items and lower-cost staff for routine tasks, with billing based on actual time spent. Routine review costs are typically covered by application fees. Additional services—such as economic development assistance, grant applications, and housing studies—are available if needed.

SCSC and Tom Goodrum, founder of Goodrum Land Planning, proposed a structured approach to improving Lake Crystal's Planning and Zoning processes. Their proposal includes developing planning goals with the Council and Planning Commission, providing ongoing planning and zoning review, shoreland oversight, variance recommendations, and regular communication with staff and Council. Meeting attendance is offered at a flat rate, with additional project-specific work billed hourly.

CEDA previously submitted a quote for services; however, they have since withdrawn it due to current staffing limitations.

Tabled for future review by Council.

Lake Crystal AI Policy

City staff may use low-risk, public data with AI technologies to perform work, ensuring compliance with Minnesota data privacy laws. Staff follow guiding principles, including ethical use, transparency, accountability, privacy, equity, and continuous learning. AI tools may assist with providing information, data analysis, process automation, and accessibility. Staff must secure and anonymize data, comply with relevant laws, and address ethical considerations such as bias mitigation and accountability for AI outcomes. All AI-generated data is retained according to the city's record retention schedule.

Motion made by Councilor Windsperger to approve Lake Crystal AI policy, motion seconded by Councilor Cooper and carried unanimously.

Approve the 2026 CEDA contract

The City of Lake Crystal retains Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), a Minnesota nonprofit, to provide technical and management expertise. CEDA supports the city in improving community quality of life, increasing affordable housing, preventing neighborhood deterioration, attracting and retaining businesses, creating jobs, and expanding opportunities for entrepreneurs. CEDA provides staff and materials as directed by the city through a work plan. The city reimburses CEDA up to \$55,053 annually for staff time and pays for approved materials and related expenses. CEDA operates as an independent contractor, maintains all payroll and insurance obligations, and invoices the City at least quarterly. The Agreement is effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, and may be terminated by either party with 30 days' notice. Upon termination, the City pays for all services and materials provided through the termination date.

Motion made by Councilor Bierma to approve the 2026 CEDA contract for \$55,053, motion seconded by Councilor Hanson and carried unanimously.

Approve Hiring of Robert Prescher

The Council discussed Robert Prescher as a Full-time Police Chief at \$50.37/hour with a start date of January 5, 2026.

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Motion made by Councilor Hanson to approve Robert Prescher as a Full-time Police Chief at \$50.37/hour with a start date of 1/5/2026, motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.

Approve Hiring of Travis Bottelson

The Council discussed Travis Bottelson, a Full-time Police Officer at \$38.74/hour, with a start date of January 5, 2026.

Motion made by Councilor Cooper to approve Travis Bottelson as a Full-time Police Officer at \$38.74/hour with a start date of 1/5/2026, motion seconded by Councilor Bierma and carried unanimously.

Community Contribution Award for Tyler Eckert

Fire Chief Paul nominated Tyler Eckert for the Community Contributions Award, recognizing him as a reliable and dedicated member of the fire department, the relief association, and the ambulance service.

Motion made by Councilor Cooper to approve Community Contribution Award for Tyler Eckert, motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.

Information/Discussion Items

Mayor Wiens discussed the planning estimate for the new Public Safety Building, with cost details to be addressed at a later date. Wiens noted this for future planning.

The Council discussed repealing Ordinance 216, which would eliminate the Cemetery Commission, and Ordinance 24-02, which would eliminate the Ambulance Commission. Councilmember Cooper and City Administrator Grafstrom spoke in favor of maintaining the Ambulance Commission for at least the first part of the year. Grafstrom also stated that she, Ryan Marti of Madelia Health, and Rhonda Ingebritson will be reaching out directly to the townships to request a cost-sharing contribution. The Council indicated that this item may be moved to an action item at a future meeting.

Upcoming meetings and events:

- Monday, December 15, 2025, 7:30 PM Regular Council Meeting

Council Comments and Observations

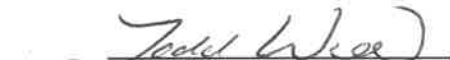
Mayor Wiens expressed his appreciation to both members of the public for attending the Council meeting and raising their questions about the public hearing.

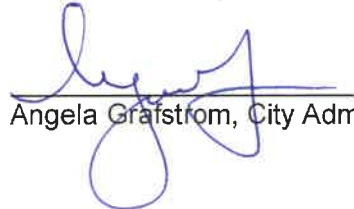
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Adjournment:

There being no further business of the Lake Crystal City Council, Councilor Hanson motioned to adjourn the regular meeting of December 1, 2025, motion seconded by Councilor Bierma and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:26 P.M.

Minutes prepared by: Kenzie Doering


Todd Wiens, Mayor


Angela Grafstrom, City Administrator

