



Goodhue City Council Work Meeting Minutes
City Hall ~ September 10, 2025 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Ernie Valenzuela, Council Members Michael Brunkhorst, Chris Schmit, Jeannine Nagel

Members Absent: Joe Benda

Others Present: Lisa Redepenning, City Administrator, Lori Luhman, Administrative Assistant/City Clerk, Jason Mandelkow, Public Works Director, Chad Ryan, Goodhue Fire Truck Association President, Bob Vose, City Attorney, Telecommunications Tower
Presenters: Kirk Rasmussen, Project Manager, Mike Huizenga, Project Manager

Call to Order

Mayor Valenzuela called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approve amended Agenda

Amendments to agenda include policing update moved to next work session and first two items on the agenda requested to be moved down the list around 6:30 timeframe to accommodate Attorney presence. Motion to approve amended agenda made by Brunkhorst, seconded by Schmit, motion carried 4-0-0.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were amended to change spelling correction of a name, change motions to 2 instead of 3 and replace the word TIF with bond. Motion to approve the amended meeting minutes of August 27, 2025, made by Brunkhorst, seconded by Schmit, motion carried 4-0-0.

Approval of Bills

A motion was made to approve the bills by Brunkhorst, seconded by Nagel, motion carried 4-0-0.

New Business

Fence Ordinance Modification for Twin Homes

To formally modify the ordinance to clear up confusion on lots with twin homes, the ordinance is to be amended as follows, Ordinance No. 152 Section 1. F. Setbacks. A fence may be located within 5 feet of a property line. **Fences along shared property lines in twin home configurations may be installed entirely within the owner's property. However, placement directly on the shared property line requires mutual consent from both property owners.** No fence, wall, hedge, or other screening device shall be permitted to encroach on any public right-of-way. A new Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 152 will be added to the consent agenda for the next meeting.

Set Preliminary Levy

Discussion centered on setting the preliminary property tax levy which must be set by the end of the month and can only be lowered later. Other Minnesota cities are proposing 3-15% increases due to rising costs and funding uncertainties. School levy and County levy impacts were discussed. City was notified that the cost of CEDA for 2026 will be increasing 2.5%. Council consensus was to set preliminary levy at 10% with intent to reduce if it is fiscally possible. Preliminary Levy of 10% will be added to the consent agenda for the next meeting.

Telecommunications Tower Proposal - discussion with vendor

Presentation by Kirk Rasmussen and colleague regarding proposed telecommunications tower in the city. The offer is \$400/month lease with 10% escalator every 5 years over 50 years plus a \$100/ month per extra carrier. Lease would include a dismantling/removal of improvements bond (\$20,000) for end-of-life or bankruptcy. Council addressed their concerns of rate, impact, public opposition, zoning, aviation lighting, access to site and the impact of crop land and coordination with farmers. The City is interested in only one specific parcel location, a smaller lease area, higher rent, and a lower self-supporting tower. The city will now wait for a revised offer and feedback from the tower company after the council's concerns are reviewed. Public engagement/outreach will be required before final approval.

Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement of the Goodhue Community Fire Truck Association

Ongoing, protracted negotiations over the JPA language for the fire truck association took place again. Main points that need clarification are the definition of “Members” and where it is used in the agreement and the clause allowing 4/5th majority to alter the funding formula. Frustrations of clarity, version control, lack of communication, intimidating tactics and unnecessary voicemail messages from association representatives, confirm that both entities’ attorneys should be communicating the proper wording to this agreement. Council consensus is the agreement needs legal review and clear definitions; current version has ambiguities and risks unfair formula changes. Council requests Fire Truck Association to engage legal counsel and clarify language before further consideration. Council Member Brunkhorst suggested choosing new JPA committee members due to rising tension.

Special Assessment for delinquent bills

Annual process to set threshold for minimum past due on utility bills to be assessed was discussed. Council agreed to proceed with assessment process for all accounts in arrears. Customers will be notified of their amount and given a chance to pay before it is assessed to their taxes.

Pool Season Overview

Pool season statistics and resident/non-resident pass breakdowns were reviewed. Purchasing concessions from a larger retailer was suggested and consider combo packages for lessons and passes.

Negative Fund Balances

The State Auditor requires negative fund balances (twin homes, Swanson Heights) to be zeroed out from the general fund. Administrator Redepenning notified Council that this will just reduce the general fund but not the total bank balance.

Public Works Report

Street painting and repairs are ongoing, the water tower is nearly done, and the new pickleball nets are installed. Dump truck purchase deferred due to high price; alternative sought via auction.

Administrator Report

Getting ready for the clean-up day and got gloves and treats for the Honor Society students that will be assisting with unloading cars as they come through. Salvation Army will be there to take anything they want.

City Clerk caught a fraudulent attempt by a title company asking for a resident’s account information. This is a reminder why it is important to have a resident’s contact information on their account.

Council Comments

Council Member Brunkhorst suggested creating a complaint policy and committee to improve responsiveness and maintain small-town approach. It was clarified that complaints are currently handled per the zoning ordinance. Council members can initiate ordinance review at any time with the City Administrator. Discussed a potential need for additional council member on the ordinance committee.

Council Member Nagel stated that she will be absent from the next meeting on September 24, 2025.

Mayor Comments

Mayor asked about the farmland, rent price and cost per acre in reference to the possible telecommunications tower.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:35 p.m. by Council Member Nagel, seconded by Schmit, motion carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Luhman, Administrative Assistant/City Clerk