

City of North Saint Paul
September 2, 2025
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Monge called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Nordby arrived at 5:20 p.m.
Council Member Woods
Council Member McKenzie
Council Member Schweer
Mayor Monge

Staff: City Manager Brian Frandle, Assistant to the City Manager Jennie Kloos, Finance Director Dan Winek, Public Works Director Ron Ritchie, Public Works Supervisor Randy Miller, and Acting Chief Peyton Fleming

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Schweer, seconded by Council Member McKenzie, with all present voting aye (4-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

IV. TOPICS

A. 2026 Budget – Levy Budgets – Certified Levy Discussion

Finance Director Dan Winek presented this item and discussed setting the maximum levy. He explained the levy components, including the general fund and infrastructure, how it is calculated, and reviewed how the City achieved the initial 5.84% levy increase.

Mr. Winek discussed the anticipated general fund and infrastructure levy changes for 2026. Council Member Woods inquired if increases will continue through the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Mr. Winek stated yes, the levy increase will need to continue through the life of the 10-year CIP.

Mr. Winek provided information on the debt and how it measures up to other cities in Ramsey County. He described the 2025 and 2026 debt levy summaries, noting the major source of debt is the issuance of the 2025A bonds as they relate to the 2026 budget.

Mr. Winek provided new information on the 2026 property tax levy increase for cities within Ramsey County and stated the City is currently the lowest.

Mr. Winek noted the impact a 5.84% levy increase would have on residents' property taxes. He noted a 1% levy increase would increase the city property tax on a median value home by \$16.89.

Mr. Winek reviewed the 2026 general fund expenditures budget by category, with personnel costs driving a major portion of the general fund budget.

Council Member McKenzie inquired about a recreation personnel position. Mr. Winek stated that a newly created personnel position would require an additional increase to the levy.

Mr. Winek provided additional options for the 2026 budget. Those items are as follows:

- additional \$30,000 to levy for parks
- additional \$84,765 to levy and transfer to the community center for current operations
- additional \$131,829 to levy and not transfer penalty from Electric Fund
- additional \$142,190 to levy for infrastructure.

If all items were accepted and approved, it would increase the levy to approximately 8.93%.

Council Member McKenzie suggested a steady increase each year versus a high and low levy increase. Mr. Winek suggested a targeted recommendation of 8% for 2026 and each year following, not to exceed that amount starting in 2027. Mr. Winek recommended the 8% increase for the next few years to create a stable and predictable budget moving forward.

Mr. Winek also provided information on what an 8% maximum levy would look like. It would be approximately \$74.00 increase for the average median home.

Council Member Woods inquired about the details for the requested increase of \$30,000 for parks. Mr. Winek stated it would be for continued park projects that have not been funded.

Council Member Nordby expressed his concern about the full transfer of the penalties from the Electric Fund. He noted his concern about transferring money out while raising electric rates. He suggested only transferring half of the penalties to keep the electric rates the same, and use the other half to help fund infrastructure.

Mr. Winek summarized the discussion among council members and noted that the council members agreed on transferring half of the dollars from the Electric fund to keep rates the same and use the other half to help with infrastructure costs. He noted he will bring this to the next city council meeting for approval.

B. Discussion – Community Center & Grant Funds

City Manager Brian Frandle described the options for reallocation of the grant funds. He reviewed the previous city council meeting's information and decisions regarding the community center. He provided some broad options for the use of the reallocation funds and the library.

Those options for the reallocation of funds are as follows:

- New Tower Park water tower
- Street Reconstruction
- McKnight Complex

Council Member Schweer clarified that the funds have not officially been turned down yet and suggested that the reallocation of funds be used for something similar to a community center.

Council Member McKenzie inquired about the City's ability to completely fund the McKnight Complex. He suggested using the funds for the new water tower and potential playground, and saving any remaining funds to offset the cost of the McKnight Complex.

Council Member Woods inquired about using reallocation funds for Silver Lake.

Council Member Nordby recommended his previous proposal of a one-level, low-maintenance, unfurnished building to use for community center-type needs.

Council Member Woods suggested funding the new water tower and using the remaining funds for the demolition of and equipment removal in the community center.

Mayor Monge noted that the grant reallocation funds are approximately the same cost as the water tower, which would free up money in the Capital Improvement Plan in the future.

The general consensus of the City Council is to use the grant funds for the new water tower.

The City Council also had a robust conversation about potential options for the remaining library space in the community center. The City has to ensure the library's location until 2030.

The City Council discussed the various options for the library. Those options are as follows:

- Find a buyer for the community center and keep the library until 2030
- Demolish the community center except for the library space
- Work with Ramsey County to relocate the library
- City would move forward without a library

Council Member Woods recommended relocating the library.

Council Member McKenzie discussed finding a potential buyer for the building.

Council Member Nordby suggested the demolition of the old building and creating a joint space for the library and the historical society.

Mr. Winek provided other options for the community center site. Those options are as follows:

- Sell the community center as is
- Sell the community center but keep the library, generator, and fiber
- Demolish the facility and relocate the generator and fiber
- Repurpose the site

Council Member Woods noted that the demolition estimate from EAPC does not include the relocation of the generator and fiber.

Mr. Winek summarized the City Council's discussions and will bring back more information at a later date. Mr. Winek suggested a final option could be to sell the building but keep the land.

V. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Council Member Woods, seconded by Council Member Schweer, with all present voting aye (5-0), meeting is adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

/s/ John Monge, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, City Manager / Clerk