



**City Council Meeting  
June 25, 2024, at 6 pm  
Sturgeon Lake City Hall**

The following council members were present at the hall: Mayor Scott Helfman, Councilmember Nick Dagele, Councilmember Adam Langhorst, and Councilmember David Lingle

The following council members were absent:

The following city employees were present at the hall: Fire Chief Al Cekalla, City Clerk/Treasurer Sandra Osterdyk, and Public Works Superintendent Larry Coursolle

The following city staff members were absent:

Members of the public that were present: Joseph Pelawa, Bernard Zuk, Nedene Kuhlman, and Emily Danelski

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

**Fire Contract Meeting**

The Fire Chief presented the 2025 Fire Contracts for review. It was explained that the contracts include a 4 % rate increase for 2025 based on the standard inflation rate and a 3.4 % cost of living rate. The figures from Pine County are based on the number of structures in each city/township and the proposed amounts due for fire protection in 2025. Nedene Kuhlman, Clerk for Sturgeon Lake Township, expressed she disagrees with the population numbers as she just received her 2023 population number, which is much lower at 568 than what is noted at 682. It was explained that she received her email from 6/1/24, which reflects the number from 2023, and the number indicated on the fire contract is the estimated number projected for 2025. This is calculated based on data from Pine County and the census website and put into the formula to get the contract number each year. It was discussed and agreed that Nedene Kuhlman would send her information to the City Clerk to review to determine if there was an error, and if so, where, correct, if in-house, and get revised contracts out. All Fire Council Jurisdictions members present, Fire Chief Cekalla, and the council agreed on the 4 % increase for the 2025 Fire Contract costs; the City Clerk/Treasurer will get clarification on the Sturgeon Lake Township population number and work with the Sturgeon Lake Township clerk to confirm their 2025 contract to be presented to her board for finalization.

Jurisdiction	2025 Contract	2025 Increase
Birch Creek Twp.	\$ 17,273.98	\$ 1,065.58
Denham City	\$ 2,677.57	\$ 77.29
Sturgeon Lake City	\$ 24,613.84	\$ 1,648.06
Sturgeon Lake Twp.	\$ 29,689.41	\$ 65.02
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 74,254.80</b>	<b>\$ 2,855.95</b>

Council member A. Langhorst made a motion to accept the 2025 Fire Contract rate increase of 4%, with clarification around Sturgeon Lake Township’s contract, seconded by Council member N. Dagele. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

**Special Guests and Visitor**

## Fire Department Report

**Fire Department Report:** Fire Chief Cekalla reported that he still has to hear from Widseth regarding the Feasibility onsite visit. The Fire Chief would like to schedule something with the mayor and himself, and Widseth to address any end-product questions. Joseph Pelawa has been asked to connect with Ryan at Widseth connect with everyone to get this scheduled. The Fire Chief shared that the DNR grant was received in the amount of just shy of \$5,000.00, along with the new equipment for the truck and gloves. There had been a total of 6 calls. National Night Out has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 6, 2024, at 5:30 pm. They are working on flyers for the event and will provide one to the city when they are done. They are possibly looking at a new tanker to bridge the gap. This one is under \$8,000 and has under 23,000 miles. To build a new truck would cost approximately \$200,000 - \$220,000.

## Approval of Minutes

The May 14, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting minutes were submitted for approval. One edit was to be made to the minutes, noting why Councilmember A. Langhorst abstained from approving the Claims Paid due to a conflict of interest as an item for reimbursement.

[Councilmember A. Langhorst motioned to approve the minutes for the May 14, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting, with one edit as requested. Councilmember N. Dagele seconded the motion. 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 A. Langhorst motioned to approve Claims Paid, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagele. 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 A. Langhorst motioned to approve the Unpaid Claims, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagele. 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 A. Langhorst motioned to approve the Financial Report/Review, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagele. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.](#)

## Reports of Departments

**Park Committee:** Mayor Helfman attended the Sturgeon Lake Lions meeting to thank them for getting the new playground equipment up in the park. Mayor Helfman asked the council to draft a thank you letter and bring it to the next council meeting. The goal is to draft a letter showing a partnership between the City of Sturgeon Lake and the Sturgeon Lake Lions Club working together and ask for their assistance in helping to get the new drinking fountains for the park and possibly paint the exterior/interior of the City Hall or a new roof for City/Fire Hall. We had a resident in town who stopped our Public Works employee and expressed how thankful they are for the park to be done but wished it had an ADA swing as they have a child who enjoys the swing but requires a unique ADA swing due to a condition. Councilmember D. Lingle will research ADA swingsets and the retro kits for just the seat itself and report to the council once he has the information.

**Public Works:** CIP has been out twice. They have helped at the playground and with painting the crosswalks in town. The areas that have been seeded have washed out. The trailer tires are ordered and should be here anytime. All the mowing is caught up for now. The mowing at the ponds, especially on the hills, makes it slide down, and it has almost ended up in the ponds and has slipped onto the ribs. We will need to schedule a time to get CIP back out again to help

clear the area around the fence line. The mowing at the cemetery is going well and looks good. The contractor is mowing every other week. The back area is growing, and Public Works is still responsible for maintaining that area.

**Roads:** Mike Buetow has been putting gravel down and grading the roads. The roads look good. There is a manhole lifting that Councilmember N. Dagele and Mayor Helfman will check to see what can be done. Timberline and Dynamite have been washed out more so far this year. Otherwise, not much washed out.

There has not been much washed out yet.

**Solid Waste:** The council will work on this as a group. Everyone should bring back notes of the properties with the top issues they want addressed. Narrow it down to several properties. The first round will focus on what can be seen from the public's point of view on the road.

**Storage Facility:** Discussions were had about installing an access door either at the front of the building or by converting one of the smaller units. Councilmember A. Langhorst will look into this more.

**Water/Sewer Operator:** Mikrots did much of the work ahead of the ESRI GIS team being onsite. Had been able to get the most difficult ones completed. Will get these into GIS and into the MN Department of Health before August 15, 2024. Have about 75 %-80% of households done. Training will be coordinated and completed as well. Mikrots will get the jetting done on the manholes. On June 24, 2024, the Lift Station #3 grinder pump went out. We need to look at repair costs to determine if replacing or rebuilding is cost-effective. There was a discussion on the sewer dumping in the north ponds and land application in Windemere. What other cities and counties are doing in the area do allow/don't. Should the city charge a surcharge or increase rates? Additional discussion to follow.

**Zoning:** They have completed the installation of the new house at Eric Witke's property and will work on updating the codes in the following months.

**City Clerk/Treasurer:** It was recently discovered that the pull tabs contributions from the Northern Pine Riders at the Sturgeon Lake Pizza Pub to provide the 10 % were not entirely in place, as a written request was not submitted with the original paperwork. This request will be sent immediately to correct the issue. With the new 2024 ESST law changes that became effective as of May 25, 2024, the question of if the fire department and council would have to be paid out this year on their ESST resolved itself, as an elected official or a person who is appointed to fill a vacancy in an elected office as part of a political subdivision or a volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters, for a department charged with prevention or suppression of fires within Minnesota boundaries, as well as volunteer ambulance attendants, or paid-on-call ambulance service personnel are now excluded from ESST. Hazel Grazin donated to the Park and Fire Department in November 2018. Her friend stopped at City Hall and expressed how a park bench recognition in her honor would be an excellent addition to the park, as nothing was ever done with the donation received. The council discussed and will look at ways to address recognition of contributions in the future. The bank balance is growing nicely, so much so that the banker has even commented that we are now where we are generally at year-end.

**Mayor:** Nothing new to report that wasn't already talked about.

### **New Business**

The Minnesota Power franchise agreement has expired and will be sent to the city attorney for review before renewal under a new ordinance. Additional information will follow.

The council discussed a donation letter from the Initiative Foundation, which was declined at this time.

### **Old Business**

The fire hall roof repair/replacement was discussed briefly due to the recent rain. Additional discussions to follow.

### **Announcements**

The next Regular City Council Meeting will be Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

The 2025 Budget Meeting will be on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

The Sturgeon Lake Fire Department will host the 2024 National Night Out on Tuesday, August 6, 2024, at 5:30 pm.

The Primary Election is on Tuesday, August 13, 2024.

The City Council Meeting/Finish 2025 Budget will be held on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

The Special Assessment Hearing/City Council Meeting, September 17, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

### Closed Meeting

Councilmember A. Langhorst motioned to open the closed meeting, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagele. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Employee Performance Reviews: permitted by Minn. Stat. 13D.03(a) & 13D.05

No motions or votes were made at the Closed Special Meeting. Topics reviewed were to evaluate staff performance, permitted under Minnesota. Statutes 13D.03 & 13D.05

### §13D.05 MEETINGS HAVING DATA CLASSIFIED AS NOT PUBLIC.

**Subd. 3.** What meetings may be closed.

*(a) A public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The public body shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the public body shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.*

Councilmember A. Langhorst motioned to exit the closed meeting, seconded by Councilmember N. Dagele. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor.


### Adjournment

Councilmember N. Dagele motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember A. Langhorst. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Osterdyk  
City Clerk/Treasurer, City of Sturgeon Lake



Scott Helfman  
Mayor, City of Sturgeon Lake