City of Stewartville
City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
Stewartville City Hall
November 10, 2026

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. CALL TO ORDER - Mayor King called the meeting to order on November 10, 2026 at 6:00pm.

Present: King, Anderson, Arndt, Beyer and Oeltjen
Staff Present: City Administrator Schimmel, City Clerk Jefferson, Finance Officer Grabau, Fire Chief Dohlman, and City Engineer Obernolte

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Anderson, second by Oeltjen to approve the agenda. Unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Motion made by Beyer, second by Arndt to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 27, 2026. Unanimously approved.

V. FINANCE AND BUDGET

Motion made by Beyer, second by Anderson to approve the Accounts Payable listings. Unanimously approved.

VI. MOTIONS AND GENERAL BUSINESS

A. **2026 Fire Relief By-Law Updates** - The Stewartville Firemen's Relief Association requested an increase in the annual pension benefit from $5,100 to $5,600. The Relief Association may amend its bylaws regarding pension, death, sick, and disability benefits; however, the City must be notified of any changes due to its legal obligation to cover any funding shortfalls resulting from City-approved benefit increases.

   In September, the Parr Knight Wealth Management Group met with the Relief Association and determined that, based on current investments, there was a funding surplus that would allow for an increase in the pension benefit.

   Beyer asked Jones whether the pension fund had ever experienced a decline in value. Jones explained that the market had declined for a period of time but eventually stabilized and increased in value. Discussion followed regarding the 1:10 asset-to-liability ratio and the importance of maintaining a healthy balance to protect both current pension recipients and future members.

Grabau noted that the pension benefit was increased last year from $4,700 to $5,100. Grabau also stated that the City carries a pension asset on its books, with the current net pension asset to be confirmed.

Jones explained that members are now vested after five years of service, compared to the previous 10-year requirement. Members are 40% vested after five years, with an additional 4% vesting each year thereafter.

Mayor King asked whether the enhanced pension benefit was intended as a recruitment tool or in response to members approaching retirement. Jones emphasized the importance of maintaining the 1:10 ratio and explained that increases to the benefit may be considered as pension assets grow. Jones also noted that the Fire Department currently has a waiting list, but the benefit could help with future recruitment by attracting individuals willing to commit their time and service. Dohlman stated that the benefit is viewed more as a retention tool than a recruitment tool and confirmed that there are currently no formal retirements anticipated.

Motion by Beyer, second by Oeltjen**,** to approve Resolution 2026-21, amending the Stewartville Fire Department Relief Association Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1, and Article VIII, Sections 1, 2, and 3, increasing the benefit amount from $5,100 to $5,600. Unanimously approved.

B. **2027 CIP Soil Borings -** Staff presented two quotes for soil boring services following Council approval of the SEH design contract on October 27, 2026. Chosen Valley Testing submitted a quote of $2,590, with services beginning within 3–4 weeks and a report available 3–4 weeks after the borings are completed. Braun Intertec submitted a quote of $10,300, with services beginning within 6–8 weeks and a report available 2–3 weeks after the borings. Staff recommended awarding the work to Chosen Valley Testing based on cost and estimated completion time.

   Beyer noted the significant difference between the two quotes. Discussion followed regarding coordinating additional projects while contractors are in the area. Schimmel explained that the Maple Brook Townhome Association is willing to cover the costs associated with milling, reclaiming, and repaving the affected road areas, while the City would cover its normal share of the watermain-related costs.

   Schimmel also discussed improvements at Bear Cave Park. He noted that SEH had previously helped develop the park's master plan and that the proposed east driveway and parking improvements were part of the long-term vision.

   Obernolte explained that rather than bidding three separate projects, staff hopes to include the additional work as alternate bids to potentially achieve cost savings while still moving forward with the approved CIP project. If bids come back favorable, the additional projects could move forward.

   Oeltjen noted that the Park Board was excited about the proposed Bear Cave Park improvements. Mayor King asked about the two design contracts.

Motion by Beyer, second by Arndt, to authorize City Administrator Schimmel to sign the Geotechnical Evaluation Agreement with Chosen Valley Testing. Unanimously approved.

Motion by Oeltjen, second by Beyer, to authorize Engineering Technician Koch to provide additional feasibility report information and City Engineer Obernolte to provide a design contract amendment for the watermain replacement. Unanimously approved.

Motion by Arndt, second by Oeltjen, to approve the Park Board's recommendation to include the east driveway and associated parking improvements at Bear Cave Park as an alternate bid in the project documents. Unanimously approved.

C. **MnDOT Hwy 30 Project -** Staff reviewed the proposed MnDOT right-of-way acquisitions needed for the 2027 Highway 30 Improvement Project. The project includes two permanent parcel acquisitions and four temporary construction easements. Schimmel explained the affected areas, sections, and intended use of each portion. MnDOT provided appraised values of $16,400 for the southeast corner of Highway 30 and Highway 63 (TRW241483), $1,000 for the northeast corner of Highway 30 and Highway 63 (TRW241479), and $9,100 for the south frontage of the City Hall lot (TRW241480).

   Discussion took place regarding the temporary easements. Arndt asked whether the affected areas would be fully restored, and staff confirmed they would be restored to current standards upon completion of the project. Beyer asked whether staff had any concerns. Schimmel explained that MnDOT has completed extensive formula process for appraisals and was following State Statute. Staff noted that the City has the option to obtain independent appraisals if additional negotiations are desired but felt the proposed values were fair and equitable.

Motion by Beyer, second by Arndt, to approve the MnDOT right-of-way acquisitions and proposed appraised values for the 2027 Highway 30 Improvement Project. Unanimously approved.

D. **2026 General Election Results -**The City Council, serving as the canvassing board pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Sections 205.185, Subdivision 3, and 206.06, Subdivision 5, reviewed the Abstract of Votes Cast for the November 3, 2026, General Election.

   There were 4,543 registered voters as of 7:00 a.m., with an additional 104 voters registering on Election Day. A total of 2,996 voters participated, including 1,282 at the Civic Center and 1,714 at the American Legion. The election included 410 accepted regular, military, overseas, and mail ballots, one federal offices-only absentee ballot, and no presidential absentee ballots.

   The City Council election results were as follows:

- Craig Anderson – 1,456 votes
- Josh Arndt – 1,433 votes
- Jason Higgins – 1,230 votes
- James Kimm – 475 votes

Discussion followed regarding early voting options, mail-in voting, and the impact on smaller townships. Bill shared positive comments regarding the management of voter wait times and lines.

Motion by Oeltjen, second by Beyer, to approve and certify the 2026 City of Stewartville General Election results as presented in the attached Abstract of Votes Cast. Unanimously approved.

E. 2027 Liquor Licenses - The City received the following applications for 2027 liquor license renewals: American Legion (Club On-Sale and Sunday), 2 Brothers Bar & Grill (On-Sale and Sunday), Down Under Bar & Grill (On-Sale and Sunday), Fareway Spirits & More (Off-Sale), Honest Liquor (Off-Sale), Kwik Trip Inc. (Locations 803 and 414 – 3.2%), and Adamson's Tavern on the Greens (Off-Sale, On-Sale, and Sunday). Discussion took place on timeline and applications.

Motion by Beyer, second by Oeltjen, to approve the 2027 liquor license applications as presented, subject to proper application. Unanimously approved.

F. 2027 Tobacco Licenses - The City received the following applications for 2027 tobacco license renewals: Casey's General Stores (South and North Stores), Fareway Stores Inc. (Liquor and Grocery), Family Dollar, Honest Liquor, Kwik Trip Stores (#414 and #803), and Stewie Smoke Shop.

Motion by Oeltjen, second by Arndt, to approve the 2027 tobacco license applications as presented, subject to proper application. Unanimously approved.

VII. MAYOR, STAFF, AND CONSULTANTS REPORTS

A. MAYOR'S REPORT

- Sympathy to the families of Sharon Bernard and Gary Carlson.
- The City of Stewartville extends its deepest sympathies to our neighboring community of Grand Meadow following the tragic events that occurred over the weekend. Our thoughts are with everyone affected, including family, friends, first responders, and the entire Grand Meadow community during this incredibly difficult time. We stand with our neighbors and send our heartfelt condolences, strength, and support to all those impacted.
- As we recognize Veterans Day, we want to extend our appreciation to the veterans in our community and throughout our nation.

- Shoutout to the Stewartville volleyball girls!

B. CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT - Schimmel gave an update on the progress on the library and noted they were full steam ahead. He explained that there is a housing study taking place through the UofM and encouraged the council to attend their next meeting.

C. FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT - Grabau explained that she is still working on the software changeover. She noted that there would be a fee schedule discussion coming up, and that she would be working on getting the budget finalized over the next month.

D. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Schimmel updated the council on the progress of the leaf machine and noted that the part had come in and that it would be up and running by the end of the week.

E. CITY ENGINEER'S REPORT - No Report

F. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT - No Report

G. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT - Dohlman provided an update on the department's new data reporting program, explaining that it can generate various reports and provide detailed call statistics upon Council request. He noted that approximately 7% of calls were previously listed as "null" due to missing information and had to be manually entered to ensure accurate reporting. He explained this new system would help eliminate this issue.

Mayor King thanked Dohlman and noted that the information was helpful. Beyer asked whether calls could be broken down by category, such as fire calls, first responder calls, and accidents. Brandon confirmed that individual reports could be created for each category.

H. POOL DIRECTOR'S REPORT - No Report

VIII. COMMITTEE, COMMISSIONS, AND BOARD REPORTS

A. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - No Report

B. EDA/HRA - No Report

C. FINANCE - No Report

D. LIBRARY - No Report

E. PARK BOARD - Oeltjen reported that a grant application was submitted to SMIF for the disc golf course. Although the grant was not awarded, SMIF provided funding to help complete the project, which included new baskets and signage. Oeltjen also noted that discussions had taken place with the baseball groups, who have funds they would like to put toward improvements to the baseball fields.

F. PERSONNEL - No Report

G. PLANNING AND ZONING - No Report

H. PUBLIC SAFETY - Deputy Kassel reported that he confiscated an e-bike the previous week after observing two minors riding on the same bike. The individuals attempted to flee when approached. Kassel reminded residents that those who follow the laws will not have issues, but violations will result in consequences.

I. PUBLIC WORKS - No Report

J. RAEDI - Schimmel informed the Council that RAEDI is developing marketing materials to help promote vacant lots available for sale in the community. RAEDI will assist with marketing efforts and is expected to attend an upcoming EDA meeting to discuss the materials.

K. ROCOG - Schimmel reviewed the minutes included in the packet and discussed upcoming studies. He noted that public hearings will be held regarding the County-Wide trail stsrem which will include the proposed Bluestem Trail. Information will also be available on the County website and added to the County's mapping system.

L. TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE - No Report

IX. COMMUNICATIONS - None

X. OPEN MIC - None

XI. ADJOURN - Motion made by Anderson, second by Oeltjen to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassandra Jefferson
City Clerk