

**CITY OF NISSWA
MINUTES – REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.
NISSWA CITY HALL**

Members present: Jennifer Carnahan, Bruce London, Jesse Zahn, Joe Hall

Other Members Present: Dave Reese, City Engineer; Tom Pearson, City Attorney

Members absent: Mark Froehle

City staff present: Maggi Wentler, Interim City Administrator; Jane Michaud, Deputy Clerk; Amber Moon-Peterson, Parks & Rec Director; Tom Blomer, Public Works Director; Todd Szymanski, Police Chief

Audience members: 18 members of the public were present.

A. Call to Order

The regular City Council meeting of January 20, 2026, was called to order by Mayor Carnahan at 6:00 P.M. Mayor Carnahan welcomed everyone and wished them a Happy New Year.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Approve Agenda

Mayor Carnahan noted that the council had an organizational meeting prior to the regular meeting at 5:00 PM with several items continued to this meeting. She proposed amending the agenda to add these items (city appointments, council liaison appointments, and commission committee assignments) under Old Business after item 1. Additionally, she recommended removing item F.2 (Lani Benefits Request) from the agenda and pushing it to a future council meeting.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended, adding organizational meeting items under Old Business and removing item F.2, made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member Zahn. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consent Calendar

Mayor Carnahan explained to the public that all matters listed in the consent calendar are considered routine by the Council and will be enacted by one motion without separate discussion unless good cause is shown.

1. Fire Department Report – December 2025
2. Parks and Recreation Report – January 2026
3. Pickle Report – December 2025
4. Police Report – January 2026
5. Public Works Department Report – January 2026
6. Planning & Zoning Report – January 2026
7. Spirits Report – November Final 2025
8. Spirits Report – December Draft 2025
9. City Council Special Council Meeting Minutes, August 19, 2025

10. City Council Special Council Meeting Minutes, August 25, 2025
11. City Council Special Council Meeting Minutes, August 29, 2025
12. City Council Regular Council Meeting Minutes, September 16, 2025
13. City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes, September 16, 2025
14. City Council Continuation Meeting Minutes, September 23, 2025
15. City Council Special Council Meeting Minutes, September 30, 2025
16. City Council Continuation Meeting Minutes, October 8, 2025
17. City Council Regular Council Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2025
18. City Council Continuation Meeting Minutes, October 21, 2025
19. City Council Continuation Meeting Minutes, October 28, 2025
20. City Council Special Meeting Minutes, October 28, 2025
21. City Council Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes, November 18, 2025
22. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes, November 18, 2025
23. City Council Special Meeting Minutes, December 8, 2025
24. City Council Special Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2025
25. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes, December 16, 2025
26. City Council TNT Special Meeting Minutes, December 16, 2025
27. Personnel Updates – January 2026
28. Presentation of Claims – Check register #156283 - 156474; totaling \$960,612.96
29. Nisswa Fire Relief LG220 Gambling Permit
30. City Street Use Permit – Nisswa Chamber – Jubilee February 14, 2026
31. Temporary Liquor License – GVL / Lakes Area Food Shelf – February 28, 2026

Motion to approve the consent calendar as presented made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Open Forum

1. Public Comment

Fred Heidmann, former mayor residing at 4794 Central Avenue, addressed comments allegedly made by Council Member Hall about Mr. Heidmann, including claims that "everybody in town hates Fred Heidmann" and spreading rumors about Mr. Heidmann and the mayor. Mr. Heidmann asked Council Member Hall to be mindful of his statements if he's asking the community to act similarly.

Council Member Hall responded briefly, noting that he wasn't present at the last meeting.

Sandy Potthoff, 6053 Shady Acres Court, spoke about a resident of Nisswa who was accused of assault, stating that the accusation was not substantiated by the Nisswa Police. Ms. Potthoff suggested this constituted defamation and traumatized the accused resident.

E. Reports

1. City Attorney

City Attorney Tom Pearson had nothing to report at this time.

2. City Engineer

City Engineer Dave Reese reported that projects under contract with the city were progressing and noted that more details would be provided in agenda items later in the meeting.

F. Old Business

1. Discussion regarding the conduct of Mayor Carnahan

Mayor Carnahan addressed the resolution concerning her conduct, noting that council members had received the resolution only a day before the meeting on a federal holiday when city hall was closed. She stated that the resolution failed to identify any specific conduct, provision, or mandatory standard that was allegedly violated, and was not made available to the public in the council packet.

She criticized the resolution for not citing specific violations of the code of conduct and for being based on aspirational rather than mandatory language. Mayor Carnahan emphasized that the resolution had no operational effect or legal authority to remove her from office or restrict her participation in meetings, committees, or commissions.

The Mayor indicated she would remain in office as she was elected by the people and would continue to serve, noting that the only tangible outcome would be taxpayers receiving a bill from the city attorney for what she characterized as "political theater."

Motion to adopt the resolution as presented made by Mayor Carnahan, seconded by Council Member Zahn. Motion carried unanimously.

Following this, the Council proceeded to address items continued from the earlier organizational meeting:

The Council reviewed the 2025 city appointments. Several changes were noted due to staffing changes, including:

- Updating the Interim City Administrator position to Ms. Maggi Wentler
- Removing the former City Clerk position
- Changing the Police Chief/Emergency Management Director to Chief Szymanski
- Discussing the labor attorney position, with council members expressing interest in starting an RFP process after concluding current labor negotiations
- Changing the regular meeting schedule from 7 PM to 6 PM
- Updating Fire Relief Association trustees to include Ms. Wentler in place of the former clerk

Motion to approve the city appointments for 2026 with the discussed changes made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

The Council discussed liaison appointments for 2026. Based on the earlier resolution regarding Mayor Carnahan's conduct, changes were proposed to remove her as liaison to the liquor committee and personnel committee. Council Member Zahn would serve as the key liaison to the liquor committee, and Council Member Froehle would take on both parks and personnel.

During discussion, Mayor Carnahan emphasized that committee assignments are administrative and do not prevent participation or override a council member's role as an elected official. She stated she would continue to attend all meetings as her schedule allows, noting that all elected officials have statutory authority to attend any meeting that other elected officials attend, provided proper notice is given to comply with open meeting laws.

City Attorney Pearson clarified that while elected officials can attend various meetings, proper notice must be given if more than two council members will be present, and some meetings, such as those involving labor negotiations, are by definition closed and cannot have more than two council members present.

Motion to approve council liaison appointments for 2026 as amended made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

The Council reviewed commission and committee appointments. Ms. Wentler noted that she had captured all the corrections discussed previously, including:

- Adding Council Member Froehle to the personnel committee and removing Mayor Carnahan
- Removing Mayor Carnahan from the liquor committee
- Updating Parks and Recreation Commission membership, removing Blake and Sherry and adding Dan and Steve
- Updating Planning Commission membership, removing Danny and adding Aaron

Tom Blomer noted that for the Public Works Committee, Cam Dorian was no longer serving, and there was a question about Dil Stachour who had served two consecutive terms and would normally be expected to take a year break before reapplying. After discussion, it was decided that this matter would be addressed at the upcoming Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion to approve commission and committee assignments with the noted changes made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Pasket's Tract D Update

City Attorney Pearson provided an update on the Tract D property issue, which was discovered during the Foxy Properties laundromat application process. The city should have received title to Tract D as a condition of a previous development approval, but this was never completed. The property is necessary for future street improvements in the downtown corridor.

The City Attorney reported he had been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the property owner for conveyance to the city. He noted that it may be necessary to request council authority for legal action in the future as the tract is implicated in 2027 road improvement plans. No action was required at this time.

G. New Business

1. Wonder Trek Children's Museum Presentation – Peter Olson

Peter Olson, President and Museum Project Director of Wonder Trek Children's Museum, presented information about their project under development in Baxter. The 9-acre campus will feature natural play spaces including a treehouse, creek, wetland pond, and a 2,500 square foot "Adventure Outfitters Studio" building. The facility is designed to encourage unstructured play and exploration for children of all ages.

Mr. Olson reported that the project had raised over \$6 million to date, with \$800,000 remaining in their current \$1 million capital campaign. Phase 1 of the project is expected to open in September or October 2026. He invited council members and the public to learn more or contribute by visiting wondertrekmuseum.org.

2. Spirits – Donation to Nisswa Park Enrichment Fund

Ms. Wentler presented a request to accept funds raised through a roundup program at Spirits for donation to the Nisswa Park Enrichment Fund.

Motion to accept the donation to the Nisswa Park Enrichment Fund made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Police – CWC 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution

Chief Szymanski presented the Crow Wing County 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was developed with input from all cities and townships within the county. He explained that the plan identifies specific hazards, primarily weather-related, and outlines strategies to address or mitigate these issues.

Motion to approve the Crow Wing County 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Parks – Community Center Quotes for repairs and updates

Amber Moon Peterson presented two different proposals for repairs and updates to the Community Center. She noted that the Parks Commission had reviewed these at length and recommended proceeding with the proposal from Hytec. The proposed work would use all of the available capital reserve funds but would address numerous issues identified during the council's April walk-through of the facility.

In response to questions from Council Member Hall, Ms. Moon Peterson explained that the proposal primarily addresses interior issues and the most pressing exterior items. Future work on water leakage due to parking lot grading would be addressed as part of the 2027 road bond project.

Motion to approve the Hytec quote as presented for the Community Center building made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Parks – Nisswa Lake Park Plans

Ms. Moon Peterson presented plans and updated cost estimates for improvements to Nisswa Lake Park. She reminded the council that they had previously approved the purchase of a toilet based on the production timeline. She explained that due to existing contracts and grant requirements with Landwehr, the city would obtain quotes rather than going through a formal bid process for the amended part of the park project.

Motion to move forward with the Nisswa Lake Park plans as presented made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Parks – Parks Commission Vacancy

Ms. Moon Peterson reported that following interviews conducted in December, the Parks Commission recommended appointing Steven Burdick to fill the vacancy left by Sherry, who was serving her last month.

Motion to appoint Steven Burdick to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Planning Commission – PCBOA Application

Ms. Wentler presented the application for reappointment of Gary Harris to the Planning Commission. She noted that Mr. Harris's first term was expiring at the end of January, and he was interested in serving a second term.

Motion to approve Gary Harris for a second term made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

8. PW – Proposed 2027 Street Improvement Design Proposal

Tom Blomer and Dave Reese presented a proposal for street improvement design work for 2027 projects. The proposal included developing 30% plans for areas within Grand View Lodge to facilitate discussions with Grand View about potential road configurations, as well as 100% design for remaining project areas including upper Roy Lake Road and areas outside the downtown area.

Mr. Reese explained that the fee for this work totaled \$269,000, which would cover these design phases and bidding for the 2027 projects. He noted that this proposal would keep the projects on schedule for 2027 construction.

Motion to proceed with the proposed 2027 street improvement design proposal as presented made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

9. PW – Advertise for Bids for the 2026 Street Improvements

Mr. Blomer and Mr. Reese requested authorization to advertise for bids for the 2026 Street Improvement projects. Mr. Reese explained that this was a routine process necessary to keep the construction schedule on track for 2026.

Motion to proceed with the advertisement of bids for the 2026 Street Improvements as presented made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

10. PW – Hwy 371 BUILD Grant Letter of Support

Mr. Blomer presented a letter of support for Crow Wing County's application for a BUILD grant (formerly called RAISE grant) for various projects along Highway 371. He noted that the letter was identical to one provided last year for the same purpose.

Motion to approve the Highway 371 BUILD Grant letter of support made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

11. PW – Boiler Replacement at the Maintenance Garage

Mr. Blomer reported an urgent need to replace two boilers at the maintenance garage after they were found to be "shocked" during a recent cold snap. He noted that Superior Mechanical had quoted \$5,975 per boiler, for a total of \$11,950, and the contractor was on-site that day to address the issue before another cold snap arrived.

Motion to approve the boiler replacement proposal at the maintenance garage as presented made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

12. PW – Street Lights to Hills Crossing

Mr. Blomer presented a request from the Hills Crossing living center to install two streetlights - one at the entrance from Lower Cullen Road and another near their buildings at the intersection with Trail Side Run. He explained that installation would cost \$1,500 each and recommended using the lowest possible lumen output to minimize light pollution.

Council Member Zahn suggested that rather than handling streetlight requests on a case-by-case basis, the city should develop a comprehensive approach to identifying needed streetlight locations. He proposed having the Public Works Committee discuss this approach at their upcoming meeting.

Motion to table the streetlight agenda item G.12 made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Local Board of Appeal & Equalization Meeting April 17, 2026 at 1:00pm

Ms. Wentler presented the date and time for the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting, which had been set by the county for April 17, 2026, at 1:00 PM. She reminded council members that at least three members needed to be present, and one trained member was required for the city to maintain its authority to host this meeting.

Mayor Carnahan and Council Member Zahn confirmed they would be able to attend.

Motion to approve the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting for April 17, 2026, at 1:00 PM made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member London. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Admin – 2026 Pay Equity Report

Ms. Wentler explained that every three years the city is required to complete a pay equity report to confirm that men and women in the same point grade positions are paid equally. She reported that the city had completed this process and passed the requirements.

Motion to accept the pay equity results as presented made by Council Member Hall, seconded by Council Member Zahn. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Recommendation to move to Closed Session pursuant to MN Statute 13D.03 for Union Negotiations

It was determined that there was no need to go into closed session at this meeting.

H. Council/Liaison Reports

1. Mayor

Mayor Carnahan had nothing to report.

2. Council Members

Council Member Hall mentioned the need to set up a meeting with area resorts to discuss planning and zoning matters.

Ms. Wentler read a statement from Council Member Froehle, who was absent due to health issues. In his statement, Council Member Froehle expressed gratitude to the Nisswa Fire Department, Police Department, and emergency responders who had assisted him during a medical emergency on December 17 when he experienced cardiac distress following a stent procedure. He specifically thanked First Responders Doug Buehl and Mike Hemmrick Jr., and Police Officer Dustin Hines.

I. Announcements & Upcoming Meeting Dates

The following upcoming meeting dates were announced:

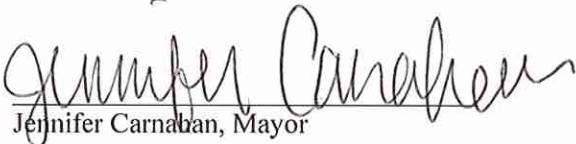
1. January 21, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting 5:00 PM
2. February 3, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting 5:00 PM
3. February 5, 2026 Park Commission Meeting 5:00 PM
4. February 17, 2026 Special Council Meeting 10:30 AM
5. February 17, 2026 Regular City Council Meeting 6:00 PM
6. February 25, 2026 Public Works Committee Meeting 5:00 PM

J. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Council Member Zahn, seconded by Council Member Hall. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Carnahan, Mayor


Maggi Wentler, Interim City Administrator