



Regular City Council Meeting

Minutes

Monday, October 20, 2025 at 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order

a. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Mayor Lalone

b. Roll Call

Council members Gaertner, Landrus, Suchy, Thurn & Mayor Lalone

Minutes:

Council members present: Gaertner, Landrus, Suchy, Thurn & Mayor Lalone
Members absent: None

2. Approval of Minutes for City Council meeting Sept. 15, 2025, Fire Advisory meeting Feb. 26, 2025, Planning & Zoning Commission meeting July 7, 2025, DAHS meeting July 22, 2025, Red Rooster Committee meeting Aug. 26, 2025, Dassel City Council EDA meeting Sept. 15, 2025.

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Suchy to approve the Minutes for City Council meeting Sept. 15, 2025, Fire Advisory meeting Feb. 26, 2025, Planning & Zoning Commission meeting July 7, 2025, DAHS meeting July 22, 2025, Red Rooster Committee meeting Aug. 26, 2025, Dassel City Council EDA meeting Sept. 15, 2025.
Motion carried.

3. Public Hearing(s)

4. Open Forum

(The City Council invites residents to share new ideas or concerns related to city business; however, individual questions and remarks are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. No City Council action will be taken, although the Council may refer issues to staff for follow up or consideration at a future meeting. The Mayor may use discretion if speakers are repeating views already expressed or ask for a spokesperson for groups of individuals with similar views. Speakers should state their name and home address at the podium before speaking.)

5. Additions or Omissions to Agenda

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Thurn to approve the agenda with the addition of Resignation from Bill Ward from the Heritage Preservation Commission to be added under consent agenda 6F and a Pre-development agreement with Derrick Haase at A Way Out Sober Living to be added under business item 9c. Motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Suchy to approve the Consent agenda with the approved changes. Motion carried.

- a. **Payment of Claims \$283,443.28**
- b. **Approve MN Lawful Gambling permit for Dassel-Cokato Wrestling Boosters to hold raffle at Thirsty's Tavern, 241 Atlantic Ave W, Dassel on Feb. 7, 2026**
- c. **Approve the Retail Registration for Lower-Potency Hemp Edible-Retail (LPHE-R) for the Dassel Municipal Liquor Store for one year starting November 1, 2025, for \$125.00 pending MN Office of Cannabis Management approval.**
- d. **Approve Resolution 2025-025 Accepting a Donation to the City of Dassel for the Fire Department - Paula Trisko**
- e. **Approval to set Public Hearing for December 15, 2024, at 6:15 p.m. certifying for assessment delinquent garbage, water and sewer, and mowing bills to Meeker County.**
- f. **Accept the Resignation from Bill Ward from the Heritage Preservation Commission.**

7. Council & Committee Reports

a. DAHS meeting, Tues. Sept. 23, 2025 - Eckerly

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly reported the Fungus Amungus show is on the 3rd floor. Sherlock's Christmas Carol during the second and third week of December. Motion passed to split the cost for the new HVAC system with the city. Postponing the little theatre work, grant application won't be submitted until October of 2026 due to the needs of getting quotes from consultants and clarifying costs. Membership drive letters will go out in October.

b. Red Rooster meeting, Mon. Sept. 29, 2025 - Gaertner

Minutes:

Council member Gaertner reported the committee discussed the financials of what had happened during the event. The committee was pleased with Marketplace and how well the refrigerated truck worked. Tom Nelson, Car Show enjoys being in the parking lot of the church. Another meeting scheduled is for October 30, 2025.

c. Special City Council meeting, Tues. Sept. 30, 2025 - Lalone

Minutes:

Mayor Lalone reported at the meeting Council agreed on a 6-foot set back and 9-foot 9-inch sidewalls. The ordinance is at 10-feet for side setbacks and 9-feet for sidewalls. There will be future discussion to look into changing the sidewall height on accessory buildings. Council also discussed the budget and set the levy at a 9% increase which is temporary and they intend for it to be lower.

d. Dassel Cokato Rec Center meeting, Mon. Oct. 6, 2025 - Eckerly

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly reported that Superintendent Mark Raymond reported

that the ice is some of the best skating ice in the area and that the Rec Center is completed. This meeting was regarding seeking funding for the remaining elements from the original ice area drawing that have not been completed such as the mezzanine. Representative Gillman would like to submit a proposal for funding again to the State Bonding Committee. She suggested funding could be approved if either the City of Cokato or Dassel would be the fiscal agent for the school district.

e. Dassel-Cokato Trail Committee meeting, Mon. Oct. 13, 2025 - Landrus

Minutes:

Council member Landrus reported the Committee discussed the preliminary agreement regarding the future trail maintenance with the State of MN but it only lists the City of Dassel. Engineer Lease is working to finalize some language in the agreement and add the other responsible entities to the agreement. There will be a signing sheet for each entity involved, Dassel Cokato School, City of Cokato, City of Dassel and Dassel Township. The work being done on the trail looks like it is nearing completion.

8. Staff Reports

a. Museum Director

Minutes:

Director Holje reported air conditioning and ergot exhibit enhancements are in progress. A manhole cover rubbing exhibit by a California artist with Dassault Connections is on display, including one from Dassel's History Center parking area. A Rosemaling exhibit, a spin-off from the Norwegian celebration, is also available. Kurt Meyer is sharing his art collection for the seventh time.

b. Liquor Store Manager

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly reported that Manager Moy is working with Vos Construction on gutter work, awaiting a part for the south side. Sales of seasonal items like Oktoberfest, pumpkin flavors, and eggnog are increasing. She's working on a low potency license application through the Department of Cannabis Management. The state will now oversee THC licensing, repealing the city's process. The state has set the fee schedule: \$125 for a low potency edible license. First application for most Cannabis products is \$500, renewal is \$1,000. Last year the Liquor Store paid \$2,200.00 for their THC license, which now would only be \$125.

c. Fire Chief

Minutes:

Chief Johnson reported September had a total of 35 calls, 15 in the city of Dassel, putting the year-to-date total at 352. The pork chop supper brought in approximately \$10,500, with expenses around \$3,000- \$4,000. Johnson thanked all who attended for their support. They had help at the school for fire prevention week and tours at the fire hall.

d. Public Works Director

Minutes:

Director Moy reported Street sweeping is ongoing due to falling leaves. The RRFID on Highway 12 was reinstalled and will need to be moved for snow cleaning equipment. Millings from the PATH project were brought in, and MnDOT and Meeker County will be charged for sweeping Highway 12. Sewer basins and vectors are being jetted, with one basin on 12 inaccessible due to moisture. A leak on First and Highway 12 is being addressed with parts ordered, estimated cost of \$1,875. The water sampling tester was repaired instead of replaced. Spray irrigation will run until early November, followed by winterizing. Gravel was brought in for millings from the Trail project to Pacific Avenue. Dale Wright, part time Public Works staffs' last day for the season will be October 24, 2025, with plans to have him return next year. The cost to get Mason a Class B CDL would be \$2,500. Next year at the park in Summit Hills, there was a discussion about doing some concrete underneath the benches and the Housing Association is willing to help pay.

e. City Engineer

Minutes:

Engineer Lease reported Spectralytics (Cretex Medical) is exploring expanding their facility and need they would like to connect to the city's gravity sanitary sewer service to their facility. The current lift station has capacity constraints and reliability issues. A new lift station is proposed at the south end of 3rd Street to serve Spectralytics and future development. The Minnesota Department of Employment Economic Development (DEED) offers the Business Development Public Interest Infrastructure (BDPI) program. The program offers grants up to 50% of eligible construction costs. Spectralytics plans to add 100 employees between 2025 and 2027. The expansion they're doing is \$3 million. There is a 93-acre parcel that could be used for industry and/or housing. The water service goes all the way down to where the gravel starts. Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Landrus to proceed with the Spectralytics Wastewater Expansion Utilizing DEED BDPI Grant. Motion carried.

f. City Administrator

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly reported that she, Mayor Lalone and Engineer Lease had previously met with Cretex about their future expansion and needs. Staff met with Derek Haase, the owner of the A Way Out Sober Living regarding fire suppress and additional development of the former Lakeview Ranch property. Staff met to discuss the Fischer property south of city limits. The City has an easement for the tile line that goes across his property. Fischer feels there have been some breaches in that tile line that the City should fix. We are looking at getting someone into camera the tile line to see if there are any breaches. The City of Litchfield is unable to help camera that line. The first Fall Frolic Festival was a success. We are already planning next year's event. We will have a Halloween trick or treat event downtown at the businesses, October 31st, starting at 3 to 5, and then the churches are from

5:30 to 6:30, and at Saints Field from 5:30 - 6:30.

Eckerly asked Council if they would like to increase their meeting per diem from \$25.00/meeting and also an increase in their salary. It was decided this will be discussed at the November meeting.

It was discussed how to do Performance Evaluations now that the staffing structure is different. Council decided on a closed session where each department head would give a summary of their evals of their staff and the City Administrator would give a summary of the Department Head evaluation.

Council would then do the Administrator's evaluation.

She is working to get job descriptions put together for the open position and get the Personnel policy updated. She budgeted for a full-time position in 2026 for the open administration position and will be bringing it to the Personnel Committee for approval.

The next Red Rooster meeting will be to talk about becoming a 501C3 or partnering with an already established 501C3.

g. Sheriff's Department

Minutes:

Deputy Kelly reported zero burglaries in town for the month and 63 traffic stops.

9. Business Items

- a. Motion to declare the 2005 Ford Ranger (VIN 1FTZR15E35PA93134) as surplus property and authorize advertisement for bids using _____ with a minimum bid of \$ _____**

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Thurn declaring the 2005 Ford Ranger (VIN 1FTZR15E35PA93134) as surplus property and authorize advertisement for bids with a minimum bid of \$2,500.00. Motion carried.

- b. Discuss new Fire Station**

Minutes:

Terry Heidecker, Fire Department gave a presentation to the Council with the research they had done on a new fire hall. The Fire Advisory Board passed a motion to request the Dassel City Council formally approve to proceed with the planning and construction of a new fire station. Estimated project cost are between \$2.5 and \$6 million. The new facility would replace the current fire station which was built in 1969 and be built on the jacent vacant city lot. Concerns with the current fire station include plumbing, water drainage, storage, flooring, and lighting issues. Space concerns: dressing for calls, space between trucks, carcinogens, bathrooms, storage office spaces, public storm shelter. maintaining and cleaning trucks. Door placement from the meeting room to the truck bay is problematic, hindering safe and efficient departures. Tight space for backing in trucks, leading to accidents and truck repairs. Fire station storage: Mezzanine above the air compressor maintenance area has low clearance. Limited storage space for spare gear, cooking equipment, tables, and blankets. A shipping container was acquired for storing charitable gambling boxes. A shed is used for signs, spare items, and tables. Training and meeting

space: The fire hall is used for training, including props like a cut-off tanker on a trailer. Meeting space is tight, especially for active training sessions. The fire hall is used for community events, such as fire prevention week. Estimates for a new fire hall were obtained for a 15,000 square foot station. Builder 1 quoted \$300-\$325 per square foot for steel construction and \$350-\$375 for tip-up cement. Builder 2 quoted \$200 per square foot for steel construction. Builder 3 quoted \$175-\$200 per square foot for steel and \$200-\$300 for tip-up cement. The costs include the complete building, including doors, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC.

Investing in a new fire station is about protecting lives, property, and the future of the city. The current building is 6,000 square feet, and the new building will be more than double that size. The new building would be built on the lot to the south which is currently being used as a parking lot. The planning process involves determining what needs to be in the fire hall, developing the design, and coming up with a price. The Fire Advisory Board wants to be involved in the design and financing of the project.

USDA funding requires going out for an RFP for engineering services. The current interest rate is 5.25%. A \$5 million loan would result in approximately \$325,000 a year for 30 years. An engineering professional is needed to go through the process and determine the actual cost.

A new truck is being built at a cost of \$1.5 million. The Fire Advisory Board has saved up close to \$700,000 for the truck. The new truck is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2028. Two trucks will be leaving when the new truck arrives, and the money from their sale will go towards the payment of the new truck.

The first step is to create an RFP for engineering services to get a rough idea of the planning process cost. The fire department is working on the 2027 budget, so they are a year ahead. The Fire Advisory Board will be invited to a meeting to discuss the plans moving forward.

Motion by Gaertner, seconded Suchy to proceed with preparing an RFP for engineering and grant services to design a new fire hall. Motion carried.

c. Motion to approve the Predevelopment Agreement with Away Out Sober Living at 22851 MN Hwy 15.

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly is requesting a predevelopment agreement with an initial deposit of \$5,000.00 in an escrow account to charge the bills incurred by the City. If the funds in the account run low the developer will be asked to replenish the account. Council member Landrus requested the sprinkler installation be added to the agreement.

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Gaertner to approve the predevelopment agreement beginning October 1, 2025, for the address located at 22851 MN Hwy 15 and to have the agreement include the installation of the sprinkler system. Motion carried.

10. Announcements / Dates to Remember

Minutes:

MN Assn Small Cities meeting, Thurs. Oct. 23, 2025, 2:00 p.m. in Paynesville, MN, Meeker County Justice Center Open House, Wed. Oct. 29, 2025, 4:30p.m. Litchfield, MN Charter Communications, Spectrum Channel Lineup and Programming Changes/Additions. CGMC 2025 Fall Conference, November 13 - 14, 2025, Grand Rapids, MN. DAHS meeting, Tues. Oct. 28, 2025, 10:00 a.m. History Center Special City Council CLOSED meeting, Tues. Oct. 28, 2025, at 6:00 pm at City Hall Red Rooster Committee meeting, Thurs. Oct. 30, 2025, at 6:00 pm at City Hall Discover Dassel, Downtown Trick or Treating, Friday, Oct. 31, 2025, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Veterans Day, Tues. Nov. 11, 2025 - City Hall Closed - Holiday Dept Head meeting, Wed. Nov. 12, 2025, 7:00 a.m. at City Hall City Council meeting, Mon. Nov. 17, 2025, 6:00 p.m. at City Hall

11. Adjourn

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Suchy to adjourn at 7:55 pm. Motion carried.