

MINUTES
TONKA BAY CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 12, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Tonka Bay City Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Mayor Jennings, Council Members Anderson, Eckland, and Ottum. Also present were City Administrator Holl, City Engineer Bradford, City Planner Johnson, and City Attorney Nason.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Member Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda with two additions, 9D.1 and 9J. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from July 22, 2025 City Council Meeting
- B. Minutes from July 8, 2025 City Council Work Session Meeting
- C. July 2025 Claims
- D. Special Event Permit-Free Bikes 4 Kidz Fundraiser Bike Ride
- E. Escrow Refund – 65 Lakeview Avenue
- F. Minutes from June 23, 2025 Parks & Docks Commission Meeting
- G. MET Council 2026 Municipal Wastewater Charge
- H. SLMPD July Calls for Service Report

Council Member Anderson motioned to approve the consent agenda with changes to 4A, 4B, and 4F. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

5. SPECIAL BUSINESS

None

6. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Variance Application – 30 Pearl Street: City Planner Johnson presented a variance request from Justin and Audrey Hall for 30 Pearl Street, zoned R1A single-family residential. The applicants propose demolishing the existing nonconforming home, which does not meet current rear setback requirements, and

constructing a new home on a combined lot comprising eight parcels. The new design meets all setback, floor area ratio, and impervious surface requirements except for the rear yard setback, where a 13-foot variance is requested (proposed at 12 feet instead of the required 25 feet). The request is due to the site's steep topography and the desire to preserve existing trees. The new home would be farther from the rear property line than the current structure. Johnson found the proposal met the practical difficulty criteria for a variance, consistent with the comprehensive plan, and would not negatively impact neighborhood character, light, traffic, or property values. Johnson recommended approval with conditions, including clarifying patio placement to ensure compliance with the front yard setback limit and an easement agreement for a private lift station.

The public hearing was opened at 7:14 p.m.

Justin Holl, 30 Pearl Street (applicant), expressed his personal connection to the property and to Tonka Bay, noting it had been in his family for generations. He emphasized the importance of preserving the property's character, trees, and landscape, and stated that the proposed project would be their "forever home," allowing them to raise a family in the City and contribute positively to the community.

Peter Eskuche, the project designer, stated that the property's unique layout, specifically the street's perpendicular orientation, created an unusual circumstance justifying a variance. He explained that the design keeps the new home near the existing home's location but slightly farther from the rear property line, and that is why a variance was requested.

The public hearing was closed at 7:17 p.m.

A motion to approve the variance request with noted conditions for 30 Pearl Street and direct Staff to draft a resolution of approval was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

Resolution to be approved at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Applications for Cable Communications System - City Attorney Nason explained that the public hearing was being held as part of the state-mandated process for considering a new cable communications franchise. The City's current franchise is with Mediacom, and Midco (Midcontinent Communications) has applied for a similar agreement. The process required public notice, advertisement, and a

set application deadline, with Midco being the only applicant. The proposed franchise terms are nearly identical to Mediacom's, as state law prohibits granting more favorable terms to a new provider. Following the public hearing, the Council will decide whether to direct the City Attorney to draft a franchise ordinance for future consideration or to prepare a resolution denying the request.

Midco representatives provided an introduction and presentation to Council.

The public hearing was opened at 7:41 p.m. No comments were received from the audience. The public hearing was closed at 7:41 p.m.

Mayor Jennings thanked Midco representatives for answering questions and expressed support for competition, noting that Mediacom is currently the only wired broadband provider. He believed a second provider could help lower prices, improve service, and offer healthier market competition, and stated he was in favor of directing staff to move forward. Council agreed to direct City Attorney Nason to prepare a franchise ordinance for formal consideration at the next City Council meeting.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Reconsider Zoning Contract Extension with WSB: The Mayor opened discussion noting the item had already been reviewed at the work session. He summarized that the proposal is a \$12,000 contract extension with WSB and the city planner to complete the zoning revision project and stated the plan is in place to move forward.

A motion to approve the zoning contract extension with WSB for \$12,000 was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Ottum seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

B. Reconsider Quotes for Shoreline Repairs at Lakeview Avenue and Hazel Street: City Administrator Holl explained that the shoreline repair at the fire lane at Lakeview and Hazel, next to 465 Lakeview Avenue, had been previously discussed. Two options were identified: either install rip-rap rocks for \$8,000 or install tow-in rocks for \$11,000. Council discussed the options and decided to go with the tow-in material, which would reduce the risk of future ice damage because the interlocked rocks are more durable. Holl noted that insurance does not currently cover ice damage under the City's policy with LMCIT. However, this coverage could be added during the next renewal if the Council chooses.

A motion to approve the shoreline repairs in the fire lane near Lakeview Avenue and Hazel Street by installing tow-in rocks for \$11,000 was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion.
Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. SLMPD 2026 Budget Request: Chief Justin Ballsrud presented the proposed 2026 budget for Council review and approval. He explained that, as this was his first time preparing the budget, he carefully reviewed all details and noted that the 2026 operating budget reflects an 8.4% increase. Ballsrud also noted that SLMPD reserves have been depleted and proposed a one-time allocation of \$50,000 from each city to rebuild the fund. Lastly, he stated the department is moving away from leasing its squad cars and financing them instead.

1. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-18 Adopting SLMPD 2026 Budget was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Ottum seconded the motion.

Roll call: Anderson Aye
 Eckland Aye
 Ottum Aye
 Jennings Aye

The motion carried.

B. Council Vacancy Application Update & Council Process: City Administrator Holl reported that six applications were received for the Council vacancy seat. Council will move forward with interviews for five applicants, as one did not complete the required materials. A special meeting will be held Tuesday, August 19 at 7:00 p.m. to conduct interviews. If voting results in a tie, state statute allows for multiple rounds of voting, and ultimately the Mayor has the authority to appoint. The City Administrator will schedule and post notice of the meeting and notify candidates.

C. Consider Options for City Truck Replacement: City Administrator Holl summarized the work session discussion regarding the replacement of a 2012 F-550 Public Works truck that is no longer operational. The City has three trucks total, which are essential for plowing and other maintenance work. Council reviewed options for repair or replacement and discussed potential funding sources. Council agreed to use a portion of the remaining liquor store funds, which many cities allocate for equipment and operational needs.

A motion to approve the purchase of a new Ford F550, including a new box in the amount of \$102,251 was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

- D. Approve Playground Quote for Manitou Park: Mayor Jennings opened discussion on the Manitou Park playground equipment proposal. He noted that while Council will be reviewing the Parks and Docks Commission's recommendation, the playset will remain in its current location rather than being moved closer to the parking lot, as had been discussed previously. City Administrator Holl explained that the Manitou Park playground replacement project has been in discussion for years and, after reviewing multiple bids, the Parks and Docks Commission recommends accepting Midwest Playscapes' proposal of \$299,971.16. Public Works will remove the old equipment this fall, with installation scheduled for spring of 2026. Funding will come entirely from municipal dock rental proceeds, not levy dollars.

Council Member Eckland expressed strong concerns about approving nearly \$300,000 for new playground equipment, noting that the existing set could be maintained and updated for a fraction of the cost. He questioned the absence of Parks and Docks Commission representatives to answer council questions and argued that the proposed expenditure was excessive, particularly since most playground users are from outside Tonka Bay. He emphasized that just because the funds are available through dock rentals does not mean they should be spent, and he felt residents were not requesting or justifying such a large expense. Eckland stated he could not support the project.

Holl explained that the current playground equipment is aging, has already had parts fail, and is not ADA compliant, which is a key reason for replacement. The new equipment and surfacing will meet current safety and accessibility standards. He noted that while repairs could be made, other parts are likely to fail due to age. The Parks and Docks Commission worked closely with Midwest Playscapes, and the city can access their pricing through Sourcewell, which ensures competitive pricing and compliance with state bidding requirements without going through a lengthy bidding process. This made Midwest Playscapes the preferred vendor over alternatives.

Council Member Anderson made a motion to approve the quote from Midwest Playscapes for \$299,971.16 for new playground equipment in Manitou Park. Council Member Ottum seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Ottum, and Jennings. Nays: Eckland. The motion carried.

1. Approve Wekota Park Tennis Court Proposal: Holl noted that the tennis courts are in poor condition, and the Parks and Docks Commission reviewed options for repair and updates. They propose replacing one tennis court with three pickleball courts while keeping one tennis court. Quotes were received from Tennis West (\$133,227) and Plehal Blacktopping (\$155,718), with Tennis West offering the lower price and the advantage of completing the project this year. Parks and Docks recommends contracting with Tennis West.

A motion to approve Wekota Park Tennis Court Proposal to replace one tennis court and add three pickleball courts, and accept the quote from Tennis West for \$133,227 was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

- E. Set Truth In Taxation Meeting Date: A motion to set the Truth In Taxation Meeting date for December 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.
- F. Resolution for Appointment to the Excelsior Fire District Board: Mayor Jennings shared that Council Member Eckland is the current representative of the Excelsior Fire District. With Council Member Wischmeier's departure, the alternate position is now vacant, and the proposal is to amend the Council Appointments and appoint a new alternate to the EFDB.

1. Approve Resolution 2025-17 Amending Council Appointments: A motion to approve Resolution 2024-17 Amending Council Appointments and appointing Mayor Jennings to the Excelsior Fire District Board was made by Council Member Eckland. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion.

Roll call: Anderson Aye
 Eckland Aye
 Ottum Aye
 Jennings Aye

The motion carried.

- G. Approve Change Order #6 and #8 for the 2024 SUIP: City Engineer Bradford provided Council with a summary of SUIP 2024 Change Orders 6 & 8:
Change Order #6: Covers the mound construction and placement. The good

news is that up until July 28, the charges were coming in at \$178,000, with approximately five days left to complete the work. Pricing follows MnDOT recommendations and comes in under the initial \$350,000 estimate presented in March 2025, keeping the project well within budget.

Change Order #8: Provides for directional drilling of an irrigation line from Manitou Road to the control station between the ball diamonds in Manitou Park. Public Works will try to locate an existing water line to reduce costs. The change order is \$14,428.70 and requires Council approval before moving forward.

Council Member Ottum asked about Manitou Park soils, mound heights, cement ribbon replacement, the Council vacancy, video status, and expressed frustration with repeated change orders and project delays.

A motion to approve Change Order #6 for \$300,000 and Change Order #8 for \$14,428.70 was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, and Jennings. Nays: Ottum. The motion carried.

H. Approve Pay Request #11 for the 2024 SUIP: A motion to approve Pay Request #11 for \$167,120.35 was made by Council Member Anderson. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

I. Approve Pay Request #12 for the 2024 SUIP: A motion to approve Pay Request #12 for \$323,683.72 was made by Council Member Eckland. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.

Holl reported that the City received a \$3 million federal grant. To date, about \$1.9 million has already been deposited (\$900,000 in July and \$992,000 last week). The remaining \$1 million required HUD headquarters approval, which has now been granted. The final funds are expected within a few days, fully funding the \$3 million grant.

J. Lilah Lane Monitoring Proposal: Bradford explained that Lilah Lane will undergo a reconstruction process similar to Pleasant Avenue, involving reclaiming asphalt, adding a cement additive, and repaving with new asphalt without disturbing original soils. Because the work is within a cemetery area, MIAC confirmed that archaeological monitoring is required. Merchant, the current sub-consultant, provided an \$8,840 quote for this monitoring. The project is

expected to begin in October, pending a 45-day permit application.

Council Member Anderson made a motion to approve the Lilah Lane Monitoring Proposal for \$8,840. Council Member Eckland seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, and Jennings. Nays: Ottum. The motion carried.

10. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

Roselind and Stuart Loomis, 50 Crabapple, asked the City Council to clarify the City's role in environmental matters concerning Lake Minnetonka, particularly in relation to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. They expressed concern about floodplain management, lakeshore development setbacks, and the placement of fill near the lake, especially unpermitted fill, and sought clarification on the division of authority between the City and the watershed district regarding oversight and enforcement.

Bradford explained that during zoning or building permit reviews, grading plans must show floodplain areas. If fill is proposed below the flood elevation, the applicant is referred to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District for review and permitting. Statute requires that any fill be offset by excavation elsewhere. Unpermitted filling without review is difficult to detect once complete, but if suspected, it should be reported to both the City Administrator and the Watershed District for investigation.

11. REPORTS

A. City Administrator Holl reported that Abdo is completing bank reconciliations through 2024 this week, positioning the City for its audit. The audit timeline has been adjusted to September 30, 2025. He noted a Chamber "Coffee and Commerce" event at Dunn Bros Coffee next Tuesday from 9–10 a.m. and reminded Council Members to submit materials for his performance review to Mayor Jennings.

Council Member Eckland asked about activity at 4581 Manitou Road after receiving notice from the Watershed District regarding a permit application to demolish and rebuild a single-family home. Jennings noted that if the project meets code and requires no variances, it may proceed without coming before the Council, with staff managing it instead.

B. City Engineer Bradford reported that mound construction is progressing well, with seeding expected to wrap up shortly. The next step is removing grass mats and bringing in class five material to rebuild the trail, with soil hauling at Manitou Park expected to take only one day. He acknowledged delays with

restoration due to heavy rain affecting contractors but confirmed that concrete repairs, seeding, sodding, and soil restoration are still expected this week.

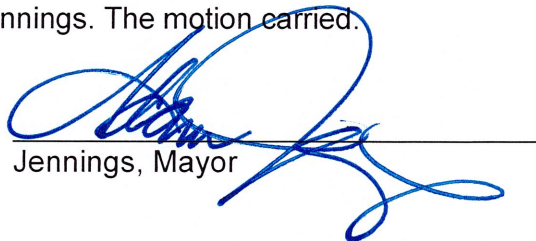
In response to questions from Council Member Eckland:

Soil tests were not performed because the soil had to remain onsite regardless of conditions; the high-water table limited excavation depth. The weight of the soil is not expected to cause sinking beyond minor consolidation, and drainage has been designed to flow around the mounds. The number of mounds was reduced from eight to five by filling in between them with extra soil, creating larger consolidated mounds.

- C. Mayor Jennings noted the need to begin scheduling budget dates, with the fire budget nearing finalization and the police budget already complete. Due to the length of the current meeting, he suggested postponing the discussion until the next meeting, and the Council agreed.

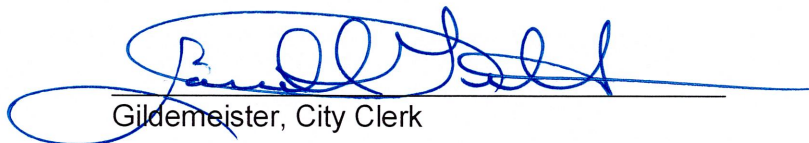
12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Council Member Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. Councilmember Ottum seconded the motion. Ayes: Anderson, Eckland, Ottum, and Jennings. The motion carried.



Jennings, Mayor

Attest:



Gildemeister, City Clerk