

MINUTES
TONKA BAY CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 18, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present: Mayor Jennings and Council Members Broas and Eckland. Also present were City Administrator Holl and City Attorney Weir

3. DISCUSSION TOPICS

Wake Boat Impact Discussion – Council held a preliminary discussion on wake-surf boat impacts in anticipation of providing future guidance to the City’s LMCD representative. Rick Atherton, a citizen of the Tonka Bay for 18 years and the president of Citizens for Sharing Lake Minnetonka, along with colleague, John Benot were present to address the issue, noting that it is complex and requires coordination among the 13 LMCD cities. Atherton discussed concerns regarding shoreline erosion, riprap failure, dock and platform damage, shallow-water disturbance, and increased dredging needs attributed to large wake-surf waves. Examples of structural damage to docks and lifts were shared, along with observations that sustained wave action is affecting lakebed conditions and usability of near-shore areas. Benot referenced scientific research, including the University of Minnesota St. Anthony Falls Laboratory studies, which found that wake-surf waves require 500–600 feet of distance to dissipate to levels comparable to traditional boats. Concerns were also raised about impacts on lake health, navigation safety, noise, and limited recreational use of bays during wake-surfing activity. Potential regulatory concepts discussed included establishing minimum operating distances, adjusting hours of operation, and supporting lake-management policies grounded in scientific data. Council will continue the conversation as the City prepares to appoint a new LMCD representative.

Council Member Anderson arrived at 6:42 p.m.

Assessing Discussion/Update and Legislative Coalition Proposal – Mayor Jennings reviewed the background of Tonka Bay’s transition from a private assessor to Hennepin County assessing services, noting that the County now includes assessing in the property tax levy, making private assessing an added—and duplicative—cost. Tonka Bay’s move to the Open Book process last year reduced expenses and staff involvement. Jennings reported that several nearby cities, led by Greenwood and Minnetonka, are exploring hiring a lobbyist to seek legislative authority allowing cities with their own assessing offices to avoid paying the County portion. These cities asked whether Tonka Bay would join the coalition and contribute financially. Minnetonka also suggested that smaller cities consider contracting with Minnetonka for assessing services. Jennings expressed that Tonka Bay benefits from the County model, finds it more cost-effective, and sees no

added value in returning to local assessing. Council members agreed that County-provided assessing remains the most efficient option for Tonka Bay and saw no need to participate in the lobbying effort.

Winter Use of Frozen Wetland Ponds - Holl asked the Council for guidance on allowable winter activities on city-owned wetland ponds, noting increased use for skating and the placement of semi-permanent structures such as boards, benches, and rinks. Legal guidance from the League of Minnesota Cities indicated the City has recreational immunity and is not liable for injuries arising from recreational pond use. Council discussed whether any restrictions should be placed on winter activities. While skating and casual use were not a concern, members emphasized growing issues with residents clearing vegetation on city property, including cutting cattails and at least one large tree to improve views or create rink space. The Administrator noted that DNR and watershed agencies consider this a City decision. Council agreed that vegetation removal and damage to city property must be prohibited and addressed separately from winter recreation. The City should establish clear rules that allow traditional pond use but prohibit cutting, clearing, or installing semi-permanent structures that disturb vegetation or damage city-owned wetlands.

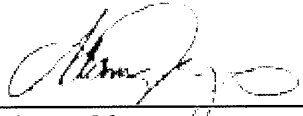
Budget Update - Holl provided a brief update on the budget process. The preliminary budget and levy were approved in September and submitted to the County. Next week, the Council will review enterprise and other fund budgets (water, sewer, parks, and docks), which do not affect the levy. The Administrator will also present the proposed pay scale based on the recent compensation study. In December, the City will hold the Truth in Taxation meeting, which serves as a public budget presentation rather than a property valuation forum. Following that meeting, the Council will adopt the final levy for submission to the County.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Attest:


Gildemeister, City Clerk


Jennings, Mayor