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**CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Ryan Heineman
Councilmember Kirsten Buscher
Councilmember Michael Olson
Councilmember Eric Peters
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Dan Specht
Councilmember Shanna Stewart

Members Absent: None

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen
Police Chief Brad Bluml
Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood
Planning Manager Todd Larson
City Planner Adam Martin

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heineman called the regular meeting of the Ramsey City Council to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Heineman.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.01: Oath of Office for Two Patrol Officers

Police Chief Bluml introduced Officers Abby Spitzer, hired in July 2025, and Andrew Kavanaugh, hired in September 2025.

Officer Spitzer's background includes a career in real estate and community service before becoming a licensed peace officer.

Officer Kavanaugh has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, served in the Minnesota National Guard, and previously worked as a community service officer.

Mayor Heineman issued the ceremonial Oath of Office to Officer Spitzer and Officer Kavanaugh.

3.02: State of the City 2026: Mayor's Address

Mayor Heineman reported continued progress and strategic growth across the City of Ramsey, with a focus on infrastructure investment, community amenities, and fiscal responsibility.

Key accomplishments include completing the Ramsey Gateway highway corridor, which has significantly improved traffic flow, safety, and access to local businesses. The city is also advancing regional discussions on a new Mississippi River crossing to Dayton, with multi-jurisdictional partnerships in place and plans to pursue funding for a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Study.

Major utility investments include a new water treatment facility that is now largely operational, addressing iron and manganese concerns and providing reliable, high-quality drinking water. The facility currently meets demand at approximately 10 million gallons per day and can be expanded to meet future growth.

Quality-of-life improvements remain a priority. Development of the Waterfront Waterplay Park in the COR is underway, featuring a large splash pad, a seven-acre pond, and a DNR-donated fishing pier. The project is fully funded by park dedication fees, with no impact on the general fund or property taxes. Additional park upgrades include ADA-compliant playground renovations and the launch of the Ramsey Farmers Market, running June through October.

Economic growth remains strong, with 28 new businesses added over the past year and expansions by existing employers. New dining, hospitality, and entertainment venues, including a new hotel and multiple restaurants, continue to enhance Ramsey's role as a regional destination. Residential development remains active, highlighted by the opening of a mixed-use apartment community with ground-floor retail.

Mayor Heineman concluded by thanking residents and reaffirming the City Council's commitment to responsible spending, balanced growth, and continued investment in services and amenities that benefit the community.

4. CITIZEN INPUT

Kali Gonzalez, 7092 139th Ave NW, described an incident that occurred after grocery shopping, when she briefly drove through the Home2 Suites hotel parking lot to assess whether ICE activity in the city had decreased. She stated she remained in the lot for under a minute and took no photos. As she exited, she reported being blocked by two individuals she identified as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, one of whom she said gestured aggressively at her. After

leaving the lot, she stated she was followed first by ICE vehicles and later by Ramsey Police Department vehicles, prompting her to drive around until she felt safe to return home.

Ms. Gonzalez reported that, upon returning to the grocery store in a different vehicle to avoid being followed again, she observed police vehicles near the hotel exit. She expressed ongoing concern about frequent ICE presence in her neighborhood.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that her family, who are Mexican American, now feel unsafe in the community and fear being targeted, despite her husband being a U.S. citizen. She shared that her family has altered daily routines due to fear of detention or harassment. She concluded by asking when the Ramsey Police Department will prioritize protecting residents over intimidating community members. She called on the City of Ramsey, the City Council, and the Ramsey PD to formally denounce ICE activity in the city.

Mayor Heineman thanked Ms. Gonzalez for coming forward and affirmed that sharing personal experiences during public comment is appropriate and valued. He emphasized the importance of using accurate information and respectfully asked speakers to avoid assigning motives to any group's actions, while acknowledging individuals' right to express how they felt about the situation.

Mayor Heineman stated that discussing experiences such as feeling followed by ICE or Ramsey Police is acceptable, but encouraged framing comments around observed actions rather than assumptions about intent. He clarified that this request was not a demand, but a general guideline for constructive dialogue.

Mayor Heineman then spoke in support of the Ramsey Police Department, noting its long-standing commitment to community-based policing focused on partnership and public safety rather than crime-seeking enforcement. Drawing on his personal experience of living in the community since 1991, he expressed confidence in the department's approach. In response to the specific concerns raised, Mayor Heineman invited the Police Chief to address departmental protocol and explain why officers may have been present in the situation described.

Police Chief Bluml thanked Mayor Heineman for the opportunity to speak and acknowledged community concerns. He emphasized that the Ramsey Police Department's mission is grounded in its oath to protect and serve with courage, integrity, and honor, and that the department is deeply invested in the Ramsey community, having served since 1974.

Police Chief Bluml stated that Ramsey Police do not enforce immigration laws, noting that this has always been the department's position and is not a recent change. He reiterated that the department's role is to maintain order, protect people and property, and uphold the U.S. and Minnesota Constitutions. He explained that the department has responded to increased activity and concerns related to lodging locations, patrol requests, and reported sightings in certain neighborhoods. In these situations, officers are focused on maintaining public safety, preventing property damage, and ensuring peaceful conditions for the entire community.

Police Chief Bluml stated that Ramsey Police are prepared to manage peaceful protests and, if necessary, address situations that escalate beyond peaceful activity. He noted that the department must balance preventing harassment of residents with preventing vandalism and property damage, citing incidents in other communities in which hotel vehicles were damaged, often belonging to visitors. He added that Ramsey Police work closely with other law enforcement agencies in Anoka County, including neighboring departments and the sheriff's office, to share resources and coordinate responses to complex situations.

Police Chief Bluml concluded by offering to speak further with Ms. Gonzalez privately after the meeting to discuss concerns in more detail.

Mayor Heineman thanked the Police Chief and reiterated that Ramsey Police leadership and officers are available to speak directly with residents who have questions or concerns. He acknowledged that raising issues during a public meeting is appropriate. Still, he noted that formal meetings governed by Robert's Rules of Order are not always the best setting for detailed or nuanced discussions.

Mayor Heineman encouraged residents who wish to continue the conversation to meet with the Police Department or City Council members outside the formal meeting environment, stating that he and other council members are willing to engage in face-to-face discussions. He emphasized that Ramsey police officers are members of the community, many of whom live locally, and have a vested interest in the city's long-term success. He acknowledged that residents and officials may not always agree on individual cases. Still, he stressed that all parties share the same goal: ensuring residents feel safe and protected while upholding the law. He concluded by reaffirming the Police Department's mission to protect lawful residents and foster community trust, encouraged respectful dialogue focused on actions rather than assumed motives, and invited the next speaker to come forward.

Mitchell Manofsky, a Ramsey resident living near City Hall, expressed appreciation for city leadership, the City Council, and the Ramsey Police Department, stating that he has a high level of trust in local officials and law enforcement due to their training, experience, and commitment to humane, community-based policing.

Mr. Manofsky contrasted that trust with deep concern about the presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), stating that he does not trust ICE agents due to what he described as insufficient training and the fear their presence creates in the community. He emphasized that armed ICE activity is alarming to residents, particularly people of color, and referenced the distress experienced by families who feel targeted or unsafe in their own neighborhood. He stated that residents should feel secure in their community and asked how ICE operations are coordinated, including how individuals are identified and whether advance notice or mitigation measures are in place to prevent residents from feeling terrorized. He urged city leaders to take steps to prevent similar incidents in the future and concluded by reiterating his trust in Ramsey city officials and police while pressing for stronger protections for community members.

Elliot Niven, 7541 147th Circle NW, expressed strong concern about what he described as racism and hostility toward community members, particularly immigrants and people of color. He stated

that fear related to the presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has caused anxiety in the community, including among students who he said carry documentation out of fear of being detained.

Mr. Niven asserted that some residents are afraid to perform routine activities such as attending school or grocery shopping, even when they are U.S. citizens or legally present. He urged the City of Ramsey and the City Council to take action to protect residents from what he characterized as an ongoing threat posed by ICE activity. He criticized what he described as silence or inaction by community members and leaders, arguing that failing to speak out enables harm.

Mr. Niven framed the issue as a moral and civil rights concern, drawing historical comparisons to emphasize the seriousness of his fears and calling on city leadership to actively protect all residents they consider neighbors.

Mayor Heineman encouraged the speaker to continue, but reiterated the importance of maintaining decorum during public comment. He emphasized that while individuals have the right to express their views, the City Council expects comments to avoid assigning blanket motives or labels to groups of people.

Mayor Heineman stated that attributing intent broadly can detract from the clarity and effectiveness of a speaker's message. He affirmed that the city would not ascribe motives to individuals and asked that speakers apply the same standard. He concluded by requesting that rhetoric be toned down on all sides to support a more constructive and respectful discussion.

Elliot Niven concluded his comments by reiterating his fear that residents are being terrorized by the presence and actions of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). He referenced historical persecution to emphasize the level of fear he believes community members are experiencing today.

Mr. Niven directly challenged the City Council to take action, asking what steps would be taken to protect residents and how many incidents would be required before intervention. He urged city leaders to decide whether to oppose what he described as harmful and intimidating ICE activity or to allow it to continue, and he concluded by calling on elected officials to take a stand on behalf of residents.

Lisa, a Ramsey resident and active community member, urged the Mayor, City Council, and Ramsey Police Department to issue a clear public statement denouncing the presence and actions of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the city. She stated that she has personally observed ICE agents operating in neighborhoods, businesses, hotels, and parking lots, and described these activities as intimidating and alarming.

Lisa asserted that the current situation conflicts with Ramsey's stated vision of being a secure, citizen-driven, collaborative community. She reported that residents, children, families, and business owners feel unsafe, citing fears related to school bus stops, grocery stores, homes, and workplaces. She stated that some businesses have altered operations to protect employees.

Lisa expressed concern that ICE activity appears to involve questioning, following, or intimidating individuals based on appearance rather than confirmed immigration violations, which she characterized as racial profiling and fear-based enforcement. She stated that this activity erodes civil rights, damages public trust, and disrupts daily life.

Lisa posed three questions to city leadership:

1. Whether the City will publicly state that ICE activity targeting the community is not supported or tolerated.
2. What concrete steps will be taken to restore safety and trust for residents and business owners?
3. Whether the Ramsey Police Department will commit to protecting residents and workers whom she believes are being unjustly targeted or harassed.

Lisa concluded by urging city leaders to consider how allowing such activity aligns with Ramsey's stated community values and emphasized the importance of a public response and leadership on the issue.

Will Boyle, 7037 139th Avenue NW, a current resident and an instructor at Anoka-Ramsey Community College, stated that while he respects the request made during the meeting to avoid assuming motives, residents are seeking clarity and action from city leadership. He emphasized that community members want a clear statement from the Mayor and City Council on their position on the issue.

Mr. Boyle expressed concern that, in the absence of a public position or response, it becomes difficult for residents not to draw assumptions. He referenced recent deaths in Minnesota that he attributed to the actions of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and noted that ICE agents are reportedly staying at a nearby hotel. He shared that his students are fearful and stated that this level of fear is unacceptable. He concluded by asking what actions the Mayor and City Council are taking in response to these concerns.

Mayor Heineman acknowledged the difficulty of responding in real time during public comment, noting that he serves as both a representative of the City and an elected representative of residents. He stated that he intends to address the questions raised later in the meeting and asked for patience while additional public comments are heard.

Mayor Heineman explained that his forthcoming remarks will reflect his perspective as an elected official and resident, and that he cannot guarantee his comments will satisfy all attendees. He emphasized his commitment to fairness and said he would be available after the meeting for further discussion.

Mayor Heineman clarified that his responses will be his own and do not represent the views of city staff, the Police Department, or other members of the City Council. He encouraged residents to continue sharing their comments and questions, assuring the audience that he does intend to respond before the meeting concludes.

Michelle Powers, a Ramsey resident, parent, educator, and co-founder of Parents for Good, shared concerns based on her work supporting families across the district and her experiences with fearful students. She stated that hearing these stories has been distressing, particularly when children and youth are affected.

Ms. Powers asked city leadership to focus on future-oriented planning rather than immediate responses. She inquired whether Ramsey has, or could adopt, policies or ordinances to protect sensitive locations such as schools, bus stops, and polling places, particularly during elections. She emphasized the importance of planning regardless of how long U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity may continue.

Ms. Powers also raised concerns about the impact on local businesses and workers, referencing reports of business closures, restaurants struggling, and hotel employees leaving their jobs due to the current situation. Ms. Powers asked what steps the City is taking to support businesses, workers, and property owners affected by these circumstances.

Ms. Powers stated that fear and uncertainty weaken the community and expressed a desire for her children to grow up in a city where families do not feel forced into hiding. She urged city leaders to demonstrate transparency, clear policies, and local leadership within their authority to restore calm, trust, and stability, while upholding fairness and due process. She concluded by thanking city officials for their time and service.

Mike Wiltfang, 14762 Waco Street, a Ramsey resident and second-generation immigrant, shared his personal background with immigration, noting his family's experience navigating the immigration system without conflict. He stated that his comments were not intended to dispute others' experiences but to raise a specific question for city leadership.

Mr. Wiltfang referenced a letter authored by the Mayor of Crosslake, Minnesota, initially released on December 22 and reportedly signed by a growing number of mayors statewide. He stated that, based on the most recent information available to him, Mayor Heineman was not listed as a signatory.

Mr. Wiltfang characterized the letter as addressing long-standing issues and Minnesota-related statistics that he believes are now coming to the forefront. He offered copies of the letter to council members and concluded by asking a single question: Why has Mayor Heineman not signed the letter?

Mayor Heineman explained that he is intentionally reserving most comments related to immigration and ICE until later in the meeting, but chose to respond briefly to the question about why he has not signed the referenced mayors' letter.

Mayor Heineman stated that while he agrees with much of the letter's content and sentiment and respects those who signed it, he does not view signing letters as a meaningful action in itself. He expressed concern about what he described as "virtue signaling," noting that signing every public letter on every issue can dilute leadership and result in symbolic gestures without tangible outcomes.

Mayor Heineman emphasized that action-oriented measures with enforceable impact are more effective than statements alone and stated that, in his view, some signatories signed the letter without follow-through. He indicated that the City is pursuing processes and actions he believes are more substantive, and that public statements should accompany real action rather than replace it.

Mayor Heineman concluded by acknowledging that his response may not satisfy everyone and reiterated his willingness to discuss the issue further with the speaker after the meeting.

Suzanne Richards, 8241 161st Avenue NW, referenced a prior interaction with the City Council in 2024 in which she received a timely written response to a request for clarification on vendor rules, and stated she expects a similar written response regarding current concerns about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity within Ramsey city limits.

Ms. Richards expressed respect for the Ramsey Police Department and appreciation for past assistance. She emphasized that her request is for clarity, transparency, and written communication that can be shared publicly, such as on the city website or in city publications, so residents who do not attend council meetings can understand city policy and actions.

Ms. Richards requested written answers to the following questions:

1. Whether Ramsey has local sanctuary policies or ordinances that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities.
2. How sensitive locations (including schools, hospitals, and places of worship) are protected from ICE enforcement activities
3. What resources (such as legal aid or rapid response teams) are available to support families affected by detention or raids?

Ms. Richards stated that ongoing ICE activity is harming the community and local economy, citing the closure of a local restaurant following the presence of armed, masked individuals she identified as ICE agents. She questioned how such activity aligns with the City's goal of supporting small businesses and economic development. She concluded by urging city leadership to publicly address the questions raised and issue a formal proclamation condemning what she described as intimidating behavior within city limits, noting that clear communication and leadership are needed to restore confidence and address community fear.

Eric Zaetsch., 6521 154th Lane NW, expressed appreciation for the professionalism and discipline of local law enforcement leadership present at the meeting. He contrasted the conduct and appearance of the Ramsey Police Department with what he described as concerning practices by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including the use of masks and aggressive enforcement tactics.

Mr. Zaetsch. stated that he believes entering homes without judicial warrants and relying on administrative warrants is improper and troubling. He emphasized that such practices undermine

trust and differ significantly from the standards he associates with local policing. He concluded that he is grateful for what he views as higher levels of accountability and discipline within the Ramsey Police Department compared with other enforcement entities.

Kelly Mahuske, a Ramsey resident, requested that city leadership provide clear, written guidance regarding community members' rights and appropriate actions related to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in Ramsey. She emphasized that written information would help residents understand the City's position and the actions it will support.

Ms. Mahuske stated that while residents are generally aware of their rights as legal observers, she believes those rights have increasingly been restricted. She cited recent incidents in which legal observers were detained despite not interfering with enforcement activity, including overnight detentions. She expressed concern that both immigrant and non-immigrant residents, as well as legal observers, feel at risk.

Ms. Mahuske asked the city to clarify, in writing, what residents should do in specific situations, including:

- When ICE is present at local businesses
- When individuals appear to be detained or removed from vehicles
- Whether residents should observe, record, or disengage
- What actions will the city support if residents engage in lawful observation or documentation

Ms. Mahuske also raised concerns about arrests occurring during protests or gatherings near locations where ICE was present, stating that individuals were arrested even while leaving an area after being asked to disperse. She emphasized that uncertainty around rights and enforcement creates fear and confusion. She concluded that clear written guidance from city leadership would help residents make informed decisions, protect their legal rights, and strengthen the community.

Mayor Heineman thanked residents for sharing their perspectives and noted that there is no limit on the number of residents who may speak during public comment. He emphasized that the City Council is present to listen and represent residents.

Mayor Heineman clarified that the City Council comprises members with diverse views, independent of one another, city staff, and any formally stated city position. He stated that he would not present an official city position at that time or speak on behalf of staff or external organizations.

Mayor Heineman reiterated that while he finds many of the comments thoughtful and meaningful, any discussion of an official council position would require further deliberation by the Council as a body. He referenced his prior explanation regarding the mayor's letter. He reiterated his preference for transparency and direct communication, noting that he has publicly shared his personal contact information and remains accessible to residents. He concluded by inviting any additional comments from residents or council members before proceeding with his own remarks.

Councilmember Buscher asked whether the Ramsey Police Department could provide immediate, practical guidance for residents, in addition to any written information that may be shared later. She noted that many residents have requested written clarification for broad distribution, but asked if the Police Chief could share brief guidance during the meeting on:

- What residents should do if they observe something they believe is suspicious
- What steps to take if they feel unsafe
- How to appropriately contact emergency communications or request a police response

Councilmember Buscher emphasized that even short, clear verbal directions could help residents better understand appropriate protocols and available resources in the moment.

Police Chief Bluml explained that Ramsey Police operate under Anoka County Emergency Communications. Residents can contact dispatch by calling 911 for emergencies or 763-427-1212 for non-emergency situations. He emphasized that residents should call police whenever they feel unsafe or observe suspicious activity, stating that officers will respond when called.

Police Chief Bluml noted that the department functions best when the community serves as “eyes and ears,” helping officers identify concerns they might not otherwise see. He stated that calls from residents, neighborhoods, and businesses requesting checks on vehicles or suspicious situations are appropriate and encouraged.

Police Chief Bluml confirmed that, if residents call, officers will respond to assess the situation. He also noted that he took notes during the meeting and is willing to follow up in writing to address questions raised by residents.

Police Chief Bluml acknowledged the wide range of emotions and perspectives expressed by residents during public comment, including those who spoke and those who did not. He stated that he recognizes the issue's complexity and the range of emotions in the community.

Police Chief Bluml explained that he intended to provide information specific to Ramsey rather than to repeat broader national or media narratives. He emphasized that many members of the Ramsey Police Department live in the community, are raising their families locally, and are personally invested in the city and its residents. He stated that the department cares deeply about neighbors and is doing its best to help everyone feel safe.

Police Chief Bluml invited residents to share specific suggestions for actions the department could take, noting that he and his staff are open and receptive to community input. He concluded by stating that he would remain available after the meeting to speak with residents, share contact information, and continue the conversation, emphasizing that he values direct engagement with the community beyond any single issue.

Councilmember Buscher thanked residents for attending and emphasized the importance of civic engagement and community participation. She stated that residents’ stories, feelings, and lived experiences are valid and deserve to be heard, and that no one should be told how they are allowed to feel about current events. She expressed personal support for residents and local businesses, noting that she has visited affected businesses to check on them and offer support.

Councilmember Buscher stated that she is available to residents at any time and considers herself an ally to anyone seeking connection, understanding, or assistance from city leadership. She acknowledged the courage it took for residents, including youth, to speak publicly and emphasized that young people's voices matter because they represent the community's future. She shared that she wants her own child to grow up seeing neighbors stand together, support one another, and insist on dignity and respect for all people.

Councilmember Buscher noted a shared sentiment expressed during the meeting: strong respect for local law enforcement. She praised the Police Chief and officers for their work and acknowledged that residents sometimes feel uncomfortable or harmed during interactions with law enforcement. She addressed one resident directly, apologizing for what occurred and committing to listen, understand what happened, and work together to address it.

Councilmember Buscher noted that many affected residents were absent from the meeting and emphasized that community impact extends beyond those who spoke. She encouraged residents to continue attending meetings, sharing feedback, and communicating both positive and negative needs to city staff and council members.

Councilmember Buscher urged residents to seek information directly from city leadership rather than making assumptions, while acknowledging that fear and uncertainty are widespread. She concluded by encouraging the community to move forward with care, mutual support, and compassion, and thanked residents again for their support of one another.

Mayor Heineman spoke from his perspective as Mayor, clarifying that he was not speaking on behalf of the full City Council or city staff. He explained that the government operates through separate levels and branches, each with defined authority, and that municipalities must comply with state and federal law. He encouraged residents who seek changes to immigration policy to work through federal and state channels, including members of Congress and state legislators.

Mayor Heineman stated that the City of Ramsey does not enforce immigration law and does not restrict or interfere with federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI and ATF. He emphasized that local governments have legal limits on their authority and that there are situations where residents ask the City to act when no lawful mechanism exists for the City to do so. He acknowledged residents' frustration and affirmed that he does not believe people are wrong for wanting action or for asking elected officials to respond. However, he reiterated that municipalities face constraints, particularly on federal matters, and that some decisions are beyond local control.

Mayor Heineman rejected what he described as divisiveness on all sides. He stated that he condemns the mistreatment of individuals by anyone, whether federal agents or protesters, but does not support condemning entire groups based on the actions of individuals. He emphasized that people hold different worldviews and experiences, and that no single narrative fully captures the complexity of the situation. He stated that he will not fully endorse any one-sided narrative or condemn broad groups of people based on political alignment, profession, or immigration status. Instead, he emphasized values of love, peace, kindness, understanding, and self-control, and rejected anger, hate, and assigning motives to others.

Mayor Heineman acknowledged the situation is difficult and unpleasant and said he believes most people dislike the current circumstances. He said he is open to conversations grounded in mutual respect, assuming good faith, and avoiding false assumptions about intent. He reiterated his willingness to meet with residents after the meeting and shared his personal contact information. He concluded by stating that public comment had concluded, that the Council would discuss how to address the issue in the future, and thanked residents for attending and participating.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- 5.01: Receive Cash and Investments for Period Ending January 31, 2026
- 5.02: Note the following Boards, Commissions, and Meeting Minutes:
 - Planning Commission – January 22, 2026
 - Environmental Policy Board – No Meeting in December 2025
 - Economic Development Authority – No Meeting in November 2025; December 11, 2025, attached
 - Park and Rec Commission – January 8, 2026
 - Public Works – December 16, 2025
- 5.03: Approve the Following Meeting Minutes:
 - 1) City Council Work Session dated January 27, 2026
 - 2) City Council Regular Session dated January 27, 2026
- 5.04: Approve Business License Applications
- 5.05: Approve Adjustments to the Hourly Wages for Temporary Seasonal Employees Working in the Public Works Department
- 5.06: Adopt 2026 Legislative Priorities
- 5.07: Adopt Resolution #26-044 Approving Cash Disbursements Made and Authorizing Payment of Accounts Payable Invoicing Received During the Period of January 22, 2026, through February 4, 2026
- 5.08: Adopt Resolution #26-028 approving a Development Agreement and Stormwater Treatment and Ponding Maintenance Agreement for Northstar Truck & RV Parking LLC
- 5.09: Adopt Resolution #26-038 Approving Permanent Sidewalk Easement Agreement on Lot 1, Block 2, Kwik Trip 1782
- 5.10: Adopt Resolution #26-039 Approving Proposals for Engineering Design Services for 2026 Neighborhood Pavement Overlay Improvements, Improvement Project #26-08
- 5.11: Adopt Resolution #26-041 Authorizing Final Payment to Kurilla Contracting of Buffalo, Minnesota for Improvement Project 24-54, The Waterfront Trail Improvements
- 5.12: Adopt Resolution #26-043 Approving Release of Right of Re-Entry Agreement and Amended Right of Re-Entry Agreement – Cottages at the COR – Centra North LLC

5:13: Adopt Resolution #26-046 Approving Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Water Crossing License No. UWAT014269

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS

7.01: Adopt Resolution #26-042 Authorizing Contract Amendment with H & U Construction for Improvement Project #25-58, Waterfront Waterplay Park Improvements

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood presented a resolution seeking authorization to fully fund the Waterfront Park splash pad project, the City of Ramsey's largest single park project to date, with a total cost of approximately \$3.7 million. He explained that the project is the result of decades of resident input, beginning with the 1998 comprehensive planning process and continuing through multiple rounds of public engagement. Residents consistently expressed a desire for a walkable downtown with amenities, trail connections, urban parks, and specifically a splash pad. The City Council responded to these requests over time by prioritizing infrastructure and park investments, which in turn supported private development that generated the park dedication funds used to finance this project.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood noted that similar investments, such as the Draw Park, completed in 2010, have become well-used and valued community assets, hosting events like summer concerts and fostering social connection. He stated that the Waterfront Park is expected to provide similar community benefits. The planned Waterfront Park will accommodate more than 1,000 patrons and include a 17,000-square-foot plaza with multiple activity zones, including toddler-friendly water features, varied spray elements, shaded and sunlit seating areas, hammocks, artificial turf, reservable shelters with lighting and outlets, and spaces suitable for programming and private events such as birthday parties. The splash pad and water features will be significantly larger than those at comparable facilities in the region, including Maple Grove's.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that additional amenities include landscaping, stone seating areas, LED lighting features, and fire elements intended to extend usability into cooler evenings and the shoulder seasons, providing recreational opportunities for adults and children. He reported that in October 2025, the City Council approved a contract with H & U Construction for preconstruction services. The design team has since completed detailed plans and specifications, conducted competitive bidding, and established a guaranteed maximum project price of just over \$3.6 million, including an owner contingency. He concluded that approval of Resolution #26-042 would allow construction to begin immediately, with an anticipated construction timeline of approximately four and a half months and a projected public opening date

of July 1, pending weather and construction conditions. The first construction meeting is scheduled for the following day, pending council approval.

Councilmember Buscher thanked Mr. Riverblood for the presentation and for all of the hard work. She thought it was beautiful work.

Motion by Councilmember Buscher, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to adopt Resolution #26-042, Authorizing a Contract Amendment with H & U Construction for a Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$3,624,184 for Improvement Project #25-58, Waterfront Waterplay Park Improvements, together with an owner's allowance from the Park Trust Fund for a total project allocation of \$3,752,684.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

7.02: Adopt Resolution #26-020 and #26-021 Approving the Preliminary Plat of "Oshaughnessy Third Addition" and Variance to Scenic River Protection Overlay at 17201 St. Francis Blvd. NW.

Planning Manager Larson presented a proposed preliminary plat and associated variance request for a 34-acre property located between Highway 47 (St. Francis Boulevard) on the west and Germanium Street Northwest on the east. The property currently consists of two parcels, including an existing house on the western parcel. A small portion of the eastern area lies within the Scenic River Protection Overlay District, which does not change the underlying residential zoning but increases the minimum lot width requirement from 200 feet to 300 feet to limit residential density near the river.

Planning Manager Larson explained the proposed plat would retain the existing house on Lot 2 and create three additional buildable single-family residential lots. A variance is required for the portion of Lot 2 that falls within the Scenic River Overlay District. The City Council granted a lot-width variance last fall, and it was noted at that time that an additional variance would be required for the scenic river portion. He explained that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was notified as required and has reviewed the proposal. The DNR did not object to the variance because the existing house is outside the scenic river setback area. The variance request is supported by state statutory criteria incorporated into the city code, including findings that the variance is reasonable and that granting it will not alter the locality's essential character. The placement of the house farther back from the river was cited as consistent with the intent of the overlay district.

Planning Manager Larson indicated that as the project moves to the final plat, a drainage and utility easement will be required within the scenic river area to clearly restrict future construction, such as garages, in that portion of the property. He also noted existing driveway encroachments on the property, which the owner has acknowledged and agreed to correct. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the preliminary plat and variance at its most recent meeting.

Planning Manager Larson stated that the City Council may approve, modify, or deny the request, but that any denial would require specific findings. He concluded that the Planning Commission's

recommendation is presented as a combined motion for Council consideration and that the applicant is available remotely to answer questions.

Mr. O'Schaughnessy, the applicant, addressed the city council.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Buscher, to adopt Resolution #26-020, Approving the Preliminary Plat of "Oshaughnessy Third Addition" and Resolution #26-021, Approving a Variance to Lot Width in "Oshaughnessy Third Addition."

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

7.03: Adopt Resolution #26-024, Approving a Conditional Use Permit for Motor Vehicle Repair Uses at 14310 Sunfish Lake Boulevard NW (Clark Companies)

City Planner Martin presented two related conditional use permit applications from Clark Companies, which were discussed together because they are similar. The requests seek approval for motor vehicle repair uses at two industrial properties: one on Sunfish Lake Boulevard Northwest (formerly the Waltek property) and one on Azurite Street Northwest. Both properties are zoned I-1 Light Industrial and are guided for business park uses under the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Sunfish Lake property is approximately 4.65 acres and contains two buildings with eight suites and shared restrooms. The Azurite property is approximately 2.09 acres and includes three buildings with seven suites and shared restrooms, surrounded by a privacy fence.

City Planner Martin explained that the buildings were originally approved for warehousing uses. The applicant has made improvements to the properties and is now seeking approval to permit motor-vehicle repair as a permitted use. Because motor vehicle repair requires a conditional use permit in the I-1 district, the applicant is requesting approval on a speculative basis, with no specific tenant identified. Approval would allow, but not require, motor vehicle repair in any of the existing suites. The applicant's proposal includes several operational limitations: no customer waiting areas; no outdoor storage; no visibly damaged vehicles parked outside; all repair work conducted indoors; and limited shared parking to ensure compatibility among tenants. These conditions align with the city's performance standards for motor vehicle repair uses.

City Planner Martin stated that additional requirements and conditions outlined by staff include compliance with all applicable building and fire codes, issuance of new certificates of occupancy as needed, and completion of required permits. A sewer accessibility charge determination is required for the Sunfish Lake property because it is connected to municipal sewer service. In contrast, the Azurite property is served by a well and septic system. Other conditions include no loading or unloading on public roadways, proper screening of trash and hazardous waste areas, prohibition of on-site vehicle sales, and termination of any unidentified or outdated conditional-use permits. Staff also included standard enforcement language authorizing revocation of the permits if violations occur, use is discontinued, or conditions are not met.

Josh Clark, owner of the two properties under consideration, thanked city staff for their presentations and explanations of the conditional use permit process. He also expressed appreciation for the Ramsey Police Department, noting positive and supportive interactions over the years as a property owner in the city.

Mr. Clark explained that the properties have traditionally been used for warehousing, such as storage for contractors and related businesses. He stated that the purpose of the conditional use permit request is to provide flexibility to rent space to motor-vehicle repair users in the future, potentially. He noted that, under the current city code, even limited vehicle work, such as a contractor working on their own work vehicle, would require a conditional use permit. He clarified that the request is speculative and intended to allow future tenants, such as small-scale or startup auto-repair operators, to work indoors in a commercial setting rather than from residential locations. He emphasized that there would be no customer waiting areas, no significant increase in on-site traffic, and no large number of occupants, as vehicles would be brought in solely for repair work.

Mr. Clark stated that the conditional use permit process can take significant time, and that prospective tenants often need space quickly. By seeking approval in advance, he aims to make the properties more competitive and viable for future tenants who might otherwise choose another location if approval were uncertain or delayed.

Councilmember Riley asked Planning staff to clarify whether approval of the conditional use permit (CUP) would still require additional work to comply with building and fire codes. He noted that the language in the case materials was somewhat unclear and sought confirmation that additional permitting or code-compliance steps would be required even if the CUP is approved.

City Planner Martin confirmed that approval of the conditional use permits does not eliminate the need for additional work to meet building and fire code requirements. He explained that the applicant has been working with the City's building official and fire marshal to identify the specific improvements required if a motor-vehicle repair use proceeds. He stated that architectural code analyses have already been prepared to determine what upgrades or modifications would be necessary to accommodate such uses. These requirements must still be completed before occupancy and operation.

City Planner Martin confirmed that the limitations and requirements related to building and fire code compliance are intended to be included as conditions within the conditional use permit resolutions.

Motion by Councilmember Buscher, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to adopt Resolution #26-024, Approving a Conditional Use Permit for Motor Vehicle Repair at 14310 Sunfish Lake Boulevard NW, subject to the conditions specified within the Resolution.

Councilmember Peters expressed appreciation to the applicant for being proactive in seeking approval for a conditional use permit in advance. He noted that this approach helps prevent potential issues such as improperly stored or damaged vehicles and reduces the need for reactive enforcement by city staff.

Councilmember Peters stated that proactive planning benefits both the City and property owners and thanked the applicant for taking steps to address potential concerns before they arise.

Mayor Heineman stated that he previously met with property owner Josh Clark and expressed appreciation for Mr. Clark's proactive approach, including his preparation with detailed questions. He also thanked city staff, including the City Administrator and planning staff, for working collaboratively to address nuances of the proposal.

Mayor Heineman emphasized that neither applicants nor city officials always have all the answers at the outset, and that open dialogue and collaboration help lead to better outcomes. He noted that this cooperative process allows issues to be addressed proactively rather than reactively and described the interaction as a positive example of how business and city government can work together effectively. He concluded by thanking everyone involved for their efforts and noted that this approach is a good way to conduct business in the city.

Councilmember Buscher expressed appreciation for the applicant's detailed explanation and historical context regarding the proposal. She noted that while planning staff consistently present clear and thorough cases, it was especially helpful to hear directly from the property owner about the realities of the business and the effort to be proactive.

Councilmember Buscher emphasized that proactive communication and collaboration with the City enables issues to be resolved effectively. She stated that when applicants are willing to engage openly with city officials, there is very little the city cannot figure out together. She thanked the applicant for operating a business in Ramsey, for navigating the process thoughtfully, and expressed interest in seeing how the properties are developed moving forward.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

7.04: Adopt Resolution #26-025, Approving a Conditional Use Permit for Motor Vehicle Repair Uses at 14047 Azurite Street NW (Clark Companies)

Motion by Councilmember Buscher, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to adopt Resolution #26-025, Approving a Conditional Use Permit for Motor Vehicle Repair at 14047 Azurite Street NW, subject to the conditions specified within the Resolution.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

7.05: Adopt Ordinance #26-02, Repealing and Replacing Chapter 10 for Animal Regulations

City Planner Martin presented a brief update on proposed revisions to the City's animal code. He explained that city staff have been working for several months on these updates, with significant

collaboration from Community Service Officers, who previously participated in Council discussions on the topic.

City Planner Martin stated that only minor changes were made since the ordinance's initial introduction. These included technical corrections identified by the City Attorney and her paralegal to improve clarity, readability, and consistency. Additional updates were made to references to Minnesota statutes to ensure alignment with current state law and to reduce the need for future code revisions when statute numbering changes. He noted that another key revision was made at the City Council's request: updating the animal units table to match the version previously presented. This table clarifies how different animals are counted and regulated under the code.

City Planner Martin concluded by presenting the recommended action shown on the agenda and stated that he was available to answer any questions from the Council.

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Stewart, to adopt Ordinance #26-02, Repealing and Replacing Chapter 10 for Animal Regulations.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Buscher	aye
Councilmember Riley	aye
Councilmember Stewart	aye
Councilmember Olson	aye
Councilmember Specht	aye
Councilmember Peters	aye
Mayor Heineman	aye

Motion carried.

7.06: Adopt Ordinance #26-01, Amending Section 30-5, Nuisances

Police Chief Bluml presented the second reading of an ordinance related to commercial vehicle braking. He stated that the only changes since the previous Council review were the addition of language to the purpose and background sections, incorporating statistics discussed with Council at the prior meeting.

Police Chief Bluml reiterated that the recommended ordinance change would allow the City to install signage along Highway 47 to reduce noise and impacts from commercial truck traffic in nearby residential areas. He concluded by stating that he was available to answer any questions from the Council.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Peters, to adopt Ordinance #26-01, Amending Section 30-5.

A roll call vote was performed:

Councilmember Buscher aye
Councilmember Riley aye
Councilmember Stewart aye
Councilmember Olson aye
Councilmember Specht aye
Councilmember Peters aye
Mayor Heineman aye

Motion carried.

8. MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND STAFF INPUT

City Administrator Hagen announced upcoming meetings and events.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

The regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off-Site Secretarial, Inc.