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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: Councilmember Eric Peters

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson
City Engineer Hafedh Hlel
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan
City Attorney Amanda Johnson

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 Riley, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to approve the agenda as presented.

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

3. PRESENTATIONS

None.

4. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 5.01: Receive July 2026 Finance Reports – General Fund, EDA, and Enterprise Funds
- 5.02: Approve the Following Meeting Minutes:
 - 1) City Council Work Session dated August 10, 2026
 - 2) City Council Regular Session dated August 10, 2026
 - 3) Canvassing Board dated August 14, 2026
 - 4) Canvassing Board dated August 19, 2026
- 5.03: Authorize Staff to Apply for Grant Funds via the Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency Grant Program
- 5.04: Adopt Resolution #26-198 Approving Cash Disbursements Made and Authorizing Payment of Accounts Payable Invoicing Received During the Period of August 6, 2026, through August 19, 2026
- 5.05: Adopt Resolution #26-181 Approving Final Payment to Douglas-Kerr Underground, LLC. For Improvement Project #24-13, Fox Ridge Estates 1st & 2nd Street Reconstruction
- 5.06: Adopt Resolution #26-182 Authorizing the Replacement of Riverdale Park's Playground
- 5.07: Adopt Resolution #26-184 Accepting an Awarded Drinking Water Protection Grant for Well #7 from the Minnesota Department of Health
- 5.08: Adopt Resolution #26-185 Approving a Grading Agreement for North Brook Meadows
- 5.09: Adopt Resolution #26-189 Approving Partial Payment No. 1 to North Valley, Inc. for Pavement Skim Patching, Maintenance Project #26-53
- 5.10: Adopt Resolution #26-190 Approving Partial Payment to North Valley, Inc. for Improvement Project #26-01, Bunker Lake Boulevard Reconstruction
- 5.11: Adopt Resolution #26-191 Approving Partial Payment to North Valley, Inc. for Improvement Project #26-03, Carol-Rose Acres & Sports Haven Street Reconstruction
- 5.12: Adopt Resolution #26-192 Approving Partial Payment to North Valley, Inc. for Countryside Estates Street Reconstruction, Improvement Project #26-04
- 5.13: Adopt Resolution #26-193 Approving Partial Payment to North Valley, Inc. for Improvement Project #26-05, Flintwood Hills 2nd & 3rd Street Reconstruction
- 5.14: Adopt Resolution #26-194 Approving Third Amendment to Lease; Mills Lacs Motor Sports II, Inc.
- 5.15: Adopt Resolution #26-199 Approving Partial Payment to North Valley, Inc. for Improvement Project #26-07, Section 01 Unplatted Street Reconstruction
- 5.16: Adopt Resolution #26-200 Approving Partial Payment to North Valley, Inc. for Improvement Project #26-08, 2026 Neighborhood Pavement Overlay Improvement

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

6. PUBLIC HEARING

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS

7.01: Adopt Resolution #26-197 Approving Tax Increment Financing Development Agreement; Ramsey Senior Housing, LLC.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the final development agreement for the Trident senior housing project located adjacent to the Veterans Administration clinic.

Mr. Sean Tice addressed the Council on behalf of Ramsey residents and requested strict compliance with Minnesota responsible-contractor requirements. He expressed concern that prime contractors may subcontract work through multiple tiers to firms that do not satisfy the same standards and asked the Council to strengthen the agreement to protect taxpayer funds and discourage wage theft, worker misclassification, and participation in the underground economy.

Mr. Benjamin Zelka, 16521 Xenolith Street NW, identified himself as a union member and supported strong workforce and construction-quality standards. He commented that responsible labor practices benefit workers and their families while helping ensure that publicly assisted projects are built to a high standard and remain an asset to the community.

Mr. Zach Temke, an organizer with the Painters Union, urged the Council to reconsider apprenticeship and responsible-bidder protections for the project. He maintained that significant public assistance creates a fiduciary responsibility to verify contractor compliance and requested robust contractor certifications and independent payroll review. He also raised concerns about using subcontractors with histories of worker misclassification and insurance violations on other developments.

Ms. Gracia Palomar, a former Ramsey resident and apprenticeship instructor with the Painters Union, described beginning her career as an apprentice, purchasing her first home in Ramsey, working on local construction projects, and spending her earnings in the community. She encouraged the Council to consider whether workers hired for publicly assisted projects reinvest their wages locally and contribute to the community.

Motion by Councilmember Specht, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adopt Resolution #26-197 Approving Tax Increment Financing Development Agreement; Ramsey Senior Housing, LLC.

Councilmember Riley supported the senior housing project but objected to Exhibit C. He proposed a friendly amendment removing Exhibit C and all references to it and replacing those provisions with the responsible-contractor requirements contained in Minnesota Statutes, Section 16C.285. He also initially suggested making approval contingent on a broader City policy applying responsible-contractor standards to all City-funded projects. City Attorney Johnson advised that the Council could remove Exhibit C and direct staff to incorporate section 16C.285 into this agreement. The Council would need to consider a Citywide policy governing other projects separately because it exceeded the scope of the pending development agreement. She

further explained that the revised agreement would remain subject to bond counsel review and the developer's acceptance. If the developer requested only non-substantive or mechanical revisions acceptable to bond counsel, the agreement would not need to return to the Council; substantive disagreements could require additional negotiations or Council action.

Councilmember Specht and Councilmember Olson accepted the friendly amendment to remove Exhibit C and incorporate Minnesota Statutes, section 16C.285.

Councilmember Specht emphasized his strong support for the project and his desire to avoid unnecessary delay while securing sufficient Council support.

Councilmember Buscher requested an additional amendment requiring completion of responsible-contractor verification and certification documents and compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 181.165, concerning wage protection for construction workers. She supported the housing project but wanted stronger safeguards for local labor, taxpayer funds, and construction quality.

Councilmember Specht declined the additional amendment, preferring to proceed with the compromise already accepted with Councilmember Riley.

Mayor Heineman thanked the speakers and the developer but cautioned against implying that the absence of apprenticeship or union requirements would necessarily result in fraud, waste, unsafe construction, or mistreatment of workers. He noted that both union and nonunion contractors can perform ethical work and that the Council shared a goal of preventing wage theft, labor trafficking, and other unlawful practices without selecting winners and losers. He referred to the August 10 work-session discussion and concluded that the statutory responsible-contractor language provided an acceptable middle ground. Councilmember Buscher responded that the speakers were advocating prevention rather than asserting that violations would automatically occur. She maintained that public assistance should be paired with strong enforcement tools and that protecting workers and public dollars should not be treated as a union-versus-nonunion issue. Mayor Heineman asked whether her support for working people included union and nonunion workers, and she confirmed that it did.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Specht, Olson, Riley, and Stewart. Voting No: Buscher. Absent: Councilmember Peters.

7.02: Adopt Resolution #26-195 Accepting Bids and Awarding Contract for 2026 MSA Pavement Overlay Improvements, Improvement Project #26-02

City Engineer Hlel presented the proposed pavement improvements for 173rd Avenue between Armstrong Boulevard and Variolite Street and 175th Avenue between Variolite Street and Nowthen Boulevard.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adopt Resolution #26-195 Accepting Bids and Awarding a Contract to North Valley, Inc. for the total amount of \$1,129,093.12 for 2026 MSA Pavement Overlay Improvements, Improvement Project #26-02.

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

7.03: Adopt Ordinance #26-17 Amending Chapter 106 (Zoning Code) Pertaining to Uses in the COR Zoning Districts

Community Development Director Hanson presented Ordinance #26-17, which consolidates remaining regulatory language from the COR Design Framework into the Zoning Code and updates the principal-use table for the COR districts. The amendments clarify and add several business uses that were not previously addressed, including veterinary services, financial institutions, and multiple principal structures on one parcel. The Planning Commission recommended approval, and the Council introduced the ordinance on August 10, 2026.

Motion by Councilmember Olson, seconded by Councilmember Stewart, to adopt Ordinance #26-17 Amending Chapter 106 (Zoning Code) Pertaining to Uses in the COR Zoning Districts.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried.

7.04: Adopt Ordinance #26-11 Amending Chapters 30 (Nuisances) and 106 (Zoning Code) of City Code Related to Managed Natural Landscapes

Community Development Director Hanson presented Ordinance #26-11. State legislation requires cities to allow property owners to establish and maintain managed natural landscapes exceeding eight inches in height. Ramsey has allowed these landscapes for several years, but the existing Code required only submission of a management plan, did not identify the required information, and did not provide for City approval. Staff explained that the amendments establish clearer application and maintenance standards and make enforcement more manageable while continuing to permit natural and pollinator landscapes. The Environmental Policy Board and Planning Commission recommended adoption, and the Council introduced the ordinance on August 10, 2026.

Motion by Councilmember Olson, seconded by Councilmember Stewart, to adopt Ordinance #26-11 Amending Chapter 30 (Nuisances) and Chapter 106 (Zoning Code).

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion carried.

8. MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

City Administrator Hagen announced upcoming meetings and events.

Councilmember Buscher expressed disappointment that the Council did not adopt stronger responsible-bidder requirements but viewed incorporation of the State statute as a meaningful starting point. She maintained that requiring contractors receiving public benefits to comply with labor laws should not be politicized or characterized as a union-versus-nonunion issue. She emphasized that responsible-bidder standards are intended to prevent wage theft and unsafe working conditions and to ensure that public dollars support workers who can provide for their families. She added that the lowest bid is not always the most responsible bid and encouraged the Council to consider stronger enforcement mechanisms in the future.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Stewart, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.