

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH

COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016

COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 7:00 P.M

December 18, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, Minnesota, held a regular meeting on December 18, 2024, at Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway. Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience, staff, and City Council Members stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Tammy Anderson called the roll: Mayor Bailey-Here; Council Member Garza-Absent; Council Member Khambata-Here; Council Member Olsen-Here; Council Member Thiede-Here.

Also present: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator; Tammy Anderson, City Clerk; Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director; Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director; Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director; Korine Land, City Attorney-LeVander, Gillen & Miller, PA; Crystal Raleigh, Assistant City Engineer; Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director; Phil Jents, Communications Manager; Amanda Meyer, City Engineer; Brad Petersen, Public Safety Captain.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Bailey opened the Open Forum.

Bruce Karnick, 1908 Pine Street, Hastings, said the item that I'm up here for is as a representative of the *Cottage Grove Journal*, your local newspaper. On the Consent Agenda, you have the *Pioneer Press* being the spot for your legal notices, and one of the things that I know is very important to all of the communities that we serve is staying local. Having the legal notices locally, in the *Cottage Grove Journal*, will hit your right market of people; we know that we had roughly 1,400 subscribers last year, and we're up to 1,800 already for this year, and it just keeps growing. So, we know that we're going to hit your right market for your legal notices, we know that our rates are very competitive, and more importantly, it keeps people like myself and John Moline, a couple other people are local, it keeps them working locally. One of the advantages that you have, and Tony, I think you're probably the only one that I have not met personally in this aspect, but Justin, Myron, Dave, I know I've dealt with you guys on different things; we've been at different events together that I've covered, that our people have covered. You know us, you know my boss, John, you can call me, text me, whatever, him directly if there's anything that we need to do on the legal notice side of things, and it's going to get done. It'll be a weekly thing, so, yeah, there's a little bit of planning in there but not much if you look at it. We are legally allowed to do so because we are in an adjacent county, so we have our office in Hastings, and we also have one in Ellsworth, so technically two counties butt up to this, even though it crosses State lines. So, having us be your legal notice distribution process, we'll make it as easy as we can, keep our rates very affordable, and you help support a local business and keep people

like myself working and doing things in the community. He asked if they had any questions as to why it's important to do that?

Mayor Bailey asked the Council Members if they had any questions, but there were none.

Mr. Karnick said I hope you guys would be willing to take that off of the Consent Agenda and have a little bit better discussion on it before you just sign it off and say we'll go with the *Pioneer Press*, because a local paper is vital to the community and every little bit of income that we have does help keep us covering stuff for you guys and covering stuff like this meeting for the City in general. So, thanks for your time and have a great night and a good Christmas.

Mayor Bailey said thank you, Bruce.

As no one else wished to address the Council, Mayor Bailey closed the Open Forum.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Olsen to approve the agenda; second by Council Member Thiede. Motion carried: 4-0.

6. PRESENTATIONS

A. Life Saving Award

Staff Recommendation: Present Lauren Rowe with a life-saving award.

Mayor Bailey said we have a presentation this evening, a life-saving award for Lauren Rowe. Our Public Safety Director, Pete Koerner, is going to start us off on this. Mayor Bailey asked the Council Members to join him in front of the dais, and he asked Lauren to step up to the front to join them.

Director Koerner said this award is a long time coming, but I think this is perfect timing with the holiday season, it's always fun to honor someone around this time of the year and have something really positive. He thanked Lauren for coming in tonight. He said Jonathan is here, he's one of the citizens that originally reached out to me; as you're aware, in the last year and a half, we've really focused on getting our awards coming back. As the Director of Public Safety, I'm fortunate that I can bring things to the Council rather than just at our Awards Banquet, and I thought this was so meaningful that we wanted to recognize Lauren here tonight.

He gave a brief description of what occurred: Last year, Lauren was at the Holiday station on Hadley Avenue, getting some energy drinks, but while at the register, another customer collapsed. Lauren, who has had First Aid and AED training, immediately began doing CPR; so, within moments of the victim dropping, she was able to start working on him. Washington County had a deputy that was near that area when they made the call, and the deputy arrived with the AED and Lauren quickly jumped in and took over that and started the AED. Fortunately, the AED deployed twice, shocked the victim twice, and then our Fire Department personnel were able to arrive. It was fortunate for us that Captain James Olson was one of the medics that responded, and he happened to be on duty tonight, so I told him it would be really neat if he could come up and meet with Lauren and also just share a few words.

Director Koerner said as you're aware, Mayor and Council, we've had countless meetings where we've come in and we've talked to you about our commitment to hands-only CPR; we have a great partnership with Teddy's Heart, so you're really well aware of it. Last year, we were actually designated as a Heart Safe Community, too, so we've put a lot of effort into this. With that, Lauren, you undoubtedly played a significant role in saving a man's life. You are also pursuing a career in law enforcement, so I know this probably continued to fuel your passion to serve and be a police officer. I hope in your interviews, when they talk about a difficult situation, this is a heck of a story to be able to share in that interview. In a moment, we'll present you with a life-saving award, and I have a Chief's coin for you, too, but the words on it are pretty small, so Director Koerner read aloud the inscription on the coin: *This coin is awarded for outstanding service to the citizens of Cottage Grove.* Director Koerner said I can tell

you these aren't issued very often, we probably have one or two of these, maybe a year, if that. So, you're in great company. With that, I'll turn this over to Captain James Olson, thank you.

Captain Olson stated what a beautiful opportunity this is to just reiterate how important it is to have our public trained. We offer classes for hands-only CPR and AED use. Lauren is a wonderful example of what that looks like in action; as this gentleman dropped in front of her, she recognized that early, she started high-quality CPR early, and then got the AED involved, and that led to a favorable, positive outcome. This gentleman walked out of the hospital, neurologically intact, so well done, Lauren.

Mayor Bailey said that's fantastic. So, I'm just going to present you with this award, and he asked Director Koerner and Captain Olson to step forward. Mayor Bailey read the award aloud: *This is a certificate for a Life-Saving Award that is granted to an employee or a citizen who performs emergency medical or rescue actions that saved a life.* He said in this case, it's you, Lauren, so thank you for your service to our community in doing that, obviously saving an individual that was in distress. On behalf of all of us on the Council, our staff, and the entire citizens of Cottage Grove, congratulations and thank you. Everyone applauded. Photographs were taken, after which Mayor Bailey asked Lauren if she wanted to say anything.

Lauren replied I just want to say thank you, and I'm honored to get this award for what I have done, even though it wouldn't have changed anything in the first place. Everyone applauded, and Mayor Bailey and the Council Members shook her hand.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve the November 13, 2024, City Council Special Meeting Minutes.
- B. Approve the September 9, 2024, Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Regular Commission Meeting Minutes.
- C. Approve the November 12, 2024, Economic Development Authority Regular Meeting Minutes.
- D. Appoint Chris Reese to the vacant seat on the Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors.
- E. Designate the St. Paul Pioneer Press as the City of Cottage Grove's newspaper for official publications in 2025.
- F. Adopt Resolution 2024-187 authorizing renewal of business licenses for 2025.
- G. Approve the 2025 Council Meeting Schedule.
- H. Approve the agreements for the Wellness Committee to purchase materials to construct and plant raised garden beds for City employees.
- I. Approve the MetLife Dental Policy and the Medica Master Group Contract for 2025.
- J. Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties listed in the attached table.
- K. 1) Adopt Resolution 2024-180, 2024 Budget Revisions. 2) Adopt Resolution 2024-181, 2025 Budget Revisions.
- L. 1) Adopt Resolution 2024-183, approving the Fund Balance Policy. 2) Adopt Resolution 2024-192, approving the Interfund Transfer.
- M. Adopt Resolution 2024-185, Accepting donations from LSP Cottage Grove, LP for the Economic Development Trust Fund.
- N. Approval of the service agreement with InfoSend, Inc. for the mailing and printing of utility bills.
- O. Approve letter for O&M Funding Transition.
- P. 1) Authorize entering into an agreement with Aurora Strategic Advisors for Federal lobbying services in 2025. 2) Authorize the letter of engagement with Larkin Hoffman for State lobbying services in 2025.
- Q. 1) Authorize the implementation and cost for two Community Service Officer Cadets to start in 2025. 2) Approve the Community Service Officer/Cadet Law Enforcement Program agreement for Cole Pfeiffer and Ella Haas.
- R. Authorize an agreement for prosecution and related services with the F. Joseph Taylor Law Firm for the contract years 2025-2027.

- S. Adopt Resolution 2024-190 approving the First Amendment to the Purchase Agreement between the City of Cottage Grove and Roers Cottage Grove Apartments, LLC, extending the closing date for Outlots A, C, and D of Frattalone's Southpoint Ridge plat to June 30, 2025.
- T. Adopt Resolution 2024-184 supporting the City's RAISE grant application for the County 19A/100th Street Realignment Project.
- U. Approve the Cottage Grove 2025 Standard Specifications for Street & Utility Construction and 2025 Standard Detail Plates.
- V. Adopt Resolution 2024-182 awarding the shelving quote to Storage Solutions in the amount of \$56,625 for the Utilities & Engineering Building.
- W. Authorize the purchase from Midwest Machinery Co. for a John Deere 6M 130 Cab Tractor and the Diamond Mower attachments for \$204,590.08.
- X. Approve the 3rd Amendment to the Water Tower Lease Agreement with AT&T at the 81st/Innsdale Water Tower Site.
- Y. Authorize the donation of surplus property (15 Motorola radios and equipment) to Washington County Communications.
- Z. Approve the Agreement for Professional Services with River Heights Inspections, LLC, for electrical inspector services.
- AA. Adopt Resolution 2024-189 authorizing the preparation of a feasibility report for the 2026 Pavement Management Project for roadways in the residential area west of Jamaica Avenue, between Hillside Trail and 90th Street, within the Thompson Grove Estates 11th Addition, Woodridge Park Addition, Pinetree Pond Townhouses, and Cottage Grove Commercial Addition neighborhoods.
- BB. Approve the scope of work and services proposed by Hometown Fiber for the Permit Assist program and authorize the appropriate officials to sign all necessary documents to effectuate those actions.
- CC. 1) Approve a purchase order to St. Croix Recreation for a picnic shelter at Denzer Park in the amount of \$19,763. 2) Adopt Resolution 2024-186 awarding the installation of a park shelter to Michael Basich, Inc., and authorizing the service agreement with Michael Basich, Inc. for the installation of a picnic shelter at Denzer Park in the amount of \$16,560.

Council Member Thiede wished to pull Item E, Designate Newspaper 2025, on the Consent Agenda for further comment and/or discussion since the gentleman spoke about this designation in Open Forum tonight.

Mayor Bailey asked the staff for the rationale behind the decision to make the *Pioneer Press* the City's designated newspaper for 2025 for legal notices.

Administrator Levitt replied it's always very difficult, obviously, when you don't have a newspaper that's physically located within your City limits because by State Statute that would have made it easier. Obviously, when that isn't the case, we go to the next tier of circulation and distribution of our paper, and the *Pioneer Press* has a very large circulation and distribution amount within our community. One of the things, Council, I know you pride yourself in is the transparency to the public, ensuring that our message and our information is getting out there. The *Pioneer Press* enables us to do that in a much broader sense than the local *Cottage Grove Journal*.

The other thing, too, is the publication schedule. As you know, development is important to the City of Cottage Grove, and the publication and the ability to be able to be responsive quickly to those publications is important. Unfortunately, with the *Journal* publishing only once a week, there is a cutoff timeframe that can make some of that challenging. So, for us, the *Pioneer Press* is able to publish seven days a week and be able to meet all of our obligations in regards to that. That really helps us on the development side of things to be responsive to the development community for their notices. And, so, that is why we are recommending the *Pioneer Press* as the City's newspaper for 2025.

Council Member Thiede said okay, that's good, thank you.

Motion by Council Member Thiede to approve the Consent Agenda; second by Council Member Khambata.

Motion carried: 4-0.

8. APPROVE DISBURSEMENTS

- A. Approve disbursements for the period of 11-29-2024 through 12-12-2024 in the amount of \$3,357,141.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to approve disbursements; second by Council Member Khambata.
Motion carried: 4-0.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. 2025 Pavement Management - Hold Public Hearing and Order Project
Staff Recommendation: 1) Conduct the Public Hearing for the 2025 Pavement Management Project. 2) Adopt Resolution 2024-188, Ordering the 2025 Pavement Management Project.

Mayor Bailey stated Crystal Raleigh, our Assistant City Engineer, will walk us through this item tonight.

Assistant Engineer Raleigh stated the next agenda item tonight is the 2025 Pavement Management Project Public Hearing. Over the years, the City of Cottage Grove has done a wide variety of different pavement rehabilitation and pavement maintenance practices. The Seal Coat practice was done for a number of years, and it's been found that that doesn't last as long as we would have hoped. We were looking for a 25-to-30-year pavement lifecycle, and we're now pushing that out to 40 years. So, we found some other rehabilitation methods that are helping us hit that 40-year life. We like to do Crack Seal projects where those cracks at the beginning of a pavement life and all through its life can get sealed up, so no water can get in. We also do a lot of Mill & Overlay projects, we do Reclamation projects where we grind up that pavement and the gravel below it, and then repave a new surface on top. We do a lot of Pavement Replacement projects, which is what we're talking about here tonight, and then we do Full Reconstruction where we remove the pavement, the gravel underneath, all the way down to that subgrade, and then we build the pavement surface back up.

So, why do we do Pavement Management? We really want to keep our roads in good structural condition; again, we want them to last as long as possible so we aren't spending our resources on them. So, again, pushing that out to that 40-year lifecycle is really what we're looking for. These projects also allow us to take inventory of our infrastructure under the street and make any necessary repairs at that time, once the pavement is off. We're also able to maintain property values with this practice; a nice new street in front of a residence maintains a higher property value than an older street with a lot of patching in that. So, we really want to keep that level of service high for our residents.

Assistant Engineer Raleigh said this map shows a history of pavement management throughout Cottage Grove, but it's a little deceiving; pavement management projects in Cottage Grove date back to 1994, and if all those years were on this map, almost every street would be highlighted and we'd run out of color, I'm sure. So, this list is since 2010, and you can see we've bounced around to lots of areas in the City.

The Pavement Management project being proposed for 2025 is in the Hidden Valley neighborhood; the neighborhood is before you on the screen. It started construction back in 1986 on the lower southeast corner of that neighborhood, in the orange; and construction continued through the early 2000s with the northwest corner, that green cul-de-sac, being completed in about 2005.

How do we figure out which roads are eligible for pavement management or which ones we want to push forward? We look at a variety of factors, and one of those is the PASER Ratings. So, we drive our streets every year, we look at all the segments of streets and evaluate what they're looking like on the surface; we give them a condition assessment, rated 1 through 10, with 10 being good condition and 1 needing a lot of work. We also refer to our maintenance records, we look at when did we Chip Seal these streets, when was there a big Patching project. We also have this thin overlay practice where our street superintendent and his crew does a half-inch to an inch overlay over the street; we look at those records, and we evaluate a lot of different factors. We also take Core Samples where we actually cut out sections of the pavement and look at it, as the surface can look a lot different from what it looks like underneath. I kind of want to point out this intersection, Hidden Valley Hollow and Hidden Valley Lane, in this neighborhood. Google Earth showed some interesting air photos throughout the years;

in 2015, under that red rectangle, you can kind of see a large, dark area on that northbound lane, and that's a really large patch. In 2016, you can see there's lots of additional patches with the smaller, darker colors on the street. In 2017, still more work was needed so our Streets crew came in and did a Thin Overlay project in 2017.

Here are some current pictures of the neighborhood. This top one is Hidden Valley 3rd Addition; you can see vegetation starting to grow through some of these cracks. The lower right-hand corner is a picture of the Thin Overlay starting to wear off; there isn't a lot of structure underneath that overlay, so it's starting to wear over time, and that's what we anticipate will continue to happen in this neighborhood if something isn't done. The upper left is Hidden Valley 5th Addition, and 6th Addition on the lower right; again, both of these photos just show a lot of cracking, a lot of asphalt stripping in this neighborhood.

So, when we're evaluating these projects for improvements, we're also looking at our Storm and Sanitary Sewer systems, and we're evaluating those from the street level and then also under the street through camera technology to look for cracks and look at the condition of the insides of pipes. When we reviewed those in this neighborhood, we found that generally the Storm and Sanitary systems are in good condition; there are some opportunities to make some improvements, and those are proposed for the project.

With Watermain, we take a look at our records, how many breaks have we had in this area; we found that there were very infrequent breaks, and we expect that that Watermain is generally in good condition out here. If the pavement is removed, we can get a better look at valve bolts and fittings, so we would evaluate that at the time of the project.

Proposed Improvements

- Full Pavement Replacement: We would remove the upper layers of pavement, get down to that gravel base, we would regrade, recompact that gravel base, and then pave two lifts of asphalt to a depth of 3.5 inches.
- Spot Curb Replacement: Some neighborhoods we do full curb replacement, it just really depends on the condition of the curb. Some areas of this project do warrant Full Curb Replacement, but for the most part, the curb was approximately 27% damaged; so, most of the area of this neighborhood would be Spot Curb Replacement.
- Minor Utility Repairs: We'll also take advantage of the street being open and do some minor utility repairs while we're in the area. Lining some pipes and manholes, replacing some of those structures, if needed. We would recondition and raise hydrants. We would replace the two pressure-reducing valves, which is a water-system feature. We would replace any damaged light poles and high-pressure sodium (HPS) fixtures would be upgraded to the LED fixtures.

Proposed Park Improvements (Not Assessed)

We also look at parks in the neighborhoods of Pavement Management projects; Hidden Valley Park is in this neighborhood, and there are some opportunities to take advantage of a contractor being right next door. So, there are some projects proposed in Hidden Valley Park, but it's important to note that these projects would not be assessed to the residents; these will be paid for by Park Improvement Funds.

Estimated Assessments

- There are about 229 Assessable Properties in this neighborhood.
- The assessments are estimated to be \$6,329.73; estimated is the key word, as right now all these numbers are based on Project Estimates. If the project moves forward, final costs would be based on real construction numbers.
- When we're looking at these projects, we also do a Special Benefit Appraisal, so we determine what is the benefit to the property from leaving the pavement alone vs. having a brand-new street in front of a home. The Special Benefit Appraisal came in at \$7,400 for these properties, that really supports the assessment of \$6,329.73.
- If a property owner did not choose to pay that assessment within the first 30 days of the Adoption of the Assessment Roll, the average annual payment over a series of 15 years is \$630.92. It's important to note that the property owners could pay any amount upfront, in that first 30 days, to avoid interest if it's amortized for 15 years.

Assessable Parcels

This screen shows the Assessable Parcels for this project; the green are the 229 Assessable Parcels in the Hidden Valley neighborhood. The blue parcels are City-owned parcels, and the streets that are adjacent to City-owned parcels are funded only by City funds; so, those street sections next to the blue are not assessed and are not included in that assessment calculation.

Funding Breakdown

There are many funding sources in a project of this size:

Total Project Cost (Based on an Estimate at this Time)	\$3,885,470.95
Sanitary Sewer Utility:	\$ 93,335.91
Water Utility:	\$ 183,436.12
Stormwater Utility:	\$ 166,362.36
Streetlight Enterprise:	\$ 118,712.95
Park Improvement:	\$ 189,039.58
Trail Replacement:	\$ 67,105.05
General Levy:	\$1,617,971.46
Assessments:	\$1,449,507.52

Assessment Terms

- Pending assessment is listed for each property once the project is ordered.
- Residents may pay within 30 days of adoption to avoid any interest charges.
- Partial payment is allowed, minimum of \$500.
- Assessment is payable over the next 15 years, and is subject to interest.
- The interest rate is 1.5% over the City's Bond Rating; right now, that is looking like about 6%, but that would be evaluated when construction is completed next fall.
- Deferral is available if certain conditions are met (disability, military, age 65 and older), and proof is needed for deferrals; interest still accrues during the deferral period.

Schedule

- December 10, 2024, Neighborhood Meeting: About 40 attended, they were very engaged, asked a lot of great questions. Logistics during construction came up, a really common question.
- December 18, 2024, Public Hearing: Will be held tonight
- February 19, 2025: Council approves plans and specifications
- March 13, 2025: Project Bid Date
- Late March or Early April, 2025: Second Neighborhood Meeting
- Spring, 2025: Construction starts
- September, 2025: Construction is complete
- October, 2025: Assessment Hearing

Assistant Engineer Raleigh said with that, the recommendations are on the screen, and I'm available for any questions.

Mayor Bailey asked Council if they had any questions.

Council Member Olsen thanked Crystal, said it was a good presentation, with a lot of good information there. A couple things occurred to me as I was going through this in the packet and then your presentation sort of made me think about those things again: One of the reasons that the City has typically approached these sorts of projects early, so we're in December for a project that's going to happen next year, is we want to be in a favorable bidding environment. The sooner we can get plans and specs out to the potential contractors, the more competitive the bidding typically is, and that's always sort of worked in our favor. I think that's been a good practice for as long as I've been part of the Council. So, my first question is this: As we are sort of exploring this, have we had any contractors we've worked with before or anything like that, has anybody expressed interest in being part of the

bidding environment at this point? Do we know any of that, or are we just basically going to wait until February, when plans and specs come online if this project moves forward, and then kind of see where we land?

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied I haven't heard of specific contractors that are calling and asking questions on the project quite yet; of course, we haven't pulled the trigger to move forward, right? But all of the contractors that I've worked with so far in my time here on this project would be interested in this type of project. Like you said, February, March, April, that is a perfect timeframe to be bidding and to be getting good pricing on a project like this. So, the contractors will really be looking for work around that time of year and looking to fill up their calendar for the summer. So, we are hitting that sweet spot, and we anticipate a lot of interest; I believe last year we had seven bidders on our project, so we should be sitting well.

Council Member Olsen said and that competitive bid environment, as I said earlier, it's seemed to be favorable for us where we get an estimate and then the bidding environment comes in and we're pleasantly surprised. So, that's why I asked that question. The second thing that occurred to me was when you think about Hidden Valley, and I live very near to Hidden Valley, and so I took several drives through the neighborhood as we were considering this project, there's a lot of cul-de-sacs. It's a little bit different than some of the neighborhoods that were built early on in the City's history, and because of those cul-de-sacs, you have some land mass that isn't necessarily fully populated with dwellings; so, it seems like the dwelling number is a little light. Am I just seeing things, or is that accurate?

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied, you're absolutely right; there is a lot of pavement area, a lot of blacktop in this neighborhood that doesn't necessarily have a house right on it or just a few houses for a lot of blacktop. So, another thing that we noticed about this neighborhood is that the lots are very large compared to how we're building our City out now. So, there are fewer parcels to spread this project cost around; so, this assessment is a little higher than we've seen for a Spot Curb in the past. Of course, there's inflation and a lot of factors that go into that, but one of those is certainly the amount of pavement because of those cul-de-sacs and then the big lot sizes that we have here.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, I mean, that's pretty much a basic math equation, but it just struck me that the configuration probably isn't helping us too much on something like that. And then the last thing that I wanted to ask, and I'm not sure if you want to take this or Ryan, but I know you did some pretty extensive testing in the neighborhood, including lots of Core Sampling. As a layman driving through the neighborhood, you can see a lot of the reflective cracking coming up, and you showed some pictures of the Thin Overlay that Gary and his team did, and that's kind of starting to break up now, too. What did we see in the core, as far as the deeper infrastructure? Because even sometimes when the roadway looks beautiful, underneath there are all kinds of issues. So, were there any major callouts that you guys saw, other than just its aged and the asphalt's dried out, and it's in bad shape?

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied, yeah, I'll take what I can and if Ryan wants to add in, he certainly can, but we are seeing a lot of asphalt stripping; and asphalt stripping is when the asphalt glue that holds the rocks together in an asphalt mix, when that glue is kind of washed away over the years. And when we take those Cores, we know there's asphalt stripping when they don't hold together, that top Thin Overlay is intact, but underneath it, there's nothing supporting it. Ryan's crew had cut out a couple sections themselves to evaluate, and one of those samples just completely fell apart, there was nothing underneath it, and we think that's what's happening throughout the neighborhood, so.

Council Member Olsen said I know that there are occasions where maybe a project gets delayed and then what ends up happening is that infrastructure that you can't see gets even worse; in fact, I think this happened in the mayor's neighborhood, and then you're stuck with a Full Reconstruction and it gets really difficult.

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied yeah, that's absolutely right; the curb continues to degrade, too, which once we have a Full Curb Replacement on a project, project costs can rise quite quickly with Full Curb vs. Spot Curb, as we're going to be doing out here. So, we really try to catch them before they're real bad.

Council Member Olsen said well, thanks for the info, I appreciate it.

Council Member Khambata asked when you were discussing the breakdown of where the funding was coming from, can you explain why the City was fronting the \$1.6 million that wasn't being assessed to property owners?

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied, so, the City's Assessment Policy allows us to assess up to 45% of Project Costs to the homeowners that are adjacent to the project. The remaining 55% is to be paid for by other funding sources. When we can identify a specific Utility Funding Source for utility work, we'll absolutely use those funds, but the remainder does have to be picked up with General Levy funds.

Council Member Khambata said so, that's like the general tax, that's everyone's taxes are paying for that section of road or that percentage of that, correct?

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied that's correct.

Council Member Khambata said it's not just this specific neighborhood; Assistant Engineer Raleigh said right, the general taxbase.

Council Member Thiede said I'll guess I'll mention it, not that it matters, but both Tony and I live in the neighborhood, so it's a tough one to swallow. But the one thing with that neighborhood, it was quite a timespan over the different roads; and actually, there was a significant difference in quality of asphalt where we had a period where probably some of the later neighborhoods had pavement that I would say probably wore out actually before some of the older stuff and so forth. So, it's kind of interesting. The other thing that makes us a little more expensive is we like our 32-foot, curb-to-curb roads vs. what is 28 now; we had a lot of arguments back in the 2010 era and things like that about the streets and the street widths, and how the contractors were narrowing it down and things like that. But that obviously adds more cost to the project, also. So, while in some ways, I go out and I say well, the road doesn't look too bad; technically, there's no holes that I've lost my cars in or any kids or dogs or anything like that. But I guess we did take the samples and while it's a little bit of a tough pill for anybody to swallow, not just because we're in the neighborhood, but anybody, anywhere in the City; it's something that does keep the City in good shape and probably helps some of the vehicles stay in more mint condition and things like that. We often have people say, man, you guys, your roads are really good when you talk to people from other cities and so forth. So, I guess I'm probably going to have to swallow hard and it'll be okay.

Council Member Olsen said so Council Member Thiede mentioned something that had not occurred to me, and I just want to ask another question about that, and that is the condition of the asphalt in some of the newer areas. There was a period of a couple of years where the MnDOT spec for asphalt was not great, and some of that had to do with the change from what they had been doing to trying to reclaim older asphalt and then remix it with oil and try to essentially recycle some of that stuff to be used in neighborhoods. I know the City of Woodbury had several large areas in their city where that asphalt wore out much faster than it was supposed to have done; did that neighborhood experience some of that, is that accurate?

Assistant Engineer Raleigh replied said as I'm a Wisconsin girl, I am going to defer to my Minnesota colleagues on that.

Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director, said this is a good one for me to touch on because I was here eight-to-ten years ago when we were really looking at our asphalt specs because we do have to follow MnDOT; they're that guiding principle for asphalt throughout all of Minnesota. But what we found with that asphalt stripping, as Crystal mentioned, it was really drying out, and what was happening is the asphalt content was quite low, compared to what we'd want to see. So, within the bounds of the MnDOT spec, we made little tweaks back in kind of the mid-2010s and we were really able to boost those numbers up and get the asphalt content back to what we like to see, while also providing a really good product, I think. So, the pavements that we're putting down now really more closely match what we were seeing in kind of the 1980s timeframe with that asphalt content being a higher percentage of the overall pavement. So, that was a very proactive thing that we did when I was here and Jennifer Levitt was the City Engineer at the time, and I think we've seen great results with that since we made those changes.

Council Member Olsen said I would agree, I just recall having those conversations at that time about the mix wasn't quite what we were looking for; so, when Council Member Thiede mentioned that, it kind of flipped the switch in my brain that maybe that was part of the issue, even in some of those newer neighborhoods. Because as he said, we had neighborhoods with that older spec, that older mix, that didn't need any work really for close to 30 years. So, yeah, that's unfortunate that that happened. Thanks for answering that for me.

Council Member Khambata said I was going to go on a tangent on asphalt and aggregate size and how we achieve the higher content of asphalt through aggregate, but I don't need to bore everyone.

Mayor Bailey opened the Public Hearing.

Kelly Dawn said I live at 7591 74th Street South, in Hidden Valley. I really am wanting to speak, I don't disagree, I was a regional director in infrastructure for a long time, I do believe our roads need to be done. I do think that the assessment is aggressive, it does help to understand that we have bigger lot sizes and things like that in the neighborhood, and how the neighborhood was phased originally didn't help that matter. But I really wanted to speak today because I really think that this rollout could've been done so much more gingerly, to be frank. This is a project that the City has known about, that needed to be done for a really long time, it's not a secret. You can get lost in potholes in some of the cul-de-sacs, we walk them every single night, the entire loop, the entire cul-de-sac. The re-pavement that was done I think around three years ago is a huge safety risk, and so it's not beyond me that it needed to be done. The part that really bothers me is that 30 days before Christmas our neighborhood is slapped with a \$7,000 bill, and then we're just supposed to go, oh, but it's interest free for 30 days. Well, that's, as far as I'm concerned, like this assessment is aggressive, the way that it was rolled out is wrong. I'm glad to know that we are going to be getting revamps to the park that was completely demolished and degraded when we did the park reboot, when was that, last summer or the summer before? Our old park was fantastic, it was my kids' favorite park. Absolutely no neighborhood community involvement happened when that park was supposedly being redone, and it's a park that my kids no longer want to go to, so that's good news on that one. But I really think that they do need to be giving homeowners more time; this is something that if we would have had more time than what will ultimately be about a year, we could've been able to pay that amount in full; we will end up having to finance it to a tune of an additional \$3,000 when this is done, to be paid. This is a time of inflation, this is a time where people don't have extra money, and with all due respect, this is a time where the City Council has come back to homeowners more than once to ask us to increase our property taxes. You came to us at this last voting election, asking us to then say, oh, well, everybody can pay a sales tax to do parks that don't need to be redone. So, I really do think that there does need to be a level of a shift in priorities because a \$7,000 bill on a neighborhood who's turned over to all brand-new families with brand-new babies isn't acceptable.

Lance McMorro, 7371 Hidden Valley Trail, said I am new to Cottage Grove and Hidden Valley, I just bought a house in the development in May. When I looked at the property, I said, great, this road is fantastic, I'm not going to be hit with an assessment for a long time; and I came from West St. Paul, where I lived in a condo association where there were about five-or-six roads that collectively were done over the course of five years, so I wrote checks for about five-or-six years. So, my biggest concern is obviously the price on this assessment was really eye popping, and the timing was less than ideal. The second concern I have is just are we getting the most for our money? The road looks good; are we making our dollars stretch as far as they can? Like I said, I came in, new to the community and the road looks really good; obviously, I don't have Core Samples or anything like that, but just from a layman's perspective, the road looks really good. And my preference and my neighbor's preference was that if this could be pushed down the road a couple years and save some money, that'd be great. But those were my concerns and thanks for hearing me.

As no one else wished to speak, Mayor Bailey closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Bailey said there were some questions that were asked; he asked City Administrator Jennifer Levitt if she wanted to respond to some of them.

Administrator Levitt said well, I'll talk about assessments, and I won't talk about asphalt, so when it comes to asphalt, I'll turn it back over to Crystal. When it comes to the assessments and taxes, I thought I would start there. One of the questions related to the assessment being too high; the one thing that I would remind Council, tonight is a decision about ordering the project. So, tonight, you're looking at the warrants that merit ordering the project and moving forward with it. The question about the value of the assessment and the amount, that is the conversation that we will have in October, after the project is complete. So, there is a distinction; so, tonight,

you're looking at is this project warranted to proceed based upon the merits that you've heard and the feasibility report that's been before you. So, we will talk about assessments in much-greater detail in October if the project moves forward.

In one of the questions, the resident brought to our attention in her comments was related to being surprised. Now, Council, I know that you want to give residents as much lead time as possible, but I know that you're also very fiscally conservative, and you know what happened in our budget discussions; you looked at our Financial Management Plan (FMP) for the next ten years, you looked at the Pavement Management projects that we had planned, and the value of those were not fitting within your financial means. So, you did challenge staff to go back and reevaluate our Pavement Management Program to make sure that it fits within our FMP for the next ten years. Unfortunately, when we had to make that adjustment, we weren't able to give the residents as much notice as we typically would because actually, tonight on your Consent Calendar, you authorized the Pavement Management feasibility report for 2026. So, that will enable us to give residents much more notice. So, to the resident's point, unfortunately, the way the financial situation worked out this summer, we had to pivot; so, as fast as we could get notice to them, we did, because you adopted the Budget and the CIP just at the last meeting, on December 4. So, the neighborhood meeting was held on December 10; we've been aggressive to try to get notice out to them, but clearly, it is still only a year for them to save, and we recognize that hardship. So, we do acknowledge that issue.

So, if there are any other questions, Council, that you want us to talk about, pavement condition and stuff like that, our Assistant City Engineer would be happy to answer those questions.

Mayor Bailey said one of the things, if I recall, though, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, so even before October, I believe it's in February or March, we'll go out for bids, correct? And if the bids come in high, we could say at that particular point we're not going to do it or we can't do it; because tonight what we're here for and I'm going to look at our attorney for this, the Benefit Appraisal says the cap is \$7,400. So, we're assuming, based on our data and all the information, that the amount that's going to be taxed is at \$6,300, or whatever the specific amount was; however, if it comes up higher than that, it can't go over \$7,400, correct? Because then it's done. So, we will, as a Council, have another opportunity to take a look at what it's going to cost. I will tell you, and it doesn't always happen perfectly this way, but so far, what happens, and it even just happened in the one that we did this year, though it was still high and that particular one was Full Curb Replacement, the bid came under what the original amount was. I just wanted to let the public know we always try to put it a little higher in our goal and expectations, and we hope that it will come down. But duly noted on the notice, if you will, because that's been a challenge.

Mayor Bailey said the last thing that I'll mention from Council's perspective, and we've done this before, there have been times, referring to the gentleman who just spoke, where we have looked and still do look at all these different pavement areas within our community. You kind of mentioned fitting it in our fiscal management plan for ten years, but the fact of the matter is there have been times where we have pushed off projects, right? If Ryan comes to us and our staff comes to us and says, we checked these areas and we think we can get a few more years out of them before we really need to get in there and do it, so we do. I know my partner next to me, here, he is very particular about, as a matter of fact, they even brought Core Samples in to share with him so he could see the underlying pavement of what's going on. I can say this was before I was mayor, I think it was even before I was on the Council, but the neighborhood that I lived in, they came up, and I think that's the last and only time that a project was delayed, and that was before I lived there; so, I'm going to put that out there very clearly, and it got delayed, and by the time I moved in there and then found out the assessment was double, the reason it was double was because they had to do a Full Curb and Full Asphalt Replacement there because they waited too long. And, so, that's the challenge and that's the risk that we're trying to avoid in some of these cases is to keep the cost as low as we can and not have to do Full Curb Replacement, which adds a lot of cost to the project.

Council Member Thiede said I was just going to mention, too, in terms of being a little bit surprised, I've already talked to staff about that because this past year, being as kind of cheap as I am, I'm kind of stingy and so forth, my dad raised me to be pretty much that way. So, I was really watching the planning, because we did have things laid out quite a few years in the future for this Pavement Management, so I was keeping an eye on it because I've been

on the Council since 2010 and on Commissions and so forth since about 2005. But so, I had never seen Hidden Valley on the list over the years, and then it kind of seemed like it popped up here this past year. I now kind of understand the reasons why we're doing what we're doing at this time, but I will admit that it was a little bit of a surprise. So, we do a great job at planning and things like that, this one was a little bit not quite on par, maybe, but we'll keep track.

Council Member Olsen said Kori, I'm going to turn to you because one of the things that you do very well whenever we have these conversations is you describe the legal process that we have to follow whenever we take a look at a project like this, and it is statutorily mandated that we do things in a certain way. So, I wonder if you might take a few minutes and just share again how exactly this process has to flow so that anybody who may be in this area or people watching at home, who are just curious, have a little bit better understanding of the way that we have to do this.

Kori Land, City Attorney, replied certainly. This is a very statutorily-driven process. Whenever the City's going to do assessments to pay for a public improvement, you must follow Chapter 429; so, it's all laid out in Minnesota Statute 429. One of the steps, ironically, is on your Consent Agenda to Order a Feasibility Report; that is Step 1, you have to determine whether or not the project that the City Engineer is designing in his head is appropriate, is the right kind of project, and the Assistant City Engineer went through all of the different kinds of projects that could be done. So, the Feasibility Report will then determine or give a recommendation in every single street as to what the appropriate method, whether it's a Mill & Overlay or is complete Reconstruction, it will spell out that process. So, that's Step 1 because you need to have the study to determine what the project could be. Then, when that Feasibility Report comes back, that's what you're holding tonight is a Public Hearing on a public improvement project; the Statute requires you to send an estimated assessment, and that's all it is at this point. It's not going to go on anybody's property taxes yet, it is just a number based on what the Feasibility Report said, this project is going to cost this amount, and this is how we could do the assessments for the project. On that entire list of how we're going to fund the project, one of those items was assessments. So, that's the assessment estimate; that's all it is, you're not going to have to pay for it in 30 days. So, the estimate must be mailed to the property owners, and there must be a published notice in the newspaper. That's why you're holding the Public Hearing tonight, you take feedback, you could continue this or you could decide tonight. If you decide tonight, you'll be ordering the project, which is Step 3. Then, the City staff will put together the plans and specs, you will then approve those plans and specs, that's Step 4. And then if you approve them, then they go out for bid. Step 5 is the bid comes back to you for award. So, all of these things have to happen in a public meeting. Finally, the City will hire the contractor, who will do the project. At the end of the project, as you've indicated, next October there will be the actual Assessment Hearing. That's when we're talking about a hard number that the Council is proposing to assess against all of those properties. So, that's when we'll have the actual based in fact, can't exceed the \$7,400 assessment. That is a property owner's opportunity at another Public Hearing to come to you and say why they think that assessment is maybe not fair or they think it should be reduced, and they can provide that objection at that hearing. That's the first thing they need to do is object by the Public Hearing date. If they do that, they preserve their right to appeal. So, there's plenty of due process built into this entire assessment, Chapter 429. If they want to perfect their appeal, they would serve the Mayor or City Clerk with their Notice of Intent to Appeal and then file that in District Court; and that is where they will get a fair hearing to determine whether or not there truly is a Special Benefit in the amount that we propose to assess. So, that's the process.

Council Member Olsen asked and is it fair to say through the course of that process, there are several stop signs where the Council can then take another look and identify whether or not we want to continue to move forward or whether we think we're at a place where maybe this isn't the right thing to do at this particular time?

Attorney Land replied there are at least six touch points that the Council has on every public improvement project where it comes back to you at a Public Hearing for a decision.

Council Member Olsen said perfect. And to Jennifer's earlier point, our objective this evening is just to identify whether or not there are Findings of Fact that would cause us to want to continue the process. Okay, thank you very much.

Council Member Khambata said as Council Member Thiede said, he and I are in a unique position because this affects us directly, but in every other hearing, the same things come up: Why is it being done this way? Why did you choose now? And in every other one, I thought about ours because three years ago, when our cul-de-sac got patched, my kids were falling into it on their bikes, and I'm like it's coming. And, so, with every other time when I had to make that tough decision, I'm like it's one of the toughest things that we do is to have to make the decision that's right in the moment but maybe not popular. From talking to Ryan and hearing about what was the assessment on the pavement three years ago; well, three years ago, when they patched it, we thought it would get us five years, but as they continued to do Core Samples because we have a takedown schedule for roads. As we're talking about this year's Pavement Management, they're going to highlight five other years, out to 2029 or 2030, on our CIP. So, every year we look at what is potentially a five-year outlook for future road improvements. Every year, they do Core Samples, and either the road is holding up as expected, longer than expected, or less than expected; and this is, unfortunately, due to that asphalt mixture, this is one of those roads that was degrading faster than expected. So, yeah, I think when I was on the Planning Commission, I think I remember having a conversation about what helps you guys decide what road needs to be done and when, and it's from that regular monitoring of the oldest and most suspect areas. Plus, you've got Public Works who is out driving plows, and as their Work Orders are coming in to patch a certain area, that's cueing them in to what might be the next potential area for improvement. So, I will say that it's always tough to have to make this decision, but a lot of empirical data went into guiding our decision to bring this up for a vote as it is.

Motion by Council Member Khambata to Adopt Resolution 2024-188, Ordering the 2025 Pavement Management Project; second by Council Member Olsen. Motion carried: 4-0.

Mayor Bailey said as you heard earlier, you will be notified as we keep going through this, and I guess the good news for you is I know, unfortunately, tonight the Council Member on my right, it is his last meeting; on my left, you can talk to him in your neighborhood, and the new Council Member is right behind you there. So, you know who to harass if you want or you can call me. But thank you for coming in and sharing, though, that's important.

Kelly Dawn said I appreciate it, and it does need to be done. I acknowledge that.

10. BID AWARDS - None.

11. REGULAR AGENDA

- A. Roers Companies Cottage Grove Multi-Family - Amended Site Plan Review
Staff Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 2024-191, rescinding Resolution 2024-007 and approving Amended Site Plan Review for a 144-unit, six-story Mixed Income multi-family apartment building, located at 6850 East Point Douglas Road South.

Mayor Bailey said I'm very happy to see this item on the agenda tonight, and Emily Schmitz, our Community Development Director, is going to walk us through this item.

Director Schmitz said I'm as excited as you are, mayor, as this has been a long work in progress. This particular site, if you're not familiar, is located just at the end of the cul-de-sac of East Point Douglas, as you pass The Legends and White Pines. A little bit of background, if you don't recall, this site has nothing short of challenges. As you can see, several different parcels, but I'll make note as you can see Outlot A has a lot of topography change on this particular parcel. There is a large area dedicated to some Stormwater ponding, but I think the biggest item to note is that Pipeline Easement; Flint Hills runs two crude pipes through that easement, obviously restricting the developable area of this parcel.

So, this is why it might look familiar to you, Council, as back in January of this year, you saw this project before you and voted to approve a 144-unit Mixed Income apartment building on this particular site. You also approved the Preliminary and Final Plat; as you saw on the previous slide, it's several parcels, and we needed to bring those

together for that Camel's Hump Addition and also for the applicant to purchase a couple of lots from the City to make this site work, and then that Planned Unit Development (PUD).

After this approval, Flint Hills after some reevaluation of what they were comfortable with on top of their crude pipelines, they asked the developer to kind of go back and reevaluate if they could maybe draw back a little bit of that impact. So, we went back and forth several times, and we finally landed somewhere in the middle; you can see the original Site Plan and the Revised Site Plan, which is on the righthand side of the screen. Some additional surface parking is still remaining there. Again, with the topography of the site, those elevations are challenging and require some retaining walls that need to extend into that easement, and finally, a trail connection.

As I mentioned, the surface parking is reducing that back from the original approval, adding some additional snow storage; obviously the site is limited, where are we going to put that snow in Minnesota? And, finally, that trail connection that we always wanted to ensure connected to the natural trail on the north side of this project that connects up, then, to the Camel's Hump.

So, these are the amendments to the original Site Plan that you saw in January, so I wanted to make sure that those adjustments to the site were clear. All of the remaining Zoning standards are being met and remaining the same from the original approval in January to this plan that you see before you this evening.

Finally, I wanted to ensure that I reminded you that the developer is not proposing to address the architectural materials; if you recall, one of our biggest passions with this project was making sure that as you are coming in and out of our community, that those Class I materials are focused on that side of this project, and they are remaining so with their amended project.

So, with that, I will leave the recommendation before you. I am available and the applicant is in the audience if you have direct questions for them as well.

Mayor Bailey thanked Emily and asked if Council had any questions for her.

Council Member Khambata said I just want to make sure that I understand correctly that there is no change to the total number of units. Director Schmitz confirmed there is no change to the total number of units.

Mayor Bailey asked the applicant if they wanted to share anything, and he wished to speak.

Pete Schroeder with Roers Companies, 2 Carlson Parkway, Plymouth, MN, said I appreciate the time tonight, and he thanked Emily and staff for the presentation and just all the work on this over the past eight months now. As Emily spoke about, we made a few adjustments to the Site Plan, but overall, it's pretty much the same project that was approved in January: The same unit count, same parking ratio, same exterior elevations, and same amenity package. Over the last few months, as Emily mentioned, we've worked closely with staff and Flint Hills Resources to get to this new Site Plan in front of you tonight. We're very excited about this new layout and to move forward with this; so, if you have any questions, I'll be more than happy to answer those and I appreciate the consideration.

Mayor Bailey said fantastic, asked if Council had any questions and none were asked. He thanked him for hanging in with us, as I said earlier when I spoke with you, because it's been a long time coming and a very challenging site. A lot of different projects have tried to come there, but didn't get it worked out, so I'm glad we were all able to work together.

Motion by Council Member Thiede to Adopt Resolution 2024-191, rescinding Resolution 2024-007 and approving the Amended Site Plan Review for a 144-unit, six-story Mixed Income multi-family apartment building, located at 6850 East Point Douglas Road South; second by Council Member Khambata. Motion carried: 4-0.

12. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Council Member Khambata said well, this will be my last meeting up here at the dais, at least for a little while. I have had a great privilege in being up here and working with City Council. I was able to get to know some of the most intelligent, dedicated, creative, and professional people that I've ever had the pleasure of working with, and I'm talking about staff, of course. Myron is selfless with his time. Justin is one of the most intelligent people I've

ever met, he remembers things from decades ago, I don't understand it, but he's also very generous with his time, he volunteers a lot. I aspire to do that when my kids are older and I have more time. Dave is super cheap, that is one of my favorite qualities about him is he keeps us in check, and he's indispensable with his spreadsheets. So, I'm really going to miss being able to collaborate with you guys. Monique, although she's not here, she's been on the Council for a year, and in that time, I've seen her jump in with both feet into some really challenging issues that we've had to deal with and never once shy away from the hard work that we do. So, I'm grateful to have worked with all of you.

Mayor Bailey said thank you, same with us, and I'll share a few things here in a few minutes.

Council Member Thiede said yeah, we'll keep you involved.

Mayor Bailey said yeah, definitely, he already is going to be. Oh, sorry, his wife's out in the audience, she's probably not going to be happy about that. All right, thank you, Tony.

Council Member Olsen said first of all, mayor, I want to wish everybody a very happy holiday season, and a Merry Christmas, too, it's almost here, and it seems like just yesterday it was January. I don't know how we got here, the time just flew by, but it's been a really good year, and I'm looking forward to more good things to come in 2025 for the City of Cottage Grove.

I also want to take a moment to thank the Cottage Grove Lions Club and Cottage Grove Beyond the Yellow Ribbon team for their contribution to the Adopt a Child event that we held at Target this past Saturday. It's an annual event where we come together and we shop for people who are in need, and with Beyond the Yellow Ribbon involved, that includes a lot of veterans and military families in our community. The combined efforts of those two clubs made some Christmas wishes come true for 100 individuals, who might not otherwise have had that opportunity. It's always just astounding to me how generous people can be with their money, their time, their energy, their enthusiasm. We did a lot of shopping, and I'm not going to share the number with you as far as dollars spent, but it was significant; but I think what was more important is afterward, we all went to the VFW and we spent a good two-to-three hours wrapping gifts, trying to make sure that when these families receive their gifts that it is a momentous occasion. I want to compliment Chief Koerner for bringing his wife, Kristin, to wrap because she's an expert and he is not and neither am I, so between my wife, Kim, and his wife, Kristin, they did just a magnificent job.

The last thing I want to talk about is my Council Member colleague to my right, Council Member Khambata. Very kind words from you, Tony, very nice, and thank you for those, but I hope you understand the degree of respect that we all have for you, and from a personal standpoint, how great it's been to work with you as a colleague. I watched you as Chair of our Planning Commission, and one of the things that we kind of do sometimes is we sort of assess the talent, right? And we look at the various commissions and we see people who are sort of standouts, and you were always one of those. And, so, when you got the opportunity to join the City Council, similar to what you said about Monique, you jumped in with both feet, into the deep end. You're very courageous, and I want to reiterate what I mean by that: You are driven by what we should all be driven by, the North star should always be what is the right thing to do, not what is the easy thing to do, what is the most politically advantageous thing to do, but what is the right thing to do. What is the right thing to do short term, what is the right thing to do long term, and you've never shied away from that. You bring a lot to the table, and I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to work with you. I have no doubt in my mind that you will continue to be an integral part of the way that the City of Cottage Grove goes about doing its business, whether that's as a commission member, as an advisor, or as a very-engaged citizen, or probably all of the above. So, thank you for everything you've done for this community. I often mention to people one of the reasons our City Council is successful is because we genuinely like and respect each other; that does not mean we don't argue because we do, but when we argue, we tend to argue behind closed doors, we come to consensus, and when the consensus has been reached, the conversation is over. We do what needs to be done, and then we move forward, but we do so respectfully, and I hope you and your family know how much we genuinely have come to like and respect you all. And, Crystal, thank you for sharing him with us because it's not easy when you've got three kids at home, I know that, so we've been blessed, and you're a big part of that. So, best to you and your family, I know you're not moving out of town or anything, but I just want you to know that you've left an indelible mark on this City, you should be proud of that. Council Member Khambata said thank you, Justin.

Council Member Thiede said so, usually what happens is that Justin is so eloquent with his talks and so forth, he's covered a lot of things that I was going to cover, too. But I do want to say that one of the qualities I think for quite a few years here we've had as a Council is number one, it really is not political; there's a little politics in everything, but I can tell you right now if it got too political, I'd be out because I don't like politics, the intense politics. I'd go crazy and they wouldn't like me up in St. Paul or anything like that, so I'm very comfortable right here where I am. And Tony fit right into that, and like Justin says, we don't always agree on things and so forth, but we all respect each other and really kind of get down to discussing things and working together to do what is best for the City, at least that's one of the things I think we believe. Over the years here, we have some longevity on the Council, I think because for the most part people in the City see that, and I think that's a communication back to us, too, that we're pretty much headed in the right direction; and it's very important to have the right staff and everything else like that to be able to do that, too. And I think Justin and Myron can attest to the fact that back in kind of the early 2000s, it certainly wasn't that way, there was a lot that was different; and so, I think it's been kind of molded in pretty good, and I'm looking forward to Dave Clausen getting on and kind of fitting in with the rest of us, and again, not always agreeing because we don't always agree, but we respectfully voice our opinions and work together to make things happen. So, and Tony's just down around the corner; in fact, I've got to walk past Dave's house to get to Tony's house, and then Justin's not too far away, either, but I guess it's kind of weighted toward that end of the City, I guess. So, I'm sure that he'll be, we'll make sure he keeps involved.

And I'm just also going to say that we'll have to see how, all the weathermen are excited, right? Because this is kind of the biggest storm that potentially is coming. And my phone, I don't know if it's Google or the weather apps almost knocked me off my chair earlier today when they announced this Severe Winter Weather Alert because it's this loud alert, and it's like holy cow. So, we'll see whether all this excitement is warranted or not, but do be careful, be considerate, so that we all make it to Christmas and beyond and look forward to a wonderful 2025.

Mayor Bailey said so, I have three things:

The first is more of an official nature, I need to make sure the public knows that after our last City Council Meeting, after the Council Meeting was completed, we did a performance evaluation of our City Administrator, Jennifer Levitt. Part of the process of that is we have to report back that the performance appraisal was very good, we were very happy with Jennifer's performance as our Administrator for the City of Cottage Grove. We were able to share our thoughts, and she was able to share her thoughts and looking forward in the City. So, on behalf of the Council, I just want to mention thank you for your many years of great service to us and many years to come.

Next, my second item, our County Commissioner, Karla Bigham, who is a resident here in Cottage Grove, also would like to present something to our esteemed Council Member.

Commissioner Bigham said thank you, Mayor and Council and audience, I'm the County Commissioner and I do live in Cottage Grove. I just wanted to say to retiring Council Member Khambata it's been a joy to get to know you and your family, and I have a Commissioner's Service Award from Washington County, and it says: *On behalf of a grateful County, the undersigned commissioner hereby extends recognition and appreciation to Tony Khambata, Cottage Grove City Council Member, for two years of outstanding service and support of Washington County's mission.*

So, I just wanted to thank you for your years of service, but I've really enjoyed your expertise on housing, that's been helpful to me in my role, as County plays a major role in that, but also social services and different things that we've had a lot of conversations about. Again, I've just really enjoyed getting to know your family and getting to know you. So, thank you so much for your service, and I know that this isn't the end of it. So, thank you. Everyone applauded, and Commissioner Bigham presented Council Member Khambata with the award.

Mayor Bailey said all right, now it comes down to me; you know me, I have notes because I'm one of these people that keeps forgetting things, like maybe it's coming with age, I don't know, Dave. Council Member Thiede said yeah, it does. So, I wanted just to recap a little bit of my partner down to the right here, Council Member Khambata. Obviously, this evening, we are celebrating his outstanding service to the citizens of Cottage Grove and being a great member of the Cottage Grove City Council. Tony is a lifelong resident of Cottage Grove, and he has been a longstanding dedicated member of our community, not even just being on the Council, but as Council Member Olsen was mentioning earlier, the Planning Commission and so on. So, since 2017, he has served on the

Cottage Grove Planning Commission and actively contributed as a Member Ambassador to the Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce, where he has been involved with them since 2016. Tony's commitment to our City extends beyond the Council Chambers, as Vice Chair of the St. Paul Association of Realtors' Government Affairs Committee, and a member of both the St. Paul and Stillwater Area Chamber of Commerce, he has worked tirelessly to improve our local economy and our quality of life. He played a key role in working with NorthPoint in expanding the Business Park, while also advancing affordable housing initiatives and supporting projects like the Interim PFAS Water Treatment Facilities that were built here in Cottage Grove. Throughout his time on the City Council, Tony has maintained a perfect attendance record, and this is rare, I must say, attending 131 Special, Closed, and Regular Meetings, showing his unwavering dedication to serving the people of Cottage Grove. That alone is worthy of special recognition and praise. Tony's leadership also helped the City achieve a AAA Bond Rating with implementing a comprehensive ten-year Financial Management Plan, which I know my partner to the left here likes, too, and supporting numerous critical housing projects in our community, especially around affordable housing. His background as a licensed real estate broker in both Minnesota and Wisconsin, combined with the experience in the industry, has been instrumental in achieving local development and economic growth here in Cottage Grove. A big one here, a proud graduate of Park High School, he's got his PHD. Tony's roots are in Cottage Grove and they definitely run deep here. He has raised his family here, Crystal is in the audience with us. A fun fact, and this is funny, though I don't know the end part that was shared on here was accurate or not, but he's been a mechanic in his past; because he was a mechanic in his past, on one of the events that we had during Night to Unite, one of our fire trucks broke down, and our Council Member, Tony, crawled under the fire truck and actually fixed the fire truck so that we could get it up and running again. So, that was pretty amazing. We all have those things that happen, and Tony, you're a part of that. Tony, your dedication, your hard work, your passion for this community is unwavering. You have left a lasting impact in our community, and I don't think, as you're hearing from many of us up here that it's over, and you know that because we've talked about other roles for you to play within the City of Cottage Grove. I just want to say on behalf of all the citizens of Cottage Grove, we all thank you, our Council, our staff thanks you for all the dedication and support. Crystal, thank you, for giving him up many, many, many nights. As we all know, a lot of people think that this is just a first and third Wednesday of the month kind of thing, and it's way more than that. And we also know this, too, is we don't do this job for the money, we do it because we love the community, and that's what you do, too; so, you want to make this place a better place for your family and other families here in Cottage Grove. So, what I'd like to do is I'm going to present you with a plaque, and Mayor Bailey read it aloud: *Presented to Council Member Tony Khambata in appreciation for your dedicated service to the City of Cottage Grove from the City of Cottage Grove.* So, again, on behalf of all of us, Tony, thank you for your service to our community. Everyone applauded.

Mayor Bailey presented him with the plaque, and a photograph was taken of Council Member Khambata with Mayor Bailey and the other Council Members.

Council Member Khambata said if you had told me there were going to be 131 meetings when you asked me to join. Mayor Bailey said we never tell you that, don't scare the guy in the audience away.

Mayor Bailey said one last thing I'm going to say, and this is more from a general sense, we've talked a lot about what we do on the Council and some of us with more years of service doing it than others, but one of the interesting things is social media can be good and it also can be bad. So, I do find it interesting there were some people on social media who think we're all a bunch of friends that have known each other for years; to be quite frank, that's completely not true. I had no idea who you were until you got appointed to the Planning Commission, and the same with Dave and the same with Council Member Olsen. So, it is just interesting how over the years, or I'll even say our County Commissioner Karla Bigham, when we both ran for Council the very first time; so, I just thought it was great and again appreciate all the dedication and support that you've given to our community.

Just for the public to be aware, after we leave this Council Chambers here and close out this meeting, we are having a reception for Council Member Khambata and obviously his wife and staff, and that will be down at the River Oaks Golf Course & Event Center. So, there were invitations that were sent out, so we will all celebrate the years of service of Tony and his family down at River Oaks after this.

13. WORKSHOPS - OPEN TO PUBLIC - None.

14. WORKSHOPS - CLOSED TO PUBLIC - None.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Khambata said first of all, thank you for all the kind words; I told Karla I might cry, and I still might. And I just want to end on one final note, which is as I've told the guys down at Public Works many times, everything that we see and touch in this City runs through Public Works and Parks. So, tomorrow and Friday and Saturday and Sunday, when the roads are clear, go hug your plow driver.

Motion by Council Member Khambata, second by Council Member Thiede, to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.
Motion carried: 4-0.

Minutes prepared by Judy Graf and reviewed by Tamara Anderson, City Clerk.