

**CITY OF EAGLE LAKE  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
September 9, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

- Mayor John Whittington called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**ROLL CALL**

- Council Members present: Garrett Steinberg, Beth Rohrich, Anthony White, Nick Lewis, and Mayor John Whittington.
- Staff Present: City Administrator Jennifer Bromeland, Deputy Clerk Kerry Rausch, Public Works Director Andrew Hartman, Fire Chief Vern Simpson, Assistant Chief Trent Talle, and Captain Spencer Kolles.

**2026 BUDGET WORK SESSION**

- Administrator Bromeland explained that Minnesota cities are required to prepare and adopt a proposed budget and property tax levy on a calendar-year basis. For cities with populations over 500, the Truth-in-Taxation (TNT) process requires that the proposed levy be certified to the County Auditor by September 30. Property owners must receive notice and an opportunity to provide input before the budget and tax levy are finalized. Once adopted, the preliminary levy may be reduced but cannot be increased before the final levy is certified. The levy is comprised of the General Fund, Economic Development Authority (EDA), and Debt Service. A public TNT hearing must be held between November 24 and December 29, with the final levy and compliance certificate submitted to both the County Auditor and the Minnesota Department of Revenue by December 29.
- Last year's final tax levy was \$1,287,042, representing a 14 percent increase of \$158,058 from the prior year. The proposed preliminary levy for 2026 is \$1,377,135, which reflects a 7 percent increase over 2025. Within this total, the General Fund would rise from \$1,130,646 to \$1,221,518 (an increase of \$90,872). The EDA levy would remain at \$20,000 and Debt Service would decrease slightly from \$136,396 to \$135,617.
- The proposed 2026 General Fund expenditures total \$3,323,174, while revenues are projected at \$2,529,421, leaving a difference of \$793,753. The proposed budget would be balanced except for planned deficit spending, which is the intentional use of previously set-aside capital reserves.
- The Truth-in-Taxation meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 1, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. The City continues to maintain a minimum unassigned fund balance of 50 percent of the annual budget, which supports a strong bond rating, ensures cash flow stability, and protects against unexpected expenses in revenue shortfalls.
- Personnel costs remain a significant portion of the budget. A 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is factored into the 2026 budget, consistent with the average increase other cities are applying based on the 2.6 percent Midwest CPI change. In addition, a 3 percent step increase is included, following the updated pay structure adopted in 2024. Health insurance costs are projected to rise by 12.24 percent. Beginning in January 1, 2026, the new state-administered Paid Family and Medical Leave program will take effect, with Eagle Lake qualifying for the reduced small-employer premium rate of 0.44 percent of payroll.

- The enterprise budgets continue to be reviewed and refined. Staff will work with Shannon Sweeney of David Drown Associates to determine whether updated rate analyses are necessary in light of projected operating costs.
- Fire Chief Simpson reviewed the proposed 2026 fire department budget and explained all proposed line-item increases. Assistant Fire Chief Talle and Captain Kolles reviewed and explained which revenue sources would cover each expense. The largest capital outlay items proposed were new radios for trucks and personnel, a new SCBA equipment washing machine, and a new ladder truck.
- Administrator Bromeland explained that she did not include the previous year \$25,000 Capital Outlay-Facilities for the fire department since this was budgeted in 2025 for the fire hall study and to try and keep the levy low, but said any unused funds at year's end could be carried over to assist with anticipated improvements, with a motion to do so by the City Council. Normally, any unused funds at year end do not carry over for departmental spending purposes without separate action to do so. Public Works Director Hartman reviewed the proposed 2026 Public Works budgets and explained all proposed line-item increases and decreases.
- Director Hartman explained that he is still working on some of the enterprise fund line-item budget amounts. He also explained that he is looking to remove the purchase of a wood chipper from the capital outlay purchases, as he has other options for disposing of tree waste.
- Council discussion included the need to use the park professional services 2025 budgeted amount so that the necessary tree removal is accomplished. It was requested to explain to the Park Board what is in their budget and what is in the Park Board's budget.
- The Council indicated they would like to see a line item for each of the repairs for each of the City-owned buildings.
- The Council scheduled a special city council meeting for Wednesday, September 24, at 6:00 p.m. to approve a preliminary general fund budget and levy to be certified with Blue Earth County.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Councilmember White moved, seconded by Councilmember Rohrich, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with Councilmembers Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Lewis, and Mayor Whittington voting in favor.**

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John Whittington, Mayor

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Kerry Rausch, Deputy City Clerk