CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 11, 2025 AT 6:30 PM
FINLAYSON CITY HALL

1. **CALL TO ORDER**: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **ROLL CALL:**
   a. Council members present: Dave Auchter, Barb Morgan, Kim Schaefer, Jeff Flaws, Rhonda Kriesel
   b. Council members absent: None
   c. Others present: Dennis Liebelt, Nancy Liebelt, David Schaefer, Ed Melzark, Pamela Burbie, Ron Oetterer, Vickie Oetterer, Wyatt Lucht, John Linden, Trina Alfson, Brittany Corr & Alex Eiffler (Bombshell Beauty Boutique), Marge Haefner, Sandra Schoenrock

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Morgan corrected July 14 Minutes to state the word “should” rather than “will” in the last sentence of the Fire Chief’s Staff Report. Auchter corrected the same minutes to include the wording: “Mayor reminded the Council that emails should be channeled through the City Clerk to avoid violation of the Open Meeting Law” under New Business A, Council Conduct. A *motion was made by Schaefer to approve the July 14, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.*
   Morgan requested a correction to the July 28 Minutes to reflect that she had made a motion to contract with Al Brigan. *Motion made by Morgan to contract with Al Brigan for the purpose of reviewing the Liquor Store operations. All in favor. Motion carried.* [Clerk maintains that per the meeting record, action was taken without motion.] *Motion made by Morgan to approve the July 28 Special Meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.*

4. **PUBLIC FORUM**:
   a. The owners of Bombshell Beauty Boutique introduced themselves & their business.
   b. The Community Club is hosting a Farmer’s Market in late August and requested garbage cans be provided by the City.
   c. Nancy Liebelt discussed concern for roadside weed/grass growth on Dixon/Sherman/etc. *Flaws motioned to have the Clerk seek proposals for roadside grass work for future years. All in favor. Motion carried.*

5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
   a. Morgan requested Consulting with Al Brigan be added to the agenda. *Motion by Schaefer to approve the agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**: *A motion was made by Flaws to approve the consent agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*

7. **PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS:**
   a. **Personnel & Policy (Morgan, Schaefer):** Reviewing job descriptions & performance review formats. Committee does not believe that the Fire Chief should receive an annual review, as it has not been done in the past and Schaefer finds it “offensive.” Auchter requested that the Committee make formal recommendations to the Council for Council action.
   b. **Public Works & Infrastructure (Auchter, Flaws):** Auchter requested weeds (sidewalk) on the north side of town be attended to, as well as brushing/washing the siding on City Hall & Post Office. Millner will do this again. Committee received concern for noxious weeds growing in the ditch off Front St. Due to the steep slope, City staff cannot address. Auchter will contact a contractor. Auchter noted the watering hose is missing again, and that if the current gardens do not get watered, that planting next year will not occur.

c. **Budget & Finance (Flaws, Kriesel):** Met in July and reviewed Liquor Store financials. Significant assets in restocking (more than previous years) but inventory not reflected in sales; hoping Brigan can offer insight. Schaefer requested report from Luedtke showing daily bar sales.

d. **Planning & Zoning (Flaws):** Presenting Comprehensive Plan updates; planning a future meeting to present to the public. Revising application for land use & compiling a quick reference guide. Fee schedule to be proposed.

8. **STAFF REPORTS**

a. **Water & Sewer Contractor (John Mikrot):** No update.

b. **Zoning Administrator (Ed Melzark):** Clerk to send Melzark copy of Land Use Permit memo. Received notice from County regarding Front Street property (blight/health concern.) No action being taken by County.

c. **City Maintenance (Randy Millner):** Will spray noxious weeds. Wants to sell surplus items; Council noted the need to be compliant with surplus selling for municipals. *Auchter motioned to expedite the disposal of materials. Schaefer volunteered to look up the proper procedures. All in favor. Motion carried.* City still need to purchase cold patch, Clerk requested clarification on quantity. *Flaws motioned to purchase a pallet of permapatch. All in favor. Motion carried.*

d. **Bar Manager (Joe Luedtke):** No update.

e. **Fire Chief (Wyatt Lucht):** Report submitted: 0 fire calls, 5 Rescue/EMS assists, 0 Motor vehicle accident, 0 false alarms, 0 County assist. 27 hours for calls this month. Lucht reports Emergency Apparatus serviced pumps and had the foam system on Pumper #2 fixed. They will be certifying pumps on August 12. Lucht questioned the City billing the Fire Dept for utilities; Auchter suggested Lucht work with his liaison to get questions answered. Upcoming November township meetings. Auchter asked the Fire Dept liaison to work with the Clerk for any needs for the township meetings.

f. **City Clerk (Liz Bernhardt):** Report submitted. Schaefer sought clarification on Paul's Portable order for satellites for the 4th of July. Report stated "modified Paul Portable order for satellites for 4th of July to remove hand washing stations per Kim Schaefer, for the Community Club." Clerk confirmed that is what was done; no changes to the satellite order were made.

g. **City Financials:** Clerk reviewed financials; noted a formula error on the Cash Balance Statement. All funds showed a profit; received state tax payments. General Fund is down $29k, Fire is up $67k, Liquor store is up $9k, Water is up $15k, and Sewer up $8k. Clerk noted that the financials reflect that Clerk/Deputy Clerk and Maint. wages have not been allocated from the General Fund to the respective funds, pending Council approval for wage allocation policy.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Temp Liquor License:** Council inquired about what events the liquor licenses were for; Clerk noted that the event purpose isn't on the application. Schaefer volunteered to solicit that information from the Lion's Club. Motion by Flaws to approve the temporary liquor licenses for the Finlayson-Giese Lion's Club in October, November and December. All in favor. Motion carried.

a. **Finlayson Giese Sportsmen's Club:** *Morgan motioned to approve the Lawful Gamblin Permit for the Finlayson-Giese Sportsmen's Club on November 22, 2025. All in favor. Motion carried.*

b. **New Business:** Council discussed Bombshell Beauty Boutique; no action required; no action taken.

c. **Midco Waiver:** *Morgan motioned to not waive the first right of refusal under the franchise agreement with Midco. All in favor. Motion carried.*

d. **City Infrastructure Concerns:** Schaefer confirmed that the current Capital Improvement Plan expired in 2016/2018. Auchter noted it was provided to Bollig for review with the hopes that they'll develop an updated CIP. Council Discussion (non-agenda item): Schaefer and Morgan clarified that the "whole" council had not agreed to refrain from pursuing retroactive paperwork. Mayor Auchter recommended that the concern be addressed through the proper channels, noting it was not listed as an agenda topic.

e. **Farmer's market:** *Morgan motioned to approve the Farmer's Market and to cooperate with the Community Club and provide receptacles. Discussion: Requested Greg reach out to Millner to coordinate. All in favor. Motion carried.*

f. **Monthly Financial Reports:** Clerk seeking clarification on financial reports requested by Council on a consistent basis. *Motion by Auchter to have the following monthly reports available to the Council:*
   i. *P&L by Fund, with month and year-to-date budget on single page (for each fund), landscape format*
   ii. *Cash Balance Summary (formerly Fund Balance) showing bank account balances*
   iii. *Disbursement Register (showing check #s, dates, payee and amount)*

   All in favor. Motion carried. Additional motion by Morgan to request that the Disbursement register is included in the Council Packet. In favor: Morgan, Schaefer. Against: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel. Motion failed.

g. **Rezoning Oetterer Properties:** Resident requested rezoning. *Motion by Morgan to hold a public hearing for both Oetterer properties in question to rezone from R1 to RR and waive applicable fees, prior to the September meeting. Flaws offered an amendment to the motion to include that the Council should follow the proper rezoning process. All in favor. Motion carried.*

h. **Enforcement of Current Handbook:** Clerk requested that all City employees be held to the policies outlined in the current employee handbook, whether paid or volunteer. Morgan stated the Personnel Committee will continue to work on updating the current handbook. Auchter asked for recommendations / updates be brought to the Clerk. No action taken.

i. **Liquor Store Holiday Hours:** Clerk requested the Council review holiday hours for the Liquor Store, considering many major holidays fall on Mondays and Mondays have not historically profited. Mondays to consider closing are Monday, 10/13, Monday 1/19, Monday 2/16. *Morgan motioned to table the decision until Brigan can provide his analysis, in October. All in favor. Motion carried.* Schaefer noted that the closing bartenders can close as early as 10PM if patrons are not in the bar. No further action taken.

j. **MN Basic Code of Ordinances:** *Flaws motioned to direct the Clerk to review the MN Basic Code to ensure it does not conflict with existing City ordinances, that the City has the means to enforce the Code, and to identify ordinances that require adoption to remain compliant. Discussion: Flaws & Auchter willing to help review ordinances. All in favor. Motion carried.*

k. **Comprehensive Basis of Accounting:** The City can save up to 20% of the auditor's fees by switching to the cash basis for accounting. Clerk explained the City operates on a cash basis, but for auditing purposes, they have to follow GAAP (Accrual). Formally switching will reduce the amount of time spent by the Auditor to prepare accruals, therefore reducing the fee billed to the City. *Motion by Morgan to formally switch to a cash basis. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Flaws motioned to extend the Council meeting to 9PM. In favor: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel, Morgan. Against: Schaefer. Motion carried.

l. Motion by Morgan to add to September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting Agenda. All in favor. Motion carried. Discussion about other department reviews, including Bar Manager, Maintenance Worker and Fire Chief; will need to be scheduled. No action taken.

m. **Ordinances & Resolutions**:
   i. Resolution 2025-21 – Donation from Peace Lutheran Church. *Motion by Flaws to approve. All in favor. Motion carried.*
   ii. Resolution 2025-22 – Donation from Josette Koets. *Motion by Morgan to approve. All in favor. Motion carried.*
   iii. Resolution 2025-23 – Donation from Mike & Rose Hansen. *Motion by Schaefer to approve. All in favor. Motion carried.* Morgan noted Fire Chief can send a thank-you note as well.

n. **Policy & Procedure**:
   i. **Employee Supervision & Reporting Structure Policy:** *Kriesel motioned to table the approval of the policy until the September meeting, or when updated job descriptions are available. Kriesel amended the motion to immediately remove supervisory responsibilities for all but the Deputy Clerk positions from the City Clerk job description. All in favor. Motion carried.*

ii. **Policy on Fundraising Activities for City Departments:** Morgan requested references & examples highlighting the Fire Department be excluded from the policy. *Motion by Auchter to approve the policy with references to specific departments removed. In favor: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel. Against: Morgan, Schaefer. Motion carried: 3:2.*

iii. **Policy on Social Media & External Communications:** *Auchter made a motion to approve the policy, with the addition of the Mayor being both authorized with full administrative access on City accounts and authorized to speak on behalf of the City. Discussion: Auchter would like to have comments turned off for social media accounts. In favor: Auchter, Flaws, Kriesel. Against: Morgan, Schaefer. Motion carried 3:2.*

Flaws motioned to recess. Motion withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT. *Morgan made a motion to adjourn at 9:03PM. All in favor. Motion carried.*

The remaining items on the agenda were not addressed.

2. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Policies & Procedures:**

i. Municipal Liquor Store Policy on Banning Patrons & Incident Form (July 2025)
ii. Allocating Administrative Charges to Funds
iii. Municipal Liquor Store Donations
iv. Employee Handbook
v. Security Camera Use & Access
vi. Key Access Policy

3. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a. Snowplow Equipment (Auchter)
b. Bylaw Update Recommendations (Flaws/Morgan)
c. Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML)
d. Bar & Cook Pay
e. Broadway Development
f. Legalities of City Fundraising & Expenditures (April 2025)
g. Sedillo Property Hwy 18 – Council to vote on pursuing blight cleanup or not

4. **MISCELLANEOUS:**

a. Al Brigan Consultation

Submitted by Liz Bernhardt, City Clerk, August 11, 2025