

1. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Waite Park City Council was held on Monday, March 16, 2026, beginning at 6:30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Members present were Mayor Schmitt, Members Blackburn, Starling and Theisen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Member Schulz

CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

City Representatives present or on the call were Administrator Johnson, Public Works Director Schluenz, Planning and Community Development Director Norenberg, City Clerk Brenny, Finance Director Virnig, Police Chief Reznicek, Chief Aleshire, and City Engineer Blommel.

OTHERS PRESENT**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE****3. PROCLAMATION NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK**

Mayor Schmitt read aloud the proclamation and declared the week of April 19-25th, 2026 as "National Volunteer Week".

4. PUBLIC INPUT**5. COUNCIL AGENDA**

Member Starling moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Member Blackburn. Motion carried unanimously.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.A. Approve Resolution & Agreement Regarding Active Transportation Grant Program
- 6.B. Approve Resolution Approving Plans & Specs & Specifications & Ordering Advertisements for Bids – Sundial Drive
- 6.C. Approve Special Animal License

Member Theisen moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Member Starling. Motion carried unanimously.

7. REGULAR AGENDA**7.A. RECORDS TECHNICIAN APPOINTMENT**

The Police Department had a vacancy in the Records Technician Position since April of 2025. The hiring process was approved by City Council on February 3, 2025. The hiring process has included a scored application and scored interview involving the Civil Service Board and City Staff. The interviews were conducted on December 4, 2025, with the top 8 candidates. Those candidates also completed an assessment on basic computer skills and task prioritizations. The finalist completed a background check, an evaluation at Martin-McAllister Consulting Psychologists, Inc. and all necessary medical evaluations.

Staff requested consideration of the appointment of candidate, Sherri Blonigen to the position of Records Technician. The appointment is to fill the full-time position vacancy and is funded in the 2026 budget.

Member Theisen moved to approve the appointment of Sherri Blonigen for the position of Records Technician, with a Pay Grade NE4, Step 2, and the eligibility list expiring on September 20, 2026. Motion seconded by Member Starling. Motion carried unanimously.

7.B. ANDERSON HUGHS 2026 CONTRACT

Staff has been coordinating with Anderson-Hughs regarding an updated 2026 contract for services which would include creation and maintenance of a City of Waite Park website hosted by Anderson-Hughs.

The proposed website would include both information promoting Waite Park recreation and entertainment options for residents and visitors, as well as an integrated economic development promotion component intended to promote the City for potential new business growth and development, particularly to outside site selection firms or businesses looking to locate to the region. Staff has provided general information regarding this concept to the City Council at previous City Council work sessions.

Staff has been coordinating with Anderson-Hughs regarding planned layout and content and is satisfied with the direction the work is going, but before committing any additional time and resources it was determined that an updated contract (attached) reflecting the addition and integration of City promotional website should be reviewed and considered by the City Council due to the additional proposed costs exceeding the existing \$5,000 expenditure threshold.

The addition and maintenance of the Waite Park promotional website would add \$6,000 annually to the contract, which has a proposed total of \$48,000 annually for 2026.

The City Council would have opportunity for review and input on final promotional website and information before it would be made publicly live and available.

Member Theisen asked when the current contract expired. Administrator Johnson said that the current contract was good until May so that's why they were looking at this now.

Member Theisen asked what the City does with all the videos that Anderson-Hughs produce. Administrator Johnson said that all of them are on our City's YouTube channel, but they are also retained by the City and they are reused for different purposes. They are published on the website, the e-newsletter. Johnson explained that a previous Fire Department recruitment video is being utilized for the Fire Chief search. Johnson said that the City has been using business spotlights as well to promote different businesses for the newsletter and copies of those videos are also given to the businesses to utilize.

Member Theisen asked that once the website was done if the cost would go back down. Administrator Johnson explained that it was the upfront cost to build the website, but there was an annual cost for Anderson-Hughs to maintain and update the website as well.

Member Theisen asked if there was a way to see how many people searched and viewed the City videos on the YouTube page or website, and Administrator Johnson said that information was available. Administrator Johnson said that the videos the City has would be good to use on the proposed Economic Development website as well. Mayor Schmitt said on the Economic Development website that Anderson-Hughs would be able to track how many views the website gets.

Administrator Johnson said that this contract is paid for through franchise fees. Mayor Theisen questioned how much was in that fund. Finance Director Virnig thought there was some concern with the costs incurred to the franchise fees fund, but she was comfortable with the cost this year. Member Theisen expressed concern that if the fund was used to pay for this contract, where the funds would come from to pay for a video board outside of City Hall. Administrator Johnson didn't think that whole expense would come out of the franchise fee fund.

Planning and Community Development Director Noerenberg thinks that the economic website would be very user friendly and that isn't difficult to navigate that can also really promote Waite Park.

Administrator Johnson explained that the total fee covers the monthly videos, Mayor's Minute and the proposed website. Mayor Schmitt explained that this idea for a website evolved from conversations between him and Brady from Anderson-Hughs who has been working with organizations in the Cities to figure out how to promote cities with unique approaches to help drive development. Administrator Johnson said that the website would have the ability, in real time, to let people know what they can do and events they can attend on certain days to help draw people to the community.

Member Starling moved to approve the updated 2026 Anderson-Hughs promotional contract, seconded by Member Blackburn. Motion carried unanimously.

8. COUNCIL/MAYOR

8.A. APPROVE BILLS; OTHER BUSINESS

Member Theisen moved to approve the bills as presented, seconded by Member Starling. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Schmitt read thank-you letters from Anna Marie Alliance and the Initiative Foundation for donations from the charitable gambling fund.

9. ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Next Council meeting is April 6th.

Adjournment

Member Starling moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Blackburn. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Schmitt adjourned the meeting at 6:48pm.

Kenneth Schmitt
Mayor

Adrianna Brenny
City Clerk

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