

**Red Wing City Council
Workshop
City Council Chambers
April 27, 2026**

Council Members Present: Council President Janie Farrar; Council Members Vicki Jo Lambert, Beth Snyder, Kim Beise, Ron Goggin, Becky Norton, and Donald Kliewer

Council Members Absent: All Council Members were in attendance

Others Present: Gary Iocco, Mayor; Melissa Hill, City Clerk; Chris Heineman, Council Administrator; Amy Mace, City Attorney; Marshall Hallock, Finance Director; Kyle Klatt, Community Development Director; Michelle Leise, Public Information & Engagement Officer; Shawn Blaney, Public Works Director; Mike Warner, Fire Chief; Nick Sather, Police Chief; Zach Regnier, Engineering Director; Dan Brower, Library Director; Shantel Dow, Sheldon Executive Director

Agenda Item 1

Call to Order

Council President Janie Farrar welcomed attendees and convened the workshop at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 2

Workshop Items

A. City Council Administrator's Evaluation Summary.

Council President Janie Farrar referenced the purposes of the closed session. The City Council met in closed session on Monday, April 13, 2026, and now concludes the evaluation process by providing the following summary statement.

Council Administrator Chris Heineman was reviewed on his hiring terms and the City's strategic plan initiatives. The Council deemed him strong in strategic plan leadership, government & policy knowledge, and fiscal organization. He needs to improve organizational culture, communication, and trust-building.

B. Draft Public Facility Use Policy.

Administrator Heineman introduced the item, noting that the memo in the Council packet provides a basic overview. Administrator Heineman explained that staff had been working for several months to consolidate disparate facility-use policies into a single master policy with consistent core principles, while allowing each facility to maintain its own supplemental guidelines. He requested Council feedback on whether significant changes were needed or whether the draft met the Council's expectations for public use of City meeting spaces.

Council Member Lambert expressed strong objection to the prohibition on political events in Appendix A, Park Facilities, noting that park facilities have a separate reservation process and a fee requirement. Council Member Lambert stated that any

individual or group willing to pay to reserve a park space should be permitted to do so, regardless of political affiliation, and requested that the prohibition be stricken from the park policy.

Council Member Snyder agreed, adding that Red Wing has limited meeting space and that allowing paid reservations for any purpose is reasonable. Council Member Norton agreed and suggested extending that same approach to the Red Wing Public Library's lower-level meeting room, noting that renting a space signals the activity is not City-sponsored. She also raised a question about whether the prohibition on private social events or parties in the draft policy would affect existing uses of park pavilions for events such as graduation parties and booster club gatherings.

Council Member Kliewer raised a legal concern about the City's ability to prohibit political events in public spaces, noting that courts have generally held that government entities cannot discriminate based on viewpoint in traditional public forums. City Attorney Amy Mace clarified that the City has more discretion in non-public forums and limited public forums, and that the key is to apply restrictions consistently and based on content-neutral criteria rather than viewpoint. City Attorney Mace noted that the draft policy attempts to establish a limited public forum framework, which provides the City with more flexibility than a fully open public forum.

Mayor Iocco raised a concern about the use of City facilities for events that include political signage, noting that the presence of campaign signs at a City-owned venue could create the appearance of City endorsement. He suggested that the policy address signage specifically.

Council President Farrar and Administrator Heineman identified a conflict in the draft policy regarding the Fire Station Training Room, noting that the current draft lists it as available for public use in one section but restricts it in another. Fire Chief Mike Warner provided background on Station 2, noting that the community room there was originally built for neighborhood use and has historically been available to the public at no charge.

Council Member Norton suggested that the policy distinguish between spaces that are reservable and those that are not, and recommended that staff review sample policies from comparable cities. Council Member Norton noted that some spaces may be better suited as non-reservable community spaces rather than formal rental facilities.

Council Member Goggin raised a concern about the potential for increased public use of City facilities to create additional workload or liability exposure for City employees, particularly in facilities where staff are present during events.

Council Member Snyder suggested a framework in which spaces are categorized as either fee-based or no-fee, with different rules applying to each category, and that the policy make clear which spaces fall into each category.

Community Development Director Kyle Klatt explained the role of Ignite! Red Wing in managing the City HALLAnnex space, noting that Ignite! operates as a separate entity, and that the City's policy may need to account for that arrangement.

Council Member Beise expressed opposition to charging fees for use of the Fire Station 2 community room, noting that the space was built for the neighborhood and that imposing fees would be inconsistent with its original purpose.

Library Director Dan Brower provided context on library meeting room use, noting that the library's current policy allows use by community groups and that the lower-level meeting room is frequently used for a variety of purposes.

City Clerk Hill summarized the Council's direction, noting that the consensus appeared to support allowing paid political events in park spaces, removing the blanket prohibition on political events, and returning the policy with clearer categorization of spaces and approval authorities.

Council Member Beise raised a concern about the long-term cost implications of increased use of the Fire Station 2 community room, particularly related to supplies and cleaning. Chief Warner acknowledged the concern and indicated he would work with the Public Works team to track costs and include a small budget allocation for Station 2 in the upcoming budget cycle.

Council President Farrar requested that staff at each facility be consulted for input before the policy returns to the Council, and suggested that each facility's policy clearly identify an approval authority and contact. City Attorney Mace noted that the Council retains the ability to revisit and close any forum it opens.

C. Draft Amendment of Ordinance Section 10.30, Unauthorized Use of City Sidewalks, Right-of-Way, Stairwells, and Parking Ramps.

Police Chief Nick Sather provided historical context for the proposed ordinance, noting that the City has seen a significant increase in calls for service related to unhoused individuals since 2025, with 72 unhoused individuals identified and 865 calls for service recorded. Chief Sather highlighted the Third Street Walkway as a particular area of concern, noting that residents and visitors have reported feeling unsafe in that space. Chief Sather emphasized that the ordinance's primary objective is education, outreach, and connection to supportive resources, not criminalization, and that enforcement action would be a last resort.

Council Member Snyder raised a concern about the breadth of the ordinance's language prohibiting sleeping in parks, noting that the provision, as drafted, could apply to daytime napping or other benign activities. Council Member Snyder

suggested revising the language to focus on overnight or after-hours use. Council Member Norton agreed and suggested that the ordinance be narrowed to address specific behaviors and locations rather than broad categories of activity.

Council Member Lambert expressed strong reservations about the ordinance, stating that it is premature given the City's current lack of adequate housing resources and shelter capacity. Council Member Lambert cited Housing First research and noted that criminalization of homelessness is counterproductive. She stated that the City should prioritize expanding housing options before adopting ordinances that restrict where unhoused individuals may be.

Council Member Beise expressed support for housing solutions, but noted that the Third Street Walkway presents an immediate public safety issue, with residents and family members having been harassed there. He stated that certain areas of the City require protection for residents regardless of the broader housing conversation.

Council President Farrar agreed with both Council Member Lambert and Council Member Beise, noting that the housing conversation is ongoing and that the Council should remain focused on the immediate policy question. Council President Farrar highlighted Chief Sather's stated primary objective of education, outreach, and supportive resources, and noted that many individuals in the room share a commitment to the dignity of every community member.

Mayor Iocco confirmed that the ordinance could be revisited after passage if needed, and asked whether Council President Farrar would be willing to lead an effort to identify space or resources for unhoused individuals.

Director Klatt advised the Council that the Planning Commission is preparing recommendations for ordinance changes that would address the absence of permitted uses for emergency and transitional housing in the City's current zoning code. Director Klatt stated that the Planning Commission's recommendations, including new definitions and permitted uses for emergency housing and supportive transitional housing, would be presented to the Council at its next meeting.

Council Member Norton suggested that one of the most cost-effective complements to the proposed ordinance would be increased budget support for community organizations working with unhoused individuals. She noted that the City had previously funded a study on coordinating unhoused services and that budget allocations to those organizations have decreased in recent years. Council Member Norton encouraged the Council to consider restoring or increasing that funding during the upcoming budget cycle.

Council Member Goggin expressed support for the ordinance as a balanced approach, noting that Chief Sather and his officers are not seeking to be combative but need defensible policies when addressing situations involving unhoused individuals. He raised a concern about the practical limits of the City's capacity to

support an unhoused population, noting that expanded services may attract additional individuals to the community. Council Member Lambert responded that housing is a universal need and that the City should build more housing because people deserve a place to live.

Chief Sather thanked the Council for its feedback and reiterated that the ordinance is not intended to result in arrests or citations, but to provide officers with the legal authority to act when situations cannot be resolved through other means. Chief Sather stated that he would revise the language to include a required step-by-step process before any enforcement action is taken, and invited Council members to contact him directly with additional feedback. He clarified that no action was being requested at the workshop and that the item would return for further consideration.

Council Member Lambert asked whether there is an opportunity to partner with county agencies and community organizations to conduct a focus group to inform the ordinance language. Chief Sather agreed that such a process is possible and indicated he would reach out to Council Member Lambert to explore options. She stated that a people-centered, trauma-informed approach could result in an ordinance that improves safety for all community members without involuntary criminalization.

D. Draft Ordinance on Aggressive Panhandling.

Chief Sather introduced the draft ordinance on aggressive panhandling, noting that while the issue does not arise frequently, the City currently lacks an ordinance specifically addressing it. Chief Sather clarified that the ordinance does not prohibit individuals from asking for money, holding signs, or soliciting donations, activities protected under the First Amendment, but rather addresses behavior that is threatening, intimidating, or obstructive, such as blocking pedestrian or vehicle access, approaching individuals at ATMs, running into traffic, or using obscene language. Chief Sather stated that the ordinance is intended to clarify community expectations, provide officers with legal authority to address repeat offenders, and focus on behavior rather than speech.

City Attorney Mace noted that aggressive panhandling ordinances are an area of evolving law and that no court cases in the City's jurisdiction have yet addressed the specific provisions at issue. City Attorney Mace stated that the tailored approach taken in the draft is preferable to broader ordinances, as broader versions are more likely to face constitutional challenges, and that neighboring communities have adopted similar ordinances without legal challenge to date.

Council President Farrar moved the discussion to the drone ordinance in the interest of time.

E. Draft Ordinance of Drones.

Chief Sather introduced the draft ordinance on unmanned aircraft systems, noting that the term "unmanned" is federally mandated language. Chief Sather explained

that the City currently has limited authority to regulate drone use, as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the primary regulatory body. The ordinance is intended to provide residents with basic information about where drones may and may not be flown, establish a permit requirement for drone use over large public events such as River City Days, and give officers a local ordinance to cite when responding to complaints. Chief Sather noted that drone use near the nuclear plant remains an area of ongoing concern. Chief Sather stated that after consultation with staff and community members, the draft was narrowed from an initially broader scope, and that a comparison sheet of other cities' approaches was included in the packet for Council reference.

Mayor Iocco requested that the band shell be added to the list of locations where drone flight is prohibited, particularly in connection with Wednesday evening concerts. Chief Sather agreed to include that addition.

Council Member Norton asked whether the ordinance distinguishes between toy drones without cameras and more sophisticated equipment, and suggested that low-altitude recreational use within a limited range of the operator's person might be appropriate in certain park areas. She also suggested that the ordinance include a non-emergency contact number for reporting drone violations, and raised a practical concern about the ability of officers to locate and identify drone operators given the range of modern equipment. Council Member Norton indicated general support for the policy while noting those implementation challenges.

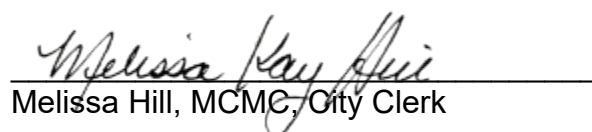
Agenda Item 3

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 6:19 p.m.


Janie Farrar, Council President

ATTEST:


Melissa Hill, MCMC, City Clerk