

May 11, 2026

The regular meeting of the Cuyuna City Council was held at 6:00 pm at the Cuyuna Fire Hall. Present were Mayor Brix and Council members Smith, Stockard, and Workman. Council member Haag attended remotely. Also present were Cuyuna Fire Officer Jake Kewatt, Cuyuna Police Chief Smith, City Engineer Tim Houle, and Clerk-Treasurer Bedard. City Attorney Tom Pearson attended remotely.

Mayor Brix led the pledge of allegiance.

Motion by Workman to amend the agenda and move up the Woodtick Day Race event in New Business to before the Departmental Reports. Second by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Workman to approve the minutes for the April 13, 2026 regular council meeting. Second by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Workman to approve payment of the invoices and forthcoming regular monthly invoices. Second by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

- Council reviewed the request for the June 13, 2026 Woodtick Races event. Owner provided the proper certificate of insurance for the event. There will be music, but no streets will be blocked. Police Chief Smith reviewed the event application and had no objections to the event. Cuyuna officers will be at the event as in previous years.
- **Motion by Workman to approve the Woodtick Day Races event. Second by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.**

Fire Chief Report:

- Council reviewed the monthly fire department report. No action required.

Water and Sewer Report:

- No reports of water or sewer issues for the city lines.

Planning and Zoning Activity Report:

- Two permits were issued in April: one for a pole building and one for a home.

Police Chief Report:

- Police Chief Smith provided the council with the April activity report. There were 23 various traffic stop warnings including 19 for speed and 2 for expired registration.
- Officers conducted extra patrols on Cotton Tail Drive, Snowshoe Lane, Getaway Circle, Cuyuna Campground, Powder House Road, Agate Shores Road, Fox Run Lane, Oak Lane, Maple Shores Road, Iron Hub Road, Mine Shaft Place, Trail Track Lane, and Kennedy Drive.

- Among the monthly activities and calls, CPD officers were dispatched to two welfare checks for residents, handled a report of an individual using a false address on their MN Driver's License, responded to a brush pile being burnt during the burning ban as well as another grass fire, investigated a hit and run accident on Tripp Ave and located the suspect, observed a suspicious vehicle parked on Getaway Circle but all was ok. Received a report of a bear cub injured south of Deerwood on Hwy 6 and advise the caller to contact the DNR and Crow Wing County Sheriff. Officers observed 4 large mattresses in the ditch off CSAH31 and reported the event to the Crow Wing Highway Department who came and removed the mattresses.
- Officers provided several agency assists to the Crosby Police Department, Deerwood Police Department, and Crow Wing County Sheriff's Department. Agency assists were for two disturbances on County Road 32 and Wolford Hall Road, two medicals on County Road 30 and Cottontail Drive and a DWI arrest on Main Street Crosby.
- Cuyuna police officers read books to the kindergartener kids as "Reading Pals" at the Cuyuna Range Elementary School.
- Chief Smith shared Officer Hunter Henkel's resignation letter. Officer Henkel was offered a full-time position with another agency and expressed appreciation to the chief, the department, the community, and council for their support throughout his time serving Cuyuna.
- Chief Smith shared he received four boxes of donated uniforms and duty gear from another department who used the same uniforms as Cuyuna's but is now changing to a new style. Squad and backup cameras, as well as taser/cartridges were received as a donation.
- Chief Smith noted Sourcewell funds emergency medical training, defensive driving training, and patrol online training courses. All at no charge to the city which is appreciated.

Engineering Report:

City Engineer Tim Houle shared they are in the study stage for the future water project and addressing Rural Developments comments on the previously submitted Preliminary Engineering Report(PER) and the Environmental Report(ER). Rural Development and other agencies are working on project applications that were delayed over several government shutdowns. He had conversations with MN Public Facility Authority, Rural Development, and MN Department of Health about whether work on the existing water tower could be advanced but has not heard back at this time.

- He shared the MN Public Facility Authority(MPFA) has a June 5 deadline to add projects to their 2027 Intended Use Plan(IUP) priority list for future projects. It would be a benefit to do so for the city's future project. It would require gathering several years' data from the city clerk and completing the forms to submit to MPFA.
- **Motion by Smith to approve submitting the City's information to the MPFA for their 2027 IUP priority list. Second by Workman. Motion carried unanimously.**

Campground Report:

- The campground is ready to open. RV sites are reserved now for most weekends and there is an increase in weekday reservations. Campers are advised if there is a burning ban or burning restrictions. The pumptrack could use some additional dirt work, and the city will check if the Mountain Bike Crew might have resources to help with the dirt work.

Public Comments:

- No public comments.

Unfinished Business:

- The city attorney will follow up on the non-compliance of a business which is using the property for residential use, a violation of the city ordinance, and for which there is an existing court order prohibiting residential use of the property. After his review, the city attorney can request a revocation of the stay of adjudication and proceed with a contempt of court order. If there are additional issues such as vehicles not in compliance with city ordinances, the city should provide him with the details and he can address them.
- Regarding the non-compliance with the accessory structure, an unpermitted shed, he will have discussion with the city zoning administrator and if necessary, move this case forward in the court system. Additionally, he will seek a misdemeanor charge for the non-compliant bus vehicle on Cottontail Drive.
- Darla Graupman, Staff Engineer for Crow Wing County, was present to give an update on the CSAH31 Rabbit Lake bridge project. Red Stone Construction is the contractor. Darla Graupman will be the main county contact for the project which will start July 6, 2026 with completion scheduled for October 31, 2026. There could be occasions when the waterway under the bridge is also closed. The county will post weekly updates on its website for the project status. Signage will be placed on 210 and 6 a couple of weeks prior to the start of the project, and a sign will be placed near the roundabout of 210 and CSAH31 noting the bridge closure and open to local traffic only. The detour route is through Crosby to Hwy 6. The council requested additional bridge-closed signage by Foley Street as there is not a good place after that street on CSAH31 for vehicles to turn around. This is also a concern from the residents on Snowshoe Lane that without extra signs, unaware travelers would use their street to turn around. Darla shared that the county would review if there were issues during the first two weeks of the project and could then amend the signage.

New Business:

- Council reviewed the inspection information from the recent well maintenance checkup by Thein Well for the pumphouse. The well is functioning fine, but it is recommended to perform a yearly checkup given its age and it is the only well for the city. The inspection cost is \$250. Engineer Tim Houle agreed that a yearly maintenance checkup is important.
- **Motion by Workman to approve a yearly maintenance contract with Thein Well for the well inspection. Second by Stockard. Motion carried unanimously.**
- Mayor Brix asked the clerk-treasurer for information regarding property tax rates. Each year cities and townships review their services and expenses to develop a budget for the next year. Expenses can vary year by year and are unique for each city and each township's community service needs. If planned expenses are more than planned revenues, a city or township can set a tax levy to collect revenue to meet expenses. These tax levy dollars are then spread over the total valuation of property, as determined by the county, for a city or township. This is the tax rate. Cities have roads, planning and zoning, and public safety, such as law enforcement and fire department expenses. Users of services such as city water and sewer pay for those services separately. Usually, townships' major expenses are roads and bridges, and the county typically provides the law enforcement and the planning and zoning. Also a township contracts out to a

city for fire protection. Crow Wing County provides yearly, based on the levies from townships and cities, their individual tax rates. The City of Cuyuna's tax rate is in the middle of the 19 cities in Crow Wing County and for 2026 it is less than local area cities. The tax rate for townships also varies as each determines its citizens' needs and expenses. For example, Wolford's 2026 tax rate is higher than Perry Lake's rate.

- Police Chief Smith reviewed with the council the generally accepted processes to contact law enforcement, which is also on the city's website. To report an emergency, dial 911 immediately. The call goes to a central dispatch system which contacts the appropriate police to respond. For non-emergencies, a person can contact the Cuyuna Police Department at [218-546-2692](tel:218-546-2692). If no one answers, a person can leave a message or if needs to speak to an officer immediately, and it is a non-emergency, dial [218-829-4749](tel:218-829-4749) and speak to a Crow Wing County Sheriff's Department dispatcher. This is the standard protocol as the sheriff's dispatch service phones are answered 24 hours a day. Chief Smith also noted that Cuyuna participates in mutual aid with the local area law enforcement and sheriff's office, so if a Cuyuna officer is not available another department officer can respond. Responding to an article, Chief Smith shared the cities of Crosby, Cuyuna, Ironton, and Deerwood did review together twice, as recent as 2023, the possibility of forming a police district, but consolidation would not save money and would increase the law enforcement cost to Cuyuna residents. He noted the City of Cuyuna does not spend more on public safety per capita than any other city in the state. Information from the State Auditor's Office shows, for small cities under 2500 the city ranks 57 out of 401 for police expenses and 67 out of 604 for fire expenses.
- The council discussed the City of Cuyuna road conditions. It spends \$60-70,000/year. Included in this cost is \$20,000-\$28,000 for pavement repairs. Cottontail Drive is 24 years old and past its life expectancy of 20 years. Information from the Crow Wing County Highway Department, City Engineering Widseth, and the City road contractor was shared with the council and inquiring residents when the Cottontail Drive surface deterioration from construction projects was discussed last year. The city did spend \$13,500 in the fall of 2025 to patch the areas of concern and recognized there could be more deterioration in 2026 with the bridge construction this year could likely result in more traffic on Cottontail Drive. If Cottontail Drive owners along the road would like a new road surface, there is an assessment process with several steps to evaluate the costs of such a project and determine the assessed costs to each property.

Adjournment:

- **Motion by Workman to adjourn. Second Smith. Motion carried unanimously. 6:55 PM.**

William F Bedard
Clerk

Lloyd Brix
Mayor