

North Powder Special City Council Meeting
Minutes
June 24, 2025
City Hall (340 E Street)
6PM

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor John Frieboes called the meeting to order 6PM. The pledge of allegiance was said.

Roll Call: Don McClure, Alan Brown, Tonya Dias, John Frieboes, Emily Hart, Midge Clause, Josh Guthrie, Jason Bingham, Jake Jones, Mike and Debby Schoeningh, Dave Hoene,

New Business:

A special meeting was held to adopt the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget.

The proposed budget was previously submitted to and approved by the budget committee on May 20, 2025.

Areas of concern include water and sewer funds:

Sewer Fund: Revenues and expenses are balanced, with required reserves funded. Water Fund: Although it has funds available, contributions to reserves are limited. A \$3 increase to monthly water fees was included as an option for the council but will not go into effect automatically upon budget adoption—future council action would be required. Budgeted reserve transfers from water revenue have declined in recent years (e.g., from \$30,000 annually in the past to \$7,600 this year).

Property Taxes Property tax revenue is budgeted with a 2% increase, expecting \$96,000–\$97,000 in receipts. These revenues support the general fund, which covers payroll, operations, and transfers to other funds such as library, street, fire, and reserves. Property tax rates and increases are determined by the county assessor; changes require a formal public process. Additional revenues include franchise fees, liquor/cigarette taxes, city licenses, and grants. Interest income on reserves is budgeted at \$24,000. Council members clarified that adopting the budget does not enact the proposed \$3 increase in water rates; it simply provides flexibility should the council choose to implement it later. Emphasis was placed on the need to build reserves to cover increasing maintenance costs and future operating expenses. Recent high repair costs have strained the budget but may decrease going forward, potentially improving fund balances.

Councilor Guthrie made a motion to adopt the 2025-2026 budget. Councilor Clause seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with all Councilors present voting Yes.

Discussion on Temporary Public Works Staffing

With Rick's departure scheduled for July 3 and no permanent hire yet in place, the council discussed the urgent need for a temporary worker to maintain essential water, sewer, and public works functions. Councilor Dias excused herself due to a potential conflict of interest. Jake Jones volunteered to temporarily fill the role, expressing willingness but requesting clear expectations regarding duties, hours, compensation, and liability before committing. Councilor Guthrie also expressed interest in the temporary position but was informed he would need to resign from the council to be employed by the city; he stated he would assist if compensated with a stipend similar to the mayor. Emily, City Recorder, exited the meeting at 6:30 PM after expressing frustration with the direction of the conversation. Council members acknowledged limited knowledge of the city's water and sewer systems and identified key tasks—such as chlorine residual sampling, fluoride and pH testing, and water meter readings—as immediate priorities. The council discussed dividing tasks among members, arranging time to shadow Rick before his departure, and reaching out to contract water and wastewater operators or local resources for interim support. The importance of compiling step-by-step guides for critical tasks to improve future training and operations was emphasized. The council agreed to continue discussions at the July 7 council meeting regarding whether to hire one or two full-time staff members and to finalize the long-term staffing plan.

The council recognized the urgency of finalizing and posting the permanent public works position. The draft posting was reviewed, with council members noting that final approval and signatures were needed for it to go live the next day. There was also discussion on advertising the position through Elkhorn Media Group to increase outreach and

attract more qualified candidates. A motion was made and seconded to approve posting the public works job with pay starting at \$20.50 per hour, depending on experience; the motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned: 7 PM

Minutes Prepared by
Emily Hart, City Recorder
6-28-2025