

Wykoff City Council Meeting
Special Meeting/Budget Meeting
August 25, 2025
7:00 pm

Call to order:

A meeting of the Wykoff City Council was held in the Council Room at 106 Gold St. N. on August 25, 2025, at 6:30 pm. Attendees included Mayor Ryan Breckenridge, Barb Fate, Jeff Hare, Jane Baker, Missy Musel and City Administrator Becky Schmidt. Also attending Rick Whitney.

A. Solar Panel Update

Mayor Breckenridge turned the meeting over to Jeff Hare and Brok Johnson, Solar Connections. Hare stated that the original project was for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Community Center, and Fire Hall. At the last meeting Rick Whitney had mentioned a good point that the well house generates more usage and asked if they could consider looking into that building. Hare stated that he, John and Ric met and he consulted with Solar Connections and MiEnergy and all agreed to drop the Community Center and the Fire Hall and focus on the Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Well House which the council had those two proposals to review. He stated the solar panel for the pump house will be located on the Community Center roof.

Brok then reviewed those two projects and opened the conversation up for questions. He noted the grant is for 70% of the project through a State Grant and 30% would be funded through Federal Direct Pay Rebate. The project would have to start before July 4, 2026, to receive federal funding. The city would submit for 30% at the end of the fiscal year. He noted that the city would have to pay that amount until the federal money is received. He stated that when approved as soon as the city receives invoices from Solar Connections, they submit them to the state for reimbursement, and it has a 30-year warranty. Inverters have a 10-year warranty, and they are factored into the grant to replace them over the 30-year period.

Fate questioned the solar panels that would be put on the Community Center roof were they sure the structure could accommodate that weight. John Baker felt that the roof had been replaced in the last 10 years and will work. She also asked about yearly maintenance. Brok noted that the panels basically take care of themselves, but there is software that monitors the panels, and we would be notified if something is not working correctly. She questioned the insurance, Becky noted that she had talked to our insurance agent, and the city would insure them for actual cost and that it had also been calculated into the 30-year plan. He also noted that the panels can withstand a one-inch hail and 50 mph storm.

With the city running to wells, the solar would only be connected to the well house for well #2. Rick will rotate between the two wells to preserve the equipment and get maximum savings from the solar. Brok states that the panels have a 10-year manufacturer's warranty.

Musel asked about the color of the panels noting the ones on the Community Center. Brok noted that the ones at the CC would be black, and the wastewater plant would be black and silver.

Becky noted that the city will need to budget the \$64,000 that the Federal Grant would pay eventually. Brok noted that there is some financing that is available through MNCIFA and that he would give Becky the information. Council discussed options for the \$64,000 with no decision being made. Brok noted that the city will need to make the 5% down payment to start the process once the grant is approved. He reviewed the urgency to apply for the grant as this is a first come first serve.

Mayor asked about savings for the city in energy costs. Brok noted that it would be approximately \$1,800 and \$5,000-\$7,000 for the first year. Becky noted that the MiEnergy increase for this year could be an increase of \$12,000 for the well house.

Becky recommended that if we are not guaranteed the MNFICA funds that she would not want to increase our levy from 5-6% to 12% to cover the \$64,000 until we are paid for the federal dollars. She questioned if there was a chance that the

Federal government would not approve 30%. Brok stated that he could not guarantee this, but it would be very unlikely that would happen.

Consensus of the council was to move forward with the process by sending the contract to the city attorney to review and have Becky check into the costs of the insurance. They also agreed to continue this discussion with the next item on the agenda, the budget.

B. 2026 Preliminary Budget Workshop

Becky made the changes from the last budget meeting. She feels that we are right on track with the revenues budgeted and with four new homes in the next year we should remain on target.

Rick Whitney was present to review the sewer and water budgets. He did not feel there were any major projects for the plant for the coming year. He gave the reasons for replacing the sampler at \$8,123.38 which the council agreed should be added to the budget. As the costs of repairs and maintenance continue to go up, they did agree to increase the budget by \$1,000. Discuss salary for LuAnn which is split 50/50 for sewer and water. Increased the Service Contract to invest in a monitoring system for \$4,387.00. The Debt Service Loan will be paid off this year which reduces that budget by \$23,000. Which will be replaced with the new 2025 street project payment. They discussed and agreed that they will not be using the recommendation by Stantec for Carimona street storm drainage but will work with O'Connell's to remedy the situation.

Also discussed was the increase of the council and mayor stipend that they receive. The office will check to see what towns similar to our size currently are. It was approved to increase the employee salaries by 5%.

The pavilion at the community center was budgeted to be replaced at a cost of \$18,000.

Discussion about the \$64,000 remaining balance of the solar project and how best to proceed. Becky will check into the MNCIFA funding, but the council also felt that this may be accomplished by shifting budgets until the funds were received from the Federal Grant. No action taken until the funding through MNCIFA can be investigated.

Becky noted the information that she had gotten on area towns of their levy increase and stated that most were at 6%. The council continued to go through the budget line by line. She will make those changes and send the council the preliminary budget to review. The council will need to pass the Preliminary Budget at the September 8th council meeting.

Council meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Adjournment

Secretary

Date of approved