

**MONTICELLO CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 9, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.
Mississippi Room, Monticello Community Center**

Present: Lloyd Hilgart, Kip Christianson, Charlotte Gabler, Tracy Hinz, and Lee Martie
Absent: None

1. General Business

A. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Hilgart called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Councilmember Hinz to approve the agenda. Councilmember Gabler seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Regular Meeting Minutes from January 26, 2026

Motion by Councilmember Martie to approve the meeting minutes. Councilmember Hinz seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Citizen Comments

The following spoke under citizen comments:

Bill Herzog, 4136 Eaton Circle. Mr. Herzog challenged the City Council’s decision to approve a single garbage hauler, noting that its rationale of long-term rate stability, reduced road wear, and environmental and neighborhood benefits conflicts with the proposed data center. He argued that the data center would raise residents’ utility costs, cause prolonged construction impacts and add noise and pollution, contradicting the principles used to support the single-hauler garbage system.

Scott Custforth, 8634 Fairhill LN. Mr. Custforth asked if the construction of the Haven Ridge West housing development depends on the data center project for infrastructure capacity. Public Works Director/City Engineer Matt Leonard confirmed there is capacity for the Haven Ridge West development.

Jenna Vandenboom read a comment for City resident Dennis Dufrane. The comments raised concerns about funding infrastructure upgrades and a new water treatment plant if a proposed data center does not contribute financially, as well as project prioritization, such as advancing School Boulevard roundabouts before

securing essential resources such as water and power. Additional concerns included gaps in the proposed Data Center PUD and ordinances, proximity to residential neighborhoods, strain on schools and city facilities, and the reliability of the aging power plant.

City Administrator Rachel Leonard clarified that the water treatment plant is unrelated to any data center or external development. The water treatment plant project addresses the City's municipal wells and emerging contaminants like manganese, which is not currently regulated but may require treatment to ensure safe drinking water for all residents. Ms. Leonard noted that the City received \$11 million in state funding and plans to finance the remainder through a low-interest loan repaid via water rates. The plant is sized for current and projected demand; future large users would fund expansions.

Regarding other upgrades, Ms. Vandenboom asked about their purpose. Ms. Leonard explained existing infrastructure is reaching capacity limits and the City is planning for improvements to support the long-term needs of the system. While infrastructure can be funded through city bonding, an alternative option that benefits existing tax and rate payers is for developers to cover project-specific costs.

Bill Saville, 873 97th Street NW. Mr. Saville emphasized the need for long-term planning for growth west of Monticello, noting that current intersections and roads, particularly near Highway 39 and Chelsea Avenue, cannot handle increased traffic. They suggested improvements, including a new intersection, bridge enhancements, and a potential South bypass, to support future development and reduce congestion. The resident also raised safety concerns regarding the Twin Pines area behind Walmart and recommended a moratorium on new projects to allow time for comprehensive planning and review of traffic, safety, and infrastructure data related to a proposed data center.

Lisa Keenan. Ms. Keenan expressed concerns about the proposed Data Center PUD ordinance, emphasizing the need for stronger protections for residents. She recommended larger residential setbacks (minimum 1,000 feet), stricter construction hour limits, continuous or more frequent noise monitoring, and provisions for hazardous waste cleanup to prevent financial burdens on the city. She stressed that the ordinance should be fully protective before any applications are submitted, rather than treating it as an early or preliminary step in the process.

Laura Bishop Ms. Bishop, a resident of Haven Ridge, stated her opposition to the proposed data center. She requested that the city provide a clear, step-by-step timeline of the process, including how applications will be communicated to

residents and how long reviews will take. She also noted concerns about Haven Ridge West, a 30-lot development adjacent to the proposed data center, emphasizing the impact of placing a data center next to existing and planned residential areas.

E. Public Service Announcements

City Clerk Jennifer Schreiber provided the following public announcement:

- Spring Tree Sale
- Farmers Market Vendors Needed
- Presidents' Day
- GLOW Fest Parade

F. Council Liaison Updates

- **Planning Commission** – Mayor Hilgart commented on the February 3 Planning Commission meeting where the Twin Pines preliminary plat and development stage, as well as the DC PUD ordinance amendment, were both approved unanimously.
- **Park, Arts, and Recreation Commission (PARC)** – Councilmember Gabler gave an update of the January 26 Parks and Recreation meeting. Erin Stein was approved as a new member. Updates included pickleball court plans, the shared maintenance building with Wright County, Bertram feasibility planning, and Community Center membership totals (2,638), boosted by recent flash sales. The Community Center reported strong membership activity, full winter swim lessons, ongoing open swim and skate programs, upcoming markets and events, and recent facility rentals for community fundraisers and banquets.
- **Central Mississippi River Partnership (CMRP)** – Mayor Hilgart noted that work on the Pel study continues and plans a request for proposals for Tier One infrastructure this year, including a river crossing to determine the location of a new bridge to improve traffic.

G. Department Updates

- **Response to citizen comments from January 23 Meeting** – A resident noted previous citizen comments regarding elevators at the Deep Haven apartment complex. The Department of Building Safety is working with the property owner and management team to address the issues.

2. Consent Agenda:

Motion by Councilmember Martie to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Hinz seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- A. Consideration of approving the payment of bills. **Action taken: Approved the bill and purchase card registers for a total of \$1,126,533.88.**
- B. Consideration of approving new hires and departures for City departments. **Action taken: Approved the hires for Communications and the Monticello Community Center (MCC) and departures for the DMV and MCC.**
- C. Consideration of approving the disposal of surplus laptops for the IT Department. **Action taken: Approved.**
- D. Consideration of approving a temporary gambling permit for the Church of St. Henry for bingo and a raffle to be held April 19, 2026, at Little Mountain Elementary, 9350 Fallon Avenue. **Action taken: Approved the gambling permit.**
- E. Consideration of approving a temporary gambling permit for the Magic MHS Touchdown Booster Club for the high school football program raffle being held on August 29, 2026, at the Monticello Country Club, 1209 Golf Course Road. **Action taken: Approved the gambling permit.**
- F. Consideration of approving a temporary gambling permit for Wright County Pheasants Forever for their annual banquet being held on March 21, 2026, at the Monticello Community Center. **Action taken: Approved the gambling permit.**
- G. Consideration of authorizing Kids Haven Monticello Holdings, LLC as the signatory applicant to the proposed Jefferson Commons Fifth Addition Preliminary and Final Plat related to a 2.93-acre childcare facility development proposal on City owned property while the purchase agreement is being finalized. **Action taken: Authorized Kids Haven of Monticello Holdings, LLC as the signatory applicant to the proposed Jefferson Commons Fifth Addition Preliminary and Final Plat and related land use actions for a 2.93-acre childcare facility development proposal on City-owned property while the purchase agreement is being finalized.**
- H. Consideration of approving 2025 operating transfers. **Action taken: Approved the 2025 operating transfers.**
- I. Consideration of approving a special event permit for MontiArts Glow Fest on February 28, 2026. Applicant: MontiArts. **Action taken: Approved the special event permit for MontiArts Glow Fest.**
- J. Consideration of approving a special event permit authorizing the Parks, Arts, & Recreation Department, in partnership with the Swim Bait Club to host a fishing tournament and expo, including the use of the MCC Warehouse, on February 21, 2026. **Action taken: Approved the special event permit.**

- K. Consideration of approving an extension to June 11, 2026, for the approval of the Preliminary Plat and Development Stage Planned Unit Development (PUD) and for City decision on the Haven Ridge West Final Plat and Final Stage PUD. **Action taken: Approved the extension to June 11, 2026, for the approval of the Preliminary Plat and Development Stage PUD and for City decision on the Haven Ridge West Final Plat and Final Stage PUD.**
- L. Consideration of adopting Resolution 2026-04 accepting public utilities for the Meadowbrook development. **Action taken: Adopted Resolution 2026-04 accepting public utilities for Meadowbrook development.**
- M. Consideration of authorizing the purchase of a 2027 Volvo VHD Tandem Axle Cab and Chasses from Nuss Truck & Equipment equipped with Force America controls, a dump body and Falls plow equipment from Towmaster and purchase of associated auto greaser from Lubecore for a net cost of \$345,499.22 and declaring the current Turck 116 as surplus. **Action taken: Authorized the purchase as presented.**
- N. Consideration of approving Change Order #1 in the amount of \$40,487.38 with OMG Midwest, Inc. as part of the School Boulevard Intersection Improvements Project. **Action taken: Approved Change Order #1.**
- O. Consideration of adopting Resolution 2026-05 supporting the Wright County Pavement Preservation Project on CSAH 30. **Action taken: Adopted Resolution 2026-05 supporting the Wright County Pavement Preservation Project.**

3. **Public Hearing:**

4. **Regular Agenda:**

- A. Consideration of adopting Resolution 2026-06 to advance Municipal State Aid funds in the amount of \$2,225,718.49

Finance Director Sarah Rathlisberger presented the item and gave an overview regarding the advancement of State Aid funding. State Aid, which is derived from gas taxes, vehicle registration fees, and a portion of motor vehicle sales tax, is allocated to cities with populations over 5,000 based on population and roadway maintenance needs. Cities may request reimbursement for eligible completed projects or advance up to four years of future State Aid allocations.

Ms. Rathlisberger noted that Monticello's State Aid account includes prior advances as well as completed projects eligible for reimbursement. Council action was requested to adopt a resolution advancing State Aid funding for

2028–2030, maximizing allowable advance to improve cash flow for local projects.

Minimal discussion among City Councilmembers.

Motion by Councilmember Martie to adopt Resolution 2026-06 to advance Municipal State-Aid funds in the amount of \$2,225,718.49. Councilmember Christianson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration of adopting Resolution 2026-07 approving a MNDOT Cooperative Construction and Maintenance Agreement for TH 25 Bridge of I-94 Redecking Project

Public Works Director/City Engineer Matt Leonard provided an overview of the item and MnDOT's plans to redeck the Highway 25 bridge over I-94. The project is scheduled for next summer and includes a wider pedestrian sidewalk and an estimated four-month full bridge closure with detours via Broadway, Chelsea, Fallon, and Seventh Street. The City will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the new sidewalk, including snow removal, minor repairs, grass boulevards, pedestrian-level lighting, and associated electrical costs. Mr. Leonard noted that the project allows up to 7% of total costs for aesthetic improvements, which may include signage, railing upgrades, and incorporation of the city logo. No local construction costs are anticipated; only ongoing maintenance expenses will be incurred by the City.

Councilmember Gabler asked about the aesthetics of the concrete embankments near Pancho Villa and whether those areas would be repaired. Mr. Leonard responded that the project scope is limited to bridge redecking and does not include the embankments but noted he could discuss the area with MNDOT.

Councilmember Christianson asked whether the bridge decking could incorporate the historic bridge railing motif used in other City projects. Mr. Leonard indicated he would follow up with MNDOT to determine whether there would be an opportunity to include this element.

Motion by Councilmember Hinz to adopt Resolution 2026-07 approving a MNDOT Cooperative Construction and Maintenance Agreement for TH 25 Bridge of I-94 Redecking Project. Councilmember Martie seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

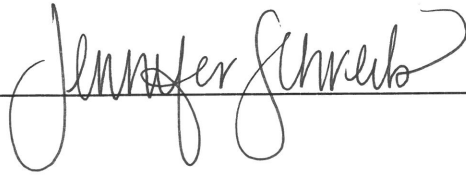
5. Additional Comment

City Administrator Rachel Leonard acknowledged ongoing public comments regarding data centers and clarified that the proposed zoning ordinance is not intended to facilitate a specific project. The ordinance is being developed as a regulatory tool to guide and control this type of development, based on public input, research, technical analysis, and legal guidance. She noted that the ordinance will come forward for Council review and direction, and encouraged the public to contact City Hall with any specific questions.

6. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Jennifer Schreiber

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer Schreiber", written over a horizontal line.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rachel Leonard", written over a horizontal line.

City Administrator