



WHITEHALL

WORK SESSION MINUTES

Council Chambers

April 14, 2026

PRESENT Scott Brown, Tanya Cabala, Debra Hillebrand, Jeff Holmstrom, Bryan Mahan, and Tom Ziemer

ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT Brenda Bourdon, Dan Tavernier, Will Meier

Mayor Ziemer called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Safe Routes to School Program

City Manager Tavernier information on a proposal from Fleiss & Vanderbrink for \$9,500 to evaluate existing sidewalk routes and school crossing safety near Ealy Elementary, Whitehall Middle School, and the Viking Athletic Complex, prepare preliminary design sketches and cost estimates, and guide the City and Whitehall District Schools through the Safe Routes to School grant application process, including surveys, walking audits, action plan development, and MDOT grant submission support.

Gee Park Requests

City Manager Tavernier explained that two residents living near Gee Park had expressed interest in acquiring portions of park property—one to extend a backyard and another to obtain a section of the pathway. He noted that the City Charter requires any sale of park property to be approved by the electors at a special election. Council consensus was to retain all park property and not pursue divestment.

City Charter Update

City Attorney Meier provided background on the two available paths for charter changes: amendment versus general revision. He explained that the amendment process is a more targeted approach involving limited changes to specific charter sections, which may be proposed by Council on a 3/5 vote and then submitted to the electors for approval. He further stated that proposed amendments are then forwarded to the Attorney General for review prior to submission to the voters. For a more comprehensive rewrite, he explained that a general charter revision requires Council to first place the question before the electors. If approved by the voters, a nine-member charter commission must be elected, with no city officers or employees eligible to serve, and the commission is given up to three years to prepare and submit a revised charter for voter consideration. One suggestion was for Council to review the charter prior to the next work session to identify potential areas for revision.

Budget Update

City Manager Tavernier reviewed several items anticipated for inclusion in the upcoming budget approval process, including union employee contract revisions, new City welcome signs, a digital marquee for City Hall and the DPW, and Police administrative vehicles. Cabala requested that the recommendations from the energy audit also be incorporated into the budget discussion. Council also discussed potential approaches for handling funding requests from outside organizations during the year, including a Council champion for each request, establishing a submission deadline for consideration, and incorporating recurring requests historically received into the annual budget process.

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INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Council Member Holmstrom reminded residents of the upcoming dates for Leaf Pickup, Brush Pickup and Free Dump Day.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ziemer adjourned the work session at 5:51 pm.



WHITEHALL

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Council Chambers
April 14, 2026

PRESENT Scott Brown, Tanya Cabala, Debra Hillebrand, Jeff Holmstrom, Bryan Mahan, and Tom Ziemer

ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT Brenda Bourdon, Dan Tavernier, Will Meier

Mayor Ziemer called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Brown to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of the March 24, 2026 Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Accounts Payable \$285,307.09
- C. Communications: Thank You: Pitkin's, Posh, Harwood Flats

Motion by Cabala, seconded by Mahan to approve the Consent Agenda.

Voice Vote: All yeses

MOTION CARRIED

MESSAGES FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND CITY MANAGER

Messages were received from Council members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kim Cyr read a press release from Norton Shores regarding Chobani and sang Happy Birthday to the Mayor.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution 26-23 Fee Schedule

Motion by Brown, supported by Mahan, to approve the fee schedule as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Yes – Brown, Mahan, Holmstrom, Hillebrand, Squiers, Cabala, and Ziemer;
No – None; Absent – None

MOTION CARRIED

B. Façade Improvement Grant Application – Gnarly Heifer

Motion by Holmstrom, seconded by Cabala to approve the façade grant application submitted by the Gnarly Heifer for up to \$6,000 reimbursement.

Roll Call Vote: Yes – Holmstrom, Cabala, Squiers, Hillebrand, Mahan, Brown, and Ziemer;
No – None; Absent – None

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Simon Morris requested information on how to submit an item on a council agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ziemer adjourned the Council Meeting at 6:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Bourdon, City Clerk