CLEARWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 10, 2025

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: 7:00 p.m. at City Hall**

- Mayor Lawrence called the Clearwater City Council to order Monday, November 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Members present were Mayor Lawrence, Council Members Schwinghammer, Crandall, Senn, and Everett. Also present were members of the public, staff, and guests.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

- Staff requested an addition to the Consent Agenda for the animal control contract renewal with Tri-County Humane Society.
- **MOTION** by Crandall to approve Agenda with the requested addition to the Consent Agenda, seconded by Senn, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. **Wright County Sheriff's Report** *(heard after Public Forum due to late arrival by deputy)*

- Deputy Sufka gave the sheriff's report in place of Deputy Marschel, who was called away.
- Deputy Sufka reported that it was a typical month, with some DUI arrests and other similar items. He stated that it had been quiet the last few weeks across the county.
- Member Crandall noted that there is still a vehicle by the meat locker that someone seems to be staying in. He is concerned about their safety in that remote location with winter coming and it being dark earlier in the day. Deputies will check in with the individual.

4. **Public Forum**
   a. **Consider Donation Request – Clearwater Food Shelf**
   - Mary Abraham from the local food shelf gave a report to the city council. Food shelf users and associated costs were running above last year's numbers prior to the federal government shutdown. The shutdown has increased those numbers. She stated that they are spending between $5,000 - $7,000 per month on food costs and asked if the city could assist.
   - Members discussed previous donations for the construction project and wanted information on where things stand. Administrator Smythe reviewed the most recent donation dates and amounts. Members also wanted information on where the budget stands for the year.
   - **MOTION** by Lawrence to donate $5,000 to the food shelf, seconded by Everett, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
   - Members reminded the public that the food shelf also accepts donations of toiletries and essentials like laundry soap.

5. **Consent Agenda**
   a. **Claims/Accounts Payable in the Amount of $ 594,670.71**
   b. **Approval of Minutes from 10-13-2025 Regular City Council Meeting**
   c. **Res 2025-50 – Approving 2026 Liquor Licenses**
   d. **Res 2025-51 – Approving Step Increase**
   e. **Res 2025-52 – Approving Step Increase**
   f. **Res 2025-53 – Approving Pension Increase for Fire Department**
   g. **Approval of Final Pay Voucher – Main Street Overlay Project**
   h. **Q3-2025 Quarterly Financial Report**
   i. **Approval of Tri-County Humane Society Contract Renewal**

- **MOTION** by Senn to approve Consent Agenda as amended, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. **Old Business**
   a. **Consider Options for Paid Family Leave Program**
   - Smythe gave an overview of the items requiring input from the city council to begin program implementation. These were outlined in the staff memo attached to the agenda:
     - Premium Split – **MOTION** by Lawrence to split premiums with employees at 50% each, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
     - Supplemental Payments – **MOTION** by Everett to decline supplemental payments for now, option to revisit later, seconded by Crandall, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
     - Intermittent Leave – **MOTION** by Lawrence to allow intermittent leave in increments of 4 hours or more, seconded by Everett, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
     - Extended Leave – **MOTION** by Lawrence to allow extended leave at the same increments at intermittent leave, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
     - Leave Program Coordination – Members would like to schedule a workshop to further discuss leave programs and coordination of benefits.

7. **New Business**
   a. **Res 2025-54 – Certifying Lien for Unpaid Charges**
   - **MOTION** by Lawrence to approve Resolution 2025-54, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

   b. **Consider Donation Request from Clearwater Farmer's Market**
   - Smythe explained the request from the farmer's market, which had been originally presented to the EDA. Smythe learned from the city attorney that the EDA is not an eligible donor. He stated that the city council may be an eligible donor with a finding that the farmer's market promotes the agricultural resources of the city, however, he suggested that the city's auditor provide an opinion on the authority level to donate. Smythe has sent this question to the city auditor but has not yet received a response. Smythe did not know the amount being requested. At the EDA meeting, the farmer's market team had noted their various costs but did not request a specific amount.
   - **MOTION TO TABLE** by Lawrence until an opinion is received from the city's auditor and a specific request is made by the organization detailing amount requested and purpose, seconded by Crandall, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

   c. **Discussion of 2025 Utility Rate Study**
   - Smythe gave a summary of the utility study and preliminary results, indicating a need to significantly raise rates in the short term to meet operational needs and a need for a long-term plan for both the water and sewer funds. Members wanted more time to review the materials and discussed the possibility of a workshop with our financial advisor.
   - **MOTION TO TABLE** by Lawrence, seconded by Senn, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

   d. **Ord 2026-01 – Fee Schedule Ordinance – DRAFT**
   - Smythe explained the proposed changes for the fee schedule. Members were asked to provide any feedback prior to the December meeting.

8. **Committee Reports**
   a. **Mayor and Council**
   - Mayor Lawrence stated that the Trunk-or-Treat event was a lot of fun and credited fire department staff for making it happen.
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b. Boards

- Fire Relief Board – Did not meet.
- Sewer Authority – Meeting next Thursday. Member Everett stated she would not be able to attend.
- EDA – Met and discussed the business social in December, the farmer's market, and discussed the message board fees.
- Planning Commission – Did not meet.
- Park Commission – Did not meet.

c. Staff

- Smythe reported on these items:
    - A plan is in place to manage the item discussed in the closed session.
    - City staff completed cybersecurity training at our recent staff meeting.
    - There have been a lot of recent requests for information about the city's zoning ordinance, particularly the requirements for cannabis licensing.
    - Spent some time on items related to T.H. 24 Corridor Project.
- Engineer Kannas noted that there were some items requiring city input on the T.H. 24 project.
    - There are some questions about the proposed turn lanes into the J Cubed development area. The property was recently listed for sale. Staff are working to determine if this project is going to move ahead and whether costs can be assessed. If not, this part of the project may be dropped.
    - He provided an overview of the plan for utility casings in the CSAH 7 roundabout areas to prepare the city for future development going south or east of current city limits.
    - The city council was asked if they wanted the same style lighting in the CSAH 7 roundabouts as will be placed on the I94 bridge. Members agreed.
    - Noted that MnDOT will not allow the lighting on the bridge to have banners or holiday lighting, as this is federal right-of-way. Evidently, only U.S. flags are allowed. There was a side discussion of holiday lights seen in other communities and the appearance of rules being applied selectively in certain communities.

9. Other Business

a. Next Regular Meeting – December 8, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

- Next meeting date/time confirmed.

10. Adjournment

- **MOTION** to adjourn by Senn, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

ATTEST

Annita M. Smythe, City Administrator

APPROVED

Andrea Lawrence Wheeler, Mayor