

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026 - 6:00 P.M. - 8150 BARBARA AVENUE**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in regular session on Monday, February 9, 2026, in person. Mayor Dietrich called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present In-Person: Mayor Dietrich; Council Members: Murphy, Scales, T’Kach, and Gliva (remote)

Staff In Attendance: Interim City Administrator Hiniker, City Clerk Kiernan, City Attorney Nason, Public Works Director Connolly, Human Resources Manager Norwig, and City Engineer Merchlewicz

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion to approve agenda as presented by Scales; second by T’Kach.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

Beth Baumann, Executive Director of Town Square Television, shared that Town Square Television has served as the “eyes and ears” of the community since 1987 by providing access to City meetings and community events for residents who are unable to attend in person.

She noted that through participation in NDC4 and Town Square Television, member cities benefit from cable franchise management, telecommunications expertise, shared resources, centralized studio facilities, local customer service support, and coordinated state and federal advocacy.

Town Square Television’s programming includes coverage of City government, elections, education, and community events, along with local news programming, public access opportunities, and technical support for City staff.

She also outlined recent enhancements, including new membership levels, expanded sponsorship opportunities, podcast services, and additional public access training.

Mayor Dietrich thanked her and her staff for their work on the events, noting the thorough and meticulous planning and coverage. She also expressed appreciation for the video, inquired whether it would be available on demand, and described it as an effective ambassador piece for Inver Grove Heights.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A.** Approval of Minutes of the January 5, 2026, City Council Special Meeting
- B.** Approval of Minutes of the January 12, 2026, City Council Special Meeting
- C.** Approval of Minutes of the January 29, 2026, City Council Meeting
- D.** Approval of Disbursements, **Resolution 2026-019**
- E.** Personnel Actions
- F.** Appointment of Board Member Alternate to the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization (LMRWMO)
- G.** Request for Proposals for Classification and Compensation Study

Patty Norwig, Human Resources Manager, brought forward a request for proposals for a

classification and compensation study. She explained that it is best practice to complete a citywide study every 5 years and that it has been 9 years since the last citywide study was conducted. She noted that the study is crucial for compliance with federal pay equity requirements and reflects the City's commitment to unions. She further stated that the study ensures pay ranges are within market value, which promotes recruitment and retention of valuable employees. The anticipated cost to conduct the study is included in the 2026 budget.

The proposed process and timeline include authorization to publish RFP on February 9, 2026, followed by distribution to the League of Minnesota Cities, posting on the City website, and direct outreach to at least 8 qualified potential vendors on February 10, 2026. Bid evaluation, finalist meetings, and negotiations are anticipated to occur from March 3, 2026, through March 17, 2026, with the preferred vendor submitted to Council for approval on March 23, 2026. The classification and compensation study is scheduled to commence on April 1, 2026.

The process will include involvement from managers and department heads, with all job titles reviewed and updated as needed. Final study results and recommendations are anticipated to be presented by the vendor on August 1, 2026. Implementation of any pay rate adjustments may occur over time, including through regular contract negotiations.

Motion to approve Item A - G as presented by T'Kach, second by Scales

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

7. REGULAR BUSINESS:

A. First Reading of an Ordinance Amending City Code Title 8, Chapters 2 and 4 Related to Water and Sewer Service Connections

Public Works Director Connolly noted that the City is undertaking an Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) and Citywide Water Meter Replacement Project in 2026 as part of City Project No. 2023-05. He explained that the current Code for Water Service Connections contains ambiguities related to the replacement of radio transmitters (remote reading devices) and the upgrades or replacement of functioning meters to work with the City's proposed AMI System. He further stated that Attorney Nason and he recommended minor edits to remove ambiguity in advance of the AMI project (January 12, 2026, Work Session).

Additional changes are being proposed to align Sewer Service maintenance responsibilities with those of Water Service, given the similarities and proximity of the Water and Sewer Service Code. The City historically and currently enforces that Sewer Service pipes are the maintenance responsibility of property owners from the building to the Sewer Main, but this responsibility has not been explicitly stated in Code. The current Sewer Code dates to 1974 and is antiquated and somewhat ambiguous, and pre-dates several requirements for illicit Sewer System discharges such as fats, oils, and grease. Additional prohibited discharges of illicit materials have been listed to clarify the types of materials that are considered harmful and to better align with Metropolitan Council Environmental Services waste discharge requirements. These changes allow the City to finalize a Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Policy, which is required for the City to be eligible for additional insurance coverage for Sewer issues from the LMCIT.

Key ordinance provisions related to Water Service include adding remote meter reading devices as a City-owned item. The City would have the right to access premises for reading of meters, inspections, and performing any service and maintenance of meters or remote meter reading

devices, including replacement. Remote meter reading devices may be replaced by the City if damaged or if they reach the end of their service life. The City would also have the right to enter a property to make inspections, conduct meter readings, and perform repair, maintenance, and inspection for items connected to the City water system.

Proposed ordinance provisions related to Sanitary Sewer Services add key maintenance responsibilities that were previously not stated but assumed. It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to clean and maintain the Sanitary Sewer Service Line from the house or building to the City's Sanitary Sewer Main. It shall also be the responsibility of the property owner to repair or replace the Sanitary Sewer Service Line from the house or building to the City's Sanitary Sewer Main, including any repairs to City right of way such as boulevards, sidewalks, trails, curb, and pavement.

Prohibited discharges into the Sewer System are being clarified through the addition of a list of waste material not allowed to be discharged, in alignment with current Metropolitan Council Environmental Services guidelines. These include liquids over 150°F, water and wastes containing fats, oils, or grease, flammable or explosive liquids or gases, inorganic waste including non-biodegradable materials such as inorganic flushable wipes, ashes, cinders, shavings, and other substances capable of obstructing the flow of the system, and noxious or malodorous substances that could create a nuisance. The header and content related to interceptors and fat, oil, and grease discharge prevention have also been changed to clarify requirements around fat, oil, and grease prevention and to clarify the role of the Chief Building Official in determining the necessity of special plumbing items such as grease traps and interceptors.

The requested action is for Council to consider the first reading of the Ordinance included in the Council packet. Given the changes are administrative in nature, Council may wish to consider waiving the requirement for three readings of the Ordinance, which would require unanimous consent.

Council Member Murphy noted that the provision appears to be common among cities and requested clarification regarding Section 8.2.9(D) related to water meter readings. He expressed concern about language permitting authorized City employees to access all parts of a building and premises connected to the City Water System during reasonable hours and raised concerns about the potential for unannounced visits. He inquired whether this reflects standard practice in other jurisdictions and whether advance notice could be provided prior to entry.

Director Connolly clarified that meter access is intended to occur during reasonable daytime and working hours and that staff would not seek access during late night or early morning hours. He noted that meter readings are conducted through drive by and walk by methods, consistent with practices used by gas and some electric utilities and are limited to accessing only those components necessary to read the meter. He acknowledged concerns regarding entry into private residences and stated that for meter replacement projects, including AMI upgrades, the City will provide advance notice and schedule appointments with property owners, rather than conducting unannounced visits.

Council Member Murphy noted that in older areas of Inver Grove Heights, such as South Grove, water meters are often located inside homes, and once meters are relocated to the exterior, the need for interior access would no longer apply.

Director Connolly confirmed that once meters are relocated to the exterior, interior access is generally no longer an issue.

Council Member Murphy asked whether residents would receive adequate advance notice when indoor meters are scheduled for replacement.

Director Connolly stated that residents will receive multiple advance notices, with a minimum of three notices provided to schedule meter replacement appointments, consistent with the AMI rollout process. He noted that if residents do not schedule after repeated notices, water service may be temporarily shut off until access is provided, as the City has the authority to replace meters. He added that the code update is intended to clarify that access provisions apply not only to meter readings and inspections, but also to maintenance and meter replacement.

Council Member T'Kach asked about the provision in the same section of the code that references access to all areas of a building connected to the City Water System and sought clarification regarding how this applies to multi story residential structures.

Director Connolly clarified that access would be limited to those portions of a building connected to the City Water System, noting that the City owns the water meter and must be able to access it for reading, maintenance, and replacement purposes.

Council Member T'Kach asked for clarification on whether City access could extend beyond the immediate area of the water meter, such as to other areas of a residence, and under what circumstances access to additional spaces might be required.

Director Connolly stated that such matters fall under Code Enforcement and are not within the purview of Utility operations. He noted that staff may respond when access is voluntarily granted by a property owner, but the City does not seek access beyond what is necessary for emergencies or meter replacement.

Council Member T'Kach stated that the provision appeared broad and asked for clarification regarding sewer responsibilities within the City Right of Way. She inquired whether this is like City Water Service, noting her understanding that water ownership ends at the curb box in the Right of Way, and requested examples of situations in which a property owner may be responsible for repair costs.

Director Connolly explained that ownership of the City Water System extends to the curb box, which is located at or near the City Right of Way and must be operated by City staff due to its connection to a pressurized system. He noted that sanitary sewer services differ in that they are not pressurized and typically do not include a cleanout at the Right of Way, making it standard practice for private property owners to be responsible for maintenance and repair of their sewer service lines, including portions located within the City Right of Way. He stated that this approach is consistent with neighboring communities and long-standing City practice and clarified that the code update is intended to formally memorialize this responsibility, including the requirement that property owners obtain necessary permits and complete restoration when work occurs within the Right of Way.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether certain areas of the City, particularly older neighborhoods, may be more prone to sewer related maintenance issues due to aging infrastructure and lack of routine maintenance.

Director Connolly stated that there is no specific indication that certain areas of the City are more susceptible to sewer service issues, although older infrastructure can be more challenging to maintain. He noted that during street reconstruction projects, the City replaces sanitary sewer mains and service lines within the City Right of Way, including up to the property line, as part of standard Public Works and Engineering practice. He added that when residents report sewer backups, staff inspect the main line, and if no issues are found, the matter is typically referred to the private service line, for which the property owner is responsible.

Council Member T'Kach suggested that additional public information and education may be beneficial, noting that many residents may not be aware of their responsibility for sewer service line

maintenance. She recommended that the City consider providing informational materials, such as a brief article, to help clarify these responsibilities.

Director Connolly stated that if the item is approved, staff could include this information in a future City Insights article to help educate residents.

Council Member Gliva expressed support for sharing this information with residents following approval, noting that many may not realize they are responsible for sewer service line maintenance and the potential costs involved. She supported including this information in a future City Insights article.

Council Member Scales emphasized that the City is not changing policy and that the intent is to clarify and communicate existing policy regarding responsibility for cleaning and maintaining private sewer service lines.

Mayor Dietrich acknowledged the distinction between clarifying existing policy and implementing new policy.

Kelly Kayser, 1953 59th Court East, asked several clarifying questions regarding the proposed code updates, including whether reasonable hours should be defined, whether access language could be narrowed to areas necessary to reach the water meter, and whether duplicative provisions in the sanitary sewer maintenance section could be consolidated. She also inquired about Public Right of Way permit requirements and fees, sought clarification on temperature limits for illicit discharges, questioned the enforceability of restrictions on so called flushable wipes, and requested examples of noxious or malodorous substances referenced in the code.

Mayor Dietrich asked for clarification regarding the question about the Public Right of Way permit fee.

Kelly Kayser asked whether the Public Right of Way permit and associated fee has historically been required for work conducted within the Right of Way and requested clarification on the current fee. She also inquired about the rationale for removing language related to grease traps in private living quarters or dwelling units in Section 8-4-10, including whether there are circumstances in which grease traps are required and whether the language was being removed due to the use of the term interceptors.

Mayor Dietrich asked Director Connolly whether the ordinance was modeled after those used by other cities and whether similar provisions and clarifications appear in other municipal ordinances.

Director Connolly stated that staff reviewed ordinances from neighboring communities, Dakota County, and model ordinances from the League of Minnesota Cities when developing the proposed updates. He noted that the provisions related to prohibited discharges were largely based on language used by the Metropolitan Council and recently adopted by the City of Eagan, as the City is required to comply with Metropolitan Council wastewater treatment standards. He explained that codifying these restrictions allows the City to enforce compliance and hold individuals accountable for illicit discharges. He also clarified that temperature limits are primarily intended to address industrial discharges and worker safety concerns, noting that typical residential discharges are diluted before reaching the sewer system.

Mayor Dietrich clarified that the concerns primarily apply to industrial users rather than typical residential activity. Director Connolly stated that typical residential activities, such as disposing of small amounts of hot water, do not generally create issues, and that concerns arise only when large volumes of hot water are discharged into the system.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the Public Right of Way permit requirement is new. Director Connolly stated that the Public Right of Way permit has long been required and that the City also requires a Utility permit under 7-2 and 7-3 of City Code. He noted that permit fees are established in the City fee schedule and are based on the area of excavation and the length of the work.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether the ordinances referenced from the City of Eagan or other communities define reasonable hours. Director Connolly stated that the reasonable hours language is unchanged from existing City Code and noted that any modification to define specific hours would require further review. He indicated that staff could verify whether reasonable hours are defined elsewhere in City Code, with assistance from City Attorney Nason if needed.

City Attorney Nason stated that she did not identify a definition of reasonable hours in City Code and noted that, if desired by the Council, specific time parameters could be established, such as defined daytime hours, with flexibility maintained for emergency situations. She added that City Code already establishes reasonable hours for other activities, such as noise regulations, and similar parameters could be applied in this context.

Director Connolly noted that any changes to the definition of reasonable hours should be standardized across all relevant sections of City Code, rather than amended only within this ordinance. He stated that such changes may be more appropriately addressed through a broader update to City Code definitions later.

Mayor Dietrich suggested that, if reasonable hours are defined in City Code, they should align with standard City employee working hours. Director Connolly suggested that reasonable hours could align with existing City Code provisions for noise restrictions.

Council Member Murphy stated that he was not inclined to waive the three readings requirement and expressed support for retaining flexibility in defining reasonable hours, noting that work schedules vary among residents. He recommended further clarification of the definition of reasonable hours and the meaning of free access and requested that Public Works and the City Attorney review the language to ensure appropriate consideration of property rights and safety.

Mayor Dietrich expressed support for the proposed approach.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether the City conducts targeted outreach to facilities such as daycare centers, senior care facilities, and other special needs providers regarding proper disposal practices, including guidance on not flushing so called flushable wipes, to help minimize impacts on the sewer system. Director Connolly stated that the City does not conduct formal targeted outreach, but that Public Works and Utility staff provide informal education during service calls. He noted that the primary sources of sewer clogs are grease from restaurants and wipes in apartment complexes, with occasional residential impacts.

Council Member T'Kach asked whether information on proper disposal practices, such as not flushing so called flushable wipes, could be incorporated into the Rental License program requirements to support preventive outreach and place responsibility on property owners to educate tenants. Director Connolly stated that he would defer to the Council regarding potential use of the Rental License program for outreach, noting that rental licensing does not fall under Public Works and he does not have direct insight into that program.

Mayor Dietrich asked for clarification regarding the apparent overlap between Subsections A and B in Section 8-4-2. Director Connolly explained that the overlapping language in Subsections A and B is intended to distinguish between maintenance and repair responsibilities and mirrors the structure used in the Water provisions of City Code. He noted that the language was adapted by substituting

Sanitary Sewer for Water to maintain consistency across the two codes, and that the format aligns with how City Code provisions are structured.

Mayor Dietrich asked whether, based on discussions with colleagues in other cities, there are any truly biodegradable wipes available or whether products are generally marketed as flushable despite disposal concerns.

Director Connolly stated that so called flushable wipes continue to be a widespread issue across communities and are a concern for the Metropolitan Council and the American Public Works Association. He noted that while some wipes are biodegradable, many products marketed as flushable do not break down in sewer systems and contribute to maintenance issues. He added that the City has provided educational materials through City Insights and the City website, and that the proposed code provisions would provide enforcement authority in cases of chronic noncompliance, particularly for properties that repeatedly contribute to sewer system blockages.

Motion to approve the first reading of an Ordinance Amending City Code Title 8, Chapters 2 and 4 Related to Water and Sewer Service Connections by Scales, second by Murphy.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Council Members requested clarification on the definitions of free access and reasonable hours.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

An email from Sonja Sewing expressing concern about ICE activity in the area, noting that some families are unable to safely go to work or attend school, that mutual aid support has been provided within the community, and that additional financial assistance may be needed as housing and other financial obligations become due

Motion to accept email into record by Gliva, second by T’Kach.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Cassandra Rivera, 3738 Upper 71st Street East, spoke about fear among immigrant families related to ICE activity, stating that the ongoing climate is impacting families’ ability to work, attend school, and feel safe in the community. She shared personal experiences with racial profiling and emphasized that community members are providing mutual aid to support affected families. She urged the City to provide visible leadership through a public statement affirming support for immigrant families, advocacy for eviction protections and access to resources, and greater transparency regarding any existing City actions or communications on this issue.

Steve Smith of IGH raised concerns about federal immigration enforcement activity in the City. He cited a reported incident involving a detention near a school, expressed concern about fear and erosion of public trust, and acknowledged the Police Chief’s public presence at a recent town hall. He requested greater transparency regarding the relationship between local law enforcement and federal agencies and urged the Council to consider formal policies, protections near schools and public spaces, data privacy safeguards, and additional public oversight and communication on this issue.

Kelly Kayser, 1953 59th Court East, acknowledged community frustration regarding federal immigration enforcement but stated that the City and Police Department cannot legally impede federal operations. She noted that the IGH Police Department has stated it does not participate in

such enforcement and encourages residents to call 911 if they feel unsafe. She added that Social Services are primarily coordinated through Dakota County and community organizations, and cautioned that City ordinances, policies, or public statements beyond the City's scope could create legal or financial risks. She encouraged residents to engage federal representatives on immigration policy and to continue supporting neighbors through community efforts.

9. MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Council Member Scales encouraged residents interested in serving on City Commissions to apply, noting that the commission appointment process is expected to occur in the coming months.

Clerk Kiernan noted that applications for City Commission appointments would be available on the City website within the next few days, if not already posted, and that appointments are scheduled to be made at the third Monday meeting in May.

Council Member T'Kach asked what actions the City could take to provide greater clarity, transparency, and support for community members affected by federal immigration enforcement, noting that some cities have adopted ordinances or resolutions and inquiring what options may be available to the City.

Interim City Administrator Hiniker stated that she was not aware of any ordinances that have been adopted to date but noted that there have been regional discussions among cities on this topic. She added that municipalities face challenges in determining appropriate actions given the limits of local authority relative to federal immigration agencies and indicated that staff are monitoring developments in other cities.

City Attorney Nason stated that cities are taking different approaches and that this is ultimately a policy decision for the Council. She noted that some cities are pursuing ordinances or resolutions reflecting policy positions, though the legality of certain measures remains uncertain, and indicated that direction from the Council would be needed to have staff develop potential options.

10. ADJOURN:

Motion to Adjourn at 7:08 p.m. by Scales, second by Murphy.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Tammy Greenlee