

# **Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes**

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Tuesday, September 30, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.  
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive  
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

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## **1. Swearing in of New Commission Member**

Chair Ficek administered the Oath of Office to new Commissioner Katie Brokaw Palalay.

## **2. Introduction / Roll Call**

Chair Ficek called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m., and at his request, Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer called the roll.

**Present:** Chair Bryant Ficek, Vice Chair Edwin Hodder, Members Jarrod Cicha, Daniel Fergus, Allison Luongo, Des Mueller, and Katie Brokaw Palalay; and Youth Commissioners Carsten Bauer and Alexis Jendro

**Staff Present:** Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer; and Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Jennifer Lowry

## **3. Approve Agenda**

### **Motion**

**Member Fergus moved, Member Hodder seconded, approval of the agenda as presented.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

## **4. Public Comments**

## **5. Business Items**

### **a. Communication Items**

Assistant Public Works Director and Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Jennifer Lowry gave a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated September 25, 2025.

Ms. Lowry's updates included selecting LHB for the maintenance center, license/passport, and dance center, as well as conducting interviews with construction managers from at-risk firms. She mentioned the completion of several projects, such as sewer cleaning and pathway work. She also noted upcoming projects and public meetings, including one about the safety conversion of County Road C.

Vice Chair Hodder inquired about the Metro Micro pilot program.

Mr. Freihammer provided an update, explaining the pilot's slow start and current progress, and mentioned staff involvement in conferences and volunteer work.

Updates were given on the sustainability newsletter, the Environmental Center open house, and the climate equity plan, which was also mentioned.

Mr. Freihammer highlighted the council's discussion on gas and electric franchise fees and the stormwater projects update.

**b. Consider Closure of Roseville Leaf Recycling Center**

Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer gave a brief review of the potential closure of the Roseville Leaf Recycling Center.

Mr. Freihammer provided detailed information about the site's history, current operations, and the reasons for its closure. The discussion included the potential impact on residents, such as increased travel distances and cost savings.

Chair Ficek opened the floor to hear from residents on this item.

Mr. Nathan Wass believed the city should consider how to lessen the impact of closing the center, especially for senior residents. He suggested that Roseville might revert to vacuum shredding with a truck to haul it away, or perhaps residents could place leaf bags on the curb as they had done in the past.

Mr. Gordie Dahlen explained he has mainly used the leaf disposal site for compost. He was aware of various issues with the site. He wondered if there had been consideration of turning it into a Ramsey County site so the County could help cover some of the operational costs, since, besides Roseville residents, other residents also use this site.

Mr. John Hughes and his wife, Valerie, explained that this has always been convenient, and they use it regularly, especially in the fall. The leaf dump is a basic need for the residents.

Ms. Amy Schroeder emphasized that the site is more than just a convenience; it is a highly valued service and a vital part of Roseville's environmental and public works infrastructure. She believes that if this site closes, there will be an increase in illegal dumping. This would pose a significant burden for the City and its staff to manage.

Several residents expressed concerns about the closure, emphasizing the site's convenience and accessibility. They suggested alternatives, such as a vacuum shredding program and contractor vacuuming. The importance of the site for seniors and the potential rise in illegal dumping were also highlighted. Residents were urged to keep the site open and explore a volunteer-based solution.

Commission members inquired about the vacuum program, expenses for new equipment, and the option of leasing. They also discussed relocating the organics collection site to a more convenient location. The potential impact of the closure on the City's sustainability goals and the community's environmental practices was considered. The idea of exploring a cost-sharing agreement with Ramsey County was raised.

Commission members discussed the feasibility of volunteer-based solutions and the challenges of managing the site. The potential for a county-managed site and its impact on the City's budget were considered. The importance of maintaining the site's current services and the potential for increased costs at other locations was highlighted.

The commission members expressed their support for explaining alternative solutions and ensuring the site's continued accessibility.

Member Brokaw Palalay expressed shock at having to figure out yard waste removal in Roseville, contrasting it with Minneapolis, where it was centralized. She mentioned the need to bag yard waste and the inconvenience of not having a centralized system. She shared her personal experience of taking yard waste to Arden Hills to dispose of everything at once. She highlighted her preference for a clean yard and her reluctance to compost, despite others finding it appealing.

Member Mueller proposed considering used equipment as a cost-saving option.

Mr. Freihammer explained the challenges of acquiring used equipment, including the need for inspections and transportation. He stated that the cost of a new machine is high compared to its usage, and noted leasing could be a more cost-effective option. He also discussed the logistics of moving equipment and the limitations of their current setup.

Member Mueller proposed exploring a partnership with Ramsey County to manage the leaf site, allowing residents to bring leaves for hauling. She suggested that this could be a more convenient option for residents and better meet their needs.

Member Brokaw Palalay supported the idea and suggested exploring other options for leaf removal, including curbside collection, as seen in Minneapolis.

Mr. Freihammer confirmed that vendors are required to provide leaf waste services, but mentioned the high costs and limited capacity.

Chair Ficek inquired about the possible use of the leaf site for other City needs, such as a maintenance center space.

Mr. Freihammer explained the changes in tree management and the challenges of hauling wood debris to other locations. He discussed the potential for using the site for large storm debris, but noted the limitations associated with different operations. He emphasized the lack of options in Roseville due to the city's built-out status and the advantages of the Kent Site and Environmental Center.

Chair Ficek suggested using the fall season to gather more data on site usage and explore options for leaf management.

Mr. Freihammer mentioned it could be an option to have a pilot project to gather more data on site usage and contractor compliance.

Member Mueller highlighted the importance of gathering more data before deciding to close the site.

Resident Gordie Dahlen inquired about the cost of repairing the current equipment.

Mr. Freihammer estimated the cost to be approximately \$10,000 for sheet metal repairs.

Member Mueller questioned the City's approach to providing equipment through ownership rather than leasing or outsourcing services.

Chair Ficek highlighted the importance of sustainability and the advantages of keeping the site open.

Mr. Freihammer mentioned the possibility of leasing equipment or hiring a private company for compost turning. He noted staff looked into this in the past but not recently. There would still be a cost and it could be high due to numerous mobilizations since there is a limited market to lease or rent for smaller sites.

**Motion**

**Chair Ficek moved, Member Mueller seconded, to keep the site open, gather more data, and explore options for leaf management, with plans to revisit the decision in 2026 after collecting additional information and exploring further options.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

The commission supported keeping the organic collection where it was for now, regardless of what happened to the leaf recycling, and then exploring the possibility of moving the organics to the City Campus, which would keep it reasonably close for residents and provide visibility and accessibility as well.

**Member Fergus moved, Member Hodder seconded, to keep the organic collection where it is currently located and explore moving it to the City Hall Campus in the future.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**c. Bike Plan Update**

Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Lowry presented the draft bike plan, funded by an Active Transportation Planning Assistance Grant from MnDOT. The plan included prioritizing bike routes, providing policy recommendations, and outlining a vision for enhancing bike infrastructure in Roseville. She highlighted the importance of public engagement and the need for a living document to guide future planning.

The Commission provided feedback on the plan, including suggestions for typos and formatting improvements.

**d. City Campus Project – Appoint Committee Members**

Public Works Director Freihammer announced the formation of a Civic Campus final design stakeholder group. The group will include residents, representatives from the VFW, and commission members to provide feedback on the project. He explained the expected time commitment and the importance of early engagement in the design process.

Member Luongo indicated her interest in being appointed to the committee.

**Motion**

**Member Mueller moved, Member Hodder seconded, approved appointment of Member Luongo to the Civic Campus Final Design Stakeholder Group.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**e. City Code Updates: Section 802.17**

Public Works Director Freihammer provided a minor update to the Public Works ordinance regarding sewer obstructions. The update clarifies language to facilitate enforcement and address issues like roots and protruding taps.

The commission endorsed the update and agreed that staff send it to the City Council for approval.

**6. Commission Direction on Member-Initiated Agenda Items**

**7. Future Meeting Updates**

Public Works Director Freihammer outlined the agenda for upcoming meetings, including updates on utility rates, the Climate Equity Action Plan, and the minor noise ordinance.

The commission discussed the possibility of a tour of the new St. Paul Regional water plant and a presentation on MnDOT's Safe Systems Approach.

Chair Ficek emphasized the importance of proposing topics and speakers early to allow sufficient preparation.

**8. Approval of August 26, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

*Comments and corrections to draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC commissioners prior to tonight's meeting, and those revisions were incorporated into the draft presented in the meeting materials.*

**Motion**

**Member Hodder moved, Member Fergus seconded, approval of the August 26, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**9. Adjourn**

**Motion**

**Member Hodder moved, Member Fergus seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:47 p.m.**

**Ayes: 7**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**