

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING, APRIL 23, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Rick Von Holdt with the following members present: Larry Janssen; Chris Kielblock; Mike Kuhle; Amy Ernst; Dennis Weber.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Hyunmyeong Goo, City Engineer; Matt Selof, Community Development Director; Cristina Adame, Community Relations & Communications; Deb Olsen, Finance Director; Angela Thiner; Assistant City Clerk; Mindy Eggers, City Clerk.

Others Present: Julie Buntjer, *The Globe*; Josh Miller, Jason Johnson, Anna Smith, Phil Benson, Tyler Nienkerk, Jay Milbrandt, Kim Milbrandt, Steve Johnson, Eric Pederson, Brent Droll, Kyle Johnson, Nate Grimmus, and other members from the community.

Mayor Von Holdt stated *Engineering Item: License Agreement with Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (MERC) for East Okabena Trail* would be moved in front of *Administration Item: Ice Arena Operations and Associated Estimate of Total Project Cost*. The motion was made by Council Member Kielblock, seconded by Council Member Kuhle and unanimously carried to approve the change.

**LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES CORPORATION
(MERC) FOR EAST OKABENA TRAIL APPROVED**

Hyunmyeong Goo, City Engineer, said staff has negotiated a License Agreement with Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (MERC) for the development and use of East Okabena Trail on a portion of MERC's property.

The key terms of the agreement are as follows:

- Use: Licensee (City of Worthington) is granted a temporary, non-exclusive license to construct, maintain, and use the property as a public recreational trail for nonmotorized activities such as hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing.
- Term: The agreement is for an initial term of 25 years, continuing year-to-year thereafter, with either party having the right to terminate with 90 days' notice.
- Rent: No base rent is required during the term.
- Construction: Construction must commence within one year of the effective date and be completed within one year of commencement.
- Maintenance: The City is responsible for all maintenance, signage, erosion control, and safety measures.

The motion was made by Council Member Ernst, seconded by Council Member Weber and unanimously carried to approve the license agreement with Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation for the East Okabena Trail.

DISCUSSION HELD ON ICE AREA OPERATIONS AND ASSOCIATED ESTIMATE OF TOTAL PROJECT COST

Steve Robinson, City Administrator, said staff has been working with consultants HTG Architecture and Greystone Construction, in the preparation of schematic plans and estimates of total project costs for various options for consideration by City Council. These options include building a new ice arena, minimal renovations to the existing facility and renovations plus an addition to the existing facility. Staff would like City Council to discuss these options and determine a level of funding. The final option is for the City to not participate in any ice arena upgrades.

The options are as follows:

- New one-sheet facility, total project cost of \$20,875,000.00. The new facility, to be constructed on City-owned property, is approximately 48,000 Square feet with a single NHL sized rink. Amenities include four visitor locker rooms, two varsity locker rooms, offices, vending, restrooms, refrigeration plant, Zamboni room, and seating capacity of approximately 750.
- Renovation and addition to the existing facility, total project cost of \$10,700,000.00. This option includes an addition on the south side of the existing building that will include a new entry, lobby space, viewing area, offices, vending, and restrooms. The existing lobby, business and locker area will be renovated to accommodate four visitor locker rooms and two varsity locker rooms. Installation of a perimeter frost footing and new exterior wall panels. Removal and replacement of the existing rink slab and refrigeration system.
- Renovation of the existing facility with no addition, total project cost of \$6,700,000.00. This option includes installation of a perimeter frost footing and new exterior wall panels. Removal and replacement of the existing rink slab and refrigeration system.

Discussion was held regarding a new hockey arena versus a complete renovation. Members of the Hockey Association pressed the Council on building a new hockey arena instead of a renovation conveying a renovation would not give the updated system to support growth. Council Members had mixed opinions as funding for this project will fall on the taxpayers and could substantially raise the city's tax levy. Several business owners were also in attendance to offer their support of the project. While there was much support for the project, some Council Members were skeptical that this would be the consensus of the entire community.

As discussion wrapped up \$5 million was proposed by some of the Council, with a \$5 million verbal commitment coming from the School District. Members of the Association preferred a \$7-\$8 million dollar commitment from the City leaving the Association to fill the gap with fundraising. No firm decision was made, and will again be addressed at the City Council Meeting on Monday, April 28, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Council Member Kielblock, seconded by Council Member Weber and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC
City Clerk