



Minutes of the September 30th, 2025 City Council Work Session

Unofficial meeting minutes until approved by Council

Tuesday, September 30, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.

Robins City Hall, 265 S. 2nd St., Robins, Iowa

The work session of the Robins City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Chuck Hinz. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call:

Present:

- Councilor Leigh Cook
- Councilor JD Smith
- Councilor Mike Foley
- Councilor Cary Smith
- Councilor JD Franzman

Also present: City Clerk Lisa Goodin, City Engineer Kelli Scott, City Attorney Maddie Huntzinger, Superintendent of Public Works/Building Inspector Mike Kortenkamp, and several Robins residents.

Approval of Agenda:

Councilor JD Smith moved to approve the agenda. Councilor Franzman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation by Hiawatha Water Superintendent Marty Recker regarding Transition to Wholesale Water Agreement with the City of Cedar Rapids. Mr. Recker was joined by Carl Ransford, Hiawatha Water Board of Trustees Chairperson. Mr. Recker detailed the Water Board of Trustees' offer to partner with the City of Robins in the operation and maintenance of Robins water utility, while Robins would retain ownership of their own infrastructure. Recker cited Hiawatha's experienced staff of operators and their full fleet of equipment, as well as their desire to maintain fully transparent communication with Robins' City staff. He detailed the scope of services offered by Hiawatha to Robins over a potential 5-year contract, including meter reading, leak detection and repair, regular inspections, scheduled maintenance of fire hydrants and valves, utility locates, GIS mapping of infrastructure, service tap inspection, 24/7 on-call service, daily and monthly sampling and compliance with all DNR regulations. Recker promised monthly reporting to the Robins City Council and further offered utility billing services as an optional service as well as ongoing training of Robins Public Works staff with the goal of Robins eventually assuming full responsibility for the administration of the utility. He further stressed Hiawatha's desire to form a solid partnership with Robins.

Councilor Franzman inquired as to whether Recker anticipated having to add to his staff in order to accommodate the administration of Robins' water utility. Recker replied that initially they intended to use their current staff. Councilor JD Smith inquired as to the construction of three water meter service pits. Recker replied that Robins would be responsible for the construction, as Robins would be retaining ownership of the infrastructure. Councilor Foley inquired as to whether existing Hiawatha staff would be able to handle the approximately 50% increase in customer base. Recker replied in the affirmative, stressing the relative new condition of Robins infrastructure and the benefit of regularly-scheduled monitoring and maintenance. Foley further inquired as to why Robins should partner with Hiawatha. Recker replied that beside retaining ownership of the utility, he expected Robins to realize an estimated \$50-\$70k annually. Foley asked as to the annual budget of Hiawatha's water utility and their staff numbers and Recker responded \$1.5M and eight full time staff members. Councilor JD Smith inquired as to whether Robins' residents' water meters would be compatible with Hiawatha's system. Recker responded that while Neptune meters are currently in Robins' homes, Hiawatha uses

Census meters. Robins could either replace the existing meters with Census models or leave the Neptune models in place, which would necessitate Robins purchasing meter readers and software. Councilor Franzman inquired into the necessity of DNR testing as Robins would continue to employ water provided by Cedar Rapids. Recker replied that distribution testing would still be required and that Hiawatha would facilitate the testing. Councilor JD Smith inquired if Recker had any recommendations as to Robins' course of action, should a water supply from Cedar Rapids become unavailable. Recker recommended that in the short term, Robins would be able to connect to Hiawatha's water mains, stressing that Robins would not go without water whether they partnered with Hiawatha or not. Councilor JD Smith asked if Recker could provide a ballpark estimate of Robins costs in a partnership with Hiawatha. Recker responded that if Robins were to transition to Census water meters, he estimated the cost to be between \$20-\$22k per month. Councilor Smith further inquired as to the structure of Hiawatha's Water Board of Trustees. Ransford provided that members are appointed by the Mayor. Smith inquired as to the likelihood of problems if Board members were to change their minds down the road. Ransford replied that a 28E agreement would be approved by both the Water Board and Robins City Council. Councilor Cary Smith asked what Hiawatha's preference would be for a term of contract. Recker suggested a 5-year contract to start, in order to give both cities a chance to ramp up and for Robins to investigate how they would like to proceed with the administration of the utility. Councilor JD Smith commented on Robins' fire protection flow issues and asked how Hiawatha would address this issue. Recker said they would examine the system, try to help resolve issues and make recommendations. Kevin Hendrickson, 465 Maple St. inquired as to the operation of Hiawatha's sanitary sewer system. Recker responded that Hiawatha's streets department oversaw the operation of that utility.

Upon hearing no further questions, Attorney Huntzinger announced that the Council had the option of moving into a closed session and described the process. At 6:39 p.m. Councilor Franzman motioned that the Robins City Council enter into closed session for discussion pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.5(1)(a) to review or discuss records which are required or authorized by state or federal law to be kept confidential or to be kept confidential as a condition for that governmental body's possession or continued receipt of federal funds and/or Iowa Code section 388.9 to discuss marketing and pricing strategies or proprietary information if its competitive position would be harmed by public disclosure not required of potential or actual competitors, and if no public purpose would be served by such disclosure. Councilor Foley seconded the motion, and upon roll call, votes were as follows: JD Smith – aye, Dave Franzman – aye, Leigh Cook – aye, Cary Smith – aye, Mike Foley – aye.

At 7:52 p.m. Council resumed the open session. Councilor JD Smith motioned for adjournment at 7:53 p.m. Franzman seconded and votes were unanimous in favor of adjournment. The motion carried.

Chuck Hinz, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa Goodin, City Clerk/Treasurer