



City of Robins
City Council Joint Work Session Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 10, 2026
Hiawatha Multi-Purpose Room • 101 Emmons Street, Lower Level
Unofficial Meeting Minutes Until Approved by Council

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Steve Dodson and Mayor Chuck Hinz called the joint work session to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Robins City Council: Mayor Chuck Hinz and Council Members Mike Foley, Leigh Cook, Bruce Vander Sanden, and Leslie Hoyt were present. Council member Cary Smith was absent.

Hiawatha City Council: Mayor Steve Dodson and Council Members Rob Archibald, Jeff Cater, Ben Fiedler, and CJ Flynn were present. Council member Jill Weigel was absent.

Staff and Others Present: Robins City Clerk/Treasurer Lisa Goodin; Robins City Engineer Kelli Scott; Robins Building Official/Public Works Superintendent Mike Kortenkamp; Robins Deputy City Clerk Rhonda Kortenkamp; Hiawatha City Manager Dennis Marks; Hiawatha City Engineer Jon Fitch; Snyder & Associates Engineer Tim Mroch; and Liz Burke, Corridor MPO.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – HIAWATHA

The Hiawatha City Council approved the agenda on a motion by Council Member Rob Archibald, seconded by Council Member Ben Fiedler. The motion carried with four ayes.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – ROBINS

The Robins City Council approved the agenda on a motion by Council Member Mike Foley, seconded by Council Member Leigh Cook. The motion carried with four ayes.

BUSINESS – TOWER TERRACE ROAD DISCUSSION

Tim Mroch of Snyder & Associates presented background on the Tower Terrace Road project and the recent receipt of a \$4.5 million CPF grant. Segment A, Segment B, and Segment 3 were identified as potential targets for use of the CPF grant funds. Segment B, estimated at \$27 million, was considered too expensive to pursue at this time. Segment A, estimated at \$12 million, was identified as a more likely target.

Mr. Mroch explained that federal funds could potentially fund 80 percent of Segment A, or approximately \$9.36 million, with Hiawatha and Robins providing the remaining 20 percent. Completion of Segment A would also provide an underpass for the Cedar Valley Nature Trail under Tower Terrace Road, eliminating the existing level crossing and increasing safety for trail users.

Mayor Hinz discussed the MPO's ongoing efforts to secure federal funding and highlighted cooperation among the metropolitan cities and Linn County. He also emphasized the safety concern associated with the Cedar Valley Nature Trail crossing and the advantage provided by completion of Segment A.

Mayor Dodson discussed the Cedar Valley Nature Trail crossing, noting that its proximity to Robins Road increases the danger and highlighting the added safety of an underpass.

Council Member Mike Foley asked whether a timeline was attached to receipt of the CPF funding. Mr. Mroch estimated an expenditure timeline of approximately three years, or 2028/2029. Council Member Foley questioned the likelihood of the MPO providing the additional federal funding. Mr. Mroch explained that the MPO would need to determine whether currently funded projects could be deferred to free the necessary money. Council Member Foley asked whether the MPO had prioritized funding the already-completed segments of Tower Terrace Road. Mr. Mroch explained that awards are based on scoring criteria and decisions of the MPO Policy Board.

Mayor Dodson asked about the size and scope of the roundabouts. Mr. Mroch explained that the roundabouts at Hawkeye and Stamy would be single-lane, while the Robins Road roundabout would be double-lane.

Mayor Hinz commented on the substantial amount of work and planning required before construction could begin. Mr. Mroch noted that receipt of the CPF grant does not prevent the MPO from continuing to apply for additional grant funding during this time.

Council Member Rob Archibald questioned why Segment A would be completed before Segment B and expressed a preference for Segment B. He also asked whether smaller portions of Segment B could be completed. Mayor Hinz stated that seeking funding for Segment B would represent a very large lift for the MPO. Council Member Vander Sanden noted that Segment A would enhance the existing roadway.

Engineer Kelli Scott asked about discretionary funds and the IIJA. Mr. Mroch stated that future availability of discretionary CPF funds is questionable and that future BUILD grant funding availability is also unclear.

Council Member Jeff Cater asked whether local dollars spent now could become unnecessary if a large federal grant were received in the future. Mr. Mroch stated that large federal grants are always possible, but a local match is almost always necessary. He emphasized the need to use currently available funding appropriately and noted that the local City Councils have ultimate decision-making authority regarding whether expenditures are in the best interests of their communities.

Mayor Hinz noted that the most recent BUILD grant application round had more than 1,200 applicants and emphasized the importance of pursuing multiple funding sources.

Council Member Archibald urged consideration of dividing the segments into smaller pieces.

Engineer Scott identified potential economic development on the north side of Tower Terrace Road as a benefit to Robins from completion of Segment A.

Council Member Archibald stated that Segment B would accomplish more for drive-by traffic than Segment A and expressed hesitation about spending taxpayer dollars on an existing roadway. Council Member Cater supported that position. Engineer Scott stated that there is not a good way to divide Segment B into smaller segments.

Council Member Ben Fiedler asked whether a smaller part of Segment A could be completed.

Mr. Mroch explained that use of federal funds must consider independent utility. He noted that the original design of the existing roadway primarily widened the road, but the roadway in its current condition does not have the elevations necessary for stormwater management, trail crossings, and other improvements. Leaving it as-is would require the installation of significantly more stormwater intakes. He also noted that public perception of piecemealing Segment A might not be favorable because of repeated roadway closures.

Council Member Archibald stated that public perception would favor lower expenditures. Engineer Jon Fitch stated that piecemealing the roadway would result in a higher “throwaway cost.”

Council Member Vander Sanden questioned the advisability of having two different types of roadways in the same stretch.

Mr. Mroch stated that the existing roadway is approximately 20 years old and about halfway through its useful life.

Engineer Fitch described efforts by the MPO Project Management Team to identify projects that could potentially be deferred. Mayor Hinz again urged the pursuit of additional funding sources.

Mr. Mroch stated that the safety improvements offered by Segment A could make the project a candidate for additional DOT funding.

Council Member Fiedler noted that the decreased speed limit on Tower Terrace Road and signage have had little effect on vehicle speeds and that roadway design has a greater impact on speed. He stated that Segment A offers greater safety improvements. Council Member Foley reported that Robins has issued numerous speeding tickets on Tower Terrace Road and stated that the existing roadway is conducive to higher speeds.

Engineer Scott stated that Congresswoman Ashley Hinson has been a strong proponent of the project and noted that whoever replaces her in Congress may not view the project as favorably or offer future funding. She stated that future funding may not be available.

City Manager Dennis Marks asked whether Hiawatha's financial portion of the roadway would increase if CPF funding were not used on Segment A. The answer was no. The cities' financial responsibility would remain, proportionately, the same if federal funding was used at a later date.

Council Member Archibald asked about the decision timeline. Mr. Mroch stated that if the cities want to apply to the MPO for additional funding, the sooner a decision is made, the better.

City Manager Marks asked whether another funding opportunity for the City of Marion was coming up soon for Segment 3. Mr. Mroch stated that a clean-air initiative funding round would be opening soon.

Council Member Fiedler asked whether Segment A was the least attractive segment for finding alternative grant sources.

Robins City Clerk Lisa Goodin identified the potential economic impact of the re-construction of Segment A for Robins. The roadway improvements, once completed, would encourage development of the light-industrial and commercial area known as "Robins Landing" which abuts the existing Tower Terrace roadway.

Council Member Cater stated that he was not compelled by the economic development opportunities for Robins.

Council Member Archibald again urged completing a smaller section of Segment A.

Council Member Fiedler asked whether a study could be completed to determine how much construction could be completed using only the CPF funds and not additional MPO funding, thereby decreasing the amount required from each city. Mr. Mroch confirmed

Council Member Foley noted that development in Robins Landing is also a benefit to Hiawatha.

Council Member Vander Sanden stated that smaller sections of Segment A might be difficult to manage.

OTHER COUNCIL DISCUSSION

No additional discussion was conducted.

ADJOURNMENT

The joint work session adjourned at 6:44 p.m. The recorded notes indicate a motion by Council Members Ben Fiedler and Bruce Vander Sanden, seconded by Council Members Rob Archibald and Leigh Cook, with the motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Goodin
City Clerk/Treasurer

Chuck Hinz, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa Goodin, City Clerk/Treasurer