

**CITY OF MILACA**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MINUTES**  
February 24, 2026

**Call to Order Roll Call**

Mayor Dillan called the meeting of the Milaca City Council to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Upon roll call, the following council members were present: Mayor Dave Dillan, Councilors: Norris Johnson, Ken Muller, Lindsee Larsen and Tim Poorker.

Staff present: City Manager Tammy Pfaff, City Attorney Damien Toven and Police Chief Rasmussen

**WORK SESSION FOR POLICE HIRING ISSUES**

Police Chief Rasmussen gave an update: Jake, Mike & Brandon are now gone. Henry has a conditional offer for the City of Big Lake. No definitive date as to when he will be leaving. Stephen Jerde started last week and is going very well. We have another candidate that passed all backgrounds and expect him to start on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. With Henry leaving, he is one of our FTO's and if and when he leaves, I will be the only one that will be able to train the new officers in. Tammy and I have talked about the possibility of getting some help from Mille Lacs County during the FTO process. The one starting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> I can train on my own. If we hire more after that, then I am not able to train two officers in. We have a couple interviews coming up.

Mayor Dillan stated we need to look at a couple of things: one is getting some officers right now and taking care of the officers/staff that are left but yet keeping budget in line.

City Manager Pfaff stated a possible hiring incentive and a retention longevity incentive may help too. One idea is in looking at their contract, when we update the posting move it down to the 3 year level to \$34.19 and then to the \$38.50 range and in their contract we would also put that in July they would get a 1.5% increase. Between years 6 and 12, there is no step increase so if we would do a longevity incentive in between those years like at year 9 that may help. There is no real increase after the 6 years. I think incentives are getting to be a common thing to help hire. Per the league, we cannot call them bonuses, we call them hiring incentives. After they are done with FTO, they would get a \$2,500 hiring incentive. We could do a temporary contract with the county to help while we FTO. Mayor Dillan asked how long FTO takes and Rasmussen replied about 12 weeks.

Pfaff continued with that she would like to see a wage increase for Rasmussen and Holly. I am proposing a \$1.75 increase which would be an annual increase of \$3,640 for each of them. I would like to move forward with that. We talked about the temporary contract with the county. I think that would be feasible.

Mayor Dillan asked about the retention longevity, that would not affect anyone at this time. It would just be to keep officers here? Rasmussen stated anyone hired in 2026 would benefit from the retention longevity. Council member Larsen questioned if that would include the new hires and Pfaff stated it

would. If the current officer finishes his FTO, he would get the \$2,500 hiring incentive and then after his 3 years, then the longevity incentive would apply. Once we would be fully staffed, we would not need

the incentive. But, should we need it again, the council would need to approve that. Mayor Dillan stated that once we open their contract and increase starting wages, we may not need an incentive. Pfaff stated that by then the starting wage for a new officer could be \$33.31 and at 6<sup>th</sup> year it would be \$42.08.

Larsen asked Rasmussen if he was pretty sure Henry was leaving or is there something that we could do to keep him here and Rasmussen stated he did ask Henry if the \$3.00 an hour increase would help but he is pretty committed to leaving. However, I do think these incentives would help. We can't compete with the metro, we just need to compete with departments our size.

Mayor Dillan stated police contract opens in late summer so I can't see us doing negotiations and saying we're only going to raise it 3%. Mayor Dillan stated he just does not want to open this contract. Rasmussen stated if the city wants to do the \$2.00 to \$3.00 increase, we could just do an MOU. City Attorney Toven asked Rasmussen if he has talked to Rick (the LELS union rep) about this. Rasmussen stated the officers had approached Rick earlier and his take on that was that since they were in a contract, any changes, the city should approach the union about that.

Council member Poorker stated he has done some research in regard to officers take home car. He spoke with the Chief of Police up in Grand Rapids and he stated it was definitely a recruiting and retention tool. Poorker asked about liability and officers mishandling and he stated they haven't had any issues. Pfaff stated that would be great if they lived in the city but like Stephen, he lives in East Bethel? Rasmussen stated he is aware of previous conversations in regard to this and it was mentioned that officers would need to live within 25-30 miles and neither Stephen nor Austin would live within that range. Mayor Dillan stated he doesn't have a problem with a take home car but he does get a lot of heat already about Public Works taking home a truck, a lot, and then soon our fire chief's will want that too. We need to look at it as a bigger benefit than just one or two departments. Poorker stated that for the police department it is a real incentive for hiring. Mayor Dillan stated he likes the idea of after 2 years being hired and the mileage so they're not driving it to Elk River. Johnson stated that it wouldn't be that much difference with cost for the city. Pfaff asked if vehicles had to keep running when they have them at home as well and Rasmussen stated no. The reason to keeping them run during working hours is to avoid the equipment from shutting down. Rasmussen stated that his idea was just during their rotation of their scheduled shifts. Pfaff stated that living within 20 miles would be good.

Pfaff asked if the council was good with that? Mayor Dillan asked if this was after a year that they had been hired or immediately? Pfaff stated after one year. Rasmussen stated that it should be after they get off probation. He further stated that he would need to put together a procedure policy should this be approved. Council member Muller asked if other cities have this. Rasmussen stated it is common with counties and more and more cities are offering this. Mora does, Foley not, Princeton, currently not, Isle and Onamia no. Mayor Dillan stated we're not locked into this. If we find in a couple years it isn't working we can rescind the policy.

City Attorney Toven asked if Rasmussen has a contract with the county in regard to helping while FTO. Rasmussen stated there is currently no contract. They just initially stated they would be interested. Toven stated that the city would want to act on this – to have the city put together a preliminary contract

and then present to the county. Hopefully in a month or two. Mayor Dillan called for a motion to begin the process of preparing a preliminary contract with Mille Lacs County. Johnson made the motion, seconded by Larsen. All in favor. Motion passes.

Mayor Dillan stated now we got to get back to the pay, hiring incentive, longevity incentive, posting pay and all those issues. Poorker stated he would like to see the 9 year longevity increase. City Attorney stated that if you are comfortable with these specific items, they can be included in the current posting. Larsen asked if we were including the vehicle in this? Pfaff stated that would be in March when the policy is presented. Rasmussen stated he would like to get the policy in place first. Mayor Dillan called for a motion to approve the hiring incentive, starting incentives and longevity incentives as presented. Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Muller. No further discussion. All in favor. Motion passes.

Poorker asked if we had expanded our advertising area that was discussed a while ago and Pfaff stated yes, we have done that.

Next, the pay increase of \$1.75 an hour for Holly and Quinn. An annual increase of \$3,640 each. That would be effective in the next pay period. Mayor Dillan called for a motion to approve. Motion by Poorker, seconded by Johnson. No further discussion. Motion passes.

Pfaff stated the council should look at a 2 year contract with the union instead of 3 years.

### **Adjournment**

Mayor Dillan called for a motion for adjournment. Johnson made a motion for approval, seconded by Larsen. With no further discussion, all in favor of adjournment. Meeting adjourned 12:42 p.m.

  
Mayor Dave Dillan

Attest:

  
Tammy Pfaff, City Manager