CITY OF HAZELWOOD
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 11, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A Council work session was called to order by Mayor Matthew G. Robinson at 6:01 p.m. on February 11, 2026, in the Council Chambers at Hazelwood City Hall.

On roll call the following members of the Council were present:

Lesli M. Henderson
Kelly Wadlow
Matthew G. Robinson
Lisa M. Matlock
Warren H. Taylor
Robert C. Smith
Jen Hatton
William C. Hoops, Jr.
Robert M. Aubuchon

City Clerk Julie Lowery declared a quorum was present. Also present was City Manager David Leezer, Interim Finance Director Brandi Enzwiler, Fire Chief Dan Luley, Public Works Director David Stewart, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Doug Littlefield, and Special Counsel Mark Spykerman.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Mayor Robinson stated that the City must begin planning for long-term infrastructure improvements and emphasized the importance of proactively addressing facility and roadway needs.

He specified meeting with residents on March 11 to discuss the potential placement of a General Obligation (GO) Bond issue on the August 2026 ballot for the construction of a new Firehouse 1.

Mayor Robinson stated that in order to properly plan for the future, the Council should begin educating residents regarding infrastructure needs and available financing options. He suggested placing the matter on a future agenda and considering approval of consultants to complete an in-depth infrastructure study.

Mark Spykerman of Gilmore & Bell, the City's bond counsel, provided an overview of bonding mechanisms available to the City. Mr. Spykerman explained that GO Bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the City and are repaid through a voter-approved property tax levy. Because they are secured by taxing authority, GO Bonds generally carry the lowest available interest rates. Voter approval is required.

He noted that Hazelwood last issued GO Bonds in 2005 and 2007 for street improvements, and those bonds have since been paid off. The debt service levy was reduced to zero in 2025 after retirement of outstanding debt.

Mr. Spykerman stated that, generally speaking, approximately $100,000 in annual debt service can support roughly $1 million in bond issuance, depending on interest rates and term structure.

Ms. Hatton asked about the City's statutory debt limit. Discussion followed regarding Missouri constitutional debt limits, which cap the amount of General Obligation debt a city may issue based on a percentage of assessed valuation.

Mr. Leezer stated that under current valuations, the City could potentially borrow up to approximately $70 million within its legal debt capacity.

Ms. Hatton asked whether debt service payments would reduce funding available to other departments.

Mr. Spykerman responded that debt payments must be funded within the City's budget and revenue structure, and that the City would need to identify revenue sources to support the levy.

Ms. Hatton asked whether subsequent bond issues could be taken to voters after the August election.

Mr. Spykerman stated there are no waiting period requirements and the City may return to voters at any time for separate bond issues.

Mr. Spykerman explained that as a Charter City, Hazelwood may issue Special Obligation Bonds. These bonds are payable from annually appropriated funds rather than a dedicated voter-approved tax levy. They typically do not require voter approval.

While not considered constitutional debt, they must be budgeted annually and therefore impact the General Fund or Capital Improvement Fund. Interest rates are generally slightly higher than GO Bonds, and issuance may have a modest impact on the City's credit rating.

Mr. Spykerman also discussed lease financing, including Certificates of Participation (COPs). Under this structure, the City enters into a lease-purchase agreement for a facility, and investors purchase certificates representing a share of the lease payments. The City makes lease payments annually, subject to appropriation.

The City has previously used COP financing, most recently for the Aquatics Center in 2008.

Mr. Spykerman stated that while lease financing and Special Obligation Bonds are not voter-approved debt, they may carry slightly higher interest rates and have direct budget impacts.

Mr. Leezer stated that the estimated construction cost for Firehouse 1 is approximately $8.7 million, with the proposed $20 million bond amount also covering soft costs and related project expenses.

Discussion occurred regarding whether Firehouse 1 and the Aquatics Center could be combined into one ballot issue. Mr. Leezer stated they could not be combined.

Mr. Spykerman concurred and explained that combining unrelated projects into a single ballot question, commonly referred to as “log rolling,” is not permitted under Missouri law.

Ms. Hatton asked whether the proposed bond issue would cover updates or improvements to Firehouse 2.

Mr. Spykerman stated that the ballot language could be drafted broadly enough to allow remodeling of House 2.

Mr. Smith asked whether unused bond proceeds could be applied toward debt reduction.

Mr. Spykerman stated that such authority would need to be expressly included in the ballot language.

Mr. Smith also asked about de-obligating bonds.

Mr. Spykerman explained that the City could issue less than the authorized amount or choose not to draw down the full authorization, thereby reducing debt undertaken.

Discussion also took place regarding potentially reducing the footprint of the proposed Firehouse 1 project.

Chief Luley stated that the consultants retained by the City are experienced in fire facility planning and cost analysis, and expressed confidence in their ability to provide reliable estimates and recommendations.

Mr. Leezer stated that the project is progressing well and that site assessment work should be completed soon.

Ms. Matlock asked about costs regarding pool repair and maintenance.

Mr. Littlefield stated that the City spends approximately $113,000 annually on maintenance of the Aquatics Center. He described ongoing issues including broken pipes, concrete, and maintenance of 16 pumps, with replacement costs ranging from $2,000 to $10,000 per pump.

Ms. Wadlow stated that priorities need to be established.

Ms. Hatton stated that essential infrastructure such as buildings and roads should be prioritized over recreational amenities.

The Council was provided with background information regarding the Aquatics Center and prior financing.

Discussion occurred regarding potential St. Louis County budget cuts and how those reductions may affect municipal services. It was noted that two County pools are closing. Road projects such as the Howdershell Road improvements appear to be moving forward.

Council discussion emphasized the importance of long-term infrastructure planning, financial forecasting, and community engagement. The Mayor reiterated the need to evaluate financing options carefully and to educate residents regarding future ballot measures.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

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Matthew G. Robinson - Mayor
City of Hazelwood, Missouri

ATTEST:

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Julie Lowery, CMC - City Clerk
City of Hazelwood, Missouri