City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Agenda

Monday, November 9, 2026

6:00 PM

Closed Meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 3(a) - Review of Performance of City Administrator.

Council Chambers

City Council

6:00 PM - CITY COUNCIL MEETING CLOSED AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor: Zweifel
Councilmembers: Beumer, Dahlen, Holmes, Ness, Peterson White, Sokup

REGULAR AGENDA

The public will have an opportunity to address the City Council on the following regular agenda items. Individuals who pre-registered may take one opportunity to address the Council for up to two (2) minutes. After all individuals on the sign-up list have spoken, other individuals may speak. Persons must give their name and address and if representing a business must give the name of the business or corporation. If an attorney or consultant is representing a client, the client must be identified for the record.

The intent of the public comment is to receive information from the public. Individuals who would like to have a question addressed may write their question on the back of the comment card and an appropriate person will follow up with them at another time.

1. 26-559 Closed Meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, subd. 3(a) related to the Evaluation of the Performance of Ben Martig, City Administrator.

Attachments: 1 - Council Policy 1.02 City Administrator Performance Review Policy
2 - 2026 Martig Resolution _1step increase
3 - 2026 Martig Resolution _Open Ended

ADJOURN

File #: 26-559, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: November 9, 2026

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Risi Karim, Assistant City Administrator

Closed Meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, subd. 3(a) related to the Evaluation of the Performance of Ben Martig, City Administrator.

Action Requested:
The City Council will consider a motion to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 3(a).

Summary Report:
The Northfield City Council will be conducting the annual performance review for City Administrator Martig. Attached is the City Council Policy 1.02 City Administrator Performance Review Policy that outlines the process and scope of review.

The City Council will consider a motion to close the meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 3(a). Accordingly, the public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority.

The following procedure must be used to close a meeting under this provision:

- The public body must identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing the meeting. The meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting; so some advance notice to the individual is needed to allow the individual to make a decision.
- Before closing the meeting, the council must state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed.
- The meeting must be electronically recorded, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the meeting.
- At the next open meeting, in this case the November 10th regular meeting, the public body must summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. The council should be careful not to release private or confidential data in its summary.

Alternative Options:
Not applicable.

Financial Impacts:

The City Council will be asked to determine any salary adjustment related to the City Administrator's performance. A resolution approving a step increase (attachment 2) and a resolution approving an amount to be determined by the Council (attachment 3).

Tentative Timelines:

- November 10, 2026 - City Council Regular Meeting (open meeting) Summarizes its conclusions regarding the annual performance review under Minn. Stat. sec. 13D.05, subd. 3(a).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the City Administrator Performance Review Process policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for the City Administrator's regular annual performance review and a mid-year check-in. The performance review process is intended to establish and communicate performance expectations, goals and objectives for the City Administrator, identify the City Administrator's strengths and areas for improvement in meeting these expectations, and foster the City Administrator's professional development.

The Annual City Administrator Performance Review will provide helpful, real-time feedback from the Mayor and City Council and direct reports. This process is an effective means to meet the objectives of a performance evaluation of establishing and communicating performance expectations, goals, and objectives and to provide recognition of accomplishments and to have a discussion regarding expectations and goals for the upcoming year. This process also identifies the City Administrator's strengths and areas for improvement in meeting these expectations and fosters the City Administrator's professional development. When used for professional development, the review offers a number of benefits, including increased self-awareness, identification of potential problem areas and gaps in perception of professional development.

The mid-year check-in is intended to provide the opportunity for more consistent and productive feedback from City Council to the Northfield City Administrator throughout the year and continue to strengthen the process for Annual Performance Review. A mid-year personal and professional development check-in is intended for the City Administrator to report progress on established goals during the previous Annual Performance Review. In contrast, the Annual Performance Review is intended to be a full year assessment of progress on strategic initiatives, opportunities for growth and development, and includes deeper assessments and feedback from the City Administrator, City Staff, and City Council. The Annual Performance Review also contemplates a salary increase while the mid-year check-in does not.

PROCESS

The Council Employment Policy Committee will work with the Communications and Human Resources Director to recommend to the City Council the City Administrator performance review timeline, review tool(s) to be used, and a professional and independent third party as retained by the City Council to assist with the review process. Each year, the performance review process and third-party consultant will be reviewed shortly after the evaluation is completed to finalize the process for the upcoming performance review year.

The following is a summary of the intended Annual Performance Review process:

1. Each year, a third-party, in collaboration with the Communications and Human Resources Director submits to City Council members and the City Administrator: (1) a copy of the previous year's Performance Review Summary; (2) a summary of the City Administrator's update on goals from the current review period; and (3) a Performance Evaluation Review form via an electronic evaluation tool.
2. Approximately four weeks prior to the City Administrator's performance review, a third-party, in collaboration with the Communications and Human Resources Director will send to all direct reports a Performance Evaluation Review form via an electronic evaluation tool.
3. City Council members, all direct reports, and City Administrator individually complete the Performance Evaluation Review forms.
    a. Note that there will be one Performance Evaluation Review form for City Council members to complete, one for direct reports, and another form for the City Administrator to complete as a self-assessment.[1] All forms will solicit competency ratings, comments, and narrative feedback in specific areas relevant to the City Administrator's job duties and goals and provide specific instructions and guidelines for feedback.
    b. City Council members to consider the City Administrator's job description and goals in evaluating the performance of the City Administrator.
    c. The identity of the individual City Council members completing the forms will be provided to the City Administrator but otherwise anonymous to others, including the City Council.
    d. Direct reports will complete a performance review survey form and meet individually with third party consultant. The feedback of the direct reporting staff will be in aggregate form. If there is a need for addressing

individual responses from direct reports by way of identifying such individual responses, the third party will determine, in their discretion, how to appropriately communicate such feedback to the City Administrator.

4. A third-party in collaboration with the Communications and Human Resources Director, drafts aggregate evaluation responses into one comprehensive report and an executive summary from all individual responses received and submits such to City Council, City Administrator, and appropriate administrative staff prior to the special meeting. The City Administrator will also be submitted individual evaluation responses concurrent with their aggregated results.
5. City Administrator meets with a third-party to review City Administrator's review form (i.e., self-assessment) and goals for the current review period.
6. On the date of the special meeting, the City Council will discuss with the City Administrator the aggregate review responses, their responses, their individual responses if they wish, City Administrator's comments, and/or any other comments City Council members have.
    a. The meeting will be closed and electronically recorded, unless the City Administrator requests that it be open under Minn. Stat. sec. 13d.05, subd. 3(a).
    b. The meeting can proceed as follows:
        i. Communications & Human Resources Director presents compensation information as provided in the special meeting agenda packet, which includes compensation increase options and answers questions from City Council.
        ii. The third-party consultant and City Council discuss performance evaluation provided in executive summary, review recommended goals, and third-party consultant answer questions from City council without City Administrator in attendance, or at minimum, not participating.
        iii. The Mayor, or in their absence the meeting chairperson, solicits feedback on the summary of conclusions provided by the third-party consultant in the executive summary. The Mayor, or in their absence the meeting chairperson, asks each member to state their concurrence or not with such conclusions If there are changes to the summary of conclusions, the third-party consultant modifies the summary as directed by the City Council.

iv. Communications & Human Resources Director leaves the meeting. City Administrator is invited into the meeting to discuss the performance review with the City Council.
v. With City Administrator in attendance, the Mayor or in their absence, the meeting chairperson, simply reference or summarize the executive summary and then allow each City Council member to state anything they wish about their evaluation of City Administrator.
vi. City Administrator comment as they wish on statements on the review responses and statements from City Council Members.

c. Evaluation of the City Administrator generally includes the intertwined issue of ratings and comments on specific area of the City Administrator's job, goals, application of the employment agreement, and salary change.
    i. Though the City Council can reference and discuss a potential salary change or adjustment as part of the performance evaluation (e.g., City Council is discussing the adequacy of performance in order to receive a salary increase), it should not negotiate such a change or otherwise make any decision on such a change outside an open meeting based on Minnesota Department of Administration, Data Practices Office, Advisory Opinion 15-002 stating:
    The Open Meeting Law does not contain a provision allowing public bodies to close meetings for general personnel reasons; meetings can only be closed in the specific circumstances described in section 13D.05 or by other statutes. As discussed in Issue 1, a performance evaluation may naturally include references to "compensation and prospective extension of [an] employment agreement." However, once a public body has determined that the employee will remain employed with a possible change in pay based on their performance, and the discussion logically turns to the specifics about the employment agreement, the City Council is no longer evaluating the performance of an individual per section 13D.05, subdivision 3(a). In these circumstances, contract negotiations must be done in an open meeting.

7. At the next open meeting following the closed session, the City Council:

a. Summarizes its conclusions regarding the evaluation under Minn. Stat. sec. 13D.05, subd. 3(a) and take action on any salary change.
    i. The Mayor, or in their absence, the meeting chairperson reads a statement summarizing the conclusions from the meeting.
    ii. The Minnesota Department of Administration Data Practices Office opined in Advisory Opinion 02-021 as follows related to the summary:
    Clearly, the language of the Open Meeting Law indicates that the City Council ought to summarize each salient point of the evaluation so that the public is given the opportunity to get the best possible sense of the performance - good, bad, or indifferent - of the public employee.

b. Take a motion and vote for any salary increase. The Communications and Human Resources Director will prepare resolutions for consideration of compensation of the City Administrator in the open meeting. The following options *may* be included in the resolutions for consideration:
    i. One step increase if performance meets or exceeds expectations.
    ii. Other option – more than one step increase (such as a two-step increase or more) if performance meets or exceeds expectations. If the City Council action directs another salary change concept, the Communications and Human Resources Director will add the appropriate language in the resolution(s) as directed by Council with the salary change that was proposed.

The City Council will also conduct a mid-year check-in with the City Administrator, typically 6 months prior to the Annual Performance Review, as follows:

1. City Council holds a closed meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. sec. 13D.05, subd. 3(a).
    a. The meeting will be closed and electronically recorded, unless the City Administrator requests that it be open under Minn. Stat. sec. 13D.05, subd. 3(a).
    b. City Administrator to inform the City Council about progress on current personal and professional growth and goals from the current review period. The City Council may then have an open dialogue with the City Administrator, providing feedback, but without conducting any formal evaluation.

2. At the next open meeting following the closed session, the City Council:
    a. Summarizes its conclusions regarding the mid-year check-in under Minn. Stat. sec. 13D.05, subd. 3(a) on whether the City Administrator fulfilled the expectation to present on goals per 1.b. above of this City Administrator Performance Review Policy.
    b. The City Council will not take any motion and vote on a salary increase.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2026-108

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA APPROVING A SALARY INCREASE FOR CITY ADMINISTRATOR BEN MARTIG

WHEREAS, Ben Martig began employment on May 2, 2016 in the position of City Administrator;

WHEREAS, City Administrator position classification is placed on Grade ZZ of the base pay schedule ("BPS").

WHEREAS, Ben Martig was approved for a one-step increase in the 2025 BPS to ZZ-6, $208,977 after his 2025 performance evaluation on May 6, 2025.

WHEREAS, Ben Martig is earning the salary of $215,255 at his step in the 2026 BPS pursuant to City Council Resolution 2024-118 which approved a new 2026 BPS that included a 3% increase above the 2025 BPS for each step in the BPS;

WHEREAS, Ben Martig reached his employment anniversary on May 2, 2026;

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2026, the Northfield City Council held a closed meeting for the City Administrator's mid-year check-in, consistent with the City Administrator Performance Review Policy, during which City Administrator Martig provided updates on his progress toward the personal and professional development goals established for the current review period, and the City Council engaged in open dialogue and provided feedback without conducting a formal performance evaluation; and

WHEREAS, at its May 5, 2026, meeting, the Northfield City Council shared a summary of the mid-year check-in and addressed the requirements of the City Administrator Performance Review Policy; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate the City Administrator's annual performance review process, Assistant City Administrator Risi Karim engaged Lauren Palmer of EverStrive Solutions LLC, as authorized by the Northfield City Council; and

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2026, consultant Lauren Palmer of EverStrive Solutions LLC facilitated the City Administrator's performance evaluation discussion during a closed meeting of the Northfield City Council; and

WHEREAS, following its review and discussion at a special closed meeting on November 9, 2026, the Northfield City Council determined that City Administrator Ben Martig's performance was satisfactory or exceeded expectations in all areas of review, and discussed the goals and objectives established for the upcoming review period; and

WHEREAS, Northfield City Council recommends a salary increase for Ben Martig.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THAT:

The Northfield City Council approves an increase in City Administrator Martig's salary to step 7 of pay grade ZZ under the City of Northfield's Base Pay Schedule for 2027, which is $229,028 effective November 10, 2026.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Northfield on this 10 day of November 2026.

ATTEST

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

VOTE: ___ ZWEIFEL ___ BEUMER ___ DAHLEN ___ HOLMES

___ NESS ___ PETERSON WHITE ___ SOKUP

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2026-108

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WHEREAS, following its review and discussion at a special closed meeting on November 9, 2026, the Northfield City Council determined that City Administrator Ben Martig's performance was satisfactory or exceeded expectations in all areas of review, and discussed the goals and objectives established for the upcoming review period; and

WHEREAS, Northfield City Council recommends a salary increase for Ben Martig.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THAT:

The City Council of the City of Northfield approves an increase in City Administrator Martig's salary to $_____, effective November 10, 2026.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Northfield on this 10 day of November 2026.

ATTEST

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

VOTE: ___ ZWEIFEL ___ BEUMER ___ DAHLEN ___ HOLMES

___ NESS ___ PETERSON WHITE ___ SOKUP