



MINUTES

**Mankato City Council
Regular Meeting
June 23, 2025 - 6 p.m.
IGC - Mankato Room**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Roll Call

Members Present: Jenn Melby-Kelley, Jessica Hatanpa, Kevin Mettler, Mike Laven, and Mayor Najwa Massad.

Members Excused: Michael McLaughlin and Dennis Dieken.

Staff Present: City Manager Susan Arntz, Administrative Services Director Parker Skophammer, Community Development Director Mark Konz, Public Safety Director Jeremy Clifton, and City Clerk Renae Kopischke.

Pledge of Allegiance

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Hatanpa moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the agenda as written. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Melby-Kelley moved and Ms. Hatanpa seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 16, 2025, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

4. **Public Open Forum (15 Minutes)**

Jane Dow, 37 Capri Drive, referenced the federal budget bill and encouraged the Council to take formal action to oppose it. She mentioned issues that arise due to inequality and noted that when a strong social safety net is in place there are fewer issues and people feel safer. She stated that the bill is not compassionate or fair and creates a wider gap between the very rich and everyone else.

Theresa Zeman, 117 Rita Road, indicated that she is a retired nurse and has witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of lack of health care, malnutrition and homelessness all too often. She felt that the proposed federal budget cuts will have a direct impact on local services and impact everyone, as there will likely be an increase to taxes to help meet demands and make up for the lack of federal funding. She asked that the Council submit a letter to the federal elected leaders and/or draft a public resolution opposing the cuts.

Leah Hanson, North Mankato, speaking on behalf of Connections Shelter, stated that she is a social worker who works with those that are facing homelessness, poverty and health crises as well as other economic insecurities. She commented on how the bill is a direct threat to the people she works with every day and how they will lose access to services. She urged the Council to reach out to legislators and other leaders and sign on expressing disappointment with the federal government.

Ava Corey-Gruenes, referred to an email that was sent to the Council, and indicated that members of their organization meet with ACLU representatives and a surveillance technologies expert. She requested that the Council rescind their vote approving the AI surveillance proposal, inform their group directly, and the public, at least a month before proposing changes to surveillance technology, ensure an ACLU representative is allowed to address the Council; initiate formal discussion about policy implementation to prevent unchecked police surveillance upgrades; and amend policies to restrict local coordination with ICE. She indicated that without following these actions, they will publicly highlight the failure to protect civil liberties. She noted that the ACLU is facilitating further meetings between their organization and their legal team.

Chris Schoenstedt, Mankato, commented on the budget and how it will affect those that are most vulnerable, as well as how the bulk of funding is being spent on police. He commented on statistics and how we should be improving the public safety department versus throwing funding at new toys. He mentioned FBI data and summarized statistics for the Mankato Police Department.

Natalia Orocio, commented on how she has witnessed firsthand how fear, distrust and silence impact immigrants and undocumented neighbors every day. She mentioned the June 9 Council meeting and the June 2 Work Session and felt that concerns were not heard. She referred to instances where data was released without consent. She urged the Council to take the issue seriously and re-evaluate the surveillance action.

Benton Bakke, spoke against the adoption of AI policing tools and encouraged the re-evaluation of the use of AI. He mentioned algorithms and how opening AI takes the decision-making away from officers.

5. **Consent Calendar**

NOTE: All items listed under the Consent Calendar will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If a Council Member wishes to discuss any of these items, they may ask that the item be removed from the Consent Calendar. Removed item(s) will be discussed and acted upon by separate motion.

Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as written. With all members voting in favor, the motion carried.

- A. Resolution approving application for Lake Washington Improvement Association to conduct lawful gambling at Weggy's, 1600 Warren Street, Suite 13, Mankato.
- B. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into Amendment No. 1 to the Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Mankato and Minnesota State University, Mankato for off-duty police and fire services.
- C. Resolution authorizing the State of Minnesota Hazardous Materials Response Team Joint Powers Agreement proposal.
- D. Resolution authorizing the Department of Public Safety to apply for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant.
- E. Resolution authorizing the Department of Public Safety to apply for a \$5,000 Fire Training Reimbursement Grant.
- F. Resolution considering bids for 2025 Sealcoating.
- G. Resolution considering bids for 2025 Striping.
- H. Resolution ordering advertisement for bid on Project 11140; Riverfront Drive Lighting and Streetscape.
- I. Resolution approving the 2025 MnDOT Aeronautics PAPI Light Replacement Grant.

- J. Set July 14, 2025, as the date of the public hearing to review an Ordinance amending Mankato City Code, Chapter 10, Section 10-1703 related to signage requirements in the Office Residential zoning district; by request of the City of Mankato.

6. **City Manager's Report**

Ms. Arntz clarified that on June 9, the Council did not take any action on implementing Flock cameras and indicated that the two items that were authorized do not connect to a national database. She noted that the data created is regulated by the Government Data Practices Act.

7. **Reports of City Council Members**

Mr. Laven provided an update from the Region 9 Development Commission. He commented on the approval of a 3% levy for the nine-county region and what it entailed, as well as provided a sample of how the levy affected property taxes.

8. **Miscellaneous Business**

View all city committee meetings by clicking on our [City Calendar](#)

Regular Council Meeting, July 14, 2025, 6 p.m., Mankato Room (with EDA to follow)

Regular Council Meeting, July 28, 2025, 6 p.m., Mankato Room (with work session to follow)

9. **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Council, Ms. Melby-Kelley moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to adjourn. With all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Minutes Approved.

Mayor Massad

ATTEST:

Renae Kopischke
City Clerk