



MINUTES

**Mankato City Council
Regular Meeting
July 28, 2025 - 6 p.m.
IGC - Mankato Room**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Roll Call

Members Present: Kevin Mettler, Mike Laven, Dennis Dieken, Michael McLaughlin, Jenn Melby-Kelley, Jessica Hatanpa, and Chair Najwa Massad.

Staff Present: City Manager Susan Arntz, Community Development Director Mark Konz, Interim City Engineer Karl Keel, 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. Hatanpa moved and Mr. Dieken seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 14, 2025, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

4. **Appearances, Recognition, and Proclamations**

Recognition of employees who have reached a milestone of 20 or more years of service with the City of Mankato during the 1st half of 2025.

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

Benton Bakke, addressed remarks made regarding the use of surveillance cameras and commented on the update to the handbook and the elimination of the Human Rights Commission.

Ava Corey-Gruenes, referenced the handbook and the meeting becoming hybrid and how people cannot attend due to transportation and how it would provide options without people physically being in the room. She referred to how the Council has censored their comments by not allowing people to speak. She asked that trespassing be removed from the Rules of Decorum.

Natalia Orocio, mentioned June 9 and the proposal being approved without attendees having the opportunity to speak. She asked that the Council reverse their actions taken on June 9.

Bill Snelson, 224 Hubbell Avenue, stated he attended to complain about a neighboring property and the issues and how nothing had been done. He asked that the property be addressed and encouraged the Council to drive by the property to see how bad it is.

Quinn Macke, 113 Piccadilly Place, asked the Council to end the sale of flavored nicotine products. She mentioned vaping issues at the high school level. She referenced the flavors and the packaging and how they are appealing.

Katie Smentek, Edgewood Road, reinforced comments made by Quinn and referred to the group speaking against the use of flavored tobacco.

6. **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.

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

- A. Resolution approving an application to conduct Off-Site Gambling on October 2, 2025, for Mankato Area Youth Baseball Association (MAYBA) at Loose Moose Saloon & Conference Center, 119 South Front Street, Mankato.

- B. Resolution accepting bid for the Riverfront Drive Lighting and Streetscape Project 11140.
- C. Resolution authorizing a reimbursable agreement for telephone service with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the Airport Control Tower at the Mankato Airport.
- D. Set August 11, 2025, as the date of public hearing for a variance from Mankato City Code, Chapter 10, Article VII, Division 4, Sec.10-1033, and for a variance from Chapter 10, Article X, Division 8, Sec. 10-1740 (125 Kingswood Drive); by request of Malterer Mechanical.

7. **Public Hearings**

- A. Mr. Konz reported that Northern Natural Gas Company is requesting a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the expansion of an existing essential service utility facility located within the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District, and a variance to permit the continuation of an 8-foot barbed wire fence in a residential zoning district. He stated that the applicant seeks a Conditional Use Permit to expand the existing natural gas utility facility at 1204 and 1210 Warren Street. He noted that the proposed expansion involves a 40' x 100' area situated on a parcel directly east of the existing facility that is under the ownership of a church, from whom the applicant would secure a lease for the project.

Mr. Konz explained that the expansion is necessary to accommodate a heater that warms the gas as it flows through the pipeline, which is intended to prevent freezing at the regulator and ensure reliable gas delivery. He added that the narrative details that the pipeline entering the station operates at 500 psig and is regulated down to 94 psig. which is a significant pressure drop that results in a temperature decrease that can impair the functionality of regulators and downstream equipment, particularly during winter months. The proposed heater would mitigate these risks.

Mr. Konz summarized the placement of new equipment in the expansion area to the east of the existing facility as well as screening requirements. He indicated that no additional parking areas are proposed, and if temporary parking of maintenance or utility vehicles is anticipated within the new expansion area, it must comply with Code standards and be hard surfaced.

Mr. Konz noted that the applicant is also requesting a variance to allow for the continuation of an existing eight-foot fence topped with barbed wire around the expanded area. He commented that the fencing matches the existing perimeter fence surrounding the current utility site. He stated that

while barbed wire is permitted in industrial zoning districts, it is prohibited in residential districts, such as R-1; thus, the applicant is seeking flexibility to continue the same fencing design. He added that the orientation of the fence (i.e., which direction the finished side faces) is not indicated on the plans; therefore, a condition is recommended to ensure that the finished side faces outward toward neighboring properties. He reviewed the criteria considered when evaluating a variance request.

Mayor Massad opened the public hearing. There being no one wishing to speak, Mayor Massad closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dieken moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion approving the Resolution approving a Conditional Use Permit to allow the expansion of an existing essential service utility facility located in the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District, and a variance to allow for the continuation of an 8-foot barbed wire fence in the residential district (1204 and 1210 Warren Street); by request of Northern Natural Gas Company. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Mr. Konz stated that Trellis is seeking approval for the preliminary and final plat of Mankato Housing LP; rezoning of proposed Lot 1, Block 1 from M-1, Light Industrial to O-R, Office Residential; a Planned Unit Development (PUD); vacation of two 15-foot-wide public alleys (one running east–west and the other north–south), and the vacation of a portion of Sibley Parkway. He indicated that the proposed project involves the construction of a 40-unit supportive housing development within a three-story apartment building which will serve as permanent housing for individuals and families who are currently experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. He commented that Trellis Property Management will staff the property, providing leasing, maintenance, marketing, and security services.

Mr. Konz noted that the proposal is consistent with the Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) approved by the Planning Commission on April 23, 2025. He mentioned that a traffic study was submitted to evaluate build-year conditions in 2028 that assumed a 1% annual traffic growth rate, aligned with the MAPO 2045 Transportation Plan. He explained that the rate is considered conservative, given that traffic volumes in the area have remained stable or declined over the past decade; thus, only minimal increases in intersection delays and vehicle queueing are anticipated. He stated that a condition attached to the LUPA requires that the applicant be a willing petitioner for any necessary intersection improvements in the future. He added that a fixed-route public transit stop is located on Dewey Lane, providing accessible transportation options for future residents.

Mr. Konz reported that the Planned Unit Development request seeks an exception to the city's standard parking requirements, as the proposed 40-unit development includes only 39 off-street parking stalls—well below

the required 80 stalls (two per unit). He noted that the applicant has indicated that the reduced parking will suffice based on data from similar properties, estimating only 20–30% of residents will own vehicles, and with only five staff members requiring parking during business hours. He mentioned that to allow for future adjustments, Trellis submitted two expansion options: one adding 12 stalls (totaling 51) and another adding 46 stalls (totaling 85). He stated that one of the conditions of approval mandates implementing one of the expansions if the initial parking proposal proves inadequate.

Mr. Konz indicated that Partners for Housing will provide voluntary, client-centered support services using a housing-first approach. He commented that upon entry, each resident will complete an intake and needs assessment to develop a personalized support plan. He stated that Service Coordinators will offer case management, connect residents to health and social services, and help track progress through regular meetings. He pointed out that residents will receive assistance with food, financial aid, transportation, childcare, and access to educational and job training opportunities. He noted that additional support includes access to crisis services, mental health care, addiction treatment, veteran resources, financial literacy, parenting programs, and children's services.

Mayor Massad opened the public hearing. There being no one wishing to speak, Mayor Massad closed the public hearing.

Mr. Laven moved and Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded a motion to approve the **Ordinance** rezoning of properties from M-1, Light Industrial, to O-R, Office Residential; **Resolutions** approving the Final Plat of Mankato Housing LP Subdivision; a Planned Unit Development; and vacating alleys and a portion of Sibley Parkway Street, dedicated as Patterson Avenue, on the plat of Oakwood Addition; by request of Trellis. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Mr. Konz reported that Fisher Development, with authorization from the property owner, is requesting the rezoning of several parcels located along 8th Avenue from P-I, Planned Industrial, to R-3, Limited Multiple Dwelling District. The subject properties are legally described as follows: Columbia Park Addition, Lot 4, Block 10; Lots 1 and 2, Block 9; Lots 9 through 16, Block 7; Lots 1 through 8, Block 8; and Germania Park Addition, Lots 1 through 6, Block 24. He stated that the request aligns with existing zoning patterns in the immediate vicinity as the properties directly east are zoned R-3, while properties to the north and south are currently used for residential purposes; they remain zoned P-I and will retain that designation until such time as the respective property owners initiate a rezoning process, and to the west lies the former quarry, which is zoned M-2, Heavy Industrial.

Mr. Konz indicated that the rezoning request is consistent with the city's recently amended Land Use Plan adopted on May 12, 2025, changing the guided land use designation of the subject parcels from Light Industrial to Medium Density Residential, intended to accommodate the development of single-family dwellings, either attached or detached. He commented that the amendment incorporated recommendations from the Jefferson Quarry Redevelopment Plan, a small area planning initiative adopted on September 11, 2023, to guide redevelopment efforts in the surrounding quarry area.

Mr. Konz summarized the conditions included as part of the adopted Land Use Plan Amendment, which are also recommended for the rezoning of the subject parcels, with slight modifications. He noted that infrastructure improvements, which will provide services to the site, are being installed as part of the Germania Park Phase 5 Capital Improvement Project.

Mayor Massad opened the public hearing.

Kimberly Wynn, Twin Cities, wondered if the development was part of an opportunity zone. Mr. Konz, yes, and stated that the current development is slated to be a part of the Community Land Trust.

Mayor Massad closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dieken moved and Ms. Hatanpa seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance rezoning of properties from P-I, Planned Industrial, to R-3, Limited Multiple Dwelling District (Lot 4, Block 10; Lots 1-2, Block 9; Lots 9-16, Block 7; Lots 1-8, Block 8; Columbia Park Addition and Lots 1-6, Block 24, Germania Park Addition); by request of Fisher Development .
The motion carried unanimously.

8. **City Manager's Report**

- A. Ms. Arntz noted recent discussion regarding possible improvements to the Council Chambers and related safety protocol adjustments as well as adding a section to the Council Handbook regarding Rules of Decorum for Council and Commission meetings. She commented on the elimination of the Human Rights Commission as the Minnesota Human Rights Act is a state law handled by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. She summarized several updates to the Council Handbook and noted that the most significant updates are to Appendix I: Meeting Procedures and Appendix II: Rules of Decorum.

Ms. Arntz stated that in the updated Appendix I, there is a recommended edit for the purpose of Council Meetings, changing the title of the City Manager's Report to Council Business, merging Reports and Miscellaneous Business (where Council and/or staff can provide updates

on projects, committees, conference attendance, or other matters), and updating the language for Public Comment. She mentioned that in the Public Comment Section, the 15-minute limit remains for three minutes per speaker. She indicated that speakers are encouraged to register with the City Clerk, and that the Council does not discuss items with questions being directed to the City Clerk. It is recommended that the Council remove the provision that the public is only allowed to speak on non-agenda items, allowing for greater participation by the public.

Ms. Arntz indicated that in the new Appendix II: Rules of Decorum, rules are outlined for the meeting to provide guidance on what the presiding officer may do to maintain order during a meeting. She commented that provisions are included where a party may be removed from the meeting and for how the Council will handle a situation where decorum may not be restored, and the meeting is shifted to a hybrid meeting.

Ms. Arntz pointed out the removal of the Financial Policies as they are reviewed and updated more frequently than the Council Handbook, making the text out of date; therefore, a link to the adopted policies is included that may be updated from time to time. She concluded that if the Handbook is adopted, staff will update the Meetings and Agendas page on the website for the public's awareness.

Brief discussion on information relevant to city government.

Mr. Laven requested that, under Chapter 3, Council Roles, At-large Council Member, that the language be removed related to "organizing the annual Council retreat". Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Council Handbook as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

9. **Reports of City Council Members**

Mr. Laven stated that he attended the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities last week and provided a report from the conference.

10. **Miscellaneous Business**

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

Work Session, August 4, 2025, 6 p.m., Minnesota River Room

Regular Council Meeting, August 11, 2025, 6 p.m., Mankato Room (with EDA to follow if needed)

Regular Council Meeting, August 25, 2025, 6 p.m., Mankato Room (with Work Session to follow)

11. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to adjourn. With all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Minutes Approved.

Mayor Massad

ATTEST:

Renae Kopischke
City Clerk