



MINUTES

Mankato City Council
Regular Meeting
November 10, 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, Dennis Dieken, Michael McLaughlin, and Mayor Najwa Massad.

Staff Present: City Manager Susan Arntz, Administrative Services Director Parker Skophammer, Interim Director of Public Works Karl Keel, Interim City Engineer Cory Bienfang, Community Development Director Mark Konz, 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. Laven seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 27, 2025, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Appearances, Recognition, and Proclamations

Recognition of 2025 Photo Contest Winners

5. Public Open Forum (15 Minutes)

No one spoke.

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.

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

- A. Motion awarding Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) public service grants.
- B. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Development Agreement with Trellis Co. for a supportive housing project.
- C. Resolution to apply for Airport Tower Construction Funds through the 2026 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act FAA Contract Tower Competitive Grant Program.
- D. Resolution considering bids on Capital Improvement Project 11190; 2025-2026 Facilities Snow Removal.
- E. Resolutions establishing 2026 rates for Special Services District Parking and Maintenance.
- F. Resolution authorizing application for the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program.
- G. Resolution accepting the 2025 Minnesota Chiefs of Police Foundation Community Partnership Grant.
- H. Resolution approving an amendment to the Black and Veatch contract for 2026 services for the Water Resource and Recovery Project.

7. **Planning Commission**

- A. Mr. Konz stated that APX Construction is seeking a conditional use permit and a certificate of design compliance to allow for the operation of an indoor playground and sports courts facility in the B-3, Highway Commercial and Overlay zoning district located at 1740 Premier Drive. The property consists of 4.83 acres and has been platted as Lot 5, Block 2 of Venstar Subdivision, Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota. He indicated

that the business, Endless Adventures, intends to operate an indoor playground for children ages 0–15 with proposed hours of operation being from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., seven days per week. He noted that memberships can be purchased, or customers can pay hourly for the use of the space.

Mr. Konz explained that the building is approximately 20,000 square feet and floor plans show proposed indoor playground equipment, a basketball court, a soccer field, separate playroom for infants and toddlers, as well as two party rooms available for rental. He mentioned that there is a second-floor mezzanine area with a future conference room space.

Mr. Konz referenced the site which provides a large parking area that also accommodates bus loading and unloading. He commented that the site is required to have parking to accommodate 43 stalls; 79 stalls have been provided. He added that a 6' berm is being installed to buffer the property from the adjacent residential neighborhood, as well as a 6-foot fence to the west and north with landscaping planned to additionally screen the parking lot and berm.

Mr. Konz stated that during the Planning Commission review of the project, the adjacent property owners addressed the need to monitor the intersection of Augusta Drive and Premier Drive due to traffic volumes. He noted that a condition was added requiring the applicant to be a cost participant for future improvements on the corridor if justified within a three-year window. He touched on the proposed exterior elevations and materials.

Mr. Laven inquired whether the site would allow for any expansion. Mr. Konz replied, yes.

Mr. Dieken moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Resolution approving a Conditional Use Permit to allow an indoor playground and sports center in the B-3, Highway Business District and a Certificate of Design Compliance for the construction of a new structure in the Highway Gateway Overlay District (1740 Premier Drive). The motion carried unanimously.

8. **Public Hearings**

- A. Mr. Bienfang stated that this was the final assessment hearing for Capital Improvement Project 11084, Victory Drive Signal and Lighting Improvements. He indicated that the preliminary assessment hearing was on November 12, 2024, and there were no objections; thus, the project was ordered, and the preliminary assessment roll was adopted. He noted that when comparing the final roll with the preliminary roll, the following was concluded:

- Properties with only a streetlight assessment have a final assessment matching the preliminary roll. The streetlight assessment was calculated based on the measured frontage multiplied by the approved commercial lighting rate per front foot of frontage.
- Properties with a traffic signal assessment have a final assessment less than the preliminary roll. The decrease is due to unused construction contingencies and decreased construction engineering costs.

Mr. Bienfang explained the process and commented that for assessments not paid in full, the assessment amount will be certified to Blue Earth County for collection with property taxes over a ten- or fifteen-year period with an annual interest rate of 4.5%. He explained deferrals and the payment process. He added that property owners were also informed of their right and the process for appealing their proposed special assessment. He stated that in accordance with State Statute, if property owners have any objection to the proposed assessment on their property, they must either present a written objection, signed by an owner, and file with the City Clerk, and/or appear at the hearing and personally object to the proposed assessment before the council. He further summarized the objection process, and noted that to date, the City Clerk has received no letters of objection from any property owners.

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

Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Dieken seconded a motion to approve the Resolution adopting Final Assessments on Capital Improvement Project 11084; Victory Drive Signal and Lighting Improvements Project. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Mr. Konz reported that on December 13, 2023, the Council authorized the [Hilltop Planning Area Study](#) to evaluate land use transitions, neighborhood traffic concerns, and long-term preservation strategies for the area bounded by Madison Avenue, Victory Drive, Main Street, and the Crocus Street bluff line. He stated that the study responds to pressures from institutional expansion, commercial redevelopment, and transportation challenges that affect the stability and character of Hilltop neighborhoods.

Mr. Konz indicated that through a robust community engagement process—including five public meetings, online participation, and collaboration with institutional and commercial stakeholders, residents identified key priorities: pedestrian safety, traffic-calming, preservation of affordable housing, neighborhood reinvestment, and balancing institutional growth with livability.

Mr. Konz commented that the transportation analysis confirmed concerns about cut-through traffic, speeding, and crash history along major corridors, while also highlighting opportunities for pedestrian system improvements and safer multi-modal connectivity. He added that the land use review emphasized the importance of managing institutional growth under the Institutional Overlay District framework, addressing redevelopment pressures along Madison Avenue, and preserving housing stock critical to neighborhood affordability.

Mr. Konz summarized the recommended strategies for implementation and integration into the City's Capital Improvement Plan as follows:

- Prioritize Corridor Safety Improvements on Dane/Dickinson, Marsh, Long, and Belle Avenue, with emphasis on pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, and traffic-calming.
- Integrate traffic-calming and pedestrian safety features into the Long Street reconstruction and future capital projects.
- Expand the Pedestrian and Bicycle Network, filling sidewalk gaps, upgrading crosswalks, and improving Safe Routes to Schools.
- Preserve and Rehabilitate Housing Stock, targeting reinvestment dollars to maintain affordability and prevent displacement.
- Evaluate parking alternatives rather than remove affordable homes for institutional or commercial needs.
- Invest in Parks and Multi-Generational Amenities to enhance community livability, including potential splash pad installation and pet-friendly facilities.
- Advance Climate Action Goals by supporting multi-modal systems, EV charging infrastructure, and sustainable neighborhood design.
- Coordinate with Institutional Campus Plans to ensure growth is transparent, cooperative, and consistent with neighborhood stability. By balancing growth pressures with neighborhood preservation, the Hilltop Planning Area Study provides a roadmap for maintaining livability, safety, and affordability while accommodating institutional and commercial needs in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Ms. Hatanpa asked about the plan for implementing some of the items moving forward.

Ms. Arntz referenced the Long Street project being pushed back to allow for further studies to take place on the traffic in the area.

Mr. McLaughlin inquired about the potential installation of a sidewalk along Belle Avenue to help with the pedestrian activity.

Mr. Konz mentioned the stop signs that were placed at the request of a resident and how they have made a difference. He commented on other connections that could occur with the sidewalks in the area.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that sidewalks should be placed so that the concrete is not right up to the curb and that there is an allowance for the boulevard.

Brief discussion on the impacts of roundabouts and if they would be an appropriate option for the traffic flow, as well as affordable housing and parking in the area.

Mayor Massad opened the public hearing.

Pete Steiner, 1019 East Mulberry Street, thanked staff and noted that he attended the meetings. He asked that further restrictions be placed on surface parking. He mentioned bumper-to-bumper parking on a few streets in the area. He stated that kids at Marsh and Dane are at the mercy of trying to cross and commented on a roundabout at Marsh and Dane. He was happy that Main Street was being resurfaced; however, he expressed a concern about people then using Marsh Street.

Donna Rose, Marsh Street, wondered when the section of Dane from Madison to Marsh was zoned as it is today. Mr. Konz responded that a couple were rezoned dating back to the mid to the late 90s, with the most recent being done with the proposal in 2023 at Dane and Madison. Ms. Rose commented on the houses that appeared vacant. Mr. Konz stated that the houses were not rezoned at that time.

Mayor Massad closed the public hearing.

Mr. McLaughlin moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Resolution adopting the Hilltop Planning Study. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Mr. Konz indicated that APX Construction Group has submitted an application for review of the preliminary plat for the proposed Evenson Subdivision. He stated that the request also includes annexation of the subject property into the City of Mankato and a rezoning of the parcel from T, Transition, to B-3, Highway Business. He noted that the property is located at 901 South Victory Drive and is legally described as the east half of the northwest quarter of Section 21, Township 108 North, Range 26 West, lying south of Highway 83 and east of Highway 22, excluding Stanley Subdivision in Blue Earth County (R43.09.21.177.001).

Mr. Konz reviewed the preliminary plat for Evenson Subdivision, which proposes a one-lot, one-block subdivision encompassing approximately 3.89 acres. He commented that although the city's Sidewalk and Trail Plan does not currently identify a sidewalk along this section of Stadium Road or this side of Victory Drive, the proposed future use of the property as a 72-unit residential development supports the need for pedestrian connectivity to the sidewalk network and to connect to transit.

Mr. Konz mentioned that no new public streets or infrastructure are proposed within the plat and site access will be provided from the existing driveway connection on South Victory Drive, which will serve both the proposed development and the property immediately to the south through a shared access easement. He stated that a Mutual Driveway Easement has been prepared that extends 15 feet onto each property for a total easement width of 30 feet. He added that the existing driveway access on Stadium Road at the north end of the parcel will be removed, and no vehicular access will be permitted from that roadway.

Mr. Konz stated that the traffic study estimates that the development will generate approximately 30 vehicle trips during the morning peak hour (7 entering and 23 exiting), 37 trips during the evening peak hour (23 entering and 14 exiting), for a total of 447 trips per day, which equates to roughly one additional trip every two minutes during peak periods. He noted that the operational analysis concludes that the roadway network will function acceptably under existing, 2027 no-build, and 2027 build conditions. He added that the crash history analysis identified no safety concerns, and the Victory Drive intersection is projected to operate adequately with single-lane approaches.

Mr. Konz touched on the utility easements shown along the north, south, and east property boundaries, the stormwater pond proposed in the northwest corner of the site, as well as the two wetland areas that are present on the property, one on the west and one on the east side.

Mr. Konz referred to the concept plan submitted with the application that depicts a grouped housing project consisting of two multifamily apartment buildings, each containing 36 dwelling units for a total of 72 units. He noted that the development of the site will require approval of both a Conditional Use Permit and a Certificate of Design Compliance with the details of building design, internal amenities, materials, and landscaping will be reviewed as part of those subsequent approvals.

Ms. Hatanpa asked where the sidewalk would be located. Mr. Konz stated that the design is being further reviewed to determine the best location. He stated that, ideally, you would connect to the west and be able to walk to the bus stops located at Tanager and Stadium and commented that as part of the submittal they were asked to resubmit the route.

Ms. Hatanpa moved and Mr. Dieken seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance rezoning the subject parcel from T, Transition, to B-3, Highway Business; Motion approving the Preliminary Plat of Evenson Subdivision; and Resolution approving the annexation of the property (905 & 909 South Victory Drive). The motion carried unanimously.

9. **Council Business**

- A. Mr. Keel reported that a construction contract for the Water Resource and Recovery Disinfection and Digester project was awarded to Rice Lake Construction Group on May 13, 2024, and work began shortly thereafter and is anticipated to be completed by mid-2027. He commented that as of the beginning of September 2025, approximately 1/3 of the construction contract has been completed (\$28,390,528 of \$83,741,911).

Mr. Keel noted that as of September 1, 13 change orders have been approved for a net total of \$19,310, which equates to 0.02% of the original contract amount. He mentioned that the City Code allows the City Manager to approve change orders up to 5% of the original contract amount (\$4,186,130) with a condition that such change orders be reported to the City Council.

Mr. Keel summarized the total project cost, including construction, contingencies and engineering, as just under \$94 million. He stated that the initial project costs are proposed to be financed with a loan from the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) which will be repaid with a combination of State/Federal grants (approx. 50%) and local utility funds (approx. 50%). He referred to the Disinfection and Digestion cost graph, and stated that the project is on schedule and within budget.

Mr. McLaughlin moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the change orders on the Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF) Disinfection and Digester Project. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Mr. Skophammer presented the Third Quarter Financial Report.

10. **Reports and Miscellaneous Business**

Mr. Dieken reported on a few of the highlights from the InterCity Leadership Visit to Wichita, Kansas.

Mr. McLaughlin noted Veterans Day on November 11 and mentioned some of the programs in the area, including a ceremony that is being held by District 77 that is open to the public. He commented on the 250th anniversary of the US Marine Corps.

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Mankato Regional Airport Open House, November 18, 2025, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Regular Council Meeting, November 24, 2025, 6 p.m., Mankato Room
(with Work Session to follow)

Public Budget Hearing, December 1, 2025, 6 p.m., Mankato Room

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 7:36 p.m.

Minutes Approved.

Mayor Massad

ATTEST:

Renae Kopischke
City Clerk