



MINUTES

Mankato City Council
Regular Meeting
January 12, 2026 - 6 p.m.
Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center
(Banquet Hall West)

1. Call Meeting to Order

Roll Call

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

Staff Present: Acting City Manager Parker Skophammer, Community Development Director Mark Konz, City Engineer Cory Bienfang, Director of Public Safety Jeremy Clifton, City Attorney Pam Whitmore, and City Clerk Renae Kopischke.

Reading of Land Acknowledgement

Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Melby-Kelley 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 Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 8, 2025, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Appearances, Recognition, and Proclamations

Presentation of Citizen Life Saving Award to Jeremy Hanel.

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

Mayor Massad moved and Mr. Laven seconded a motion to extend the public open forum to 30 minutes for this meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Jameel Haque, speaking in his role as a historian, referenced the similarities to Hitler/Germany and the actions with ICE. He commented on the danger with them being in the community and felt that the city needed to do better. He referenced demands provided by community members. He mentioned that he is considering running for Mayor. He stated that no violence is justified with the murder of Renee Good.

Natalia Orocio, stated that the Hispanic community in Mankato lives in fear. She mentioned that Mankato Public Safety recently released a statement telling people to contact 911 if a suspicious masked person who does not identify themselves approaches them. She mentioned how Minneapolis closed schools and continued classes online and city property has been banned from being used by ICE for any kind of enforcement. She requested the Council act and for the city to show that it cares about its people. She referred to examples that have been provided that can be followed. She felt that the Council had the resources, action, and power to stand up. She stated what has become reality affects everyone.

Chris Schoenstedt, mentioned how order was to take place during the meeting, but there was no order out on the streets. He commented on the use of AI surveillance cameras and how they are being used. He mentioned that people were being abducted by federal agents this past weekend. He asked that the Council use the full extent of their powers to protect residents. He indicated that they would not keep order in the meeting space if the Council doesn't keep order out in the community. He referred to an incident that occurred with ICE and how members of the community had been pepper sprayed. He wanted action taken on the policy suggestions that were provided to the Council.

Ava Corey-Gruenes, mentioned she was maced and referred to the video clip on the Greater Mankato ICE watch Facebook page. She stated the ice agents have been terrorizing the community throughout the weekend. She noted how people were being watched, taken, and were scared. She commented that the police didn't care as she asked a question and was refused an answer. She stated that it is clear that the police do not protect us. She asked Council members to switch the focus of the meeting to address proposals for protecting residents from ICE and referred to the open meeting law and how she would cover the fine.

Jaklyn Olson, stated she is a Mankato resident who is proud of the city. She commented on concerns related to ICE enforcement in the city and how they have invoked fear in the community. She mentioned how the city is publicly committed to being a welcoming community, emphasizing respect, dignity, accountability and collaboration. She stated that public safety describes their role as prevention focused, community oriented, and grounded in trust. She referenced the use of the SARA model and how it works. She mentioned how ICE was affecting the community and urged the city to state its position. She asked several questions and wondered how the SARA model was being used, including what issues have been identified and what was being implemented.

Jacob Bases, stated he prided himself on trying to understand the perspectives of those around him. He noted how a lot of people were having a difficult time trying to understand the presence of ICE in the city and how parents were unsure if their kids were safe at school, businesses are locking doors, and citizens are afraid to leave their homes. He commented on out-of-state federal agents descending on the community, causing fear and creating a divide. He stated that the behavior is lawless and disrespectful. He asked that, as leaders, the Council hold the agents to the highest letter of the law. He indicated that he could not adequately communicate what his neighbors felt and the depth of the issue, but only that he had witnessed it. He asked that human rights be considered in the analysis of the issue and that the Council hold on to their humanity and drop the bi-partisan framework.

Sara Hansen, reiterated what had already been said. She commented on public safety messages on social media and how clearly they stated that they would not be intervening with federal immigration enforcement. She mentioned the message that was read by the Mayor at the start of the meeting. She touched on how immigrants are our neighbors and friends and important to the community. She commented on things that were happening throughout the state and felt that everything was on the next level. She summarized footage and what occurred in Minneapolis at schools. She thanked the public safety team; however, she felt that it was unclear what public safety could do against ICE. She asked the Council to consider their options.

David Mesta, COPAL organizer, stated he was deeply alarmed by the violence. He mentioned how ICE was at their location and how scared people were. He commented on an incident that occurred at Walmart. He stated that their acts are unacceptable. He noted that ICE does not make neighborhoods safe but puts everyone at risk. He invited the council and community members to attend immigrant defense network training on January 20. He requested that the council act and pass resolutions creating policy and transparency.

Mary Murray, commented on how she had lived in Florida and how she was on the planning commission, and they had to be escorted to and from meetings by law enforcement. She felt that council's focus should be on individuals and their safety. She requested that no areas be used in Mankato for ICE enforcement. She indicated that all activities must be backed by judicial warrants, and any entry without one should be followed up on and charged accordingly. She commented on how agents must have agency identification, including badge number, and how they should not be allowed to have their faces covered. She mentioned written communications with sister cities and Blue Earth County asking for their cooperation and support. She requested a know your rights campaign conducted by the city.

Jonah Jepsen, reiterated what everyone had previously stated. He commented that he had never felt unsafe on the streets until the federal agents arrived, and in his opinion, they were a gang. He felt that excessive force had been used as someone was maced with no warning. He would hope that if the police were to stop someone who was walking in the street, they would just request that they step onto the sidewalk. He mentioned other cities where ICE had been and asked if something could be done. He stated that he would donate the \$300 fine for violating the open meeting law.

Bob Johnson, stated that he wasn't planning to speak and wasn't even going to attend; however, on his way he witnessed the scene and noticed the female that was maced. He commented on the pain that he saw and the face of America as an idea and not the political boundaries that shift and change. He felt that we could make one another better and touched on an incident that occurred in his life and how his friend was killed. He mentioned how he felt today holding another human being that had been hurt to no fault of their own. He stated he would like to have the old America back.

Aaron DeVlaeminck, stated that he is lost and doesn't know what is happening to the country and what he can do. He commented on how he doesn't understand what he can do to help his friends and neighbors. He stated that he missed America.

Abby Dickhudt, stated that she was glad that everyone attended tonight and noted how much it shows that Mankato cares. She commented on the incident and how no wrong was done. She touched on safety and what it does not mean, and how Renee Good should still be alive. She commented on safety through community, and people coming together to create it. She mentioned words and music being shared to help make people feel safe. She felt that ICE was creating havoc that shouldn't happen in any community.

Francis Kelliher, asked that the city move forward and join the lawsuit that was brought forward by attorney Ellison today.

Petrice Hundsted, stated that it has been hard to watch what has been happening throughout the community as everyone is in danger. She asked that the Council do what they can do to help the community.

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

- A. Motion approving 2026 City Council committee assignments.
- B. Resolutions establishing regular times and locations of Council Meetings, and designating the official newspaper of the City of Mankato.
- C. Resolution approving application to conduct off-site gambling on February 13, 2026, for Community Charities of Minnesota at Kato Ballroom, 200 Chestnut Street.
- D. Resolution adopting negotiated changes to the Teamsters 320 (Public Works Operations) Contract for 2026-2027.
- E. Resolution adopting negotiated changes to the Teamsters 320 (Public Works Utilities) Contract for 2026-2027.
- F. Motion authorizing Request for Qualifications, approving the Selection Committee, and authorizing the release of a Request for Proposals for a Construction Manager at Risk for Capital Improvement Project 11212; the Vetter Stone Amphitheater Improvements.
- G. Resolution declaring surplus property and authorizing the City Manager to execute a donation to the All Seasons Arena Joint Powers Board.
- H. Motion approving a License to Encroach for 307 Mound Avenue.

- I. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an updated agreement with Lime Township for Planning Services.
- J. Resolution authorizing the release of a Request for Proposals and approving the Selection Committee for the Airport Tower Construction Manager at Risk.
- K. Resolution amending the 2026 Fee Schedule related to the Airport.
- L. Resolution to apply through the 2026 Airport Terminal Program (ATP) for Airport Tower Construction Funds.
- M. Resolution approving the 2026 Transit Asset Management Plan.
- N. Resolution authorizing the adoption of the Transit Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program.
- O. Resolution authorizing the purchase of a mobile command center and allocation of Public Safety Aid funds for purchase, refurbishment, and upgrades.
- P. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an amended agreement with Affordable Towing for Vehicle Towing Services.
- Q. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Blue Earth County (BEC) for Detox Transportation Services.
- R. Resolution approving an addendum to the agreement for services between the City of Mankato and Mankato Area Public Schools for School Resource Officer (SRO) Services.
- S. Report on project and Change Order 3 for Capital Improvement Project 10990; 2023 Sidewalks Project.
- T. Report on project, Contract Amendment and Change Order 4 for Capital Improvement Project 11188; Bassett Drive Extension (BCA) Project.
- U. Resolution approving the temporary construction easement for Phase I of the Trunk Highway 169 Project.
- V. Motion approving Change Order No. 2 to the 2024 Tree Trimming and Removal Contract.

- W. Resolution adopting the Minnesota River - Mankato Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.
- X. Resolution accepting the Source Water Protection Grant from the Minnesota Department of Health.
- Y. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with HRGreen to provide professional engineering services for a 2026 Reverse Osmosis Project.
- Z. Resolution receiving feasibility report, ordering improvement, preparation of plans and specifications, and ordering advertisement for bids for Capital Improvement Project 11207; Hiniker Pond Park Parking Lot.
- AA. Set January 26, 2026, as the date of public hearing to review an ordinance amending Chapter 2 of Mankato City Code related to the adoption of an ordinance addressing requests for reasonable accommodations.
- BB. Resolutions ordering preparation of a feasibility report and setting February 9, 2026, as the date of public hearing for Capital Improvement Project 11141; Third Avenue (CSAH 5).
- CC. Resolutions ordering preparation of a feasibility report and setting February 9, 2026, as the date of public hearing for Capital Improvement Project 11214; Range Street.
- DD. Set February 9, 2026, as the date of public hearing to review a variance from Chapter 10, Article VIII, Division 1, Sec.10-1059 of the Mankato City Code to increase the number of units in a building from 4 to 5 in the Shoreland District (Lots 17-22 Block 5 Groh Farm Subdivision); by request of KJ2 Properties.
- EE. Set February 9, 2026, as the date of public hearing to review a variance request from Chapter 10, Article VII, Division 3, Sec.10-1005 of the Mankato City Code to decrease the transitional yard setback from thirty (30) feet to six (6) feet in the M-1, Light Industrial, zoning district (120 Pine Street and 1700 3rd Avenue); by request of Ron Goodrich.
- FF. Set February 9, 2026, as the date of public hearing to review a variance from Chapter 10, Article X, Division 2, Sec.10-1500 (e) of the Mankato City Code to reduce the required setback from a wetland from 16.5 feet to 5 feet for the purpose of constructing a sidewalk (905 South Victory Drive); by request of APX.

- GG. Set February 9, 2026, as the date of public hearing to review an amendment to Chapter 10-1246 of Mankato City Code related to floodplain ordinance maps and adoption dates.

7. **Public Hearings**

Mr. McLaughlin moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to move the public hearing (Item 7.A.) to a future meeting so that the rest of the meeting could be used to discuss ICE-related concerns. The motion carried unanimously.

- A. Public Improvement Hearing and Resolution receiving feasibility report, ordering improvements, preparation of plans and specifications, and ordering advertisement of bids for Capital Improvement Project 11206; Hiniker Parkway.

8. **Reports and Miscellaneous Business**

Discussion centered on questions related to ICE activity in Mankato and public safety.

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

Regular Council Meeting, January 26, 2026, 6 p.m., Council Chambers (with Work Session to follow)

Work Session, February 2, 2026, 6 p.m., Minnesota River Room

Regular Council Meeting, February 9, 2026, 6 p.m., Council Chambers (with EDA to follow if needed)

9. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Mettler moved and Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded a motion to adjourn. With all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Minutes Approved.

Mayor Massad

ATTEST:

Renae Kopischke
City Clerk