



MINUTES

**Mankato City Council
Regular Meeting
June 22, 2026 - 6 p.m.
IGC - Council Chambers**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Roll Call

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

Staff Present: City Manager Susan Arntz, Administrative Services Director Parker Skophammer, Community Development Director Mark Konz, City Engineer Cory Bienfang, and City Clerk Renae Kopischke.

Pledge of Allegiance

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Mayor Massad noted the addition of item 6.E. under Council Business. Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the agenda as amended. 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 June 8, 2026, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Steve Brock stated he has been reading about data centers all over the country and how residents are opposed, and he is concerned about them as well. He mentioned the amount of resources they consume in addition to the noise that they produce. He hoped that the city wouldn't approve any data centers.

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. McLaughlin pulled items A. and I. Ms. Hatanpa moved and Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as amended. With all members voting in favor, the motion carried.

- A. Resolution receiving feasibility report, ordering improvements, preparation of plans and specifications, and ordering advertisements for bids for Capital Improvement Project 11266; 2026 Victory Drive and Adams Street Signal and Striping Improvements.

Mr. McLaughlin inquired whether a turn lane would be installed in the eastbound lane (turning to Circle K). Mr. Bienfang replied no and commented on the purpose being for better signal function.

Ms. Hatanpa moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Resolution receiving feasibility report, ordering improvements, preparation of plans and specifications, and ordering advertisements for bids for Capital Improvement Project 11266; 2026 Victory Drive and Adams Street Signal and Striping Improvements. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Resolution authorizing the submission of application for the Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- C. Resolution considering bids for the Membrane Treatment System (Reverse Osmosis Pilot) Project.
- D. Resolution to approve Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Grant Funding Assistance for Capital Improvement Project 11200; Land of Memories Park.
- E. Resolution to approve the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the Taxiway A/D/E Intersection Reconstruction and Airfield Marking Enhancement Project.
- F. Resolution adopting the Mankato Transit System Procurement Policy 2026 Update.
- G. Resolution accepting State of Minnesota Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant.

- H. Resolution authorizing the Mankato Department of Public Safety to apply for the Spark Good Local Partnership Grant Program.
- I. Resolution authorizing the Mankato Department of Public Safety to apply for the Firearms Storage Grants – Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if public safety could provide clarification on the firearm storage grant. Mr. Clifton responded that eligible expenses may include firearm lockers, safes, storage boxes, gun racks, electronic keypads for securing firearm storage rooms, barcode scanners, and other equipment or administrative costs directly related to the secure storage and management of firearms collected pursuant to an Extreme Risk Protection Order.

Mr. McLaughlin moved and Ms. Hatanpa seconded a motion to approve the Resolution authorizing the Mankato Department of Public Safety to apply for the Firearms Storage Grants – Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program. The motion carried unanimously.

- J. Set July 13, 2026, as the date of hearing for a variance from Chapter 10, Article II, Division 8, Sec.10-271 of the Mankato City Code to decrease the corner side yard setback from ten feet to five feet, four inches in the O-R, Office Residential District to construct a deck (502 North 2nd Street); by request of Generation Properties.

6. **Council Business**

- A. Ms. Arntz presented the Resolution petitioning the District Court for appointments to the City of Mankato's Charter Commission pursuant to Minn. Stat. 410.05; reappointment of Trudy Kunkel and Mike Lagerquist.

Ms. Hatanpa moved and Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded a motion to approve the Resolution petitioning District Court for appointments to the City of Mankato's Charter Commission pursuant to Minn. Stat. 410.05. The motion carried six to one with Mr. Mettler recusing.

- B. Ms. Arntz reported that the funding necessary for design and engineering of the airport tower has been received and was covered by a 100% federally funded grant. She indicated that on June 1, 2026, the airport tower design and engineering team provided the Issue for Bid/Permit documents finalizing the tower design and the next steps include the Construction Manager at Risk soliciting bids for the construction project.

Ms. Arntz explained that construction is estimated to cost \$27.7 Million based on the final plans and includes construction administration, controller equipment, airfield lighting regulators, furniture, reimbursable agreement with the FAA, independent cost estimates, and city administration costs. She summarized the \$9.765 million in funding sources that the city has been awarded for construction.

Ms. Arntz noted that staff have been working with the local FAA District Office to pursue additional funding opportunities following the Federal Contract Tower (FCT) grant announcement. She stated that the FAA has encouraged the city to apply for the remaining Airport Infrastructure Grant funds through its Discretionary Program, using unobligated funding from fiscal years 2022 and 2023. She explained that due to Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding, projects awarded in 2026 are eligible for a 95% federal cost share, compared to the standard 90% beginning in federal fiscal year 2027. Furthermore, she added that to apply for both the FCT grant and discretionary funding, the FAA requires actual bid amounts, making it necessary for the city to solicit bids before a complete funding package is in place.

Ms. Arntz explained that advertising for bids would not commit the city to construction or require the use of local funds. Instead, bids would be held through May 1, 2027, while staff seek additional funding, with no contract award occurring until funding is secured and the Council authorizes the project. She commented that although this approach differs from the city's typical practice, it is required by the FAA's grant process and has been determined to be a reasonable path forward in consultation with the City Attorney and project consultants. She mentioned that given increasing airport activity and documented safety concerns identified during the air traffic control tower study, staff believe delaying the project presents additional risk. She stated that the Council will continue to receive updates on funding, future grant acceptance, and authorization of construction once an acceptable funding strategy has been established.

Mr. Dieken moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Resolutions authorizing the City Manager and Construction Manager at Risk to solicit bids for the construction of an Air Traffic Control Tower at the Mankato Regional Airport and submitting applications for the current Federal Funding Grant Obligation and future FAA Discretionary Grant Funding. The motion carried unanimously.

- C. Ms. Arntz reported that at the June 8 City Council Meeting, the City Council discussed the status of the current emergency ordinance, and as a result of the discussion, a new emergency ordinance has been created. She noted that staff are planning a joint meeting with the Public Safety Advisory Committee and the City Council for Tuesday, July 28, 2026, to further discuss the matter.

Ms. Arntz stated that if adopted, the ordinance would commence at 12:01 a.m. on June 25, 2026, and expire on the 61st day following the effective date, or August 24, 2026.

Mr. McLaughlin moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Emergency Ordinance continuing to clarify requirements for Law Enforcement Agencies and Officers within the city. The motion carried unanimously.

- D. Ms. Arntz indicated that on May 26, the Council reviewed information and discussed interest in moving forward an ordinance for the keeping of chickens in the city. She stated that a review of the city's Animal Ordinance has been done, and a proposed Ordinance has been drafted that updates the city's animal regulations by expanding and clarifying definitions, restricting non-domesticated animals, and establishing rules for keeping backyard chickens. She commented that key changes include:
- Expanding the definition of "animal" to include all non-human species while clarifying that non-domesticated animals are treated separately.
 - Adding new definitions related to the keeping of chickens and improving the definition of non-domesticated animals.
 - Prohibiting the sale of non-domesticated animals within city limits, with exceptions for certain small pets, licensed research institutions and veterinary hospitals, service animals, and animals approved as a disability accommodation.
 - Retaining existing licensing requirements for keeping animals other than dogs, cats, or chickens in zoos, museums, or educational facilities.
 - Allowing residents in single-family residential zones to keep up to four hens with roosters and cockfighting being prohibited.
 - Permitting renters in single-family homes to keep chickens with the property owner's consent.
 - Requiring chickens to be housed in a permitted coop or run.
 - Establishing standards for chicken enclosures, including placement in the rear yard, at least 10 feet from property lines, a maximum coop size of 120 square feet, and a maximum run size of 20 square feet per hen.

Ms. Arntz commented that as discussed in May, failure to comply with this new ordinance would be considered a violation of the Code and is a misdemeanor under state law. She noted that if adopted, the new ordinance would be subject to enforcement of administrative citations and subject to civil fines pursuant to the Administrative Procedure set forth in Chapter 2, Article III, of the City Code and nuisance abatement actions may be pursued in Civil District Court, similar to other nuisance violations.

Ms. Arntz concluded that if the Council finds the draft acceptable, staff recommend setting July 13, 2026, as the date for hearing on the proposed ordinance.

Brief discussion on the ordinance.

Mr. Laven moved and Ms. Hatanpa seconded a motion to set July 13, 2026, as the date of the public hearing for the Ordinance amending Mankato City Code Chapter 4 pertaining to the Keeping of Chickens in Residential Areas. The motion carried unanimously.

- E. Mr. Arntz reported on an Interim Ordinance re a Moratorium on Data Centers. She stated that, over the past few weeks, staff have been discussing having a work session in July re the consideration of an interim ordinance imposing a moratorium on Data Centers. She indicated that although the city has not received any applications, there have been some recent inquiries regarding regulations; thus, as a result, the need was discussed to accelerate the timing.

Ms. Arntz referred to the draft that was provided to the Council and added that staff believed it should be amended to add language for industrial users that consume large resources to the study. She stated that if the Council concurs, the draft would be amended to include another definition to accommodate those uses into the study.

Mr. Laven made a motion to include the additional language re industrial users, and to set July 13, 2026, as the date of the public hearing to consider an Interim Ordinance authorizing a study and imposing a Moratorium on Data Centers. Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

11. **Reports and Miscellaneous Business**

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

Regular Council Meeting, July 13, 2026, 6 p.m., Council Chambers (with EDA and/or Work Session to follow)

Regular Council Meeting, July 27, 2026, 6 p.m., Council Chambers (with Work Session to follow)

Mr. Dieken provided a report from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Regional Meeting that he attended with the City Manager.

Ms. Hatanpa mentioned community concerns related to the North Star Bridge and deterrents that were installed. Ms. Arntz touched on work that was recently done by MnDOT that involved adding simple geometric triangular deterrents that are not sharp or intended to cause harm under the bridge. She explained that the purpose is to prevent the creation of makeshift shelters in areas where fires have previously occurred, as even small fires pose a significant risk to the bridge's bearing pad assemblies. She added that damage to the components can compromise the bridge's ability to expand and contract properly, potentially leading to severe structural issues.

Mr. Laven noted that he would be attending the League of Minnesota Cities Conference from Wednesday, June 24 through Friday, June 26.

12. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Laven moved and Ms. Hatanpa seconded a motion to adjourn. With all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Minutes Approved.

Mayor Massad

ATTEST:

Renae Kopischke
City Clerk