



MINUTES

**Mankato City Council
Regular Meeting
August 10, 2026 - 6 p.m.
IGC - Council Chambers**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Roll Call

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

Members Excused: Michael McLaughlin.

Staff Present: City Manager Susan Arntz, Administrative Services Director Parker Skophammer, Community Development Director Mark Konz, Building Official Tom Krause, and City Clerk Renae Kopischke.

Pledge of Allegiance

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Item 5.P. Resolution to apply for additional awarded Airport Traffic Control Tower Construction Funds under the Federal Contract Tower Program added. Mr. Mettler moved and Ms. Hatanpa 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 July 27, 2026, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Dieken seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Emergency Meeting of July 30, 2026, as written. The motion carried unanimously.

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

No one spoke.

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. Dieken moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as written (with the addition of item 5.P. as requested under agenda approval). With all members voting in favor, the motion carried.

- A. Motion approving Proclamation designating August 21, 2026, as Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness and Prevention Day in the City of Mankato.
- B. Motion approving Proclamation designating August 31, 2026, as International Overdose Awareness Day in the City of Mankato.
- C. Resolution adopting negotiated changes to the 2027-2028 LELS (Police Officer) Labor Agreement.
- D. Resolution accepting the Fiscal Year 2025 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Award.
- E. Resolutions approving the Final Plat of Mankato Clinic Fifth Addition, amending the Planned Unit Development to allow for a structure expansion, and for a Certificate of Design Compliance for a property located in the Highway Gateway Overlay District (1411 Premier Drive); by request of the Mankato Surgery Center.
- F. Resolution approving a Certificate of Design Compliance for a new, approximately 9,360 square foot structure to be located in the Highway Gateway Overlay District (184 Saint Andrews Drive); by request of Kohlmeyer Hagen Law.
- G. Set August 24, 2026, as the date of the public hearing for an ordinance authorizing the conveyance of real property at 116 E. Walnut Street.
- H. Resolution amending the Manual of Assessments Standards for the City of Mankato regarding homestead properties and benefit appraisals.

- I. Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an Intent to Cost Participate Agreement with Blue Earth County for the development and design of Industrial Road and Lime Valley Road (CSAH 26) from the Union Pacific railroad tracks to North Riverfront Drive.
- J. Resolution considering bids on Capital Improvement Project 11159; Fire Station #3 HVAC and Restroom Remodel.
- K. Set September 28, 2026, as date of public hearing for Capital Improvement Project 11189; TH 169 Revitalization Project.
- L. Resolution receiving feasibility report, ordering improvement, preparation of plans and specifications, and ordering advertisement for bids for Capital Improvement Project 11231; Tourtellotte Pickleball Court Reconstruction project.
- M. Resolution considering bids on Capital Improvement Project 11236; 2026 Rosewood Pond Outlet Improvements.
- N. Resolution ordering preparation of feasibility report for Capital Improvement Project 11215; Union Pacific Railroad and Sibley Parkway.
- O. Motion to release the Request for Proposals for the 2028 Transit Development Plan.
- P. Resolution to apply for additional awarded Airport Traffic Control Tower Construction Funds under the Federal Contract Tower Program.

6. **Planning Commission**

- A. Mr. Konz reported that the proposed Play Café at 321 North Riverfront Drive is intended to provide a welcoming environment where children can learn through play while parents experience connection, community, and an opportunity to recharge. He added that the café plans to create an intimate and welcoming atmosphere that encourages conversation, connection, and repeat visits, and parents can enjoy specialty coffee while keeping a close eye on their children in the play area, creating a stress-free environment unlike traditional coffee shops. He stated that the café will serve coffee and a variety of non-alcoholic beverages, including espresso, lattes, cappuccinos, hot chocolate, Italian sodas, refreshers, and teas. He noted that pastries and light snacks will also be offered, though none will be prepared onsite.

Mr. Konz indicated that in addition to the café and play area, the applicant plans to use the back room for play therapy, child counseling, family therapy, small group therapy, parenting workshops, developmental classes, and support

groups during stated business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. He mentioned that the room may also be rented for private parties during evenings and weekends.

Mr. Konz stated that the property is in the CBD-F zoning district, where restaurants and non-alcoholic drinking establishments are allowed as conditional uses. He explained that no exterior site changes are proposed, and interior improvements will include café seating for up to 14 people, food and beverage equipment, a children's play area, party room, bathroom, nursing room, and office.

Mr. Konz mentioned that parking will be provided through the shared parking areas managed by the 300 North Riverfront Association, which has consented to the use and confirmed adequate capacity. He stated that the project requires eight spaces, five for the café and three for the multi-use room. He commented that no signage was included in the application, so a condition of approval would require a sign permit before any signage is installed.

Mr. Laven moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Resolution approving a Conditional Use Permit to allow for a play café in the CBD-F, Central Business District Fringe (321 North Riverfront Drive); by request of Samantha Grems. The motion carried unanimously.

7. **Public Hearings**

- A. Mr. Konz stated that the applicants are seeking a variance from Chapter 10, Article II, Division 3, Sec. 10-97 of the Mankato City Code to decrease the front yard setback from 30 feet to 0 feet in the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District, to allow for the construction of an approximately 12-foot x 16-foot shed at 405 Ridgewood Street.

Mr. Konz explained that the lot is bordered on the north by an unimproved street; a water line is currently located within the right-of-way approximately 13.5 feet from the proposed location of the shed; and the rear yard and the eastern side yard consist largely of bluff areas.

Mr. Konz indicated that because the shed is proposed to be located over the property line and in the unimproved right-of-way, the applicant is also seeking a license to encroach. He noted that in May 2026, the applicant applied for a petition to vacate the unimproved street right-of-way area; however, the application was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant due to the presence of the existing water line and the future potential for the necessity to locate a stormwater line through the right of way area.

Mr. Konz touched on the practical difficulty analysis and commented that an administrative hearing regarding the variance was held on July 22, 2026, and no additional comments related to the proposal were submitted.

He further noted that an application for a license to encroach had been submitted and reviewed and is now being recommended for approval.

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 approving a variance from Chapter 10, Article II, Division 3, Sec.10-97 of the Mankato City Code to decrease the front yard setback from 30 feet to 0 feet in the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District, to allow for the construction of an accessory structure; and motion approving a license to encroach (405 Ridgewood Street); by request of Brian and Tricia Sarff. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Mr. Konz reported that WEB Construction is requesting a variance from Chapter 10, Article V, Division 6, Sec. 10-584 of the Mankato City Code to decrease the front yard setback from 15 feet to 12 feet and to decrease the corner side yard from seven feet, six inches to 0 feet in the B-1, Community Business District, to allow for an updated façade with new finishes and a new exit door at 1028 North Riverfront Drive. He noted that the use of the building will remain the same.

Mr. Konz stated that currently, there is no pedestrian connection on the north side of the building, which will also provide the required egress for the safety of the tenants. He noted that the applicant applied for a certificate of design compliance to ensure that the façade upgrades and repair will meet the guidelines for the Downtown Gateway District. He commented that it was determined through that review that what the applicant is requesting does honor the essential character of the district.

Mr. Konz noted that, in addition to the three-factor practical difficulty analysis, city staff made findings as part of the variance evaluation regarding the proposal's harmony with the intent of the ordinance and its consistency with the comprehensive plan.

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

Ms. Hatanpa moved and Ms. Melby-Kelley seconded a motion to approve the Resolution approving a variance from Chapter 10, Article V, Division 6, Sec. 10-584 of the Mankato City Code to decrease the front yard setback from the code required 15 feet to 12 feet and; to decrease the corner side yard from the code required 7 feet, 6 inches to 0 feet in the B-1, Community Business District, to allow for an updated façade with new finishes and a new exit door and related foundation (1028 North Riverfront Drive); by request of Dustin Lee.

The motion carried unanimously.

8. **Council Business**

- A. Ms. Arntz stated that the Council had a joint meeting with the Public Safety Advisory Committee on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, where the City Attorney provided information from recent court decisions that affect the efficacy of the city's current Emergency Ordinance Continuing to Clarify Requirements for Law Enforcement Agencies and Officers within the city. She mentioned that changes were made so that the city could not regulate an entity at a higher level (i.e., county/state/federal).

Ms. Arntz indicated that following the discussion, it was determined that the Emergency Ordinance should expire as it is set to do later in August. She noted that it was also decided that a Resolution that outlines the city's policies as it relates to Immigration Enforcement should be considered by the Council. She added that the attached resolution also refers Chapter 414 of the Mankato Police Policy to the Public Safety Advisory Committee for review for any modifications. She commented that the Public Safety Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet on September 22, 2026.

Ms. Arntz commented that the situation will continue to be monitored and, should conditions change, the Council could consider other actions in the future.

Mr. Mettler reiterated the fact that if another emergency ordinance or a permanent ordinance were to be put in place, the city could be sued.

Brief discussion on where the funds would come from to cover the costs in the event the city was sued. It was noted that it would be paid by the taxpayers as it would not be covered by insurance.

Mr. Mettler moved and Mr. Laven seconded a motion to approve the Resolution regarding City Policies on Immigration Enforcement. The motion carried unanimously.

- B. Ms. Arntz reported that the city has received numerous complaints at 312 Hubbell Avenue over the course of many years. She stated that in June 2024, with consent from the property owners, city staff inspected the exterior of the property and found and documented numerous code violations and nuisance conditions existing in the yard and on the porch of the dwelling on the property. The property owners voluntarily entered into an Abatement Agreement with the city in August 2024. The nuisance conditions existing in the yard and on the porch of the house were cleaned twice by the city pursuant to the Agreement with the property owners.

Ms. Arntz informed that recently on July 13, 2026, the property owners consented to multiple members of city staff to come onto the property and enter the dwelling to inspect both the exterior and the interior of the residence. She noted that the city had an interdisciplinary team present at the inspection and that photographs were taken and are provided as Exhibit B to the Resolution (see attached) and include renewed nuisance conditions in the yard and on the exterior porch of the property, including debris and junk vehicles in the yard, trash, clothes, household items, mattresses, old furniture, junk and construction materials. She indicated that the city's Building Official also found multiple building code violations and safety issues that pose an immediate danger to public health and safety, as described in the Order to Vacate (attached Exhibit A), which was delivered to the property owners and posted at the property. She commented that staff, while on site at the time of the inspection, were informed that the basement stairs were not structurally safe for anyone to go down into the basement and that, in addition to other unsafe and nuisance conditions, there was standing sewage in the basement.

Ms. Arntz stated that Minnesota Rule 1300.0180 authorizes city building officials to order the evacuation of any building, or portion thereof, when continued occupancy poses a danger to the life, health, or safety of its occupants. She explained that the rule also authorizes building officials, in an emergency, to order the disconnection of utility services to any building, structure, or system regulated by the code when necessary to eliminate a hazard to life or property. She noted that, after the Building Official identified violations involving the improper installation or maintenance of electrical equipment, he contacted Xcel Energy pursuant to this authority. Xcel Energy subsequently disconnected utility services to the residence due to multiple hazards involving its electrical and mechanical systems.

Ms. Arntz indicated that other interior conditions and violations were found on the property that pose an immediate risk to public health, welfare, and safety, including violations of the 2020 Minnesota State Fire Code, the 2020 Minnesota State Residential Code, and City of Mankato Ordinance Chapter 5, Article 1, Section 5-1, which included exposed and damaged electrical wiring and fixtures, improper use of extension cords and power strips, missing electrical cover plates, missing or broken windows, removed or inoperable plumbing and kitchen facilities, obstructed and inadequate means of egress, missing handrails and guardrails, a deteriorated access sidewalk, removal of required smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and hazardous accumulation of household belongings that creates a heavy fuel load and restricts access to plumbing and mechanical equipment. She added that as a result of the documented conditions, the Building Official determined that the conditions collectively create fire, electrical, sanitation, and egress/access conditions that create a danger to health and safety.

The conditions also represent health and safety hazards and expose the dwelling to the elements, as well as prevent compliance with minimum standards for heating, light, ventilation, sanitation, and maintenance; thus, as a result, the Building Official posted an Order to Vacate the property.

Ms. Arntz reported that following the Order to Vacate, the Council, on July 30, 2026, using Minn. Stat. §463.251, subd. 4 and Section 2.15 of the City of Mankato Charter, passed an Emergency Ordinance authorizing the emergency securing of the vacant building because it presents an immediate danger to the health and safety of persons in the community.

She stated that the recommendation is for an Order to Abate the property. She noted that the property owner will be given 20 days to respond to the Abatement Order. She indicated that Alastair Weston resides at 312 Hubbell Avenue and is acquiring the property through a Contract for Deed from his parents, Sandra and Norman and Weston. She summarized the requirements included in the draft abatement order.

Mr. Mettler asked for an opinion on whether it was felt that the structure was salvageable or fixable.

Tom Krause, Building Official, felt that the property was not salvageable based on the safety conditions and other hazards that were found during the inspection.

Ms. Hatanpa asked if the property was only occupied by the owner. Mr. Krause replied that it was believed that he was based on his comments. Ms. Hatanpa questioned if the property had a working bathroom and kitchen. Mr. Krause noted that there was no working kitchen as there were no appliances and the bathroom also lacked proper fixtures.

Ms. Hatanpa wondered if the occupant secured other housing. Mr. Konz noted that he was provided with resources and has since pursued other options.

Ms. Arntz stated that the city is monitoring the property, including water usage. She believed some effort was being made to remedy the exterior of the property.

Ms. Hatanpa inquired about the process and if, after 20 days, the work isn't completed, what would be the next steps? Ms. Arntz replied that if the property owner isn't able to address the issues to the satisfaction of the City, the order allows the City to go to Court, following the 20 days, to seek an order to abate the property, up to and including demolition. She touched on the two previous abatements that occurred at the property over the last few years and mentioned how the conditions were abated by the city with the costs assessed to the property owners.

Ms. Hatanpa moved and Mr. Mettler seconded a motion to approve the Resolution ordering the abatement of hazardous structure and conditions, code violations and public nuisances at 312 Hubbell Avenue in the City of Mankato.
The motion carried unanimously.

9. **Reports and Miscellaneous Business**

Ms. Arntz noted that the City Canvassing Board is scheduled to meet on Thursday, August 13, at 11 a.m. in the Council Chambers to Canvass the Primary Election results.

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Regular Council Meeting, August 24, 2026, 6 p.m., Council Chambers (with Work Session to follow)

Regular Council Meeting, September 14, 2026, 6 p.m., Council Chambers (with EDA and/or Work Session to follow)

10. **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 6:37 p.m.

Minutes Approved.

Mayor Massad

ATTEST:

Renae Kopischke
City Clerk