

Pursuant to the due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on May 1, 2023. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, asking everyone to join the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, City Administrator McCann, Finance Director Ryan, Public Works Director Arnold, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

Approval of Agenda

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote on the motion Steiner, Peterson, Whitlock, Oachs, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Pollinator Proclamation

WHEREAS, the monarch butterfly is an iconic North American species whose migration and metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly has captured the imagination of millions of Americans; and

WHEREAS, globally, pollinators are in decline due to pressures including habitat loss and climate change; and

WHEREAS, cities, towns, and counties have a critical role to play in helping preserve the monarch butterfly habitat; and

WHEREAS, North Mankato has made significant efforts to increase pollinator habitats through prairie restoration of Benson Park and Bluff Park and incorporating pollinator plants in community gardens, green spaces and natural yards; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor of North Mankato has taken the National Wildlife Federation's Mayor's Monarch Pledge to demonstrate North Mankato's commitment to creating habitat and educating citizens about how they can make a difference at home.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Scott Carlson, Mayor of the City of North Mankato, Minnesota, declare the City of North Mankato a

POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

In the City of North Mankato, and encourage all North Mankato residents to join me in this special effort.

Dated this 1st day of May 2023.

Approval of Council Minutes from April 17, 2023, Council Meeting.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson, to approve the Council Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2023. Vote on the motion Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from April 17, 2023, Council Work Session.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the Council Work Session Minutes of April 17, 2023. Vote on the motion Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson, to approve the Consent Agenda.

- A. Bills and Appropriations.
- B. Res. No. 32-23 Accepting Donations/Contributions/Grants.
- C. Approved Audio Permit for June 3, 2023, at Wheeler Park Shelter from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm for a Graduation Party.
- D. Approved Seasonal Patio License for Big Dog Restaurants at 1712 Commerce Drive for May 1, 2023, through November 1, 2023.
- E. Approved Seasonal Patio License for the Circle Inn at 232 Belgrade Avenue for May 1, 2023, through November 1, 2023.
- F. Approved Audio Permits for May 3, 4, 5, 6, and 13, 2023, for the Circle Inn at 232 Belgrade Avenue from 5 pm to 10 pm.

Vote on the motion Steiner, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson, aye, Oachs abstain, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Comments Concerning Business Items on the Agenda.

None.

Business Items

Res. No. 33-23 Adopting “Juneteenth” as an Official Holiday within the City of North Mankato’s Paid Holiday Schedule.

City Administrator McCann stated that Juneteenth National Independence Day commemorates June 19, 1865, when the Union Army went to Galveston, Texas, to announce the emancipation of the last enslaved people in the United States. President Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law on June 17, 2021, and on February 3, 2023, Governor Walz signed into law a bill establishing Juneteenth as a state-recognized holiday. With the law going into effect, the City must recognize Juneteenth. Minnesota law states that no public business shall be transacted on any holiday except in cases of necessity. As the City recognizes Juneteenth, two items need to occur. First, the City will need to add the date to the official holiday schedule, and the Council Meeting scheduled for June 19th will need to be moved to June 20th. The following two resolutions will recognize the holiday as paid and move the City Council Meeting.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Adopt Res. No. 33-23 Adopting “Juneteenth” as an Official Holiday within the City of North Mankato’s Paid Holiday Schedule. Vote on the motion Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 34-23 Amending Council Meeting Dates for the Year 2023.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Adopt Res. No. 34-23 Amending Council Meeting Dates for the Year 2023. Vote on the motion Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Authorize City Administrator McCann to Hire a New Water Department Staff Member.

City Administrator McCann reviewed the memo noting that the Water Department currently employs four members and protects the City's drinking water. The current Water Superintendent will be retiring in 2025. The water department has recently hired individuals who were not fully trained, and it requires three years to be fully trained. Staff would like to hire an additional employee in 2023, so the staff will not be short-handed following the Water Superintendent's retirement. Public Works Director Arnold noted that the workload has increased, especially with water locates. City Administrator McCann noted that Finance Director Ryan had prepared several scenarios. With potential additional capital savings in the rest of the budget, the new staff member should not cause a budget deficit. Council Member Peterson requested clarification on if there was already a temporary worker the staff was interested in bringing on full-time. Public Works Director Arnold indicated there was a summer seasonal who would be returning and was interested in the position.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Authorize City Administrator McCann to Hire a New Water Department Staff Member. Vote on the motion Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Receive Information Concerning the City's Brush Site.

Public Works Director Arnold reviewed the memo noting the brush site open hours are currently set to match the recycling department's hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Sunday. He stated that staff reviewed public information from 28 Minnesota communities and reported that most sites had limited hours, and a few of those with more extended hours had a permit system. Public Works Director Arnold stated the memo's purpose was to provide information and seek direction from the Council on immediate steps the City should take to provide additional hours to the brush site. He noted a few options, including soliciting and using volunteers or utilizing the Police Department to close down the brush site. Public Works Director Arnold noted the City had been approached by a potential volunteer but thought it might be possible to solicit additional volunteers to lessen the burden. Mayor Carlson asked if it would be possible to expand the site by an additional acre in 2023 or if that would need to wait. Public Works Director Arnold stated it would be possible to make it happen later in the year. He noted one of the main reasons for limiting the hours was to control costs which have increased in the past few years probably due to commercial dumping, which is prohibited, but the City has not been able to curb it. A discussion was held about possibly providing a third bin to residents as a compost/organics bin. Public Works Director Arnold stated that this proposal would need additional research as he has not considered the cost.

Mayor Carlson stated he thought in 2023 it would be good to look into the 1-acre expansion, search for additional contracts to remove the mulched waste, begin using volunteers to expand the hours and upgrade the video system to have a better-quality video to catch violators of the no-commercial dumping. Council Member Whitlock suggested contacting Police Chief Gullickson to consider having the new Police Reserve recruits also assist with monitoring the site.

Open Forum

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council and stated regarding the additional bin that if residents use herbicides or pesticides, the materials could not be considered organic waste.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Public Works Director noted that City staff had begun crack sealing. The Lor Ray roundabout has gone out for bid with a planned start date after the State Softball tournament and finishing before the start of school.

City Administrator McCann reported that the Governor's fishing opener would occur the weekend of May 12th.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone out to Bookin' on Belgrade on May 20th.

City Administrator McCann reported that the new website will go live on Tuesday, May 2nd.

City Administrator McCann said the new lights are up at Caswell Park and ready to go!

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Peterson stated that the new roundabout would help the traffic flow at Lor Ray and Howard, especially at the start of the school day.

Council Member Whitlock thanked all the donors.

Council Member Steiner noted that The Beast would be hosting GMG after hours on May 2nd from 4-7 pm and asked why Jeni Bobholz could not serve liquor from the Circle Inn. She has served off-site before. City Administrator McCann reported that the City received a concern and they needed to follow up. Staff spoke with the State, which noted that Ms. Bobholz does not have a catering license that allows her to serve alcohol off-site. Staff also confirmed with an attorney that she could not serve liquor without jeopardizing her license. Staff was unaware of other times that Ms. Bobholz served off-site as her license is site specific.

Mayor Carlson noted that the Police Department had received new applicants for the Police Reserve.

Mayor Carlson thanked donors to the youth scholarships. He stated he is encouraging kids at his school to consider looking into scholarships if they are in need.

Mayor

City Clerk