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 December 16, 2024. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., asking everyone to join the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, City Administrator McCann, Finance Director Ryan, Community Development Director Fischer, Public Works Director Arnold, Attorney Kennedy, and Administrative Services Manager-City Clerk Van Genderen.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Council Minutes from December 2, 2024, Council Meeting.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to approve the December 2, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from December 2, 2024, Council Work Session.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the December 2, 2024, Council Work Session Minutes. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Hearing, 7 pm Stormwater and Annual Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program Review.

City Engineer Sarff reported the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) requires cities with populations over 10,000, including North Mankato, to comply with the MS4 General Permit to reduce stormwater pollution. The City developed a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP) to meet six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs):

1. Public Education and Outreach – Inform the public about stormwater pollution prevention.
2. Public Participation – Engage citizens in program development and water quality activities.
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) – Detect and stop illegal discharges.
4. Construction Site Runoff Control – Manage erosion and sediment during construction.
5. Post-Construction Stormwater Management – Control runoff from new developments.
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping – Reduce runoff from municipal operations.

City Engineer Sarff reported that the SWPPP was revised in 2022 and December 2023 to align with permit changes. In May 2024, the city hired Chelsea Baker as the Stormwater Compliance Specialist, and in August 2024, the City updated Ordinance Chapter 54 to clarify requirements for erosion control plans and strengthen enforcement procedures. In 2024, the City has completed site and stormwater management plan reviews for new developments, monitored public and private construction sites, provided education through the City's website and outreach materials, and had staff complete training on detecting and eliminating illicit discharge.

The City must offer at least one annual public input opportunity on its SWPPP. This year's session is being held at the City Council Meeting on December 16, 2024.

With no one else appearing, Mayor Carlson closed the Public Hearing.

Public Comments

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before the Council and thanked them for providing an opportunity for public input on the Caswell project.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before the Council and stated the Council should consider expenditures and how to limit tax rate increases because his property taxes went up by 8% in 2025. He stated he did not agree with potential changes to the current public works building site. He thanked the staff for the wildlife hunt. Mr. Hagen stated that two council members would receive free memberships to the Nicollet County Historical Society.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 105-24 Approving Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Res No. 106-24 Setting Fees and Charges.
D. Res. No. 107-24 Approving Committee Assignments.

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

Business Items

Res. No. 108-24 Approving 2024 Tax Levy Collectible in 2025.

Finance Director Ryan reported the Resolution would approve the 2024 tax levy, collectible in 2025, totaling $9,582,889. The funds are allocated across key areas, including the General Fund ($5,955,031), Port Authority Fund ($75,000), Bonded Indebtedness ($1,526,901), Abatement Levy ($473,099), and Capital Levy ($1,552,858).

Council Member Oachs stated she appreciated the work but thought the City could have done better and to look for redundancies.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 108-24 Approving 2024 Tax Levy Collectible in 2025. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 109-24 Approving the General Fund Budget and Auxiliary Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

Finance Director Ryan reported Council is being requested to adopt the the 2025 fiscal year budget, totaling $33,359,346. This includes $10,680,524 for the General Fund, covering General Government, Public Safety, Public Works, Culture-Recreation, Other Functions, and Transfers. Auxiliary Fund expenditures amount to $22,678,822, allocated across Special Revenue, Port Authority, Debt Service, Capital Projects, Enterprise, and Trust and Agency Funds. The City Council also approves the Capital Improvement Plan as part of the budget.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Adopt Res. No. 109-24 Approving the General Fund Budget and Auxiliary Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 110-24 Approving the Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2029.

Finance Director Ryan reported the City Council was being requested to adopt the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan after considering infrastructure conditions, project demands, costs, funding availability, debt levels, and service efficiency options.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 110-24 Approving the Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2029. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 111-24 Setting Rates and Charges for Water Fees.

Finance Director Ryan reported the cost per gallon water rates are proposed to increase by $0.50 per 1,000 gallons of water. She noted that the per gallon rate had not increased since 2014.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 111-24 Setting Rates and Charges for Water Fees. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 112-24 Setting Rates and Charges for Wastewater.

Finance Director Ryan reported an increase in the price per 1,000 gallons of $0.50.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to Adopt Res. No. 112-24 Setting Rates and Charges for Wastewater. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 113-24 Setting Rates and Charges for Solid Waste.

Finance Director Ryan reported an increase of $0.25 per size on the refuse carts.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to Adopt Res. No. 113-24 Setting Rates and Charges for Solid Waste. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 114-24 Adopting a Final Order and Record of Decision for an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for the North Mankato Industrial Development.

Community Development Director Fischer reported that a prospective developer had initiated an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for 678 acres near the Northport Industrial Park to evaluate different development scenarios. An AUAR is a hybrid of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which assesses potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies while informing public and local planning decisions. Key study areas include climate resilience, water resources, land use, transportation, and more. He noted that an AUAR is not required for all developments, but because of the size and scope, the developer has requested an AUAR. The City facilitates the AUAR and will not pay for the AUAR. The majority of the property that will be reviewed has not been annexed into the City but is a part of the Orderly Annexation with the Belgrade Township, and it is also a part of the City's future land use map, so the County deferred the AUAR process to the City. Community Development Director Fischer noted that there were two potential developers for the site due to the availability of land, electricity, and water. The two developers decided to combine resources to complete the AUAR. He noted that even if the developments do not occur, the City will still have the AUAR for future potential developments.

Community Development Director Fischer reported that Kimley Horn prepared a Scoping Document published on October 22, 2204, with a 30-day public comment period ending November 21, 2024. After reviewing comments, the City Council is requested to adopt the Scoping Document and

initiate the Draft AUAR phase. This phase involves assessing impacts, recommending mitigation actions, and allowing another public comment period. A final AUAR is expected by the spring of 2025.

Council Member Steiner requested information on who the developers were. Community Development Director Fischer reported that the city staff had signed a non-disclosure agreement.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs to adopt Res. No. 114-24 Adopting a Final Order and Record of Decision for an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for the North Mankato Industrial Development. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 115-24 Authorizing the City Administrator to Enter into a Solid Waste and Recycling Removal Contract with West Central Sanitation.

City Administrator McCann reported a five-year solid waste contract had been finalized with West Central Sanitation, which had previously held the contract. The changes to the current contract include capping the CPI at 4%. Any actual CPI increases greater than 4% are to be carried over to the next annual adjustment. A CPI greater than the 4% maximum will be carried forward throughout the contract until it is absorbed. He did note that this year's increase will be greater based on a catch-up provision. City Administrator McCann reported that the garbage and recycling pick-up start time will return to a 6 am start rather than a 4 am start. Council Member Oachs requested clarification on if the annual rate increase will annually impact resident utility bills. City Administrator McCann stated it would not, as the City sets the rates separately from the West Central contract.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Adopt Res. No. 115-24 Authorizing the City Administrator to Enter into a Solid Waste and Recycling Removal Contract with West Central Sanitation. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 116-24 Authorizing Funding Application for the 2027 U.S. Trunk Highway 169 MnDOT Project SP 5212-42 and 0713-81 and North Mankato Highway 169/Webster Avenue/North River Drive Area Access Project.

Public Works Director Arnold reported the resolution allows the City to apply for federal funding through the Surface Transportation Program (STP - Small Urban) for the 2027 U.S. Trunk Highway 169 project. The project will improve the intersection of Webster Avenue and Highway 169, addressing traffic delays and pedestrian safety issues identified in previous studies. The city will participate in funding the reconstruction of Range Street and North River Drive frontage roads, which are necessary for safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings. If awarded the funds, the City agrees to oversee the design, construction, and maintenance of the project, ensuring compliance with all regulations, and to enter into a cooperative agreement with MnDOT.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 116-24 Authorizing Funding Application for the 2027 U.S. Trunk Highway 169 MnDOT Project SP 5212-42 and 0713-81 and North Mankato Highway 169/Webster Avenue/North River Drive Area Access Project. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 117-24 Authorizing Transportation Alternatives Funding Application for the 2027 U.S. Trunk Highway 169-MnDOT Project SP 5212-42 and 0713-81 and North Mankato Highway 169/Webster Avenue/North River Drive Area Access Project.

Public Works Director Arnold reported that the resolution supports a Transportation Alternatives funding application for the 2027 U.S. Trunk Highway 169 reconstruction project. The project, developed in partnership with MnDOT and the City of Mankato, aims to enhance safety for non-motorized users accessing local trails and businesses. The city agrees to act as the sponsoring agency, secure funding, and ensure project completion while adhering to federal, state, and local regulations. Additionally, North Mankato commits to designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the facilities built with federal transportation funds for their useful lifespan.

Council Member Steiner moved, Seconded by Council Member Oachs to Adopt Res. No. 117-24 Authorizing Transportation Alternatives Funding Application for the 2027 U.S. Trunk Highway 169-MnDOT Project SP 5212-42 and 0713-81 and North Mankato Highway 169/Webster Avenue/North River Drive Area Access Project. Vote on the motion Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Open Forum

None.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Public Works Director Arnold reported that the first stage of working with FEMA is coming to a close and that additional valuation processes will be occurring.

City Administrator McCann reported the Swim Facility early bird discounts on 2025 memberships and passes are available online.

City Administrator McCann stated that boulevard trees could be a great gift. Applications for the 2025 program are open on the City's website.

City Administrator McCann thanked everyone who participated in Shop with a Hero on December 7th. City staff that participated included the North Mankato Police and Fire Departments who shopped with 19 local youth.

City Administrator McCann thanked everyone who participated in the 125th-anniversary events and Bells on Belgrade. About 350 people visited the Old-Fashioned Christmas booth at Bells on Belgrade on December 7th.

City Administrator McCann invited participation in several events, including the Hometown Holiday Lights, breakfast with Santa at the Library, and the 2025 Weight Loss Challenge, which will begin on January 9th.

City Administrator McCann reported that with the closure of BENCHS to the City's strays, the City is developing a small heated kennel that will be appropriately staffed and will work with Mending Spirits for those dogs that are not reunited with their owners.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Members and the Mayor wished everyone Merry Christmas and stated that they looked forward to the next year.

At 7:43 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Whitlock, seconded by Council Member Steiner, the Council Meeting was adjourned.

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Mayor

_____
City Clerk