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 August 18, 2025. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., asking everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, City Administrator McCann, City Planner Lassonde, Finance Director Ryan, Community Development Director Fischer, Attorney Kennedy, and Administrative Services Manager-City Clerk Van Genderen. Absent: Public Works Director Arnold.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Carlson requested an amendment to the Agenda for August 18, 2025, Agenda. He requested the addition of item 7A Reading of Prepared Statement Concerning the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy V. City of North Mankato and Project Deacon, LLC. Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to amend the City Council Agenda for August 18, 2025. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Council Member Whitlock 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 the August 4, 2025, Council Meeting.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, to approve the August 4, 2025, 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 August 4, 2025, Council Work Session.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to approve the August 4, 2025, Council Work Session Minutes. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

CITY OF NORTH MANKATO'S STATEMENT
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy v. City of North Mankato, and Project Deacon, LLC
Court File No. 52-CV-25-568

The City of North Mankato has retained attorney Paul Donald Reuvers and the law firm Iverson Reuvers, through the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust, to represent the City in the matter of *Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy v. City of North Mankato and Project Deacon, LLC*.

The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) has filed suit challenging the City's use of the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) process to evaluate the potential environmental effects of a proposed four-million-square-foot development known as North Mankato Industrial. MCEA has also initiated a similar lawsuit against the City of Lakeville, which is likewise represented by Mr. Reuvers and his firm.

The AUAR process, authorized by state law, is a hybrid of the environmental assessment worksheet and environmental impact statement procedures. It allows cities to assess the cumulative

environmental impacts of different development scenarios within a defined geographic area before any project begins. The City maintains that its use of the AUAR process was lawful and appropriate.

The litigation will proceed through compiling the official record, briefing the legal issues, and scheduling a hearing before District Court Judge Paul Gunderson. There is no claim for monetary damages or attorney's fees; the sole issue is whether the AUAR process was conducted in compliance with the law.
The City will share updates on this matter as they become available.

Public Comments

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, asked questions about whether Council Members read the AUAR before approval, who signed, and whether there are additional NDAs, and if the City is lobbying for more aquifer water.

Jodi Swanson, Lime Township, appeared before Council and thanked Council for working on the Climate Action Plan and asked that they approve the plan.

Sharon Schindle, 2278 Aspen Lane, appeared before Council and expressed concerns about a data center's impact on the aquifer and possible noise. She noted Benson Trail is in need of maintenance, and the City should budget for maintenance. The City is not able to provide everything for everyone.

Lucy Lowry, 2263 Northridge Drive, commented that she believes there is a breakdown of honesty and thought the Council should not have approved the AUAR. She claimed staff responses to questions concerning the AUAR were deceitful. Ms. Lowry stated that a lawyer was at the July 7th Council meeting and commented during the public comments that he thought the AUAR was incomplete. She concluded by saying the trust has been broken, and staffing changes are the only fix.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, asked if the Council had read the AUAR. he claimed that his comments on the AUAR were not responded to and stated that the staff should not be trusted to complete the work, and urged the Council to seek input from residents.

Benton Bakke, 1243 Lake Street, stated he enjoyed participating in the Climate Action Plan process but opposed the proposed hyperscale data center, citing its heavy water and energy use, and urged Council to reject it, warning of AI's potential harm.

Bessie Tsaouse, 136 Mary Circle, noted that it was great to have the climate action plan, but was distraught about the data center.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 72-25 Approving Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Approved Concession Permit for Wheeler Park on August 20, 2025, from 11 am to 6 pm for CERO.
D. Approved Concession Permit for Wheeler Park on August 27, 2025, from 11 am to 3 pm for CERO.
E. Res. No. 73-25 Approving Consent Assessment.
F. Set Fall Drop-Off Dates for October 2-5, 2025.
G. Res. No. 74-25 Declaring Surplus Vehicles and Equipment.

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

Business Items

Res. No. 75-25 Adopting the Climate Action Plan.

City Planner Lassonde introduced Ted Redmond from paleBluedot LLC who managed the study. Mr. Redmond reported that Pale Blue Dot helps cities develop climate action plans to help reduce their carbon footprints. He reviewed the process, which will take 11 months when completed, and so far has engaged 200 community members, held two community events, two online community surveys, worked with 29 planning team members, and utilized five research documents. Mr. Redmond stated that they included a community survey and baseline studies. The 177 survey participants reported that 68% of the responders believe the City should prepare for climate impacts, and needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. About 62% thought the City should be a leader in climate action. Of the community members surveyed, 41% were extremely concerned about climate change, 18% were very concerned, 8% were moderately concerned, 9% were slightly concerned, and 24% were not concerned. Mr. Redmond reviewed annual temperature trend information and potential future climate impacts. He reviewed the City's GHG Emissions, which totaled 162,025 metric tons, with 48.9% from electricity, 28.2% from natural gas, 21.1% from transportation, and 1.9% from solid waste. The goal of the study and implementation of the study is to reduce citywide GHG emissions by 55% below 2020 levels by 2040 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. To accomplish the goal, the plan addresses six sectors through 22 strategies, supported by 61 detailed action steps over 15 years. The plan addresses transportation and land use, buildings and energy, waste management, water and wastewater, green space and ecosystems, and the economic impact.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs to Adopt Res. No. 75-25 Adopting the Climate Action Plan. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Consider Res. No. 76-25 Approving Payment for an Unbudgeted Item Over $25,000.

City Administrator McCann invited Bob Mickelson from ISG to the podium to answer questions concerning the proposal from ISG and RW Carlstrom to conduct a review of the existing Public Works Facility to evaluate the feasibility of rebuilding on the site. He noted that included in the packet were two studies, one by Oertel Architects, Ltd, which was a public works facility assessment completed in 2019, and a report by LHB, which was a report of inspection procedures and results for determining qualifications of a Tax Increment Financing District, which was completed in 2023. City Administrator McCann did note that additional information would be obtained in conjunction with interest from a possible outside developer. The information would include soil boring. Mr. Mickelson reported that the two reports were fairly comprehensive. The study they would conduct would be fairly similar. In fact, he did not believe the report would change much; it would not improve. Mr. Mickelson stated they could use the current study and just update the numbers. Just updating the numbers would cost only about $5,000, so the Council would not need to approve the resolution.

Council member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to approve Res. No. 76-25 Approving Payment for an Unbudgeted Item Over $25,000. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Steiner, and Carlson nay, Whitlock, aye. Motion Failed.

Res. No. 77-25 Approving Change Order All Seasons Arena Project No. 11075.

City Administrator McCann noted the resolution would approve three change orders: Met-Con #16, Malterer Mechanical #10, and Laketown Electric #10 for the All Seasons Arena Improvement Project. This would increase the total contract price by $11,836.83 bringing the contingency fund down to $104,464,85.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to adopt the resolution. No. 77-25 Approving Change Order All Seasons Arena Project No. 11075. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, thanked Council for listening to residents, but he thinks the City needs greater citizen involvement.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council and asked if there was still a contingency fund for the All Seasons Arena project. The City should not lobby for more water from the aquifer unless it is for resident consumption, and the City should plan for a smaller garage, not a plan for a Public Works Building that will last for 50 years.

Bess Tsause, 136 Mary Circle, appeared before Council and asked if the City had budgeted for the lawsuit.

Lucy Lowry, 2263 Northridge Drive, appeared before Council and asked Council and staff to set aside cell phones during Council Meetings, requested a moratorium on large projects due to national uncertainty, urged prioritizing taxes for essential needs and infrastructure maintenance, and stated the City should have an administrator who lives in North Mankato.

Danielle Bollman, 515 Page Avenue, appeared before Council and stated 4,400 people in Minnesota were laid off in July, with 14 of those jobs in North Mankato, so we should not be increasing taxes. She stated build a bridge, not an ocean.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

City Administrator McCann noted that it is not a requirement for the City Administrator to live in North Mankato.

City Administrator McCann announced that seal coating on city streets will be finished by the end of August. Please follow the "No Parking" signs. The swim facility's last day is Thursday, August 21, 2025. Caswell Youth Football begins Saturday, August 23, 2025.

City Administrator McCann thanked Duane Rader for his 30 years of service to the City.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone out to the Picnic with First Responders on Saturday, August 23, from 4-7 pm at Messiah Lutheran Church. He invited everyone to take the Lee Boulevard Corridor Survey by Thursday, August 28th. He invited everyone to Symphony on the Prairie on Saturday, September 6, from 6 to 7:30 pm at Benson Park.

City Administrator McCann announced the Taylor Library and City Hall will be closed on Monday, September 1st, in observance of Labor Day.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Steiner was glad they adopted the Climate Action Plan and indicated he does not want a data center.

Council Member Oachs stated she agreed with Council Member Steiner.

Council Member Peterson congratulated Duane Rader on his retirement and Andy Paulson on his retirement.

Mayor Carlson congratulated the retirees on their retirements.

Mayor Carlson read the following statement concerning City Administrator McCann's review: "On August 4, 2025, the Council held a closed session to complete City Administrator McCann's job evaluation and concluded that his job performance was satisfactory."

At 8:08 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Steiner, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting was adjourned to Closed Session Under State Statute 13D.05 to Discuss Pending Litigation with Legal Counsel.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk