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 March 2, 2026. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:28 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, 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: Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Minutes from the February 17, 2026, Council Meeting.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the February 17, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from the February 17, 2026, Council Work Session

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to approve the February 17, 2026, Council Work Session Meeting Minutes. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Hearing, Consider Adopting Ordinance Amending City Code Section 156.035 (E) (G) (2) Accessory Uses.

Community Development Director Fischer reported that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposal at their last meeting. The Planning Commission did not recommend the amendments. He stated that, under the City Code, the maximum square footage for attached/detached garages, recreation buildings, and pool houses/cabanas should not exceed 1,400 square feet of floor space per lot for all structures combined. As pool houses and recreation buildings become more popular, some residents are facing challenges with the 1,400-square-foot maximum when considering accessory buildings in addition to their existing garage space. Specifically, residents have proposed pool houses that meet all building setback and ground coverage requirements but would exceed the 1,400-square-foot limit for all structures combined.

Robert Klinkner, 34 Deerwood Court, appeared before Council and stated he had requested the change. He currently has a 1,080-square-foot garage. The size does not allow for a pool house. He noted that his lot has enough space to add a pool house while still meeting all easements and setbacks. The change would allow residents the opportunity to enjoy their property.

Scott Kaminski, 22 Deerwood Court, appeared before Council and stated he was in favor of the City Code amendment. He stated that the code should change with the times and accommodate modern life. He also noted that there could be health, safety, and sanitation concerns if pool chemicals were stored in garages instead of pool houses.

A person spoke concerning the amendments and indicated there might be unforeseen consequences.

Danielle Bollman, 515 Page Avenue, appeared before Council and asked if, with the amendments, she would be able to build a greenhouse in her backyard. Community Development

Director Fischer indicated that there was a possibility she would not run into the limits unless it was a large greenhouse.

Martha Otis, 733 Range Street, appeared before Council and asked if there was specific criteria that Council used to help them decide whether to approve an ordinance.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and indicated he thought a Historic Preservation Committee would be able to help determine what should and should not be allowed.

Community Development Director Fischer noted that the recommended amendments would not change the setbacks, number of structures, and ground coverage limitations.

Mayor Carlson commented that when making these types of decisions, he considered the changes in society, such as the increased number of drivers and garage space needs. What changes in the modern world need to be addressed?

Public Comments-Agenda Items

A person spoke about item 11C Consider Resolution Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisment for Bids for the 2026 Caswell North Soccer Synthetic Turf Project, City Project No. 26-03, indicating the project conflicted with the climate action plan and if the school district, as the property owner, knows about the plan.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and indicated that agenda item 11C could damage the environment.

Martha Otis, 733 Range Street, appeared before Council and stated that agenda item 11C was short-sighted and did not align with the Climate Action Plan.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 27-26 Approving Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Approved Res. No. 28-26 Accepting the Highest Bid Received from the Request for Quote for the Sale of Water Meters.
D. Approved Audio Permit Great Oaks Church on May 3, 2026, from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Spring Lake Park.
E. Approved Audio Permit for Chris Good on September 11, 2026, from 6 pm to 10 pm.

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

Business Items

Ordinance No. 197, An Ordinance of the City of North Mankato, Minnesota, Amending North Mankato City Code Chapter 156.035 (E) (G) (2), Accessory Use.

Council Member Oachs asked what the Planning Commission's response was to the proposed amendments. Attorney Kennedy noted they did not move it forward because they were considering if the code should create an overall percentage of coverage. There was no recommendation to amend the proposal or approve the proposal. Council Member Oachs asked if there were other ordinances that could moderate what was built. Community Development Director Fischer reported that City Code limits the number of structures and ground coverage requirements, so there are other avenues of regulation. Council Member Oachs asked what would happen if someone built a pool house and then chose to rent it out. Council Member Peterson noted that the ordinance change only addresses or

changes the inclusion of the pool house in the square footage limitation. He noted that any structure could be built and used in alternative ways, but that would be addressed upon discovery.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Adopt Ordinance No. 197, An Ordinance of the City of North Mankato, Minnesota, Amending North Mankato City Code Chapter 156.035 (E) (G) (2), Accessory Use. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 29-26 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids Marie Lane Lift Station and Forcemain Improvement Project, City Project No. 25-07 A.

City Engineer Sarff reported that pursuant to the January 20, 2026, Council resolution, the City has substantially prepared plans and specifications for the Marie Lane Lift Station and Forcemain Improvement Project. The project includes converting the existing wet well/dry well lift station to a submersible type station, installing new submersible pumps, constructing a new valve manhole with check and gate valves, upgrading electrical and control systems, and abandoning the existing dry well.

The forcemain improvements include constructing a new 6-inch forcemain by directional drilling along Marie Lane and abandoning the existing line, as well as installing a new 8-inch forcemain along Lookout Drive to redirect wastewater flow from the Clare Court lift station to the sanitary sewer on Marie Lane.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 29-26 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids Marie Lane Lift Station and Forcemain Improvement Project, City Project No. 25-07 A. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 31-26 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for the 2026 Caswell North Soccer Turf Project, City Project No. 26-03.

City Engineer Sarff reported the project would convert the existing grass practice field into a 230'x 380' multi-use synthetic turf field for soccer, lacrosse, football, and other activities. Work includes excavating and preparing the subbase with drainage, installing stormwater management features, extending concrete trails, replacing or adding fencing, providing athletic equipment and nets, and adding a new scoreboard funded by the Mankato School District. All areas impacted by construction will be restored.

City Engineer Sarff noted that the City and the school district have a Joint Powers agreement, which is in the process of being updated. He noted there are some tradeoffs when talking about the environmental concerns. The turf would not require watering, mowing, or herbicides. There are obviously some trade-offs when using synthetic turf, trading playability for environmental impact. Council Member Peterson noted that there was significant interest and support for additional turf, as seen in the survey results. City Administrator McCann noted that it has been listed as a high priority due to a decrease in rain delays, water issues, and turf wear and tear, but there is a tradeoff. Council Member Peterson indicated he was in favor of the project and noted that there are user groups that are interested, and the schools are also interested in the synthetic turf. Council Member Oachs noted that the funds would be from the sales tax that needs to be used, and no additional taxing will occur. She indicated she would like a cost analysis of the new turf versus not moving to turf. Council Member Oachs asked about the removal of the turn within 10 years, and the cost of that should be considered. Mayor Carlson commented that he has done research about purchasing turf for Monroe Elementary due to the fact that, often, the playgrounds are just mud due to usage. He noted that often you can purchase used turf. He also indicated he has done some research into the type of fill used under the turf and the risks associated with the microplastics breakdown. He noted some fills are better than

others. Mayor Carlson noted that turf can last longer than 10 years and may be closer to 12-13 years depending on usage and care.

City Engineer Sarff noted that the replacement of the turf would not be $1.2 million because a majority of the initial cost is in field preparation. Mayor Carlson stated the City should plan ahead for the replacement of the turf. Council Member Peterson indicated the City could set aside a portion of the user fees for the turf replacement. Council Member Oachs asked if the Joint Powers Agreement would be completed. City Administrator McCann reported the agreement is currently in talks, and the School District is in full support of the tuf installation.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to adopt Res. No. 31-26 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for the 2026 Caswell North Soccer Turf Project, City Project No. 26-03. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, Steiner nay. Motion carried.

Res. No. 30-26 Setting Firefighter's Relief Association Retirement Benefits and Establishing Funding Limitations.

Finance Director Ryan reported that a process has been established that requires the retirement fund to be at least 110% funded before any increase is considered. Currently, the Fire Relief Association has approximately $4.6 million in assets and is 128% funded. They are requesting a $750 per year benefit increase, which would reduce the funding level to approximately 118%, which is still well above the 110% guideline. The increase would not impact the City's budget unless market performance declined significantly and the Association could no longer fully fund the pension. The Fire Relief Association had requested a higher amount, but it was determined to be cautious. The fund will be considered for an increase again in 2027.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to adopt Res. No. 30-26 Setting Firefighter's Relief Association Retirement Benefits and Establishing Funding Limitations. Vote on the motion: Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Comments-Other City Matters

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council and requested that the City consider looking at accessory buildings referred to as "granny pads".

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and questioned the limitations of the public comment periods.

A person spoke about the sale of the water meters and suggested the Webster Avenue facility be considered for a tree nursery.

Danielle Bollman, 515 Page Avenue, appeared before Council and shared concerns about how she felt her concerns were being received by men in leadership roles.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Finance Director Ryan responded to the question concerning the sale of the water meters and read the request for Council Action in the packet which reported the funds from the sale of the meters would first be applied to the tariff costs that have not been passed on to the residents and the remaining would be applied to the antennas and updates to the software to improve the use of the meters.

City Administrator McCann reported that the City has several seasonal positions open.

City Administrator McCann invited residents to register for community events.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Oachs indicated she had more to think about the proposed turf and only approved the going out for bid, not the project.

Council Member Oachs thanked residents who were coming out and supporting the businesses on Belgrade.

Council Member Steiners stated he did not agree with the installation of artificial turf.

Mayor Carlson asked if the City had been contacted concerning the use of goats to remove noxious weeds. Community Development Director Fischer reported that the City has an ordinance that allows the use of goats.

Mayor Carlson requested clarification on Mankato's ordinance concerning law enforcement and masks. Attorney Kennedy reported that the City of Mankato had an emergency ordinance that prohibited the wearing of masks by law enforcement agencies. He noted that the enforceability of the ordinance is in question.

Mayor Carlson noted the concerns about the public speaking period and stated the rules are to provide additional structure for both residents and the council. He noted the Council listens and does research into the topics. He reminded everyone that no one is perfect.

Mayor Carlson read into the record the following proclamation:

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, often disabling neurological disease that affects the central nervous system, disrupting the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and body; and

WHEREAS, nearly one million people in the United States live with MS, and millions more worldwide are affected, including family members, friends, caregivers, and colleagues whose lives are touched by the disease; and

WHEREAS, the cause of MS remains unknown, and there is currently no cure, though advances in research and treatment continue to improve quality of life and offer hope for the future; and

WHEREAS, National Multiple Sclerosis Society and other advocacy organizations work tirelessly to fund research, provide support services, and increase public awareness and understanding of MS; and

WHEREAS, March is recognized nationwide as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, and March 8–14 is observed as MS Awareness Week, dedicated to raising awareness, supporting those affected, and encouraging community involvement in the fight against MS; and

WHEREAS, increased awareness fosters early diagnosis, advances research efforts, and strengthens community support for individuals living with MS;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Scott Carlson, Mayor of the City of North Mankato, do hereby proclaim the month of March as

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

and March 8–14 as

MS AWARENESS WEEK

in the City of North Mankato, and encourage all residents to learn more about Multiple Sclerosis, to recognize the resilience of those living with MS, and to support efforts to find a cure.

At 8:18 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Steiner, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting adjourned.

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Mayor

_____
City Clerk