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 April 20, 2026. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m., asking everyone to join in 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 Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Minutes from the April 6, 2026, Council Meeting.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the April 6, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Oachs aye, Carlson abstains, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from the April 6, 2026, Council Work Session

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson, to approve the April 6, 2026, Council Work Session Meeting Minutes. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Oachs aye, Carlson abstains, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Hearing, 7 p.m. Project No. 25-05 DEF Belgrade Avenue Improvement Project Assessment Hearing.

City Engineer Sarff appeared before Council and reported the project proposes a full reconstruction of Belgrade Avenue, including reducing traffic from four lanes to three with a center turn lane, maintaining and adding parallel parking, widening sidewalks, and installing bump-outs at key intersections. Improvements also include a new storm sewer system, minor water system upgrades, decorative street lighting, event power infrastructure, and enhanced streetscaping features. Construction will use concrete pavement from Range Street to the Highway 169 interchange, with bituminous pavement west and south of the Range Street intersection. Additional improvements are planned for the TH 169/Veterans Memorial Bridge area. Streetscaping elements feature upgraded sidewalks, decorative pavers, planters, raised intersections, enhanced crosswalks, and potential gateway features. Lighting will include decorative LED fixtures, event-ready power outlets, and infrastructure to support community events.

Total estimated City cost is approximately $3.07 million, including $1.97 million for Belgrade Avenue improvements and $1.1 million for the City's share of the Highway 169 interchange. Assessments are proposed based on City policy, with a reduced capped rate of $135 per linear foot. Estimated assessments range from about $3,375 for a 25-foot lot to $21,600 for a 160-foot lot. Property owners may prepay assessments by November 15, 2026, or pay over 15 years at 6% interest. Council Member Oachs asked if the assessments included the City's portion of the MnDOT project. City Engineer Sarff stated the project cap reduces the assessment below cost participation. He noted that if the City just figured the assessments on the Belgrade Avenue project those costs, without the inclusion of the MnDOT project cost would be higher than the assessment cap.

Public Comments-Agenda Items

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue appeared before Council and stated she did not agree with the use of the Port Authority to assist the City with the new Public Works Building land acquisition, or financing. She indicated the residents should have been allowed to vote on the Public Works Building.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and stated he believed the Public Works Building would become a financial burden for many residents, the City should wait to start the construction of the building to allow fuel prices to decrease, and the City Council should have allowed the residents to vote. He also thought the vote from Council should be unanimous in order for the project to move forward.

Susan Beech, 925 Lake Street, appeared before Council and stated she believes the City should ask the public what we want to spend tax payer money on.

Danielle Bollman, 515 Page Avenue, appeared before Council and stated she believed the Council chose incorrectly on how they proceeded with the bond process. The Council should have chosen the one that required citizen input.

Benton Bakke appeared before Council and spoke on the proposed turf field. He indicated the Council should not proceed with the project due to environmental concerns and rising costs.

Hisham Sorour the Director of Coaching from Mankato United Soccer requested the Council approve the proposed turf as it allows sports teams to play earlier in the season and it is a benefit to the community.

Jerrad Aspelund the Mankato East High School Boys Soccer Coach appeared before Council and encouraged the Council to proceed with the installation of the turf. He noted the field could be used not only by soccer, but football and lacrosse.

Lucy Lowry, 2263 Northridge Drive, appeared before Council and stated she believed the turf field, the swim facility improvements and the public works buildings are wants. She noted that the City used to get by with equipment and made do.

Taylor Garcia appeared before Council and stated she supported the turf field as someone with children currently involved in athletics and noted the turf would be smoother and less uneven than playing on other fields.

Randy Hermanson, 405 Jefferson Avenue, appeared before Council and stated he believe the Council needed to consider needs versus wants and consider the tax payers who are paying for the wants.

Kelly McDonough, 822 South Avenue, appeared before Council and stated she believed the Public Works Building should be delayed and the residents should be allowed to vote.

Riley Ellanson, 509 Sherman Street, appeared before Council and stated that what the City has may not be the best, but the City should be able to make it work and asked for the pausing of the project and consideration of alternatives.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 45-26 Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Approved Seasonal Patio for the Circle Inn at 232 Belgrade Avenue.
D. Approved Seasonal Patio for Big Dogs at 1712 Commerce Drive.
E. Approved Audio Permits for the Circle Inn at 232 Belgrade Avenue May 3 and 17, from 4 p.m. to 7p.m., May 13, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., May 9, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and May 2 from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m..

F. Approved Audio Permit for Fun Days at Wheeler Park on July 8 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m..
G. Approved Audio Permit for Movies in the Park at Spring Lake Park on June 12 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m..
H. Approved Audio Permit for Movies in the Park at Benson Park on August 7 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m..
I. Approved Audio Permit for Music in the Park at Wheeler Park on July 16, 23 and 30, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m..
J. Approved Audio Permit for Music in the Park at Wheeler Park on September 3, 10, 17, and 24 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m..
K. Approved Audio Permit for Party on the Prairie at Benson Park on October 3, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m..
L. Approved Audio Permit for the 300 Block of Belgrade on September 19 from noon to 10 p.m. for Blues on Belgrade.
M. Approved Audio Permit for Art Splash at Wheeler Park on June 27, from 11 am to 3 p.m..
N. Res. No. 46-26 Waiving the Waiting Period for Exemption from Lawful Gambling License for the Knights of Columbus.
O. Res. No. 47-26 Approving Updates to the North Mankato Alcohol and Drug Abuse DOT Policy.
P. Approved Concession Permit for CERO at Wheeler Park on May 8th from 11 am to 3 p.m..
Q. Approved Audio Permit for Spinners Bar & Grill on May 9, 2026, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m..

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

Business Items

Res. No. 48-26 Approving and Consenting to the Issuance of a $27,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2026A of the North Mankato Port Authority Commission, Minnesota.

City Administrator McCann reported that the lawsuit, Barb Church vs. the North Mankato Port Authority and City of North Mankato, was dismissed in favor of the Port and City. The judge stated that the Port Authority has the authority to issue bonds and transfer the land to the City.

Council Member Oachs requested Attorney Marin Magill provide the Council and members of the audience the information provided at the Port Authority Meeting. Attorney Magill reported that the principal amount of the bonds constitutes debt service. It is a tax lien on all properties; it is against all properties, not just the property the public works building would sit on. The bonds are General Obligation Bonds (GO), meaning the Port is paying bonds with revenues collected pursuant to taxes pledged to the bonds. That is why the City was involved in the sale of the bonds, because the City would need to concur with the issuance of the GO bonds and the debt service would pay the bonds.

Tammy Omdal from Northland Securities reported the City Council is being asked to concur to the Port Authority bonds. The bonds were placed out for bid on Monday, April 20, 2026, with the award going to Mesirow Financial, Inc., with a True Interest Cost of 4.11%. The Port Authority is issuing $27 million in General Obligation Bonds (Series 2026A) to fund construction of a public works facility within the Timm Road South Development District and cover issuance costs. The resolution would back the bonds with the City's full faith and credit, including ad valorem taxes. The financing is structured to provide a level annual debt service over 25 years, with final maturity on February 1, 2052, and an optional call date of February 1, 2034. The bonds received a strong S&P rating of AA. Total project funding sources equal about $27.9 million (including premiums), with the majority allocated to construction costs.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 48-26 Approving and Consenting to the Issuance of a $27,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2026A of the North Mankato Port Authority Commission, Minnesota. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson aye, Oachs and Steiner nay. Motion carried.

Res. No. 49-26 Adopting Assessment 2026 Belgrade Avenue Improvement Project, Project No. 25-05 DEF.

City Engineer Sarff stated the Public Hearing was held earlier in the meeting. He did note that there was a formal letter of appeal included in the packet and those placing the appeal were in the audience if there were any questions.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 49-26 Adopting Assessment 2026 Belgrade Avenue Improvement Project, Project No. 25-05 DEF. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, Oachs abstain. Motion carried.

Res. No. 50-26 Accepting Bid for the 2026 Marie Lane Lift Station and Forcemain Improvement Project No. 25-07 A.

City Engineer Sarff appeared before Council and reviewed the bids and information for the 2026 Marie Lane Lift Station and Forcemain Improvement Project. Bids were opened for the Marie Lane Lift Station on April 16, 2026 with four bids being received.

Bidder	Bid
GM Contracting, Inc.	$925,005.84
Pember Companies, Inc.	$948,893.40
Holtmeier Construction, Inc.	$1,055,048.61
Flatland Enterprise	$1,143,174.70

The low bidder is GM Contracting, Inc. at 6% below the engineer's estimate and 3% below the next lowest bid. The total estimated project cost is $1.3 million, which is withn the $1.6 million budget. Based on qualifications and past performance, staff recommend awarding the contract to GM Contracting, Inc. and adopting the resolution accepting the bid.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to adopt Res. No. 50-26 Accepting Bid for the 2026 Marie Lane Lift Station and Forcemain Improvement Project No. 25-07 A. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 51-26 Accepting Bid 2026 Caswell North Soccer Synthetic Turf Project, City Project No. 26-03.

City Engineer Sarff appeared before Council and reviewed the bidding process for the synthetic turf project. He noted that the bids were opened on April 1, 2026 and two contractors submitted bids, with Peterson Companies identified as the low bidder for the base project and alternates and deemed qualified based on past performance. City staff recommend proceeding with the base bid and a reduced version of the Alternate No. 2 to include only safety netting for approximately $40,000, along with an estimated $27,000 for potential topsoil replacement. The scoreboard in Alternate No. 1 will be funded separately by the school district. For the synthetic turf, AstroTurf Great Lakes provided the preferred quote. Staff recommends accepting an upgraded turf for approximately $30,310 with an

extended 10-year warranty, while declining additional grooming equipment. The total estimated project cost is $1.5 milllion for the City and $34,000 for the school district. Funding would come from the local sales tax fund, which is projected to fall short by about $70,000 after accounting for this and other planned projects, though ongoing monthly revenues and interest will help offset the deficit. Todd Wolf from AstroTurf Great Lakes appeared to provide answers to questions concerning the use of astro turf. He reported they do not introduce PFAS into the astroturf. Mr. Wolf also noted that the astroturf can be recycled and used as an alternative fuel source so they are not introduced into dumps. He reviewed turf safety and noted they have participated and followed many studies and worked to make sure AstroTurf is safe.

Mayor Carlson asked what type of infill does AstroTurf use. Mr. Wolf noted it is rubberized and not organics. Organics do not work as well in an area that has a freeze thaw cycle. Mayor Carlson asked about a rough estimate for the replacement of turf. Mr. Wolfe stated the turf would be about half the price.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to Adopt Res. No. 51-26 Accepting Bid 2026 Caswell North Soccer Synthetic Turf Project, City Project No. 26-03. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 52-26 Adopting the North Mankato Active Transportation Action Plan.

City Planner Lassonde reported the Council reviewed the active transportation plan at a previous meeting. The plan identifies priorities and guides future investments. The plan will be used to help complete an updated Streets Plan and a demonstration project will be prepared on Haughton Avenue.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs to Adopt Res. No. 52-26 Adopting the North Mankato Active Transportation Plan. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, Oachs and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Comments-Other City Matters

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and stated he believe the Council was making bad choices and the Council should not have passed the Public Works Building bonding on a 3 to 2 vote.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council and asked how the Port Authority could sell the property to the City and indicated she did not approve of the Public Works Building bonding and cost to the tax payers.

Danielle Bollman, 515 Page Avenue, appeared before Council and indicated she did not believe the Council was listening and that the Council needs to hold staff accountable.

Randy Hermanson, 405 Jefferson Avenue, appeared before Council and stated he was disappointed by the Council's vote on the bonding for the Public Works Building and suggested moving to a ward system.

Benton Bakke appeared before Council and stated he had friends who would struggle with the increased tax burden created by the Public Works building bonding.

Lucy Lowry, 2263 Northridge Drive appeared before Council and stated she was disappointed in the vote to approve the bonding for the Public Works Building.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Public Works Director Arnold thanked resident Bollman for bringing some clerical issues to light concerning the letters sent out for the Page Avenue tree replacement program. He noted those clerical issues have been corrected.

Public Works Director Arnold noted that the Belgrade Avenue reconstruction project began on April 20, 2026. He noted resident concern about the truck traffic on Sherman Street. He stated the street would be able to manage the extra truck traffic and the traffic will shift from Sherman Street to Center and Range Street after school is out. He also noted there would be additional traffic disruptions on streets with the MnDOT 169 project in 2028.

Public Works Director Arnold reported there would be a study conducted along Highway 14 similar to the one on 169 to help direct and inform a MnDOT reconstruction project.

Finance Director Ryan noted a memo was included in the packet concerning comments from a resident that claimed the City's plumbing contractor installing meters would not replace meters in mobile homes. The memo provided information concerning the meters and corrected the fact that the plumber will change meters at the mobile home park.

City Administrator McCann reported there was a memo reviewing how the City has implemented the plans and studies that it has conducted.

City Administrator McCann reported a request for a Climate Action Plan Commission was presented to Council by a resident at the previous meeting. The City has provided a response to the request and provided information on commissions and boards and compared with St. Peter and Mankato.

City Administrator McCann reported the MCEA lawsuit has been voluntarily dismissed by MCEA without concessions. The City believes this outcome is consistent with the valid AUAR process it used. There are no active prospects for the site, though the city remains open to new business and industry in the community.

City Administrator McCann invited residents to sign up for Summer Recreation Programs. He invited everyone to the Pollinator events including flower planting on May 14th and the Pollinator Plant Swap Meet on May 16th. Bookin' on Belgrade will be held on May 16th and Art in the Alley is a partnership event with the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts with the first event on May 30th. The event will be used to draw people to Belgrade Avenue businesses during the reconstruction.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Peterson encouraged everyone to visit Belgrade Avenue and support their local businesses.

Council Member Oachs thanked staff who participated in the Council Work Session she enjoyed hearing from each of the departments leads.

Council Member Oachs stated she would be working with staff to help create wayfinging signs for Belgrade Avenue during reconstruction.

Council Member Whitlock noted that he believed the Public Works Building construction is in the best interest of the City, that it is needed and that it will not become more affordable if the City waited to begin construction.

Mayor Carlson noted that there was concern when the vote was 3-2 but he stated there was also concern when the votes were 5-0. He thought it was encouraging that the Council is thinking and representing the public independently. He noted that while people that spoke may have one opinion, there are other residents in the City that Council is also representing. The goal is to do what is best for the entire community.

Mayor Carlson invited everyone out to the Mayor's ride on May 14th.

Mayor Carlson noted that Monroe will be conducted its annual bike bus event on May 6th and encouraged residents to be cautious.

Mayor Carlson invited residents out to Coffee with the Council on April 25th starting at 10:00 a.m. at Caribou Coffee on Commerce Drive.

At 9:10 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Whitlock, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting adjourned to closed session.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk