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 July 20, 2026. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:05 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, Community Development Director Fischer, City Planner Lassonde, Attorney Kennedy, and Administrative Services Manager-City Clerk Van Genderen. Absent: Finance Director Ryan and Public Works Director Arnold.

Approval of Agenda

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

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

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

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from July 6, 2026, Council Work Session

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

Public Hearing, 7 pm: Consider Amendments to City Code Section 71.05 Other Parking Restrictions.

City Planner Lassonde reported the requested amendment is to clarify the City Code language surrounding vehicle parking regulations. The request was brought before the Traffic and Safety Committee, which reviewed proposed amendments to City Code 71.05, Other Parking Restrictions, in response to public confusion regarding on-street recreational vehicle parking regulations. The existing code was found to be unclear for both residents and enforcement, particularly due to ambiguity in the 22-foot RV exemption and related provisions in 71.05 (K). To improve clarity and enforceability, the Committee recommends removing 71.05 (K) and revising 71.05 (L)(2)(a) to clearly state that recreational vehicles longer than 22 feet may not be parked on any street for more than 24 consecutive hours.

With no one appearing before Council, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council and stated she approved of the Council's consideration of placing a moratorium on the construction of data centers.

Lucy Lowry, 2263 Northridge Drive, appeared before Council and stated she agreed with placing a moratorium on the construction of data centers. She also asked why an ordinance needed to be passed and why a public hearing would need to be held. Attorney Kennedy responded and noted that in order to have a moratorium, an interim ordinance would need to be approved, and when the City passes an ordinance, a public hearing is required.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, stated that along with a moratorium, the City should also consider vacating the AUAR study.

Benton Bakke appeared before Council and stated that along with the moratorium on data centers, the City should consider no longer allowing NDAs. He also questioned the size limitations and water limitations proposed in the moratorium and asked why electrical use was not considered. Mr. Bakke also stated he believed that the City should slow things down and extend the process to pass an ordinance by requiring an additional meeting following a public hearing.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 78-26 Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Approved Audio Permit and Event Permit for July 25, 2026, from 11 am to 5 pm at Options Mankato at 1695 Lor Ray Drive.
D. Approved a Block Party Permit for Shanda Walters at 203 Lake Street on August 20, 2026, from 3 pm to 8 pm.

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

Business Items

Consider Ordinance No. 198 Amending Chapter 71.05 Other Parking Restrictions.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Adopt Ordinance No. 198 Amending Chapter 71.05 Other Parking Restrictions. Vote on the motion: Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Set a Public Hearing to Consider an Ordinance authorizing a Study and Imposing a Moratorium on Data Centers.

Attorney Kennedy stated the Council is being asked to set a Public Hearing to consider a moratorium on Data Centers.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Set a Public Hearing to Consider an Ordinance authorizing a Study and Imposing a Moratorium on Data Centers. Vote on the motion: Steiner, Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Consider Belgrade Light Pole Medallion Engagement Results and Provide Direction Concerning Next Steps.

City Planner Lassonde reviewed the public engagement process for selecting a decorative medallion design for the new streetlights on Belgrade Avenue. City staff conducted a public outreach effort that resulted in 19 design submissions representing 10 unique concepts. An ad hoc committee consisting of two City Council members, two residents, and one Belgrade Avenue business owner reviewed the submissions and selected four designs to advance for public consideration.

The public survey was available from June 25 through July 8 and received 115 responses, including 98 from North Mankato residents. Only resident responses were included in the evaluation of the designs. Participants rated each design on a five-point scale, with Submission 1 receiving the highest average score at 3.3, followed by Submission 2 at 3.1, Submission 3 at 3.0, and Submission 4 at 2.8. City Planner Lassonde noted that the results were relatively close among all four designs.

The survey also asked residents whether the City should proceed with the existing submissions or hire an artist to develop entirely new concepts. Of the 98 resident responses, 69.4% supported moving forward with the submitted designs, while 30.6% supported creating new concepts.
Comments received through the survey emphasized incorporating elements that represent North Mankato's identity, including the river, bluffs, trees, Veterans Memorial Bridge, and the Belgrade Avenue corridor. Additional suggestions included combining elements from multiple designs, incorporating alternating medallion designs, adding music and entertainment themes, and ensuring consistency with the City's overall branding.

City Planner Lassonde stated that the City Council's next step was to review the public input and determine whether one or more concepts should be forwarded to a professional artist for refinement into a final medallion design.

Council Member Whitlock asked whether the City was able to determine which submissions may have been created using artificial intelligence (AI). City Planner Lassonde explained that submissions that were clearly AI-generated were removed from consideration; however, it is possible that some remaining submissions may have included AI-generated elements.

The City Council discussed whether a selected design should be forwarded to an artist for final refinement, how many concepts should advance, whether the submitted designs represented North Mankato as a whole or specifically the Belgrade Avenue corridor, and whether an original submitter could potentially complete the final design work.

Following discussion, the City Council determined that Designs 1 and 3 should be forwarded to a professional artist for final rendering.

Public Comments-Other City Matters

Lucy Lowry, 2263 Northridge Drive, appeared before the Council and asked about the process used to obtain the light pole medallion renderings and how the project progressed to its current stage. City Planner Lassonde reviewed the process from initial outreach through the selection of the proposed designs. Ms. Lowry stated that she did not believe the public outreach conducted regarding the medallions was sufficiently broad.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before the Council and requested that Council members and staff speak louder and use their microphones more effectively during meetings.
Ms. Church also expressed concerns regarding a property in her neighborhood that sustained fire damage and stated that no corrective action has been taken. She suggested that additional law enforcement agencies may need to become involved. Attorney Kennedy explained that criminal charges are being pursued and that the City has inspected the property. He noted that, unless the building is determined to be unsafe or constitutes a public hazard, the City's authority to require additional action is limited. He further stated that members of the public may have the option to pursue civil action regarding the matter.

Benton Bakke appeared before the Council and discussed concerns regarding the potential for continued fuel shortages. He requested that the City consider developing a plan to address a lower-energy future and prepare for potential changes in energy availability.

Duane Rader, 715 Lyndale Avenue, appeared before the Council and asked whether the City had received a proposal for a data center. He questioned how the City could take a position for or against a data center if there was no proposal before the City for review. Mr. Rader referenced comments made at a previous meeting regarding misinformation about data centers and stated his belief that any misinformation was likely coming from local media rather than the City Council, as no formal data center proposal had been submitted. Mr. Rader also asked about the status of the lawsuit filed by MCEA. It was explained that the lawsuit had been dismissed because there was no active data

center proposal before the City. Mr. Rader stated that he was supportive of the City's consideration of a moratorium.

Mr. Rader further commented on the lawsuit related to the plans for the new Public Works Building, noting that it was filed on February 11, 2026. He reported that in order to bring the project to a referendum, 417 signatures would have been required. He noted that, according to information he had read in the newspaper, residents collected 383 signatures and suggested that this reflected the level of community support. Mr. Rader also raised concerns regarding the use of inappropriate language during public comments at Council meetings and questioned whether such language is permissible under the City's meeting procedures.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

City Administrator McCann reported Fun Days went well with over 100 floats and thanked everyone who participated and worked on the event.

City Administrator McCann noted that the 200 and 300 blocks of Belgrade are open and the City is working on finalizing some items, but MnDOT is still working on their portion of the project.

City Administrator McCann invited participation in the Highway 14 Corridor Study, which is open through the month of July, and an open house will be held at MnDOT on July 30.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone to Music in the Park at Wheeler Park on July 23 and 30. Music begins at 5:30 p.m.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone out to a Free Parent and Child Fishing Event at Benson Park on July 27th starting at 10 a.m., offered by the DNR.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone out for Night to Unite on August 4th.

Mayor and Council Comments

Mayor Carlson thanked Duane Rader for his comments and noted that the City Council is working to address concerns about language and to maintain high standards.

Mayor Carlson stated that he and his wife were excited about the ADA improvements on Belgrade and were looking forward to the opportunity for his wife to utilize the area better.

At 7:48 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Steiner, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting adjourned to a closed meeting under State Statute 13D.03 Performance Evaluation City Administrator.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk