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 6, 2026. 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 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: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Minutes from the June 15, 2026, Council Meeting.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the June 15, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from June 15, 2026, Council Work Session

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the June 15, 2026, Council Work Session Minutes as presented. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Hearing, 7 pm Extension of the Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) Agreement between the City of North Mankato and Gordini.

Community Development Director Fischer reported Gordini operates a warehouse and distribution business. Gordini applied for and was awarded funds from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) through the Minnesota Investment Funds. The agreement requires the creation of 30 new jobs, and to date, Gordini has created 18. Gordini is expanding its facility and believes all 30 jobs will be created as a result. The agreement would extend the deadline to April 30, 2027. Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, asked what would happen if all 30 jobs were not created. Jason Hackerman from Gordini reported Gordini would not receive all of the funds; rather, the business would receive a prorated portion of the funds. Mayor Carlson asked if seasonal employees would meet the requirement. Jason Hackerman stated seasonal employees do not meet the requirement. Their goal with the expansion is to become more of a year-round facility, which would help to meet the job creation goal. Benton Bakke asked what the City's role in the agreement is. City Administrator McCann reported the City is a pass-through.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before the Council to speak regarding Item 11E, Acceptance of the Housing Study. Mr. Hagen stated that the online comment section limited responses to 1,000 characters, which he believed was insufficient to provide meaningful feedback. He further expressed his opinion that citizen comments and concerns are not adequately considered during Council deliberations and that Council Members have often already reached their decisions before public input is received. Mr. Hagen also stated that, in his view, some residents have become discouraged from speaking or submitting comments because they do not believe their input is being heard or considered.

Benton Bakke appeared before the Council to speak regarding Item 11B, Authorization of Competitive Negotiated Sale of General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2026B. Mr. Bakke stated that he believed the bond financing had been structured to include the Industry Court improvements in a way that minimized the perceived cost of the Public Works Facility. He further stated that, in his opinion, the Industry Court improvements would not have been undertaken if the Public Works Facility were not being constructed. Mr. Bakke requested that the Council acknowledge the consequences of its decisions and avoid, in his view, misleading the public regarding the associated costs.

Mr. Bakke also commented on Item 11D, Adoption of the City of North Mankato Social Media Policy. He suggested that the City disable comments on its social media posts while continuing to allow users to share those posts and create their own forums for public discussion. He stated that this approach would eliminate the need for the City to monitor or moderate comments on its social media platforms.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 70-26 Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Approved Audio Permit for Wheeler Park on September 20, 2026, for Holy Rosary Mass in the Park.
D. Approved Audio and event Permit for July 18, 2026, at Dakota Meadows for a Kids Triathlon.
E. Approved Traffic and Safety Committee Recommendations and Authorizing Implementation of Recommendations.
F. Res. No. 71-26 Appointing Election Judges for Primary and General Elections.
G. Approved North Mankato Public Art Agreement with Nakato Bar and Grill for a Mural.
H. Res. No. 77-26 Declaring Surplus Vehicles and Equipment.

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

Business Items

Res. No. 72-26 Authorizing One-Year Compliance Date Extension for the Gordini Minnesota-Investment Fund (MIF) Agreement.

Community Development Director Fischer reported that the resolution would authorize extension of the MIF agreement to April 30, 2027.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to adopt Res. No. 72-26 Authorizing One-Year Compliance Date Extension for the Gordini Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) Agreement. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 73-26 Authorizing the Competitive Negotiated Sale of General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2026B.

City Administrator McCann introduced Jessica Green from Northland Securities to review the proposed bond sale and structuring.

Jessica Green from Northland Securities appeared before Council and reported the City is proposing the issuance of $2.5 million in General Obligation Bonds, Series 2026B, to fund Industry Court improvements, water and sewer improvements, and bond issuance costs. The bonds will be secured by special assessments, net revenues from the City's water and sewer utilities, and property tax levies. The bonds will mature annually from 2028 through 2042, with an estimated true interest cost of 3.91%. The bonds will be sold through a competitive public bidding process, with proposals due August 3, 2026, and Council consideration scheduled for August 3, 2026. A rating will be requested from S&P Global Ratings, with the City's current general obligation debt rating at "AA." The bonds are expected to be issued as tax-exempt obligations.

Council Member Oachs asked why the bonds for the Industry Court improvements and the Marie Lane water and sewer improvements were being combined into a single bond issuance. She noted that the estimated project costs included approximately $980,000 for street improvements, $1,360,000 for sewer improvements, and $160,000 for water improvements. She stated that the street improvements are expected to be funded through 100% special assessments, while the water and sewer improvements will be supported by net revenues from the respective utilities. She asked whether utility rate increases were anticipated and noted that if utility revenues were insufficient to cover the debt service, the City could need to increase the property tax levy. She also stated that combining the projects made the funding for the street improvements appear less transparent. At the request of City Administrator McCann, Ms. Green explained that combining the projects into a single bond issuance provides economies of scale. She stated that issuing separate bonds would likely attract less interest from bidders and could result in higher borrowing costs and interest rates. City Administrator McCann stated that the assessment for the Industry Court improvements was taken into consideration as part of the purchase of the property for the new Public Works Building and will be paid at the time the property is sold. He noted that this is consistent with how assessments are incorporated into the sale price of other Port owned property.

Council Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to Adopt Res. No. 73-26 Authorizing the Competitive Negotiated Sale of General Obligation Improvement Bonds, Series 2026B. Vote on the motion: Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, Oachs nay. Motion carried.

Res. No. 74-26 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids 2026 Storm Sewer Improvement Project City Project No. 26-04 C.

City Engineer Sarff reported the 2026 budget includes funding for storm sewer improvements to address drainage issues in two locations near 1627/1629 North Ridge Lane and along the rear lot lines of 1018/1020 Shady Oak Drive and 1027 Oak Terrace Drive. The project includes installing new storm sewer pipe and inlets, reconnecting existing roof drains and sump pump discharges, minor grading to improve drainage, driveway restoration where needed, and turf restoration. All work will occur within existing drainage and utility easements, with temporary construction easements secured from affected property owners, all of whom support the project. The estimated project cost is $63,000, with bids scheduled to open on July 28, 2026, contract award anticipated on August 3, 2026, and approximately one week of construction.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs to Adopt Res. No. 74-26 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids 2026 Storm Sewer Improvement Project City Project No. 26-04 C. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 75-26 Adopting the City of North Mankato Social Media Policy.

Communications and Outreach Coordinator Larson appeared before Council and reported the proposed resolution adopts the City of North Mankato's Social Media Policy as presented at a previous Council Work Session. No additional comments were received from the Council. Accordingly, staff recommends adopting the policy as presented. Mayor Carlson requested a brief explanation of the proposed policy. Communications and Outreach Coordinator Larson reported the proposed policy supports the City's goal of using social media to provide a secure, timely, and informational platform for residents to learn about City events, emergencies, and public notices. The policy informs the public that the City's social media platforms are considered limited public forums. It clarifies that the City may disable comments on informational posts that are not intended to solicit public input and encourages residents to direct questions, concerns, or requests for assistance to staff through other available communication channels. The policy would also allow staff to block spammers. Council Member Oachs asked if the posts without the option to comment could still be shared. Communications and Outreach Coordinator Larson responded that they could be shared and essentially took the post out of the public sphere into the personal sphere.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 75-26 Adopting the City of North Mankato Social Media Policy. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

2026 Housing Demand Analysis.

City Planner Lassonde appeared before Council and reported the analysis was completed by Maxfield Research and Consulting, a company with 30+ years of experience. The City posted the analysis on the City's website from June 20, 2026 through July 1, 2026 to solicit public input. Citizens were notified via social media and other City news outlets, including the July utility bill stuffer. The survey received two responses from North Mankato citizens during the engagement period. Staff notes that these comments reflect policy preferences and community development concerns but do not alter the demographic and market data findings contained in the Housing Demand Analysis. He noted the comments are kept and considered by the planning department.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to approve the 2026 Housing Demand Analysis. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 76-26 Adopting the City of North Mankato Policy for Donation of Surplus Equipment to a Nonprofit Organization.

Administrative Services Manager-City Clerk Van Genderen reported the policy outlines procedures for identifying, valuing, advertising, and transferring surplus equipment from the City to qualified cities and nonprofit organizations. It is similar to the processes the Council is already familiar with, such as accepting donations and approving the sale of surplus equipment.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whiltock to Adopt Res. No. 76-26 Adopting the City of North Mankato Policy for Donation of Surplus Equipment to a Nonprofit Organization. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Set a Public Hearing for 7 p.m., on July 20, 2026, to Consider Amendments to City Code Section 71.05 Other Parking Restrictions.

City Planner Lassonde appeared before Council and reported the Traffic and Safety Committee 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. A public hearing is required to consider adoption of the proposed amendment.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Set a Public Hearing for 7 p.m., on July 20, 2026, to Consider Amendments to City Code Section 71.05 Other Parking Restrictions. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson aye, no nays. Motion carried.

Public Comments-Other City Matters

Danielle Bollman, 515 Page Avenue, appeared before Council and addressed information from the work session discussion about imposing a moratorium on construction of a data center. She suggested that ADM and CHS were both looking at ways to reduce their water consumption. She suggested that the misinformation that was discussed could be attributed to the City Council's lack of transparency. She referenced her previous comments regarding potential layoffs, including layoffs at Mankato Clinic, and stated that Taylor Corporation could also be impacted. She stated concerns that the Council's decision to proceed with financing the new Public Works Building did not reflect those concerns.

Benton Bakke appeared before Council and addressed information from the work session. He stated that he was not opposed to data centers but believed the size and ecological impacts should be considered. He invited the public to attend an event at Grace Lutheran Church on July 25th that he described as providing a balanced perspective on data centers. He requested that the City Council consider prohibiting the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs).

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and addressed the proposed one-year moratorium on data center construction. He stated that a one-year moratorium was not sufficient given that the adopted AUAR would remain in effect for five years. He questioned the City Council's commitment to public input in relation to the approval of the Public Works Building, which he stated would cost $27 million and was not subject to a public vote. He stated that misinformation regarding the proposed data center resulted from the City's use of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with Oppidan, a company that builds data centers. He referenced a comment from the housing study indicating that the commenter did not believe the City had sufficient visual appeal to attract residents and stated that the issue could be addressed through the creation of a committee.

Dave Olinger, 1302 Lee Boulevard, appeared before Council and reported he had a dispute with the City over a dead tree. He did not believe the tree was on his property, and requested the City to remove it. City staff looked at the tree and stated it was on his property. He disagreed and would like the City to cut it down. City Administrator McCann stated staff would need to review the provided information.

John Tottleben, 522 Lyndale Street, appeared before Council and stated that he lives next to a house that had previously been damaged by fire. He stated he had appeared before Council in the past regarding concerns that an individual he believed was living in the garage continued to reside there. He expressed concerns regarding the lack of progress in cleaning up the property and stated he had been unable to receive a response from the City regarding the anticipated timeline for cleanup. Attorney Kennedy stated that the City's inspector would provide a report regarding the condition of the structure. He explained that until the property is determined to be a nuisance, the City has limited authority to require action. He noted that the property owner could also be subject to civil litigation.

Duane Rader, 715 Lyndale Street, appeared before Council and thanked the Council for the work they do. He stated that when he worked for the City, staff viewed themselves as having

approximately 14,500 bosses and recognized that it is not possible to make everyone happy. He shared his experience serving on committees and acknowledged the challenges committees face in producing meaningful outcomes. He stated that he has worked with many City staff members and believes they are hardworking individuals who understand their roles and can be trusted. He also thanked everyone involved in Fun Days.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

Administrative Services Manager-City Clerk noted that the Council approved the appointment of election judges and thanked them for their service. She also stated that affidavits of candidacy would be accepted from July 14 through July 28 for individuals interested in filing for public office. It was noted that the filing period was moved up two weeks due to changes in state law.

City Administrator McCann thanked everyone who made Art in Alley a successful event on June 18th; the event was hosted by Twin Rivers Council for the Arts.

City Administrator McCann reported Art Splash was held on June 27th at Wheeler Park and thanked attendees and organizers.

City Administrator McCann reported Belgrade Avenue is expected to open soon, pending weather.

City Administrator McCann invited residents to participate in the survey concerning the Belgrade Avenue Light Pole Art.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone out to Fun Days July 8-12.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone out to Art in the Alley on July 18th from 10 am to 2 pm.

City Administrator McCann invited everyone to participate in Night to Unite on August 4th.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Whitlock noted he enjoyed seeing six bald eagles flying overhead as he entered the City Hall for the Council Meeting.

Mayor Carlson asked about the beginning of pool construction. Public Works Director Arnold indicated it should start soon; Webb Construction is finalizing their permits.

Mayor Carlson commented that a resident contacted him concerning a cistern that appeared to be uncapped on Belgrade Hill.

Mayor Carlson asked if the new water meters and software system were able to capture unusual uses of water. Finance Director Ryan stated the system is working and they have been able to assist residents in locating leaks early.

Mayor Carlson commented that he witnessed a near miss between a scooter and a car up at Forest Heights and requested further study of the area to hopefully prevent an accident.

At 8:06 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Steiner, seconded by Council Member Oachs, the Council Meeting adjourned.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk