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 September 21, 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, Steiner, Whitlock, Peterson, City Administrator McCann, 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

Council Member Oachs 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.

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

WHEREAS, September 17, 2026, marks the two-hundred-thirty-ninth anniversary of the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary, to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate it; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designating September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week.

NOW THEREFORE I, Scott Carlson, Mayor of North Mankato, by virtue of the power vested in me as Mayor of the City of North Mankato, do hereby proclaim September 17 through 23 as:

CONSTITUTION WEEK

And ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties.

AGEISM AWARENESS DAY PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, ageism refers to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination directed toward others or ourselves based on age; and

WHEREAS, ageism can affect people at every age and negatively impacts health and wellbeing, financial security, workforce participation and the strength of our communities; and

WHEREAS, North Mankato is home to approximately 3,100 residents age 60 and older, whose experience, talents and contributions strengthen our community; and

WHEREAS, ageism in education, employment, health care, housing, media and community life can limit opportunities and prevent people from fully participating; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the rich and varied experience of aging and promoting age-inclusive language, policies and practices benefit people of all ages; and

WHEREAS, the City of North Mankato, together with the Age-Friendly Mankato and North Mankato Coalition and other community partners, is committed to building a community in which people of every age are respected, included and valued;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Scott Carlson, Mayor of the City of North Mankato, Minnesota, do hereby proclaim October 9, 2026, as

AGEISM AWARENESS DAY

in North Mankato and encourage all residents to challenge age-based stereotypes and help build a more age-inclusive community.

Approval of Council Minutes from the September 8, 2026, Council Meeting.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, to approve the September 8, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; Peterson abstained; no nays. Motion carried.

Approval of Council Work Session Minutes from the September 8, 2026, Council Work Session Meeting.

Council Member Whitlock moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to approve the September 8, 2026, Council Work Session Meeting Minutes as presented. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; Peterson abstained; no nays. Motion carried.

Public Hearing, 7 pm to Consider an Interim Ordinance Authorizing a Study and Imposing a Moratorium on Data Centers.

Attorney Kennedy said this is the second public hearing on a proposed moratorium to establish a one-year moratorium and allow staff to study data centers.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council in support of the moratorium.

Benton Bakke appeared before Council in support of the moratorium.

Patrick Cusack appeared before Council in support of the moratorium.

Joe Tougas, 923 Lake Street, appeared before Council in support of the moratorium.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before the Council and requested that the Council not adopt the proposed ordinance reducing the required separation between a cannabis growing or manufacturing facility and a school from 1,000 feet to 500 feet.

Benton Bakke appeared before the Council and stated that he did not support increasing the width of Range Street and North River Drive. He also expressed opposition to using the remaining miscellaneous paving budget to repair the two identified alleys.

Consent Agenda

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

A. Bills and Appropriations.
B. Res. No. 91-26 Approving Donations/Contributions/Grants.
C. Approved Parade Permit for Benson Park Cross Country Meet on September 29, 2026 from 1 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

D. Approved Parade Permit for Benson Park Cross Country Meet on October 14, 2026 from 1 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
E. Approved Parade Permit for Benson Park Cross Country Meet on October 29, 2026, from 1 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
F. Approved Audio Permit for Spring Lake Park Shelter #1 on October 22, 2026, from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
G. Approved Event and Audio Permit for 256 Belgrade Avenue on October 3, 2026, for the Rockin Recon Event from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

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

Business Items

Ordinance No. 199, An Interim Ordinance authorizing a Study and Imposing a Moratorium on Data Centers.

Attorney Kennedy noted that the proposed ordinance would provide City staff with time to study data centers while prohibiting their development during the moratorium. He explained that if the State adopts a two-year moratorium on data centers, the City could extend its moratorium to align with the State's. Under current State law, however, the City is not authorized to impose a two-year moratorium. The City could extend its moratorium in the future if State law changes or circumstances warrant.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to adopt Ordinance No. 199, an Interim Ordinance authorizing a Study and Imposing a Moratorium on Data Centers. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 92-26 Approving a Proposed Preliminary Tax Levy.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson, to adopt Res. No. 92-26 Approving a Proposed Preliminary Tax Levy. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Consider City Code Amendment Chapter 113, Cannabis Business Regulation.

Community Development Director Fischer reported that the applicant, Tim Tupy, who is in attendance, is requesting an amendment to City Code Section 113.03 to reduce the required cannabis business buffer from a school from 1,000 feet to 500 feet. The request relates to the proposed sale and use of the vacant former Mankato Brewery building at 1119 Center Street, zoned M-1 (Light Industrial), for a cannabis manufacturing and processing business. The property is less than 1,000 feet from the Trinity Christian Day Care/Preschool at 1027 Sherman Street but is more than 500 feet away. Staff has provided maps and buffer requirements from other area communities for reference. Tim Tupy appeared before Council and stated the goal was to reduce the buffer from 1,000 feet to 500 feet because he has an interested buyer who would like to grow and manufacture marijuana. He noted that the facility would be secure and would need to meet all State requirements. Council Member Oachs expressed interest in amending the City Code concerning manufacturing and growth but not retail. Council Member Peterson stated the City responded to the State's sudden legalization of marijuana and created ordinances. As additional information develops, it would not be unreasonable to reconsider the ordinances that were approved.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to have the Staff prepare an Ordinance Reducing the Distance Between Manufacturing and Growing Marijuana from 1,000 feet to 500 Feet. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Approve Northport No. 28 Preliminary & Final Plat.

Community Development Director Fischer reported the Port Authority intends to sell Lots 1 & 2, Block Northport No. 26 to Hemple Development for the construction of a new 300,000-square-foot manufacturing facility. The preliminary and final plat combines Lots 1 & 2, Block 2, Northport No. 26.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson, to approve Northport No. 28 Preliminary & Final Plat. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 93-26 Receiving Preliminary Engineering Report and Calling for Hearing on Improvement for 2027 Range Street and North River Drive Project.

City Engineer Sarff appeared before the Council and reviewed the proposed project, which is part of MnDOT's larger 2027–2028 TH 169 improvements through North Mankato and Mankato. The project includes reconstruction and improvements to portions of Range Street and North River Drive, including new pavement, curb and gutter, storm sewer, water main and sanitary sewer improvements, street lighting, and multi-use trails. A pedestrian underpass will connect the trail systems across TH 169. The improvements are intended to address existing infrastructure needs, improve drainage and utilities, and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections.

The overall TH 169 project is estimated at $36.6 million, with an estimated $6.8 million City share. Approximately $4.3 million is expected to be covered by federal and state aid, leaving approximately $2.5 million in local City costs. The Range Street and North River Drive improvements are estimated at approximately $2.9 million combined. A portion of the costs would be recovered through special assessments to benefiting properties, subject to proposed assessment caps.

Staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Engineering Report and proceeding with the improvement hearing and project process. City Engineer Sarff reviewed the proposed assessment process, noting that property sizes along Range Street and North River Drive vary significantly. Staff recommends a linear-foot assessment cap similar to the approach used for non-residential properties on previous projects, with a proposed cap of $139 per linear foot. Proposed assessments are included in the Council packet and, even with the cap, would result in significant assessments. The Council will need to determine whether the proposed assessments meet the statutory test that the properties are benefited by the improvements.

In response to public comment, City Engineer Sarff noted that the proposed increase in street width would provide consistency with existing street standards in the area and allow for on-street parking.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Adopt Res. No. 93-26 Receiving Preliminary Engineering Report and Calling for Hearing on Improvement for 2027 Range Street and North River Drive Project. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 97-26 Declaring costs to be Assessed and Ordering Preparation of Proposed Assessment for the 2026 Industry Court Improvement Project, City Project No. 26-01 ABCDEF.

City Engineer Sarff reported that the bids for the Industry Improvement Project were awarded by the City Council in July 2026. The project is currently under construction and is expected to reach

substantial completion this fall. The project includes a new water main, storm sewer, street and surface, and street lighting improvements for a new street in the Northport Industrial Park.

All project costs were originally intended to be assessed to the Port Authority property. However, the City has since purchased a portion of the property and incorporated the assessment costs into the sale price of the property. State statute requires a public hearing even when only one property is subject to assessment.

Council Member Oachs asked whether the Port Authority would have sufficient funds to make the annual assessment payments if the remaining lots do not sell. Finance Director Ryan indicated that the Port Authority would be able to cover the assessments and that the payments would not affect the City levy.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson to Adopt Res. No. 97-26 Declaring costs to be Assessed and Ordering Preparation of Proposed Assessment for the 2026 Industry Court Improvement Project, City Project No. 26-01 ABCDEF. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 94-26 For Hearing on Proposed Assessment 2026 Industry Court Improvement Project, City Project No. 26-01 ABCDEF.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner to Adopt Res. No. 94-26 For Hearing on Proposed Assessment 2026 Industry Court Improvement Project, City Project No. 26-01 ABCDEF. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 95-26 Authorizing Additional Work 2026 Street and Miscellaneous Paving Improvement Project, City Project No. 26-02 DEF.

City Engineer Sarff reported that the 2026 Street and Miscellaneous Paving Improvement Project was awarded to WW Blacktopping, Inc. in March and included mill and overlay work on Lilac Lane, North and South Orchid Drives, Valley View Drive, Cambridge Court, and Valley High Court. The original work has been completed, with approximately $345,000 of the $400,000 budget expended, leaving approximately $55,000 available.

Staff proposes using the remaining funds to reclaim and repave two alleys between Belgrade Avenue and Park Avenue. WW Blacktopping submitted the lower quote of $49,750.75, compared with $95,925.00 from M.R. Paving and Excavating. Staff requested Council approval to add the alley improvements through a change order.

Finance Director Ryan noted that the project is under budget and the remaining funds are in the 230 Fund and will not carry forward to the following year. She also noted that the City has reduced the amount of mill and overlay work planned for 2027, including the deferral of some needed maintenance. Completing the alley improvements now would address alleys already identified for future repair and make use of the available project funds.

Staff reported that the alleys are in poor condition and noted that delaying the improvements could result in higher costs in the future.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock to Adopt Res. No. 95-26 Authorizing Additional Work 2026 Street and Miscellaneous Paving Improvement

Project, City Project No. 26-02 DEF. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Set Public Hearing, 7 pm on October 19, 2026, to consider the Vacation of a Utility Easement.

Community Development Director Fischer reported the requesters were purchasing two properties and combining them. There is a utility easement between the properties, and in order to replat, the easement would need to be vacated. The City will contact the utility companies to ensure no utilities are present or will be removed before the vacation is completed.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to Set a Public Hearing, 7 pm on October 19, 2026, to consider the Vacation of a Utility Easement. Vote on the motion: Oachs, Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Carlson, aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 96-26 Authorizing Application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for a PROTECT Discretionary Grant.

City Planner Lassonde reported that the resolution would authorize the City to apply for a USDOT PROTECT Discretionary Grant for transportation and flood-resilience improvements related to the Lookout Drive/Lee Boulevard interchange and associated flood protection infrastructure. The resolution also commits an estimated $3.34 million local match and authorizes the City Administrator to prepare, submit, and execute the necessary grant documents if funding is awarded. City Planner Lassonde noted that the application is similar to previous grant requests submitted by the City.

The grant would require a 20 percent local match. Council Member Oachs noted that the project is included in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) but is not currently scheduled and asked about the timeline for incorporating the project into the debt service levy if the grant is awarded. City Administrator McCann explained that the grant and project process would take several years, providing the City time to add the project to the CIP and plan for the associated debt service before the project is completed.

Discussion was held regarding whether the City would be required to accept the grant if awarded. City Planner Lassonde confirmed that the City would not be required to accept the grant. Finance Director Ryan noted that the estimated $3.34 million local match includes engineering and other miscellaneous costs, with no additional costs anticipated. It was also noted that the City has applied for other grant opportunities in the past without being awarded funding.

Council Member Peterson moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to adopt Res. No. 96-26 Authorizing Application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for a PROTECT Discretionary Grant. 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 the Council and expressed support for the moratorium and continued maintenance of City infrastructure. She also supported using utility bill stuffers to keep residents informed and thanked the City for replanting the trees on Page Avenue.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before the Council and asked whether the City is pursuing grants for the removal of lead service lines. She also asked how much industrial property tax revenue the City would lose as a result of constructing the new Public Works building on the property.

Benton Bakke appeared before the Council and requested a change to the number of days an issue may be brought before the City Council. He also expressed his belief that the Port Authority was being used to prevent the possibility of a referendum.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and stated he agreed with the moratorium.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

City Administrator McCann reviewed the All Seasons Arena Board agenda and noted that, with only the two cities remaining on the board, the existing board will be dissolved and replaced with an advisory board. The City Councils will act independently to approve or deny proposed actions.

City Administrator McCann thanked those who helped make Symphony on the Prairie, CityArt in the Alley, and Blues on Belgrade successful, as well as those who attended the events.

City Administrator McCann provided updates on upcoming community events and City activities. The Fall Clean-up Drop-off Event will be held October 1–4, with a shredding truck available on October 3. Annual water main flushing will begin October 5, with Lower North expected to be completed by October 9 and Upper North by October 23. Residents and businesses may experience temporary water discoloration during flushing.

City Administrator McCann also announced that the North Mankato Taylor Library is hosting a City-Wide Duck Hunt through September 30 and a Community Read Author Talk featuring Patty Wetterling. The annual Party on the Prairie will be held October 3 at Benson Park.

City Administrator McCann also noted that Greater Mankato Growth, KTOE/Radio Mankato, and South Central College will host a North Mankato City Council and Mayor Candidate Forum on September 29 at South Central College.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Peterson noted that many youth sports activities are happening throughout the City, and it is good to see the assets the City has put in place being used.

Mayor Carlson noted that the City is not saying there will not be a Symphony on the Prairie, only that the City is looking at other avenues to obtain the funding.

At 8:46 p.m., on a motion by Council Member Steiner, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, the Council Meeting adjourned.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk