

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on January 3, 2022. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, asking that everyone join in the Pledge of Allegiance. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, and Norland, City Administrator Harrenstein, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Council Minutes from December 20, 2021, Council Meeting.

Council Member Steiner moved, seconded by Council Member Norland, to approve the Council meeting minutes of December 20, 2021. Vote on the motion Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Public Hearing, 7 p.m. Amending City Code Chapter 32: Departments, Boards, and Commissions.

City Administrator Harrenstein reported Ordinance No. 145 would establish a Culture, Recreation & Quality of Life Department in the City of North Mankato. The activities of this Department shall be assigned to it by the City Administrator and may include the coordination of the Taylor Library, Caswell Sports, the Swim Facility, adult and youth recreation, community events, promotion, and marketing of the City of North Mankato.

Tom Hagen, 927 Lake Street, appeared before Council and indicated the Ordinance was a coverup for taking over the North Mankato Fun Days and can be included in a pattern of overreach.

Tim Roemhildt, 2102 Burnett Lane, appeared before Council and requested clarification on the cost of the new Department.

Barb Church, 102 Wheeler Avenue, appeared before Council and requested clarification on the planned duties for the position and how much the Department would cost. She indicated that she thought the position/department was being built around a person's talents.

With no one else appearing, Mayor Dehen closed the Public Hearing.

Consent Agenda

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

- A. Bills and Appropriations.
- B. Res. No. 1-22 Approving Donations/Contributions/Grants
- C. Res. No. 2-22 Setting Gas Mileage Reimbursement Rate.
- D. Res. No. 3-22 Designating Official Newspaper
- E. Res. No. 4-22 Designating Depositories for the City of North Mankato
- F. Approved Parade and Audio Permit for the 14th Annual Girls on the Run 5K on April 30, 2022, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Spring Lake Park.
- G. Accepted a Property Owner Annexation Petition to Annex 7.63 Acres into the City of North Mankato and Set a Public Hearing for 7:00 p.m. on February 7, 2022.
- H. Res. No. 7-22 Approving Consent Assessment Agreement-22 Snowbird Trail.

Vote on the motion Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Public Comments Concerning Business Items on the Agenda

None.

Business Items

Ordinance No. 145 Establishing a Culture, Recreation, & Quality of Life Department in the City of North Mankato.

City Administrator Harrenstein reported that the proposed Department results from action requested during a Work Session. The Council suggested it would be appropriate to consolidate the efforts of Caswell Park, the Swim Facility, the Taylor Library, and the youth and adult sports. City Administrator Harrenstein reported that currently, these independent departments work together to accomplish their goals. He stated that as each of the departments has increased program offerings it became apparent to the City Council and staff it would be beneficial to have everyone report to one individual. City Administrator Harrenstein stated there are no additional costs proposed. He noted the Department is not organized around a person. Instead, it results from functions and coordination, and it is important to have someone at a different level of authority in the working group to direct the work.

Council Member Steiner indicated he believes it is unnecessary to create another layer of bureaucracy.

Council Member Oachs stated that she was one of the people who questioned the current organization, and having one person in charge would be beneficial.

Mayor Dehen stated he believes it would be a way for the various leaders to coordinate all of the activities that have been increasing over the past ten years. He noted that the City's reputation is for well-run and quality activities that continue to bring additional activities.

Council Member Whitlock indicated he believes that with the City's continued involvement and expansion of activities, it would be essential to have someone in charge so everyone can be coordinated.

Mayor Dehen indicated having one Department would help coordinate everyone in the City involved in the planning and execution of all of the City's activities. He stated that the activities and offerings would grow in the next five years. While the City has talented people in place, their jobs overlap, and pulling everyone together will help coordinate.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Whitlock, to adopt Ordinance No. 145, Establishing a Culture, Recreation, & Quality of Life Department in the City of North Mankato. Vote on the motion Oachs, Whitlock, Norland, and Dehen aye; Steiner nay. Motion carried.

Res. No. 5-22 Granting Consolidated Communications Inc., a Franchise Extension through July 31, 2022.

City Administrator Harrenstein introduced Attorney Brian Grogan from Moss & Barnett, who discussed Resolution No. 5-22 and Resolution No. 6-22 at the same time. Attorney Grogan stated he represents the City of North Mankato as they work to establish franchise extensions with both Consolidated Communications and Spectrum Mid-America, LLC. Attorney Grogan stated the City granted a 15-year franchise to Charter Communications, now Spectrum, in 1996 and executed a five-year extension with an expiration date of December 18, 2021. He noted Consolidated Communications was granted a franchise in 2006 with an expiration date of December 18, 2021. The City purposefully set the renewal dates for the same time to help with the renewal process. He explained that State

Statute requires the City to treat the companies the same. The City now has two expired franchises that will continue to function monthly. He stated they are expecting the renewal process to take several months. The resolutions will bridge the gap until new franchises are established. Attorney Grogan noted the cable industry is changing dramatically with the increased option to stream services. Council Member Norland requested clarification on how long the City could anticipate the new franchise to run. Attorney Grogan reported the goal would be a ten-year franchise.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to Adopt Res. No. 5-22 Granting Consolidated Communications Inc., a Franchise Extension through July 31, 2022. Vote on the motion Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Res. No. 6-22 Granting Spectrum Mid-America, LLC a Franchise Extension through July 31, 2022.

Discussion concerning the resolution occurred during the previous agenda item discussion.

Council Member Oachs moved, seconded by Council Member Steiner, to Adopt Res. No. 6-22 Granting Spectrum Mid-America, LLC a Franchise Extension through July 31, 2022. Vote on the motion Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, and Dehen aye; no nays. Motion carried.

Receive Redistricting 2022 Information.

City Clerk Van Genderen reviewed information concerning Redistricting in 2022. She noted North Mankato's population increased 6.5% between 2010 and 2020. The total North Mankato population is 14,275 people. Redistricting is the process of redrawing the boundaries of election districts, done in the United States after completing the decennial Census. The purpose of redistricting is to ensure that the people of each district are equally represented. In Minnesota, the Legislature redistricts congressional and legislative districts, and City Councils redistrict wards and precincts, township boards redistrict precincts, school boards manage school board election districts, and the county board redistricts for commissioner districts. City Clerk Van Genderen reviewed the schedule for redistricting, noting the City redistricts after the Congressional and legislative plans are completed on February 15, 2022. If the City redistricts, the process must be completed by March 29, 2022. City Clerk Van Genderen reported precincts are the basic geographical areas for organizing and administering elections established by the local municipality. Each precinct has its own voting roster; the precinct's ballot style and votes are tallied. Precincts are not tied to population size, but precincts with a large number of registered voters can become challenging to manage, and most precincts do not have more than 2,000 registered voters. City Clerk Van Genderen reviewed the registered voters by precinct for 2020, noting that Precinct 5 had 1,799 and Precinct 6 had 1,683 registered voters. By law, the City of North Mankato may be required to redistrict if new Congressional or legislative lines are drawn that split a precinct. But the Council may choose to redistrict to realign precincts to accommodate population changes or change polling locations. City Clerk Van Genderen reviewed two redistricting options. A discussion was held concerning the options, with City Clerk Van Genderen recommending option 1 to ease precinct identification and allow growth in the proposed precinct 7. City Clerk Van Genderen reported that if the Council chose or needed to redistrict, the Council should set a public hearing for February 21, 2022, hold a Council Work Session on February 28, 2022, and conduct the Public Hearing on March 7, 2022, and adopt the Ordinance. Council supported Option 1. Mayor Dehen requested a Council Work Session to review the options and provide a chance to offer additional options if the Legislature's redistricting split a currently proposed precinct.

City Administrator and Staff Comments

The City Administrator congratulated the Taylor Library Hometown Holiday Lights winners. The individual house was 10 Cardinal Court, and the neighborhood contest winner was Omega Court.

City Administrator Harrenstein stated the Taylor Library Adult Spelling Bee would take place on Friday, January 28th, at the Mankato Brewery. There is still time to register your team at the Taylor Library.

City Administrator Harrenstein announced that Spring Lake Park, Wheeler Park, King Arthur Park, and Walter S. Farm Park skating rinks are open. The Wheeler Park and Spring Lake Park warming houses are also open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 pm.

The City Administrator reported that the Public Works accepts real Christmas trees at the compost site at 600 Webster Avenue, and holiday lights and extension cords can be recycled at the Riverbend Recycling Center.

City Administrator Harrenstein reported absentee voting has begun for the Nicollet County Commissioner District 3 Special Election. The special election primary will be held on Tuesday, February 8th, and absentee voting is offered through Monday, February 7th. For more information on this election, please visit the Nicollet County website. Please note that this special election is only for Commissioner District 3, including North Mankato Precincts 1,2 and 3.

Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Norland responded to a comment from a resident posed during the December 20, 2021, open forum. She reported the question was specific to the Wingert Development Agreement in 2018. In general, she reviewed the City Council process for decision-making.

Council Member Norland thanked the Council for their hard work and individual contributions to the City and the Council.

Council Member Whitlock requested Council Member Norland move her computer screen to provide him with further visibility to Council Member Oachs.

Council Member Steiner requested the City Attorney and Community Development Director Fischer return to the meetings.

Mayor Dehen reported that Hockey Day Minnesota is set to take place in Mankato on January 19-23, 2022, and the event will be an economic benefit to the region. He reminded everyone that the Anthony Ford Pond Hockey Tournament would be at Spring Lake Park on January 29-30, 2022.

At 8:11 pm, on a motion by Council Member Norland, seconded by Council Member Steiner, the Council Meeting was adjourned.

Mayor

City Clerk