

## **COUNCIL WORK SESSION March 28, 2022**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Council Chambers on March 28, 2022. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Oachs, Steiner, Norland, Mayor Dehen, Interim City Administrator Fischer, Public Works Director Host, and City Clerk Van Genderen. Absent: Council Member Whitlock.

### **Greater Mankato Growth**

Mayor Dehen welcomed Jessica Beyer, President, and CEO of GMG, Inc., Andy Wilke, Business Development & Public Affairs Director, and Ryan Vesey, Economic Development & Research Manager. Jessica Beyer thanked the Mayor for allowing GMG to present information to the City Council to discuss GMG's work on behalf of North Mankato. She noted the organization exists to support and promote its members' economic growth and vitality and the regional marketplace. The organization's four pillars are Business Growth and Development, Talent Growth, Retention and Attraction, Regional Livability, and Advocacy of the Marketplace.

Ryan Vesey addressed the Council concerning the REDA Partnership. The partnership focuses on developing a regional alliance to promote economic and community prosperity. The partnership's goals are business retention and expansion, new enterprise and emerging business development, new business development, and marketplace enhancement. Partners include Eagle Lake, Lake Crystal, Mankato, North Mankato, St. Peter, Blue Earth County, and Nicollet County. The City of North Mankato's 2022 Partnership Contribution is \$34,933. It contributes to regional economic development services for the overall regional marketplace, including cities and counties, specifically outlined in the Joint Services Agreement. Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. Matches every dollar invested by all Alliance partners 1 to 1. Each dollar invested by the City of North Mankato leverages \$18.72 in matching public and private contributions. The funds are used for economic development and marketing resource subscriptions, business development and recruitment, and promotional materials including videos, media, social media, and printed materials and human capital and resources by way of dedicated and shared staff.

Andy Wilke reported the City Center Partnership's mission as a private/public partnership is to promote collaboration and foster investment in the City Center to attract and support the growth of a diverse array of businesses, customers, visitors, and residents in the region. The organization's vision is a vibrant City Center that anchors and exemplifies the region's creativity, diversity, and vitality. The strategic work plan areas include livability and development, aesthetics and vitality, and CityArt. Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. also acts as the regional chamber. Chamber activities include celebrating business milestones, promoting community businesses, and offering a leadership program.

Jessica Beyer reported GMG also puts out a weekly e-newsletter with various topics. Once a month, the organization hosts an after-hours business event to highlight businesses and provide opportunities for networking.

Council Member Norland thanked Andy Wilke for attending the legislature day in the capital to promote the Caswell bonding request.

Council Member Oachs requested GMG connect with the new leadership on Business on Belgrade to continue promoting the events.

Mayor Dehen mentioned the GMG event's Brewing in Our Cities event, held on April 30, 2022. He noted Mayor Massad from Mankato and himself would be present for the event.

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Mayor Dehen requested Ms. Beyer provide additional information on the community planning. She noted a lot of work was completed for vision 2020, and now the region continues to plan for the future.

Mayor Dehen requested clarification from Ryan Vesey concerning the change in focus from attracting new businesses to the retention and expansion of companies. Mr. Vesey commented the plan would not stop attracting new businesses but rather increase efforts on the retention and expansion of the current companies.

Jessica Beyer thanked the Council for their continuing support and partnership.

### **Annual Street, Shop, and Street Light Report**

Public Works Director Host reported the Public Works Department's objectives are Safety, Quality, and Productivity.

The goal of safety is to perform work safely. The staff is working towards that goal through education which includes training sessions, quarterly safety meetings, and creating a safety culture. In 2021 there were five reportable incidents, with 58 reportable incidents in the last five years.

Public Works Director Host noted the staff is working toward quality through planning their work and working on their plan. Utilizing consistent documents, consistent expectations, improving training programs, and updating equipment.

Public Works Director Host stated productivity is also produced through planning the work and working the plan using consistent documents and expectations and updating equipment. He said 48% of Street Department hours were utilized for asphalt patching, milling, curb repair, and snow removal.

Public Works Director Host reported the North Mankato Street System is approximately 210 lane miles, with 10 miles of that being private streets. The City maintains approximately 200 lane miles with 14.2 miles of MSA, four miles of alleys, and 105 cul-de-sacs. He reviewed the Mill and Overlay program map and the seal coat program. The Pavement Management Plan implemented in 2019 has increased funding for road system maintenance. The program has a goal to sealcoat all miles every seven years. The City averages 13.25 lane miles per year, falling approximately 3-5% short of the plan.

The Street Department has ten full-time employees, 70 pieces of equipment, and works 16,000 hours each year. Challenges facing the street department include the outdated Public Works Facility, older equipment, materials inflation, and a tight labor market with difficulty hiring seasonal staff. Opportunities include potential funding opportunities and the purchase of equipment, including milling equipment.

The Mechanic shop has two full-time employees and maintains 154 units in the city fleet. Challenges include inflation of material costs, inflation and availability of new equipment, and the current fleet's condition. The equipment is evaluated yearly based on price and quantity of repairs, age, type of use, miles/hours, reliability, and condition of the unit. The evaluations ranked the equipment with 46 good, 14 that need to be evaluated, and 91 items that need to be replaced.

The Street Lights department has one full-time employee and maintains eight signal lights, 1428 lights with 392 Xcel, 837 Benco, and 199 owned by North Mankato. Opportunities include converting lights to LED and the possibility of the City owning additional lights. Challenges for the department include the old infrastructure, the cost to lease the lights from Xcel and Benco, and the age of the signal system.

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Council Member Oachs requested clarification on the street light lease. Public Works Director Host reported there were ongoing leases. The companies work well with the City, but there may be opportunities for changes.

Mayor Dehen requested clarification on potential reconstruction projects in the future. Public Works Director Host stated Somerset is planned for 2023, and other roads, including Wheeler Avenue and Page Avenue, in outgoing years.

**Receive Logo Information**

Public Works Director Host reported that updated logos were included in the packet, including the library, swim facility, and a potential Caswell Sports logo update. The discussion revolved around changing Caswell's colors from red and blue to green and blue. Council Member Norland and Steiner agreed with the move to the green and blue logo. Council Member Oachs requested Caswell's font match the other symbols' fonts. She stated she was okay with Caswell's logo staying red and blue with the change. Mayor Dehen commented consistency would be good, and he would support either red and blue font or changing the font style to match. He commented a change would be good.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to adjourn the Council Work Session at 12:58 pm.

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Mayor

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City Clerk