

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Council Chambers on September 26, 2022. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, Norland, City Administrator McCann, Interim Finance Director Ryan, Community Development Director Fischer, Police Chief Gullickson, City Planner Lassonde, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

Haughton Avenue Traffic

Community Development Director Fischer reported that the Traffic and Safety Committee had met several times in response to traffic-related concerns expressed by residents along Haughton Avenue in Upper North Mankato. The Committee has met several times and staged several exercises to understand and mitigate traffic issues. Beginning in May of 2021, the City conducted a traffic study using speed radar. The results showed that some vehicles traveled at significantly higher speeds than the posted speed limit of 30 mph, but the average speed recorded was 19 mph. The City did not make traffic control changes in 2021, but the Police Department increased patrols. In May of 2022, the City began to receive additional concerns about the area. The City distributed a survey to all Haughton Avenue residents concerning the perception of speed, increased traffic, safety when walking or biking, and interest/support in adding stop signs. Concerns brought to the attention through the survey included an increased volume of traffic from people using Haughton to get to the new Waters North Subdivision, traffic, and parking around the Mankato Area Youth Baseball Association (MAYBA) warehouse. The Traffic and Safety Committee recommended the City place the portable speed radar along the road and then added temporary stop signs at the La Mar Drive intersection. Initial data without a temporary stop sign showed a daily maximum speed of roughly ten mph over the limit. Following placing a stop sign at the intersection of Haughton Avenue and La Mar Drive a daily maximum speed of approximately ten mph over the limit was still recorded but with a reduction of 15% in the percentage of vehicles traveling over the speed limit. The City proceeded to send out a second survey, and 73% of respondents believed the stop sign improved safety and supported a permanent stop sign at La Mar Drive. There was some support (46.7%) for testing traffic calming methods such as seasonal speed bumps or other treatments. Other suggestions included a permanent radar sign, stop signs at multiple locations, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons at crosswalks. Several roadway improvements have been discussed and researched, including stop signs, traffic calming measures, and speed enforcement. Complications for installing a stop sign include installation location, as both the La Mar Drive West and Castle Drive intersections would create difficulty for residents who live at the corners. Traffic calming methods include bump-outs, striping the road to narrow the lanes, and speed bumps presenting complications, including loss of parking spaces and confusion for residents. Police Chief Gullickson stated that the police department has been conducting additional patrols but has not found the traffic unusual for similar neighborhoods. City Council discussed the issue, and Mayor Dehen recommended testing a stop sign at the Green Acres intersection and one at the La Mar intersection. Staff agreed to conduct additional testing of stop signs to determine if traffic would slow down.

Budget Workshop: Enterprise Funds, Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, Recycling, Stormwater, and Hotel Fund

City Administrator McCann appeared before Council and reviewed the North Mankato Average monthly utility bill in 2022 was \$86.86, which, compared to North Mankato's comparable cities, is the second to the lowest bill, with Faribault having a lower bill. The other 11 cities had higher utility bills. He did note that staff is recommending a rate increase of \$1.50 on the base for

Wastewater and a \$.50 rate increase on the stormwater base rate. Even with the \$2.00 increase, North Mankato would maintain one of the lowest utility bills.

City Administrator McCann reviewed the Water Utility, which includes a 2023 operating budget of \$2,427,133, a \$55,899 increase from 2022. Increases are attributed to capital outlay, personnel services, supplies, utilities, and transfers to the Capital Facilities Fund. The fund's cash balance would decrease in 2023 to 48% due to a capital outlay for filter rehabilitation but would increase in the outlying years due to a rate increase in 2024. The goal would be to build cash reserves so the City can pay cash for capital outlay. Mayor Dehen requested an update on the radio read meter installation. Interim Finance Director Ryan reported that progress is slow but steady with all new houses, houses affected by reconstruction, replacement water meters, and some interested in the convenience continue to transfer to the new meters. Mayor Dehen suggested the possibility of requiring all multi-family units to change. Interim Finance Director Ryans suggested changing all rental units to the new auto-read units.

City Administrator McCann reviewed the Wastewater Utility Fund which accounts for the operations of the City's Wastewater Utility. In 2023 the operating budget is \$2,651,706 which is a \$59,592 increase from 2022. The increase is due to transfers to the Capital and Facilities Replacement Fund, capital projects, and Mankato treatment costs. Revenue will increase by \$118,964 due to increased customer receipts, including the \$1.50 base rate increase on all units. He noted that Mankato has not committed to anything concerning anticipated increases due to the anticipated work on the wastewater treatment plant.

Interim Finance Director Ryan reported that the 2023 Recycling budget is \$571,796, which is an \$8,518 increase from the 2022 Budget. The increase relates to personnel services and recycling contract fees. She noted that the City has been receiving a check from DemCon rather than paying them due to their ability to sell the recyclables. Mayor Dehen pointed out that the recycling tonnage collected has been decreasing. He requested that Public Information Officer Brown create a campaign to encourage residents to recycle, noting that recycling materials can reduce costs.

Interim Finance Director Ryan reported that the Storm Water Utility fund accounts for the operations of the Storm Water utilities. The Storm Water Utility Fund's 2023 operating budget is \$531,252, which is a \$16,459 decrease from 2022 due to personnel and retirement of debt. Revenue will increase by approximately \$63,000 due to the base rate's \$.50 a month increase. The funds have been used for ravine maintenance, and the City will need to look at future ravine projects.

Interim Finance Director Ryan reviewed the Solid Waste Fund to collect refuse and general garbage. The Solid Waste Fund's 2023 budget is \$872,011, an increase of \$36,877. The growth relates to spring and fall clean-up expenses, disposal costs, and decreased debt. Council Member Norland discussed changing the West Central Sanitation contract to increase the amount the City pays to West Central to help offset expenses related to the current economic situation. She noted the concern about the West Central Sanitation's personnel. Mayor Dehen thanked her for her thoughts but reminded Council that it would not set a good precedent to break the contract and that the contract coincides with Mankato's and the two need to stay instep. Mayor Dehen also confirmed with staff that mattresses would not be accepted at the Fall Drop-Off.

City Administrator McCann reviewed the Hotel Fund, which is related to the City's housing for temporary workers. The Hotel Fund's 2023 budget is \$238,623. This is an increase of \$71,702 from 2022. The increase relates to facility maintenance, debt service, insurance, and taxes. He noted the Port Authority bonded an extra \$1.5 million for maintenance of the facility. He said the fund would burn through any reserves that could pay for the debt service by 2028. City Administrator McCann reported that staff had been actively marketing the property.

Council Member Whitlock requested an additional work session on cannabis. He reported that it would be good to be able to regulate the products being sold. Staff indicated that oversight who sells the products is with the State.

Council Member Whitlock also requested a work session on the All Seasons Arena as significant funds may be required. Council Member Oachs reported that the All Seasons Arena Board is working on determining partners before they can determine shared costs. The board is also working on a joint powers agreement.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to adjourn the Council Work Session at 1:05 pm.

Mayor

City Clerk