

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in the North Mankato Police Annex on January 28, 2019. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The following were present for roll call: Mayor Dehen, Council Members Norland, Oachs, Whitlock, and Steiner, City Administrator Harrenstein, Finance Director McCann, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

Alternative Public Transportation Options

City Administrator Harrenstein reported the Council could consider if they are interested in a pilot project that provides alternative transportation options. He reported the City currently receives service from Mankato and contracts for 6 hours per day. The service is a fixed route, and recently residents have expressed concerns about the limitations. City Administrator Harrenstein introduced Jeffrey Ericson and Aiden Marty from RubyRide along with JoAnn Olsen, a consultant from SRF and Mark Anderson, the former director of Mankato transportation. Mark Anderson reported it is difficult to provide service in low density, low ridership areas, and this project may assist. JoAnn from SRF reported the City is exploring alternatives to better meet the travel needs of its residents and addressing challenges of providing transportation for a diverse population. The goal is a cost-effective and convenient on-demand service for residents of North Mankato, with travel points to and from Mankato being permitted, but travel points within Mankato not permitted.

Mr. Ericson from Ruby Ride reported the mission of the organization is to offer a transportation solution more convenient, affordable and useful than driving yourself. RubyRide is a form of Demand Responsive Transit (DRT) that adapts to the daily transportation demands using technology to provide more flexible routing, trip booking, and service requirements. RubyRide is used to enhance existing options and help fill the holes in fixed-route transit. Mr. Ericson reported the drivers are local employees who become familiar with the people they serve. He reported that often beneficiaries of the services would sometimes help pay for the service. Mr. Marty reported using RubyRide is simple, users set trip destination by booking online or over the phone, they are provided trip details including pickup time, trip length, driver name, and car model, users are requested to meet the driver at the curb, but special accommodations may be made, and then users are requested to rate their experience to help build and improve the service. A snapshot of North Mankato shows a diverse population that could benefit from diverse transportation options. Mr. Ericson reported that because the City is their client, they would receive data concerning the use of RubyRide, but information of users will remain protected. Council Member Norland requested clarification on the hours of availability. Mr. Ericson clarified the times are set by the City, but currently it is 7 am to 6 pm. Mayor Dehen noted the service could be used outside of those hours but would not be subsidized by the City. Council Member Oachs requested clarification on destination sponsorship. Mr. Ericson reported a receipt or some other form of confirmation would be used to verify the customer used the service and went to the specified location. Council Member Whitlock requested clarification on if an MSU student who lived in North Mankato could get a ride to MSU. Mr. Ericson stated they could, but they could not go from one location in Mankato to another location in Mankato. Mayor Dehen reported in subsequent phases that the City may want to look at lowering the age that a person can use RubyRide so parents could arrange student transportation. Council Member Whitlock requested clarification on cost. City Administrator Harrenstein reported the City does not have a contract for review, but are anticipating approximately \$3.00 per ride or approximately \$75,000-\$100,000 for the service. He reported the fixed route bus route would remain, but the City could make the additional service work within the adopted budget. Council Member Whitlock reported he liked the concept. Council Member Norland requested clarification on if she was driven to a medical appointment would the driver wait. Mr. Ericson stated the driver would leave, but you could schedule a return ride. Mayor Dehen stated he appreciated the

added flexibility that could help people meet their needs. Council Member Oachs clarified people with differing abilities would be accommodated. A formal presentation and additional information will be presented at a Council Meeting.

Discuss Community Development Report

City Administrator Harrenstein congratulated the Community Development Department on the highest building permit revenue in years. Community Development Director Fischer reported the City issued 1,225 Building Permits with a total value of \$45,340,795 divided into Industry/Commercial, Single-Family Homes, Residential Remodel and Multi-Family Housing. Mayor Dehen requested clarification on if this was record number of permits or record value. Community Development Director Fischer reported it was value. City Administrator Harrenstein noted there might be a market for senior housing such as patio homes. Mayor Dehen noted the City has been working to encourage single-family development with smaller lot sizes and new developments and should continue to monitor the permits to determine if the work that has been done is working. Community Development Director Fischer reported the inspectors conducted 2,269 inspections and 218 plan reviews. The Fire Department trained four rental inspectors who have conducted 94 inspections. Community Development Director Fischer reviewed the growth in Northport including Blue Star Power Systems, LJP expansion, Building Fasteners, and D&K Powder Coating addition. The City was also awarded a BDPI grant for utility extensions and is working on an additional grant submittal in 2019 for continued westward expansion. Harrison Trucking is expected to construct in 2019 along with Mankato Clinic. Mayor Dehen reviewed the development of the 14/41 interchange and how North Mankato's \$3 million investment has garnered around 28 or 29 million dollars in development in the Industrial Park.

Community Development Director Fischer reported his department has worked on the Commerce Drive Plan which will be presented to Council in the coming months along with the ADA Transition Plan which is being conducted by MAPO and will be presented in the coming months. City Administrator Harrenstein reported the ADA Transition Plan would be used to identify ADA deficiency's that will be considered during reconstruction projects. Mayor Dehen reported he was working with City Engineer Sarff and Matt Lassonde from Bolton & Menk on completing the Commerce Drive reconfiguring of access points. City Administrator Harrenstein thanked Mayor Dehen for his work on completing the access point reconfiguring. Community Development Director Fischer reported the City is considering a Northwest Area Development Plan. City Administrator Harrenstein stated the plans created by the City have produced development of areas and staff would like Council to inform them if there are other areas that they would like studied. Mayor Dehen requested the Northwest Development plan be presented for inclusion in the Nicollet County Comprehensive Plan. Community Development Director Fischer reviewed the Future Land Use map highlighting areas for industrial growth and residential growth. He did note that there is little area planned for future multi-family housing, but Council did allow the consideration of that growth when considering areas for development. Mayor Dehen stated if development continues in the Judson Bottom area the City may need to review the use of the road as it may not be able to sustain additional use. City Administrator Harrenstein reviewed a piece of property known as the Bengtson property and requested guidance as the owner may consider selling the property for development. Mayor Dehen suggested providing infrastructure guidance so potential developers may be able to plan accordingly.

Discuss Benson Park

Public Works Director Host reviewed proposed plans for a restroom/shelter at Benson Park. Mayor Dehen noted the structure might not be as elaborate as the originally planned structure, but it will accommodate the needs of the park. Council Member Oachs noted that maybe it would be

possible for people to donate time or money for naming rights. Mayor Dehen stated the information should be brought before Council and if someone wants to donate time or money, they would need to be able to provide it within the timeframe laid out for the project.

Mayor Dehen requested the next Council Session on February 11th will be held at the new Spring Lake Park Warming House.

Mayor Dehen closed the Council Work Session at 1:37 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk