

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA  
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION  
Monday, August 18, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted at the Hastings Municipal Airport, 3300 W. 12th Street, on August 18, 2025.

The Worksession Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Council President Steve Huntley with the following members present: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong, Larry Consbruck, Brad Consbruck. Absent: Maggie Esch.

City Officials present: City Administrator, Mark Funkey; City Attorney, Jesse Oswald; City Clerk, Tyler Ficken; Fire Chief, Troy Vorderstrasse; Parks & Recreation Director, Jeff Hassenstab; Utility Manager, Derek Zeisler; Director of Engineering, Lee Vrooman; Development Services Director, Kevin Kubo; Director of Human Resources, Lori Hartman; Library Director, Kelly Reisig; Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson; Director of Finance/City Treasurer, Roger Nash; Technology Director, Erik Nielsen; Public Information Manager; Tony Herrman; Information Technology, Kirk Layton; Safety Director, Trent Clark.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited.

Moved by Brad Consbruck seconded by Michael Anderson to adopt the current agenda for the August 18, 2025 City Council Worksession. Roll Call: Ayes: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Matt Fong, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman. Nays: None. Absent: Maggie Esch. The motion carried.

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, August 15, 2025. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available for public review and a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted and accessible to members of the public.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

### **Update on regulating motorized vehicles**

City Attorney Jesse Oswald provided an update; staff are reviewing prior feedback and drafting an ordinance to present at a later date. Mayor Beckby discussed ongoing safety concerns regarding electric bikes, scooters, and similar devices, particularly on major roads involving children. He emphasized the importance of public safety while balancing recreation. Council members and staff discussed possible classification of motorized vs. non-motorized devices, enforcement challenges and potential penalties, liability and insurance concerns, public education including outreach in schools, helmet requirements, state regulations, and city-specific rules, as well as consideration of designated lanes on bike/hike trails. The consensus was that more research is needed, and staff would bring back a draft ordinance.

### **Discussion of mobile vendors**

Mayor Beckby presented concerns regarding food trucks and mobile vendors downtown, including public safety, aesthetic impact, competition with brick-and-mortar businesses, lack of tax/utility contributions, and blocking storefronts. City Attorney Jesse Oswald discussed a draft ordinance defining mobile vendors, requiring permits, and restricting operations in public rights-of-way. Key discussion points included (1) allowing vendors in city or private parking lots with appropriate permits and fees, (2) exceptions for events such as those utilizing the event guide, youth lemonade stands, and ice cream trucks, (3) a fee structure (e.g., \$25/day) to contribute to a fund to be determined, (4) enforcement and ensuring compliance with fire, health, and noise regulations, (4) potential installation of electrical hookups in city lots to reduce generator noise. Councilmember Rowan suggested that mobile vendors can have a positive impact when they are located adjacent to a business that specifically invites them. Further refinement of the ordinance will continue.

### **Discussion of proposed 2025-2026 City Budget and Utility Budget**

City Administrator, Mark Funkey provided updated pages for the budget book. Finance Director, Roger Nash provided an update on the County valuation numbers, which increased 7.2%; the estimate used was 10% resulting in a reduction in the tax ask by approximately \$235,000. Councilmember Huntley asked if the city would need to attend the pink card meeting. City Administrator Funkey replied yes, and he and the Mayor would attend the meeting. City Administrator, Funkey provided an overview of the capital expenditures in the general fund by each department. Councilmember B. Consbruck asked if the capital expenditures would come from reserves. City Administrator, Mark Funkey confirmed that the outlined capital expenditures would come from reserves, and the operating budget is balanced. Councilmember L. Consbruck asked what the

percentage increase in budget would be. City Administrator, Mark Funkey replied that the budget would be up by \$4.2 million, which is attributed to transfers and capital outlay, which includes the City Hall project, airport projects, and cemetery project. The operating expenses are down \$309,000 from the prior year. Finance Director, Roger Nash, said that personnel costs are up 1.55% and operating expenses are decreasing 4.44%. Capital costs are increasing by 13.37%, and reimbursements for airport projects will be down approximately \$1 million. The tax ask and maintaining the levy would offset the deficit from the prior year, and cash would not be needed for operating expenses. Councilmember Rowan asked about the trend of spending cash which will deplete the cash reserve. Finance Director, Roger Nash provided that if operating expenses are balanced and capital expenses are drawn from cash reserves, the city would be down to less than \$500,000 in cash reserves by 2030. With capital expenses of \$2 million per year, it is evident that additional revenues are needed. Councilmember Rowan expressed his concern and Finance Director, Roger Nash shared that concern; he added that lowering the levy 5.5 cents two of the last three years is why the city faces this challenge. Councilmember Anderson asked for information on IT personnel expenses included in the department budgets. City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that the amounts in the department budgets are for hardware and software; the \$1.4 million amount is for personnel costs. City Administrator Mark Funkey stated that software contracts are reviewed when they expire and analyze where departments can utilize the same software. Councilmember Anderson stated that he is looking for smaller items that can add up to make a difference in the budget such as cleaning, water, safety incentives and credit card fees. Councilmember L. Consbruck asked how increased valuations have impacted the budget. City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that the amount captured increased, but the levy would remain the same; if the levy were to be reduced to account for the valuation increase, the reduction in the cash position for the city would accelerate. The city would need to look at programs the city would no longer be able to offer. Councilmember L. Consbruck stated that that is the direction he would go. Councilmember Hoffman stated that services would be degraded vs. being eliminated. City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that people are services. Councilmember Fong inquired about the restaurant tax and City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that the tax would help with the degradation of the cash balance; the Mayor and staff have been looking into what other communities are doing. Mayor Beckby discussed the disadvantage that the community faces with sales taxes when compared to Grand Island and Kearney. Councilmember Hoffman stated his desire to look further into the restaurant tax and City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that the focus has been on the current budget, but the restaurant tax could come forward if the plan needs to change. Councilmember B. Consbruck circled back on the discussion of services, stating that services can be covered by others within departments; if personnel had to be reduced, the

services would not be affected that much, and the remaining people would cover the work. City Administrator, Mark Funkey provided the example of the mowing of City parks; the frequency of mowing would be reduced if there were less staff. Councilmember B. Consbruck and City Administrator, Mark Funkey agreed that there would need to be a level of acceptance from the community or have a discussion on community amenities. Mayor Beckby added that the number of personnel has been reduced; City Administrator, Mark Funkey added that six full-time and eleven part-time jobs have been reduced. Mayor Beckby added that personnel costs are up to approximately \$300,000 with the cost-of-living adjustment. Councilmember L. Consbruck stated that government agencies need to do more for less. Councilmember Fong stated that there is an impact to be considered on the remaining staff; hiring for police and fire has been a challenge, and cited the recent bonuses approved by the Council. Councilmember Rowan stated that the firing freeze is an option; he would like a list of items that the city is paying for that could be cut, and he provided the League of Nebraska Municipalities as an example. He would rather the benefit go to the employees instead of outside agencies. Utility Manager Derek Zeisler provided that the Department of Utilities provides funding to the HEDC and Chamber, and the Council has discretion on the use of the economic development funds. Councilmember Huntley stated that advertising could be investigated and additionally considering contracting for some services at a reduced cost, and suggested concessions at the water park as an example. City Administrator, Mark Funkey provided Enterprise Fleet Management as an example of a contract service the City is looking into. Councilmember Hoffman asked if currently empty positions could be looked at to accept that staffing will not be at desired levels. City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that hiring police and fire is trending positively, and we are actively looking to fill the positions. Human Resources Director Lori Hartmann added the reduced staffing levels could have an impact on insurance and ISO ratings for the community. Councilmember Rowan asked City Administrator Mark Funkey to go back to the department heads to look for another round of cuts. Councilmember L. Consbruck asked about the status of the PILOT discussion. City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that ordinances for those changes will be presented to the City Council at the August 25, 2025, Council meeting.

Moved by Marc Rowan seconded by Brian Hoffman there being no further business before the Council to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Matt Fong, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman. Nays: None. Absent: Maggie Esch. The motion carried.

APPROVED:

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George J.J. Bixby, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tyler Ficken, City Clerk

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