

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA  
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION  
Monday, February 16, 2026

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 February 16, 2026.

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

City Officials Present: Mayor Jay Beckby, Mark Funkey, Jesse Oswald, Tyler Ficken, Adam Story, Troy Vorderstrasse, Erik Nielsen, Jeff Hassenstab, Lee Vrooman, Kelly Reisig, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson, Tony Herrman, Lori Hartman, Kevin Kubo, Kirk Layton, Trent Clark.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Moved by Michael Anderson seconded by Larry Consbruck to adopt the current agenda for the February 16, 2026 City Council Worksession. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong. Nays: None. The motion carried.

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, February 13, 2026. 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:**

Carol Hoffman, Chuck Neumann, John Northrup, Aimee Birch, Gabriel Anderson, Pam Burr, Karen Doer, Tammy Craig, Dick Lebeau, Sam Johnston, Robert Lemke all spoke on the topic of Heartland Pet Connection.

1. Update on EPA Superfund site status. Marty Stange and Michael Sullivan provided a history of the City's interactions with the EPA. Groundwater plumes and sites were discussed and the mitigation efforts for the sites. Mayor Beckby inquired about the quality of the drinking water, and Michael Sullivan stated that he has the greatest confidence in the drinking water because it is likely more tested here than anywhere in the country. Marty Stange discussed the process of licensing a well within the HU WHPA Well Permitting and Institutional Control area.

2. Presentation by Heartland Pet Connection - Jennie Theesen - Shelter Manager, Jake Klabenes - Board Treasurer, Tara McDanel - Board President. Jennie Theesen, Jake Klabenes and Tara McDanel presented on the Heartland Pet Connection topics including

contract history, costs of animal care, funding comparisons to other Nebraska communities, the history of payments made by the City of Hastings, services to the community and those adopting animals, and also adopted and potential cost-cutting efforts. The group provided information about areas where the community could help with labor that could be donated to the facility. Councilmember Hoffman inquired about any meetings with City staff on the financial reports of Heartland Pet Connection and whether an audit is required. Jake Kalbenes reported that he hasn't had any specific meetings, but he would be willing to set something up; Tara McDanel added that there was a meeting following the prior Council meeting with Heartland Pet Connection, but the books were not discussed at that time. Jake Kalbenes reported that an audit is not required and would be expensive for Heartland Pet Connection. Councilmember Huntley inquired regarding the frequency of State Inspections and Jennie Theesen provided that the inspections are random but occur every six to twelve months. Councilmember Rowan asked about the requested amount and Jake Kalbenes reported that there is not currently a request, but negotiations could continue. The request was made by member of the Council to receive additional information on the numbers of adoptions and euthanasia. Councilmember Anderson asked for an overview of the processing of animals through the facility. Jennie Theesen reported on the process, which is a hold generally lasting six days, followed by temperament testing and health checking for placement in a safe manner. Heartland Pet Connection conducts the temperament testing and health matters are addressed by a veterinarian. Councilmember Fong expressed his desire for Heartland Pet Connection to succeed, the need for future funding and the need to continue future fundraising efforts, which is essential for a non-profit organization. Councilmember Huntley discussed a tour he had of the facility and encouraged others to do so. Next steps were discussed to include Heartland Pet Connection and City staff discussing a contract to take to the Heartland Pet Connection Board and, subsequently, the City Council; City Administrator Funkey agreed with that process moving forward.

There being no further business before the Council, Council President Huntley adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

APPROVED:

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George J.J. Bixby, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tyler Ficken, City Clerk

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