

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
Saturday, February 28, 2026

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Retreat of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted at the Hastings Public Library, 314 N. Denver Avenue, on February 28, 2026.

The following members were present: Larry Consbruck, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Brian Hoffman, Matt Fong.

The following City Officials were present: City Administrator, Mark Funkey; City Attorney, Jesse Oswald; Utility Manager, Derek Zeisler; City Clerk, Tyler Ficken; Police Chief, Adam Story; Director of Development Services, Kevin Kubo; Director of Finance/City Treasurer, Roger Nash; Technology Director, Erik Nielsen; Public Information Manager, Tony Herrman; Library Director, Kelly Reisig; Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson.

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

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

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Wednesday, February 25, 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:

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Needs of the City

The City Council discussed strategies for economic development in the areas of industry and retail and how to coordinate efforts with the HEDC and receive reports and additional statistical information from HEDC. Discussion included weighing the need for additional housing versus an increased focus on industry and retail and keeping young people in the community with development through educational institutions. Revenue sources including restaurant tax, occupation tax, CDBG grants, property tax and an LB840 program were discussed to address the budget and support economic development to increase sales taxes moving forward. Conversation was had regarding the potential for expansion of the number of designated Inland Port Authorities within the State. Discussion was had regarding City wages and comparability with other communities.

2. Discussion Topics

a. Budget

Potential restaurant tax and LB840 were discussed and have been discussed for some time but have not been implemented by the City of Hastings due to a general aversion to taxes. The upcoming budget was discussed in the context of cash that the City has available; the consensus was that without change the City would be out of cash to support capital expenditure in the future. Property taxes were discussed in the context of receipts following reductions not keeping up with labor expenses and inflation. City wages and comparability were discussed and identified as a driver of costs. The restaurant tax was discussed as an option to fund the Hastings Museum and allow for additional revenue to the general fund. Reducing capital expenses was discussed with the caveat that reduced capital expenditure can result in increased maintenance and replacement costs in the future. The budget process was discussed, which included a request for departments to present capital expenditure requests to the City Council as a part of the upcoming budget cycle. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program was discussed in the context of additional revenue coming back to the City as projects complete; approximately one fifth of the increment returns to the City with the county, school district, and other taxing entities making up the difference. CDBG grants were discussed as an opportunity to bring in new business but also support existing businesses.

b. Public Safety

Police Chief Adam Story discussed Police Department funding and staffing levels with the City Council. There was discussion on funding for and negotiation of the Heartland Pet Connection contract.

c. Public Services

The City Council discussed topics with Utility Manager Derel Zeisler the topic of utility growth, utility incentives for business recruitment, dividend fees, wholesale, and the future of nuclear power.

d. Public Amenities

Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson discussed the grand opening of the Kool-Aid exhibit, collection storage improvements, cost and showing of Hollywood films, attracting people to the museum who use recreational vehicles and the frequency of bus tours and reciprocal memberships. Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson thanked building maintenance for their work; they have saved the city a lot of money with recent projects. Library Director, Kelly Reisig discussed the Hoopla program and the changing nature of the library and the revitalization and expansion of the bookmobile program.

3. Council Goals

Councilmember Anderson stated that providing camper electricity at the softball complex could be a worthwhile project. Councilmember Huntley stated that he would like to see safe transportation across railroad tracks and increased industry and retail business. Councilmember Esch stated that the city needs to look seriously into restaurant and

lodging tax and LB840 which is a longer process. Councilmember Hoffman stated that expanding bike paths with phase 4 is important, but also smaller branches to the main routes. Councilmember Rowan stated that getting children across railroad tracks safely is the top priority, specifically to the Middle School and water park, and secondly, a nice senior center. Councilmember Esch added improved communication with economic development. Councilmember Hoffman added that the second half of funding for the new airport hangar is a priority. Councilmember L. Consbruck stated that growing business will solve many of the other problems. Councilmember B. Consbruck stated that acting on what is being discussed will be important moving forward. Mayor Beckby emphasized the importance of evaluating where the city is on housing and pushing industry and retail moving forward. Councilmember Anderson addressed the need to treat each other with respect.

There being no further business before the Council, Mayor Beckby adjourned the meeting at 1:46 p.m.

APPROVED:

George J.J. Bixby, Mayor

ATTEST:

Tyler Ficken, City Clerk

(S E A L)

Document(s) received for the record:

Public Record Submission City Council Worksession February 28, 2026

Mayor and Councilmembers,

As the City continues its work on budgeting, long-term planning, and community development, I respectfully submit this request for inclusion in the public record.

For residents to clearly understand how public resources are allocated, it would be helpful to have a single, consolidated summary of all public funding currently supporting development within the City. Development-related funding can occur through multiple programs and approvals over time. When viewed separately, it can be challenging to understand the total level of public participation or the duration of those commitments.

In the interest of transparency and clear public understanding, I am requesting that the City consider providing a straightforward summary table that brings together, in one place, the primary public funding tools that support development activity. This request is intended to capture all forms of public participation supporting development, regardless of whether funds originate locally or are received through state or federal programs, so that the full scope of community-supported investment can be understood in one clear context.

These may include, where applicable:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) commitments and associated property tax increment redirection
- The Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) levy and general allocation of those funds
- LB 840 or other local economic development program funds used for development or housing
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other state or federal grants supporting development projects
- Sales tax-supported economic development programs, if applicable
- Public infrastructure participation for streets, utilities, or site preparation connected to development
- Workforce housing incentives or reimbursements
- Any interfund transfers or other public financing supporting development agreements
- Redevelopment agreements that include tax rebates, reimbursements, or other forms of public participation

If assembled, a single summary could also indicate, where reasonably available:

- Total public dollars committed by project or funding source
- Amounts distributed to date
- Remaining or ongoing obligations
- General duration of commitments
- A combined view of development-related public funding citywide

Providing this information in a clear, consolidated format would allow residents to better understand how development-related public funding is structured across the community and how those commitments fit within the City's broader financial planning and priorities.

This request is not intended to oppose development activity, but rather to support clarity and consistent understanding of how public participation in development is structured and evaluated within the City's overall financial framework and goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Jacobsen
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