

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA  
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, March 9, 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 West 12th Street, on March 9, 2026.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in Regular Session by Mayor Beckby with the following members present Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The following City Officials were present: City Administrator, Mark Funkey; City Attorney, Jesse Oswald; City Clerk, Tyler Ficken; Director of Finance/City Treasurer, Roger Nash; Technology Director, Erik Nielsen; Information Technology, Kirk Layton; Utility Manager, Derek Zeisler; Director of Engineering, Lee Vrooman; Development Services Director, Kevin Kubo; Fire Chief, Troy Vorderstrasse; Director of Human Resources, Lori Hartman; Library Director, Kelly Reisig; Safety Director, Trent Clark; Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson; Airport Manager, Matt Kuhr.

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

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Maggie Esch to adopt the current agenda. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Matt Fong. Nays: Marc Rowan. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Matt Fong. The motion carried.

Official Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, March 6, 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.

**COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson provided a report on the Kool-Aid exhibit at the request of Councilmember Rowan. Councilmember Esch wished Councilmember Huntley a happy birthday.

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS:**

Service Anniversaries. Mayor Beckby recognized service anniversaries for Spencer Gerritsen, Engineering, 5; William Kosters, PCF, 10; Brian Keever, Engineering, 15.

Mayor's State of the City Address. Mayor Beckby delivered the annual State of the City address.

Mayor's State of the City Address.

Good evening everybody. The state of the city address is more than a list of projects and accomplishments. It's a moment to step back and take an honest look at where we've been, where we are today, and where we're going as a community. Hastings is more than buildings and streets; Hastings is our home. Hastings is where we raise our families. Hastings is where we build our businesses, and it's where we share the responsibility of shaping the future of Hastings together. Tonight, I want to talk about that future and how we can build it together. Hastings has always been a community of strong values, strong work ethic and strong people. Like many communities across the Midwest, we've also faced our challenges, for a number of

years our growth slowed and in some areas it stalled. That did not happen because of a lack of opportunity, it happens because at times we allowed hesitation, overregulation and division to slow our progress. We wanted growth, but sometimes only in certain circumstances. We wanted lower taxes, but also more services. We wanted opportunity, but sometimes we resisted change when it appeared too close to home. Those competing priorities created gridlock, and gridlock is the enemy of progress.

Over the past year, I've had what every new mayor must have, a learning period. This role gives you a very different perspective on how a city works. You see the challenges more clearly. You see the pressures that exist and you begin to understand where the real opportunities for progress lie. That learning period has been valuable, but it is now time to move forward. It's time to shift from learning to action. It is time to push, and push is what I plan to do.

In the past several years, much of our focus in the city has been on housing, and that focus was important because housing matters, and we made progress addressing that need. Housing alone does not grow a community. Housing must be supported by jobs, jobs must be supported by industry, industry must be supported by opportunity. That means the next phase for Hastings is clear. It's time to focus on job growth, industry, retail, and business expansion within Hastings. Communities that grow do not wait for opportunity to arrive. They go out and recruit it. Hastings has advantages that many communities across our state do not have. We are centrally located in Nebraska with access to major transportation corridors, we have rail that supports distribution and manufacturing, we have a strong agricultural and manufacturing base that supports our industry, we have affordable land, reasonable utilities and a cost of living that families can afford here in the Midwest. We have educational institutions preparing the workforce of tomorrow; those are Central Community College and Hastings College. These advantages matter, but only if we actively promote them. Organizations like the HEDC, the CRA exist to drive economic growth in our community. Their role is to recruit industry, attract employers, and help create the conditions that encourage investment and job creation. We cannot simply wait for opportunity; we must go find it. Moving forward also means learning from our past. Many people have heard me speak of this. The not in my backyard mentality has cost the city real opportunities. Projects that could have created jobs and expanded our tax base sometimes moved to other communities that welcomed them. When development is blocked by fear or resistance, those opportunities simply go somewhere else, and when they go somewhere else, the jobs and investment also go with them. Hastings must move forward with fair and consistent development policies; no picking winners, no picking losers, just a fair process that rewards good projects and protects the public interest. Development should be about an opportunity for the entire community, favorable development, not developmental favors. When decisions are driven by rumor instead of facts the entire community pays the price. Conspiracy theories do not create jobs, they do not grow our tax base, but they do slow development, they create division, they discourage investors who are looking for communities who wish to work together. City boards and council exist to serve the public interest and evaluate projects based on merit, legality, ethics and community benefit. That is how trust is built, and trust is essential for growth.

The good news is, Hastings is growing. Look around, it has been growing for some time now. We are seeing new housing being built, new businesses opening and existing industries expanding. We just learned of a couple of them a week ago. Heartwell Renewables represents major economic activity in our region, and on the south end of town we are seeing a new truck stop being planned, and on the other end of town we are seeing a new tire shop, carwash, additional business and development taking place all across the corners of Hastings, housing to the north, housing to the east, and the housing project across the street to the south that have been great for our community.

In collaboration with the State of Nebraska, we are also working on the Hastings Southeast Project aimed at improving safety, traffic flow, and the appearance of our southeast entrance. That's where the roundabout is going in, just in case you were hiding under a rock.

The focus cannot be on just new development. I'm going to make myself clear. Our focus cannot only be on new development. We must also support and promote existing business. Recently companies like CHIEF Ethanol fuels, Bruckman Rubber and Nebraska Prime have announced expansions. These investments in existing businesses are just as important as new developments. I want to stress that. Keeping people here, keeping investment here, keeping jobs here, are just as important as bringing new ones to town. When companies invest here it sends the powerful message that Hastings is a community worth investing in, and that momentum matters.

We are working to reduce unnecessary regulations and make development easier and more predictable. When someone chooses to invest in Hastings, they should feel welcome and not discouraged. That means clear processes, consistent standards and professional cooperation. Our Developmental Services and delegated authority have been successful thus far and we will continue with that. It means making Hastings a city where development is encouraged, facilitated and responsibly managed.

Economic development is not only about industry, but also about quality of life. One exciting opportunity is the vision of a community fieldhouse. Facilities like this can host tournaments and events that bring visitors into Hastings as well as benefit our community. Visitors stay in the hotels, eat at restaurants and shop in local stores. That activity strengthens our local economy and increases our sales tax base. Every new business that opens in Hastings contributes to something important; sales tax revenue supports our community services. Sales tax supports our police, our fire, infrastructure and city services. It helps relieve pressure on property taxes and strengthens the financial health of our city.

Progress requires cooperation. We will not always agree and that's healthy. Different perspectives help us make better decisions. At the end of the day, we all want the same thing. We want a stronger community. We want a growing economy and a future where our children and grandchildren can succeed right here in Hastings.

As we look ahead, Hastings has real opportunities here in front of us. One project that represents both redevelopment and community investment is the renovation of the old Hastings Middle School where I went. For years the building has been largely unused and has become an eyesore for many people in our community. Today plans are moving forward to convert that facility into apartments, transforming a long-time vacant structure into housing, and bringing new life into that part of our city. A project like this represents exactly the kind of development that Hastings should support. Revitalizing an existing structure, improving neighborhoods, turning underused property back into productive assets for our community. That is real growth.

Another exciting initiative moving forward is the Hastings fieldhouse project. This vision has been talked about in our community for some time, and we are now just as of last week beginning to move from discussion to action. Preliminary planning has begun, and a fieldhouse committee has been formed to help guide this effort and bring community leaders together; organizations and partners who want to see this project succeed. A facility like this would be a tremendous opportunity for our youth, our schools and all our community organizations. It also has the potential to bring tournaments, visitors and regional events to Hastings, creating economic activity that supports local businesses and strengthens our tax base. I have been talking about this since I took office, and we are behind the power curve in terms of a fieldhouse

for the size of our community. This is something that needs to be done, and I will push. This is the kind of project that reflects both community pride as well as economic opportunity.

Looking forward, my goal as Mayor is to make sure that the organizations responsible for development of our city are working together as efficiently as possible. That means ensuring that the HEDC, Community Redevelopment Authority and Development Services Department are aligned and coordinated in their efforts. When these entities are working together, sharing information and moving in the same direction, they can become a powerful engine for growth. My goal is to help streamline those efforts so that Hastings operates as a well-oiled machine when it comes to development, recruitment and investment. When our development organizations are coordinated, responsive and proactive, we put Hastings in the best possible position to attract industry, grow jobs and expand opportunity. That is exactly what our community deserves.

My learning period as Mayor is over. This next year we will hit the ground running. We will recruit industry; we will grow jobs and expand opportunities. We will do it fairly, transparently and with a focus on the future because the future of Hastings is not behind us. It is being built right now, by all of us, together.

Thank you everyone and God bless Hastings.

#### CONSENT AGENDA:

1. All Consent Items.

Moved by Marc Rowan seconded by Michael Anderson to approve consent agenda except items 1m, 1q and 1r. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

- (a) Approval of the minutes of the Council Meeting of February 23, 2026
- (b) Approval of the minutes of the Worksession of February 16, 2026
- (c) Approval of claims and payroll except the claim of Vaughan's Printing
- (d) Approval of release of unneeded easements for property being re-platted (portion of vacated Lexington Avenue)
- (e) Resolution No. 2026-19 accepting the work and the Certificate of the City Engineer in Gas Extension District 2024-1 Elm Meadows First Subdivision
- (f) Resolution No. 2026-20 accepting the schedule of assessments as prepared by the City Engineer for special assessments proposed to be levied in Gas Extension District No. 2024-1 Elm Meadows First Subdivision and setting a hearing date relative to the levy of said special assessments
- (g) Resolution No. 2026-21 accepting the work and the Certificate of the City Engineer in Street Improvement District 2024-1 Elm Meadows First Subdivision
- (h) Resolution No. 2026-22 accepting the schedule of assessments as prepared by the City Engineer for special assessments proposed to be levied in Street Improvement District No. 2024-1 Elm Meadows First Subdivision and setting a hearing date relative to the levy of said special assessments
- (i) Resolution No. 2026-23 accepting the work and the Certificate of the City Engineer in Water Extension District 2024-1 Elm Meadows First Subdivision
- (j) Resolution No. 2026-24 accepting the schedule of assessments as prepared by the City Engineer for special assessments proposed to be levied in Water Extension District 2024-1 Elm Meadows First Subdivision and setting a hearing date relative to the levy of said special assessments
- (k) Resolution No. 2026-25 accepting the work and the Certificate of the City Engineer in Sewer Extension District 2024-3 Elm Meadows First Subdivision

(l) Resolution No. 2026-26 accepting the schedule of assessments as prepared by the City Engineer for special assessments proposed to be levied in Sewer Extension District No. 2024-3 Elm Meadows First Subdivision and setting a hearing date relative to the levy of said special assessments

(m) Review of Revive's February 26th bid opening and concurrence/approval of the project. Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Michael Anderson to approve Revive's February 26th bid opening and concurrence/approval of the project. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

(n) Approval of Work Order EL-317, installation of single-phase underground electric lines and padmount transformers to serve the new Lochland Meadows Subdivision Number 17 residential development along White Wolf Street from Quail Ridge Avenue to Mallard Way Avenue

(o) Approval of Work Order EL-318, installation of underground streetlight lines and pole-top streetlight fixtures in the new Lochland Meadows 17th Addition along White Wolf from Quail Ridge to Mallard Way

(p) Approval of Work Order PL-646, project is for updating our distributed control system (DCS) at Whelan Energy Center Unit 1

(q) Approval of Airport Services Agreement with Grow Aviation LLC. Moved by Larry Consbruck seconded by Matt Fong to approve Airport Agreement with Grow Aviation LLC. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

(r) Approval of signs on light poles in the downtown area for Creative District and downtown. Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Michael Anderson to approve signs on light poles in the downtown area for Creative District and downtown. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

#### REGULAR AGENDA:

2. Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting.  
None.

#### 3. Public Hearings.

(a) Motion to adjourn as Mayor and City Council and reconvene as Board of Equalization. Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Michael Anderson to adjourn as Mayor and City Council and reconvene as Board of Equalization. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

(b) Public hearing on the levying of assessments in Sewer Connection District 2024-2 South Street. Mayor Beckby opened the public hearing. Mayor Beckby closed the public hearing with no comments received from the public.

(c) Motion to adjourn as Board of Equalization and reconvene as Mayor and City Council. Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Larry Consbruck to adjourn as Board of Equalization and reconvene as Mayor and City Council. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

(d) Resolution No. 2026-10 Sewer Connection District 2024-2 South Street. Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Michael Anderson to approve Resolution No. 2026-10 Sewer Connection District 2024-2 South Street. Director of Engineering, Lee Vrooman reported that the fees will not be charged until the property owner decides to connect to the district. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve

Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

4. General Business.

(a) Approval of the claims of Vaughan's Printing in the amount of \$450.00. Moved by Steve Huntley seconded by Michael Anderson to approve the claims of Vaughan's Printing in the amount of \$450.00. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong. Nays: None. Abstain: Maggie Esch. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

(b) Community update - Michele Bever, South Heartland District Health Department Director. South Heartland District Health Department Director, Michele Bever provided copies of the South Heartland District Health Department 2025 annual report, described the creation of the District 25 years ago and the leadership structure of the organization. Michele Bever highlighted the new van supported with ARPA funds from the City to provide mobile services and discussed environmental health monitoring for air quality. Councilmember Rowan asked about the number of employees in the Department and Michele Bever responded that there are twenty-four employees with the potential for more with rural health transformation funding. Councilmember Huntley asked if instances of colds and flu are on the decrease. Michele Bever reported that monitoring continues to show increases. Councilmember Anderson asked what the biggest item on Michele Bever's radar was. Michele Bever stated that there is concern about measles, but there has been a low number with no community spread here.

5. Ordinances and Resolutions.

None.

6. Final Passage of Ordinances.

None.

7. Appointments.

(a) Appointments to Boards and Commissions. Moved by Michael Anderson seconded by Steve Huntley to approve the appointments to Boards and Commissions as presented. Roll Call: Ayes: Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Larry Consbruck, Maggie Esch, Matt Fong. Nays: Marc Rowan. Absent: Brad Consbruck, Brian Hoffman. The motion carried.

8. Miscellaneous and Other Business.

None.

9. Possible Closed Session (if necessary or requested).

None.

There being no further business before the Council, Mayor Beckby adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

APPROVED:

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George J.J. Beckby, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tyler Ficken, City Clerk

( S E A L )