CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, August 17, 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 August 17, 2026.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in Regular Session by Council President Huntley with the following members present Steve Huntley, Michael Anderson, Brad Consbruck, Larry Consbruck, Matt Fong, Brian Hoffman, Marc Rowan, Maggie Esch. Absent: None. 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; Public Information Manager; Tony Herrman; Utility Manager, Derek Zeisler; Director of Engineering, Lee Vrooman; Development Services Director, Kevin Kubo; Director of Parks and Recreation, Jeff Hassenstab; Fire Chief, Troy Vorderstrasse; Director of Human Resources, Lori Hartman; Library Director, Kelly Reisig; Safety Director, Trent Clark; Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson; Police Chief, Adam Story.

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

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

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, August 14, 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 accessible to members of the public.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:
Jody Stutzman spoke on item #4.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:
1. Presentation by League of Nebraska Municipalities. Executive Director of the Nebraska League of Municipalities, Lynn Rex reviewed the activities of the Nebraska League of Municipalities, which include municipal assistance calls, work with the Nebraska Legislature on municipal goals, conference programming and policy work; and emphasized that the Nebraska League of Municipalities works solely for Nebraska municipalities. Utilities Section Director for the Nebraska League of Municipalities, Lash Chaffin shared his experiences working with the City of Hastings on policy priorities. Executive Director of the Nebraska League of Municipalities, Lynn Rex discussed with the Council the different types of municipal government in Nebraska, authority regarding adding and removing items to the agenda, executive and legislative duties and the importance of the budget.

2. Presentation from Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce. Hastings Economic Development Director, Shannon Landauer provided a report on Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce which included target sites, attracting business to the community, strengthening existing industry, housing, community/industry data, advocacy and workforce. Shannon Landauer explained that the Chamber of Commerce is focusing on networking, Made to Grow podcast and Shine Bright program. An emphasis should be placed on buying local first before going out of market. Retail consultant work is underway; national brands are prioritizing HWY 281 frontage. Shannon Landauer highlighted future events which include the candidate forum, manufacturing month, visiting state officials, sale of chamber dollars, and hosting the 2027 Nebraska Economic Development Conference which will encompass the community.

3. Presentation from Hastings Economic Development Corp. Site Consultant, Chad Chancellor provided feedback on the community from the perspective of a site consultant. Jobs and investment create local revenue to operate schools and local government; his business helps small and medium-sized communities. Chad Chancellor reviewed eSRI statistics on the City of Hastings which shows that incomes are rising and Hastings can be selective with business and industry coming to the community. Chad Chancellor presented data on a survey of site consultants and the number one issue is utility capacity, water and wastewater; the trend is smaller headcount and larger investment. Regardless of political perspective, the "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) movement is a concern; he will not show a property to one of his clients if it is not zoned correctly. Data centers can be a heavy use of energy and water, but Chad Chancellor provided and example of a META data center in Monroe, LA and the positive impact on local tax revenues for the local governments. Councilmember Anderson asked what the best prospect for Hastings currently is, and Chad Chancellor discussed the old Eaton building. Unfortunately, out-of-town owners are not as motivated to sell; the positives are existing electrical and good ceiling height at the property. Given the expected growth in wages, the community could see more retail and commercial. The data centers are going to take a look at the community; a large data center is a license to print money, according to Chad Chancellor.

4. Discussion of proposed 2026-2027 City Budget and Utility Budget. City Administrator, Mark Funkey reported on the City revenue streams and revenue options moving forward. The City has received numbers from Adams County on valuations; if the City sets the levy at 0.406359, the City could collect $1.1-$1.2 million in additional revenue. Staff recommends not setting the levy below 0.387076 to achieve not losing future authority. Director of Finance, Roger Nash compared the 2025-26 tax ask to the upcoming year, and the total available tax ask for 2026-27 is $9,886,964 under LB34. Director of Finance, Roger Nash explained the consequences of not using the authority; only 5% plus growth can be carried over from the prior year tax ask; $469,182 is the amount that can be carried over to next year. Authority will be lost in future years if the ask is less than $9,417,782 or $0.387076, and would be a detriment to the City in future years. For a home valued at $200,000 the monthly cost would go from $63.18 per month to $67.73 with an ask of 0.406359 and would generate an additional $1,179,089 for the General Fund, and would reduce the general fund deficit by 33%. Currently, the City is using cash on hand to balance the budget; the deficit needs to be corrected in

future years. All costs to the City are increasing and Hastings is not unique in needing to address inflation, personnel costs, operating costs and capital costs; revenue is not keeping up, which creates a funding gap that will need to be addressed. Finance Director, Roger Nash confirmed with Councilmember L. Consbruck that the numbers presented reflect the valuation amount provided by Adams County. Councilmember Hoffman inquired about the additional half-cent sales tax to address the gap; City Administrator, Mark Funkey stated that sources of revenue have been looked at. For example, the restaurant tax, dividend fee and discussions on the levy each year, those revenue streams are City-directed. An additional half-cent sales tax would need to be forwarded by a non-city entity and receive the support of a vote of the people; it could be used to support an LB840 program or other priorities supported by the public. Finance Director Roger Nash stated that an additional half-cent sales tax could have an indirect benefit to the general fund with additional business in the community. The currently imposed half-cent sales tax supports parks improvements, street improvements and museum; that half-cent will come up in a year, and can be used for anything and could be used for general fund operations, and the additional half-cent, up to two cents, has restrictions. Councilmember Esch asked what would happen if the City decided to do nothing and continued to balance the budget with cash, no additional taxes, no LB840; what would be the realistic outlook in three to four years when the cash reserves are gone? City Administrator Mark Funkey stated that there would be very difficult decisions on needs vs. wants. Councilmember Huntley added that the question is difficult because you never know what the Legislature is going to do. City Administrator, Mark Funkey agreed that external factors make it difficult and additional unfunded mandates add to the problem; this is where the Nebraska League of Municipalities is an asset in keeping the City apprised of developments. Councilmember Esch added that the City would need to cut people and services at that point, and City Administrator, Mark Funkey agreed, adding that at that point you would be looking at entire departments; he provided Aurora as an example of their loss of EMT service, and they are working to solve that problem. Councilmember L. Consbruck stated that there also needs to be a look at what is not needed, in addition to revenue. City Administrator, Mark Funkey agreed and stated that he will be presenting information on current-year cuts. Councilmember Rowan inquired with Finance Director Roger Nash about the status of the over funded self-insured health fund, and how long that source will be available at the rate of $2 million each year. Finance Director, Roger Nash stated that there was a transfer of approximately $900,000 this year, and another transfer to the general fund is slated for next year in 2027; that will leave the balance in a comfortable position, but it is a one-time cash infusion which helps in the interim period. The recommendation for the fund is to have $3-$4 million, and at the beginning of the draw-down, the fund was in excess of $10 million at the time the city and utility funds were combined. Councilmember L. Consbruck asked about costs in the upcoming budget, and Director of Finance, Roger Nash provided that personnel costs in the budget are 3%, general fund operations approximately 1%, and approximately $2 million in capital requests. City Administrator, Mark Funkey added that overall costs are going to be under inflation, which illustrates that costs are being kept in line with needs and not wants. City Administrator, Mark Funkey reviewed the capital expenses in the budget and highlighted funding that has already been obligated. Councilmember Anderson inquired about the 15' mower. Director of Parks & Recreation, Jeff Hassenstab explained that the large mower is used on approximately 300 acres of the 520 acres within the parks properties and can be driven from park to park. The current unit is a 2016 model with approximately 6,400 operating hours, and was purchased for $93,000 at that time; the price has gone up over the last ten years. The unit has aged well, but it is in need of replacement. Councilmember L. Consbruck asked if the item would go out for bid, and Director of Parks & Recreation Jeff Hassenstab stated that the unit would be purchased through the State cooperative purchasing program where an RFP has already been completed; the department has had good experience with the TORO brand. City Administrator, Mark Funkey reported that phase six of the cemetery paving project has been bid out, but the contract has not yet been signed to allow Council consideration. There was additional discussion on bulletproof vests and the Hastings dam project; there is approximately $1.1 million in uncommitted capital projects. City Administrator Mark Funkey discussed cuts that have been made which include 1 full-time position, 4 part-time positions and use of 911 Wireless Funds to support the general fund.

There being no further business before the Council, Council President Huntley adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

APPROVED:

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George J.J. Beckby, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tyler Ficken, City Clerk

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