

CERTIFICATION OF CLERK

I, Brenda K. Wolf, the duly appointed, qualified, and City Clerk of Manhattan, Kansas, do hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes from September 16, 2025, were duly adopted at a meeting of the City of Manhattan, Kansas, held on the 7th day of October 2025, and that said Minutes have been compared by me with the original thereof on file and of record in my office, is a true copy of the whole of said original.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the City of Manhattan, Kansas, this 8th day of October, 2025.



Brenda K. Wolf
Brenda K. Wolf, CMC, City Clerk



MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025
6:00 P.M.

This meeting was recorded and is available [online](#) for full viewing.

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 6:00 p.m., Mayor Karen McCulloh called the September 16, 2025, City Commission Meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF A QUORUM

Present: Commissioner Susan E. Adamchak, Commissioner Peter Oppelt, Commissioner John E. Matta, and Commissioner Jayme Minton, with Mayor Karen McCulloh presiding.

Absent: None.

After roll call, the City Clerk announced there were five (5) Commissioners present and that the quorum of three (3) was met.

Also present were City Manager Danielle Dulin; Deputy City Manager Jason Hilgers, Assistant City Manager Jared Wasinger, City Attorney Katharine Jackson, Assistant City Clerk Chelsea Johnson, 7 staff, and approximately 51 interested citizens.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor McCulloh led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.



This meeting was held in the City Commission Room at City Hall, 1101 Poyntz Avenue. Public participation was solicited without regard to race, sex, familial status, military status, disability, religion, age, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing special accommodation to participate in the City Commission Meeting or access meeting minutes, or those requiring language assistance (free of charge) should contact the City of Manhattan ADA Coordinator, Deann Tiede, no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting, at (785) 587-2442 or 7-1-1 (Relay).

4. PROCLAMATION

- A. Mayor McCulloh proclaimed September 17-23, 2025, Constitution Week. Susan Church, Chapter Regent, Polly Ogden Daughters of the American Revolution, was present to receive the proclamation.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor McCulloh opened the public comments and highlighted the process.

Hearing no comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public comments.

6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Minton congratulated the 2025 Business Award Winners through the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, which were, the Museum of Art + Light, SwitchWicked, New Boston Creative Group, Flint Hills Ventures, Addair Law, and Bayer Construction.

Commissioner Oppelt had coffee on Saturday, September 13, 2025, at the Library and several people joined for a civil conversation for about two hours. He thanked the citizens for attending and stated he looked forward to the next one.

Mayor McCulloh, mentioned that she would be proclaiming National Responsible Dog Ownership Day at City Park at 12:00 p.m., Saturday, September 20, 2025, if anyone wanted to join her.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

(* denotes those items discussed)

- A. MINUTES
1. Approve the minutes of the Regular City Commission Meeting held Tuesday, September 2, 2025.
- B. CLAIMS/PAYMENTS
1. Approve Claims Register No. 3102 authorizing and approving the payment of claims from August 28, 2025 – September 11, 2025, in the amount of \$3,721,231.89.

C. **FINAL PLATS**

1. Accept the easements and rights-of-way on the [Final Plat of The Highlands at Grand Mere, Unit Four](#), and authorize City Administration to finalize and the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement creating the restrictive covenant related to the conversation and drainage easement.

D. **BID AND AWARD**

- * 1. Danielle Dulin, City Manager, answered questions from the Commission.

Award a construction contract in the amount of \$164,375.87 to InLine Construction, Inc. for the [Warner Memorial Park Trailhead and Loop project \(PR2111\)](#) and authorize the City Manager to approve up to an additional \$50,000.00 in change orders.

2. Rescind award of a construction contract to Surgeon Construction, LLC for the [Concrete Street Repairs Task Order project \(ST2512\)](#).

E. **MISCELLANEOUS AGREEMENTS**

1. Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an Agreement for Construction of Infrastructure for public improvements at [Cedarhurst Subdivision \(WA2514, SS2506\)](#).
2. Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an Agreement for Construction of Infrastructure for public improvements for the [Morgan Cats Addition \(WA2210, SS2212\)](#).

F. **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Approve [Resolution No. 091625-A](#) repealing Resolution No. 060617-A to terminate the public improvement benefit district for the Genesis Health Club water project (WA1632).

G. **APPOINTMENTS**

1. Approve the [Mayor's recommendations for appointment](#) to external and/or City boards and committees.
 - a. Appointment of Debora Madsen to the Historic Resources Board.

Mayor McCulloh opened the public comments.

Hearing no comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public comments.

MOTION:	Commissioner Oppelt.
ACTION:	<i>Approve the consent agenda.</i>
SECOND:	Commissioner Minton.
RESULT:	On a roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.
Ayes:	Mayor McCulloh, Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Oppelt, Commissioner Matta, and Commissioner Minton.
Nayes:	None.
Abstain:	None.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

A. CONSIDER REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE AND 2026 CITY BUDGET

Mayor McCulloh opened the public hearing for the Revenue Neutral Rate.

Gary Olds, 3308 Frontier Circle, mentioned that because the Commission increased the Revenue Neutral Rate the taxpayers must receive a notice. He questioned the \$24,000,000 for the 2026 Budget mentioned in a letter from RCPD to the City of Manhattan and said it doesn't coincide with the amount allocated. He encouraged the Commission to look at city's budgets to the East and West of Manhattan, like Salina's budget.

Danielle Dulin, City Manager, answered questions from the City Commission.

Hearing no other comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public hearing.

MOTION:	Commissioner Oppelt.
ACTION:	<u>Adopt Resolution No. 091625-B, levying a property tax rate exceeding the revenue neutral rate.</u>
SECOND:	Commissioner Minton.
RESULT:	On a roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.
Ayes:	Mayor McCulloh, Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Oppelt, Commissioner Matta, and Commissioner Minton.
Nayes:	None.
Abstain:	None.

Danielle Dulin, City Manager, presented the item. She then answered questions from the Commission.

Mayor McCulloh opened the public hearing for the 2026 Budget.

Andrew VonLintel, 225 Fourwinds Court, expressed concern about the compounding effects of inflation on residents over the past several years, stating that the issue was not isolated to one year and was likely to continue. He warned that continued tax increases by the City would only add to the financial burden. He noted a rise in tax payment delinquencies as a sign of stress in the community and urged the Commission to exercise restraint in spending and to avoid accruing additional interest.

Gary Olds, 3308 Frontier Circle, addressed the Commission regarding the 2026 Budget, suggesting that unless two Commissioners changed their position, the budget outcome was already set. He criticized the Commission for rejecting the City Manager's initial recommendation of no cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and stated that she appeared to have a strong grasp on the city's financial stability. He questioned whether the middle-class taxpayer mattered in the City's decisions and highlighted increasing taxpayer frustration. He suggested that ultimately taxpayers would decide when to no longer accept the current situation.

Amber Starling, 408 Houston Street, acknowledged a clear disagreement between her and others who viewed social service spending as an unnecessary charitable donation. She argued that providing assistance was a constitutional obligation to promote general welfare and compared it to paying a contractor to fulfill city responsibilities. She expressed frustration that the city regularly granted large tax abatements to developers while spending far more time debating comparatively small investments in social services that help struggling residents, many of whom are directly affected by rising rents.

Roger Seymour, 1181 Rock Springs Lane, urged the Commission to focus on cost containment, stating that he did not see enough evidence of it in the current budget. He recommended freezing wages and eliminating COLA adjustments for all city employees. He shared a personal story about a family relying solely on Social Security who could no longer afford to live in Manhattan. He emphasized that rising costs were driving people out of the city and called for reductions in staffing and unnecessary programs. He criticized the decision to tear down and rebuild four ball diamonds and suggested that avoiding debt could free up millions in interest costs.

Pat Butler, 3414 Womack Way, who built his home in 1975, shared that he originally purchased his lot for \$3,000 and that construction costs and permits were far more affordable at the time. He stated that everything today seemed to be taxed excessively. He argued that high taxes were pushing residents outside city limits and criticized ongoing increases in water and storm sewer fees, often tied to technology upgrades. He opposed widespread tax abatements, stating that others were left to make up the difference, and called on the Commission to lower taxes to help residents stay in Manhattan.

Cindy Pitts, 1006 Leavenworth Street, highlighted that Manhattan was currently using 78% of its legal debt capacity, well above the 60% ceiling recommended by best practices, and

warned that the city's financial "credit card" was nearly maxed out. She explained that new projects would either require more taxes or budget cuts elsewhere. She questioned the 7.7% property tax increase proposed in the budget and why long-term residents were being asked to subsidize developer-driven projects such as parking garages and utility extensions for luxury condos. She pointed out that nearly half of the 2026 CIP was based on new debt, while maintenance backlogs continued to grow. She called for long-term cost planning, including life cycle estimates, and asked how the City would ensure solvency beyond the current year.

Kyle Clark, 808 Church Avenue, with a background in business and sales, expressed concern over the proposed 7.7% tax increase, explaining that many residents were already struggling under high taxes. He noted that there were not enough high-paying jobs in Manhattan to support such increases and that many people commuted to other cities for work. He urged the Commission to consider the perspective of lower-middle-income families and questioned whether additional increases were sustainable. He asked where the money was going and suggested revisiting the budget proposal with an eye toward moderation and practical solutions for residents trying to stay afloat financially.

Anthony Tiroch, 1000 Brierwood Drive, expressed long-standing frustration with what he perceived as the Commission's focus on new projects—like a new aquatics center or riverwalk—while basic infrastructure was neglected. He pointed to deteriorating streets, overgrown medians, and poor maintenance in public areas as examples. He also criticized the prevalence of tax abatements for businesses, including Kansas State University. He shared that he had spent nearly a year planning to build a new home after retirement but could no longer afford it due to the rising financial burden. He stated that residents in the area were being heavily taxed by multiple entities, the City of Manhattan, Riley County, and USD 383. He expressed concern that each of these bodies took a portion from residents without coordinating efforts or considering the cumulative impact.

Amy Dye, 3012 Payne Drive, said she felt the Commission had already made its decision on the budget and was frustrated by the continued push for a new indoor natatorium. While she acknowledged that many families might benefit, she pointed out that existing promises—like free access to junior high exercise facilities—had not been fulfilled. She called for greater accountability and a better understanding from the Commission about what residents were going through. She shared the story of a hardworking family who had to leave Manhattan due to rising rent costs, despite not receiving government assistance. She also criticized a past comment from the Mayor suggesting a \$60 tax increase was insignificant, stating that, for many families, it could mean going without food. She urged the Commission to consider budget reductions and more practical solutions.

Joe Knopp, 104 Oakwood Circle, presented data comparing the City's growth and budget trends, noting that Manhattan's population declined by 6.6% from 2019 to 2024, while the Consumer Price Index rose by 22% and the General Fund grew by 60%. He reported that the overall city budget nearly doubled from \$117 million to \$225 million during that period. He also pointed out a discrepancy in department budgets, where projected expenses for 2026

decreased by \$4.8 million compared to 2025. He questioned how the City could justify asking for more money while simultaneously claiming to be cutting costs and requested further explanation.

Elizabeth Parker, 3708 Katherine Circle, stated that she had lived in her current home for 35 years and was now paying \$7,000 per year in property taxes. She noted that her escrow payment had doubled in the last five years and was now equal to her mortgage. As a retiree on a fixed income, she said she could not afford continued tax increases. She opposed proposed projects like the riverwalk and stated that many retired residents were leaving the city for more affordable areas like Missouri. She criticized the City's financial incentives for apartment complexes, noting that long-time residents received no similar support, despite contributing to the community for decades.

Hearing no other comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public hearing.

Danielle Dulin, City Manager, answered additional questions from the Commission.

MOTION:	Commissioner Adamchak.
ACTION:	<u>Approve Ordinance No. 7772 adopting the 2026 City Budget and Resolution No. 091625-C adopting the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program.</u>
SECOND:	Commissioner Oppelt.
RESULT:	On a roll call vote, motion carried 4-1.
Ayes:	Mayor McCulloh, Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Oppelt, and Commissioner Minton.
Nayes:	Commissioner Matta.
Abstain:	None.

B. CONSIDER AMENDED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR 716 MORO STREET HOUSING PROJECT

Stephanie Peterson, Director of Community Development, presented the item. She then answered questions from the Commission.

Tyler Holloman, Frontier Development Group, presented the item. He then answered questions from the Commission.

Jason Hilgers, Deputy City Manager, answered questions from the Commission.

Mayor McCulloh opened the public hearing.

Jacob Stultz, 4514 Freeman Road, asked if the city was paying for the development.

Jason Hilgers, Deputy City Manager, provided information on the item.

Roger Seymour, 1181 Rock Springs and 520 Moro Street, stated that a prior City Commission had rezoned the entire area to single-family, despite the presence of multi-family units. He mentioned that he owned a three-unit building in that neighborhood. He noted that although the area had been downzoned to single-family, the city was allowing multi-family development. More importantly, he expressed concern that buildings were being constructed without proper parking, stating there should be a parking space for every unit. He stated that most people did not support the development and that he did not view it as a good deal for the city.

Amber Starling, 408 Houston Street, commended city staff for a better structured proposal than she's seen in the past. She stated that the performance structure was very well defined, and the pilot was as well. She mentioned that information was still missing, and asked what each unit would rent for, how much in property taxes in total would be abated, how much in sales tax total would be abated, how much workforce housing sales tax funding would be used for the project in dollars, and how many of the units would fall into workforce housing rates.

Stephanie Peterson, Director of Community Development, provided additional information.

Hearing no other comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public hearing.

MOTION:	Commissioner Oppelt.
ACTION:	<u>Approve Resolution No. 091625-D, amending Resolution No. 061725-B, determining the advisability of issuing Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds (MHRBs); and authorize execution of an amended economic development agreement with Midtown Holdings LLC for the Moro Flats housing project located at 716 Moro Street.</u>
SECOND:	Commissioner Minton.
RESULT:	On a roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.
Ayes:	Mayor McCulloh, Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Oppelt, Commissioner Matta, and Commissioner Minton.
Nayes:	None.
Abstain:	None.

At 7:45 pm. the Commission took a brief recess.

At 7:50 pm, the Commission reconvened with Mayor Karen McCulloh and Commissioner Susan E. Adamchak, Commissioner Peter Oppelt, Commissioner John E. Matta, and Commissioner Jayme Minton in attendance.

9. GENERAL AGENDA

A. CONSIDER REZONING 300 NORTH 11TH STREET AND 1020 LEAVENWORTH STREET

Commissioners did not have ex parte communications to declare.

Stephanie Peterson, Director of Community Development, presented the item. She then answered questions from the Commission.

Katie Jackson, City Attorney, presented the item. She then answered questions from the Commission.

Mayor McCulloh opened the public comments.

The following members of the public provided comments:

- Michael Mescerai, 1015 Leavenworth Street
- Denice Ellis, 928 Leavenworth
- Ricky Parham, 928 Leavenworth
- Aisha Stephenson, 300 North 11th Street
- Sara Fisher, 811 Osage Street
- Cindy Pitts, 1006 Leavenworth
- Kristina Wyatt, 1011 Osage Street
- James Seymour, 730 Osage Street
- Charissa Bertels, 519 Houston Street
- Judy Klimek, 904 Humboldt Street
- Mike Crubel, 825 Houston Street
- Andrew VonLintel, 225 Fourwinds Court
- Patricia Keefe, 926 Humboldt Street
- Linda Glasgow, 2236 Snowbird Drive, Riley County Preservation Alliance
- Zach Klentz, 922 Humboldt Street
- Mel Borst, 1918 Humboldt Street
- Kathy Dzewaltowski, 100 South Delaware Avenue
- Alisa Pajser Kerns, 713 Osage Street
- Amber Starling, 408 Houston Street

Hearing no other comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public comments.

Gavin Schmidt, applicant, 3725 Hawthorne Woods, provided comments.

MOTION: Commissioner Minton.
ACTION: [Override the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Boards recommendation and approve rezoning Ordinance No. 7773 rezoning two lots from Low-Density Residential \(RL\) with Established Neighborhood Overlay \(O-EN\) District, to Low-Density Residential Attached \(RL-A\) District with Established Neighborhood Overlay \(O-EN\) District, based on the findings in the staff report.](#) [See Attachment #1 in the above link to the Agenda Item Summary]
SECOND: Commissioner Matta.
RESULT: On a roll call vote, motion failed 3-2.

Ayes: Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Matta, and Commissioner Minton.

Nayes: Mayor McCulloh and Commissioner Oppelt.

Abstain: None.

MOTION: Commissioner Oppelt.
ACTION: Remand the item to the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board for reconsideration along with a statement that the basis for the return of the recommendation was that they needed more specific reasons under each review factor under Section 26-9B-2D, if the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board would deny it again.
SECOND: Commissioner Adamchak.
RESULT: On a roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.

Ayes: Mayor McCulloh, Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Oppelt, Commissioner Matta, and Commissioner Minton.

Nayes: None.

Abstain: None.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. City Manager discussed voting delegates for the October 11, 2025, Business Meeting at the Annual League of Kansas Municipalities Conference. Commissioner Oppelt was appointed the voting delegate for the meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Oppelt.

ACTION: *Adjourn the September 16, 2025, City Commission Meeting.*

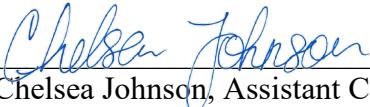
SECOND: Commissioner Adamchak.

Ayes: Mayor McCulloh, Commissioner Adamchak, Commissioner Oppelt,
Commissioner Matta, and Commissioner Minton.

No: None.

Abstain: None.

At 9:23 p.m., Mayor McCulloh announced the Commission meeting was adjourned.


Chelsea Johnson, Assistant City Clerk