

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 July 15, 2025, were duly adopted at a meeting of the City of Manhattan, Kansas, held on the 5th day of August 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 5th day of August, 2025.



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



MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 15, 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 July 15, 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, Assistant City Manager/Assistant Director of Public Works Wyatt Thompson, City Attorney Katharine Jackson, Assistant City Clerk Chelsea Johnson, 12 staff, and approximately 61 interested citizens.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor McCulloh led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PROCLAMATION

- A. Mayor McCulloh proclaimed July 26, 2025, National Day of Cowboy. Stephen Bridenstine, Flint Hills Discovery Center Director and Amber Myers, Flint Hills Discovery Center Education Supervisor, were 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 stated she cochairs a program through the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce called Classroom to Careers, where they partner 4th grade classrooms with businesses and organizations across the community, they need 40 businesses to help support classrooms in Manhattan, Wamego, St. George and beyond, they only have about 15, if anyone is interested contact Allison Muth at the Chamber.

Commissioner Oppelt stated on August 2, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. in the Groesbeck Room at the Manhattan Public Library, they will be having coffee with a Commissioner and Mayor McCulloh will be joining.

Commissioner Adamchak recognized the Juneteenth committee and stated Manhattan was recognized as the 2025 Juneteenth Celebration Event of the year in Kansas by the Neighborhood Academic and Athletic Association. She also mentioned the Riley County Historical Society would be leading free tours of City Park on Friday, July 18 at 5:30 p.m. starting at the log cabin.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

(* denotes those items discussed)

A. **MINUTES**

1. Approve the minutes of the Regular City Commission Meeting held Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

B. **CLAIMS/PAYMENTS**

1. Approve Claims Register No. 3097 authorizing and approving the payment of claims from June 11, 2025 – June 24, 2025, in the amount of \$6,779,830.16.
2. Approve Claims Register No. 3098 authorizing and approving the payment of claims from June 25, 2025 – July 8, 2025, in the amount of \$3,403,410.09.

C. **FINAL PLATS**

1. Accept the easements and rights-of-way on the [Final Plat of Islamic Center of Manhattan Complex](#) and approve an agreement creating the restrictive covenant related to the drainage easement.

D. **ORDINANCES**

1. Approve [Ordinance No. 7761](#) amending the Mercy Regional Hospital Planned Unit Development (PUD). *[Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board recommends approval]*

E. **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

1. Authorize Contract Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement for Professional Engineering Services with Schwab Eaton, P.A. in the amount of \$23,830 for the [2023 Waterline Improvements \(WA2302\)](#) and [Legore Lane Storm Sewer Improvements \(SW2312\)](#) Projects.

F. **BID AND AWARD**

- * 1. Brian Johnson, Director of Public Works, answered questions from the Commission.

Authorize an increase to the construction contract in the amount of \$23,689.63 with Olgoonik Enterprises, LLC for the [Houston Street Improvements Project \(ST2205\)](#).

G. **APPOINTMENTS**

This item was removed from the agenda at the request of the applicant.

1. ~~Approve the Mayor's recommendations for appointment to external and/or City Boards and committees.~~
a. ~~Appointment of Kelm Lear to the Human Rights Advisory Board.~~

Mayor McCulloh opened the public comments.

Hearing no comments, Mayor McCulloh closed the public comments.

MOTION: Commissioner Adamchak.

ACTION: *Approve the consent agenda.*

SECOND: Commissioner Minton.

RESULT: On a roll call vote, motion carried/failed 5-0.

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

Nayes: None.

Abstain: None.

8. ITEM REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

No items were removed from the Consent Agenda.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

A. CONSIDER INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS FOR THE WAREHAM HALL PROJECT

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

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

Blade Mages, Executive Director, Wareham Hall, provided information regarding the project to the Commission. He then answered questions from the Commission.

Mayor McCulloh opened the public hearing.

Andrew VonLintel, 225 Fourwinds Court, he stated at the June 10, 2025, City Commission Meeting and last week on KMAN radio he expressed opposition to the project due to concerns of its possible for-profit status. He stated he was now satisfied with its non-profit status and would remove his opposition to the project and the city's involvement in the project. Expressed his apologies to anybody offended. He emphasized part of the reason for his opposition was to make sure donors were not being taken advantage of.

Frank Tracz, 145 Bethany Drive, stated he is attending in support of the project, and that the students of K-State and citizens of Manhattan can use this facility in many ways that would benefit us all. He stated that CBS Sunday Morning is doing a special on the City of Manhattan due to the famous Everett family and they're going to do an exposé on the Wareham that will bring the city national and international exposure. He said the Manhattan Municipal Band has only had 4 concerts this summer due to rain, and they usually have 10, the Wareham is somewhere they could move their concerts in the event of rain.

Stephanie Gryniewicz, 1419 Humboldt Street, stated she has worked closely with the Wareham Hall staff and that the Wareham is a part of our history. She mentioned many people will travel two to six hours to see comedians, so people are willing to travel for experiences and quality events. She stated that she has a lot of confidence in the Wareham's staff. She mentioned coming from a non-profit world she is very grateful they're doing this without public money.

Jack Colligan, 1741 Laramie Street, stated his roommate has a band and he's really seen him grow this past year but it would be nice for him to have the opportunity to grow here with his band and not to have to drive two to six hours for a concert. He felt really compelled by the project and what it can do for the growth of the school and the town.

George Matthews, 1002 Houston Street, mentioned there is a lack of venue space of this size in Manhattan and that there are a lot of great small venues and Bramlage which is a large venue, but we don't have a mid-sized venue which is what Wareham Hall would be. He stated that there are shows and acts that can't come here because there isn't a space here for them. He mentioned that he grew up in San Antonio, there wasn't much to do so they would travel to Austin which was 90 minutes away. He said San Antonio now has more things to do because they made the investment to keep people in town and to attract people to San Antonio. He stated you have to create the space, if you don't build it then they can't come.

Doug Meloan, of 2033 Estella Drive, stated he was a lifetime Manhattan resident and had gone to the Wareham as a kid when it was still a movie theatre. He said he was in support of the Wareham Hall. He described it as a wonderful building and expressed his appreciation for restoring architectural history. He noted that the Wareham Hotel and Wareham Theatre signified Manhattan's downtown. He believed the building could be a benefit to the community. Just this past spring, he had been looking for a venue for a high-celebrity speaker to come to Manhattan but the speaker decided to wait until the Wareham Hall project was finished. Meloan thought it would be a wonderful venue for the community and that we would be preserving a beautiful facility downtown.

Bryan Pinkall, 2049 Estella Drive, Director of School of Music Theatre and Dance at Kansas State University, stated that it was the fastest growing department at the University. He said they had a lot of students they needed to place into the arts and entertainment industry, and that the project had presented an opportunity for internships and one-on-one experience for students. He thanked his colleagues for attending and showing their support for the project.

Ralph Diaz, 412 Kearney Street, stated that he had owned businesses Downtown since 1999. He noted that the youth had been giving public comments and asking for this venue, and that the community had wanted young people to stay in town rather than leave. He expressed the desire for them to graduate and grow their businesses locally. He said Blade had worked really hard on the project and had a great team supporting him. As a downtown business owner, he appreciated seeing crown jewels like the Flint Hills Discovery Center and the Museum of Art and Light emerge. He believed that adding this crown jewel on top of all the other great businesses would help keep younger people in the area and hopefully continue to grow the city. He said Blade and his team were doing great work and that he was supportive.

Heather Augustine, 624 Pebblebrook Circle, Elementary Music Educator at USD 383, shared that they had a meeting with Blade and were instantly overwhelmed by how much they could tie in with their students. She explained that someone often falls in love with music or decides to pursue a career in performance as early as 5 or 6 years old. She emphasized the value of showing students not only how to perform, but also what happens behind the scenes. There will be opportunities for small master classes, and with the venue being downtown it will be easily accessible to many schools within walking distance. When there is a performer in the evening they will offer a presentation specifically geared to students, including Q&A or behind-the-scenes sessions. Augustine noted that this could help spark students' interest in the arts. She also mentioned the need for more summer programs, particularly those with a performing arts focus or week-long day camps. The music staff was very excited about the opportunity, as there was nothing else like it in

Manhattan, and she believed it would be a great resource for students in USD 383 and surrounding districts.

Lee Modesitt, 1819 Fairchild Avenue, stated that if the Commission wasn't convinced by the \$20 million in fundraising, the visuals presented, or the number of people involved, then nothing he or anyone else could have said could have demonstrated that the community had been behind the project and that it was a worthwhile endeavor. He noted that doing nothing would leave another avenue open at the state level, which would result in \$0 revenue. However, approving the abatement would allow the project to leverage over \$4 million in federal funding. He believed the project had significant merit, investment, and support, and called it a smart decision for the community to invest and bring in outside dollars. He stated that Blade had been hired by and reported to a board. He shared that he had known Blade for many years, noting that Blade had moved to Manhattan, was currently renovating a mid-century modern home, had founded and grown a successful digital advertising agency, and was now channeling his passion for Manhattan into this new project. He concluded by saying that this was a challenge Manhattan faced—many talented individuals came through Kansas State University, only to leave for places like Kansas City, Chicago, or Dallas. He urged the Commission to do everything possible to retain the young talent and support the project.

Vern Henricks, 3508 Vanesta Drive, echoed what Lee had said. He stated that the project had plenty of support. He emphasized that this is about the young professionals and inspiring individuals to have the vision to stay in the community. He stated that Blade has done a lot of research and appreciates the building. He said that it is admiring how much energy he and the board of put into this process. Henricks expressed his support for Blade and said the community needed to be turned over to the younger generation, supporting their vision and inspiration to make the city a better place. He believed it had been important to build on decisions like this so that others would be inspired to stay.

Jason Smith, 904 Locharno Drive, President/CEO, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, expressed excitement about the project. On behalf of the board and the 850-plus members, he stated that they fully supported the project and asked the commission to consider the resolution in a positive manner. He thanked Blade and his team, noting it was remarkable that they had been able to put the project together without requesting local government financing. He also thanked the Commission for their time and commitment, and expressed appreciation to the audience for their support of the project.

Jeremy Ricci, 501 Gatlinburg Way, Apt. 205, stated that his interest in the project was a personal one. He had been producing comedy in Manhattan for 12 years, starting in the basement bar of Auntie Mae's Parlor. Over time, he began producing shows at Liquid Art Winery about 8–10 times a year for audiences of 150–250 people, with nearly every show selling out. He said that people had wanted this—they came from places like Salina and Topeka to attend these shows. According to Ricci, people had craved entertainment, shared experiences, and a sense of community—and that was what this project could have offered: a place to share what unites us. He believed that viewing the project strictly as a business had been the wrong approach; instead, it needed to be seen as part of the community—a way to restore a sense of soul to the town and bring people together. Ricci described Blade and the people of Wareham Hall as individuals of character and

said it would be a mistake for the community to disparage them or take the project away from those who could benefit from it personally.

Tom Addair, 2708 St. Charles Circle, owner of Addair Law, spoke about what it takes to keep people in the community. He stated there was no question that the project would produce revenue. He stated this project isn't taking tax money away from the city, the city isn't going to get the tax money. He mentioned the only thing at risk of being lost was \$6 million in federal funding that could come into the town to help this project. If we don't allow the federal funds to come into the town to help this project then it will be on the citizens of the community to make up the \$6 million. He stated we would continue to give to the Wareham to make sure the project gets to completion.

Amber Starling, 408 Houston Street, said she was pleased that Blade addressed many concerns she raised in her research and was very encouraged that the City Commission asked hard questions. She was encouraged by the amount of people attending the meeting in support of the Wareham and the confidence she has in the Wareham's future. She said she wanted the Commission to consider their spending habits. She mentioned that the Commission has told a number of people recently that they don't have to pay property taxes, and that we are cutting off dollars from the future. She said she was grateful to see people are willing to take care of the Wareham. She reiterated that she was pleased to see the Commission ask hard questions and hoped it would continue.

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

Blade Mages, Executive Director, Wareham Hall, thanked his team, his board and everyone in attendance at the meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Oppelt.

ACTION: Approve Resolution No. 071525-A, determining the advisability of issuing Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs); and authorize execution of an economic development agreement for IRB property tax abatement.

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 7:27 p.m., the Commission took a brief recess.

At 7:32 p.m., 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.

10. GENERAL AGENDA

A. CONSIDER LEASE AGREEMENT WITH HCW IN THE DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE

Jared Wasinger, Assistant City Manager, presented the item. He then answered questions from the Commission.

Mayor McCulloh opened the public comments.

The following members of the public provided comments:

- Andrew VonLintel, 225 Fourwinds Court

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

MOTION: Commissioner Adamchak.

ACTION: [Authorize City Administration to finalize and Mayor and City Clerk to execute a lease agreement with HCW for up to 300 parking stalls in the Downtown Parking Garage.](#)

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.

B. CONSIDER EXCEEDING THE REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE

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

Mayor McCulloh opened the public comments.

The following member of the public provided comments:

- Andrew VonLintel, 225 Fourwinds Court

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

The Commission discussed, and the majority were in favor of a 2 mil increase. Commissioner Matta was opposed.

MOTION: Commissioner Oppelt.

ACTION: [Approve Resolution No. 071525-B regarding the City Commission's intent to levy a property tax exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate by 2 mils and setting a public hearing regarding its intention to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate on September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.](#)

SECOND: Commissioner Adamchak.

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.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Adamchak.

ACTION: ***Adjourn the July 15, 2025, City Commission Meeting.***

SECOND: Commissioner Minton.

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

No: None.

Abstain: None.

At 8:30 p.m., Mayor McCulloh announced the Commission meeting was adjourned.



Chelsea Johnson
Chelsea Johnson, Assistant City Clerk