



May meetings

City Commission, May 6 and 20, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

School Board, May 5 and 19, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

Park Board, May 12, 4:30 p.m., City Hall

County Commission, May 12 and 27, 5:30 p.m., Morton County Courthouse

City Planning and Zoning Commission, May 27, 5:15 p.m., City Hall

Online billing postponed

The City Finance Department is implementing a new online system for customers to view water bills online, see current balances, and make payments or set up auto payments. Customers will be able to opt out of paper bills. Staff members are addressing technical issues to be sure the online system works in harmony with the City's new utility billing program.

Local sales tax revenue up

Collections through February of the 1% local sales tax were up 9% compared to the same period for 2013. Revenue from the 1% restaurant and lodging tax was down 6% and the 2% hotel occupancy tax was down 21%.

Report concerns online

The City has a new form on its website at www.cityofmandan.com for use by community members in reporting concerns such as property maintenance issues that can be addressed in 48 hours to a week's time. Matters requiring immediate attention should be phoned in to the appropriate department and emergencies should still be reported via a 911 call.

Spring Clean-Up Week April 26 to May 3

During Spring Clean-Up Week, residents may place bulky items (no more than two people can lift) at their boulevard curb by 5 a.m. on their normal waste collection day. Items will not be picked up in alleyways. Please keep items for discard separate from household garbage as well as from belongings you do not want collected. Mark old cans, crates, or boxes for disposal, or they will be emptied and left.

Restrictions include no tires, branches, leaves, grass, commercial or demolition rubbish, or hazardous waste materials such as paints, batteries or insecticides. Please take these items to the landfill. There is a charge of \$2 per tire. Any appliance left for spring clean-up that has any food item in it will be left.

The City landfill will be open free of charge to Mandan residents from 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Saturday, April 26 and Monday, April 28 through Saturday, May 3. For more information about Spring Clean-Up Week, see the "Announcements" section of www.cityofmandan.com or call 667-3240.

Volunteers asked to help with litter pick-up and beautification with Adopt-A-Street program

Public Works Director Jeff Wright encourages community-based groups, local businesses or school organizations to participate in Adopt-a-Street throughout the city. Besides picking up litter along streets, organizations may take on beautification projects, such as planting and maintaining flower beds. Areas available for adoption include: "Welcome to Mandan" signs at the west and east ends of Main Street, the Sixth Avenue SE underpass, the MANDAN letters in concrete and trees on Crying Hill, and the walking path gazebo by Sitting Bull Bridge near the Heart River. Additional ideas are welcomed.

Adopt-A-Street agreements are for a minimum of two years. The group agrees to pick up litter in right-of-ways on a volunteer basis as needed. In return, the City will post a sign on each end of an adopted section with the group's name. The Public Works Department provides trash bags and picks up filled bags.

Anyone interested in assisting may pick up a copy of the agreement at the Public Works Office at 411 6th Avenue SW or on the city website. For more information, please contact the Public Works Department at 667-3240.

Committee seeking grant for Memorial Highway program

The Mandan Tomorrow - Leadership, Pride and Image Committee, together with the City of Mandan, has applied for a Bush Foundation Community Innovation grant in the amount of \$200,000 to fund an enhancement program for commercial property owners and businesses on Memorial Highway and portions of connecting streets. Mandan should know if it is a finalist by May. The Bush Foundation received nearly 600 applications for programs in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Mandan's proposed program, if approved, would make up to \$10,000 available for exterior improvements to street-facing sides of buildings and for trees and other landscaping elements to improve the appearance of entrances and parking lots.





Upgraded water meters will be read by radio transmission. Meter readers will no longer need to access customer properties each month.

Citywide water meter upgrade project beginning this spring

Starting around May, the City of Mandan will be working with a contractor to replace or upgrade the approximate 6,600 residential and commercial water meters in the town with more advanced units. This project is to be completed by January 2015. Current water meter assemblies in Mandan's homes and businesses vary in age, brand, size, and accuracy. "When the project is finished, the City's utility workers will be able to drive by a property to log water usage or collect the data via radio towers instead of needing to access customer properties each month," explains Jay Perkins, Mandan Water Meter Maintenance Supervisor.

Scheduling. At a March 18 meeting, City Commissioners selected the low bidder, Thirkettle Corporation, as the project's contractor. Thirkettle representatives will be contacting property owners to schedule appointments over the next few months. When the project schedule is determined, it will be posted on the City's website, www.cityofmandan.com, in the Announcements section. If you do not have internet access, you may pick up information about the project at City Hall. Information should be available by late April.

Safety precautions. To ensure the public's safety, the City will require Thirkettle installation technicians to pass background checks before being approved to work in homes and businesses in Mandan. The technicians will also be required to wear photo identification badges and to provide each property's specific work order number as further proof of identity. The installation technicians' photos will be posted on the City's website with the rest of the project information in the Announcement section as soon as photos are available and contracts are executed. It is important to note that someone over age 18 must be present during installation. The technicians are not allowed to enter a home unless an adult is present.

Appointment expectations. The City and its contractor need cooperation from property owners to continue providing water services. Appointments will take about 30 minutes, however the installation technician may request a two-hour window of time to arrive at your property. During the installation appointment, the technician will remove the old meter and/or radio transceiver and install a new model. Water service will be briefly interrupted during the appointment. Most water meter assemblies are located a few feet off of the basement floor, on the wall that faces the street. However, they can also be found inside pits, walls, or cabinets. The installation technician will need at least 3 square feet of workspace to access the meter assembly. Property owners are asked to remove any belongings that could block access to a water meter assembly prior to scheduled appointments. Most properties will require a single appointment with the contractor to complete the prescribed upgrades. However, a limited number of locations may require follow-up appointments to make minor corrections to the radio transceiver placement.

Upgrades accounted for in current water rate. The cost of the project is covered by the City's current water and sewer rates. Property owners will not see an increase in their water bill unless their previous water meters have been inaccurately reporting water usage. There will be no cost to property owners for installing new water meter assemblies. In older properties some of the pipes, water shut-off valves, or curb stops may need to be updated to work properly with the new meters. In cases such as this, homeowners will be responsible for the cost of updates or modifications needed to operate the new meter assembly. A representative from Thirkettle will explain to property owners any additional improvements that need to be made and the cost associated with those improvements. The costs could range from a few dollars to a couple hundred dollars. When practical, existing meter equipment will be salvaged.

If you have questions about the water meter upgrade project, please call City of Mandan Water Meter Maintenance Supervisor Jay Perkins, phone 701-220-0825.

Retailers wanted to anchor prime properties on Main and First streets

The City of Mandan Business Development and Communications Department continues to field many questions about the status of the former Central Market property and the Thrifty White Drug location. Central Market closed unexpectedly in December and Thrifty White Drug recently announced that it is moving its pharmacy to a new building on Overlook Lane.

Business Development and Communications Director Ellen Huber contacts the property owners on a weekly basis for updates on inquiries and collaborative efforts to attract buyers or tenants for the buildings. The ownership group is Joersz Land, LLP, consisting of brothers Wally, Bob and Marv Joersz. The owners are willing to lease, lease with option to buy, or sell the properties.

The building at 504 W Main, the former Central Market, is 32,173 square feet (sf). The land area totals 116,950 sf or 2.68 acres. The lease by Central Market expires Dec. 31, 2016. Early release may be attainable for non-grocery use. The building was constructed in 1989.

The building at 511 First Street NW is 15,785 sf with the land it sits on and an associated lot totaling 34,750 sf or 0.8 acres. The building was constructed in 1976.

The properties are available together or separately. For lease rates, asking prices and other terms, contact Bob Joersz, phone 701-663-8447.

Fact or fiction? When the Central Market sign was removed from the pole in the parking lot, it revealed a former Miracle Mart sign. This was the name of the store at one point under operation by the Barlow family. Miracle Mart is not re-opening in Mandan.

It was commonly rumored throughout the city that Runnings was going to buy the properties. Bob Joersz reports that Runnings representatives did look at the property, but they weren't able to agree on a sales price.

Next steps. Huber and other city officials are reaching out to regional grocery entities, but have no firm bites at this point. Efforts in the near-term may need to expand beyond grocery use because of the existing lease agreement.

The Bismarck-Mandan Development Association will be assisting with marketing and outreach with bulk e-mails in the coming month to a list of about 2,000 retail site selectors and corporate real estate representatives. If still available, the property will also be marketed at the International Association of Shopping Centers retail expo in May.

The buildings are in Mandan's Renaissance Zone for tax exemptions with qualified improvements and the area eligible for Storefront Improvement matching funds.



Having a grocery store on Mandan's Main Street has been important to many other retailers, restaurants and businesses in the downtown area. As more apartment units were added to the downtown, many residents enjoyed walking to the store.



Thrifty White Drug is relocating its pharmacy to Overlook Lane, west off Sunset Drive, north of I-94 and Old Red Trail.



The two properties are adjacent to one another and could be combined for one larger retailer.



Assessing office using new program

The City of Mandan Assessing office implemented a new program for 2014. The software is known as CAMAvision by Vanguard Appraisals. The company has over 260 clients across the midwest with parcel counts ranging from 1,000 up to 125,000. City Assessor Shirley Shaw explains that the office staff chose this program because it is easy to work with, is priced right for Mandan's needs, other cities and counties report great service and support, and Morton County recently went with Vanguard, so it makes it easier for the two offices to work together.

As long as a city has accurate data on all property, the pricing module will value all residential and commercial property by following the sales ratio analysis. It follows the International Association of Assessing Officers Standard on sales ratio studies and provides group statistical analysis: price range, map areas, style, age, grade condition, total living area, occupancy, and sub-division. The program has residential and commercial modules, a sketching program, and photo module that allows hundreds of photos to be added as well as portable document format (PDF) files, which capture printed documents as electronic images. The city is working on scanning all old building permits and plans into the computer system and those documents can be added to each parcel.

North Dakota law requires each assessor's office to uniformly and fairly value all parcels of land and buildings for tax purposes. This is an ongoing process that consists of gathering and reviewing information through field inspections, measuring and listing new construction, and analyzing market sales to determine fair values for existing and new construction properties.

Property taxes are determined by elected officials (city and county commissioners, school and park board members) setting their budgets. Once budgets for each political subdivision are set, the amount needed from property taxes is divided by the total taxable value to determine the mill levy. Each property's share of the property tax is based on the assessor's value. Although the work of the assessor doesn't determine the total amount of taxes paid, it does affect the uniform distribution of the property tax burden.

Mandan's Assessing Office has been working hard to implement the new program. Assessor Shaw reports staff are pleased so far with the conversion from the AS400 system which has been in use since 1978. The old program went through many updates and changes throughout the years, but with the advancement and growth Mandan is seeing in recent years, it was becoming outdated. The assessor's office had to utilize both programs this year to properly assess all properties equitably as the conversion is being completed. If anyone has questions, please call the Assessing Office at 667-3232.

ON-LINE POLL RESULTS

Spring Clean-Up Week popular among respondents

March's informal, on-line poll focused on Spring Clean-Up Week in Mandan, scheduled for April 26 to May 3. The question was "Do you plan to partake?" There were 88 respondents. Eighty-seven percent were planning to take advantage of services provided that week with 41% planning to place items on the boulevard for pick-up, 5% were planning to take items to the landfill, open that week free of charge to Mandan residents, and 42% were planning to use both options. Another 5% were unsure and 8% said they would not be participating. For more info on Spring Clean-Up Week, see the cover article, the Announcements section of www.cityofmandan.com, or call the Public Works Department at 667-3240.

City Contacts

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Mandan City Commission

Mayor Arlyn VanBeek
Mike Braun
Dot Frank
Dennis Rohr
Sandra Tibke

City Departments

Administration	667-3215
Airport Authority	663-0669
Assessing	667-3232
Building Inspection	667-3230
Business Development	
& Communications	667-3485
Cemetery	667-6044
Engineering, Planning & Zoning	667-3225
Finance	667-3213
Fire	667-3288
Human Resources	667-3217
Landfill	667-0184
Library	667-5365
Municipal Court	667-3270
Police	667-3455
Public Works	667-3240
Special Assessments	667-3271
Utility Billing	667-3219
Waste Water Treatment	667-3278
Water Treatment	667-3275

Receive E-mail Notices

Sign up to receive notice of city meetings and news in the "E-mail Updates" section of www.cityofmandan.com. Meeting dates and agendas are available.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Has any member of your household used the Capital Area Transit (CAT) bus or paratransit system in the last two years?

Visit www.cityofmandan.com by April 30 to respond.