



September meetings

City Commission, Sept. 2 at 5 p.m. and Sept 16 at 5:30 p.m., City Hall

School Board, Sept. 2 at 7 p.m. and Sept. 15 at 5:30 p.m., City Hall

Park Board, Sept. 8 at 4:30 p.m., City Hall

County Commission, Sept. 8 and 30 at 5:30 p.m., Morton County Courthouse

City Planning and Zoning Commission, Sept. 22 at 5:15 p.m., City Hall

Movie in the park

Grab your lawn chairs and get ready for a movie under the stars! The Mandan Park District is hosting an outdoor movie night on Friday, Sept. 12 at Memorial Ballpark, 501 Third Street SW.

The Sandlot is a coming-of-age story centered around a group of young baseball players in the 1960s. It's rated PG.

Gates open at 8:30 p.m., and the movie starts at 9 p.m. The event is free to the public. Concessions will be available. Temperatures may drop when the sun goes down, so dress warm and pack a blanket!

Oktoberfest celebrates German heritage

Celebrate North Dakota's German heritage! Join the Mandan Progress Organization for Oktoberfest at Dykshoorn Park on Sept. 27.

Enjoy German food, live music, fall crafts, beer tasting and more! The community event runs from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Cottonwood will take the bandshell stage at 7 p.m.

For more information, visit www.mandanprogress.org.

City officials develop 2015 budget

City of Mandan elected officials and staff are creating the 2015 budget. The budget process began this spring. Departments submitted budget requests in June.

Last year, the budget policy was revised to transfer 50% of annual city sales tax collections to the general fund for property tax reduction, up from a 40% contribution in 2013.

The Finance Committee has been meeting with department managers, supervisors, and portfolio commissioners to review requests. The committee includes City Administrator Jim Neubauer, Finance Director Greg Welch and City Commission finance portfolio holder Sandy Tibke.

The Finance Committee will present its recommendations to the City Commission at its Aug. 19 meeting. On Aug. 29, the City will publish a notice of a public hearing in the *Mandan News*, and budget information will be available at the City Finance office and on the City's website, www.cityofmandan.com.

The Mandan Park District, School District and Morton County are also creating 2015 budgets.

Committee studies possible sales tax initiative for community improvements

The Mandan Sales Tax Committee is responding to community requests for capital improvement projects by exploring the possibility of an initiative funded largely with a potential bump in sales tax. Mandan's local sales tax is currently 1%, increasing to 1.5% when a half-cent increase becomes effective in October for a joint jail approved by voters in Burleigh and Morton counties. Committee members are talking about a possible increase, possibly a half-cent on the dollar, which would put the local sales tax at 2%.

The sales tax committee is seeking public input on the scope of such an initiative and a variety of project options. The first method of evaluating reactions to ideas is through a focus group in mid-August. "The more public input we receive, the better decisions our elected officials can make. This is just one of the first steps to gauge public opinion," explains City Administrator Jim Neubauer.

An online survey will be posted later this month. Watch the websites of the Mandan Park District, www.mandanparks.com, and the City of Mandan, www.cityofmandan.com, for a link to the survey to be available by Aug. 15.

Members of the Mandan Sales Tax Committee as appointed by the respective entities are Mandan Park Board President Jason Arenz, Mandan Mayor Arlyn Van Beek, and Mandan School District Vice-President Sheldon Wolf.

In accordance with state law, a school district cannot receive funding through sales and use taxes. The school district was asked to be part of the sales tax committee to explore possibilities for rent of new or improved facilities if constructed by the park district.

The committee will evaluate initial input to gauge potential public support for a capital improvement project initiative and possible components. More public information meetings would be held and official City Commission action would be needed before any initiative would go to a formal election ballot for consideration by voters.





NEW & EXPANDING MANDAN BUSINESSES

- Borealis Vape
500 W Main Street
- Custom Cut & Fab
3111 Memorial Highway
- Legacy Law Firm
2610 Old Red Trail, Suite C
- Performance Off-Road
2010 46th Ave SE
- Western Ag Professional
Agronomy of North Dakota
3204 Memorial Highway

Upcoming

- Creative Construction
4720 19th Street SE
- JJ's Cakery
3801 Memorial Highway

CITY SALES TAX GENERATES MORE REVENUE

Collections through June of the 1% city sales tax were up 21.6% compared to the same period for 2013. Revenue for the 1% restaurant and lodging tax increased by 11.1%, and the 2% hotel occupancy tax decreased by 10% percent.

Opportunity Fund helps 29 businesses in 13 communities

North Dakota Opportunity Fund leaders filed a federal quarterly report in July indicating the consortium of 38 municipalities has fully committed to its small business loan program the original \$9.7 million allocation received from the U.S. Treasury Department State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI). Funding was originally awarded in September 2012.

So far, including the revolved funds, the Opportunity Fund has committed nearly \$10.5 million to small business loans, leveraging more than \$79 million in private sector financing for 29 businesses in 13 communities. The Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council (LCRDC) administers the loan program from its offices in Mandan. Administrative costs have been kept low, at only 2.5% of the allocation.

Businesses that received loans for start-up or expansion are now making payments, allowing the loan fund to revolve and continue as a source of assistance for many more businesses for the foreseeable future. The City of Mandan is the lead municipality for the consortium. Projects in Mandan approved for loans since the program began have been the purchase of Red Trail Petro by CR Oil, the Comfort Inn and Suites, and the new Action Motor Sports.

Included in the overall loan portfolio are manufacturers, retail stores, restaurants, hotels, and industrial services. Loans range from \$8,000 to \$1 million. The fund has helped retain 128 jobs and create 364 jobs with the participating businesses. For more information, call the LCRDC at 701-667-7620 or visit www.lewisandclarkrdc.org.

Business reps invited to 'Talk of the Town' on Sept. 17

The Mandan Tomorrow - Economic Opportunity and Prosperity Committee is hosting a "Talk of the Town" outreach event with local leaders. The "town hall" style event gives business owners and managers a chance to talk with local elected officials about community progress, ongoing projects, future initiatives and other topics specific to Mandan. The event takes place Sept. 17 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Seven Seas Inn. Registration is requested by Sept. 15 online via www.cityofmandan.com/register or by calling 667-3478.

Residential growth strong for 2014, yet behind last year's record

Mandan issued building permits for 43 single family homes as of July's end, well below the 105 permits issued by this time in the 2013 record-smashing year. Total new units permitted for 2014 stand at 249 including condos, apartments, an assisted living expansion and mobile homes. The pace is down from 352 units for the same period a year ago, but is above 12-month totals for all other years except 2012 and 2013. The average value of new single family homes permitted to date in 2014 is \$279,000, similar last year's average of \$283,831.

City planning, engineering and building officials anticipate strong residential growth to continue in 2014, but at present, the number of permits for single family homes issued in 2014 is off the pace from last year for a couple key reasons:

- Spring was late in arriving in North Dakota, delaying the start of construction.
- A change in city policy to assure emergency access to new homes and construction sites was adopted in 2013. The City of Mandan now requires, prior to issuance of a building permit, that there be a roadway with a hard surface, either the first layer of asphalt or a 20-foot wide strip of Class 5 gravel with a 5-inch base, and a turn-around at the end of the road to accommodate fire trucks and ambulances.

There were six subdivisions in which contractors were unable to complete street projects in 2013 due to late bidding and wet conditions in the fall. Once contractors complete these projects in 2014, there will be 135 lots eligible for permit. Subdivision and street improvement projects have either been approved or are anticipated for another five subdivisions in 2014 accounting for approximately 158 lots.

Commercial development. New commercial and industrial buildings as well as remodeling and addition projects total \$11 million so far in 2014. That compares to approximately \$19 million for all of 2013.



Comprehensive plan nears completion

Mandan's new comprehensive plan that addresses land use and transportation is nearing completion. After the June 2 community meeting, planning consultants at Stantec received comments and suggestions regarding various issues including:

- Truck routes to relieve congestion on Main Street.
- The alignment of proposed regional arterial routes that will extend beyond the existing limits of development.
- Future planning studies focused on downtown, the I-94 business route and on McKenzie Drive crossing of the Heart River.
- Coordination of approvals in the extraterritorial area between Mandan and Morton County as the city grows.

The consultants are evaluating comments and will present an updated draft plan to the Planning Advisory Committee later this summer.

Police department releases 2013 annual report

The Mandan Police Department released its 2013 annual report in July. The report includes a crime report statistic comparison, juvenile offender statistics, and traffic enforcement and crash summaries.

The department reported decreases in the areas of juvenile crimes, drug crimes and reports of child abuse and neglect. Reports of child abuse and neglect decreased by 25%, while juvenile and drug crimes decreased by about 22%. The department contributes the decrease in drug crimes in part to a cease-and-desist order placed on synthetic drugs in 2012 by the North Dakota attorney general. The report also indicates minor increases in aggravated assaults, domestic violence and simple assaults.

The City's 2014 budget allows for the hiring of four additional police officers and a warrants officer. Deputy Police Chief Paul Leingang says the new positions will improve services by providing better response times and allowing officers more time for follow-up. The new positions will also allow for more preventative and proactive patrols, increasing the safety for both officers and residents.

The department is filling existing vacancies in addition to new positions. Leingang says a new police academy in Bismarck will make it easier to hire and retain employees. Lake Region State College's Peace Officer Training Academy will host its first training in Bismarck on Aug. 27.

The annual report is available on the police department's website, www.mandanpd.com.

Contractors completing parts of Sunset Drive reconstruction

Contractors largely completed the reconstruction of Sunset Drive in 2013, but a few aspects of the project have remained for 2014 finalization.

Weed problem. The amount of weed growth in the area of reconstruction is unusual. The City of Mandan Engineering and Planning Department is seeking assurance from consulting engineers responsible for oversight of the project that contractors used appropriate top soil and seed.

Other project pieces. Striping was completed earlier this year. Contractors completed selective grinding of the surface in order to improve surface smoothness and allow for a better ride. In July, contractors corrected miscellaneous items deemed insufficient in order to allow final acceptance by the city.

The City of Mandan, engineering firm and contractor will continue to work out remaining issues and hope to have all outstanding items resolved in the next 30 to 60 days.



The City Commission will be considering the creation of a City of Mandan Facebook page at its Aug. 5 meeting. Stay tuned if approved, and be sure to like and monitor updates.



"WHERE THE WEST BEGINS"

Technicians continue water meter installations

The City's water meter replacement project is 25% complete as of July's end, with meters replaced in approximately 1,300 properties. The project is expected to be finished in January. Installation technicians are now focusing on areas north of Main Street.

Property owners are being contacted by Thirkettle Corporation, the City's primary contractor for the project, before work begins in their neighborhoods. Individual appointments are being communicated via a personalized post card and reminder phone calls are being made.

The City and its contractor need cooperation from property owners to continue providing water services. Failure to allow a technician to make the required water meter upgrades to a property could result in temporary water service suspension, which includes an operator's fee from the City of Mandan.

The cost of the project is covered by the City's current water and sewer rates. There will be no cost to property owners for installing new water meter assemblies. However, 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 these cases, homeowners will be responsible for the cost of updates or modifications needed to operate the new meter assembly.

The City of Mandan and Thirkettle Corporation appreciate the cooperation and patience shown by residents.

More information, including an installation route map and technician photos, is available on the City's website, www.cityofmandan.com or by request at City Hall.

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Respondents split on affordable housing issue

July's online poll focused on the development of affordable housing. Of the 85 people who responded, 40% thought the City should take steps to foster more affordable housing developments. Of the remaining respondents, 41% did not think the City should be involved, while 19% were undecided and would need more information.

Asked which methods would best foster affordable housing developments, respondents who supported affordable housing prioritized the following options:

- 8% Support expansion of the North Dakota Housing Incentive Fund in the 2015 legislative session.
- 7% Morton County Housing Authority should invest in housing.
- 5% Provide an interest rate buy-down for the Bank of North Dakota FlexPACE program.
- 3% Reduce street width requirements (may have parking only on one side).
- 3% Support formation of a community land trust.
- 3% Support in downtown areas with property tax exemption through Renaissance Zone, a Remodeling Exemption or Tax Increment Financing.
- 30% None of the above methods of assistance are acceptable.
- 21% All of the above methods should be considered.
- 20% Uncertain, need more information.

City Contacts

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Mandan City Commission

Mayor Arlyn Van Beek
Mike Braun
Dot Frank
Shauna Laber
Dennis Rohr

City Departments

Administration	667-3215
Airport Authority	663-0669
Assessing	667-3528
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	667-3250
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

Do you think Mandan needs improved visitor way-finding signage?

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