



January 2014 meetings

City Commission, Jan. 7 and 21, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

School Board, Jan 6 and 20, 5:30 p.m., City Hall

Park Board, Jan. 13, 5:30 p.m., City Hall (contemplating 4:30 p.m. start)

County Commission, Jan. 13 and Jan. 28, 5:30 p.m., Morton County Courthouse (Note change to second Monday and last Tuesday.)

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

Please consider auto payments for efficiency

The City of Mandan received payment through automatic means for 23 percent of its 6,589 utility bills in October, accounting for 39 percent of revenue. An online payment option by credit card was introduced on the City website in March and is now used by 361 accounts.

Other options include automatic checking or savings account withdrawal or credit card payment.

Automatic and online payments reduce costs for city services with less staff time required. Residents who call in their payment, who stop by City Hall in person, or who pay by check are encouraged to consider other options. For more info, visit www.cityofmandan.com or call 667-3219.

Growth, growth everywhere

At the annual Chamber of Commerce State of the Cities breakfast in November, Mayor Arlyn Van Beek talked about Mandan's steady growth and improvements, noting that residential building continues at a record pace, other local economic indicators are strong, several new retail developments are in the works, and residents will see significant property tax reduction in 2013. The complete presentation is posted at www.cityofmandan.com. Here are some of the latest statistics:

- **Residential building.** Permits for 645 living units were issued in 2013 as of November's end, up from 520 units in 2012. The 2013 total includes 156 single family homes, 44 units in condominiums, 70 units in townhouses, 357 units in apartments, and 18 mobile homes. The average value of new single family homes permitted is nearly at \$284,000, up from \$239,000 in 2012.
- **Commercial and industrial building.** Permits for 17 new projects total \$9 million in value through November. Additions and remodeling account for another \$8 million in permit activity across 24 projects.
- **Local usage taxes.** Collections of the 1% sales tax are up 13.8% for the year through October at nearly \$1.9 million. The 1% restaurant and lodging tax is up 7.3% at \$332,350 for the first 10 months of 2013 compared to the same period a year ago. Revenue from the 2% hotel occupancy tax is down 2.7% from 2012.

Diesel fuel remediation nearly complete



In 2004, the State of North Dakota and City of Mandan reached a settlement with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway for clean-up of a diesel fuel spill in beneath downtown Mandan. Between 2005 and 2007, a comprehensive remediation system was installed in the area. It originally consisted of approximately 300 extraction wells, 22 miles of underground pipe, 11 remote manifolds and three buildings for collection and treatment equipment.

The system has been drawing diesel fuel, contaminated groundwater and soil vapors from portions of a six-block area, shrinking the breadth and depth of the plume to where free product is no longer detectable in most wells. The Health Department reported this fall that it has approved shut-down of several parts of the system.

The deepest area of the plume once had 2.91 feet of product. A spot remained this fall on the 200 W Main block near the tracks with 1.28 feet. Soil scrubbing is occurring in this area.





New & expanding Mandan businesses:

- Battery Doctors, 2111 3rd Street SE, Unit 2
- Feil Orthodontics, 1411 27th Street NW, Suite A (to open in December)
- MFRA, Inc., 2401 46th Ave SE
- Keitu Engineering, 1403 27th Street NW (new building)
- Missouri Valley Petroleum (new building/expansion)
- ProWheel Polishing, 901 Old Red Trail

Loans available to assist businesses in Mandan

The N.D. Opportunity Fund has been operational for a year now and has loan commitments to small businesses for \$6.2 million of its \$9.7 million allocation from the U.S. Treasury State Small Business Credit Initiative. The loans are for business start-ups and expansions, so far in 12 of 38 North Dakota communities that are part of a consortium.

Many banks currently require 30% owner equity to loan money toward business projects. If a business owner is able to raise at least 10% of the equity needed for a project, the fund helps by filling the gap between what the owner has available to invest and the amount a bank is willing to loan. Interest rates average between 5 and 6 percent.

Mandan's Business Development Department took the lead in applying for the federal funds in cooperation with the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council, which administers the loan fund. For more information, contact the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council, phone 667-7620 or visit www.lewisandclarkrfdc.org.

Comprehensive plan to be completed spring 2014

Phil Carlson, senior planner with Stantec, a planning organization assisting with creation of a comprehensive plan for Mandan, shared at a Nov. 12 meeting a draft planning map for the ultimate growth of Mandan along with some concepts and recommendations:

- **Greenways.** Use rivers, streams and valleys that weave through the area as the backbone of a trail system, for stormwater management, and an amenity for future neighborhoods.
- **Neighborhoods.** Include smaller commercial nodes and neighborhood parks to encourage walkable and bikeable neighborhoods.
- **Downtown.** Continue redevelopment and inclusion of more dense housing to keep the "heart" of the city strong.
- **New front door on I-94.** Recognize the area is becoming a major gateway into the city and capitalize on development interest north of I-94.

Carlson's full presentation is posted at www.cityofmandan.com. Hard copies are available at City Hall in the Engineering and Planning Department, phone 667-3225.

Comments received at the Nov. 12 session related to use and preservation of the Heart River valley, traffic concerns, a desire for more trail connections, wishes for downtown to thrive even as a supercenter has opened, and interest in the timeline for new connections to I-94 at 32nd and 56th avenues to allow for development south of the freeway.

Carlson explains, "The areas immediately north and south of existing Mandan city limits have been analyzed for the extension of future city water and sewer services. This is an area of about 3,400 acres or roughly 5 square miles. We estimate these areas could develop about 12,600 new housing units, which is more than twice what we project Mandan will need by the year 2030." He estimates 2030 growth at 10,000 people living in 5,500 housing units covering 1,600 acres or 2.5 square miles.

With growth will come new residential neighborhoods, but also demand for new retail shopping areas and places for business and industry. "Mandan now loses a significant share of its buying power to businesses across the river in Bismarck. Reclaiming some of that and balancing the economic playing field is a challenge and opportunity as Mandan grows," says Carlson.

This comprehensive planning process is a joint project of the City of Mandan and Mandan Parks and Recreation. Mandan's comprehensive planning process started in February 2013. The next community input meeting will be held after the first of the year. Stay tuned to the city website for the date. The plan is expected to be complete in the spring of 2014.

Sixth Ave NW intersection to Sunset Dr closed in reconstruction project due to angle



This photo shows the streets in the midst of the reconstruction process this summer. Sixth Avenue NW no longer connects directly to Sunset Drive.

The City of Mandan’s Engineering and Planning Department has received inquiries about the closure of the Sixth Avenue NW intersection with Sunset Drive following the reconstruction project. Because Sunset Drive is a major arterial roadway, federal funding is covering more than 80% of the road reconstruction portion of the project. With acceptance of federal funds come design standards administered by the N.D. Department of Transportation. The previous angle of the intersection was not within NDDOT standards. Without viable alternatives for realignment, the intersection needed to be closed for safety reasons and to obtain federal funding assistance.

Mandan looking at future water intake options

The City of Mandan has contracted with Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. (AE2S) for a study into the potential location for a new conventional water intake in the Missouri River. A preliminary investigation completed in 2008 suggested locating a new intake about 2 miles south of the Water Treatment Plant within a self-cleaning portion of the river channel. The targeted area is slightly north of the former “car bodies” location, near the present-day Mandan Park District archery range.

The preliminary investigation has been the basis for requesting funding assistance from both the Drinking Water Revolving Fund and the State Water Commission Water Program. The City of Mandan has asked AE2S to study the potential intake improvements. The study will address intake siting, transmission line routing, intake cost sharing, identification of environmental, permitting and regulatory challenges associated with the proposed improvements. The study is expected to be completed in March 2014. The study is being funded half through a State Water Commission grant and half through a state revolving loan fund.

The existing intake, located by Water Treatment Plant, just north of the refinery, was built approximately 60 years ago. The current intake provides the city with a steady, reliable, and quality supply of water provided that regular and sometimes extensive maintenance is provided to keep it open due to silting or filling in of the river bed around the current intake. The new intake would take advantage of the river’s naturally deeper channel at the proposed location to better ensure a reliable supply of water at low river levels with less turbidity, thus reducing stress on equipment in the treatment process.



Learn more about Mandan's conversion to an improved water meter program

The City of Mandan continues to work towards updating and standardizing all water meters and meter radio transmitters (also known as MXUs) for Mandan Public Works Department customers. More information about the conversion has been posted to the "Announcements" section of www.cityofmandan.com. The city website will be continually updated throughout the process with project information, the general schedule for replacements, frequently asked questions, and contact information. Updates will also be included in this newsletter and provided to local media.

The Mandan Public Works Department currently has to read nearly 6,500 water meters each month to determine water usage for billing information. The existing water meters and MXUs are of inconsistent sizes and brands. Staff members collect data by either physically walking up to read the meter, utilizing touch pad technology or radio receivers for drive-by readings. The water meter improvements project will standardize the entire City meter reading system by the fall of 2014. The new water meter system is expected to reduce human error, record more accurate data, and reduce the time needed for City staff to read meters which will result in a system that runs more efficiently and economically.

Finance Director Greg Welch adds, "The City is going to try to salvage as much as we can and take advantage of compatibility with current meters wherever possible to lower overall improvement costs to the City and our citizens." The City is looking at converting to a mostly fixed network with radio transmissions from towers and some drive-by transmissions. A fixed network would allow data to be read on demand and eliminates the need for staff members to drive throughout the City. Additional improvements include creating more seamless operations between data collection, and the management and accounting portion of water utility billing.

City staff are working on the announcement for bids in order to choose a contractor for replacing the equipment. The City expects to choose a contractor in February 2014 with installations likely to begin in April.

ON-LINE POLL RESULTS

Customer service seen as strength for Mandan businesses

November's on-line poll focused on perceptions of general characteristics of the Mandan retail business community as a whole. Customer service was rated a strength, but responses in other categories suggest room for improvement. There were 53 to 55 respondents, depending upon the factor, providing input as follows:

- **Customer service** – 45% strength, 33% not a point of differentiation, 13% weakness, and 9% unsure.
- **Business attractiveness/cleanliness** – 24% strength, 20% not a point of differentiation, 54% weakness, and 2% unsure.
- **Quality products/services** – 22% strength, 31% not a point of differentiation, 43% weakness, and 4% unsure.
- **Convenient hours** – 16% strength, 33% not a point of differentiation, 45% weakness, and 5% unsure.
- **Competitive pricing** – 13% strength, 38% not a point of differentiation, 40% weakness, and 9% unsure.

City Contacts

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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
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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.

What factors prompt you to shop or do business in Mandan?

Visit www.cityofmandan.com by Dec. 31 to respond.