

Regular Meeting Minutes of the Plankinton City Council

December 1st, 2025, Meeting Minutes of the Plankinton City Council

The Plankinton City Council met on December 1st, 2025, for a regular meeting.

Members present included Mayor Carl Bode, Council members Jim Nielsen, DeEtte Bohr, Magdalena Popek-Hurst, Amber Green, and Terry Schuldt. Nathan DeGeest has an excused absence.

Finance Officer Cindy Geiman and Maintenance Superintendent Darin Cranny were among the city employees present.

Also were Gayle Van Genderen, representing the South Dakota Mail; Curt Nelson; Brad Green; Rodney Faulhaber; Gabriel Syhre; and Howard Weischedel, with Tony Erpenbach arriving at 6:50 pm.

Mayor Bode called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Bode asked Finance Officer Cindy Geiman to summarize the roll call. Cindy stated that "Council members Bohr, Schuldt, Green, Nielsen, Popek-Hurst, and Mayor Bode are present. Council member DeGeest has an excused absence. We have a quorum."

AGENDA APPROVAL

Council member Bohr asked about the duties of the mayor and city council regarding the earlier email and requested that we table it until all council members are present. Nielsen moved to approve the agenda, excluding the duties of the mayor and the city council. Schuldt seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

BILLS TO PAY

Popek-Hurst made a motion to approve paying of the bills. Green seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion passed.

A&B BUSINESS SOLUTIONS- COMPUTERS & IPADS-\$254.34; A&B BUSINESS IT- IT SUPPORT-\$719.10, AFLAC- VOLUNTEER INSURANCE-\$181.55; AMERICAN LEGAL PUBLISHING- ORDINANCES/SUPPLEMENTAL-\$867.96; AMERICAN LEGAL PUBLISHING- ONLINE PUBLISHING-\$64.35; AURORA BRULE WATER- WATER PURCHASE-\$8342.50; BARNES AND NOBLE- BOOKS PURCHASED-\$278.97; BELL BANK-MINI EXCAVATOR-\$919.42; BORDER STATES- ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES-\$94.07; BORDER STATES- ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES- \$31.05; CENTRAL ELECTRIC- WHEELING FEES- \$1418.79; CNH CAPITAL- SKIDLOADER LOAN-\$959.11; DAKOTA LANDSCAPING- WINTERIZE IRRIGATION- \$135.00; DELTA DENTAL- DENTAL INSURANCE- \$317.00; DGR ASSOCIATES- ENGINEERING FEES- \$840.00; EAST RIVER- POWER PURCHASE- \$4038.32; FARMERS AND MERCHANTS-PAYROLL FEES- \$7.50- FARMERS AND MERCHANTS- PAYROLL FEE- 7.60; GOLDEN WEST- PHONE UTILITIES- \$509.74; GURADIAN- INSURANCE-\$347.34; GWORKS- ANNUAL FEES-\$8623.00; HEARTLAND- POWER PURCHASE- \$21915.54; IRS- PAYROLL-\$2909.51; MENARDS- DECORATIONS-\$33.68; MITCHELL QUARRY- ¾ IN ROCK- \$649.38- MORGEN MAHRT- GRANT WRITING CLASS- \$157.22; OVERWEG AURO- HYDRAULIC CRIMP-\$184.70, PLANKINTON DEVELOPMENT- DONATION- \$15000.00; PLANKINTON LUMBER- SUPPLIES-\$123.44; ROADSIDE- FUEL-\$337.00; RON'S MARKET- SUPPLIES \$162.72; RUNNINGS SUPPLIES- \$274.78; SANTEL COMMUNICATIONS- HTTP WEBSITE- \$125.04; SD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH- WATER TESTING- \$20.00; DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION- FUEL-\$688.91; SD MUNICIPAL LEAGUE- ANNUAL DUES- \$1189.00; SDRS- SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT-\$295.20; SDWWA- ANNUAL FEES- \$20.00; SOUTH DAKOTA 811- MESSAGE FEES- \$16.80; SOUTH DAKOTA MAIL- ADVERTISING- \$1533.65; SPN- ENGINEERING FEES- \$1271.02; STEVES WELDING- CASE LOADER- \$255.00; TITAN

MACHINERY- SUPPLIES -\$462.48; TITAN MACHINERY-CASE LOADER- \$229.51; TOSHIBA- COPIER CONTRACT- \$241.09; VERIZON WIRELESS; SURFACE HS-131.80- VESTIS- RUGS-\$37.41- VISA- SEPT SUPPLIES- \$2974.52; VISA -OCTOBER SUPPLIES-\$2632.77; VISION SERVICE PLAN- EYE INSURANCE- \$134.63- WAPA- POWER PURCHASE- \$12774.35; WEALTH MANAGEMENT- WATER METER LOAN- \$6634.92; WEALTH MANAGEMENT- SEWER DEBIT LOAN- \$5293.35- WEALTH MANAGEMENT- ACCRUED INTEREST ON LOANS- \$15142.05; ZACH SCOTT CONSTRUCTION- BORING ON MADISON- \$2380.00; PLANKINTON LUMBER- SUPPLIES- \$311.06; DARIN CRANNY- MEAL REIMBURSTMENT- \$16.98; AURORA BRULE WATER- WATER PURCHASE- \$6879.50; SOUTH DAKOTA MAIL- PUBLISHING NOVEMBER- \$582.21; SD ASSN RURAL WATER SYSTEM- ANNUAL MEMBER FEE- \$525.00; SPN- ENGINEERING FEES- SEWER PROJECT- \$14692.82; SANTITATION PROJECT- SUPPLIES STREET SWEEPER- \$4543.11.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Without any additions or corrections. The minutes were approved as published.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

OLD BUSINESS

ELECTRICAL SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

We didn't have any outages this month.

We worked on wrapping up some services for the year. We have one service ready to energize: we're just waiting for them to complete their end of it.

We got our fusing cut on the 3rd and Walnut.

Barry and I moved a streetlight pole and converted that one, along with another, to the underground system we had installed. We went around and removed some poles we were no longer using.

Barry and I did some dirt work in some areas we had dug that had settled. Dan followed us and spread grass seed.

We prepared the shop for winter. We moved some equipment to ensure we can get everything we need inside. Worked around the outside and cleaned up quite a bit from the summer.

I went over to Central Electric to talk with Brian about the way they figure their aid in construction.

Dee joined us and took notes.

The bucket truck will be at Overweg's on the 3rd for some work. I experienced a "death wobble" on the highway, and it requires new steering arms. It wasn't that fun of an experience. Keith said it was safe to drive in town, but wouldn't recommend taking it on the highway until it's fixed.

Barry and I put up the Christmas lights a little earlier this year, as the forecast didn't look all that great. Karter Weber decorated the Jail Pond on his own on behalf of the Student Council, as he did it for the Service Club.

Barry and I also took the patch mix trailer around, as there was a little bit of mix left, and filled in some trenches we had from electrical work. Once we got that done, we went around and filled some potholes until we ran out.

I haven't received any updates from Blair on the rate study yet.

I added two more lights outside of the shop: one between the electric doors and one on the back, where all our bucket attachments are.

Planning on replacing some light fixtures in the Fire station shop and taking some old heaters and unused electrical down. I plan to install a few more ceiling fans in our shop to help move some of the heat around. Hoping this will reduce some of our heating costs as well.

We will begin taking down some of the transformers we have converted. Once we get these done, I'll reach out to companies that will buy them from us and get pricing. They pay so much per KVA, and they all offer different pricing.

Dan has been busy at the tree shed, cleaning up years of accumulated junk. He's gotten most of it organized.

Chance Boyd

PAST DUE BILLS

Finance Officer Cindy Geiman presented four accounts that are past due, asking the council for permission to pay account 13570001 in the amount of approximately \$300.00. Popek-Hurst moved to approve the payment plan for account 13570001. Bohr seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried. The other three accounts will be shut off if not paid by the 8th.

MOBILE VENDING ORDINANCE No. 2025-12-1

1ST READING

Mayor Bode brought to the attention of the city council the email Mr. Taylor, the city attorney, wrote regarding this draft ordinance. How will the city manage the scope of who is eligible to apply for this license? Will it include women's social groups holding a pie sale at the park? Or do we want to limit it to more commercial vendors? Nielsen suggested that we make it for commercial-based vendors. Nielsen made a motion to approve the first reading, with Schuldt seconding. All voted aye; motion carried.

JUNK VEHICLES /PROPERTY

Popek-Hurst stated that she has updated the list. The first one is 304 S. Lawler. The vehicle window is open, and the tires are in the grass, not operational. It has been on her list since last year. The second one is at 209 E 2nd. At this property, one vehicle has not moved. The 3rd one is at 405 E 3rd Street, where there are RVs, boats, and other vehicles. The owner granted permission to walk through the lot and take the photos she needed. Popek-Hurst said she will save this property for next month, when she revisits and retakes photos. Popek-Hurst is seeking permission to contact the owners of four lots in town. Asking the owners to walk around the lots to ensure they are licensed and mechanically sound. Nielsen noted that some of these lots are being used for winter storage. Bohr stated that the property on 405 E 3rd is her lot. Popek-Hurst wants the council to discuss, per our ordinance, sending the two letters this week, and to obtain permission to inspect the lots. The council agreed to these suggestions.

Nielsen has identified two other properties in town that need attention. He also asked Council member Schuldt to review these same properties and share his opinion. Schuldt agreed with Nielsen that these properties need repairs. One of the homes has grass growing on the roof. At the next meeting, Nielsen will present a draft letter to the homeowners for council approval. Mayor Bode asked Nielsen about 602 E. 1st Street. The appeal should have been filed with the courts. However, Gayle from the South Dakota Mail asked, "If we (the City) haven't established a case, how will she appeal to the court?" Mayor Bode said he would contact Mr. Taylor, our city attorney, to get answers on the next steps. It was also noted that the council believes it would be helpful to have Mr. Taylor at the January 5th meeting.

Council member Nielsen stated that he had contacted an independent contractor to perform an unbiased appraisal of the house and lot. Nielsen emphasized to the contractor that they were not permitted on the property. Big Timber Construction reports that the house is in poor condition and needs to be demolished. They also noted that the lot is valued at approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000 if the house is torn down and the lot restored. The estimated cost to demolish the house is around \$3,000. Nielsen mentioned that Linda (homeowner) had cleared the outside garbage and moved one van, but there's still an open back door that allows animals to enter and exit.

AID IN CONSTRUCTION

Council member Bohr and Electrical Supt. Chance met with Brian at Central Electric. Council member Bohr stated that aid in construction is widespread among rural electric cooperatives.

There are several considerations the council needs to address when forming this policy. First, who should receive aid in construction? All customers, three-phase additions, or residential versus commercial? Second, over how many years do we want to recover our return on investment? Currently, this is done through facility charges. Third, does the risk of the load influence the council's decision? Lastly, what portion of the costs do we want them to pay? Options include 50%, a flat fee, a flat fee plus a per-foot charge, a percentage upfront with the rest recovered through facility charges, or 100% recovered through a larger facility charge over a set number of years. Keep in mind that tracking and billing the last two options will be challenging. Council member Bohr and Supt. Chance are pretty much on the same page. Their recommendation is to estimate the total cost for materials and labor and charge 50% of that before any work on three-phase service additions and upgrades for now. Aid for other residential and commercial single-phase services should be discussed by council to determine whether we should move forward with a fee for those. At a minimum, they do recommend a fee for residents and customers requesting changes to an existing service at a time-and-materials rate, as described in the examples above.

Bohr also mentioned that the council might consider adopting an ordinance to charge residents for the time and materials used to move city equipment, for example, moving a pad-mounted transformer to accommodate construction or relocating electric wires or sewer lines to dig a new foundation.

SEWER PROJECT- PAY APP- STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN

Finance Officer Cindy Geiman explained that H & W Contracting is requesting \$71,953.07 for a portion of the sewer project. The funds for this come from the State Revolving Fund Loan of \$87,917.00, which includes about \$16,000 for SPN Engineering. This pay application will bring us to 99% complete. Superintendent Darin Cranny mentioned that almost everything is finished, but we are withholding about 5%, totaling \$216,786.78. The remaining items on the punch list probably won't be completed until next spring due to the snow. Nielsen made a motion to authorize Mayor Bode to sign and pay the Contractor's Application for Payment and the State Revolving Fund Loan for Reimbursement. Green seconded the motion. All voted aye, and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

RODNEY FAULHABER (JUNK VEHICLES AND STREET SIGNS)

Rodney Faulhaber provided background about their repair shop, which they bought from Mike and Mary Krell. Rodney's family, along with his son-in-law, Gabe Syhre, and his wife, Stephanie, purchased the shop from Krell Trucking. It's a shop where Gabe has done business, performing vehicle repairs and other services. Since it's a repair shop, not everything occurs within 90 to 120 days, as with typical vehicles. Rodney read the ordinance, which covers vehicles on private property. The question is whether they are subject to the ordinance or treated like any other repair shop in town. The ordinance doesn't specify whether it applies to commercial or private property; it just states "private property." Council member Popek-Hurst thanked Rodney and Gabe for coming to the meeting to discuss this. Popek-Hurst said she would like to give them another 90 days and then check in with a council member or the City Office to update them on their status. Gabe Syhre mentioned what qualifies as a junk vehicle and who is certified to call it a junk vehicle? Popek-Hurst told them that we recently revised our ordinance to clarify what constitutes a junk vehicle. Next, Rodney wanted to discuss the street signs and the truck route. He said not many people know this, but when you're hauling 80,000 pounds and must stop and restart, those wheels can slide on asphalt, damaging the road. He is asking the council to consider changing all stop signs on the north side of the truck route to yield signs. Have the yield signs face east and west. This would help protect the road and make it easier for trucks to navigate. Superintendent Darin Cranny said he doesn't see a problem with doing that, but he must educate the community. However, the stop

signs at the Catholic Church and Howard's service station are county signs and must be approved by the county. Darin was instructed to investigate any state laws prohibiting the moving of street signs and bring this back to the council at the January 5th Meeting.

TONY ERPENBACH AND JACOB BRANDT (CEMETERY)

On behalf of Jacob Brandt, Tony Erpenbach met with the council to discuss placing a directory at the cemetery to help people locate burials. As Jacob Brandt's mentor, Tony, explained, Jacob is seeking a letter of approval to install the sign at the cemetery. He is also inquiring about the city's assistance with placing the concrete slab at the cemetery for the directory to be mounted on. The cost of the sign is \$2,530, excluding the concrete slab. This sign will be approximately 6 feet long and will include a box to hold the directory. Tony showed pictures to the council of what Jacob is thinking about doing out there. Tony mentioned that since becoming Jacob's mentor, he has visited many cemeteries and found that many of the towns around have some sort of directory to help people find loved ones. Jacob will be working on this during the winter months as a senior project and as an Eagle Scout Service Project. A discussion was had about where the sign would sit. After the discussion, Nielsen moved to approve the letter supporting the project and authorizing him to place the sign on the land. Green seconded the motion. All voted aye, the motion carried.

CHRISTMAS LEAVE/PARTY

Mayor Bode spoke with April at the auditor's office about the county's plans for the Christmas holiday. April informed him that the office will close at 3:00 pm on December 24th and will be closed on the 25th and 26th. Council member Bohr asked how many holidays the city provides and referenced the personnel handbook, which states they offer 11½ holidays. Council member Nielsen mentioned that the council usually follows the county's lead. Council member Bohr asked why the city follows the county's lead? Nielsen responded that they usually just do. Council member Green pointed out that there are 11 federal holidays. After discussion, Popek-Hurst made a motion to give employees a half-day on December 24th, a full day off on December 25th, and to return to work on December 26th. The same motion also included granting employees January 1st off. Bohr seconded the motion. All voted aye, and the motion passed.

Mayor Bode also wanted to discuss having an employee Christmas Party in January. Mayor Bode suggested something similar to last year, in which the city paid for employees and spouses, and council members paid for their own meals. It was decided that the Finance Officer would check previous years' expenditures to provide the council with a benchmark. Popek-Hurst moved to approve a Christmas Party for employees sometime in January, with a second from Bohr. All voted aye; the motion carried.

IPADS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Bode wanted to get the council's opinion on purchasing iPads for the council. As shown in the packets, our paper usage remains high, and reducing it could help prevent wear and tear on the devices. Council member Nielsen mentioned that he did some calculations and concluded that using electronic forms of communication would save the city a significant amount of money. It was suggested that the Finance Officer investigate whether Apple offers any government discounts on iPads. Finance Officer Cindy Geiman stated she would conduct further research to find the best deal and obtain a price by the January 5th meeting. Nielsen also asked if the cost of the iPad cover could be included with the iPads.

TIMESHEETS

At a previous budget council meeting, the council proposed tracking where our city employees spend most of their time and which department they work in. Mayor Bode showed a computer model of the timesheets he created and a method to track hours by department for each employee. He demonstrated the different features he added to make this user-friendly. The individual timesheets include space at the bottom for additional comments if needed. The entire

spreadsheet consolidates all the data and can be used to total hours for all departments by quarter.

Council member Popek-Hurst asked Superintendent Darin which tasks require overtime after a lengthy discussion about overtime. Mayor Bode discussed that our personnel handbook states that overtime must be approved before it is worked. Mayor Bode wants to consider updating the handbook to allow some flexibility while reducing overtime use. Some exceptions, like weather-related overtime, which are necessary, need to be addressed.

COUNCIL ROOM REMODELING

Mayor Bode requested the council's permission to redo the council chamber. He is willing to fund the remodeling himself. Additionally, he proposes adding a playroom at the front of the City Hall, so people attending council meetings can bring their children and keep them entertained during the meeting. His main goal is that at least half of the council members' backs are to the audience, which he finds unfavorable. He wants to expand the room as much as possible so that members' backs aren't facing the audience. Mayor Bode is seeking the council's approval since it is a public building. Council member Green thinks it's a great idea. Council member Nielsen is willing to help where he can. Green made a motion to approve remodeling of the council chambers and creating space for children. Nielsen seconded the motion. All voted aye; the motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION- PERSONNEL SDCL 1-25-2 (1)

Popek-Hurst made a motion to go into executive session at 8:49 p.m. Green seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried.

Mayor Bode declared out of executive session at 9:14, with no action taken.

BUILDING PERMITS

Council member Nielsen stated that he had one building permit for Rick Pryor for a wheelchair ramp at 208 E 5th: Lot 21-24 Block 1 of Miracle and Clark's 1st addition.

MAINTENANCE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Everyone has been doing things to get ready for winter. Shop arranging, plow, and sander on pickup, etc.

I spent almost a whole week working on the old big loader, fixing a lot of miscellaneous issues. It had a leaking cylinder, wipers, grease zerks that wouldn't accept grease, lights, a heater control, door and window problems, a broken exhaust adapter, leaking antifreeze, and more. It's about as good as I can get it for a 35-year-old loader. I had the guys help me install the wing on the maintainer one day. I got that inside and spent a couple of days working on it—more grease zerks that wouldn't take, installing new blades, cleaning it, lubricating the controls, and so on. Also, the sweeper broke the bottom tube for the conveyor belt, so I have that torn apart now. Parts are here, so we should be able to get it back together soon.

I had some time involved with the sewer project. We are getting close...

I had a couple of days of office work this month.

The first little snow we had this month, I went to get in the loader for some main street work, and the door latch broke. I bungeed it shut and got it done. I ordered a new latch and replaced it. As for this last snow, I was on call this weekend, so I was out on Friday cleaning Main Street. Saturday, I did Main early in the morning, and I had Barry come in and do Main after lunch when the snow mainly stopped, while I did the rest of the town with the pickup. On Sunday, I arrived early again to do Main, this time with the maintainer, since the snow had passed. Today, I came in at 4:45 and did Main again with the loader because the sidewalks weren't clear on Sunday, and people pushed all the snow onto the road. That's usually what happens, which is why I came in early. This morning, I ran around town with the maintainer and cleaned/widened some of the main roads. I had to stop at noon to get ready for tonight and catch up on some things, as I took a few days off last week.

I got the rest of my sign brackets in. I have all the street signs finished except for the six more I ordered. I'll get them done on a halfway decent day once they arrive.

That's the majority. Most of my month was spent working on equipment.

FINANCE OFFICERS REPORT

The first part of November was spent doing routine duties. We held the council meeting and processed payroll. Morgen prepared the letters for junk vehicles to send out. We needed the mayor's signature, so we sent those out last week.

We rented a carpet cleaner, and Morgen and I cleaned the entire reception area carpet. It looks a lot better.

I was gone on the 10th and 11th (Veterans Day), and took that Friday off, the 14th. During that week, I finished the end-of-the-month reports, shut-offs, and sales tax. Morgen attended the grant-writing class in Aberdeen on the 12th and brought back useful learning materials that I haven't had a chance to review yet.

Towards the end of the month, I began the election workshops. They are free webinars designed to assist with elections. There are a total of four workshops in total. I am attaching the calendar guidelines, so you each know when specific tasks need to be completed. At the January Meeting, we will need to decide when the election will be held, either the Primary Election on June 2nd or the General Election on November 3rd, and whether we want to combine it with the school or county elections.

We did bills on the 25th due to the Thanksgiving Holidays. Shut-offs will be on December 8th, since the 7th is on a Sunday.

I received an email on the holiday weekend that the price of our dumpsters is going up to \$65.00 after taxes. This will affect the dumpster we have at the city shop. However, we share a dumpster with Horizon Health Care, so that dumpster will be charged around \$32.50. I have called to ask about a discount if we pay it all before December 31st. And it is not available to businesses.

MAYORS REPORT

The Southeast Central District Meeting was held on November 12 at the courthouse. Thank you, Magdalena, for covering in my absence to provide a welcome speech and good word about our Plankinton community at this event.

Heartland Energy has announced excellent news: their wholesale power rates will stay steady in 2026 for the ninth straight year without any increase. Unfortunately, WAPA, our other power supplier, along with our carriers, will be passing along their rate increases in the upcoming year. The city will continue working with DGR to review our electrical rate study over the next couple of months and find the best way to manage and minimize the rate hikes passed on to the customers the city serves.

The Christmas decorations set out during the nice weather just before Thanksgiving look really great. We had our first significant snowfall of the winter this past weekend. Thank you to our city crew for clearing the streets. Plan to get out for the Plankinton Hometown Christmas this Friday, December 5, sponsored by the Plankinton Service Club. The school will have a Christmas movie and carnival from 2pm-6pm. Several of our businesses will have activities later that afternoon and early evening. I wish everyone a merry and blessed Christmas, and I look forward to the opportunities in the New Year.

Mayor Bode adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Carl Bode,
Mayor

ATTEST

Cindy Geiman
Finance Officer