

Regular Meeting Minutes of the Plankinton City Council

November 3rd, 2025, Meeting Minutes of the Plankinton City Council

The Plankinton City Council met on November 3rd, 2025, for a regular meeting.

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

Finance Officer Cindy Geiman, Electrical Superintendent Chance Boyd, 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; and Brian Reis arriving at 6:40 p.m.

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 "All council members and the mayor are present. We have a quorum."

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mayor Bode requested an Executive Session, Personnel, SDCL 1-25-2 (1), after the mayor's report.

DeGeest made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of the executive session, which Popek-Hurst seconded. All voted yes; motion carried.

BILLS TO PAY

Popek-Hurst made a motion to approve the bills, with Green seconding. All voted aye. Motion carried.

ZACH SCOTT CONSTRUCTION- FIRE HYDRANT WORK-\$5000.00; DELTA DENTAL- DENTAL INSURANCE- \$317.00; B&H TREE SERVICE- TREE REMOVAL-\$400.00; CNH CAPITAL- SKIDLOADER-\$959.11; BELL BANK- MINI EXCAVATOR- \$919.42; HEARTLAND LOAN #1- \$1241.68; HEARTLAND LOAN#2-\$1241.68; TOSHIBA- COPIER CONTRACT- \$199.05; AURORA COUNTY AUDITOR- SECOND HALF CONTRACT LAW- \$39050.00; RESCO- ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES-\$1453.88; DAKOTA SUPPLY GROUP-FIRE HYDRANT-\$6960.29; BORDER STATES- ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES- \$50.23; DGR ASSOCIATES- RATE STUDY- \$280.00; PLANKINTON LUMBER- SUPPLIES-\$123.44; GWORKS- ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION- \$8623.00; GERRIT OVERWEG GRAVEL- \$1492.04; SPN- ENGINEERING FEES-\$1271.02; SOUTH DAKOTA MAIL-ADVERTISING-\$1533.65

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Bode asked if any changes need to be made, and if no suggestions were offered, he declared the minutes approved as read.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Bode asked how it was going out at National Foods? Curt Nelson replied that they have two houses up and going, and by September of next year, they will have ten houses going.

OLD BUSINESS

INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

This was previously emailed to the council for review and to address any questions they may have.

Popek-Hurst wanted clarification on who is auditing the bank statements. Mayor Bode replied that a binder containing bank statements and reconciliation statements is available at the council table before and after each meeting. Popek-Hurst also asked about payroll and who is responsible for ensuring everything is correct? Finance Officer Cindy stated that there should be two initials on the paystubs, and whoever handles payroll is supposed to have another employee review the Calculations and Verification report to ensure it matches the paystubs. Popek-Hurst requested that bank statements or budget reports be distributed before each meeting. Finance Officer Cindy Geiman said there is a report called the Cash Report that provides all that information.

PAST DUE

UTILITY BILLS

Finance Officer Cindy Geiman noted that we now have four people involved in the small claims process and one Judgment. The list is significantly shorter than last month, thanks to the diligence of the Finance Office. We made many calls and convinced people to come in and pay. Cindy Geiman asked the council for guidance. The 7th falls on a Friday, and we don't shut people off on Fridays, plus the Finance Officer will be away on the 10th. The 11th is a holiday. Therefore, Cindy asked if we could do shut-offs on the 12th. The council agreed to this. Gayle from the South Dakota Mail inquired about the past due bill connected to an LLC and why we can't collect on it? It was directed for the Finance Officer to reach out again to city attorney Mr. Taylor and get his response on why we can't take an LLC to Small Claims.

JUNK VEHICLE

ACTION

Popek-Hurst stated that seven vehicles are on the list for this month. A few cars can be removed from this list because Nielsen has spoken to the owners. The first one to be removed from the list is 509 N. Duff. The owner at 215 E. State Street moved the vehicle that was violating, but there are still several other vehicles at that location with violations. The council agreed to address all the cars on each property together rather than one at a time, which will be discussed at the next meeting. Another vehicle, located at 201 1st Street, which Nielsen discussed with the owner, is for sale and still insured. The owner plans to relocate it to a better spot for sale. De Geest noted that there is no tall grass around it and that it has been moved recently. The next property is 609 E 1st Street. Popek-Hurst mentioned that there are three trailers, and she stressed that the council needs to act on this immediately, as it has been on our list for more than 120 days. De Geest asked if he could speak with the homeowner first? Popek-Hurst had no objection, provided that no further extensions are granted. The following vehicle is across the street at 701 E. 1st. There have been complaints about the garage and the white car on that property. We need to identify the renter and not pursue the landlord since this is a rental property. The next property is 802 E. 2nd Street, which has multiple vehicles, including one that is burned out and another with missing windows. Lastly, at 501 E. Commerce Street, the car did not move in 120 days. Nathan will ask the property owner if it is mechanically sound. To recap, we will send letters to 501 E. Commerce Street, 609 E. 1st Street, 701 E. 1st Street, and 802 E. 2nd Street. Nielsen mentioned he received another complaint about 306 E. 5th, where six vehicles are stored in the backyard. Nielsen reported the owner claims he will address all of them through a repair business under his wife's daycare business. But only one of the six vehicles are licensed. Popek-Hurst would like to have someone assist her in the next drive around review of the junked vehicles before December's meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

PLANKINTON DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Brian Reis submitted a letter and financial report for the Plankinton Community Development Company Inc. requesting the \$15,000 that the city allocates as a donation. The financial report includes the amounts they've allocated for grants so far this year and the grants that are pending. The most popular grant is the Urban Renewal Grant, which helps demolish dilapidated buildings. The Development Company has also acquired a governor's house and sold it to Briggs Development. Nielsen asked Brian if the city would end up with a piece of property. Nielsen inquired if the Development Company would be

interested in developing that property? Brian responded that there is a \$ 5,000 grant available for new building projects. Alternatively, the city could give them the lot, or the board could purchase it. However, that decision is up to the board, not just Brian. Nielsen made a motion to grant the \$15,000 funding the Development Company. DeGeest seconded the motion. All vote aye, motion carried.

AID IN CONSTRUCTION

Electrical Supt. Chance reached out to Blair Metzger of DGR Engineering for options for aid in construction. The options are as follows.

- 1. Require nothing upfront from the customer and cover all costs to serve them out of electric utility funds.
- 2. Charge the customer upfront with all or a portion of the cost of serving them, with the intent of not refunding any of the price. This could include, at a minimum, the cost of a new transformer (usually the most expensive piece of equipment), but could also include the cost of extending primary circuitry if it is of significant length or is solely intended to serve them (and doesn't benefit other customers). This may also include switching and sectionalizing equipment on the primary side, as well as any secondary equipment such as CT or metering cabinets.
- 3. Charge the customer upfront with all or a portion of the cost of serving them but then refund a portion of the price over time if they continue to be a customer and if the actual load is close to what was initially estimated. This could be set up to refund a portion of the upfront cost over, say, 10 years, with 1/120th of the cost refunded each month. This would help ensure that a customer does not leave after a brief period.
- 4. Charge the customer upfront an amount equal to the cost of serving them, minus an amount that estimates how much the customer contributes each month (through their regular bill) to the system's operating costs. This can be achieved in several ways, such as analyzing the revenue paid by the customer to help cover the system's fixed costs, or it could be based on a multiplier of the revenue. Either option would require some analysis to determine the correct numbers to use, which may or may not be worthwhile.

After reviewing and discussing the options, the council's thoughts are leaning towards option #2. Chance mentioned that Blair is currently working on the rate study and would like him to complete it, then have Blair write the aid in construction. Mayor Bode requested information from Council Member Bohr on what Central Electric does and how it handles the facility fee on such businesses.

END OF YEAR MEETING

The council will need to meet toward the end of the year to pay the final 2025 bills. It was suggested that the special meeting be held on December 29th. That allows enough time for everything to be paid and mailed off. Everyone agreed and confirmed that this plan works for them.

BUILDING PERMITS

No new building permits. Building Inspector Jim Nielsen has gone around and looked at the building permits he has given out and there are about three that are left in the construction phase. Nielsen would like to proceed with applying for the Building Associates membership. Popek-Hurst made a motion to approve the Building Associates membership. DeGeest seconded the motion. All voted eye motion passed. Another discussion was held regarding the pursuit of grants for a walking trail, a shooting range, and a dog park.

MAINTENANCE SUPERINTENDENT

REPORT

I spent nearly a week installing the new street signs and removing the old posts and signs. I've finished everything from 9th Street to State Street. The only remaining work is on HWY 16 (Davenport Street), Madison Street, a couple on East Meadow Drive, and a few at the development east of the school. I had to order six more signs and twenty more brackets to complete the job. Once they arrive, I'll finish the rest.

The hydrants were installed on the school property on Monday, the 13th. I had a contractor do that since we only had one day to complete the work while school was out, and we hadn't done one ourselves before. I had one more new hydrant, which I ordered a few years ago, and we installed it ourselves a couple of weeks ago at the pool park. Barry took one of the old school hydrants apart to see if it could be repaired. It was about 22 years old and was just a pile of rust inside. After checking that, I don't think we will try to repair any hydrants with issues. Our best option is just replacing them. I believe most can be done by ourselves. I don't expect any more to be done this year, but I'll keep an eye on the budget. If I have enough money left, I might order one more to keep as a spare.

I spent part of one day filling holes at the cemetery.

I had some office work this month again; of course, some of it involved finalizing our budget with Cindy before the last meeting.

I spent one day by myself working in the shop, replacing the brooms and rubber guards on the sweeper. I also replaced the step (running boards) on the plow pickup as they were rusty and not safe to step on.

Barry and I spent a couple of days (Dan helped some, too) at the pool park doing dirt work around the new sidewalk. We also expanded the parking area with gravel and chip seal rock.

We also winterized the bathrooms at the pool park and the ballfields last week.

I spent most of an entire week at the west RU site cleaning up, moving dirt, piling up asphalt/gravel from the sewer project, etc.

Some miscellaneous things were also done, but that's the majority.

ELECTRICAL SUPERINTENDENT'S

REPORT

We experienced two outages on the East circuit. Both occurred about 200 feet apart on two different phases. One was caused by a squirrel, and the other by a tree branch falling into the line. Both incidents happened on the north side of 3rd Street and east of Walnut, behind the houses. There is no alleyway there, and it's difficult to access all of this with the truck because many sheds are built close to the line. I plan to have a couple of fuses installed right off of 3rd and Walnut to limit the outage area. We aim to complete this work this week, and once the ground freezes, we will bring the truck and loader back in to clear away as many trees as possible. We will need to contact many owners before doing this since we will have to go across private properties to reach everything.

We trenched in two new services this month, and I had Zach bore one across Madison Street last week. I caught a fiber conduit that wasn't marked correctly. We didn't break the fiber itself but did break the conduit. I took pictures before and after because I sensed something was off, especially since the sewer crew hit it last summer. This isn't any cost to us since it wasn't marked properly. I've been helping Golden West as much as I can, but it sounds like they will try to fix the conduit tomorrow. If I hadn't caught it with our mini, Zach would have hit it with the bore, which could have taken out everything south of there.

We received notice of another increase from East River for next year as well. I sent the info over to Blair for him to incorporate it into his study. I will try to figure out what our average monthly increase looks like, but I haven't had much time to do that yet. Our network service rate is going from \$1.34 to \$1.38, and our substation service rate is increasing from \$1.52 to \$1.66. I estimate the high end of the increase (winter months) could be over \$600, while the low end (spring and fall) might be around \$300. Again, this is all weather dependent.

Worked briefly with Blair on the Aid in Construction Policy, which will be reviewed tonight. Cindy sent him the information he requested to get started. Hopefully, we can have something ready for the December meeting.

The lights on top of the Water Tower are out, so I plan to climb it sometime this week to change the lights and the photo eye.

We have one service I want to complete this week on part of our underground work we did along 6th and Duff, and I also need to move a street light pole there.

We covered up our box pads before winter. I don't currently have enough of the correct size transformers to finish that project. I will check the budget later this month to see where we stand before I order any to place on top.

I added a few lights on the south side of our shop a few years ago. I plan to add two more this month, one between the bucket truck doors and another on the back where all our loader attachments are. I already have all this material on hand.

Going to haul some more black dirt from the dump site to work on areas we undergrounded and try to get grass seed planted before winter.

Helped Darin replace a fire hydrant by the pool and assisted him with hauling some dirt at the dumpsite last week.

FINANCE OFFICERS REPORT

At the beginning of October, Morgen attended the SDML Annual Conference, where she made many connections and acquired new knowledge while she was there.

After the meeting on the 6th, I did the minutes and the Appropriations Budget Ordinance for the paper.

Morgen and I have both worked on taking people to small claims court. We currently have four people in small claims, and we obtained a judgment against another one. We have spent a considerable amount of time trying to locate where people are living and getting them served.

Morgen has been working out at the cemetery a lot, while I do the everyday duties.

I have been teaching Morgen how to handle penalties, end-of-month reports, and billing.

I received instructions from GWorks on how to input the 2026 budget into the computer. I have also been discussing with them how to pay city utility bills without writing a check. We

had concerns that during billing, it takes a few days for the PDF to download when using the GWorks website. The GWorks IT department is addressing both issues. Hopefully, they will have resolved them by the end of the year.

One afternoon, we rented a carpet cleaner from Dollar General to remove the oil spot from the front carpet. Morgen completed the cleaning on a Friday afternoon and successfully removed the stain. Now, we feel that to make the rest of the carpet as clean as possible, we will need to rent the cleaner again and clean the entire office.

Towards the end of the month, I received instructions and items to prepare for our yearly audit and the 2025 annual report. Morgen and I worked on it for about a week. There are still things that we need to do, but we have completed most of it.

We donated the lost and found to Blessing's Repeated.

I will be away for a few days in November for doctor's appointments and deer hunting with my husband. No word on when my surgery will be, but I will keep you informed as soon as I know.

MAYORS REPORT

I have completed the employees' performance reviews and conducted one-on-one sessions with each of them on Monday morning.

I have worked with Cindy and developed a spreadsheet to track the time of our city employees across various departments (accounts), so that the city council has a better understanding of how much time is spent in each of these areas. We will start tracking the hours beginning the first of the new year.

Magdalena is seeking a resolution to have Aurora County to become the first county in South Dakota to officially designate October as Aurora County First Responders Appreciation Month. I have written the letter of support from the city to recognize and honor the dedication of all first responders who serve our community. Magdalena will present this letter of support to the County Commission at their Nov 6th meeting and seek their approval for this resolution.

The Plankinton Service Club is looking for interested parties to develop a community celebration for America's Semiquincentennial (250-year anniversary). The initial planning committee, organized by Lezlie Larsen and Lindsey Weich, will meet sometime around the first of the year. I would encourage the city council to get involved in this activity.

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

Entering executive session for legal at 7:41 p.m. Coming out of executive session at 8:17 p.m. with no action taken.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Carl Bode,

Mayor

ATTEST

Cindy Geiman

Finance Officer