

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PAWNEE CITY, HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE CORNERSTONE BUILDING, 601 G STREET, ALL IN PAWNEE CITY, PAWNEE COUNTY, NEBRASKA.

Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by advertising in the Pawnee Republican, a designated method for giving notice as shown by the Affidavit of Publishing on file in the office of the City Clerk. Notice of this meeting was given to the Mayor and City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of the notice and the Agenda are on file in the office of the City Clerk. The availability of the agenda was communicated in advance and in the notice to the Mayor and Council of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Present: Mayor Charlie Hatfield, Council Members Pat Hatfield, Donnie Fisher, Susan Eisenhower (present by phone) and Vickie Zelenka; Deputy City Clerk Kellie Wiers, City Clerk/Treasurer Tamela Curtis and Foreman Spencer Cumley. Absent: None.

Mayor Charlie Hatfield called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. informing all those present of the Poster stating the Open Meeting Law Changes on the West meeting room wall, next to the storage closet, accessible to the public. At this time, all those present stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Member Zelenka moved to accept the February 9, 2026, regular meeting minutes. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

The Treasurer submitted the following claims for consideration: **2/24/26 Payroll:** \$11,447.41; **Union Bank & Trust**, FWH 3,285.46; **NE Dept. of Rev**, SWH 406.56; **John Hancock**, retirement 1,633.98; **Allstate**, cancer/accid insurance 199.56; **Ameritas**, vision insurance 92.40; **Madison Nat'l Life**, employee life ins. 60.10; **Medica**, employee health ins. 8975.29; **Windstream**, phone @ sewer plant 64.45; **Amazon Capital Services**, repair supplies 116.98; **Coral's Cleaning Services**, office cleaning 120.00; **Dept. Water, Energy & Environment**, 2026 pool permit 40.00; **Diversified Safety & Compliance**, empl drug test 143.80; **NPPD**, electric service 3803.14; **Pawnee Republican**, Jan 2026 publications 427.53; **Seneca SA**, debris clean up, dumpster @ pond 612.00, Jan garbage service 8,279.27; **ACCESS Systems Leasing**, Fortinet/Fortigate lease 232.14; **BHE**, gas service 1133.79; **Lincoln Winwater**, water parts 2929.29; **Nebr. Rural Water Assn.**, exercise water valves 1380.00; **Pawnee True Value**, repair parts 99.45; **Schendel Pest Control**, spray @ swr plant 70.00; **U.S. Cellular**, emergency cell phone 48.76; **PCDC**, Dec 2025 sales tax 10,088.20; **Pawnee Co. Treasurer**, qtrly law enforce agreement 20,708.18; **Casey's equip fuel** 392.05; **Spectrum**, internet/phone @ shop 184.99. Council Member Zelenka moved to approve the claims as submitted. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Report and update from Council Member Zelenka: *Review the Speaking Guidelines for Council Meetings:* Council Member Zelenka stated a copy of the Open Meeting Act is displayed

in the Cornerstone Building and has a lot of good information listed on it in regards to public meetings. She also explained there were several instances at the last Council meeting where there were a lot of sidebar conversations taking place at the same time which makes it difficult to hear what everyone is saying and it is also difficult to type up meeting minutes with several conversations happening at the same time. Council Member Zelenka read the “Speaking Guidelines for Council Meetings” that was included in the agenda packet, is also displayed at each Council meeting next to the public copy of the agenda packet. In the past, people attending the Council meeting had to write their name on a “sign in sheet” and the speaking guidelines were displayed next to the sign in sheet. DC Wiers suggested displaying a copy of the Speaking Guidelines next to the Open Meeting poster. Council agreed but suggested making the print on the Speaking Guidelines sign bigger so it would be easier to read. Mayor Hatfield explained he probably should not have attended the last meeting because he was sick the next day. Also, the Mayor said he had contacted Lash Chaffin with the League of Municipalities about paying firemen because he wanted to see if other communities paid their employees while responding to a fire call. He was not trying to “step on anyone’s toes,” as had been suggested.

Review/take action on Annual Audit from PCDC performed by Citizen Advisory Board:

Council Member Zelenka moved to accept the annual audit from PCDC performed by the Citizen Advisory Board. Council Member Eisenhauer seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

American Legion is inquiring about the Hot Water Heater the City is no longer using in the Cornerstone Building since changing to an “on demand” water heater; Review highlighted price paid in 3/2024: Larry Borchert from the American Legion was present. Mayor Hatfield explained the water heater at the Cornerstone building was changed to an “on demand” water heater because it wasn’t used very much and created a foul odor when it was used. Therefore, the water heater was changed out. Council Member Eisenhauer moved to donate the hot water heater the City is no longer using in the basement of the Cornerstone building to the American Legion. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

City Atty Stehlik-Ladman: Discuss any updates to the nuisance properties at 1120 5th Street and 728 9th Street (Parkers): Jennifer explained there are now two people interested in the 1120 5th Street property and one person interested in the 728 9th Street property. She has sent the information to Parkers to let them decide if they want to accept any offers. Jennifer is willing to write up the purchase agreements and email them to Parkers to expedite the process. City Clerk/Treasurer Curtis and Deputy City Clerk Wiers had previously volunteered to drive to Lincoln to notarize the Parkers’ signatures if and when they accept bids for the properties. Jennifer will keep in contact with the clerks with any updates.

Report and update from Council Member Hatfield: *Review/Approve proposed change to Employee Handbook on page 21, under “Hours of Work or Scheduling,” #3 re: Rest Period or Coffee Breaks:* Council Member Hatfield explained he proposes to change the wording to: “Rest period or coffee breaks are granted as follows: a 15-minute Morning Break not less than 2, nor more than 3 hours after the workday starts and a 15-minute Afternoon Break not less than 2, nor more than 3 hours before the end of the workday and cannot be added to an Employee’s lunch

break.” Council Member Hatfield moved to approve the proposed changes to the Employee Handbook on page 21, under Hours of Work or Scheduling #3 re: Rest Period or Coffee Breaks. Council Member Zelenka seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried. **Review/Discuss new proposed addition to Employee Handbook re: Emergency Response:** Council Member Hatfield read from a list that was included in the agenda packet: “1. Employees who respond to an emergency will be paid straight time. Overtime will be paid when regular working hours are over 40 hours. Council Member Eisenhauer suggested adding “during regular business hours.” Discussion was had and it was suggested to add “during regular work schedule.” This would then be clearer and apply to both crew members and clerks. Jennifer agreed this wording was clearer. Council Member Hatfield continued “2. Emergency will be described as fires, car crashes, missing person or as the City sees fit.” Discussion was had and Council agreed “or as the City deems necessary.” This would then be applicable to CASA for another employee. Council Member Hatfield continued “3. Voluntary help at the fire hall will not be paid out to employees for example: controlled burns, regular meeting during business hours, or as the city sees fit.” Discussion was had and Council agreed to “during employees’ regular work schedule, or as the City deems necessary. Hatfield continued “4. Employees responding to a fire shall report back to work when the emergency is under control. If #4 is abused, this policy will be reviewed further.” “5. Pay will be classified as paid Administrative Leave.” Jennifer stated this policy should agree with Workman’s Comp guidelines. Discussion was had to add this information to the “leave” section in the employee handbook as a separate section. Clerk Curtis will write this information up as it would appear in the employee handbook and bring back to Council for approval. After that point, all employee handbooks will be updated. **Review/Take Action on Reimbursing Leave/Pay on Emergency Fire Calls this past year (2025):** Council Member Hatfield referred to information included in the agenda packet. The employee submitted fire logs and time sheets. Council Member Eisenhauer stated the employee didn’t write time down on the submitted time sheets for responding to fire calls. Clerk Curtis explained the employee didn’t write the time down on the time sheets because he responded to the calls before he reported to work at 8:00 when the regular time is 7:00 but there is notation to the right side of the time sheets to explain why he was late so there was one hour he didn’t get paid for because he had overtime on that time sheet. There are two separate time sheets showing two different instances. More discussion was had about the second instance not claimed because there was overtime claimed during that work period. Council Member Eisenhauer stated she feels it needs to be made clear that the employee will use Administrative Leave when responding to emergencies and will be included in the future so that it doesn’t affect employees’ overtime. The employee had shorted himself overtime according to the submitted documentation. Council Member Eisenhauer stated the documentation shows two instances during regular work hours but from previous conversations during the last council meetings, it was stated there were four or five instances. Council Member Hatfield stated this is why he has heartburn and makes him angry. He knows there were more fires but why did you only turn in paperwork for two instances for an hour each? Crew Member Barloon asked for clarification about more fires? Council Member Hatfield asked about the fire at “Klepper’s” where Crew Member Barloon responded to and Hatfield responded to it for NPPD during regular business hours. Barloon replied he had already taken a vacation day from work and was not scheduled to work that day. Hatfield: so basically, you are asking for two hours? Barloon replied “on the basis of a conversation they both had with Foreman Cumley and Hatfield had asked if previous employees who were firefighters had been paid. Foreman Cumley had made a comment

about Clint, a former employee who was on the Fire Dept. and was paid. Why wasn't I notified this being done with a previous employee?" Clerk Curtis stated she didn't think Clint was ever paid. Foreman Cumley stated "I said Clint was allowed to go to fire calls. I did not know if he was paid." Barloon stated "It doesn't make sense to me if we are okay with it going forward, but you are not okay with the past and you say only two hours? That's your opinion." Council Member Hatfield explained he had a previous conversation with Barloon that he (Hatfield) would approve being paid emergency pay for responding to a fire but he would not approve "back pay." He realizes Barloon wasn't present at the last meeting and he, himself, wasn't present at the meeting before last. Council Member Hatfield stated that he is supportive of the employees. He supported the on call for 7 days pay and he was supportive of the emergency pay when it was brought to his attention, then you "smack the Council in the face by asking for back pay," when we had already had a conversation about back pay. Council Member Hatfield asked Crew Member Barloon if that was correct? Barloon did not comment. Council Member Zelenka commented that whenever the Council makes a decision, they vote on it and it takes affect once it is voted on moving forward. Council Member Eisenhower commented this is such a minor amount that it is not hardly worth wasting our time on it for two hours. This is silly. Council Member Hatfield commented "I'm still not going to vote for two hours. Council Member Hatfield moved to not approve the reimbursement of hours spent on past emergency fire calls for the 2025 year. Council Member Zelenka seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Discuss Any Incident Reports: Review/Discuss current Incident Report & proposed

Corrective Action Form: There are no incident reports to discuss. Clerk Curtis explained that LARM is expecting the City to implement a corrective action form to show the City has something in place when there has been an incident in order to work with an employee, more so when there is a safety issue. LARM wants documentation to show we are working with that employee to prevent a safety issue from happening again and to verify the employee is following the corrective action. So Clerk Curtis did some research and wrote the Corrective Action Form included in the agenda packet which would be attached to an incident report. A meeting would then be scheduled to review the corrective action plan and verify it is being followed. Clerk Curtis also shared this form with City Atty Jennifer Stehlik-Ladman. The form shows a place for the employee signature and the supervisor's signature. The employee doesn't have to agree with the actions but they should sign to acknowledge that it was shared with them. We want to make sure we prove to LARM that we have a follow-up program and it is being followed. Council Member Fisher stated if an employee broke a window on a piece of equipment and then part of the corrective action was to install a guard on the window, then this would be listed as part of the corrective action on the form. Jennifer stated it shows a review of the incident and it will also show if discipline was warranted. It would be a paper trail especially if there are other incidents that occur. Council Member Zelenka stated she likes that the form is a "pdf" and can be typed up on the computer. Also, from past experience, if an incident report was written on an employee and then there were no other incidents in a year's time, then the report was taken out of the file but if there are more incidents, then it shows a pattern and disciplinary action could be taken. It gives the Council and the employee accountability. Clerk Curtis explained that Fred from LARM was concerned there was no written corrective action in place after the number of incidents that occurred in 2025. Council Member Hatfield asked whether the employee or the supervisor would complete the Incident Report? Discussion was had that either one could complete the Incident

Report and then the Council would complete the Corrective Action Plan. The Corrective Action Plan could then be discussed in Executive Session. Jennifer suggested adding a section for additional recommendations from the Council. Council Member Hatfield stated he felt it put a burden on the supervisor to complete the Corrective Action Plan and if the plan was left up to the Council, there are four of them that could maybe have a different insight on the situation. Jennifer suggested possibly inserting a "Recommendations by the Supervisor" section between Facts and Corrective Action Plan. Then, the plan would be submitted to Council and Council would vote on the plan. Discussion was had that this form can be used for any incident and not just damage to equipment. It could be for any action taken against policy by an employee. DC Wiers explained that LARM has safety videos that Fred has suggested employees watch to improve their skills or they can be used as part of a corrective action and they are free. DC Wiers will look into the safety videos available and report back to Council.

Report and Update from City Foreman Cumley: *Review City Invoice & Receipts on 1145 G Street Nuisance Property Clean-up; Discuss next steps:*

Cumley made reference to the invoice he wrote for expenses incurred in cleaning up this property for a total of \$14,728.94 which included labor, equipment, landfill charges and fuel. Receipts were included in the agenda packet. Clerk Curtis asked "What are our next steps?" Jennifer stated there are some other expenses to add such as service fees and then that bill needs to be given to the property owner. The ordinance says if the owner doesn't pay within two months then the costs can be assessed against the property or file a civil suit. The property owner will have to be served either by the sheriff or someone can personally hand it to the property owner but you have to make sure the property owner actually received it. Discussion was had comparing the total costs incurred against a bid a local contactor had submitted of \$17,500 to clean up the property. Currently, it looks like the City saved around \$3000 by including a controlled burn and City Crew Members to clean up the property. Mayor Hatfield asked if the property owner could apply for the \$4000 demolition funds from the City and the \$4000 demo funds from PCDC? Council Member Eisenhower stated the property owner has to apply for those funds before any work is completed. Mayor Hatfield expressed concern that the property owner could apply for these funds and the City would still have incurred these expenses. Discussion was had that the program reimburses expenses and the property owner would have to prove she paid the expenses first. The property owner had paid for asbestos testing but the City paid for its removal. Clerk Curtis stated there are other expenses to add to the invoice. Council Member Eisenhower suggested including all of the expenses in a letter and then hand-deliver it to her. Jennifer stated she would give the City a "return" form to document delivery of the letter. ***Review/Accept Bid on Water Meter***

Replacement Project: Foreman Cumley explained the two quotes, one from Municipal Supply and one from Lincoln Winwater. Winwater had a 3% increase in January. Even with the price increase, Winwater is cheaper per meter. Municipal Supply is harder to work with than Winwater for customer service. Municipal Supply requires extra hardware you have to carry with you when you do the meter readings which means there are more things that can go wrong and have to be replaced. Both bids list brass ultrasonic meters. The Winwater bid shows \$70,500 for install because they would hire a company to come down and install the water meters. Municipal Supply doesn't offer installation. We would have to find someone, ourselves, to install the water meters. The problem with Winwater is they want a set number of meters to install when they bid it out so if there is less meters to install, they might charge more per meter to install. The City has roughly 511 water meters in the system. Foreman Cumley called around to different towns

and nobody has done a complete install themselves. Our City Crew Members would not be able to install all 511 of these meters themselves. The Winwater quote includes AMR software that would be installed on the computer system in the office. The local salesman is in Lincoln and he comes down to troubleshoot. Todd from Municipal Supply does some of the tech support but he is difficult to work with. Also, Municipal Supply shows the City would need to purchase a “transfer file” for our billing system from our software provider and it could cost \$800 so that is an additional expense. The software cost for the Winwater quote is cheaper than our current Sensus software. Foreman Cumley tried to contact Sensus for a quote but never received it. Clerk Curtis explained \$236,000 was budgeted for the water meter project which includes \$185,000 through bank funding and the City would pay \$51,000 (without engineering fees). She stated the total bid from Winwater is \$249,606.46 with the 3% increase. With the new system, the City Crew would be able to read most of the meters from the City Shop. Currently, it takes four guys to read all of the meters in one day. Mayor Hatfield asked if the new system would be able to show a water leak from the computer system in the office? Cumley stated that would not happen until they switch to AMR. This would require a mobile data collector on the water tower which is \$15,000 and then one or two repeaters which are \$5000 each, therefore an additional \$25,000 to \$30,000 for the system. Clerk Curtis stated there is around \$13,000 in the water meter reserve account. The \$51,000 required by the City was going to be paid in part with one of the CDs. Foreman Cumley stated the Council should decide which company they want to use and then he will call them back and then the company will write up an accurate bid he can bring back to Council. We should also decide whether another company is going to replace all of the meters or if the City Crew is going to replace some of them. Council was in agreement to choose Lincoln Winwater and they will vote on an updated quote when received. ***Review NDOT Plans & Project Description of Hwy 8 Road Project coming through Pawnee City:*** Foreman Cumley explained NDOT just sent out plans for the project that will be coming through town sometime between 2027 – 2030. There are some mistakes on the wording which lists 6th Street but should state 7th Street and the project spans from HWY 99 all the way through town to the Historical Society. ***General discussion on things going on in the City:*** The flow meter at the sewer plant is still not working. They pulled the meter out of the water and it is not resetting. Now, GPM thinks there is an electrical current in the water coming off a motor that is affecting the sensor and causing it to freeze up so they sent instructions on a way to ground the water in the channel to see if that works. Discussion was had on how this bad meter is affecting the City from not being in compliance with the State. Foreman Cumley will probably have to complete a noncompliance report but they are generally reviewed individually, so Cumley feels the City should still be okay. The Speed Radar signs have been installed and programmed. Council Member Fisher expressed concern the north sign may not be working. Crew Member Holthus was present at the meeting. He stated the sign may need to be adjusted to capture the speed more accurately. The crew members filled potholes last week. Mayor Hatfield stated he had two questions that were presented to him by a resident. When are the lines going to be painted on the street (in front of the grocery store and former FSA office)? Cumley replied it is done every Spring. Mayor Hatfield stated, “It wasn’t done last year.” Cumley said he was pretty sure it was done last year. Mayor Hatfield stated the people at the grocery store said it didn’t happen last year. The second question was when will the pond be fixed and the pond is getting pretty low. Mayor Hatfield said he hasn’t been out lately. He told the resident there is a leak in the pond and he assumed the leak was getting fixed but apparently not. Cumley stated he had talked with Gyhra’s. Hatfield interjected: Gyhra’s told the Mayor that Spencer told Gyhra’s that Spencer was going to fix it.

Cumley said “that is because nobody can exchange information correctly. I had talked to Gyhra’s afterwards when you guys assumed I could fix it. I can’t and the ground is full of rubble. If we go digging in it and tear up a bunch of concrete we can make a lot more holes that we are not experienced enough to fix. Cumley called Randy Gyhra back and explained to him and he said Oh, I didn’t know that and they would try to get to the pond and fix it whenever possible. I am not in control of their schedule. Mayor Hatfield said “That’s all I needed to know so I could ask Randy but the last I heard, Randy told me that he said you were going to fix it, so I said no more.” People were asking the Mayor and he didn’t know because he had not been checking on it. Now I have an answer.” Cumley stated he had also given Council Member Eisenhauer this information. Also, the City Crew doesn’t usually fill the pond up that much during the winter unless we have to but we did have the water going awhile back and it’s only down about two feet. It was kept a little empty because Council Member Eisenhauer had budgeted to put rock around the pond and we are working to start hauling rock around it when we finish with the fence project we had started at the Van Horne park. Mayor Hatfield stated “There you go. Did you get that for the paper? Now the people will know. Thank you.” Discussion was had that there is a well house next to the pond that is used to fill the pond. It is not drinkable water.

Report and update from Deputy Clerk Wiers: Discuss future of Pawnee City Dog Park, setting up a committee, applying for a grant, etc.: DC Wiers explained the City Crew has cleaned up the lots next to the library and also hauled in dirt to help level the sides a bit and it looks very nice. DC Wiers has talked with some citizens and a couple of them; Emily Norman and Brittany McCullough (SENDD Community Development Specialist) are interested in helping with this project. The first meeting is scheduled Thursday morning at the Cornerstone Building. We will work on a plan and a grant for the dog park.

Review/Approve Special Conditions & Environmental Review Documents on the CDBG 25-PP-011 Planning Grant to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan: *Certified Administrator Letter—This identifies SENDD, and specifically Clerk/Treasurer Curtis, as the Certified Administrator for the grant; Excessive Force Certification; Financial Management Certification—Note: The document template doesn’t allow for adding letterhead; Procurement Codes and Conduct—Certifies compliance with federal procurement regulations; Authorization to Request Funds—This form needs to be signed in blue ink. Authorized individuals should include the Mayor, and then CDBG Internal Control & Financial Management Form—New Project; Finding of Exempt Activity and 58.6 Checklist—Along with the completed Determination of Level of Review, these documents will fulfill all that’s needed for the Environmental Review process of this planning grant; Grievance Policies/Procedures for Fair Housings, Civil Rights, and/or Section 504/ADA complaints:* Clerk Curtis explained all of these items are included in the agenda packet for review to see what all is included in the planning grant to update the comprehensive plan. Council Member Zelenka moved to approve the Special Conditions & Environmental Review Documents on the CDBG 25-PP-011 Planning Grant to update the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Correspondence: Council reviewed the spreadsheet on the December 2025 Sales Tax of \$31,427.15 with Motor Vehicle Sales Tax totaling \$4,525.28 and \$6,725.47 being ½% Street Repairs Sales Tax.

At this time, Clerk Curtis addressed the Council. She explained that it was very confusing what the Council was doing and wasn't doing with the Fire. She thought she had been directed to reinstate the two hours of sick leave for City Crew Member Lucas Barloon that he spent at the controlled burn at 1045 G Street. The motions were wrong at one meeting and then at the next meeting and Jennifer said the wait until the Council corrects the motion at the next meeting. Then the motion was made to approve the emergency pay so she reinstated the sick leave time he used when he was present at the controlled burn at 1045 G Street. So, can we just leave it or do I need to take it back? Council Members Fisher and Eisenhower stated "no." Fisher continued to explain there was a lot of confusion during this process. Council Member Eisenhower stated to leave it because the point was to reinstate past leave after the controlled burn which turned out to be just another two hours which is a lot of paperwork for nothing. Council Member Hatfield stated going further if it is a controlled burn for the City, then he (a city crew member) is working for the City as far as he is concerned. Eisenhower added it's not administrative leave, either, even if the employee helped out the Fire Dept. Mayor Hatfield added it's no different than all of them standing out there watching the controlled burn.

Council Member Zelenka moved to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Hatfield seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all in favor of the motion and meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

ATTEST: Kellie A. Wiers, Deputy City Clerk

Charlie Hatfield, Mayor