

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PAWNEE CITY, HELD ON MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2025, 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 and Susan Eisenhower (by phone); Kellie Wiers, Deputy City Clerk; Tamela Curtis, City Clerk/Treasurer and Foreman Spencer Cumley. **Absent:** Council Member Vickie Zelenka.

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 Eisenhower moved to accept the June 9, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Council Member Hatfield 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: **6/17/25 Payroll:** \$15,536.56; **Union Bank & Trust**, FWH 3992.09; **NE Dept. of Rev**, SWH 528.64, sales/use tax 2046.35; **John Hancock**, retirement 1374.68; **Allstate**, cancer/accid.184.04; **Ameritas**, vision 81.20; **Madison Nat'l Life**, life ins. 53.71; **Medica**, health ins. 8606.55; **Spectrum**, internet & phone @ shop 184.99; **Seneca SA**, May 2025 garb service & dumpster @ pond 7122.80; **PCDC**, April sales tax 10,374.41; **Capital Bus. Syst.**, Elevate Phone Syst 201.92; **Verizon Wireless**, home conn & jetpack 64.95; **Access Systems Leasing**, IT hardware 232.14; **Access Systems**, IT services 931.60; **Windstream**, phone & internet @ city office 135.70; **Black Hills Energy**, gas service 312.86; **Friedly Oil**, equip fuel, 222.32; **Lincoln Winwater Works**, wtr parts 2247.22; **NPPD**, electric service, 3308.63; **Hometown Leasing**, library copier lease 100.79; **Stallbaumer Lumber**, door closers 124.99; **Dollar General**, first aid & libr supplies 63.43; **Pawnee True Value**, repair supplies 1061.06; **Quill Corp.**, office supplies 130.69; **Schaardt Lawn Care**, library lawn care 885.00; **Gayle Lang**, reimb pool operator cert 40.00; **Nebr. Life Magazine**, libr subsc 52.00; **Pawnee Republican**, publications 944.88; **Tori Ward**, life guard class 950.00. Council Member Hatfield 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.

Josie Friedly: Discuss Daycare Meeting held 6/18 & what the City could possibly do to assist:

Josie Friedly, spokesperson for the nonprofit, PC Little Learners, explained there was a community meeting on June 18th at the school lunchroom to seek assistance in acquiring the Sweet Second Home Daycare from Amanda and Derek Niss for \$250,000 (valued at \$220,000). The goal is to figure out the next steps and develop a business model. "C4K" is helping the Board with developing a business model and writing a budget. The group plans to have three major partners with the daycare to include the daycare board whose offices would be up for renewal every year, the person or entity to process the payroll and offer benefits to daycare employees and someone to purchase, own and maintain the building. The group had talked to Alpha to process the payroll and offer benefits to the daycare employees and then the daycare would pay Alpha back for the benefits when they were financially able. There are only two licensed daycares in Pawnee City so childcare is limited. Josie has talked with many people and organizations about acquiring the daycare. This afternoon, the Clerks contacted Kelly Gentrup with SENDD (Southeast Nebraska Development District) to see if the nonprofit could qualify for a grant to purchase the daycare. Kelly Gentrup explained the City could apply for a CDBG grant to purchase the daycare but there would be a 20% match and the City would have to enter into an interlocal agreement with the nonprofit in order to qualify. Kelly Gentrup suggested setting up a meeting with the City and the nonprofit board to discuss this further. Clerk Curtis explained Co. Atty Emily Sisco contacted her requesting the City provide insurance to the daycare but LARM would only insure the building so the daycare would have to pay for their own liability insurance. Clerk Curtis also explained the City could apply for a Public Works Grant for the purchase price of \$250,000 but it would require a \$50,000 match. Josie said the nonprofit would be able to raise the \$50,000 but she would need answers by July 31st. Clerk Curtis explained the Council meets again on July 14 and will have a full council present. Council Member Hatfield stated he didn't want the City to have another PCAL situation. Josie explained she is concerned that the Pawnee City Schools doesn't offer a 3 yr. old Preschool while Lewiston and HTRS both offer 3-yr old Preschool. Parents would be more inclined to send their children to the other schools since they offer a 3-yr old preschool. The nonprofit group would like to implement a 3-yr old preschool at the daycare next school year. This would bring the number of children closer to capacity since there are only 20 to 28 children at the daycare this Summer. Full capacity would be 43 children with up to 12 being infants. There are currently 2 full-time and 5 part-time employees but it would be easier to hire more staff if the daycare offered some benefits. The staffing ratios for a daycare are 1 adult for 4 infants, toddler 1/6, pre-school 1/10 and school-aged 1/15. Council Member Hatfield stated the Council needs more discussion on this issue. Clerk Curtis explained the application for the CDBG grant is due Sept. 15th and the Council meets again on July 14th. She urged Josie to bring more board members to the next Council meeting. Board member Julia Smith was present in the audience. Josie gave Clerk Curtis a copy of the presentation from the June 18th meeting for PC Little Learners. Josie explained the daycare currently charges \$33.60/day/child but the recommended fee is \$47.00/day based upon the city's population. DC Wiers asked Josie if the daycare board planned to pursue the food program offered by DHHS? She said they did plan to look into the food program but had heard there is a lot of paperwork involved but this could offset food costs. Also, they are looking into having another entity providing food for the daycare which would eliminate the need to pay someone to prepare food. Josie stated Pawnee City Schools cannot afford to take over the daycare because they would have to increase the number of employees which would then require them to offer benefits to the paraeducators. HTRS can afford to have a daycare because the school district has

a bigger land base and more tax money. Josie had previously stated her children do not attend Sweet Second Home daycare but they do attend an in-home daycare in another county. DC Wiers asked Josie why she is so interested in working on this project. Josie replied that she grew up in Falls City, loves Falls City and would love to move back to Falls City but that is not feasible. So, she would like to “love” Pawnee City but will remain living in DuBois. She would like to see Pawnee City flourish, increase population, and increase jobs.

Jennifer Stehlik-Ladman, City Atty: Discuss latest updates on 522 & 526 G Street collapsed buildings, Pharmacy/Bank Insurance Updates & Asbestos Removal: Jennifer stated she still doesn't have a total claim from the pharmacy. Some of the bricks next to the pharmacy wall have been removed from against the building halfway down the outside wall. An abatement letter has been sent to the owner of the lots next to the pharmacy. It was mentioned Eileen and Jerry may be residing in California at this time and not receive the letter timely. Jennifer explained the City could continue the abatement process and recommended putting the debris clean up out for bids. Mayor Hatfield explained that Nolan and Andrea from DHHS will be down this week to look at the debris site to determine whether there is asbestos and precautions will have to be taken during removal. Their findings will affect the how and where for the debris disposal. Gyhra's had given Mayor Hatfield a rough estimate of \$160,000 for disposal but that includes dealing with asbestos. Jennifer explained due to the cost of removal this will have to be sent out for bids. Council Member Hatfield asked if it was possible for the City to rent equipment and dispose of the debris ourselves? Hatfield said Midwest Refuse & Waste from Beatrice has large dumpsters available for around \$500 and the company would pick them up when they were full plus the debris would probably be dumped at Beatrice, anyway. Hatfield texted the information to Foreman Cumley. The next step is to put the job out for bids and find out the status of asbestos plus, calculate the cost if the city crew completes the work. Hopefully, this information will be available for the July 14th meeting. **Discuss Nuisance Property Abatement Letters recommended by Health Board sent out:** Jennifer explained she has sent letters to Veronica and Kara Lee about the camper parked in Veronica's backyard at 239 G Street. Veronica still needs to write a letter to Kara Lee asking her to move the camper off her property. The dog ticket letters have been updated and Jennifer will file on the people who have not licensed their dogs or paid their dog ticket fines. Clerk Curtis explained the PRIDE Committee meets Tuesday. Kenneth Klepper had been sent a letter about the line of thistles he has on the south side of his property. Two weeks later he still has not taken care of the thistles and they are flowering. DC Wiers will take pictures and write a work order to have the thistles cut down. Also, Clerk Curtis found meeting minutes that Klepper's bait shop was approved on the condition that he keeps the property cleaned up. Besides the thistles, there is a fallen tree within the fenced area plus trees, brush and weeds have grown up around the fence and the entire property. The clerks will contact Zoning Admin. Matt Kuhlmann about the issue. Discussion was had about the cost for the City to take care of mowing and weeds on nuisance properties. There was concern if the cost is low enough then people will depend upon the City to mow their private properties. It was decided there should be a minimum charge of \$110.00. **Any follow up on asbestos removal at 1345 G Street:** No update yet.

Discuss/Approve Wage Recommendation Options from Wage Committee: Council Member Eisenhower reviewed the City Employee Wage Info 2025 form that was included in the agenda packet with raises based upon performance. No employee received 40 out of 40 points so there

are no recommended \$0.75 raises. If someone received 40 points, the recommended raise would be \$0.75/hr.; 36-39 points = \$0.65; 32-35 points = \$0.50. If 31 points or less, there is no recommended raise. Council Member Hatfield recommended if someone received 25–31 points, then the employee should receive a \$0.25/hr. raise. If someone received less than 25 out of 40 points, then “they don’t need to be here.” Council Member Hatfield moved to approve the performance-based raise recommendations as amended to include a \$0.25/hr. raise to the scale if an employee received 25–31 points on their evaluation. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Review letter from USDA re: PCAL Reserve Requirements not being met (NOTE: A Zoom meeting with USDA, PCAL & City is set for June 30th @ 3 p.m.): Council Member Hatfield and Mayor Hatfield plan to attend and meet at the City Office along with both clerks for this meeting.

Pawnee Republican Meeting July 2nd @ 6:00 p.m.: The City Officials are invited to a meeting on the future of the Pawnee Republican Newspaper @ the Cornerstone Building: Bev and Ron Puhalla would like to retire from the newspaper.

Review SENDD’s Membership Packet requesting continued participation and membership dues with Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDDD). Approve FY 2025/2026 Housing Dues - \$260.00 and Membership Dues - \$1575.00 (same amount for past 9 years): Council Member Hatfield asked what things do they do to help the City? Clerk Curtis explained SENDD helps the City quite a bit. They helped with the RCRP grant, with the CDBG grant for the street project, and the clerks talked with Kelly Gentrup from SENDD about helping the daycare. Jim Warrelman is a housing development specialist and he is helping with the three houses that are currently being built in town. Also, in the packet is information about a purchase/resale housing rehab program that is new and could help Pawnee City residents. Council Member Hatfield moved to approve FY 2025/2026 Housing dues - \$260.00 and Membership Dues - \$1575.00 with the Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDDD). Council Member Eisenhower seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Report and update from Foreman Cumley: *Discuss Well Water Levels:* Foreman Cumley explained the water level is low in the aquifer, the wells are pumping air and the wells have reached their pumping capacity so he recommends the City implement water restrictions. Discussion was had whether the City should start with Stage 1 or Stage 2 water restrictions. Foreman Cumley explained the City had implemented a water restriction two years ago and it helped quite a bit but that was stage 2. It helped a lot since residents did not run their sprinkler systems. The wells went from pumping 300,000 gallons/day down to 180,000 gallons/day during the summer. He also suggested posting something in the newspaper and putting something in the water bills. Council Member Hatfield moved to approve implementing Stage 1 voluntary water conservation effective immediately due to low aquifer levels. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried. ***Review/Discuss updates on various projects in the City:*** There was a water main break along the highway plus another water leak on 5th street. Water was coming out from under the

driveway tube so that will have to be replaced. The handrails are finished and ready to be installed this week. The City Crew had to repair the manhole by the City Shop because the lid kept coming off. Also, the City Crew has raised their last manhole up by Moser's shop and it was located four feet under the road. Now they will have access to every manhole in the system in case they need to "jet" them. The sewer line located by Kerl's has backed up twice and is part of the trunk line that runs North by the walking trail on 8th and 9th streets. It has been "jetted." It would be helpful to have a camera so they can see why it keeps backing up. The camera will be discussed for next year's budget. This location will also be put on the list to do slip lining for next year's budget. Foreman Cumley had previously discussed with Clerk Curtis about slip lining the sewer line on 17th Street by the new tube that was installed. Cumley is concerned the line may collapse because of all the work that was completed on that tube. The City recently received an email from Tyler Keenan with JEO about the water meter project. Tyler did talk about the SRLF funding for a better interest rate for the project. They would be able to fund just a water meter replacement project but he didn't have details about the loan or the interest rate. Clerk Curtis and Foreman Cumley will contact JEO for more information to have available on Friday for the budget workshops. Cumley explained they were going to work on the manhole cover by the courthouse at 5th & F streets but they could smell a gas leak when they opened it so Black Hills Energy was contacted. The leak will have to be repaired before the City Crew can complete their project.

Review Correspondence: Aaron Sawyer confirmed the City did not receive the AARP Grant for murals. The City will receive \$163,604.53 in Municipal Equalization Funds (MEF) Aid for 2025-26. Council reviewed the spreadsheet on April 2025 Total Sales Tax of \$31,975.70 with ½% Street Repairs Sales Tax totaling \$6916.28 and \$4,310.60 being Motor Vehicle Sales Tax. The Southeast Nebraska Economic Update Meeting has been moved to Nebraska City on July 7, 2025. Reminder: budget workshops with Julie Bauman are scheduled this Friday at the City Office.

Council Member Hatfield moved to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Fisher seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all in favor of the motion and meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

ATTEST: Kellie A. Wiers, Deputy City Clerk

Charlie Hatfield, Mayor