

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA  
March 9, 2021

The regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. Present were Mayor Hartz and Council Members Dale Wilkinson, Brent Pickrel, Leonard Miller and Ted Hughes. Also in attendance were City Attorney James McNally, City Clerk Danielle Klabenes, Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan-Simonsen, City Supt. Dan Donaldson, Generation Supervisor Josh Capler, Police Chief Mike Wright, Library Director Jennifer Norton, News Reporter Kelly Garcia, Don Weinman and Auditor Kyle Overturf. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on March 3, 2021. Notice of this meeting was given to the Mayor and all members of the Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of notice and the agenda is attached to the minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Council of this meeting. Mayor Hartz offered a prayer before opening the meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public. Mayor Hartz presided over the meeting and noted that a copy of the Open Meetings Law, located on the east wall of the City Council Chambers was available to the public. Clerk Klabenes recorded the minutes. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council member Wilkinson moved to approve the February 9<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Pickrel, Miller, Wilkinson. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Clerk Klabenes reported the transfers discussed at the previous meeting for Dial-A-Ride and the Police departments to reimburse the Electric fund were completed in February. Discussion was held that the power bills for February from the extraordinary cold temperatures would take time to learn the full impact and the first look at a February invoice would not be available for a minimum of a week yet. City Attorney McNally thanked the City Supt. and Electric Personnel for their work in the generation room in keeping it running during the severe cold temperatures where the temperature in the generation room was 10-15 degrees colder than the outdoors. Council member Hughes moved to approve the February treasurers report as presented. Seconded by Pickrel. Roll call votes in favor were Wilkinson, Miller, Hughes, Pickrel. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

#### FISCAL YEAR AUDIT 2019-2020

Auditor Kyle Overturf of Almquist, Maltzahn, Galloway & Luth of Grand Island presented the 2019-2020 fiscal year audit. He reported the audit was performed remotely due to COVID. He reported the audit received an unmodified opinion, which was the highest opinion the city may receive from an outside accounting firm. He reported on several pages of the audit noting revenue sources of governmental activities, long-term debt paid, a decrease in water and sewer cash flow, segregation of duties of personnel and a recommendation to allocate certificate of deposits to the applicable service source compared to all certificates allocated to the general fund. He reported on benchmark calculations compared to all Nebraska cities for city valuation. He also reported on a comparison to cities of similar size in a peer group of 1,000 to 3,000 population for all other benchmark calculations which included department budgets, state allocations, sources of revenue, operating income, debt ratio, levy rates and cash reserves. He also reported on the importance of the city council asking questions of the treasurer's report and to continue looking for new sources of revenue for the General Fund. Council Member Hughes moved to approve the 2019-2020 fiscal year audit as prepared by Almquist, Maltzahn, Galloway & Luth. Seconded by Wilkinson. Roll call votes in favor were Pickrel, Miller, Hughes, Wilkinson. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

#### RESOLUTION 2021-1 DIAL-A-RIDE FUNDING FOR 2021-2023

Clerk Klabenes reported the operation assistance application for a bi-annual period of 2021-2023 comprised of federal, state and local funds. She reported the overall budget increased 4.7% and included a projected increase in fuel prices. She reported the Sunday services would increase from \$51.73 per week to \$52.76 per week which was split among 4 participating churches. Council Member Miller introduced and moved for passage Resolution 2021-1 requesting federal funding of \$55,420.00 and state funding of \$15,639.00 for the two-year fiscal years of 2021-2023 Dial-A-Ride Public Transportation operation. Seconded by Wilkinson. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Hughes, Wilkinson, Pickrel. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

#### NEBRASKA PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK APRIL 11-17<sup>TH</sup>

Clerk Klabenes reported the 7<sup>TH</sup> annual marketing promotion of Nebraska Public Transit week was slated for April 11-17<sup>th</sup> with daily activities to show appreciation and increase awareness of public transit services available to all ages. Hughes moved to authorize and approve the Dial-A-Ride Public Transportation events for the Nebraska Public Transit Week of April 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Seconded by Pickrel. Roll call votes in favor were Wilkinson, Hughes, Pickrel, Miller. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

2021 MAY 2020

approved by council  
4-13-21  
DK

## **SEMI-TRUCK AND TRAILER PARKING AREAS**

City Supt. Dan Donaldson reported one option for a semi-truck and trailer parking was the Joe Funk property east of Neligh. He reported Funk proposed that the city install the rock, pads and electrical to improve the property and charge the city \$400 a month for rent of the property. Discussion was held for the survey results from the Economic Development office following a Facebook survey for interest in a semi-truck parking area. The survey noted that 77% of the responses thought a truck parking area was a good idea while 23% did not. The survey noted that 23% of the responses stated they would be personally interested in truck parking while 77% did not. The Supt. reported he inquired on an area by the former grain elevator which would provide room for 2 to 3 trucks. Discussion was held if 2 trucks were located in one area with another 2 trucks in a different area while considering the noise level away from residential areas. Discussion was held for the investment to provide rock and electrical hookups. Discussion was held for little interest in developing property not owned by the city. No action was taken.

## **CITY PROPERTY FOR A COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Supt. Dan Donaldson reported he was awaiting notice of award of grant funds. He reported the County Extension Agent and himself had developed a plan for the city property located north of the Department of Transportation. He reported monetary donations from the Women of Neligh and a donation to garden till the area from Steve Kuester was available. He reported on an idea to provide a water line attached to a fence for water needs that could extend as needed. He reported plot sizes may be 20x30 feet with names placed on a fence. He reported fence materials may use temporary snow fence or chain link. He reported the program would be free to city residents tending to a plot with one requirement to grow an extra 1-2 rows of produce to donate to the Food Pantry. No action was taken.

## **APPOINTMENT**

Mayor Hartz recommended the appointment of Judy Eggerling to the Tree Board for a 3 year term. *Council Member Wilkinson moved to approve the appointment of Judy Eggerling to the Tree Board for a 3 year term.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pickrel, Wilkinson, Miller, Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

## **RIVERSIDE PARK JET AGREEMENT RENEWAL**

Clerk Klabenes reported the annual agreement between the US Air Force and the City of Neligh to display the aircraft in Riverside Park was the same as previous years. Discussion was held that the new curator at the Antelope County Museum had expressed an interest in painting the jet to the original design. City Supt. Donaldson reported he had contacted a US Air Force representative for the technical specifications to repaint the jet and there was interest in helping with the project. *Pickrel moved to approve the 2021 loan agreement for displaying the jet in Riverside Park between the Dept. of US Air Force and the City of Neligh.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Wilkinson, Hughes, Pickrel, Miller. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

## **CREDIT CARD**

Chief Wright reported on an incident where an emergency police call took him to Lincoln so he could not check out the city credit card and he needed to purchase fuel with his own credit card to return home. He requested a credit card be issued to the police department. Discussion was held for a prepaid card to be used for emergency situations. Discussion was held for obtaining a 2<sup>nd</sup> credit card in the city office in the event that one card was checked out and unavailable. Discussion was held that the current policy was to check out the city credit card with two employees while noting the vendor and purpose of the purchase for accounting and internal control. Discussion was held that previous municipality meetings recommended not issuing credit cards. Discussion was held that the police chief had checked out the city credit card without a 2<sup>nd</sup> employee verification therefore not complying with the policy. Discussion was held for permitting the Police Chief to check out a city credit card after hours and to continue having access to a city credit card after business hours for emergency situations. *Council member Hughes moved to add a second credit card to the city office for emergencies and purchases for the city* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Hughes, Pickrel. Opposed: Wilkinson. Motion carried.

## **CUSTODIAN FOR LIBRARY**

City Clerk Klabenes requested consideration to hire Jennifer Jacob for custodial services at the Neligh Public Library at \$12.50 an hour for 4 hours a week. Discussion was held that the Library budget included funds for a custodian. Discussion was held that after the previous custodian left in the fall from a 6 hour weekly schedule, and with COVID limiting traffic and programs for a period in the spring that the library staff had picked up the custodial duties. Discussion was held that now with increased traffic and programs that a custodian's services were needed for 4 hours a week with library staff picking up the 2-hour difference. *Hughes moved to hire Jennifer Jacob as Library custodian at \$12.50 an hour following successful completion of pre-employment testing.* Seconded by Pickrel. Roll call votes in favor were Wilkinson, Hughes, Miller, Pickrel. Opposed: None.

Motion carried.

### **ECONOMIC DIRECTORS REPORT**

ED Director Sheridan-Simonsen reported \$2,800 was still available to businesses for COVID-19 support. She reported the digital façade application was under review to be streamlined for easier completion. She reported the county wide Job and Career Fair received free building use from the Antelope County Ag Society and a \$500 sponsorship from City Engineer Advanced Consulting Engineering Services. She reported a budget of \$1,276 for advertising with 28% of the budget spent locally. She reported 11 businesses had signed up before the advertising began earlier that day. The Director also reported of a tourism promotion called the Best of the Backroad Tour where \$100 grants to participating businesses can work with News Channel Nebraska for a professional commercial which the business would own the commercial for reuse on a website or social media page. She also reported Ag Expo went well with an estimated 600 people attending. She reported Chamber of Commerce awards recognized Thriftway and Brian Christiansen. She reported work at Clearwater continued on the Nebraska Affordable Housing Grant. *Wilkinson moved to approve the Economic Development Director report.* Seconded by Pickrel. Roll call votes in favor were Pickrel, Wilkinson, Hughes, Miller. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Wright presented the February report of 210 calls. He reported he has advertised for an officer position since January and reported over 50 municipalities were hiring officers at the same time. He reported two candidates declined a part-time position at \$18.00 an hour for a \$19-20 wage offered in other locations.

*Pickrel moved to approve the February police report of 210 calls.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Wilkinson, Hughes, Pickrel, Miller,. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

### **CITY SUPT. REPORT**

City Supt. Donaldson reported the street personnel were patching potholes and applying tar and fill with the crack machine before warmer temperatures. He reported he was working on obtaining three bids for a generator for the east well. Discussion was held for the process to setup backup for the wells to run in an emergency situation. He reported the sewer operator and himself had attended a wastewater treatment training earlier that day. He advised having a contractor inspect the sewer plant mechanics for overall maintenance and budget planning. Discussion was held for the repairs needed on the grader valve and fuel issues and payloader hydraulic oil leak that has increased. He reported the west well invoice included in the bills for the night included a \$4,400.00 expense to install approximately 100 feet of stainless-steel line shaft in the column.

Discussion was held for lifeguard certification classes beginning before the April 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting and consideration for the Park Board to hire lifeguards at their April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting prior to the City Council meeting to allow a lifeguard to be informed and able to attend the certification classes required before a lifeguard can work at the pool. Discussion was held for pool and park seasonal positions to be part of the Job Fair on March 23<sup>rd</sup> with applications available to complete. *Wilkinson moved to authorize the Park Board to hire summer pool and park employees prior to the April Council meeting.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pickrel, Miller, Wilkinson, Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

*Hughes moved to approve a community spring clean-up weekend of April 24-25 with a rain date of May 1-2 with regular fees in place.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Wilkinson, Hughes, Pickrel.

*Pickrel moved to approve the City Supt. report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pickrel, Wilkinson, Miller, Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

### **ELECTRIC REPORT**

Electric Generation Supervisor Capler reported on a few minor outages from fuses. He reported the underground electric services for a new home northeast of town was in and ready for the contractor. He reported tree trimming would begin before leaves filled the trees. He reported on the February extreme cold temperatures when Neligh was advised they were not part of the rolling blackouts. Upon the February 16<sup>th</sup> blackout that did affect Neligh, the electric crew quickly started generation to restore power to the town within 20-35 minutes. He reported the following day, Neligh was on a rolling blackout list and the electric crew started generation ahead of any blackouts so Neligh was not affected. He reported on the difficulty of refilling the fuel tanks and the severe cold temperatures caused the fuel to gel immediately creating intense work to change filters and heat the tanks several times. Discussion was held on the lessons learned from the severe cold weather, on operating on diesel in extreme cold weather and on change in the setup to alleviate the exchange between incoming and return fuel into the tank. Mayor Hartz thanked the electric personnel for their work. *Hughes moved to approve the Electric report.* Seconded by Pickrel. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Pickrel, Miller, Wilkinson. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

*Wilkinson moved to approve the bills as presented, except the Blackstrap invoice.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Pickrel, Wilkinson, Miller, Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

*Wilkinson moved to approve the Blackstrap invoice of \$800 for street ice melt.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call



votes in favor were Pickrel, Miller, Wilkinson. Abstain: Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

There being no further business to conduct, *Miller moved to adjourn*. Seconded by Wilkinson. Roll call votes in favor were Wilkinson, Hughes, Pickrel, Miller. Opposed: None. Thereupon Mayor Hartz declared the meeting adjourned. Time 9:12 P.M.

City of Neligh



Joe Hartz, Mayor

ATTEST



Danielle Klabenes, City Clerk

### CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, City Clerk of the City of Neligh, Nebraska, hereby certify that on March 9, 2021; that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk; that such agenda items were sufficiently descriptive to give the public reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at the meeting; that such subjects were contained in said agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available for public inspection at least twenty-four hours before the meeting; that the said minutes from which the foregoing proceedings have been extracted were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body; that all news media requesting notification concerning meetings of said body were provided advance notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting; and that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available and accessible to members of the public, posted during such meeting in the room in which such meeting was held.



City Clerk

(SEAL)