

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA  
February 4, 2025

The regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. Present were Mayor Joe Hartz and Council Members Steph Lundgren, Tyler Pedersen, and Ted Hughes. Leonard Miller was absent. Also in attendance were City Attorney James McNally, City Supt. Dan Donaldson, Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan-Simonsen, City Clerk Danielle Klabenes, Library Director Amy Baker, News Reporter Shelby Pitzer, Police Chief Logan Lawson and Assistant Fire Chief Dave Jacobsen, and Ray Connot. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on January 29, 2025. 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 thereafter 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. City Clerk Danielle Klabenes recorded the minutes. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Council member Hughes moved to approve the January 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

#### **TREASURER REPORT**

Clerk Klabenes reported that the December spinning reserves reported in January of \$3,710 were larger than expected. *Lundgren moved to approve the January 2025 treasurer's report as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

ED Director Lauren Sheridan-Simonsen reported a lump sum certificate of deposit was created last year as a match for the Rural Workforce Housing Grant match. She recommended creating three certificates of deposits for 6 months to allow for an investment to be made without batching all the funds into one certificate. She reported with the anticipated projects or loans, that \$125,000 be placed into three investments. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve creating three LB840 certificates of deposits with two certificates of \$50,000 and one certificate of \$25,000 at Pinnacle Bank for 6 months at 4.14% interest.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were heard, and no action was taken.

#### **SEMI-ANNUAL LIBRARY REPORT**

Library Director Amy Baker reported the statistical semi-annual library report included total library visits of 16,928 with an annual cardholders increase of forty-nine to a total of 2,566 cardholders. She reported that of the 242 children's programs, attendance was 2,491 and of the 375 adult programs, attendance was 3,599. She reported strong partnerships including the school, hospital, emergency medical, and police. She reported the most popular volunteer engagement was Friday bi-weekly Story Time. She reported two facility improvements with up-to-date lighting and a new HVAC system that offered a more efficient and pleasant space for meetings, programs, studying, and day-to-day library use. She reported one challenge of the library was the space limitation and the need for outdoor seating for Wi-Fi access. She reported one opportunity for the library was the growth and expansion of programs including digital resource enhancements. The Director reported the short-term goals included a library patio and updated computers, with a change in Wi-Fi carrier. She reported the long-term goals

of the library included major renovation for increased space with larger program rooms. *Pedersen moved to approve the semi-annual library report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

#### **NELIGH FIRE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT SALE AND PURCHASE**

Assistant Fire Chief Dave Jacobsen requested authorization to sell the 1984 Econoline Van by sealed bids. He reported the van had approximately 12,000 miles. He reported that the fire department was looking for a new pumper truck with similar specs now estimated at approximately \$600,000. He reported that the Rural Fire had partnered with the Neligh Fire Department about 10 years ago on a previous equipment bond purchase. He reported that if the Rural Fire would approve doing the same shared bond for the purchase of the pumper truck, that the Neligh Fire would be responsible for half of the purchase. He reported the Neligh Fire Department had certificates of deposit of approximately \$73,000 that would be used to apply towards the Neligh Fire's purchase, in addition to the proceeds of the 1984 Econoline Van. He reported the purchase of a pumper truck was estimated to be 18 months out of production time. Discussion was held for council members to attend a fire department meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> or March 10<sup>th</sup> to see the pumper on hand and give the Neligh Fire Dept. an opportunity to talk to the Rural Fire. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the sale of the Fire Dept. 1984 Econoline Van by sealed bids.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Lundgren, and Hughes. Opposed: None. Absent: Miller. Motion carried. No action was taken on the current pumper truck. The matter will be tabled to the March meeting.

#### **RESOLUTION 2025-1 AND 2025-2 DECLARING 301 J STREET AND 507 EAST 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET AS DANGEROUS BUILDINGS**

City Attorney McNally reported the properties of 301 J Street, and 507 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street were inspected and found to have various violations with the city ordinances. He recommended the council consider the resolutions presented to declare the properties dangerous buildings. Property owner, Ray Connot reported he would like to sell the property on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and had an estimate to reside the home at the East 4<sup>th</sup> Street property, fix the sidewalk, fix the home interior, and new floors for \$6,905. City Supt. Donaldson reported as city inspector and recommended the two properties should not be allowed to be rented until all conditions were remedied. Council discussion was held that the necessary repairs would exceed \$6,905 and pictures from the inspection with the homeowner showed health and electrical hazards. *Council Member Hughes introduced and moved for passage of Resolutions 2025-2 declaring the property of 301 J Street and 507 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street as a nuisance and a dangerous property in violation of the city ordinances.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Thereupon, Mayor Hartz declared Resolutions 2025-1 and 2025-2 adopted.

#### **SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR CITY SERVICES**

Discussion was held for city services proposed to change to include swimming pool admission and pool party fees, daily camping fees, board of adjustment hearings, electric meter, water meter by tap size fees, and water and sewer connection fees after the tap is in place. Discussion was held for updating the Dial-A-Ride rates at the next meeting with the next budget for operational assistance with Nebraska Department of Transit. No action was taken, and the matter was tabled to the March meeting.

#### **PROCLAMATION FOR GAMBLING AWARENESS IN MARCH**

Mayor Joe Hartz proclaimed March as Gambling Awareness Month encouraging all citizens to support the National Council on Problem Gambling in their efforts to mitigate gambling related harm nationwide.

#### **APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Hartz recommended the appointment of Duane Eichberger to the Tree Board for a 3-year term and the reappointment of Chelcy Mooney to the Park Board for a 3-year term. *Hughes moved to approve the appointments as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

Discussion was held to select a representative and alternate to the ACE Board of Directors as former Council member Dale Wilkinson had served for a number of years. Discussion was held for visiting with Council Member Miller next month and checking with city employees to split the two representatives with one council member and one city employee. No action was taken, and the matter was tabled for next month.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS REPORT**

Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan-Simonsen reported the 6-plex apartment received a second advance on the loan for materials as the remodel continued. She reported the balance of the revolving market workforce housing fund was \$780,000 with the annual report on housing projects underway. She reported the Nebraska Childcare website will be launched very soon with easy navigation, and Spanish translation, and include Neligh and Clearwater childcare providers in the first phase. She reported refund request letters for façade grant program funds that did not maintain the five-year period were sent out and totaled about \$1,300. The Director reported she will attend a 10-week online course through the University of Nebraska Lincoln on Community Engagement and Support. She reported the Certified Leadership designation would need reapplication again and the new welcome to Neligh signs received positive feedback. Discussion was held for the Certified Leadership Government (CLG) developing a program to accept proposals for local projects. No action was taken on the Assistant Director position, and the matter was tabled to the next month.

The Director reported the first draft of the blight study and redevelopment plan from Five Rule Rural Planning and presented a look at redevelopment areas #4 and #5. She reported that blight and substandard study is not a valuation of the property but a tool to use for redevelopment projects. She reported the process of adopting a redevelopment plan included both the Planning Commission and the City Council holding regular meetings and public hearings. She reported with some scheduling conflicts Five Rule proposed a public hearing date for the April 8th meeting. *Council member Lundgren moved to set a public hearing date for April 8th at 7:00 PM for the blight and substandard study and redevelopment plan.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Pedersen, and Hughes. Opposed none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

The Director reported that the LB840 Loan Review Committee recommended an additional \$20,000 loan to JDM Enterprise. She reported JDM Enterprise had requested a larger loan in January of 2024 when the funds were not available, and this additional request would meet the needs of the original loan request. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the LB840 Loan Review Committee recommendation for a \$20,000 loan to JDM Enterprise which was not originally available in January 2024.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

*Peterson moved to approve the Economic Development Director's report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

## **POLICE REPORT**

Chief of Police Logan Lawson reported the holiday season went well without any major issues. He reported the graduation for the DARE program would be Monday, March 10th at 5:30 P.M. and invited the council members to join. He reported Sergeant Miller and the Chief of Police were working on upgrading the police equipment. He reported he had received a grant from the Nebraska Department of Transportation for \$10,195 that covered 70% of the cost for three new computers, with one computer for each police vehicle. He reported that other equipment would be put into a rotating schedule for budgeting purposes including body cameras, Tasers, and firearms. He reported one of the trainings last month was with Region 11 Emergency Management held over a round table on active shooter incidents where the Neligh Police Department attended with the Antelope County Sheriff's Office, Neligh Fire Department, Antelope Memorial Hospital, Arbor Care Center, and the Antelope County Courthouse staff. He reported with a software change the number of calls that were provided in a numeric report would now be provided in the written report going forward. He reported some of the calls the Neligh Police were involved in included assisting with an accident near Oakdale, an investigation on a hit and run with the help of Nebraska State Patrol, one domestic altercation, an arrest on multiple out-of-county warrants, and assisted with ordinance

violations including two property inspections discussed earlier in the evening. *Hughes moved to approve the January written police report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Pedersen, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

#### **CITY SUPT. & ELECTRIC REPORT**

City Supt. Donaldson reported Rutjens Construction was progressing along Highway 275 with the sewer project. He reported the street department had been filling potholes including Baker Road. He reported the second pavilion was finished for the mini park in Russell Park. He reported that both the manager and assistant pool manager had agreed to return to the swimming pool this season and an advertisement for lifeguards would begin. He reported the VFD for blower #2 was expected to be delivered in the next week for the sewer plant. He reported one pump was 22 years old and had to be taken to Omaha for repair. He reported the city had received approval for the re-lining of the north well and Sargent Irrigation would be starting that project soon so it would be completed before spring and any increased water pumping needs. He reported the cardboard load had passed inspection and thanked the public and the city crew for their vigilance to ensuring the recycling program for cardboard could continue. He reported the electric new meter install was still underway as learning and tweaking the program to get it working. He reported the transformer was set in the new fairgrounds Ag building. He reported the water tank's five-year cleaning and inspection received approval reports. *Council member Peterson moved to approve the City Superintendent report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

The City Superintendent reported that the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission did not award the Neligh Parks with a grant through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. He reported the grant writer was upset and had offered to continue writing a grant for Neligh to see these projects through to fruition. The Superintendent reported that the disc golf and fishing dock were included within the Neligh fiscal year budget in the event the grant was not received and both projects would proceed. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the assistance of the Vacanti Municipal Consulting Services for additional grant writing assistance for the Neligh Park Improvements for free.* Seconded by Peterson. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

#### **NEW MOON THEATER REPORT**

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported the grant writer was working on Phase 3 of the Brownfields grant and letters of support were obtained. She reported Melanie Miller had resigned from the board and Sue Williams was welcomed to the board. *Pedersen moved to approve the New Moon Theater report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, and Lundgren. Opposed: None. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

*Lundgren moved to approve the current claims as presented, except for the Blackstrap invoices.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Pedersen, and Hughes. Opposed: None. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

*Pedersen moved to approve the Blackstrap invoices for weigh tickets totaling \$50.00.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen and Lundgren. Abstain: Hughes. Opposed: None. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

*Pedersen moved to approve Pay Application #4 to Rutjens Construction for \$220,806.00.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Lundgren, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Absent: Miller. Motion carried.

There being no further business to conduct, *Lundgren moved to adjourn.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: None. Absent: Miller. Thereupon Mayor Hartz declared the meeting adjourned. Time 8:38 P.M.

City of Neligh

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Joe Hartz, Mayor

ATTEST

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Danielle Klabenes, City Clerk

### **CERTIFICATION**

I, the undersigned, City Clerk of the City of Neligh, Nebraska, hereby certify that on February 4, 2025; 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.

(SEAL)

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City Clerk