

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA  
May 13, 2025

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. Present were Council Members Steph Lundgren, Leonard Miller, Ted Hughes, and Tyler Pedersen. Absent was Mayor Joe Hartz. Also in attendance were City Attorney James McNally, City Supt. Dan Donaldson, Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan-Simonsen, City Clerk Danielle Klabenes, Police Chief Logan Lawson, News Reporter Kelli Garcia, Library Director Amy Baker, Neligh-Oakdale Teacher Lisa Hanson, and Neligh-Oakdale students Joslyn Hoefer and Bode Koinzan. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on May 7, 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. All proceedings thereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public. Council President Hughes 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 Lundgren moved to approve the April 8<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Hughes, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**TREASURER REPORT**

Clerk Klabenes reported that the spinning reserves for March reported in April were the largest of the fiscal year at \$5,816. She reported that for two weeks in April the City was paid instead of paying a bill due to a small energy load requested. She reported the first reimbursement from the State Revolving Fund for the water projects was received in April which was reflected in the April monthly revenues. *Pedersen moved to approve the April 2025 treasurer's report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, Lundgren, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**NELIGH OAKDALE SCHOOL ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEY**

Neligh-Oakdale Teacher Lisa Hanson and Neligh-Oakdale School students Joslyn Hoefer and Bode Koinzan reported on the results of a survey with 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students and the Neligh Community Foundation (NCF). Hoefer and Koinzan reported on amenities and services that the students would like to see in the community, what would improve the community and what the students cared deeply about. Topics that students repeatedly brought up in the conversation with NCF included a roller skating rink/ ice rink, a park for everyone and to grow the current one, more affordable housing and childcare and more entertainment opportunities such as paint ball, a rage room, axe throwing, an ice cream shop and having the New Moon Theater. Discussion was held if the new youth county fair building would provide a space for an indoor roller rink. Students also discussed the street leading to the school and school parking lot, bike safety and good sidewalks, an interest in being involved in the community, and an interest in sharing their ideas and having those ideas taken into consideration. *Lundgren moved to approve the report from Neligh-Oakdale school students from the student engagement survey with Neligh Community Foundation.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Pedersen, Lundgren, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**NELIGH PUBLIC LIBRARY CEMENT PROJECTS**

Library Director Amy Baker reported on a couple of outdoor cement non budgeted projects for the library. She reported one project was to provide a patio area on the north side of the entrance offering shade elements tables and benches all ADA compliant to provide a space for Wi-Fi access to read and relax when the library is closed. She also reported the plan was to remove the current rock area and convert it into a cement surface. She said local donations had come through for the concrete estimated to be about \$4,000. She reported no property tax dollars would be used and donations would be sought for the benches and tables. City Superintendent Donaldson reported these projects would make the front door a true ADA entrance and design like the new concrete project done at the American Legion. *Pedersen moved to approve the patio and concrete projects supported by local donations at the library.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Lundgren, Miller, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

### **NELIGH PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFF CHANGES**

Director Amy Baker reported the Youth Librarian, Cedrela Bennett, had submitted a letter of resignation to pursue a Veterinary position. She reported Bennett held a veterinary degree in Mexico but upon moving to Nebraska, wanted to learn the English language better and joined the library staff. She reported while Bennett was attending a library conference she was encouraged to take the veterinary test, which she successfully completed and would be working at the library through the end of May. Baker reported Natilee Payne would like to return to the library for the summer and take over the Youth Librarian for the summer programs. Baker also reported that Jamie Hart would like to return to the library to fill custodian duties. *Lundgren moved to accept the resignation of Cedrela Bennett with regrets and approve the hiring of Natilee Payne at Youth Librarian at \$20 per hour and Jamie Hart as Custodian at \$20 per hour following successful completion of pre-employment testing.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Lundgren, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

### **DANGEROUS BUILDINGS UPDATE**

City Supt. Dan Donaldson reported the city had received summons for the Ray Connot properties for an appeal to District Court. City Attorney Jim McNally reported the city would file an answer within 30 days and the appeal was for a review on record without witness testimony. He reported the review would be to find if state statute and local ordinances were followed. He reported Connot would be representing himself in court. Superintendent Donaldson reported on a water meter not reading at the property located at 1004 R Street. He reported after multiple attempts to repair with no answer at the door that the water was shut off to get a response. He reported the property has had multiple nuisance violations for weeds, yard, and trash. He reported Department Health and Human services had recommended a welfare check where the city learned the owners had turned off the gas which resulted in frozen pipes in the house that likely lead to the water meter problems. He reported there was an appointment later that week to enter the home, inspect the water meter for replacement, and consider any dangerous building violations for next month. The Supt. also reported the Wynn building, also known as the former standard station, was planned for demolition.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS REPORT**

Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan reported the annual TIF report included a new statute in 2026 that would require the report to be presented at the council meeting in addition to a column with the remaining balance on each project. She reported she was starting to share the report to familiarize the council one year in advance. No action was taken.

Director Sheridan reported on the two facade grant programs referred to as the digital facade and exterior facade programs. She reported the Economic Development Board had recommended a modification to the facade program applications for a prorated repayment of the grant award for any business sold or transitioned during the five-year grant forgiveness period. *Pedersen moved to approve a revision to both the digital facade and exterior facade grant applications for a prorated payback on businesses sold or transitioned during a five-year grant forgiveness period.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Hughes, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The Director reported on a signage grant for tourist attractions as part of the Certified Leadership

Government (CLG) project. She presented a sign rendering for a bronze sign to be placed at the Neligh Mill, the Antelope County Courthouse, and the Antelope County Museum. She requested to have one sign also placed at the Trail of Tears. She reported the wording on the sign would also include a QR code that would lead the tourist to the Neligh app. *Lundgren moved to authorize the display of an educational panel at the Trail of Tears for the historic preservation committee.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Lundgren, Hughes, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Other items the director reported on included a retirement party on June 6 at the American Legion for Al Stelling, former Economic Development Board member. She also reported that the annual review on the Chamber of Commerce housing grant was completed and funds available for housing projects were approximately \$706,000. She reported progress on the six-plex apartment complex including an HVAC system scheduled for installation at the end of the week with plumbing and drywall to follow. She reported the project would then be eligible for the second half of the loan agreement. Discussion was held about parking spaces at the six -plex complex and available room to add more parking. She reported one of the discussion topics the CLG held included the strategic plan and creating a scavenger hunt to be integrated into the Neligh app at minimal cost. She reported another topic from the CLG including a community survey on historic properties. She reported that the Chamber Director announced mother-of-year recipients Candis Kurpgeweit and Shaylene Stenka, and the Chamber scholarship was awarded to Ashley Lazaro-Caballero. She reported the Chamber of Commerce welcomed a new business opening for martial arts in the 319 building operated by Chris Turner. She reported the Chamber Director had helped set up an artificial intelligence class. The director reported Clearwater was preparing the final sculpture for the veteran's park and working on a website redesign with NPPD. *Pedersen moved to approve the economic development director's report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Pedersen, Lundgren, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

## **POLICE REPORT**

Chief of Police Logan Lawson reported the month of April was getting officer Schroeder basic training before leaving for Academy training. He reported officer Schroeder was in his third week of fifteen weeks at the Academy. The Police Chief reported external training in Norfolk focused on school shooting events in which a lockdown drill with schools was held the following week. He reported he had attended a meeting with the Attorney General Mike Hilgers with other police chiefs and sheriffs discussing pressing issues in law enforcement. He reported an improvement in communications through First Net for more complete coverage in and outside of the city. He reported the new plan was slightly cheaper. He reported two additional benefits of (one) accessible statewide radio system available by phone anywhere the officer was located instead of restricted to cell phone service and (2) more reliable communications in weather events whereas before standard communications may not be strong to carry service. He reported as the nicer weather was moving in that the department saw more traffic and other April calls included an attempt at shoplifting, numerous calls with department Health and Human services and dog calls. He reminded the council of the statewide burn ban was still in place and applied to fire pits as well. He reported the Neligh Police Foundation would be holding the first Community Day event on June 21st with a follow up report to the Council in July. *Miller moved to approve the April written police report as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Pedersen, Miller, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

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

City Supt. Dan Donaldson reported he was trying to fill a vacancy in the Solid Waste department and recommended hiring Robert Dugan. He reported Dugan worked for the city last summer and had an interest in entering the workforce following high school graduation. He reported Dugan would work in the Solid Waste department and after a successful 90-day probationary period, be offered a \$.50 per hour increase with the potential for a second 90-day review period, wage increases and eligible benefits. Supt. also recommended hiring Garret Belitz for the Park department this summer to help with ballfields and other park maintenance and projects. *Pedersen moved to approve the hiring of Robert Dugan for Solid Waste at \$16.50 per hour effective May*

12<sup>th</sup> and Garret Belitz for Park department at \$16.50 per hour effective May 27<sup>th</sup> upon successful completion of pre-employment testing. Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Miller, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The Supt. reported that one siren on the west side of town did not work and was not repairable nor replaceable. He reported he received a quote from Blue Valley Public Safety for a Federal Signal siren which is twenty-five decibels louder allowing replacement of two sirens as needed instead of the existing four. He presented an aerial picture of the city with coverage of the existing sirens and proposed new sirens. Discussion was held for the lead time for delivery on a new siren and consideration for ordering two sirens now with payment of one in the current fiscal year and payment of the second siren in the next fiscal year. Discussion was held for using Lottery funds to purchase the sirens as lottery funds were intended for community betterment and the sirens are a fitting use of community betterment. *Miller moved to approve the order of two Federal Signal emergency notification sirens from Blue Valley Public Safety with Lottery funds.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Hughes, Miller, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Supt. Donaldson reported the Street department loader repairs exceeded the loader worth and presented three options for a purchase or lease on used and new loader models. Discussion was held for renting a 2016 loader currently on loan with 2500 hours with an option to purchase at the end of the fiscal year with 90% of the \$4,000 monthly rental amount applied to the purchase price of the used loader and a \$3,000 trade in for the old loader as is. Discussion was held that the city hours placed on a loader was approximately 250 hours unless a heavy winter snow required another approximate one hundred hours. *Miller moved to approve a used loader rental for \$4,000 a month through the current fiscal year with a purchase of the used loader after October 1, 2025, with 90% of the rental payment applied to the purchase price and a \$3,000 trade in from Reuter's.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Miller, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The Supt. also reported the Antelope County Fair Board and Neligh Park Board recommended matching camping rates of Riverside Park with the fairgrounds during the Antelope County Fair. *Lundgren moved to approve matching the Antelope County Fair Board camping rate of \$15 for a week of camping in Riverside Park during the Antelope County Fair.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Miller, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

City Supt. Donaldson reported vast use of the mastic pothole machine on city streets and an experiment on the west road by the high school where a little asphalt was milled off. He reported pothole repairs would continue after Memorial Day weekend. He reported he was working with Blackstrap on a dust control product and share expenses with another town. He thanked Nathan Hughes for all the installation work on the north and south ballfields with the new sprinkler system adding a nice addition to the ballfields. He reported the pool leak test found and fixed seven leaks and Brad Thieman was busy preparing the pool to fill with water, turning on the bath house and preparing the pool to open for the summer season. He reported that both Riverside Park Road and the Airport Road to the Tree Dump were recently armor coated with a little extra gravel applied at the intersection of Wylie Drive and Highway 14 where the oil started to bleed through. He reported that the crew hoped to have the new 9-hole disc golf installed by Memorial Day weekend. He reported that Dan Schneider was off duty for shoulder surgery recovery, but Steve Christiansen and Ray Branstiter were great additions to the team filling in. He reported Scott Kester was doing a really good job staying on top of the water and sewer project with Rutjens Construction. He reported the well relining was delayed for two parts on backorder, the wastewater treatment plant was operating well, and the recycling baler should arrive in about three weeks. He reported a good response on the spring clean-up weekend with filling a trailer, but the compactor was able to stay open for the full day. He reported he received notice of a price increase from the landfills effective July 1<sup>st</sup> following a legislative bill that recently passed to increase landfill fees by \$1.25 per ton. He reported the transformers were being reset at the generation plant. He reported that an annual oil test on the generation motors found one motor needed to get changed and the generation plant had been asked to generate four times in April. He reported on a very successful and eventful Earth Day with the Neligh-Oakdale students working on projects that included planting the main street flower pots, picking up trash along Highway 14 and along the Airport Road, working in the donation garden, and working at the AMH healing garden. *Council member*

*Lundgren moved to approve the City Superintendent report as presented. Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Miller, Lundgren, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Motion carried.*

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

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported the theater was hosting an event in Riverside Park later that week with the showing of the movie "Cars" on the exterior of the Pavilion as the backdrop. She reported that the theater had received an operating grant from the Sherwood Foundation to fund activities for fundraising which the theater board purchased a new screen, popcorn machine and cotton candy machine for the summer events for a free movie feature with concessions to be sold. She reported the board was awaiting results of the Brownfields test on soil for whether contamination was present or absent. She reported the board was awaiting notice of award on a large grant. She reported a summer event at the swimming pool may include a movie while floating at the pool in the dark after coordination with pool managers. She reported the Class of 1965 was the only class to graduate at the downtown Theater due to work on the gymnasium at that time and the class had requested a tour of today's theater during a July reunion. She reported the grant writer was coming for a tour later that week. *Pedersen moved to approve the New Moon Theater report as presented. Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Lundgren, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: None. Motion carried.*

#### **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

*Lundgren moved to approve Pay Application #7 to Rutjens Construction for \$380,740.68 for water projects #3 & #4 and sewer project #1. Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, Lundgren, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.*

*Lundgren moved to approve the Blackstrap invoices for weigh tickets totaling \$40.00. Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Miller, and Pedersen. Abstain: Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.*

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

There being no further business to conduct, *Miller moved to adjourn. Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Miller, Pedersen, and Hughes. Opposed: None. Thereupon Council President Hughes declared the meeting adjourned. Time 9:00 P.M.*

City of Neligh

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Ted Hughes, Council President

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 May 13, 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