

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA
July 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. Present were Mayor Joe Hartz and Council Members Steph Lundgren, Leonard Miller, Ted Hughes, and Tyler Pedersen. 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, Police Sergeant Aubrey Miller, News Reporter Carrie Pitzer, Lyle Juracek, and Karmen Sauser. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on July 9, 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 Lundgren moved to approve the June 10th regular meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Lundgren, Miller. and Hughes. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

TREASURER REPORT

Clerk Klabenes reported that a refund on unused project funds from the Police camera project of about \$2,200 were refunded to the Lottery fund which caused the negative expense number in the Treasurer's Report. She reported that both the LB840 and Electric checking accounts began an Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) account in June earning higher interest than a regular checking account and reducing the city pledged funds. *Pedersen moved to approve the June 2025 treasurer's report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Pedersen, Miller, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lyle Juracek reported that during the Fred Benning dedication on July 3rd, Army General Strong visited about a statue in Riverside Park to recognize Fred Benning. Juracek reported the American Legion would be discussing this at their meeting the following week for possible location at the Riverside Park Memorial Site and asked that the city council consider support for the project at a future meeting when the matter could be placed on the agenda. No action was taken.

NELIGH POLICE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

Sergeant Aubrey Miller reported that the Police Foundation was formed in May with the assistance of the City Attorney and Economic Development office for the purpose of serving the community. He reported a 3-member board of Neligh residents or workers will help run the foundation to help the community in need of disasters, events, and holidays such as Christmas. He reported the first community event was held in June at the American Legion with food, games, prizes, and everyone enjoyed the event. He reported a Trunk or Treat event for downtown was the next event planned for Halloween. Discussion was held for the National Night Out event held in September may be an event to consider in the future. Sergeant Miller also reported that the foundation would be participating in the Christmas Giving Tree. *Pedersen moved to approve the Neligh Police Foundation annual reported as presented by Sergeant Aubrey Miller.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Lundgren, Pedersen, and Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

RELOCATION OF STORM SIREN PLACED AT 205 EAST 6TH STREET

City Supt. Dan Donaldson reported that Bryan Funk had requested the notification siren placed on the property at 205 East 6th Street, which used to house the county jail, to be relocated off the now private property where he was remodeling the building for apartments. He reported Funk requested the relocation due to the noise directly above the building and the existing pole was on Funk's private property. The Supt. reported that he was obtaining pricing on moving the siren to City Hall so placement would be on public property and the siren would be retained in the transition with two new sirens on order as the 6th Street sign was a newer model. The Supt. reported that both contractor and vendor contacts from Federal and Blue Valley advised of no issues placing the siren at City Hall. He reported the 6th Street pole would be pulled with a new pole set at City Hall due to the weight. The Supt. reported the two new sirens would be placed at Sheriff's office and near Simplot. Discussion was held that the outdoor sirens are intended to notify people outdoors and working outside and that the city CodeRed offered a good notification method for emergency notifications. *Pedersen moved to approve the relocation of the storm siren at 205 East 6th Street to City Hall.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Miller, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA DISTRIBUTION BY MASS EMAIL

Clerk Klabenes reported Bryan Funk had requested the City Council agenda be sent out by mass email since the city could email out utility bills or send an email out for a notification message through CodeRed. She reported that statutory requirements for the city included notice of the meeting to be published in the newspaper and the agenda to be available on the city website. Council members discussed that with the city website listing the city council agenda this offered an opportunity for someone to view the agenda at their preference. No action was taken.

REQUEST FOR LIVESTOCK WAIVER WITHIN CITY LIMITS

Discussion was held that Eldean Reinke would like to keep sheep at the Highway 275 business of Reinke's Farm and City Service to help mow the grass around the equipment. City Attorney McNally reported that zoning changes began with the Planning Commission which came forward to the City Council to create an ordinance. The Council discussed livestock before annexation being grandfathered and a representative should attend a council meeting when a request or complaint is made. No action was taken. Eldean Reinke joined the meeting minutes later. Mayor Hartz reported that livestock had not been allowed in city limits, and no motion was made to allow nor a waiver extended. Clerk Klabenes reported that Mr. Reinke could send a letter to the Planning Commission to change the zoning if he would like to which would start the process for the Planning Commission to hold a meeting and public hearing if a recommendation for a change to the zoning laws were to come forward to the City Council. No action was taken.

DANGEROUS BUILDINGS UPDATE

City Attorney McNally reported that an R Street property had the water turned off for several months and the house was eligible for a dangerous building determination, however the police were going to be talking to Health and Human Services (HHS) for a recommendation what HHS would do before the city took action. He reported that one house scheduled for demo was being renovated by a local contractor. He reported work on the 6-plex apartment building appeared to have stopped after the exterior improvements were made and no communication was being returned by the property owner. He reported that the owner and loan were not in violation, but neither were complying with the time frame of the loan scheduled for completion in March 2026. Discussion was held that in absence of phone call being returned or available, to send a letter to the property owner to schedule a conference. The City Attorney also reported that the Connot properties were scheduled for a hearing on July 30th with the judge to determine if the city followed all the regulations. He invited the council to share any property projects they would like to see worked on next. Supt. Donaldson reported a demo permit was issued for a property on eighth street which would become available for an infill lot. No action was taken.

RESOLUTION 2025-13 FOR NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS LAND WATER & CONSERVATION GRANT

Clerk Klabenes reported on a grant application through Land Water and Conservation Fund for the outdoor recreation projects in Riverside Park and Russell Park. She reported the same grant application was submitted last year, and the city had received positive feedback and encouragement to reapply and following several phone calls, she felt the city had a stronger application to submit. She reported the projects included the second phase of the inclusive playground and renovating the tennis court into a pickleball court with adjustable basketball hoops in Riverside Park, and a dog park and 9-hole frisbee golf course in Russell Park. She reported the grant application would help complete the inclusive playground and an 18-hole frisbee golf course after the city had made initial investments in both projects. *Council member Lundgren introduced and moved for passage Resolution 2025-13 to the Nebraska Game and Parks Land and Water Conservation for the development of outdoor recreation in Riverside and Russell Parks.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Hughes, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Thereupon Mayor Hartz declared Resolution 2025-13 adopted.

NEW MOON COMMUNITY THEATER SPECIAL DESIGNATED LIQUOR LICENSE

Karmen Sauser of the New Moon Theater Board reported the theater board would like to host a fundraiser during the Antelope County Fair from 1:00pm to 4:00pm on August 2nd featuring a Trifecta event like Neligh's 150th anniversary event, on the tennis court in Riverside Park. She requested a special designated liquor license for the event that includes teams solving a puzzle, eating a pizza, and drinking twelve alcoholic drinks. She reported one side of the fenced in tennis court would be blocked for one entrance allowed to check identifications and adhere wrist bands. *Pedersen moved to approve a special designated liquor license for the New Moon Community Theater Trifecta fundraiser in Riverside Park on the tennis court on Saturday, August 2nd during the Antelope County Fair.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Hughes, Pedersen, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Hartz recommended the appointment of Will Paul to the Citizens Advisory Review Committee to fill the unexpired term for DeManda McGowen. *Lundgren moved to approve the appointment of Will Paul to fill an unexpired term to May 2028 on the Citizens Advisory Review Committee.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Hughes, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS REPORT

Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan reported little progress was moving on the 6-plex as discussed earlier and discussion was held for sending a letter to the property owner to schedule a conference with the Economic Development office and City Attorney. She reported that the Rural Workforce Housing Grant balance for housing development was \$703,094. She reported that both junior and adult level scavenger hunt were available on the Discover Neligh app. She reported updates were beginning for the Comprehensive Plan last done in 2014 with a planning grant to be submitted to Nebraska Economic Development for half the cost. She reported the Comp Plan serves as a road map for a 10-year benchmark for improvements and development. She reported on a Brownfields training course in Chicago which she was strongly encouraged to attend, and she had applied for a \$1,500 grant toward the \$1,800 training. She reported attendance would not be considered without being awarded the grant. She reported that the Bike Walk Nebraska would be on site in September for promotional activities along the Cowboy Trail. She reported the Farmers Market was underway on Saturdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm. She reported the Assistant Director, Shelby Snodgrass, was busy with the Chamber of Commerce barbeque, sponsors and publicity grants including the Antelope County Visitors Promotion fund, Chamber Coffee at Carhart Lumber the following week, and welcomed a new member, NE-Leigh Farm of Gus & Stephanie Leigh to the Chamber. She reported the Chamber of Commerce contract was presented at the last Chamber meeting and considered reducing the hours from 600 to 550 hours to work with the Assistant Directors schedule. She reported the contract would be presented at next month's meeting. *Lundgren moved to approve the economic development director's report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, Lundgren, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2025-14 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FOR PUBLIC WORKS PLANNING

Lundgren introduced and moved for passage Resolution 2025-14 to the Nebraska Economic Development District for a Community Development Block Grant for public works planning and authorization to apply for the planning grant. Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Pedersen, Lundgren, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Thereupon Mayor Hartz declared Resolution 2025-14 adopted.

FAÇADE GRANT APPLICATION APPEAL FOR HEIDI RETHMEIER AT 103 WEST 6TH STREET

Economic Development Director Sheridan reported the application for sidewalk repair for the commercial rental property had been presented in August 2024 when the ED Board did not approve of the application. She noted the board discussion had concern for using LB840 funds for sidewalk repairs and noted that the application, however, allowed for such sidewalk application to be made. She reported the application was represented for an appeal in 2025 which the ED Board reviewed and noted that the commercial rental property was eligible and requested a Schedule C from the property owner. The property owner provided a Schedule E which showed active use, therefore the ED Board recommended approval of the \$1,000 request for the sidewalk property. City Council discussion included concern for using LB840 funds for sidewalks, opening up the fund to be used for more sidewalks for any business including rental properties, applying the use of LB840 funds for façade such as exterior improvements instead of sidewalks, and to consider a change to the façade grant application. City Supt. Donaldson reported that a sidewalk cost share program will be discussed at budget time that some other cities are using with percentage cost shares, timelines to follow and contractor requirements. City Clerk Klabenes reported that this offers an option for sidewalk repairs to be updated without the use of LB840 funds and makes funds available on a first come first serve basis for a set budgeted amount to be allocated for the budget year. *Moved by Lundgren to follow and affirm the ED Board recommendation for a façade grant of \$1,000 for a sidewalk for Heidi Rethmeier's rental at 103 West 6th Street.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Miller, Lundgren, and Pedersen. Opposed: Hughes. Motion carried. Discussion was held to let the ED Board know of the City Council's concerns about using LB840 funds for sidewalk repairs and to place the matter on the August agenda.

POLICE REPORT

Chief of Police Logan Lawson reported more assistance offered to the Sherriff's office and more alcohol investigations this year from the Clearwater Rodeo than other years. He reported Officer Schroeder was in the final 4-5 weeks of training going through many different scenarios in the final stretch leading up to his final. He reported the kickoff event for the Neligh Police Foundation was successful. He reported other calls for the month included disturbance calls, minor accidents, and a minor theft that was resolved with a joint effort with Antelope County and Holt County. *Lundgren moved to approve the June written police report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, Lundgren, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

NELIGH FIRE DEPARTMENT PUMPER PURCHASE WITH RURAL FIRE BOARD

Fire Chief Mike Mortensen reported the Rural Fire and Neligh Fire had received two bids on a new pumper from Danko for \$731,303 and FYR-TEK for \$620,814. He reported the Rural Fire would be meeting later that week to consider signing a contract for the lower bid from FYR-TEK. He reported both bids for were a 1,250-gallon pumper. He reported the delivery time on the truck was 880 days ahead, roughly 2 ½ years out, but the chassis upon order was 10-12 months out. He reported the chassis estimate of \$126,985 offered a \$12,000 discount if paid upon arrival. He reported the cost would be split between Neligh Fire and the Rural Fire Board

and an interlocal agreement for the 50/50 cost share was being drafted and both entities had funds set aside for the chassis purchase. The Fire Chief also presented a bond schedule for a 7-year plan with interest ranging from 3.75% to 4% now. He reported with the build scheduled out for nearly 2 ½ years, that the bond would not be started until closer to completion time in the hopes that interest rates would also drop by then. He reported a 7-year bond would save about \$36,000 on the total cost. He reported that while the 1993 pumper is still a good manual truck, it will be sold, however the range of sales proceeds appears to be a wide range on what a pumper can bring in. *Pedersen moved to approve the joint purchase of a pumper truck between the Neligh Fire Department and the Rural Fire Board according to purchase and financing specifications.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Hughes, Lundgren, and Miller. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

CITY SUPT. & ELECTRIC REPORT

City Supt. Dan Donaldson reported the streets were prepped in time for the July 3rd Fred Benning dedication. He reported potholes were filled on Baker Road which needs to be considered in the One- and Six-year plan for a chip and seal plan. He reported he appreciated the training and advisement of Ray Branstiter from his knowledge and experience on road work. He reported that the Nebraska Department of Transportation was planning for a Fall 2026 highway construction project between Tilden and Neligh, including bridge replacement on the Belmar Creek. He noted this project will create traffic congestion and park access under the bridge will be closed for construction. The Supt. reported the park personnel were really happy with the additional help to prepare the fields for the Quad County baseball tournament following heavy rains and keeping the mowing and weed eating current. He commended the Pool Managers, Candis Kurpgeweit and Mary Oakes for a smooth operation, streamlined operation with no problems, additional training for lifeguards and a great group of employees. He reported the water project was about one week away from being completed and then would move to East Highway 275. He reported that with all the recent rains in June, only ten million gallons of water were pumped. He reported the north well project was done, and the well was pumping again. He reported the sewer processed 156,000 gallons in June with all the recent rains compared to an average day of 90,000 gallons processed, showing the infiltration of the rains. He reported that Walt Patras had completed his continuing education credits, and the City Supt. would be completing his later that week. The Supt. reported the baler had arrived and was scheduled to be wired, finished earlier that day. He reported Green Fiber was evaluating a recent load of cardboard and may not accept any cardboard with any tape at all. He reported that with the baler in operation, First Star Fiber would take 20 tons, approximately 19-20 bales, of cardboard and pickup the load to take to the distributor which also paid \$70 a ton, currently, compared to the \$45 a ton with Green Fiber and hauling to Green Fiber. He reported on the Electric side, the transformers were set, leveled, and finished. He reported bids were being obtained for the underground for 5th and 11th street work. He reported that both Grant Knutson and Scott Kester had worked on many streets' light outages. *Lundgren moved to approve the City Superintendent report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Miller, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Supt. Donaldson recommended that the One-and-Six-year Street plan includes the next armor coat for D Street and some work to Baker Road. He reported the crack and fill on the west side of town was close to completion with one more year before looking at intersections and gravel roads. No action was taken.

Supt. reported he hired one more seasonal worker for the park department to assist with baseball fields and the county fair, but it would be a short-term hire that would not extend when school started. *Pedersen moved to approve the hire of Landon McAllister for seasonal Park Department at \$16.00 an hour effective July 9, 2025.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgre, Miller, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

NEW MOON THEATER REPORT

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported the 4th of July tours of the theater and sales of popcorn; cotton candy and t-shirts went very well. She reported the committee for one large grant application submitted would be touring the theater on July 24th. She thanked City Supt. Donaldson for being very instrumental in the theater cleaning up. She reported the Brownfields application was done for the mold remediation of 100% and asbestos of 50% match in floor tile and pipe wrap. She reported the next fundraiser event would be during the County fair on August 2nd at the Riverside Park tennis courts for the Trifecta for teams to solve a puzzle, eat a pizza and drink twelve beverages. She reported a county mailer would be going out to update on progress and offer donation opportunities. She reported tickets would be sold at Trifecta for a fundraiser to include Husker tickets with a parking pass, hotel stay and restaurant gift certificate. She reported an event at the end of the summer at the swimming pool was being planned. *Pedersen moved to approve the New Moon Theater report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Hughes, Miller, Pedersen, and Lundgren. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Hughes moved to approve Pay Application #9 to Rutjens Construction for \$96,745.50 for water project #4. Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Lundgren, Pedersen, Miller, and Hughes. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Lundgren moved to approve the Blackstrap invoices for weigh tickets totaling \$80.00. Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Lundgren, and Miller. Abstain: Hughes. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

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

AUGUST BUDGET WORKSHOP SPECIAL MEETING

Discussion was held to reschedule the August budget workshop from Thursday, August 14th to Tuesday, August 19th. *Miller moved to set the budget workshop special meeting for August 19th at 5:30PM. Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Pedersen, Lundgren, Miller, and Hughes. 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, Hughes, and Pedersen. Opposed: None. Thereupon Mayor Hartz declared the meeting adjourned. Time 9:24 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 July 15, 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)

City Clerk