

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA

April 14, 2026

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on April 14, 2026 at 7:00 PM. Present were Mayor Joe Hartz and Council Members Ted Hughes: Present, Steph Lundgren: Present, Leonard Miller: Present, Tyler Pedersen: Present. Also in attendance were Attorney Joe McNally, City Supt. Dan Donaldson, Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan, City Clerk Danielle Klabenes, Police Chief Logan Lawson, News Reporter Kelli Garcia, Bobbi Pettit, Jodan Doffin Wong, Kevin Connot, Molly Brown, Kyle Overturf, Aaron Rice, Cameron Paulk, Allee Snider, Jay Spearman, Ray Connot, and Lori Pasewalk. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on April 8, 2026. 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 Pedersen moved to approve the March 10th regular meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

TREASURER REPORT

Clerk Klabenes reported the final engineering invoice for the water and sewer project was included in the claims and all other pay applications have been paid. She reported the Fire Department Chassis payment would be requested in April and two certificates of deposits were redeemed to make the payment with any remaining funds to be reinvested into a new certificate of deposit. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the March 2026 treasurer's report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were heard.

FIVE RULE PLANNING CONTRACT FOR A LOW TO MODERATE INCOME STUDY

Bobbi Pettit of Five Rule Planning reported she had been talking with the City Superintendent, City Clerk and Economic Development Director to complete an income survey and community engagement. She reported the City of Neligh is currently scored at 45% for a Low to Moderate Income threshold, which a 1threshold of 51% or more is the baseline for grant eligibility of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). She presented a scope of services, timeline, and agreement for conducting an income survey to challenge the 45% score to see if Neligh could reach the 51% or higher threshold and be eligible for the CDBG grants. She reported the exercise of the survey was not to determine if the community was financially worse, but to take the temperature of the community to take care of issues. She also reported that the agreement provided for a community engagement component with three community workshops to educate the citizens on infrastructure projects which the community engagement piece was one of the components to completing the comprehensive plan the next year. Discussion was held that multiple grant opportunities hinder on the 51% threshold, and educating the community to respond to the surveys would be a focus. Discussion was held that one of the comprehensive plan pieces could be accomplished through the community engagement. *Council member Hughes moved to approve to enter a contract with Five Rule Planning to conduct a Low to Moderate Income Study and Community Engagement Strategy for \$12,000 for eligibility for grants.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen:

Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

SOLAR ENERGY PRESENTATION

Kevin Connot of Gen Pro Energy reported he had worked in renewable energy and worked with communities on small projects. Molly Brown, Managing Partner of Gen Pro Energy Development, reported she had worked with public power with municipalities such as Scottsbluff, Fremont, Lexington, Hastings, and Aurora. She reported the new administration had federal funds available with hefty deadlines and she was looking for any communities interested in the safe harbor projects with a June 30th deadline for building by 2030 for project ideas of community solar, wastewater treatment plants or other ideas. She reported for the size of Neligh the minimum was 1 Megawatt estimated at \$4.5 million to aim for a 40% tax credit returned to the city as cash. She reported the concrete pads are about \$50,000. She reported the systems estimated to last 40 years can do an asset flip or a decommission plan after. She reported building in a floodplain would be allowed if the structure were built up correctly. She reported battery storage doubled the cost. No action was taken.

2024-2025 FISCAL YEAR AUDIT

Auditor Kyle Overturf of Almquist, Maltzahn, Galloway & Luth of Grand Island presented the 2024-2025 fiscal year audit. He reported the financial reports were the responsibility of management and the auditors' only control deficiency was a smaller office staff. He reported main revenue sources were property taxes, state allocation, sales tax, and charges for services. He reported the largest two capital asset projects were the Highway 275 utility project and the well liner replacement. He reported an increase in debt of \$3.5 million for the water and sewer project. He reported a property tax asking increase of 4.4% with a city valuation increase of 7.6%. He reported the city had one component unit listed of the Library Foundation. He reported an increase of about \$357,000 was needed to operate the city without utility funds. He reported the electric and sewer showed a strong operating income, but the water was weaker with a negative operating income. He reported the city received federal funds over \$1 million and was subject to a Single Audit. He reported that not all investment interest should be allocated to the general fund but allocated to specific departments instead.

He also reported on a comparison of financial ratios to other cities of comparable size in a peer group with a population range of 1,000 to 3000. He reported on revenue sources, state allocations, department expenses, operating income and noted the water rates needed to be considered, debt ratio, levy rates, and cash reserves. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the 2024-2025 fiscal year audit as presented by Almquist, Maltzahn, Galloway & Luth.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

NELIGH YOUNG MEN'S CLUB OLD MILL DAYS

Neligh Young Men's Club members Aaron Rice and Cameron Paulk requested authorization to use Fred Penn Park for the annual 4th of July fireworks display and requested a donation. Rice reported the men's club was planning a bigger fireworks show for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the declaration of independence. He reported that while campers in Fred Penn Park have a front row seat to the show, the club was required by law to complete all clean up after the show which will take a little longer. Discussion was held for posting a sign at the Fred Penn Park restrooms with notice to the campers of the clean up after the show. Discussion was held to increase the donation for the 250th anniversary fireworks show. *Council member Hughes moved to authorize the use of Penn Park for the display of fireworks on July 4th and authorized the distributor to display the fireworks and approve a donation of \$6,000 to the Neligh Young Men's Club for Old Mill Days fireworks as budgeted from the Electric Department and an additional \$4,000 from the Lottery Fund.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 669 ISSUING BONDS FOR SEWER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT 2024-1

Jay Spearman of Northland Securities reported while final numbers were being reviewed, the bond anticipation notes were due June 15th, and the USDA was looking at payment earlier in June. He reported the

ordinance presented was for the sewer portion of the project with a potential June 15th closing date with current interest of 4.25% and with all costs interest at 4.41% for 19.5-year financing. *Council Member Hughes* introduced Ordinance 669 entitled as follows:

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION SEWER BONDS, SERIES 2026, OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED ONE MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,200,000) TO PAY THE COSTS OF CONSTRUCTING ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SEWER UTILITY IN SEWER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 2024-1 OF THE CITY; PRESCRIBING THE FORM OF SAID BONDS; PROVIDING FOR A SINKING FUND AND FOR THE LEVY AND COLLECTION OF TAXES TO PAY SAID BONDS TO THE EXTENT NOT PAID FROM OTHER SOURCES; PROVIDING FOR THE SALE OF THE BONDS AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO ENTER INTO A BOND PURCHASE AGREEMENT; AUTHORIZING THE DELIVERY OF THE BONDS TO THE PURCHASER; PROVIDING FOR THE DISPOSITION OF THE BOND PROCEEDS AND ORDERING THE ORDINANCE PUBLISHED IN PAMPHLET FORM.

And moved that the statutory rule requiring reading on three different times be suspended. Council Member Pedersen seconded the motion to suspend the rules and upon roll call vote on the motion, the following Council Members voted in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Yea: 4, Nay: 0. The motion to suspend the rules was adopted by three-fourths of the Council and the statutory rule was declared suspended for consideration of said ordinance.

Said ordinance was then read by title and thereafter, *Council member Hughes moved for final passage of the ordinance*, which motion was seconded by Council member Pedersen the mayor then stated the question, "Shall Ordinance No. 669 be passed and adopted?" Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Yea: 4, Nay: 0. The passage and adoption of said ordinance, having been concurred in by three-fourths of all members of the City Council, the Mayor declared the ordinance was adopted and approved of the same and affixed his signature thereto and ordered the City Clerk to publish said ordinance in pamphlet form as prescribed by law.

AUDIT SERVICES BID OPENING

Clerk Klabenes reported every four years it is good practice to bid audit services like the city is doing for insurance services. She reported she has been pleased with working with the current auditors, and the bidding process offers a good price check. She requested authorization to submit request for proposals to accounting firms with a bid opening at the July meeting. *Council member Miller moved to authorize the request for proposals for audit services for fiscal years ending 2026 through 2029 with a bid opening of July 14th at 7:00pm.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

INSURANCE PROPOSALS FOR BID OPENING

Clerk Klabenes reported the required notices to LARM, its members and the Nebraska Dept of Insurance were submitted, and the current insurance schedules and coverage limits were gathered. She reported she was ready to submit the bids to interested insurance carriers and requested a bid opening date of July 14th at 7:15pm *Council member Lundgren moved to set a bid opening date of July 14th at 7:15pm for proposal for insurance services.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

DANGEROUS BUILDING UPDATE

City Superintendent Dan Donaldson reported a letter was being prepared for the property at 1004 R Street to start the 30 days of demolition. He reported the 4th street house burn was completed and the owner would have it cleaned up soon. No action taken.

APPOINTMENTS TO TREE BOARD

Mayor Hartz recommended the re-appointment of Lauri Huffman and Jon Strom to the Tree Board for 3-year terms. *Council member Hughes moved to approve of the appointments as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen.

Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS REPORT

Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan reported progress on the six-plex apartment complex including cabinets were hung, doors installed, flooring completed and countertops installed. She reported the market rate housing balance was \$718,103.79 with one outstanding loan. She reported she had been making several website updates in last month which was requested in a community survey earlier in the year. She reported she had submitted a grant application for main street lighting to the Nebraska Department of Water, Environment, and Energy and submitted Section 106 to the Nebraska State Hist Society for review and compliance as the downtown district was listed on the national register. She reported the grant request of up to \$100,000 was for the retro fit of streetlights in downtown Neligh to replace the 54 streetlight heads with light-emitting diode (LED) lights. She reported Ashley Caballero-Lazaro would intern in the Economic Development Office this summer as a Nebraska Community Fund intern with collaboration with the Neligh Area Community Fund. She reported the Village of Clearwater received the 2026 showcase award with Governor Pillen making the presentation last week. Mayor Hartz stated he could not attend, but it was a great community award and offered congratulations to the Village of Clearwater on what the community has done. The Director reported the Chamber of Commerce met earlier that day and she would work with the City Attorney for an agreement to be presented next month. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the Economic Development Director's report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

The Director reported that the Chamber of Commerce did approve the governance agreement presented to define the roles of application in administration of the workforce housing fund and that LB840 Loan Review Committee can approve the application while the Chamber of Commerce collaborates with the City of Neligh on the funds to be used for housing. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the Workforce Housing Governance Agreement.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

POLICE REPORT

Police Chief Lawson reported that the fourth class of DARE completed the program in March. He appreciated and thanked Mrs. Kerkman, Mrs. Williams, and Mr. Beacom to allow the department to work with this program. He reported he had participated in a Safety Committee with the school considering different lockdown drills or disruptions and recommended that every school has a relationship with the safety committee and local law enforcement. He reported on one training with the fire department hosted by Antelope Memorial Hospital for an elevator extrication training. He reported the Charger vehicle has been put on hold, but the department has been sharing vehicles. He reported the license plate reader camera company, known as FLOCK, ran into a delay as they were waiting for special materials. He reported that the first payment was made after the first camera was put in the ground so FLOCK will see what the total delay time is and extend the contract time for that delay. He reported on one call in cooperation with Sheriff's office by Officer Schroder involved a careless driving case during a traffic stop where the vehicle swerved closer to the County Deputy and Officer Schroeder was able to stop the driver and cite the driver for careless driving. The Chief reported on the reminder of the move over law in effect for vehicles to slow down or move over safely to keep officers and everyone safe. He reported March calls included a protection order violation, sexual assault, stolen vehicle, drug investigation, theft investigation, welfare checks and assisted with a gas smell with the fire department. Council Member Pedersen reported on the admiration of the kids for the police. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the written Police report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

The Chief reported requested the bonus structure be approved as budgeted for Officer Schroder who reached a one-year anniversary on March 24th. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve an employment bonus of \$1,000 after one-year employment, \$2,000 after two years and \$3,000 after three years for Officer*

Schroeder as budgeted. Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

CITY SUPERINTENDENT AND ELECTRIC REPORT

City Supt. Dan Donaldson offered accolades to crew member Chad Kaup with cleaning curbs with the old street sweeper that has unfavorable work conditions and when the water sprayer went out, Kaup successfully repaired it. The Supt. reported two of our part-time seasonal employees would begin working on street with the mastic machine to fill potholes in May. He reported he was pleased with the newest team member to the solid waste team with repetitive and punctual attendance and enjoyed running a chain saw which cleaned up the Memorial Row in Riverside Park and along the river. He reported the tree signage plaques in Memorial Row were not visible and work by Shade On to clear volunteer trees was underway. He reported a lot of work preparing the ball fields was underway. Council member Lundgren commented that she had received many comments about the park looking good. The Supt. reported the pool deck cracks were fixed and about 22 yards of concrete around the diving boards were replaced and the fence reinstalled to get ready for opening. He reported all the lifeguard's paperwork was completed and classes were now scheduled. He reported the Solid Waste clean-up weekend was coming up on April 25th with free dumping for Neligh residents, and the tire amnesty would be held on April 24th and 25th to collect up to 350 tons of tires. He reported he hoped to be open a second day with the increase of tonnage allowed to collect this year. He reported that the Solid Waste team started separating milk jugs to be baled. He reported he was contacted by a young student doing a thesis on rural recycling from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. He reported the sewer pump finally returned from being repaired for the D Street lift station which the original pump was installed in 1992, and the repaired pump would be installed at the end of the week. He reported the lift station will need some repairs in the next budget year. He reported that March saw 3 million gallons of wastewater processed. He reported a 4-inch meter at Pioneer Homes needs replaced estimated at \$4000. He reported that over 5 million gallons of water were pumped last month, which was an increase of 899,000 gallons from March last year. He reported that the Electric project at Q Street was completed, tree trimming service orders were caught up, and current bids for the 5th street project were being gathered. He reported he was working on replacing the downtown streetlights that were a little over 50 years old. He reported the light heads were the focus as each light pole was estimated at \$5,000 to \$6,000 per pole, so the city would keep the poles and replace the fixtures on top. He reported the current 180-watt light heads would be replaced with LED 55-watt lights. In Electric Generation, he reported the city 50 times last year on short runs and people do not know when the city generates these short runs. He reported he has started adding a newsletter to the utility bill newsletter to explain day-to-day operations. He reported that FirstNet had placed a truck with a 60-foot mast off D Street to work on their system, so the truck was the tower that many first responders run off for FirstNet service. He reported he had visited with a member of the John D. Neligh statue committee who was in favor of liability insurance coverage only for the statue and would not ask the city to provide further property damage coverage. No further action was taken on the statue. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the City Supt. report as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

Mayor Hartz shared that former City Council member Dale Wilksinon had recently passed away. He reported Wilkinson was heavily involved with recycling, known for his research in preparation of council meetings, and took pride in attending and representing regional Housing Authority and ACE meetings for the City. He reported our thoughts were with the Wilkinson family.

City Supt. Donaldson reported that with the new electric tantalus meters that electric and office personnel had learned that repeat changes from a demand meter to a general service meter can create a lot of errors. He reported the meter trainers recommended that one rate be selected and remain unchanged without an audit after a period of months and to ensure the correct rate was started, that the contractor and city electricians help determine which rate they should comply with the needs of the business. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the General Service Demand Policy as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

City Supt. Donaldson reported that he cannot get replacement parts for the downtown streetlights anymore for what we have and the grant discussed earlier would help cover the cost to replace about 54 downtown streetlight heads. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve submission of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) application to Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Efficiency for lighting upgrades.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

NEW MOON THEATER REPORT

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported the Board President Karmen Hughes and herself had toured the theater earlier that day following the completion of the interior demolition. She thanked the City Supt. with help in the bidding process to find a contractor, and thanked Joe and Bryan Funk for the wonderful job with the demolition of space. She reported the theater now presented a blank canvas ready for a big grant for further remodeling. She reported grants were being worked on with a planned meeting at the end of the month. She reported the theater board was preparing for summer fundraisers and a video will be posted and shared. She reported the old theater seats were all out of the theater except for a few kept in the lobby area for the nostalgia. She reported the first estimates for the big phase of the theater project were \$2 million which included adjusting the floor slope, new projectors, and new seating. City Supt. Donaldson reported that the remaining funds left from the demolition were used to remove the front windows and doors on the flanked sides where the concessions and bathrooms would be relocated. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the New Moon Theater Liaison report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Council member Pedersen moved to approve the current claims except for the Blackstrap invoices as presented. Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 1. Motion Carried.

Council member Miller moved to approve the Blackstrap invoices for weigh tickets totaling \$50.00. Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Abstain, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1. Motion Carried.

There being no further business to conduct, *Council member Miller moved to adjourn the meeting.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried. Time adjourned 9:11 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 April 14, 2026; 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