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

June 9, 2026

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on June 9, 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 City Attorney James McNally, City Supt. Dan Donaldson, Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan, City Clerk Danielle Klabenes, Police Chief Logan Lawson, Library Director Amy Baker, News Reporter Kelli Garcia, Lee Wilkinson, Bill and Alice Lyons, Tom Boggs, and Les and Janice Ridder. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on June 3, 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 the meeting opened. 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 May 12th regular meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Abstain, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1. Motion Carried.

TREASURER REPORT

Clerk Klabenes reported the USDA bond funds were deposited on May 29th as reflected in the water revenues and the City sewer bond funds will be deposited on June 15th when the $3 million bond anticipation notes are repaid. She reported SRF funds closeout were awaiting a couple of engineering reports. She reported on the quarterly electric spinning reserves with an average per month and cumulative average compared to the fiscal year bond. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the May treasurer's report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Alice Lyons reported a motorized scooter rider traveling on T and 10th Street earlier that day sank into loose gravel left by the motor grader. She requested the newly graded gravel street have some of the road scooped and removed. Discussion was held that sidewalks were not present in the neighborhood. Janice Ridder reported the streeted needed to have gravel and speed was a factor in the neighborhood with no stop signs nor yield signs. Tom Boggs reported many trucks traveled the gravel road off the highway south of the neighborhood and then back to the highway. Discussion was held that a residence south of the area had trucks of dirt hauled in the same week. The council thanked the audience for public comments. The incident occurred on the same day as the council meeting, so the topic was not listed on the agenda 24 hours before the meeting as required by statute. No action was taken.

SEMI-ANNUAL LIBRARY REPORT

Library Director Amy Baker reported the library served as a community center, technology hub, and a meeting place to come for information, resources, and connection. She reported that the library was a place where a preschool aged child, a retiree, a job seeker, and a student could all look for something. She reported the strength of the library was bringing people together from book and writers' groups to after school programming where learning continues. She reported the bike rodeo brought together people from law enforcement, the hospital, EMT's, city employees, Friends of the Library, New Moon Theater group and many volunteers for hands on activities and safety education. She reported that libraries can be measured by more than attendance and circulation numbers connecting people with information and each other, expanding opportunities and literacy, and providing free access to knowledge. Council Member Lundgren thanked the Director for the excellent library. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the semi-annual library report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE 671 ADOPTING MINIMUM STANDARDS OF SANITARY AND SAFETY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE NELIGH SWIMMING POOL

City Attorney Jim McNally reported the proposed ordinance did not specify rules and regulations as the sanitary and safety standards for pools were established by the State of Nebraska. He recommended adoption of the rules as promulgated by State of Nebraska. Discussion was held that the North Central Health District was considering taking over the role to conduct pool inspections in the 9-county region following adoption of LB759 going into effect July 18th. City Supt. Donaldson reported that the state inspector had visited and inspected the Neligh Pool earlier that day, so the 2026 inspection was completed.

Council member Hughes moved to introduce Ordinance 671 entitled as follows:

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF THE NELIGH SWIMMING POOL AND THE BATHER PREPARATION FACILITY; REPEALING ALL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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 Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: 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. 671 be passed and adopted?" Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: 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 one time as prescribed by law.

RESOLUTION 2026-7 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK REVISIONS

Clerk Klabenes reported that the Human Resources (HR) Committee had met to review and recommend updates to the employee handbook that included the subjects of operational service, department certifications, travel expenses, and holidays falling on a Saturday. Discussion was held for the library and compactor department employees allowed to close on Saturdays when a holiday falls on a Saturday and recognizing the holiday on a Friday for the same time off as other departments. Discussion was held for the library and compactor scheduling part-time employees on Saturday or earlier in the week to provide the holiday time off. Discussion was held for the HR Committee to review the Saturday holiday further and bring back to the July meeting. No action was taken and the matter was tabled to the next meeting.

RESOLUTION 2026-8 DEED OF CONVEYANCE CORRECTION WITH PEKAJ, INC

City Attorney McNally reported the deed filed was incorrect and included more property than was needed as the property lots on the west side of the newly named D Avenue ran north and south instead of east and west with the other side. He reported the real estate transfer had been made to reconvey the property to Pekaj and create a new deed. He recommended the proposed resolution to consider. *Council member Hughes introduced and moved for passage Resolution 2026-8 correcting a deed of conveyance and authorizing the sale of property with Pekaj, Inc.* 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. Thereupon Mayor Hartz declared Resolution 2026-8 adopted.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS

Clerk Klabenes reported an employee had inquired if a domestic partner could be enrolled onto the employee health insurance. She reported the current health insurance carrier left the decision to allow or not allow by the employer. She reported a list of guidelines used by other insurance carriers for determining if a domestic partner is allowed or not. Discussion was held about the timeframe and financial conditions required to be eligible, the financial impact to the city and employee, and consideration for acknowledging different lifestyles. Discussion was held whether a domestic partner should be added to definition of immediate family in the employee handbook. Discussion noted that common law marriage was not recognized in Nebraska. *Council member Lundgren moved to add a domestic partnership to employee health insurance.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Nay, Tyler Pedersen: Nay, Leonard Miller: Nay Yea: 1, Nay: 3. Motion Failed.

EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLAN

Clerk Klabenes reported she had met with the retirement financial advisor on upcoming federal changes to retirement plans later in the fall which included budgetary considerations. She requested consideration for an update to the eligibility date for employees to begin contributing to the retirement plan. She reported that the current plan began on the first of the month following 90 days of employment, whereas the health insurance began the first of the month following 30 days of employment. She requested consideration for the retirement plan to match the health insurance eligibility date. Discussion was held about whether the employee could begin contributing to the retirement plan after 30 days of employment and the employer begin contributing after 90 days of employment. It was the consensus of the council to ask the financial advisor for the retirement plan if the contribution dates could be different. No action was taken. The matter was tabled to the next month.

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Hartz recommended the re-appointment of Dennis Koch to the Board of Adjustment for a 3-year term, Lance Sanne to Planning Commission for a 3-year term, and Joshua Thoendel to the Library Board to a 4-year term. Mayor Hartz reported a volunteer is being asked to serve on the LB840 Citizens Advisory Review Committee. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the appointments as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS REPORT

Economic Development Director Sheridan reported the 6-plex was 90% completed and she will begin promoting the new apartments to assist with filling the vacancy. She reported the balance of the Market Rate Housing Fund was $719,404.70 with four applications out. She reported the Historic Preservation Commission Certified Local Government (HPC-CLG) social media video series produced by the Neligh-Oakdale Schools Civics Class under the direction of Kimberly Alspaugh increased social media traffic by 1800%. She reported that the students also developed a YouTube channel for a continued project with the school to present historical preservation. She reported the HPC submitted a CLG grant application that requested funding for a historic property survey to expand preservation resources beyond the Old Mill District area. She reported community engagement workshops were scheduled for the following week at the Neligh Community Center. Mayor Hartz reported he had received one of the income surveys and the importance for households to fill out and return the survey if they receive one. The Director reported that the intern under the Neligh Area Community Fund, Ashley Caballero-Lazaro, had started in the office. She reported the Nebraska Community Fund had a bus tour with a stop at TallGrass Retreat, and highlighted the swinging project, disc golf and Youth Enrichment Center. She reported work on the website continued and she added a new community calendar page. She reported Clearwater activities included a grant application for fire equipment, beautificaion with FFA at Summerland, mailboxes presented to graduating seniors, and working with Five Rule Rural Planning on Clearwater's comprehensive plan. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the Economic Development Director's report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

Director Sheridan reported there was a 24-month timeline when the first loan was issued from the housing account after the release of the funds from the state with a date of December 31, 2026. She reported available funds still needed to go out for housing projects. She reported the only contact at the Department of Economic had been out of the office, and the Director had discussed an extension. She reported the Economic Development Board and Chamber of Commerce had reviewed and recommended the proposed amendment to the Fund Investment Plan for the developer to pay at the beginning or at the end the closing costs of the secured loan for a 1% fee and raise the maximum project loan amount from 65% to 85% of the project cost. She reported loan applications were reviewed by the LB840 loan review committee and loans had 15 months to complete a project for qualifying businesses eligible in the LB840 plan. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the proposed amendment to the Fund Investment Plan Section H for types, amounts, and terms of assistance in the Rural Workforce Housing Loan Program.* Seconded by Lundgren. 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 Economic Development Board discussed and recommended the maximum grant amount for a facade and digital facade grant be increased to $1,500 that was previously set in 2020 at $1,000. She reported 5 applications were pending. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the facade and digital facade grant maximum amount increase to $1,500.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

Director Sheridan reported the Nebraska State Patrol background check fee currently at $15.50 would be increasing to $45 effective September 1. She reported the current application fee of $100 did not cover the costs and that the Economic Development Board proposed an application fee of $150 with $45 for each additional background check. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve an increase in the LB840 loan application fee to $150 with $45 for each additional backgorund check, effective July 1, 2026.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

POLICE REPORT

Police Chief Lawson reported May service calls increased and showed the highest call volume in 2 years. He reported the month began with traveling to Wiegand campground for follow-up investigations for a trial that resulted in a plea agreement. He reported May calls included two transports out of town for EPCs, domestic disturbances, welfare checks, trespassing, dog calls, and an electioneering investigation. He reported he was proud of progress on school safety talks, and he had personally attended with Mrs. Kerkman to talk to a subcommittee for the planning of a potential bond for safety considerations. He reported with yard work season in motion, he asked the public to stay on top of yard maintenance and credited Officer Schroeder for his work on contacts with property owners about yards. He reported one notice of abatement was served. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the written May Police report as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

CITY SUPT. AND ELECTRIC REPORT

City Supt. Donaldson reported street sweeping through the whole town, filling potholes, and grading gravel roads was in motion. He reported he had accessed dust retardant to begin application on gravel roads to see how it worked. He reported on maintenance to T Street over the last two years including application of crushed concrete as a base before removing 3 dump trucks of the project off the street from dust complaints. He reported that new gravel was applied to all of 9th Street and T Street. He reported the scooter rider had called earlier that day to apologize for not traveling in the middle of the road. He reported he had had discussions about applying bigger rock product but that would hinder the scooter from traveling on the street. He reported on the dust retardant for dust control and would test it for hardening the surface and see how it worked for the scooter owner too. He reported that the city is really going to have to look at some improvements to streets, with asphalt instead of waiting for concrete curb and gutter and start with intersections for gap paving. Discussion was held that the November ballot question will consider .5% for sales tax for street improvements and based on prior years sales tax the annual amount was estimated at $174,000 to $200,000 to take a chunk of the cost away. The Supt. reported he visited with the county commissioners earlier that day on the availability to partner with the county to mill some of city overlay problem streets, but the commissioners were concerned about using the blades on streets and decided it was not a good idea.

The Superintendent reported the park was busy with ball games and lawn care. He reported that the 9-hole disc golf designer Trooper Ray Johnson met with the Supt. and walked through the Russell Park course. He reported after installation, the Russell Park course could be a top course in the state with two holes across the Elkhorn River. He reported the Riverside Park course was already registered on the UDisc app. He reported that all plants were done for Russell Park from the Sidney Loofe donation. He reported the state inspector was at the pool for the annual inspection earlier that day and had a couple small corrections fixed before the inspection finished. He reported the inspector appreciated the pool improvements made and the resurfacing of the diving boards was done. He reported solid waste department had 38 bales of cardboard hauled out, 106.7 tons of waste hauled to the landfill, and he was awaiting a check to Butler County to complete the tire amnesty grant paperwork. In the sewer department, the superintendent reported the result of a sewer jet and video of East 1st street from Johnson Service discovered from D to J Street were in good shape, that once were thought would have to be relined but was not needed now. He reported the sewer plant itself looked and ran good, weeds were sprayed by the same company that does Nebraska Public Power locations, and the booster pump had the VFD installed by Boyd's Electrical Services. In the water department, 14 million gallons of water were pumped, and 600 pounds of fluoride was added last month. He reported the electric crew had completed a boring project from 6th to 5th Streets, and the generation plant had changed working hours for the automatic controls to run on call from 8am to 4pm due to Nebraska Machinery Technicians were not seeing the third generator starting up. He reported the generation plant ran for 10 minutes the day before.

City Supt. Donaldson reported the Hines property asbestos inspection was completed Monday and results showed no asbestos. He reported he had submitted the report to the fire department to schedule a house burn. He reported the clean-up and inspection costs will now be filed as a lien on the property. He reported the first schedule of work required to be completed on 301 J Street was not meeting deadline and the council would be discussing next steps at next month's meeting. He reported that while the Kester Carpentry shop fell within the definition of a dangerous building and due to the historical nature and historical determination, following a Brownsfield meeting today with several agencies, the Kester Carpentry owners would need to advise what they would like to do to help and restore the building and be eligible for grants. The City Supt. reported the pickleball court contractor had sub-contracted the project which was delayed. He reported currently footings are in with poles set on the footings to keep from having the problem of concrete cracking around the poles and upon frost entering the crack pushing the pole up through the slab. He reported the two courts will be a top of the line pickleball courts, with lights, seating to watch, volunteers to give lessons on how to play, and the school to have a class. He reported that Sherri Maple had access to a number of paddles. *Council member Pedersen moved to approve the City Supt. report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Steph Lundgren: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

City Supt. Donaldson reported he had hired Garret Belitz for part-time seasonal 20 hours a week, with ballfields preparation which allowed another employee to work more on street projects. He reported Garret had set up and lined fields. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve to hire Garret Belitz as a part-time seasonal employee in the Park Department at $18 hourly wage retroactive from May 27, 2026.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

NEW MOON THEATER REPORT

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported the Theater Board were meeting at the same time as the Council meeting but continued to work on grant applications now that the demolition was done and a blank slate for next steps. She thanked City Supt. Donaldson for his assistance with the demolition. She reported summer activities included tours of the theater after the 4th of July parade. She requested temporary lighting needed for the tours following the interior demo completion. She reported another summer event would be held during the Antelope County Fair for music bingo with both a kid's time and adult time on the tennis courts. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the New Moon Theater Liaison report as presented.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Council member Pedersen moved to approve the bills as presented except the Blackstrap invoices. Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

Council member Miller moved to approve the Blackstrap invoices of $120 for weigh tickets and $1,168.44 for hauling of agri-lime. Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Ted Hughes: Abstain, Leonard Miller: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1. Motion Carried.

ACE UPDATE

Council Member Miller reported 75 towns were in the Choice Gas program and Neligh was ranked #3 for the highest percentage of new accounts and ranked #2 for volume of gas used for next year. He thanked Utility Billing and Deputy Clerk Jennifer Pellatz for inclusion of the Choice Gas program in the monthly newsletter included with the utility bills which she timed and wrote well, contributing to Neligh's success. Council Member Miller reported that according to ACE that 60% of people do not make a choice but let the previous year roll forward and result with a prior selection. He reported Neligh increased the number of accounts the most percentage to be #2, and ACE had about 16% of the choice gas accounts so there was room to go up. Discussion was held that only citizens in town received the option to choose the gas supplier. No action was taken.

BUDGET WORKSHOP DATE SET

Council member Hughes moved to set a budget workshop date for Thursday, August 13th at 5:30PM. Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried.

There being no further business to conduct, *Council member Miller moved to adjourn the meeting.* Seconded by Pedersen. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 4, Nay: 0. Motion Carried. Time adjourned 9:33 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 June 9, 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.

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(SEAL) City Clerk