

MINUTES-February 21, 2023
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS-
1111 AVE E, WISNER, NEBRASKA 68791

The City Council of the City of Wisner, Nebraska met in regular session in the Council Chambers at the City offices in Wisner, Nebraska, on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. according to the notice published in the Wisner News Chronicle issue of February 16, 2023, a copy of proof of publication is attached to these minutes. Notice of the meeting was posted in three public places which are the Wisner Post Office, Wisner Public Library, and the Wisner City Office. Notice of the meeting and the agenda were mailed or emailed to the mayor and all members of the City Council. A true copy of their signed acknowledgement of the receipt of the advance notice of this meeting and the agenda is filed in the office of the City Clerk/Treasurer. An agenda for the meeting was kept continuously current, and was available for public inspection at the City Offices three days before the meeting date. Agenda subjects were contained at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. Mayor Soden presided and the City Clerk/Treasurer recorded the proceedings of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the general public.

Mayor Soden called the meeting to order, and announced the location of the posted Open Meeting Act, pursuant to Section 84-1412(8) of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. Mayor Soden also announced that this meeting is being recorded.

Present on the roll call: Cathy Gobar, Barry Meyer, Jay Meyer, LJ Parker, and Mayor Soden. Staff present: Randy Woldt, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent, Stephanie James, City Clerk/ Treasurer, and Jonathan Brandow, Wisner Care Center Administrator.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – CONSENT AGENDA – AGENDA, MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2023 REGULAR MEETING, AND CARE CENTER, CITY, & CITY/RURAL FIRE BOARD JANUARY 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT. Moved by Barry and seconded by Jay to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Barry, Parker, Jay, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – WATER TREATMENT PLANT – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF FUNDING. Moved by Barry and seconded by Gobar to accept the \$2,775,000.00 from the State of Nebraska ARPA Grant for a Reverse Osmosis system. Roll call: Ayes: Parker, Jay Barry, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried. Roger Protzman with JEO was in attendance at tonight's meeting to go over some new numbers he has regarding the water rates. Mr. Protzman handed out a spreadsheet that had four different options with different scenarios which changed the water rate. Mr. Protzman went over the numbers with everyone and the spreadsheet is now a part of these minutes. With giving the first 6,000 gallons of water in the base rate is a pretty good value to the customers of Wisner, Mr. Protzman said. After all this is said in done, the City of Wisner will have done \$10,000,000.00 worth of improvements to the water system in Wisner. Russ Breikreutz asked for those customers that have a water softener system in their homes, with the reverse osmosis treatment, water softener users will not need to use them anymore. The reverse osmosis system will take the hardness out of the water. This will also save customers in purchasing the salt.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – WATER TREATMENT PLANT – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING NOTIFICATION LETTER TO WISNER-PILGER SCHOOL FOR LOCATION OF TREATMENT PLANT. Moved by Barry and seconded by Parker to approve sending a letter to Wisner-Pilger School for the location of the water treatment plant that will be prepared by the city attorney. Roll call: Ayes: Jay, Barry, Parker, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING GAS PROFORMA AND GAS RATES-ANDREW ROSS, NMPP. Andrew Ross introduced himself and took the time to explain to the the council, mayor, and public in attendance the City of Wisner’s gas rates and where the city is sitting in the gas fund. Mr. Ross explained that out of all of the utilities, the gas has the most volatility. Natural gas was as high as \$12.00 per btu in 2008. Then in 2009 we had the economic collapse and for a period of about twelve years, natural gas was extremely cheap. A lot of the demand came from hydraulic fracking. Now, fast forwarding to February 2022, we are now in the one-year anniversary of Russia invading Ukraine. There are some impacts to that that impacted America. When Russia invaded Ukraine, gas prices didn’t go up then explains Mr. Ross. What happened then was that Europe understood that the one true leverage that Russia had was their natural gas supply and that Russia supplied a lot of natural gas to Europe. So, what America did in March of 2022 was when Biden exported natural gas heavily to Europe which gave up our supply to Europe which then had a big price impact to us. The reason we did it was to remove Russia’s leverage. Gas prices were \$2.00 to \$4.00 for twelve years. When exporting to Europe started, the prices tripled, going from \$2.00 to \$4.00 to \$8.00. Since then, it has dropped down some. Mr. Ross explained that there are some things out of our control but there are some things that we can control and how we can manage our system and finances. Mr. Ross handed out a 2022 Cost of Service/Rate Design Study that is now a part of these minutes. Mr. Ross explained to everyone the handout. We are in a pretty good spot but if we don’t do something soon we will eat up our cash reserves and will be in bad spot and will have to make a big rate increase. Right now, we could make a small rate increase sooner than later. A rate increase of 3.5% to 6.4% is a range that is being recommended. Council will look into a 5% increase starting October 1st. Randy Woldt stated that gas supplies have doubled in price. No action was taken at this time.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 – DINKLAGE GRANT APPLICATION – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE MAIN STREET FLOWER BASKETS. Moved by Barry and seconded by Gobar to approve forwarding the Dinklage application onto the Dinklage Foundation for final approval for the Main Street Flower Baskets. Roll call: Ayes: Barry, Parker, Jay, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 – MONTHLY POLICE REPORT – D. SALMEN. Doug Salmen, Chief of Police, made available the monthly police activities report to the mayor and council.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - BUILDING PERMITS. Randy Woldt, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent, stated he had one building permit application at this time at 788 Q Road for installation of grain bins.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - COMMUNICATIONS, REPORTS, COMMENTS BY COUNCIL, CITY OFFICIALS AND GENERAL PUBLIC.

- A. Councilman Jay asked if there has been anything done yet on the trucks going down the park road. Mr. Woldt said he has talked to the city attorney and he has not gotten back to him yet.
- B. Councilwoman Gobar asked if the water tower has had a good test yet. The last Mr. Woldt knew is that they are going to get an outside company to come in and sanitize it to see if that will work. Eight intersections have to be completed yet before the water tower can go into use after passing a water sample test.
- C. Mr. Woldt stated that the radar sign on the west end of town had to be sent in to get fixed and should be showing up soon.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - MOTION TO ADJOURN TO MEET IN REGULAR SESSION ON MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023, AT 7:00 PM. At 7:54 PM moved by Barry and seconded by Parker that the City Council adjourn to meet in regular session on March 6, 2023 at 7:00 PM, in the Council Chambers at the City Office. Roll call: Ayes: Parker, Jay, Barry, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk/Treasurer