

MINUTES-September 16, 2024
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 Monday, September 16, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. according to the notice published in the Wisner News Chronicle issue of September 12, 2024, 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. The mayor 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, LJ Parker, Jay Meyer, and Mayor Terry Soden.

Staff present: Randy Woldt, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent and Stephanie James, City Clerk/ Treasurer.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – SET FINAL TAX REQUEST. Mayor Soden opened the public hearing at 6:01 PM to set the final tax request for the City of Wisner at \$437,915.80. Mayor Soden invites questions or comments from the public and council at this time. Councilman Barry asked if any dollars were cut. Randy Woldt, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent stated that no dollars were cut. Dusty with the Wisner News Chronicle asked if it is the same base as the school at two percent. He was told that is correct including 1.66% real growth percentage increase. Russ Breitreutz asked about the city's cash reserves. The city's investments make up a lot of the cash reserves and cash on hand. With no other questions or comments from the public or council. Mayor Soden closed the public hearing at 6:04 PM.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – CITY GENERAL & ENTERPRISE FUNDS BUDGET FY 2024-25. Mayor Soden opened the public hearing at 6:04 PM for the General and Enterprise funds budget for fiscal year 2024-2025. Mayor Soden invites questions or comments from the public and council at this time. Dusty with the Wisner News Chronicle asked if the valuation included Grandview. Mr. Woldt stated we have in there what the estimates for the infrastructure would be. Stephanie James, City Clerk/Treasurer stated that there was not enough valuation this year to request since they started building there. Mrs. James went on to explain that there will be more of a valuation next year but the funds will not be seen until 2026. Mr. Breitreutz asked about the 2023-2024 actual/estimated disbursements and transfers for the public safety-fire, wanting to know what the \$1,097,784.00 consisted of.

Most of that dollar amount was the purchase of a new fire truck. Mr. Breitzkreutz said that he is looking at the total certified valuation of \$97,314,682.00 and was at the school budget hearing and theirs was at a billion something and didn't think that the two valuations would be that close. Council explained that Mr. Breitzkreutz is off about \$900,000,000.00 and Mr. Breitzkreutz agreed with that and felt better with the figures. Mr. Breitzkreutz asked if the county sends out a report on the available funds that is for the city or do we have to request that. Councilman Barry stated that it is what we request. Mrs. James said that the funds come to the city monthly, not quarterly. Mr. Breitzkreutz asked if we zero it down each month. The council was not sure what was being asked. We get what we request from the county but the city does not always spend it all. With no other questions or comments from the council or the public, Mayor Soden closed the public hearing at 6:17 PM.

At 6:17 PM, City Council Members paused until 7:00 PM for the regular council meeting.

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, LJ Parker, Barry Meyer, Jay Meyer, and Mayor Soden.

Staff present: Randy Woldt, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent, Stephanie James, City Clerk/ Treasurer, and Sammye Nyman, Wisner Care Center Administrator.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – CONSENT AGENDA – AGENDA, MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 REGULAR MEETING, AND CARE CENTER, CITY, & CITY/RURAL FIRE BOARD AUGUST 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT. Moved by Barry and seconded by Gobar to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Barry, Parker, Jay, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – ORDINANCE NO. 2024-1185 – TO ESTABLISH AN HOURLY & SALARY PAY SCHEDULE OF CITY PUBLIC WORKS, OFFICE EMPLOYEES, LIBRARY, AND POLICE DEPARTMENT. Councilman Barry introduced Ordinance No. 2024-1185, entitled: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WISNER, NEBRASKA TO ESTABLISH AN HOURLY AND SALARY PAY SCHEDULE OF CITY PUBLIC WORKS, OFFICE EMPLOYEES, LIBRARY, AND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT; REPEAL OF ALL ORDINANCES AND PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE; AND TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE DATE, moved by Councilwoman Gobar that the statutory rule requiring readings on three different days be suspended. Councilman Parker second said motion. Roll call: Ayes: Parker, Jay, Barry, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried. The motion to suspend the rule was adopted by the Council and the statutory rule was declared suspended for consideration of said ordinance. Ordinance No 2024-1185 was then read by title. Mayor Soden then stated the question: "Shall Ordinance No. 2024-1185 be passed and adopted?", and thereafter Councilman Parker moved for final passage and Councilman Jay second said motion.

Mr. Woldt asked that the hourly employees are getting six to ten percent wage increase and he is getting 3.5% wage increase. Mr. Woldt asked if that was fair. Councilman Barry stated that him and the mayor were discussing was to try and get the hourly employees up to par that will

get them by better than the salaried employees that are making way more than the hourly people are. Councilman Barry stated that I don't know if it is fair and maybe you don't think it's fair Randy but that is what we came up with. Mr. Woldt stated that he doesn't agree with it. So apparently what I do around here is not worth anything. Councilman Barry stated that, that was not said at all and would never say that and what you do is very important its that you're on such a high pay scale. Mr. Woldt said that if you go to other town's they are on a lot higher pay scale with half of the stuff to do. Mr. Woldt said that he can get some figures from other towns. Councilman Barry said that we can revisit this.

Roll call: Ayes: Parker, Jay, Barry, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

The passage and adoption having been approved by the Council, the Mayor declared Ordinance No. 2024-1185 adopted and in the presence of the Council signed and approved the Ordinance. The Clerk attested the passage and approval of the same and affixed her signature thereto. A true, correct, and complete copy of said ordinance is as follows: Copy attached hereto becomes part of these minutes.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – WISNER CARE CENTER – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ENGINEERS RECOMMENDATION TO TERMINATE CONTRACT FOR ADDITION. Councilman Barry said that as we all know, all the care centers around the area, we have been having troubles making ends meet with inflation and census, Covid, raises. It has gotten to the point where it is really hard to make ends meet. We can only charge so much and not be higher than the competition around the area or we won't get patients. Councilman Barry went on to say that he would like to terminate the addition to the Wisner Care Center, even though it's a grant, it will not cost us nothing, until we get the care center in better shape and on sound footing, I can't see adding \$350,000.00 on to it. What if we don't get it on sound footing, I think we will and I am determined to do that and so is Sammye. We are going to keep it open and want the people of Wisner to know this and support this. Their loved ones are up there, their friends are there. There are sixty-one employees, one of the biggest employers in the city outside of the school. This is something that I can not let fail. We are doing a lot of things, such as doing some cutting and improving on things. Councilman Barry said that we have spent about a fourth of the grant money but that was to pay for the engineers and architect. We still have all the drawings and if there is a grant in the future, hopefully we can still make use of that. My main goal right now is to get that place running the best we can, cheaply as we can without cutting services. We have great food and employees. Cuts will have to be made. Some nursing homes that have shut down in the area are Scribner, Dodge, Hooper, Pender, and two in the Norfolk area in the past two or three years and over thirty some state wide.

Councilman Barry said that the state put out a new deal that our tax went \$8,000.00 a quarter to \$24,000.00 to \$26,000.00 a quarter and why the state is doing that when the care centers in the state are closing is beyond me. People need to call their senators and let them know that this is not a thing they should be doing especially when the state is sitting on over a billion dollars in the bank for a rainy-day fund. Councilman Barry stated that we are going to do our best to keep this open and running well. There are tough times ahead but we are going to weather them. The Wisner Care Center is city owned. Councilman Barry thought it was done back in the eighties when Mayor Willa Toelle was in office. It was privately owned. So, now having this city owned

to have something closed or go into default is not an option for me. There are sixty some employees that have kids in school, I want to keep them employed and this town intact. Councilman Barry stated that he had a conversation with the city's attorney and there are some options out there that we can do to help them out. Word has gotten out there that the care center has borrowed money from the city. There is a chance that we can get a bond but it would have to be approved by the vote of the people. The biggest thing right now is to cut expenses so that we don't have this problem a year from now or two years from now, said Councilman Barry. The city can raise gas rates along with the water, sewer, and dump and the care center has raised their rates as high as they can go. The care center can't do what the city can do. It all takes time for the care center to do things explained Councilman Barry. If you are from Wisner or around Wisner, support the care center, everyone knows someone that is up there. Councilman Parker asked if there are any contractors or engineers that are on the hook for money. Councilman Barry said that everyone has been paid. Councilman Barry already talked with Andrew Schweers with Big Red Construction to let him know and no contracts have been signed yet. Russ Breitreutz said that a comment has been made that maybe since the city has been funding this, is there a possibility of making a line item in the city's budget. Options are being looked into and really need to get by until January 1st when rates will increase. Inflation has hit the care center so hard with wages, food, and utilities. Councilman Barry said that we are waiting on the Treasury. We have a million dollars out there that we were told we were going to get last year and we have been denied because we were not a medical facility. Well, we are, so we appealed that and just waiting to see what they say. Mr. Breitreutz asked if anyone has calculated if it is shut down, what it will cost per month to heat and cool and empty building. Councilman Barry said it would cost about \$200,000.00 to close it. No one has calculated what it would be a month to heat and cool the empty building. It would not be cheap. Mr. Breitreutz stated that if it wasn't for the city's support, the care center would have been shut down a long time ago. Moved by Gobar and seconded by Barry to take steps to terminate the contract with Cure Designs. Roll call: Ayes: Jay, Barry, Parker, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - AUTHORIZE CLERK/TREASURER TO RENEW CD'S #2348 GAS, #2349 CEMETERY TRUST, & #2350 SWIMMING POOL TRUST. Moved by Barry and seconded by Parker to go with Citizens State Bank for six months at a rate of 5.01%. Roll call: Ayes: Barry, Parker, Jay, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 – WISNER CARE CENTER – AUTHORIZE OPERATING LOAN AND SET INTEREST & TERM. Moved by Barry and seconded by Jay to approve the \$50,000.00 operating loan and to set the term for five years at three percent interest rate. Roll call: Ayes: Barry, Parker, Jay, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY – 2001 FORD CUTAWAY VAN AMBULANCE ON BIG IRON. Mr. Woldt stated that the old ambulance that they were using for an equipment van is no longer needed since they got the new pumper. Rural Board has approved the sale of the ambulance and just need the city's approval to sell the ambulance on Big Iron. Moved by Parker and seconded by Jay to approve the sale of the 2001 Ford Cutaway Van Ambulance on Big Iron. Roll call: Ayes: Parker, Jay, Barry, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 – MONTHLY POLICE REPORT – D. SALMEN. Doug Salmen, Chief of Police did not get a report ready for this month’s activity and will have two months for next month’s meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - BUILDING PERMITS. Randy Woldt, City Administrator/Utility Superintendent, stated he has one building permits at this time. It is for Lot Thirteen in the Grandview Addition to build a new home.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - COMMUNICATIONS, REPORTS, COMMENTS BY COUNCIL, CITY OFFICIALS AND GENERAL PUBLIC.

- A. Mr. Woldt stated that the playground equipment at the pool park that was purchased from the school where the old elementary was at is starting to rust out. It needs to be removed because it is becoming dangerous. There is a possibility that there is a grant for playground equipment.
- B. Councilman Barry said that the Dinklage Foundation is going to sell their old office building and the land behind the building which is about thirty-seven thousand square feet. It has been discussed to spend about \$100,000.00 on land to build a new warehouse someday. The land has been appraised at \$100,000.00. The Dinklage Foundation would like to see the city get it so that it can be used for parking for the auditorium and parking for other businesses. Councilman Barry stated that he received a phone call the other day to let us know that if we could put in an honest bid and then to apply for a Dinklage Grant to cover the balance so that they can show that they received \$100,000.00 for the land. Then the west half can be for parking for the auditorium and parking for people up town and the west half to someday put up a new warehouse. The building and the land are to be sold separately. Mr. Breitzkreutz asked Mr. Woldt if he is out of room that a new warehouse is needed. Mr. Woldt stated that all of the sheds are full and the shop on Tenth Street is tight. No more equipment can be placed in there. It is hard to work on anything in there because it is so tight. When you pull a truck in there to work on it, you can barely walk around it let alone work on it. Mr. Breitzkreutz said so, with a new warehouse it would be a good fit for your people. Mr. Woldt agreed that it would.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - MOTION TO ADJOURN TO MEET IN SPECIAL SESSION ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024, AT 7:00 PM. At 7:30 PM moved by Gobar and seconded by Barry that the City Council adjourn to meet in special session on September 23, 2024 at 7:00 PM, in the Council Chambers at the City Office. Roll call: Ayes: Jay, Barry, Parker, Gobar. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk/Treasurer