

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

January 7, 2016

A regular meeting of the Ashland City Council was held at the Ashland City Hall Council Chambers on the 7th day of January, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Richard Grauerholz
City Council President Russ DeVries
City Council Member James Anderson
City Council Member Janece Mollhoff
City Council Member Kyle Vest
City Administrator Jessica Quady
City Clerk Kathleen Sliva

Absent: City Attorney Mark Fahleson

Others Present: Brandon Parmer and Troy Johnston

Notice of meeting was advertised in the Ashland Gazette on December 31, 2015. The Mayor and all Council Members received advance notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda as shown by the Acknowledgment of Receipt of Notice. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the public.

Mayor Grauerholz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared. Mayor Grauerholz noted the Open Meetings Act that is posted on the south wall of the Council Chambers.

Motion by DeVries, seconded by Vest to adopt the regular agenda.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Brandon Parmer, owner of El Rancho Trailer Court, gave public comment regarding possible changes to the water and sewer rates that may be proposed, specifically to trailer court and multi-unit complexes. Parmer gave demographic information about the residents in his trailer court stating that over two-thirds of the residents are over age 60, over 75% are at or below the poverty threshold and some of the residents are physically and/or mentally handicapped. He continued saying the proposed rate change that he has heard would raise his bill by \$1,600 per month which would have

to be passed on to the residents as an increase in rent to a population of some that live on less than \$700 a month from Social Security disability. He added that the proposed rate change would also affect the retirement community of Golden Manor Apartments, the apartments at 29th and Clay, the retirement community of Oxbow Living, the apartments at 19th and Silver and possibly, the nursing home. He said he did not recall anyone on this Council running on the campaign platform that targeted the elderly, the poor and the handicap just in the effort to relieve the water and sewer rates of a few downtown businesses and to contemplate this action toward this demographic of people is unethical, immoral and an injustice.

Troy Johnston, City Street Superintendent, addressed the Council regarding the One and Six Year Road Plan. He distributed a sheet showing the 2015-2020 Plan. He said planning for roads is a part of a program governed by the State of Nebraska that infuses approximately \$170,000 into the City's street fund. Johnston reviewed the current plan which included the Silver Street Bridge replacement on the one year plan and two paving projects of residential streets on the east side of town on the six year plan. Discussion was held regarding possible additions to the plan including unpaved streets on the south side of town, South 15th Street from Ash to Birch, and Birch Street from South 14th to South 15th. City Administrator Quady stated that the last gravel to paving project was the 6th Street project in 2008 or 2009. Council Member Anderson expressed concern about street access to Oxbow Living Center when the road is closed due to high water. He suggested that the Council consider a road connecting North 17th Avenue with Bill's Drive or Highway 66. Discussion was held regarding this possibility. Johnston said he would have to look into whether this can be placed on the plan as this is outside of the City limits. Mayor Grauerholz stated that the roads are not platted and it would take right-of-way purchase to do so. He added that with the raising of the grade of Highway 66 through that area by the construction project, the road may not have the same problems with closure due to high water. Quady stated that if there is a fire at Oxbow, the fire department will get there down Noble Drive and through yards. Johnston said that the Silver Street bridge project will be started after the 14th Street project is completed this spring. Quady stated that she has discussed with SENDD doing income surveys of residents in the affected area on the east side to possibly get funds to help defray the paving cost to the residents. She said that the City would pay for the water and sewer lines in the area. She said that it will be up to the City Council to determine when projects are done. Quady confirmed that paving Birch Street would be a joint venture with the County. Council Member Mollhoff said the paving of Birch Street will need to be thought about when planning for extending the hiking and biking trail. Quady said a public hearing on the Road Plan will be held in February.

Motion by DeVries, seconded by Vest to approve pay request from JEO Consulting Group Inc. for New Well 2015 in the amount of \$9,121.25.

City Administrator Quady reported that the project is close to going out for bid and should be completed this fiscal year.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Motion by Mollhoff, seconded by DeVries to approve the consent agenda which included approval of the December 17, 2015 City Council meeting minutes.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Motion by Vest, seconded by Anderson to approve the second half of December 2015 Claims.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Mayor Grauerholz reported that the Building Inspector and City Administrator Quady had completed another walk through at the ballpark and that there are only a couple of minor things left to finish. Quady commented that one of seals for the flood barriers needs to be finished and that there may be a possible change for the bathroom fans. She said that she will be working on signage for the building. Discussion was held regarding storage of and training for using the flood barriers.

Council Member DeVries commented on the new church signage coming into town.

Mayor Grauerholz reported that the Rescue Squad is adding more new members and that there will be a sizable group being put through training. He commented that the people in the rescue squad have been putting in a lot of dedication and a lot of hours into this project and that he very much appreciates their efforts.

Mayor Grauerholz commented that Ashland was designated as one of eleven most picturesque small towns in the state.

Discussion was held on dates for the retreat session.

Council Member Anderson suggested that an additional street light be installed in a dark area on Furnas Street west of North 14th Street. Quady will check to see if this light is a part of the highway project.

Council Member Anderson commented on a lady who was injured in a fall on a bad sidewalk. He inquired about the handling of a sidewalk complaint. City Administrator Quady said it is in the Municipal Code that the City may request


property owners repair their sidewalks. Quady stated that the City is taking care of sidewalks in the downtown area.

Council Member Anderson recommended that a letter signed by the Mayor be sent to the Ashland Postmaster regarding the poor condition of the Post Office soffit including pictures of the soffit.

Council Member Anderson inquired about building owners correcting waterlines that are under other owner's buildings, such as Marge Root's building and the ROC building and the flower shop and Ray Elwood's building, before the paving along 14th Street is completed.

Motion by Vest, seconded by DeVries to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried


Richard Grauerholz, Mayor


Kathleen Sliva, City Clerk



I, the above signed City Clerk of Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of the proceedings had and done by the Council on January 7, 2016 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 subjects were contained in said agenda for at least twenty four hours prior to said meeting; that said minutes from which the foregoing proceedings have been extracted were in written form and available for public inspection within ten business days or prior to the next convened meeting of said body.