

Regular City Council Meeting
City Council Chambers

May 19, 2009
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor – Joyce Hudson
Council members Jeff Kennedy
Jim Aden
Tim Strauser
Jeff Whiting
City Administrator Bruce Clymer
City Clerk Connie L. Dalrymple
City Attorney Mike Bacon
Police Officer Jill Ostergard

Press: Gothenburg Times - Beth Barrett

Also present: Shane Gruber, Anne Anderson, Lois Stanton, Dan Yancy

Mayor Hudson opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Advance notice and a copy of the agenda were given to the Council and members of the press. City Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a copy of which is available for public inspection on the north wall of the Council Chambers.

Whiting moved, Strauser seconded, to approve the consent agenda that included:

- City Council minutes – May 5
- Police Report – April
- Planning & Zoning commission minutes – May 11
- Library Director's Report – March thru May 2009

Roll call vote: Yea - Kennedy, Aden, Strauser, Whiting. Nay - none.

Kennedy moved, Aden seconded, allowing payment of the claims against the City, \$40,654.09; Public Works Division \$255,404.24; and the May 14 payroll of \$33,173.79. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Whiting, Aden, Kennedy. Nay - none.

Open Forum:

- Anne Anderson presented the Dawson County Booklet and noted the current issue of Nebraska Life magazine features Gothenburg and copies are available at her office.
- Sargent Irrigation installed a de-watering well at the pool so we can repair the drains. The pool tub is below water level. Hopefully the pool will be open in 1 – 2 weeks.
- Paulsen's will begin this or next week on the paving.
- The Mesner Group has received funding for the Housing Authority duplexes on Jefferson Street. There will be 12 housing units.

Aden moved, Whiting seconded, to advance Ordinance 847 regarding zoning district boundaries to third and final reading. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Kennedy, Whiting, Aden. Nay – none.

Kennedy moved, Strauser seconded, to advance Ordinance 848 regarding water fowl at Lake Helen to third and final reading. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Strauser, Aden, Kennedy. Nay – none.

The proposed fee resolution includes several additions and changes:

Added: \$10 for permit to place large dumpsters on right-of-way. This will be effective June 1 according to Ordinance 845.

Summer ball fees: \$10 thru April 30. \$15 after April 30. This has been the practice for several years but was not in the resolution.

The Planning & Zoning Commission has recommended building permit fees for non-habitable agricultural use structures in AG and AG-1 zones \$20 plus \$.02 per foot for first 5000 feet. Discussion was had on permits other than the current square footage calculation for carports and pole sheds and if this change would affect grain bin permits.

Changes: Currently peddlers / hawkers permits are \$25 /day per person or \$100 / year per person. According to Atty. Bacon permit fees can only reflect our cost of issuance, including background checks on the individuals and company. The proposal is \$10 per person for a 30 day permit.

After discussion on the building permit fees, Council decided to table action on the resolution but Whiting moved, Kennedy seconded, to approve the proposed rate for dumpster permits effective June 1. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Aden, Kennedy, Whiting. Nay – none.

Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, approval of a one-day license to dispense beer, wine, and distilled spirits at a Business After Hours event sponsored by Pony Express Chevrolet on June 5, 2009 from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 420 South Lake Avenue in Gothenburg. Roll call vote: Yea –Strauser, Whiting, Kennedy Aden. Nay – none.

The employee health insurance policy renews on June 1. We currently self insure the first \$20,000 of claims with a ‘side fund’ which we have been funding at 75% for several years. Due to the number of claims recently that fund is very low at \$47,000, down from \$209,000 two years ago. In addition two employees have been ‘lasered’ at \$40,000 each because of their health issues. That means we not only will pay the first \$20,000 but will be responsible for an additional \$20,000 before the reinsurance takes over.

Administrator Clymer presented several calculated options for renewal: continuing to underfund the side fund by 25%, underfunding the side fund by 15% and / or eliminating spousal coverage or raising employee cost share, and fully funding the side fund. None of these options give consideration to the lasers. Council discussed each option in detail along with a tiered rate option. Such a rate is doable but the ultimate cost to the City is the same. While the Council was reluctant to delete any employee benefits or make any of them a financial hardship on the employees it was apparent some change must be made to meet the rising cost of insurance.

Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, to renew the health insurance with Corporate Plan Management and to amend the policy to reflect a 15% underfunded side fund and a requirement that spouses obtain insurance from their employer if it is offered or from government sources if that option is applicable. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Strauser, Kennedy, Aden. Nay – none.

Strauser moved, Kennedy seconded, to incorporate the language provided by Corporate Plan Management into our policy using a September 1, 2009 affective date:

Effective September 1, 2009: If you are currently enrolled in a group health plan and have health coverage on a spouse that has health benefits available from the employer's group plan, or is eligible for health benefits from a governmental agency; the City will no longer provide group health benefits for your spouse. You are encouraged to begin the process of getting your spouse covered through the other entity. It will be your responsibility to provide us with documentation that no other benefits are available. This change will be a qualifying event (loss of coverage) to enable your spouse to obtain other coverage. If your spouse has no other benefits available, you can continue to cover them under this plan.

Kennedy moved, Whiting seconded, approving payment of pay request #3 to Van Kirk Brothers Construction in the amount of \$139,033.66 for Avenue I sewer construction. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Aden, Whiting, Kennedy. Nay – none.

Tom Shea Construction submitted the only bid for foundation work on the community entrance sign. The bid is for \$7763 with work to begin June 22. Kennedy moved, Strauser seconded, to accept the bid from Tom Shea Construction. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Aden, Strauser, Kennedy. Nay – none.

Lois Stanton was given a notice to abate the grass and weeds at her home and requested a hearing before the Council to request an extension on the time allowance to abate. The code requires grass and other non-ornamental vegetation to be kept at or below 12 inches. Lois requested an extension to allow time to trim without damaging her wildflowers or having the City do the mowing.

Discussion was had and a motion made by Kennedy, seconded by Aden, to allow a 5-day extension on the abate notice given to Lois Stanton on May 13. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Whiting, Aden, Kennedy. Nay – none.

Acting upon a citizen request, Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, to open the platted alley between 25th and 26th Streets from Avenue J to Avenue L. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Strauser, Kennedy, Aden. Nay – none.

Whiting moved, Strauser seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea – Aden, Kennedy, Strauser, Whiting. The next regular meeting will be June 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Joyce Hudson, Mayor

Connie L. Dalrymple, City Clerk