Gering Parks, Cemetery, and Tree Board Meeting
April 20, 2026

1. Call to order at 5:15 and roll call: Present: Chairman Don Gentry, Vice-Chairman Tim Maxcy, Recording Secretary Vickie Nemnich, Amy Seiler, Philip Schmitt, and Chris Kautz. Absent Mike Donovan

2. **Open Meeting Act – NEB. REV. STAT. CHAPTER 84, ARTICLE 14**
   As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act available in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Chairperson. As required by State Law, additions may not be made to this agenda less than 24 hours before the beginning of the meeting unless they are considered under this section of the agenda and the board determines that the matter requires emergency action.

3. Visitors: Adam Engelhaupt and Ann Bishop; James Jackson

4. Public Hearings: none

5. Reading and approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of March 23, 2026. Motion to accept made by Chris Kautz and seconded by Philip Schmitt. Motion carried.

6. Reports:
   a. Cemetery: March 2026 report attached. Dustin and Amy met and budgeted money to convert the Buffalo Grass back to regular grass. Using test plots, they will experiment how to kill off the Buffalo Grass and then experiment how they will seed the new grass with Rocky Mountain Bluegrass with rye. Next spring may require some overseeding. Sherry Preston has arranged a tour of the cemetery through the Gering Library with Bill Bolte from Grand Island and it will be on June 16 at 6:30 P.M. to talk about the history and symbolism within the cemetery. We have between 600-900 veterans buried in Westlawn cemetery.
   b. Parks: Ball fields are getting ready. All organizations have paid their rental fees for the ball fields. Still hiring people to work in the parks. We need to put together a proposal to rename Carl Gray Park and to update that area. We will work on getting a master plan together for that area. Don and Vickie will work on that plan.
   c. Trees: We've been busy mulching trees. Gentry is done. Northfield has about 10 more to do. We are doing one park at a time. We have some newer trees damaged in Legion Park that we need to replace and we have more trees to plant in Northfield on the north side to try and prevent cars driving through that area. Pruning is an ongoing thing and Chris and Philip have been doing that. On U Street, WAPA clear cut all the trees within their right of way on U Street without discussing it with the City. Amy sent them a letter that they need to replace 40 trees, grind out all the stumps and do some landscaping in front of the high school at a cost of about $27,000. They have not responded at this time.

7. Unfinished business:
    a. Update on Memorial Tree Program: This needs to be memorial tree, bench, and plaque program. No update at this time. Philip and Chris will work on the pamphlet.
    b. Update on tour of parks: see attached report ; Amy and Vickie did the tour on April 10
    c. Update on historical tour of West Lawn Cemetery: Will meet there in May.

8. New Business:
    a. Perpetual Care fund: discuss continuation of current ordinance and make recommendations to council regarding this fund: 33 1/3% of all cemetery income goes into the perpetual fund each year. The State dictates how it can be used. You can use 20% each year. We have $639,270 in our investments. There is $2,163.00 in the cash account. We do not know how much interest it has gained. We have removed $70,000 from this fund this year. What we would like to propose is that we want to get away from a perpetual care fund and put the 33 1/3% into a sinking fund each year. We would recommend that that balance never be allowed to go below $50,000. Motion made by Chris Kautz that Amy move forward with redoing this ordinance. Seconded by Philip Schmitt. Motion carried.
    b. Eagle Scout Bench project - Adam (AJ) Engelhaupt: Adam provided a PowerPoint of his project. Gentry Park, Hampton Park, and McLellan Park would get 2 benches each. Roundhouse Park and Johannes Park will each get one bench. Some benches will have backs and some will not. Adam will be building them so they can't be made completely of metal but he could make them of composite material. The City will need to put the cement pads in for the benches but Adam will be there to observe that process. Adam will seek out donations to fund this project. The Board recommends going with a gray color composite to stay aligned with other benches in the parks.
    c. Reschedule Walk in the Park: Thursday, May 14, at 5:30 p.m. at Northfield Park.
9. Date, time and place of next meeting: 5:15 p.m. May 18, 2026, **at Cemetery Building.**

OPEN COMMENT: discussion or action by the Park Board regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only.

Motion made by Vickie Nemnich and seconded by Philip Schmitt to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.. Motion carried.

Don Gentry, Chairman

Vicki Nemnich, Park Board Secretary