Parks, Cemetery, and Tree Board Meeting
August 17, 2026

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

2. **Open Meeting Act – NEB. REV. STAT. CHAPTER 84, ARTICLE 14**
As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available current copies of the Open Meetings Act available on the south wall corkboard in the Park Maintenance Facility Conference 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**: none

4. **Public Hearings**: none

5. **Reading and approval of the minutes** of the regular meeting of June 15, 2026. Motion to accept made by Mike Donovan and seconded by Philip Schmitt. Motion carried.

6. **Determine source and method of public notification for Park, Cemetery, and Tree Board meetings**: Motion made by Mike Donovan that we align ourselves with the City Council and publish our meeting notices on the city website. Seconded by Philip Schmitt. Motion carried.

7. **Reports:**
    a. Cemetery: June and July 2026 : see attached reports; we pay water rights to the Gering – Ft. Laramie Irrigation District and because of that we need to be using their water. We believe that the reduction of stress on our water system by using the irrigation canal would be well worth it. Upon checking the overflow pipes, one of them had to be repaired. We are looking at different filtration systems to use on this. The well was replaced by Gering-Ft. Laramie Irrigation district. The electric panel needs to be replaced. It will amount to about $35,000 to make improvements to move over from total City water to ditch water and City water as needed. We are correcting one intersection in the cemetery that will help divert more water off the road and into the cemetery but not shoot gravel out into the cemetery. The main east-west road will be asphalted also. It may be possible that the City Water department may be responsible for some of the cost of the changes to the watering system, but that is still to be determined.

b. **Parks:** Pool closed on August 2, 2026. GPS started softball at Dome Rock Diamond. The West Nebraska Pioneers are no longer at the stadium, but 3 excellent potential teams were interviewed today. The Recreation Committee will make their recommendation to the City Council. More graffiti and vandalism have occurred in the parks. There were irrigation problems in the main lines in many of the parks.
c. **Tree Report:** Philip Schmitt reported that he attended a tree celebration and field day in North Platte. Gering did receive the Tree City USA award for the 36th year. Gering also received the growth award for the 30th year. Philip started watering trees again a month and a half ago and concentrated on memorial trees and grant trees; he has pruned for mower clearance and done tree inspections. By the end of the year, we will probably have removed at least 50 trees. There are 2 trees in Legion Park that got damaged by kids hitting them with baseball bats. They maintained their leaves so Philip put splints on them. One got damaged again and had to be cut off. In Northfield Park Philip cut a bur oak tree and is going to try stump sprouting. A coffee tree in Northfield Park was cut off and it has stump sprouted. We have Japanese beetles on our lindens that we have been observing.

8. **Unfinished business:**
   a. **Update on Memorial Tree Program**: Philip brought a rough draft of a brochure to share that he, along with Chris Kautz and Karen Heins, created.
   b. **Memorial benches**: these are also included in the rough draft of the brochure
   c. **Update on Carl Gray Park:** Dr. Don Gentry presented: see attached report; Phillip suggested that we could overseed the bare spot and perhaps plant a couple of new trees. It was suggested that we make a recommendation to the City Council to change the name of the park to "Liberty Park" and to replace the current sign by applying for Keno funds. We'd like to have an application ready for the February Keno meeting. It was also discussed that the Statue of Liberty be moved onto the City property and put right next to the new sign. A motion was made by Philip Schmitt to form a sub-committee of Mike Donovan and Dr. Don Gentry to start the process to change the name of this park and to apply for keno funds to fund the new sign and the moving of the Statue of Liberty. Seconded by Vickie Nemnich. Motion carried.

9. **New Business:**
   a. **Approve updated rules and regulations for cemetery:** Karen Heins and Amy Seiler put together a new larger format of the rules and regulations for the cemetery, and it will be posted on the website once approved. They also put together a tri-fold brochure for the City to have available that explains general regulations and can be handed out to the public. A motion was made by Vickie Nemnich to accept both items. Seconded by Mike Donovan. Motion carried.

b. **Discuss permanent soccer goals in Oregon Trail Park:** Amy will work with the Gering Public Schools, Gering Booster Club, and Western Nebraska Football to submit a new application for funds to finance the soccer goals.
c. **Discuss scooters and electric bike use in the parks:** It was suggested we do some more research into this matter and discuss it at a future meeting.

10. **Date, time, and place of next meeting:** 5:15 p.m. September 21, 2026, at Park Maintenance 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 Mike Donovan and seconded by Phillip Schmitt to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Motion carried.

Don Gentry, Chairman

Vicki Nemnich, Park Board Secretary