

THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GERING CITY COUNCIL, AUGUST 25, 2025.

A regular meeting of the City Council of Gering, Nebraska was held in open session on August 25, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Gering City Hall, 1025 P Street, Gering, NE. Present were Mayor Ewing and Councilmembers Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. Also present were City Administrator Pat Heath, City Clerk Kathy Welfl, and City Attorney Matt Turman. Absent was Councilmember Kinsey. Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Star-Herald, the designated method of giving notice. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public except as otherwise indicated.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ewing called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated that a quorum of the Council was present and City business could be conducted.

1. Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer
2. Roll Call
3. Excuse councilmember absence (None).

OPEN MEETINGS ACT - NEB.REV.STAT. CHAPTER 84, ARTICLE 14

Mayor Ewing stated: As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Mayor. 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 Council determines that the matter requires emergency action.

CONSENT AGENDA:

(Items under the Consent Agenda are proposed for adoption by one action for all items unless any member of Council requests that an item be considered separately.)

1. Approve minutes of the August 6, 2025 Budget Work Session
2. Approve minutes of the August 11, 2025 regular City Council Meeting
3. Approve Claims
4. Approve the June, 2025 Financial Report

Claims 8/12/25 – 8/25/25

24/7 FITNESS \$233.00, A & A PORTA POTTIES \$600.00, ACE HARDWARE \$1,415.98, ACUSHNET COMPANY \$307.93, AFLAC \$1,391.56, AL'S TOWING, INC \$350.00, AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES \$183.66, AMERICAN LEGAL PUBLISHING \$500.00, AMERITAS LIFE INSURANCE CORP. \$595.72, AT&T MOBILITY \$1,666.38, BEELINE SERVICE NC \$255.00, BENZEL PEST CONTROL \$165.00, BIG MACK HEATING & COOLING \$105.00, BLACK HILLS ENERGY \$1,610.76, BLACKBURN MANUFACTURING CO. \$195.53, BLUFFS FACILITY SOLUTIONS \$881.23, BORDER STATES INDUSTRIES, INC \$3,874.95, BRETHOURS HONEYWAGON EXPRESS \$200.00, BROWN'S SHOE FIT COMPANY \$235.99, CALLAWAY GOLF COMPANY \$757.44, CATTLE BANK & TRUST \$1,050.01, CENGAGE LEARNING/GAGE \$348.24, CITY OF GERING \$804.58, CITY OF SCOTTSBLUFF \$14,195.90, CLARK PRINTING LLC \$106.73, COLUMN SOFTWARE, PBC \$290.15, CORE & MAIN LP \$805.07, CROWNE PLAZA-KEARNEY \$174.95, DEMCO, INC \$89.04, DUTTON-LAINSON COMPANY \$5,662.90, EAKES INC \$229.49, ECOLAB \$411.01, EJS SUPPLY, LLC \$26,454.00, ELITE TOTAL FITNESS \$165.00, ELLISON, KOVARIK & TURMAN LAW \$10,000.00, FAIRFIELD INN \$338.00, FASTENAL COMPANY \$464.04, FAT BOYS TIRE & AUTO \$42.00, FEDEX \$529.47, FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF OMAHA \$9,214.93, FIRST NATIONAL BANK OMAHA - POLICE \$584.00, FLOYD'S TRUCK CENTER, INC. \$876.74, FORT COLLINS WHOLESALE NURSERY \$151.25, FRANK PARTS COMPANY \$656.70, GOLF & SPORT SOLUTIONS \$712.88, GREATAMERICA FINANCIAL SERVICE \$100.00, GROUND UP CONSTRUCTION & CLEAN \$1,882.50, HACH COMPANY \$733.48, HOMETOWN LEASING \$157.23, IDEAL LAUNDRY AND CLEANERS, INC. \$530.74, INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES \$710.12, INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE \$57,596.66, INTOXIMETERS, INC. \$358.75, IRBY TOOL & SAFETY \$2,154.30, J RODZ \$220.00, JC GOLF ACCESSORIES \$727.18, JIRDON AGRI CHEMICALS, INC \$1,851.10, JOHN HANCOCK USA \$17,765.80, JOHN HANCOCK USA FIRE \$873.56, JOHN HANCOCK USA POLICE \$9,386.79, JOHNSON CASHWAY CO. \$167.92, KAYLA GROSS \$10,658.89, KELLY KIRALY \$250.00, KENT EWING \$132.00, LAWSON PRODUCTS \$222.64, LEAGUE OF NE. MUNICIPALITIES \$30,621.00, LEE ENTERPRISES \$132.05, LEGACY COOPERATIVE \$6,686.31, LOGOZ LLC \$1,296.00, LONDON FLATS, LLC \$661.96, MASEK DISTRIBUTING INC \$2,222.39, MATHESON TRI-GAS INC \$126.67, MATTY B'S HVAC \$269.55, MENARDS \$18.36, MIDWEST CONNECT \$4,280.06, MILLER & ASSOCIATES CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C. \$14,500.14, MONUMENT INN & SUITES \$880.00, MUNICIPAL ENERGY AGENCY OF NE \$350,093.09, NC CHILD SUPPORT CENTRALIZED COLLECTIONS \$311.54, NEBRASKA CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT CENTE \$714.93, NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF REV (PR) \$17,729.71, NEBRASKA DEPT OF REVENUE \$1,014.57, NEBRASKA DEPT. OF REVENUE \$69,253.99, NEBRASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRO LAB \$280.00, NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT \$4,549.51, NKC TIRE \$254.66, NORTHWEST PIPE FITTINGS, INC \$833.25, O'REILLY AUTOMOTIVE STORE \$179.33, PANHANDLE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE, INC. \$1,624.00, PANHANDLE HUMANE SOCIETY \$3,168.50, PAT HEATH \$132.00, PAUL REED CONSTRUCTION & SUPP \$430.00, PETE'S QUICK LUBE \$390.28, PIPE

WORKS PLUMBING LLC \$9,420.00, PLATTE VALLEY BANK \$400.00, POWERPLAN OIB \$140.24, PRECISION AIR \$260.00, PT HOSE AND BEARING \$70.37, PVB VISA \$9,012.71, RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT \$33.49, RAPID FIRE PROTECTION \$95.00, REGIONAL CARE INC. \$72,207.61, RIVERSTONE BANK \$560.08, RPM FITNESS \$70.00, RVW INC \$3,221.00, SCB COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS \$40.00, SCB. COUNTY AMBULANCE SERVICE \$316.23, SCOTTSBLUFF-GERING UNITED WAY \$273.02, SCS ENGINEERS \$1,998.75, SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER \$1,000.00, SIMMONS OLSEN LAW FIRM, P.C. \$1,650.00, SIMON CONTRACTORS \$6,236.81, SIMONSEN CONSTRUCTION INC. \$21,080.00, STEVE SHAW \$300.00, TEAM CHEVROLET \$205.20, TERESA TOSH \$25,396.96, TERRY CARPENTER, INC. \$650.00, THE MIXING BOWL \$44.00, THE PRESTWICK GROUP, INC \$1,685.16, THE YOGA COLLECTIVE \$65.00, TITAN MACHINERY INC. \$682.88, UTILITIES SECTION \$5,547.00, VALLEY AUTO LOCATORS LLC \$798.11, VALSTONE CORPORATION, INC. \$5,460.21, W J R INC. \$99,380.00, WESTERN COOPERATIVE COMPANY \$18,920.31, WHITING SIGNS, LLC \$400.00, YMCA OF SCOTTSBLUFF \$962.00, TOTAL \$998,097.86

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to approve the Consent Agenda. Second by Councilmember Frye. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS:

Mayor Ewing moved Resolution Agenda items #3, #4 and #5 up on the agenda as Lauren Garduno, President and CEO of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, was virtually present to discuss the Heartland Expressway agenda items. Mr. Garduno explained that the Alliance represents these three high priority corridors (Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and a portion of Ports-to-Plains) that have been in existence since 1991. This was the next evolution in the interstate system across the country. For over 30 years, the federal government has not had a national vision on what they want to do with the next evolution of interstates across the United States of America. What the Alliance is proposing at this meeting is to help jumpstart that a little bit, and to move the ball a little farther and faster.

The first resolution is supporting a funding mechanism in the new reauthorization of the Federal Highway Program next September in 2026. What they're asking the federal government to do is consider signing another Future Interstate Highway Act like what was done in the 1950s under President Eisenhower and done again in 1968 under President LBJ. That Interstate Highway Act that was signed in those two bills represents the funding that built the interstate system across the United States today. These three corridors run through the midwestern U.S. and basically identifies a potential gap in the interstate system. It runs from Texas all the way up to Canada. He further explained where it "peels" off in different directions at various locations. The first resolution is for a Future Funding Program to be funded at the Federal Transportation Service Bill. This is funding in addition to existing highway money that comes back to the State of Nebraska in a Federal Gas Tax (used to maintain highway systems, bridges and more). This would be additional money coming back to the state at about a 9% or 10% ratio (90% federal, 10% state). Currently today, the Heartland Expressway and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway are not designated as Future Interstate Highways. They only have that designation on the Ports to Plains in Texas and New Mexico. The rest of the corridor in the Midwest is not designated as a future interstate. Even if they're successful in getting this first bill passed (the resolution Council is considering supporting) that would make the funding mechanism available. But then, they have to look at part two and part three for Gering and the Heartland Expressway, and that is to start looking at the feasibility of what it would take to look at bringing the Heartland Expressway, and the Theodore (north of Nebraska), up to future interstate quality standard.

The second resolution is basically supporting a study, a state-level study that Nebraska or North Dakota could sponsor. The funding is \$10,000,000 (federal dollars) to study the feasibility of taking the rest of "our" corridors up to interstate standard. If that feasibility proves to be successful like it was in Texas and New Mexico, they think the evolution and the third step would be the third resolution before Council tonight, supporting the designation of the Heartland and Theodore and the rest of Ports to Plains as a future Interstate 27 Corridor. By doing that, and if they're successful getting the first bill passed in Washington next fall, then all of a sudden, the Heartland Expressway would become eligible for that funding that they're trying to get past in the first resolution Council is supporting. This is the purpose of the three resolutions and why they're trying to do it.

Councilmember Wiedeman commented on the corridor through this part of Nebraska that is basically all four-lane, but in Colorado from Brush south to Amarillo, it's awful. There are areas that drivers cannot pass and it's a terrible stretch of road. She asked if Colorado is going to be on board with this. Mr. Garduno replied that's the nice thing about the feasibility study, they can do the feasibility study with or without Colorado. If it proves that it's viable, they

can get the designation with or without Colorado. Right now, Colorado wants to spend their money on public transit from Denver north. That's part of the purpose of the feasibility study is to show the State of Colorado the benefits of that interstate running all the way from Texas up through Colorado and Nebraska. He thinks if they can bring the funding to bear in that first resolution, Colorado will change their mind on this. Discussion followed regarding the Colorado highways and truck traffic. It's predicted that there is a future need for these highways as there's a \$15,000,000 ag industry on this corridor; there will be a greater need for this corridor. He thinks the feasibility study will prove the need.

Councilmember Morrison asked how far out he's talking before any of this is even started. Mr. Garduno replied when the Interstate and Highway Bill was signed in 1957, it took over 30 years to build the system across the U.S. If they're successful in getting the dedicated funding source next September, they're talking probably about a 20-year build-out on interstate highways across the U.S. Today, there are 23 states that would be eligible for that funding. Their goal is to try to bring the Heartland and Theodore on-line so they can add those states to the eligible funding. It's a 20-year build-out, even if it's totally funded by the Federal Interstate Highway dollars.

Councilmember Shields asked what the feasibility study would cost the City. Mr. Garduno replied that he doesn't think it will cost the City anything. They're not asking for money from the cities that are supporting these resolutions. It's a \$10,000,000 study; they've been successful in getting federal congressional-directed spending out of Nebraska Senators and Congressional Delegation. Senator Fischer has been very supportive of the Heartland Expressway and they plan to reach out to every congressional delegate in each of these five states and ask for a little bit from each state to fund the study, therefore they're not burdening the cities in any way for this study.

Mr. Garduno thanked the Mayor and Council for their support of the Heartland Expressway. Mayor Ewing thanked Mr. Garduno and added that he'd be welcome to come to Gering to provide and update in the future.

3. Approve Resolution 8-25-3 regarding support of the Future Interstate Highway Formula Program

RESOLUTION 8-25-3

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE FUTURE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY FORMULA PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the United States economy must have the world's pre-eminent surface transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the Future Interstate Highway Formula Funding Program will establish a predictable and stable level of federal funding to support development of congressionally authorized Future Interstates and will address the need to focus federal transportation funding on projects that provide national benefit; and

WHEREAS, the Formula Funding Program will provide needed investment in the next generation of the Interstate Highway System to keep pace with growing population and efficient freight movement demands; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Interstate Highway System is to provide a safe, efficient, and high-capacity roadway network for the movement of people and goods; and

WHEREAS, highways meeting interstate standards substantially enhance safety for the traveling public while also addressing emergency evacuation needs; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Future Interstate Highways is to expand and enhance the national transportation network by identifying and developing key corridors that will eventually meet full Interstate Highway standards, with the goal of supporting 1) National Connectivity; 2) Freight and Economic Development; (3) Cross-Border Trade and International Commerce; 4) National Defense; 5) Emergency Evacuation; and 6) Transportation Modernization; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no dedicated federal funding to plan and construct Future Interstate Highways; and

WHEREAS, international trade has grown from \$39 billion in 1956 to \$5.8 trillion in 2023, an increase of 14,700 percent in 67 years, an average annual growth of 219.4 percent; and

WHEREAS, entry into NAFTA (1994) and now USMCA (2020) strengthened trade with Mexico and Canada and as a result land ports of entry became critical -- especially for energy, agriculture, and auto parts trade across North American corridors; and

WHEREAS, initially trade across the United States moved primarily east-west and the original Interstate Highway System was built to serve the east-west movement; and

WHEREAS, today the United States, Canada, and Mexico are each other's largest trade partners for oil, energy, automobiles, electronics, and agricultural goods—and it is common for materials to be procured from one country, produced into goods in a second, and then marketed and sold in a third; and

WHEREAS, the nation's shift from manufacturing-based economy to services and technology; a significant rise in consumer spending, e-commerce, and just-in-time logistics. This growth in freight further highlights that highways are critical for supply chains; and

WHEREAS, despite the authorization of a 40,000-mile Interstate Highway System by Congress in 1944 and the initial designation of 37,700 miles in 1947, the total constructed mileage has significantly fallen short of long-term national mobility demands; and

WHEREAS, by 1960, over 10,000 miles were completed, followed by rapid expansion to 20,000 miles by the mid-1960s, 30,000 miles by 1970, and 40,000 miles by 1980, with 92% of the system completed by 1986; and

WHEREAS, incremental additions brought the system to approximately 42,700 miles in the 1990s, 46,747 miles by the early 2000s, and over 48,000 miles in the 2020s; and

WHEREAS, the modest mileage growth of interstate highways over the past four decades reflects the need for renewed federal commitment to expanding and modernizing the Interstate System to meet 21st-century transportation, economic, and security challenges.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GERING, NEBRASKA that:

Section 1. That the City of Gering supports the proposal to include the Future Interstate Highway Formula Program in the next federal surface transportation authorization bill whereby federal taxpayers' funds are used for the national interest, ensuring a strong Federal role in surface transportation. Interstate Highways were developed as a national interest and Future Interstate Highways should be the same.

Section 2. This resolution to be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

Section 3. If any portion or provision of this resolution shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such portion or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Resolution, the intention being that the same are severable.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk (SEAL)

Motion by Councilmember Wiedeman to approve Resolution 8-25-3 regarding support of the Future Interstate Highway Formula Program. Second by Councilmember Morrison. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

4. Approve Resolution 8-25-4 regarding support of the Future Interstate Feasibility Study for Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and a portion of Ports-to-Plains High Priority Corridors

RESOLUTION 8-25-4

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE FUTURE INTERSTATE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR HEARTLAND EXPRESSWAY, THEODORE ROOSEVELT EXPRESS, AND A PORTION OF PORTS-TO-PLAINS HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDORS

WHEREAS, Congress designated the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas and New Mexico as Future Interstate 27; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation published the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Report on October 15, 2019; and

WHEREAS, current Feasibility Study trends address greater potential including metrics improving connectivity, safety, and mobility; improving travel time and reduce travel time cost; improving freight movement; increasing access to markets for energy and agricultural products; alleviating congestion and improving reliability; facilitating the flow of goods and international trade; creating jobs and economic opportunities; and increasing and expanding the local tax base and state sales tax revenues, than historically used metrics; and

WHEREAS, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Report data showed Corridor annual travel cost savings of \$4.1 billion, annual increase in GDP of \$2.2 billion, and increase in employment of 17,710 for the agriculture, energy, and warehousing industries; and

WHEREAS, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Report data showed a Return on Investment of 76% or \$17.8 billion; and Benefit Cost Ratio / Net Present Value of 2.4 or \$39.2 billion; and

WHEREAS, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Report data showed that development of a Future Interstate Highway in Texas would improve safety and reduce crash rates, leading to approximately 8 percent fewer fatal collisions, 7 percent fewer injury collisions, and 11 percent fewer property damage crashes throughout the corridor each year. These safety improvements result in \$457 million in annual safety benefits according to the TxDOT estimates in addition to saving lives; and

WHEREAS, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Advisory Committee Report results helped the State of Texas and the Texas Department of Transportation to support Future Interstate Designation in Texas; and

WHEREAS, North-South Interstates are a significant distance from the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway: to the west it is 670 miles between U.S. 85 and Interstate 15 and to the east it is over 480 miles between U.S. 85 and Interstate 29; and **WHEREAS**, the Heartland Expressway is 648 miles between NE 71 and Interstate 29; and **WHEREAS**, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is 775 miles between U.S 287 and Interstates 29 and 35; and **WHEREAS**, the proposed Future Interstate Highway Corridor shared major industries that are reliant on agriculture, energy, tourism and trade.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GERING, NEBRASKA:

Section 1. That the City of Gering supports efforts to complete a Future Interstate Feasibility Study in Oklahoma, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana.

Section 2. This resolution to be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

Section 3. If any portion or provision of this resolution shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such portion or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Resolution, the intention being that the same are severable.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk (SEAL)

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to approve Resolution 8-25-4 regarding support of the Future Interstate Feasibility Study for Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and a portion of Ports-to-Plains High Priority Corridors. Second by Councilmember Morrison. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

5. Approve Resolution 8-25-5 regarding support of the Future Interstate Designation for Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and a Portion of the Ports-to-Plains High Priority Corridors and Numbering Future Interstate Segments

RESOLUTION 8-25-5

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FUTURE INTERSTATE DESIGNATION FOR HEARTLAND EXPRESSWAY, THEODORE ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY, AND A PORTION OF PORTS-TO-PLAINS HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDORS AND NUMBERING FUTURE INTERSTATE SEGMENTS

WHEREAS, Congress has already designated the Heartland Expressway (14) in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and South Dakota; Ports-to-Plains Corridor (38) in Oklahoma and Colorado; and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (56) in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana as a High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System; and

WHEREAS, with Texas and New Mexico already designated as Future Interstate 27, this designation would move forward that effort to create a complete north-south corridor serving agriculture production, energy production, tourism, and international trade needs of not only the region, but also the nation; and

WHEREAS, High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System were established in 1991 under Section 1105 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and amended several times since including the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 which reaffirmed and refined the corridors, formally integrating them into the National Highway System and emphasized intermodal connections, national defense, and access to ports and border crossings; and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), 2021, which amended several High Priority Corridors, reaffirming their importance in multimodal freight and economic corridors and encouraged use of these corridors in the development of rural infrastructure, Resilience Improvement Plans, and INFRA and RAISE grant funding; and

WHEREAS, in FHWA Freight and NHS Policy Guidance cited in federal freight strategies for enhancing freight reliability, trade competitiveness, and infrastructure resilience; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Interstate Highway System, formally known as the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, is to provide a safe, efficient, and high-capacity roadway network for the movement of people and goods across the United States. It serves multiple national interests; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Future Interstate Highways is to expand and enhance the national transportation network by identifying and developing key corridors that will eventually meet full Interstate Highway standards, with the goal of supporting: 1) National Connectivity; 2) Freight and Economic Development; 3) Cross-Border Trade and International Commerce; 4) National Defense and Emergency Preparedness; and 5) Transportation Modernization; and

WHEREAS, Future Interstate Highways were created to extend the reach of the existing Interstate System to underserved regions, especially rural and economically isolated areas; create seamless links between major cities, ports, borders, and freight hubs; improve the movement of goods and services, particularly in corridors critical to agriculture, energy, and manufacturing; support economic growth by reducing travel time, transportation costs, and congestion; facilitate efficient trade between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada by connecting ports of entry with inland freight routes; and support the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), ensuring that military and emergency vehicles can travel efficiently across the country; and

WHEREAS, the current Interstate Highway System in the western United States only includes three Interstate Highways (I-29, I-15 and I-5) that extend from Canada to Mexico covering over 1,150 miles of international border; and

WHEREAS, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas and New Mexico are already designated as Future Interstate 27; and

WHEREAS, this designation and route numbering would meet the Federal requirement that Future Interstate which must to connect at an existing Interstate Highway. The Proposed Designation would connect to I-70 in Colorado; I-76 in Colorado; I-80 in Nebraska, I-25 in Wyoming, I-90 in South Dakota and I-94 in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, this designation would create a Future Interstate Highway across three High Priority Corridors on the NHS which would serve \$9.5 billion of Crop Production and \$24.8 billion of Livestock Production; and

WHEREAS, this designation would connect four of the top five oil producing states in the United States; and

WHEREAS, this designation would create a Future Interstate Highway across three High Priority Corridors on the NHS which would serve \$50.7 billion of exports to Canada and \$141.7 billion of exports to Mexico annually from the nine-state corridor; and

WHEREAS, this designation would create a Future Interstate Highway across three High Priority Corridors on the NHS which would serve \$191.3 billion of tourism impact annually across the nine-state corridor; and

WHEREAS, a future Interstate designation will be a significant new economic development tool for communities along the corridor. Site selectors for manufacturers, warehousing and distribution recommend sites along an interstate highway and travel services businesses such as hotels, truck stops, convenience stores and restaurants, which can have a dramatic impact on small communities will also expand. This will create much needed new jobs and expanded tax base across this North America Corridor; and

WHEREAS, while designation as a future interstate is the first step in a very long process before the completion of an interstate highway, that does not lessen the importance of the designation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GERING, NEBRASKA:

Section 1. That the City of Gering supports the designation and route numbering of the Future Interstate by Congress and urges the Departments of Transportation to support such designation and numbering for Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and a portion of Ports-to-Plains High Priority Corridors.

Section 2. This resolution to be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

Section 3. If any portion or provision of this resolution shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unenforceable, the invalidity or unenforceability of such portion or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Resolution, the intention being that the same are severable.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk (SEAL)

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to approve Resolution 8-25-5 regarding support of the Future Interstate Designation for Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, and a Portion of the Ports-to-Plains High Priority Corridors and Numbering Future Interstate Segments. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Going back to Resolution Agenda items #1 and #2:

1. Approve Resolution 8-25-1 regarding the Second Amendment to the Gering Police Officers' Pension Plan

RESOLUTION NO. 8-25-1

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF GERING, NEBRASKA:

- Adoption of Second Amendment to the City of Gering, Nebraska Police Officers' Pension Plan: NOW, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City shall amend and it hereby does adopt a Second Amendment to the City of Gering, Nebraska Police Officers' Pension Plan (the "Plan") in the form of the Second Amendment document attached hereto and by this reference fully incorporated herein.

The purpose of said Amendment is to increase the employee contributions required under the Plan to 9% of the Employee's Compensation, effective October 1, 2025, in accordance with 2025 Nebraska Legislative Bill 179, and to make such other amendments as the City deems necessary and desirable.

2. **Authorizations:** NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and other appropriate elected officials and officers of the City of Gering shall be, and they hereby are, authorized to do all things necessary to carry out and accomplish the foregoing Resolution, including the execution of any document or amendment which may be necessary or appropriate to amend and administer the Plan, including such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to achieve and maintain qualification of the Plan under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, as said sections apply to government plans.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2025.

CITY OF GERING, NEBRASKA

By: _____
Its: _____

ATTEST:

City Clerk (SEAL)

Motion by Councilmember O'Neal to approve Resolution 8-25-1 regarding the Second Amendment to the Gering Police Officers' Pension Plan. Second by Councilmember Frye. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

2. Approve Resolution 8-25-2 regarding transitioning from a self-funded health insurance plan to a fully-funded health insurance plan with United Healthcare

RESOLUTION NO. 8-25-2

**RESOLUTION TO TRANSITION FROM A SELF-FUNDED HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN
TO A FULLY-FUNDED HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN WITH UNITED HEALTHCARE**

Recitals:

- a. A Plan Document and Summary Plan Description ("plan document"), made by the City of Gering ("plan sponsor") as of June 1, 2020, which set forth the provisions of the City of Gering Health and Dental Plan (the "plan"), was originally adopted by the City of Gering effective June 1, 1992.
- b. The Plan Sponsor established the Plan for the benefit of eligible employees and their eligible dependents, in accordance with the terms and conditions described in the Plan Document. Plan benefits are funded solely from the general assets of the Plan Sponsor (self-funded plan). Participants in the Plan are required to contribute toward their benefits. Contributions received from participants are used to cover Plan costs.
- c. The Plan Sponsor's purpose in establishing the Plan is to protect eligible employees and their dependents against certain health expenses and to help defray the financial effects arising from injury or sickness.
- d. Due to a substantial increase in claims, it has come to the attention of the Plan Sponsor that premiums will become cost-prohibitive in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.
 - i. The bid for the current plan renewal for fiscal year 2025/2026 is \$2,881,425.
 - ii. This is an increase of \$856,802 for the next fiscal year if the Plan Sponsor remains with the current self-funded plan.
 - iii. Remaining with the current plan would result in substantial premium increases to the Plan Sponsor and participants.
- e. It has been determined to be in the best interest of the Plan Sponsor and its participants to change from a self-funded plan to a fully-funded plan at the end of the current fiscal year.
 - i. Moving to a fully-funded plan will ensure premium costs remain affordable with a cost savings of \$1,094,060.
 - ii. The result will be a minimal increase in premium costs for Plan Participants.

Resolved:

1. Effective October 1, 2025, the Plan Sponsor will replace the existing self-funded plan with a fully-funded plan.
2. The Plan Sponsor will continue to reevaluate the plan annually and may determine to return to a self-funded plan in the future.
3. The Dental Plan will remain with the current provider as a self-funded plan.
4. The Mayor or City Administrator are each hereby authorized to sign documents to move to United Healthcare and renew all other current lines of coverages prior to October 1, 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

(Seal)

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to approve Resolution 8-25-2 regarding transitioning from a self-funded health insurance plan to a fully-funded health insurance plan with United Healthcare. Second by Councilmember Morrison.

Discussion: Councilmember Morrison asked, when the City changes back as it may do, will there be another resolution to undo what Council is doing now, in the future? Administrator Heath replied, yes. City legal counsel felt that because this was such a substantial change, a resolution was needed to go from self-funded to fully-funded and the City would have to do the same to change back to a self-funded plan.

Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, Morrison. "NAYS": O'Neal, Jackson. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

BIDS/PROPOSALS:

1. Award bid for the 2025 P Street Storm Sewer Improvements – Wastewater Department

Engineer Folck stated that this project was budgeted for in Fiscal Year 2025. Because it may spill over into Fiscal Year 2026, it was carried over. This project is for the P Street storm sewer in front of City Hall between 10th and 11th Street. There's a deteriorating storm sewer there; it's an old corrugated metal pipe. Staff have tried cleaning it out, but there's also a jog in there, so it can't be properly cleaned. There have been some back-ups and issues due to that. It was designed and advertised; the City received two bids. The low bid was from Mark Chrisman Trucking for \$79,392. It was a little bit higher than the engineer's estimate of \$74,620. It's also slightly higher than the \$75,000 that was budgeted. However, Public Works Director, Mike Davies, is comfortable with that because he has plenty of money in that fund.

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to award the 2025 P Street Storm Sewer Improvements bid for the Wastewater Department to Mark Chrisman Trucking, Inc. in the amount of \$79,392.00. Second by Councilmember Jackson. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

CURRENT BUSINESS:

1. Ratify Interlocal Agreement Establishing the Western Nebraska Regional Land Bank approved on February 14, 2022

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to Ratify the Interlocal Agreement Establishing the Western Nebraska Regional Land Bank approved on February 14, 2022. Second by Councilmember O'Neal. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

2. Ratify Land Bank Board Members: Tony Kaufman, John Stinner, Brady Shaul, Amy Newman, Kelsey Molina, Nan Garrett

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to Ratify Land Bank Board Members: Tony Kaufman, John Stinner, Brady Shaul, Amy Newman, Kelsey Molina, Nan Garrett. Second by Councilmember Gillen. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye,

Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

3. Consider FY26 Outside Agency Funding Requests:

- Gering Senior Center, \$18,000.00 (requested and received \$12,000.00 last year)
- HEA (Heartland Expressway Association), \$2,971.44 (requested and received \$3,052.08 last year)
- Keep Scottsbluff/Gering Beautiful, \$5,000.00 (requested and received \$5,000.00 last year)
- PADD (Panhandle Area Development District), \$7,536.32 (requested and received \$7,536.32 last year)
- RDC (Riverside Discovery Center), \$60,000.00 (requested and received \$50,000.00 last year)
- Scotts Bluff County Transit, \$5000.00 (requested and received \$5000.00 last year)
- TCD (Twin Cities Development), \$50,000.00 (requested and received \$50,000.00 last year)
- United Chamber of Commerce, \$4,129.00 (requested and received \$4,129.00 last year)

Motion by Councilmember Wiedeman to fund the Gering Senior Center at \$18,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Morrison. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to fund the Heartland Expressway at \$2,971.44 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Morrison. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Wiedeman to fund Keep Scottsbluff/Gering Beautiful at \$5,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Jackson. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to fund Panhandle Area Development District at \$7,536.32 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman.

Discussion: Councilmember O'Neal noted a comment that there was a need to utilize PADD more in the future; she asked if there was a plan for that. Administrator Heath replied that staff are hoping to utilize them more for grant applications and possibly, if additional funding can be developed, more Community Development Block Grants - especially for facade improvements.

Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Frye to fund the Riverside Discovery Center at \$60,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Gillen. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to fund Scotts Bluff County Transit at \$5,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember O'Neal. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to fund Twin Cities Development at \$50,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Morrison.

Discussion: Dale Hauck, present in the audience, addressed Council and asked "What do we get for \$50,000?" He asked if "twin cities" means Scottsbluff and Gering. Administrator Heath replied that Twin Cities Development is the City's only economic development recruiter for Gering. The City pays them \$50,000 to try and recruit new

business, manufacturing and other businesses to the Gering area. They also assist with LB840 applications and with other projects the City performs. If the City didn't utilize them, the City would have to hire an Economic Development Director, and that would be well over a \$100,000.00 position. TCD is out actively recruiting for the City of Gering. The funding for this comes out of the LB840 Half Cent Sales Tax Fund that was last adopted by the public in 2018.

Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to fund the United Chamber of Commerce at \$4,129.00 for Fiscal Year 2026. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman.

Discussion: Councilmember Jackson asked, what does the City receive for this \$4,129.00? Administrator Heath replied that the Chamber has put on the State of the Valley annually. They work with local businesses and support them. Councilmember Jackson asked if there is a return on investment for this or is it just helping them put on the State of the Valley. Administrator Heath replied that each city puts their own presentation together, the Chamber groups it altogether and reserves the location. They do host a couple of events at the Civic Center each year. Councilmember Wiedeman added that they've helped in the past with the City's sales tax initiatives. Councilmember Jackson asked if they will assist the City with that this year. Administrator Heath replied that they will be asked (when the sales tax renews). Councilmember Gillen asked if the level of service, that the City has historically been used to, changed in recent years regarding the City's investment. Administrator Heath replied he didn't know what it was prior to him coming on, but it hasn't changed much since he has been the Administrator. He thinks the City is receiving close to the same level of service with the new director as with the previous one.

Mayor Ewing called for the vote. AYES": Shields, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": Gillen. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION: (Council reserves the right to enter into closed session if deemed necessary.) None.

OPEN COMMENT: Discussion or action by Council regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only.

RDC Director, Kei Hodgson, thanked the Mayor and Council for seeing the vision for what they have going at the Zoo. He invited Council to come out and see what they are working on, if they haven't already.

Jerry Cline, Vice-President of the Gering Senior Center, thanked the Mayor and Council for their past and continued support. They deliver hundreds of meals, and that number is going to continue to grow.

ADJOURN:

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to adjourn. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Frye, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Kinsey. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

ATTEST:


Kathleen J. Welfl, City Clerk




Kent E. Ewing, Mayor