

## THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GERING CITY COUNCIL, MAY 11, 2026

A regular meeting of the City Council of Gering, Nebraska was held in open session on May 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at Gering City Hall, 1025 P Street, Gering, NE. Present were Mayor Ewing and Councilmembers Shields, Gillen, Cecil, Kinsey, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. Also present were City Administrator Pat Heath, City Clerk Kathy Welfl, and City Attorney Jim Ellison. 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 Council Member 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 April 27, 2026 regular City Council Meeting
2. Approve Claims

#### CLAIMS 4-28-26 TO 5-11-26

PLUMBING SOLUTIONS \$14,650.00 ,911 CUSTOMS \$14,491.84, ACE HARDWARE \$349.33, ACUSHNET COMPANY \$371.78, ADVANCED SERVICES, INC. \$577.51, ALLO COMMUNICATIONS \$3,656.48, AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES \$579.17, AMERITAS LIFE INSURANCE CORP. \$618.86, AT&T MOBILITY \$384.21, B & S RASK GRILL \$5,792.80, BENCHMARK GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS, LLC \$78.70, BENZEL PEST CONTROL \$258.21, BERGANKDV \$77,124.00, BLACK HILLS ENERGY \$2,456.44, BLACKBURN MANUFACTURING CO. \$627.45, BLUFFS FACILITY SOLUTIONS \$221.75, BORDER STATES INDUSTRIES, INC \$30,207.08, BRANDED BILLS \$494.04 ,CALLAWAY GOLF COMPANY \$3,755.09, CAMPSHOT \$760.14, CENGAGE LEARNING/GAGE \$(7.15), CENTURY BUSINESS PRODUCTS, INC \$149.08, COLLABORATIVE SUMMER LIBRARY PROG. \$417.68, COLUMN SOFTWARE, PBC \$142.64, CONNECTING POINT \$10.63, CONTRACTORS MATERIALS, INC. \$195.20, COZAD SIGNS, LLC \$150.00, CRESCENT ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO. \$18.72, CROELL, INC., \$23,575.00, CROSSCOUNTRY COURIER INC \$297.53, DEARBORN LIFE INSURANCE COMPAN \$113.52, DEMCO, INC. \$306.28, DOOLEY OIL \$1,150.50, DUTTON-LAINSONCOMPANY \$3,989.57, EAKES INC \$19.97, EAST PENN MANUFACTURING CO.\$121.30, FASTANAL COMPANY \$285.61, FAT BOYS TIRE & AUTO \$798.00, FEDEX \$169.22, FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF OMAHA \$10,671.53, FIRST NATIONAL BANK OMAHA – POLICE \$584.00, FLOYD'S TRUCK CENTER, INC. \$108.92, FRANCISCOS BUMPER TO BUMPER IN \$230.00, FRANK PARTS COMPANY \$614.80, FYR-TEK, INC. \$80.00, GALLS, AN ARAMARK COMPANY \$127.48, GARRETT TIRES & TREADS \$2,347.35, GERING VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT. \$573.72, GOLF & SPORT SOLUTIONS \$1,693.72, GROUND UP CONSTRUCTION & CLEAN \$4,182.50, HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS \$143.90, HAWKINS, INC. \$11,583.34, HEALTHBREAK, INC. \$625.00, IDEAL LAUNDRY AND CLEANERS, INC. \$791.56, INDEPENDENT PLUMBING & HEATING \$93.00, INDOFF INCORPORATED \$163.64, INFINITY CONSTRUCTION INC. \$17,259.20, INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES \$1,530.01, INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE \$55,623.63, INTRALINKS, INC. \$7,617.18, IRBY TOOL & SAFETY \$4,074.74 ,J & A TRAFFIC PRODUCTS \$621.80, JEO CONSULTING GROUP \$400.00,JOHN HANCOCK USA \$21,620.34, JOHN HANCOCK USA FIRE \$1,075.74, JOHN HANCOCK USA POLICE \$10,973.69 ,L.L. JOHNSON DISTRIBUTING \$705.08, LAWSON PRODUCTS \$118.65, LEAGUE ASSOC./RISK MANAGEMENT \$2,162.67, LEGACY COOPERATIVE \$9,287.07, LITTLE IT HOUSE \$1,069.20, LOGOZ LLC \$16.00 ,MACQUEEN EQUIPMENT, LLC \$279.68, MAGPUL INDUSTRIES CORP \$367.10, MARK CHRISMAN TRUCKING \$9,944.10, MATHESON TRI-GAS INC \$326.39, MENARDS \$788.12, MIDWEST CONNECT \$3,902.33, MOBIUS COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY \$30.00, MONUMENT SHADOWS MENS GOLF \$2,540.00, MUNICIPAL SUPPLY, INC. OF NE. \$2,271.71, MUTUAL OF OMAHA \$5,924.50, NC CHILD SUPPORT CENTRALIZED COLLECTIONS \$53.19, NEBRASKA DEPT. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY \$250.00, NEBRASKA CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT CENTE \$714.93, NKC TIRE \$128.40, NORTHWEST PIPE FITTINGS, INC \$1,487.93, OAK JAY \$6,965.00, ONE CALL CONCEPTS, INC \$90.77, O'REILLY AUTOMOTIVE STORE \$18.99, PANHANDLE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE, INC. \$4,305.00 ,PANHANDLE POWER SYSTEMS LLC \$300.00 ,PAUL REED \$4,586.25, POMP'S TIRE SERVICE INC \$271.74, POWERPLAN OIB \$183.82 ,PRAISE WINDOWS \$350.00 ,PROTEX CENTRAL, INC. \$1,117.48, PSI DIGITAL IMAGING SOLUTIONS \$1,153.05 ,PT HOSE AND BEARING \$904.76, R & C WELDING & FABRICATION \$545.00 , REGIONAL CARE INC. \$507.50, RIVERSTONE BANK \$647.67, RMA ARMAMENT INC \$1,115.36, SANDBERG IMPLEMENT, INC.\$6,640.74, SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY COURT \$331.06, SCOTTSBLUFF POLICE DEPARTMENT \$380.00, SCOTTSBLUFF-GERING UNITED WAY \$226.34, SE MUNICIPAL SOLAR (NE), LLC \$9,497.69, SHERWIN WILLIAMS \$297.46, SIMON CONTRACTORS \$2,402.65, TEAM CHEVROLET \$600.00,

TERESA TOSH \$19,288.25 ,THE TORO COMPANY \$315.00, TITAN MACHINERY INC. \$501.60, TNEMEC COMPANY, INC. \$924.36, TRANSWEST \$221.39, TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$395.00, UNITED HEALTH CARE \$139,590.69, VALLEY AUTO LOCATORS LLC \$1,546.11, VERIZON WIRELESS SERVICES, LLC \$233.14, WESCO RECEIVABLES CORP. \$4,858.46, WESTERN COOPERATIVE COMPANY \$7,631.61. TOTAL: \$606,079.96

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

## **CURRENT BUSINESS:**

### **1. Presentation of National Police Week Proclamation**

Mayor Ewing read the following proclamation aloud:

#### **PROCLAMATION OF SUPPORT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**

WHEREAS: In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15 as National Police Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week in which May 15th falls as National Police Week; and,

WHEREAS: There are more than 800,000 law enforcement officers serving in communities across the United States, including the dedicated members of the Gering Police Department, Scottsbluff Police Department, Scotts Bluff County Sheriff's Office, Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the United States Park Service; and,

WHEREAS: Law enforcement officers play an integral role in our society. They are the guardians of our way of life and they deserve our support; and,

WHEREAS: Being a law enforcement officer, one must be professional, courteous, caring and yet be ready to protect the public at all times. Officers must be prepared to make life and death decisions in a moment's notice and take an amazing amount of abuse at times, but view this abuse as just "part of the job." They do not have the liberty to express emotions during many situations; and,

WHEREAS: In spite of improved training, equipment, and protocols, officers can still face fatal risks on duty. The law enforcement profession places officers in unpredictable, high-stakes situations where danger can escalate quickly; and,

WHEREAS: Since the first reported death in 1786, there are currently more than 24,775 law enforcement officers in the United States that have been killed in the line of duty. The names of those dedicated public servants are engraved on the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial in Washington, D.C. including James Harvey Ray who was killed in the line of duty in Gering on August 7, 1959; and,

WHEREAS: To recognize National Police Week 2026, and to honor the service and sacrifice of those law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, while protecting our communities and safeguarding our democracy,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on this 11th day of May, 2026, that the City of Gering will recognize and honor May 11-16, 2026 as National Police Week.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kent Ewing, Mayor

Chief of Police, George Holthus, thanked the Council and introduced the officers who were present: Officer Jared Shepard, Sgt. Brian Eads, Sgt. Travis Enlow, Officer Dale Schneider, Officer Chris Thompson, and Captain Jason Rogers. He stated that the members of the Gering Police Department are vital to the service they provide to the community. The support they receive from the Mayor and Council is very important. He invited the Mayor and Council to attend a memorial ceremony at the American Legion Pavillion at West Lawn Cemetery at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, May 15; he added that it's open to the public as well.

### **2. Discussion regarding Safe Streets for All Grant Application**

City Engineer, Annie Folck, stated that the City completed its Safe Streets Plan and it was adopted in March. The goal of the plan was to try to get implementation funds. The number one priority project in the plan is 10<sup>th</sup> Street. City staff have been fortunate to connect with the Nebraska DOT Infrastructure Hub; they have been helping staff with the grant application because they are very involved and have consultants that are also providing services free of charge in order to put the grant application together. Staff felt it was important to have a discussion about what

the City wants to apply for and what that roadway would look like if the City was able to get this grant and was able to do this project.

Jon Markt, Senior Engineer/Transportation Planner with HDR Engineering, a consultant for the Nebraska Department of Transportation Infrastructure Hub, joined the meeting via Zoom and discussed the 10<sup>th</sup> Street SS4A Implementation Grant. Engineer Markt explained that there is \$687,800,000 in funding available for implementation. They expect 40 to 70 awards; roughly one per state. The expected funding range is \$2.5 million to \$25 M. Federal funding is 80% with a required 20% local match. The key consideration for this discussion is to define the 10<sup>th</sup> Street project to request SS4A funds. He then presented a slide show.

#### **SS4A Eligibility:**

##### Eligible:

- Implement projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan that address roadway safety problems.
- Perform planning, design, and development activities for projects and strategies identified in an Action Plan.

##### Ineligible:

- Maintenance activities for an existing roadway primarily to maintain a state of good repair. However, roadway modifications on an existing roadway in support of specific safety-related projects identified in an Action Plan are eligible activities.

#### **SS4A Rules – Merit:**

1. Safety need, 2. Safety impact, 3. Engagement and collaboration, and 4. Implementation cost. Mr. Markt added that highly recommended applications will rate high in 3+ of these categories. Safety impact must also rate high.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> Street Options:**

1. U Street to Twin City Drive north
2. M Street to U Street

- The M Street to U Street (south) option is estimated at \$16 M to \$17.7M and is likelier to be “highly recommended” for merit.
- The U Street to Twin City Drive (north) option with existing conditions and new sidewalk added is estimated at \$21.6 M to \$23.8 M and is unlikely to pass merit review (questionable eligibility).
- The U Street to Twin City Drive option with three lanes and a new sidewalk is estimated at \$18.4M to \$20.3 M and likely to be “recommended” for merit.

Engineer Markt further elaborated on the options and noted that regarding the road diet, FHWA data shows that reconfiguring a roadway from four lanes to three lanes can reduce crashes by up to 47%. FHWA reports safety benefits for this strategy on roads with current and future average daily traffic (ADT) of up to 25,000. The 10<sup>th</sup> Street ADT is between 11,000 and 13,500 with the recent traffic counts. Benefits include traffic calming, improved safety, mobility and access for all roads users, and enhanced quality of life.

Councilmember Morrison asked if there is a record of how many accidents have occurred on 10<sup>th</sup> Street from the railroad tracks going towards Scottsbluff. Engineer Folck replied that some of that information is in the Safe Streets Plan. It was also on a map in the slides presented by Mr. Markt. There are not as many crashes in the north segment as there are in the downtown segment, which is why that would probably score a little lower. The reason staff are focusing on the north section of road is because the match would be some of the half cent sales tax revenue for infrastructure; the downtown segment was not on the radar when the half cent sales tax was passed. There are some injury and severe injury crashes on that segment and that's why 10<sup>th</sup> Street as a whole came out as a top priority in the plan.

Councilmember Jackson asked how much the City has for the match. Engineer Folck replied that right now, the City has roughly \$2,000,000 - cash on hand. The half cent sales tax generates about \$600,000 per year; it would be two to three years at least before construction would start because the project would have to go through design, environmental studies, etc. Staff believe the City would have the match available by the time it would come due. Councilmember Jackson inquired if Union Pacific would assist with the section near the tracks. Engineer Folck replied that staff hasn't talked to UP regarding financial contributions. Mr. Markt interjected that the City should

plan on funding it; it would be an eligible expense. It's possible there could be a cost-share, but the safer approach is to assume it will be on the City.

Councilmember Wiedeman asked how close the cost estimates are. Mr. Markt replied they are projected high and there's a fairly substantial contingency. She responded that this wouldn't happen for several years and there would be inflation. Mr. Markt noted that inflation has been built into the estimates. Once a number is proposed to the U.S. DOT, they'll lock the City into that number. They put in escalators for a late start and a contingency that would cover a number of factors.

Councilmember Gillen stated that he was recently stopped at a train on the north side of the tracks for two full trains. By the time the crossarms went up, traffic was backed up past Snell's, probably down to the Valley Event Center. His concern is, if the City goes down to one lane on both sides, it's going to encourage people to go through the underpass and/or overpass consequently bypassing Gering's downtown district. The goal is to make it "safe for all" so people will want to be in the downtown, but the City also doesn't want to encourage people to go around the community to avoid being stuck at a railroad crossing. His other concern is, with the close proximity of the light, if this goes down to one lane, it could triple the amount of time it will take to get from Scottsbluff into Gering. He appreciates that there will be plenty of room for trucks to turn into businesses, but he's concerned Gering will be pushing people away from the downtown area. Engineer Folck replied that options regarding those concerns were discussed. Mr. Markt explained that while they're trying to comply with U.S. DOT and recommendations for a preferred three-lane cross section, that doesn't mean every part of the project needs to be down to three lanes. There's a possibility when the project is designed, the right of way in that area can stay wider in that section and keep both of those lanes; there are certainly options on the table. There may also be things that can be done with the signal as well to make sure it's clearing traffic appropriately. The idea is not to lose operations at that one crossing just because half a mile north of that crossing, it goes down to fewer lanes and wider sidewalks; trade-offs are available.

Councilmember Shields stated that the highway is busy almost all day long; she has concerns about rear-ending occurring when people slow down to turn into businesses along that highway because people don't pay attention and there's a long line of cars already. Mr. Markt replied, from the program perspective, the structure of the program focuses on severe crashes. Rear-end crashes are generally less severe than any type of crash. They have a sense of what is good federal use of funds. Replacing a five-lane with a five-lane for this level of traffic is not likely to be seen that way. The City can certainly consider keeping more lanes for cutting down on that risk, but he would say that this program is not going to be the right one for the City in that case, and it's not consistent with some of the work Engineer Folck has done.

Councilmember Gillen asked for clarification that if the City applied for the grant and for some reason another project is selected, that doesn't mean that this is the design going forward - everything being done at this time is contingent upon this project being selected. It doesn't mean it's going to three lanes, it means it's a possibility if the City should receive grant money. Engineer Folck replied, absolutely; if the grant isn't received, the City obviously doesn't have \$20,000,000 to put into a project like this. Staff would go back to what was being looked at for 10<sup>th</sup> Street previously which is a mill and overlay and to redo the curb and gutter. It would be a band-aid and would last approximately 15 years and then the City will be doing it again. It's unknown where that money would come from. She added that this opportunity is very appealing. Administrator Heath added that the concrete that was originally replaced on that street will fail. Someday it will have to be a complete R & R (remove and replace).

Administrator Heath stated the proposed changes on 10<sup>th</sup> Street would be very similar to Ave. I in Scottsbluff between 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The difference is, going northbound, it widens out to two lanes and there's a center turn lane; this would be very similar to that. He was recently driving south on Ave. I from 27<sup>th</sup> and there was a train on the crossing. He was at 26<sup>th</sup> Street, roughly four blocks north of the tracks. It cleared fairly fast - the signal does create some issues there. The traffic counts are pretty close to the same there as on 10<sup>th</sup> Street according to the DOT. Avenue I is a good comparison. Gering has a few more trucks turning on and off 10<sup>th</sup> Street than Ave. I has because they don't have much truck traffic on that street. If Council is fine with the traffic on Ave. I, then they should be fine with the traffic on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The only time there will be disruption is when there are trains, especially double trains. He noted that the 10<sup>th</sup> and U Street light was changed last year and it can be reconfigured; he explained the cameras on the light and how it works.

Engineer Folck added that this would certainly change the character of the road, it used to be about the only way to get between Scottsbluff and Gering. However, with the other by-passes now (Five Rocks and the overpass), 10<sup>th</sup> Street is less of a through passage and may become more of a local roadway. Councilmember Gillen agreed, but it's the close proximity (of the tracks) to the light that creates issues.

Councilmember Jackson stated that they're talking about the safe street act, not the safe convenience act. This is making it safe, not convenient. "If we're looking at making our streets safer, then this is the plan we probably want to go with."

Councilmember Wiedeman noted the premise for Safe Streets for All and why they're looking at this - "We all know that N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street is not the most beautiful street in our area. When our current pathway system went in, it was more for recreation." She added with inflation and other things going on, a lot more people are riding their bikes or walking to work. This would be one of the more direct routes from Gering to Scottsbluff, or Scottsbluff to Gering. Safe Streets for All is not only for cars but for those that are bicyclists and those walking. With all the drive-ways on that road now, it's very dangerous. Hopefully that would change if it did go down to three lanes and designated bike lanes on the outside; that would give them some separation from the traffic. She doesn't think that street is safe for people in electric wheelchairs as well. She's not a fan of three lanes either, but it would make the street safer for those on bikes, wheelchairs or those who are walking, and would provide separation from the traffic. Administrator Heath added that the 10<sup>th</sup> Street river bridge is the only crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Megan Barhafer with Panhandle Public Health District addressed Council and stated that they wrote a letter of support for this project. She wanted to share some points from the Public Health perspective; their agency has worked closely with the Tri-Cities Active Living Advisory Committee that serves Gering, Terrytown, and Scottsbluff. It has been discussed that this is really about preventing the most dangerous types of crashes. From a public health perspective, injury prevention is a large concern in the area because of low seatbelt usage and other factors which result in a higher injury rate. Also, designing streets so that human error is less likely to occur is the best way to move forward with having safe streets. It also serves as chronic disease prevention. "When folks feel unsafe walking or biking because of speed or traffic volume, they choose not to do those things and if we can encourage them to do those things, that also makes our communities healthier overall." Transportation policies that make walking, biking, and rolling easier, helps residents build active lifestyles. She added "If we can help folks feel confident riding their bicycles on the streets, it makes it safer for those on the sidewalk as well."

The walk audits they've been involved with have touched on many different parts of Gering but one of the largest sections is 10<sup>th</sup> Street. They've previously done walk audits along 10<sup>th</sup> Street; nothing has been done on 10<sup>th</sup> Street to alleviate the concerns that were noticed - especially for young children and families using these roadways. Again, not everyone drives and 10<sup>th</sup> Street is the most direct route to get between the various cities. The theme they see over and over again in the walk audits is that mobility devices (bikes, scooters, etc.) don't have safe accessibility to use the roadways. She expressed her hope that the Council would move forward with Safe Streets for All.

Councilmember O'Neal clarified that there's only, maybe, one of these (grants) given out in the state. Engineer Folck replied, some states may get multiple, some may not get any - on average there's probably going to be roughly one per state. There's no guarantee there will be one in Nebraska. There could be one in Nebraska, or there could be two, it just depends on how Gering scores. Councilmember O'Neal asked, if the City does apply for this and didn't receive it, is there a plan in place for safe streets without this? Engineer Folck replied if the City redoes 10<sup>th</sup> Street, the curb and gutter have to be redone, and staff hope to make changes to improve the sidewalks - but it won't be to this degree. Unfortunately, the City won't have the funding to do it on this scale. Staff would try to address the safety issues within the limits of what *can* be done. "We'd like to re-stripe downtown because that was one of the big concerns in the walk audits that have been done." She added the junior high crossing for kids is not a good situation. That is something staff are looking into - re-striping there. Additionally, in the next month or two, the new flashing beacons will be installed. Staff hope those will be effective; if they are, it may be something the City will look into for other parts of town as well. Councilmember O'Neal noted that even if this happens, it's several years out; she was hoping something could be done sooner (for safety). Engineer Folck replied that staff are doing what they can. The first step will be the beacons; those will be up this summer. Staff will also have discussions regarding a good timeline for the downtown portion. Administrator Heath added that it would probably be 2027 or 2028 before the City would have the funds to make improvements on North 10<sup>th</sup> Street if the grant isn't approved.

Councilmember Gillen asked if it would be helpful to talk to the schools to help encourage students to use crosswalks and to know where it is and isn't safe to cross. Ms. Folck replied that Jennifer Sibel with the Gering Schools is on the Safe Streets for All Committee and this is something they've talked to her about. She's more than happy to help promote education about crosswalks, where they are and how they work and why it's safer to go to certain crossings over others.

Darrell Bentley addressed Council and stated "We have to think about the fact that the largest concentration of truck traffic in the Scottsbluff-Gering area is from the ditch to the railroad tracks in Gering." He added that it isn't as much as it was at one time, but there is still a lot. If everybody is in one line, they're going to be stacked up at the railroad tracks and getting trucks on and off that road isn't going to be handy. He believes that's something that Council needs to keep in mind, too. He noted that there is 7<sup>th</sup> Street for some of them to get in and out, but not all of them come that way. Those companies along there need their truck traffic; he further talked about safety concerns with trucks needing room to get in and out of there.

Councilmember Wiedeman clarified that this option is probably the only choice the Council has if they want to apply for this grant. Ms. Folck replied, correct.

Mayor Ewing entertained a motion regarding a recommendation for one of the options presented.

**Motion by Councilmember Jackson to go with the three lanes on north 10<sup>th</sup> Street to get to the recommended level. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman.**

**Discussion:** Councilmember O'Neal asked if staff have discussed with any of the businesses on that corridor about what would be impacted if it went to three lanes. Engineer Folck replied yes, she and Administrator Heath made some phone calls and talked to some of the businesses. Nobody loves it, it's not going to be a popular change, but most of them were pretty understanding of where the City is at with funding and trying to keep it maintained as well. With regard to people trying to turn out on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, the alleyway behind B & C Steel that goes to the City's water plant, would likely be used more often with truck traffic, which the City has no issue with. On the east side (of North 10<sup>th</sup> Street), there is more access because there are a lot more cross streets which helps alleviate some of the issues for those businesses. She added that it's not ideal by any means; it will make things more inconvenient. Councilmember Wiedeman commented that they're probably not happy either way, but the City has to do something with that street. Engineer Folck agreed and stated that's the hard part; trying to keep well-maintained roads is not cheap. Thinking long-term how the City would fund this is a tough call, and they understand that. Councilmember O'Neal clarified that if this grant doesn't go through, the plan is to do a mill and overlay in 2027. Administrator Heath replied, 2027 or 2028 – mill and overlay and replacement of curb and gutter. Engineer Folck added that most likely the design will be done in 2027, which will give the City a better idea of what to budget for that. Councilmember O'Neal clarified that that would be the same construction (as it is now) with two lanes both ways; Engineer Folck replied affirmatively. She stated the City will budget the Safe Streets match this next year, or at least a portion of what would come due, and then if the City finds out the grant wasn't awarded, the budgeted funds will then be used for the design and construction of the mill and overlay. Discussion followed about a design that would accommodate four lanes closer to the tracks for businesses that are nearby (if the grant were to be approved).

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

**3. Consider approving Resolution 5-26-1 to adopt a target year for Vision Zero**

**RESOLUTION NO. 5-26-1**

WHEREAS, the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary grant program was established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) with the primary purpose of improving roadway safety by significantly reducing or eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries through safety action plan development, refinement, and implementation focused on all users; and,

WHEREAS, on December 19, 2024, the City of Gering, Nebraska was awarded SS4A planning & demonstration grant funding by the U.S. Department of Transportation for the creation of a comprehensive safety action plan (CSAP); and,

WHEREAS, on MARCH 23, 2026 the City of Gering, Nebraska adopted by resolution a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, entitled the City of Gering Safe Passage Initiative Safe Streets and Roads for All Safety Action Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Gering developed this Comprehensive Safety Action Plan with input from regional stakeholders, member agencies, the public, the Nebraska Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration and in accordance with the requirements of the SS4A discretionary grant program; and,

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan will serve as the foundation for future safety investments, guide the prioritization of strategies and projects, position the City to pursue federal SS4A implementation grant funding, and advance the City's commitment to achieving zero fatalities and serious injuries within Gering city limits by the year 2050.

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

**Section 1.** Commitment to Vision Zero. The City of Gering, Nebraska hereby adopts a target year of 2050 for achieving zero fatal and serious injury crashes within Gering city limits.

**Section 2.** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 11<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2026.

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Kent E. Ewing, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Welfl, City Clerk

**Motion by Councilmember Gillen to approve Resolution 5-26-1 to adopt a target year for Vision Zero. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Cecil, Kinsey, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.**

#### **4. Consider approving Keno Fund requests:**

- a. Stand Up and Play - Gering, NE Chapter, \$12,450
- b. Allred Brothers Fireworks Show, \$8,500
- c. Drive 308 Truck Show, \$2,500
- d. PVC Monument Marathon, \$6,200
- e. ESU 13, \$802.00
- f. Scotts Bluff County CERT, \$2,818.16
- g. Oregon Trail Days, \$4,100
- h. Old West Balloon Fest, \$10,000

Keno Committee Chairman, Darrell Bentley, asked Council if there were any questions. Councilmember Shields stated, regarding the 308 Truck Show, they applied for Occ Tax Funds and were awarded \$2000. She explained that on the occ tax request, they indicated they weren't going to ask for any other grant requests - which could have affected how much occ tax they were given. On their Keno Committee request, they requested \$2500 to use for shirts and prize money. She noted that Scotts Bluff County Tourism doesn't provide funds for t-shirts because that doesn't help tourism. She doesn't mind if the City gives them money for advertising, but they do charge an application fee for people to be in it. That fee could cover the t-shirt cost and prize money as they get \$3000 in registration fees and \$3850 in donations; that's \$6850 to put towards their shirts and prize money. She stated she's curious what the terms are for giving Keno Funds, "Do we want to use it for t-shirts?" Mr. Bentley stated there were two applicants that they found out after the meeting were getting "hotel money" (Occ Tax Funds) that the Keno Committee didn't know about; the applicants didn't bring it up during the meeting. He stated that in defense of Drive 308, it's growing and little by little it's getting to be more like the Father's Day Classic with the amount of people that are coming. Their numbers have gone up every year. They're holding the event the same day as the fireworks show, so it's bringing people out. They're having a local band play that they have to pay as well. He noted that the Keno Committee considers approving the applications, but they don't have the final say. The committee studied the information and from that data and what the applicant stated at the meeting, the committee felt they deserved the funding. Councilmember Shields asked if Mr. Bentley knew how many people attend the event outside of Scotts Bluff County. Mr. Bentley replied that he didn't believe they provided that information, but they had entries from five different states. Councilmember Shields expressed that she didn't feel t-shirts fit the definition of Keno Funds.

It was clarified that the Keno funds for the 308 Truck Show would be used to supplement advertising costs and prizes for the winners of the truck show; additionally, to purchase t-shirts. Councilmember Gillen noted that those were many of the same things they asked for from the Occ Tax Committee. Discussion followed regarding the 308 Truck Show's request for Occ Tax Funds and if the Father's Day Classic has requested Occ Tax Funds. Councilmember Gillen added that it's already gone through two committees; it's up to Council to decide if they'll be funded. He thinks the bigger concern to address from a City standpoint is putting tighter controls on how many different subsets of funding organizations can apply for. He stated "I think right now, we need to focus on the Keno requests that are in front of us today and either approve or deny them." Mr. Bentley noted that some organizations go everywhere in the community to ask for money. He thinks the City has to be careful where they draw the line on that; he guaranteed they'll have more questions next year when they come.

Councilmember Shields explained that with Scotts Bluff County Tourism, applicants know up front what they can and can't apply for. She asked if it was possible to still approve this request, but not fund the t-shirts. Councilmember Wiedeman replied that it would be hard to say "We'll do this, but you can't buy t-shirts with it. If we're going to fund it, we're going to fund it. Maybe the following year, you can ask those types of questions." She added that Keno money is for community betterment; hopefully they will buy the t-shirts from a local business so that business will benefit from having t-shirts purchased. People will wear the t-shirts in this community and other communities. She doesn't want to nitpick it; if Council is going to approve it, they just need to approve it as recommendation from the Keno Committee. Mayor Ewing added that the Father's Day Classic Car Show started small also; he's in favor of anything that can be done to bring more people into the community. Gering seems to be the hub for this kind of entertainment and he would hate to squelch anything that would go against that type of entertainment. He thinks the funds will be well spent.

**Motion by Councilmember Morrison to approve the Keno Fund requests as follows: Stand Up and Play - Gering, NE Chapter \$12,450, Allred Brothers Fireworks Show \$8,500, Drive 308 Truck Show \$2,500, PVC Monument Marathon \$6,200, ESU 13 \$802.00, Scotts Bluff County CERT \$2,818.16, Oregon Trail Days \$4,100, and Old West Balloon Fest \$10,000. Second by Councilmember O'Neal. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Cecil, Kinsey, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.**

**5. Consider moving the second regular City Council meeting in May to Tuesday, May 26 due to the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 25**

**Motion by Councilmember O'Neal to move the second regular City Council meeting in May to Tuesday, May 26 due to the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 25. Second by Councilmember Morrison. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Cecil, Kinsey, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.**

**BIDS/PROPOSALS:**

**1. Consider Substation Transformer Bid – Electric Department**

Engineer Folck explained that as part of the ongoing voltage conversion project for the Electric Department, the City will be building a new substation in 2027. One of the key pieces of equipment for the substation is the electrical transformer. Transformer lead times are extremely long right now; because of that, staff is ordering the transformer now in order to have it available in the fall of 2027.

The transformer was publicly advertised and bid, and the City received four bids. The electrical engineers that are designing the substation evaluated the bids, taking into consideration efficiency to determine long-term comparative costs of the transformers. The low bid was from Uptegraff. After taking into consideration energy loss based on efficiency of the equipment, Uptegraff was still the lowest cost transformer. However, Uptegraff does not provide a fixed cost for the transformer; instead, there is a base cost and then they provide a Price Adjustment Procedure by which the final cost of the transformer will be determined at the time of shipment. This cost adjustment can be very significant. Additionally, the lead times on the Uptegraff transformer are much longer than the other transformers, and could push back the construction of the substation substantially.

For these reasons, the engineers have recommended going with the next lowest bid, which is a WEG transformer. Their bid is a fixed cost, excluding any tariffs that are enacted between now and when it ships. They had a much more favorable lead time, which would keep the project on track for the fall of 2027. Additionally, their transformer is the most efficient of the ones evaluated. The final purchase cost is \$1,284,293, not including sales tax; with sales tax, the total would be \$1,380,615. Of this cost, 20% of that would be due upon order, with progress payments to be made after that. The \$1,284,293 includes shipping but not off-loading. It is estimated that approximately 40% of the cost would come out of the FY2026 Budget, with the remainder to come out of the FY2027 Budget.

Councilmember Morrison asked about a warranty; there is a five-year warranty. She asked if the manufacturer would help fix issues if there were any. Engineer Folck replied they should, yes. She added that the engineers called references on this company as well; they felt comfortable recommending them.

**Motion by Councilmember Gillen to award the substation transformer bid for the Electric Department to WEG Transformers USA in the amount of \$1,380,615 which includes sales tax. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Cecil, Kinsey, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison, Jackson. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.**

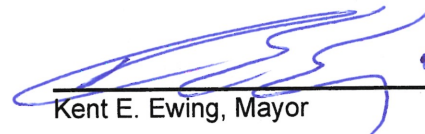
**OPEN COMMENT:** Discussion or action by Council regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only.

Dale Hauck, 2355 Country Club Road, addressed Council and stated regarding the Safe Streets, he would have liked to have heard from the Police Department and what they think about that situation. He asked if it was possible for them to give an opinion. Administrator Heath replied since this matter was on the agenda, he would comment. Chief Holthus/Police Department indicated they did not have an issue with North 10<sup>th</sup> Street going down to three lanes.

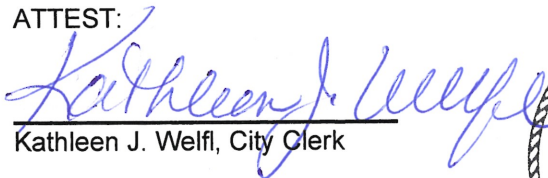
**ADJOURN:**

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

  
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Kent E. Ewing, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen J. Welfl, City Clerk

