

THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF GERING KENO COMMITTEE MEETING November 5, 2025

A regular meeting of the City of Gering Keno Committee was held in open session at 4:30 p.m. in the Gering City Hall Conference Room at 1025 P Street, Gering, NE, on November 5, 2025. Present were Committee Members Darrell Bentley, Matt Janecek, Don Kugler and Amy Doll. Absent: Donna Engleman and Julie Morrison. Also, present were City Administrator Pat Heath, Mayor Kent Ewing, City Treasurer Lyndsey Mathews, and Secretary Carol Martin.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Star-Herald, which is the designated method of giving notice. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Darrell Bentley called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

B. Open Meetings 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 posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Chairman. 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 Keno Committee determines that the matter requires emergency action.

C. Approval of August 6, 2025 Keno Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Matt Janecek to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2025 Keno Committee meeting. Seconded by Don Kugler. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

D. Keno Fund Financial Report

Lyndsey Mathews, City Treasurer, stated they made the transfer of \$500,000.00 from the pooled investment endowment into the cash account and the balance as of September 30, 2025 is \$7,505.09. She also reported the following balances:

- U.S. Bank Keno balance - \$300,278.44
- Pooled Investments (Invesco and RBC Morton Capital) - \$1,032,735.55
- Outstanding obligations (pay state taxes) - \$8,189.56
- Deferred commissions - \$73,394.75
- Obligations not yet met - \$33,885.06
- Available cash - \$1,225,049.71

She said the amount collected for the fiscal year of 2025 is \$169,555.16 and the last quarter collected \$41,968.00. When the pooled cash account starts getting low, she will transfer funds from the US Bank Keno account that way they can keep those investments going as interest rates are higher than the US Bank account.

Darrell asked if \$192,000.00 is what is available if they needed to spend it. Lyndsey said yes, that is the cash available and that is not counting the investments.

E. Remove from table: Project Prom of Western Nebraska

Motion by Matt Janecek to remove from table Project Prom of Western Nebraska. Seconded by Don Kugler. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

F. Discuss Project Prom of Western Nebraska

Secretary Martin spoke with Kim Soule and asked her how things were going and explained we had to remove it from the table at the Keno meeting. She said it was not going well and to remove it completely at this point unless she comes back later.

G. Review and discuss applications for Keno Funds

Information taken directly from Keno Application submitted by each applicant

**1) Gering multi-Purpose Center - \$14,000.00
Jerry Cline and Susan Heitman**

Through the Nutrition Program from AOWN, we provide 100 meals a day to shut in elderly. There 20-25 meals available for dinning service at the center. There is Bingo cards, puzzles, pool and holiday carry-in meals for members and friends. Exercise programs are offered also. All are welcome 55+.

**2) Warrior Run - \$3,300.00
No one present**

The Warrior Run is the main source of funding for the Veterans & Military Families Emergency Organization. We assist veterans and families in emergency situations such as rent, utilities, car and phone payments, and hotel rooms for homeless veterans. We work closely with the organizations mentioned above, to assist the veterans in the most effective and cost-efficient ways, keeping the dignity and safety of the veterans as our top priority. We work together with Support Services for Veterans, Black Hills VA Homeless Program, Scotts Bluff, Morrill and Kimball County Veterans Service officers, and NE Workforce Development to provide emergency services to Veterans in need. Working with these programs helps us determine the best use of our money.

**3) Veterans & Military Families Emergency Relief Organization - \$6,000.00
No one present**

Quilts of Valor is a program designed to say "thank you" to all honorably discharged military veterans and active-duty personnel by presenting them with a handmade quilt. These are either in group presentations or sometimes private. Regardless of the locations, our goal with these quilts is to let those recipients know that we are grateful for their service, no matter where or when they served, whether in declared war, conflicts, police actions, peacekeeping missions, counter terrorism operations and/or times of peace.

We have been told many times especially by Vietnam veterans that this was the first time they have been told thank you. Their eyes tell us the pride they feel in serving our country and the tears show us that these words long overdue.

4) Gering Visitors Bureau/City of Gering- \$9,940.00
George Holthus for Tina Worthman

Gering Keno Application

Project Title: Light the Way: Gering Holiday Walkway Experience

Applicant: Gering Visitors Bureau / City of Gering

Funding Request: \$9,970

Project Summary:

The City of Gering Tourism Office is seeking funding support to create a Holiday Lighted Walkway that connects 10th Street to the Gering Civic Plaza, where the Gering Merchants Santa Village takes place each December. This illuminated corridor will serve as a festive, family-friendly gateway, encouraging foot traffic from downtown to the Plaza, enhancing the overall holiday experience, and supporting local tourism.

This project complements broader efforts by the City of Gering to revitalize the downtown area with new light pole decorations and seasonal enhancements that create a more welcoming, visually engaging holiday environment. These improvements are designed not only to delight local residents but to attract regional visitors and families looking for meaningful winter experiences.

Tourism & Economic Impact:

In 2024, over 4,000 people attended Santa Village at the Civic Plaza. By adding an engaging and accessible walkway, we aim to increase visitation to both downtown businesses and Plaza events, encouraging exploration, dining, and shopping in both areas. This project also aligns with regional holiday tourism efforts, connecting Gering with events such as Sidney's All is Bright Christmas Tour and Fort Robinson's Christmas at the Fort.

The walkway will feature:

- Overhead swag lighting
- Illuminated holiday figures or displays
- Wreaths, garlands, or banner poles
- A welcoming entrance feature near the Civic Plaza sign and City of Gering logo

These improvements will serve as a reusable investment, creating an annual draw for holiday tourism and increasing sales tax revenue, visitor spending, and community pride.

Project Budget:

- Total Project Cost: \$19,940
- Occupation Tax Grant Request: \$9,970 (pending)
- Gering Keno Fund Request: \$9,970 (pending)

Alignment with Gering Keno Priorities:

This project meets multiple funding priorities:

- Increases tourism and overnight stays by linking to regional holiday events
- Enhances visitor experiences with engaging, walkable holiday space
- Supports downtown businesses with higher foot traffic
- Activates public spaces with vibrant, family-friendly decor
- Strengthens Gering's identity as a welcoming, festive, and forward-looking community

City of Gering's Commitment to the Holiday Destination

The City of Gering is investing in the revitalization of downtown to create a cohesive and memorable holiday experience for residents and visitors. In addition to the proposed Holiday Lighted Walkway, the city has committed to city staff installing and maintaining the holiday display in addition to working with the Gering Merchants to keep the Santa Village maintained and available for residents and visitors to enjoy. The Gering Tourism Office will also work to market and promote this walkway as well as the Santa Village for the holiday tourism season.

This coordinated effort demonstrates the City's commitment to making downtown Gering a true holiday destination and supports long-term tourism development and economic vitality.

This proactive investment showcases the City of Gering's dedication to creating a welcoming, festive downtown environment that benefits local businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

To support the implementation of the Holiday Lighted Walkway, the City of Gering Tourism Office has submitted a request for funding from both the City of Gering Occupation Tax Grant and the Gering Keno Fund, with each source covering half of the total project cost. This dual-application approach reflects a shared investment in enhancing downtown's seasonal appeal and ensures that both tourism-driven and community benefit funding sources are aligned to support this impactful project.

5) Monument Shadows Golf Course/City of Gering - \$28,990.72

Amy Seiler

#1 Explain in detail what the Keno Funds will be used for:

Funds are being requested to purchase commercial grade, high quality, HDPE (high-density polyethylene) plastic patio furniture for Monument Shadows Clubhouse Patio. Multiple guests of the restaurant and course have requested comfortable, updated furniture for the patio to allow guests the opportunity to enjoy the outdoor atmosphere, incredible views of the Monument, Dome Rock and the 18th green. Guests have indicated improved patio furniture would encourage guests to spend more time at the restaurant/course and socialize. Funds would specifically purchase the following:

- (4) 42" Square Tables
- (16) Dining Chairs
- (3) 28" High-top Bar Tables
- (6) Bar Side Chairs
- (1) Round Fire Table
- (4) Adirondack Chairs

Vendor Sister Bay Furniture states, "this furniture will not rot, is impervious to insects and will stand up to any weather conditions." This furniture will require no painting or refinishing and will need minimal maintenance such as soap and water to clean.

Furniture would be purchased upon approval and would be made available for use in spring of 2026.

#2 Describe how your organization impacts the community:

Monument Shadows Golf Course has been one of the premier golf courses in the area since its renovation in 1997. The course provides picturesque views of Scotts Bluff National Monument, surrounding landmarks and the North Platte River Valley. Over 30,000 rounds of golf have been played at Monument Shadows in 2025. The golf course provides social, health and financial benefit to the community. Over \$17,000 is generated in City sales tax for the community annually. Approximately 20 events and tournaments are hosted each year; several in which people come from outside the community to participate which means additional monies potentially spent at hotels and other businesses in the community. Along with tournaments and events the course runs men's, women's, couples and youth leagues 5 days a week providing constant activity at the course. On average 450 people participate in these leagues weekly between the months of April through September. Additionally, the course hosts both Boys and Girls NSAA Class B State Golf Championships every other year in partnership with the Scotts Bluff Country Club. In April of 2025 the course hosted the National Junior College Athletic Association Women's District Golf tournament.

In addition to the golf course, the restaurant provides additional benefits for golfers and the community. The clubhouse restaurant is a meeting place for leagues, provides quality dining, functions as a meeting space for card clubs and hosts weddings, receptions and special events. The restaurant generates an estimated \$18,000 in sales tax revenue for the city.

The clubhouse area should mirror the quality care of the golf course. Updating the patio furniture with high-quality, comfortable furniture would continue the practice of excellence at the course and elevate the user experience at Monument Shadows Golf Course.

Discussion regarding Keno Fund Requests:

Gering multi-Purpose Center

Discussion: Amy asked how to go about considering this application since they already did it. Don added they always come to the committee after they are done. In Darrell's opinion, that's what the endowment bond is for. That is why people donate money, not just to have it in a CD. The other thing about this is, the \$14,000.00 they are asking for would only be obligated to what B&C Steel is doing at \$12,968.00. He was surprised when he went over there because it was already done. He was looking for rust but it was nice and shiny; they did a nice job.

Darrell said he did not understand what kind of lease the city has with them, the city has no obligation to take care of the maintenance on their building. Pat said there is a 99-year lease but couldn't recall the terms of the lease. Pat said the city owns the ground on which the city allowed them to put their building. They are responsible for the maintenance and City staff does help them from time to time. The city increased its contribution; it was \$1,000.00 a month and now it is \$1,500.00 per month.

Pat's comments to Council at the Budget Work Session was that the city spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on youth activities and youth sports in the city and at that time the senior center didn't receive money. In the past several years, the city has contributed \$1,000.00 per month; it was increased to \$1,500.00 a month this year. They are struggling. Scottsbluff helps with funding the senior center as they are selling their senior center. Some of those people are coming over to the senior center in Gering.

Darrell believes that is why people leave money to the senior center is to do things with it and improve it. He is not sure the Keno Fund should replenish the money that they used. They have \$25,000.00 laying there and the building needs fixed, but they expect someone else to fix it.

Don said it seems like they have replaced the entire building over the last ten years. Darrell said the Keno Fund has done doors, sewer lines and the parking lot. Mayor Ewing said the committee can't pick a better location to put money. He said there are a lot of things (other applications for Keno Funds) that go through that are somewhat questionable from his view over the last several years. Pat mentioned the city has spent a lot of money in other places, and a lot of times "our seniors get shoved off". Mayor Ewing added that they have an older facility and have been patching it together for years. It would be very nice if they had a really nice facility and have everything done and be perfect, but that is not going to happen the way the economy is. He added "We've got to figure out a way to supplement some of that." Darrell said once inside, it is a nice facility. Pat asked if they had just replaced the floor. Darrell replied they replaced the floor in the kitchen.

Matt said if they had cashed in the CD to pay for that stuff, then they might be here. Darrell said the CD can only go so far when they do things, but if they never use it, what do they have it for? Pat added that the city does some in-kind services off and on - it might be \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 of in-kind services a year - staff time. They might also get some concrete and some other things. The city tries to help them the best they can.

Darrell noted that a comment that was made is very true, that they are out there and doing the community a good job, especially with the meals on wheels. He believes they got their money's worth with the \$13,000.00, it really looks nice; his only questions were where should the money have really come from.

Motion by Amy Doll to recommend \$12,968.00 for the Gering multi-Purpose Center. Seconded by Matt Janecek. There was no further discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Motion by Matt Janecek to recommend \$3,300.00 for the Warrior Run. Seconded by Darrell Bentley. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Motion by Don Kugler to recommend \$6,000.00 for Veteran's & Military Families Emergency Relief Organization. Seconded by Matt Janecek. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Gering Visitors Bureau/City of Gering

Darrell said the \$10,000.00 (rounded up) they are asking for could be the only money they get. He asked if the project would be half done; he's sure it would be a presentable project even with half of it. One

thing that bothers him is the amount of money they are talking about might be only used for maybe a four-week period from Thanksgiving until Santa Clause Village is done. Amy asked who paid for the lights in the plaza last year. Pat replied, the Gering Merchants did.

Mayor Ewing doesn't believe it would just be a seasonal thing. Pat said some of the lights that will go across from building to building will stay up year-round. Mayor Ewing said it would light up the mural as the alley is pretty dark through there. Pat would like to see murals at the back of the building and along the other alley, too.

Matt agreed that whatever they get, they can do something with, maybe not all they want to do but it'll put some lights in that alley and hopefully they can stay up all year and it would be a bigger benefit. Pat said there is money budgeted to do some landscaping. Darrell thought the landscaping was done at one point but it went away and wasn't taken care of. Amy is in favor of drawing more attention to the plaza and understands putting something as an entrance off of 10th Street to get people down there. She isn't comfortable with almost \$10,000.00 from Keno for that. Matt asked what she would be comfortable with. Amy said more in favor of \$5,000.00 because the overhead lights are \$2,000.00 and the electrical is \$2,500.00 and that would still be a little bit more that is completely, dramatically different than what they are asking for, though.

Don asked where else the tourism office gets money from. Pat said tourism gets money from sales tax and some from the occupation tax that comes in from the hotel amenities. They have some funding and they have a committee very similar to this that can give out occupation tax money. That is where some of the other funding could come from, is the occupation tax. Don asked if they get anything from the State of Nebraska. Pat replied, only if they request grants. Don asked if they are writing grants. Pat said they write a lot of grants. Most of them have to be specific to a project like a sporting project or a concert that would bring somebody in. The Heirloom Market is something they could write a grant for; they are very active in writing grants. Amy asked if they did not fund this at the full amount, where would they find the rest of the money. Pat said they would have to figure out where they could come up with the rest of the funds. There may have been some costs to get the lines buried. They may have to do some City in-kind funds for that or donations for that.

Amy said regarding the nearly \$10,000.00, if Keno doesn't fund it for the whole amount, where would they get the rest of the money? Whatever they are given and if it isn't \$10,000.00, is that enough to make a difference to do what they want? Darrell said he wouldn't like part of the project being done, but on the other hand, how are they going to do it?

Mayor Ewing said they have summertime activities in the plaza; activities there are really picking up. He mentioned he threw a party there for City workers and hired a band. Everything was lit up to where all the kids could run around. People are taking advantage of it for outdoor weddings, receptions and the tourism director is bringing other things in. He said Scottsbluff's 18th Street Plaza brings tons of people in and if Gering starts getting those kinds of activities, there would be a lot more people starting to use it. If it looks nice, they'll pass the word on and things will start coming around. Some lighting here and there has made a big difference for the art (at the plaza) that the Keno Committee helped fund. It is the same thing as the senior center; there are a lot of things that this group funds that go to a lot of different places to improve the city to where people have a place to go. He assumes the way this group works, that is what they are after, is to improve those types of things.

Darrell said it may start enticing more people to park on main street and walk. Mayor Ewing said some of the food vendors that are down in that area have started parking two blocks away on the back side. If they park on both sides of 10th Street and walk through the alleyway, they will see the mural and everything if it is properly lit up. He thinks it is going to be advantageous getting people in and out.

Pat said there have been events at the Civic Center and they may take their trailer out and have their meal at the plaza instead of eating inside the Civic Center. Amy said they had their meal at the plaza and it was great.

Motion by Don Kugler to recommend \$9,940.00 for Gering Visitors Bureau/City of Gering Seconded by Matt Janecek. There was no further discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Monument Shadows Golf Course/City of Gering

Darrell noted that Monument Shadows Restaurant offers Keno and that, so far this year, it has generated \$17,646.00. He suggested this revenue could potentially help offset the cost of some of the furniture. Darrell said he is very impressed with how the restaurant is being run and feels they have done a good job overall. He added that while the restaurant has brought in money through Keno, they will also be profiting from it significantly.

Matt commented that \$29,000.00 is a substantial amount for furniture. He compared the situation to when the Pioneers requested funding for a playground, questioning who would ultimately benefit from the play area. He was unsure whether the same group had been asked to contribute to the playground and whether the situations were comparable.

Darrell responded that it was a comparable situation and noted that the playground is not open to the public.

Amy stated that she and her family have visited several golf courses this year and observed that many have significantly nicer patios and patio furniture. She noted that she was unsure whether those courses were city-run or how they were funded. She commented that when comparing a patio with high-quality furniture and a scenic view to one with less appealing furniture, the furniture can detract from the overall experience. Amy emphasized that this is a city-owned golf course, that the city is attempting to attract golfers, and that the facility serves as a representation of the city. She stated that while the restaurant may benefit from the furniture, the golf course would also benefit.

Darrell added that the City also receives sales tax revenue from the restaurant and indicated that he was considering the issue from multiple perspectives. Pat stated that, due to state law, the City cannot disclose the amount of sales tax revenue received. Darrell responded that the specific amount did not change his view and noted that it represents a significant revenue source. He further stated that, based on the information presented and the items being considered for purchase, the city would be receiving substantial value for the expenditure. He suggested that the furniture may not need to be replaced for at least five years.

Darrell stated that when the \$29,000.00 expenditure (rounded) is considered over a ten-year period, the annual cost would be minimal.

Amy stated that no additional needs had been requested by the restaurant, but that the golf course had made requests in the past. Darrell clarified that previous requests included racks to hold golf clubs. Darrell further stated that when viewing the issue broadly, a portion of the \$29,000.00 expenditure would be indirectly offset by revenue generated from Keno at the Monument Grill. He added that if the improvements encourage patrons to remain at the facility longer and increase sales, and when considering the longevity of the furniture, the annual cost would be minimal.

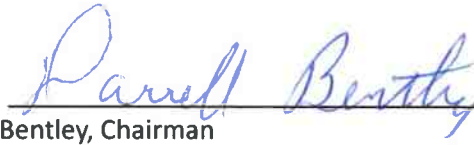
Motion by Matt Janecek to recommend \$28,990.72 for Monument Shadows Golf Course/City of Gering. Seconded by Amy Doll. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

H. OPEN COMMENT: Discussion or action by Keno Committee regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only. None.

I. Adjourn

Motion by Matt Janecek to adjourn. Seconded by Amy Doll. There was no discussion. "AYES": Bentley, Janecek, Kugler and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Engleman and Morrison. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.


Carol Martin, Secretary
Darrell Bentley, Chairman