

**THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GERING CITY COUNCIL,
JANUARY 22, 2024**

A regular meeting of the City Council of Gering, Nebraska was held in open session on January 22, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Gering City Hall, 1025 P Street, Gering, NE. Present were Mayor Ewing and Councilmembers Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. Also present were City Administrator Pat Heath, City Clerk Kathy Welfl and City Attorney Jim Ellison. Absent were Councilmembers Backus and O'Neal. 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

Motion by Councilmember Gillen to excuse the absence of Councilmember Shields from the January 8, 2024 regular City Council meeting. Second by Councilmember Bohl. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, O'Neal. Motion carried.

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 January 8, 2024 Regular City Council meeting
2. Approve Claims
3. Approve December, 2023 Financial Report

Claims 1/9/24 – 1/22/24

A & A PORTA POTTIES \$250.00, AC ELECTRIC MOTOR SERVICE \$652.77, ACE HARDWARE \$1,611.23, AFL, LLC \$53,179.00, ALTEC INDUSTRIES, INC. \$10,390.43, AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES \$1,594.42, AMERITAS LIFE INSURANCE COPR. \$612.38, ASCAP \$434.00, AT&T MOBILITY \$1,586.14, AULICK INDUSTRIES \$10,967.25, AYRES ASSOCIATES \$1,226.40, B & C STEEL \$1,869.67, B & H INVESTMENTS, INC \$155.00, BARB MILLER \$150.00, BLUFFS FACILITY SOLUTIONS \$460.60, BORDER STATES INDUSTRIES, INC \$259.44, BUDGE-IT DRAIN SERVICE \$820.00, CITY OF GERING \$15,763.20, CLARK PRINTING LLC \$202.00, CNA SURETY DIRECT BILL \$875.00, COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY \$982.00, CONNECTING POINT \$18.04, CONTRACTORS MATERIALS, INC. \$8.50, CROELL, INC \$4,029.00, CROSSROADS COOPERATIVE \$34,994.50, DANKO EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT CO \$1,291.61, DEMCO, INC \$106.39, DOOLEY OIL \$1,052.35, DUSTIN KINNAN \$171.20, DUTTON-LAINSON COMPANY \$1,256.42, EAKES INC \$785.20, ECOLAB \$250.39, EJS SUPPLY, LLC \$26,030.00, ELLISON, KOVARIK & TURMAN LAW \$6,501.25, ENERGY LABORATORIES INC. \$520.00, ESC ENGINEERING \$696.25, FASTENAL COMPANY \$273.76, FAT BOYS TIRE & AUTO \$603.47, FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF OMAHA \$29,003.60, FIRST NATIONAL BANK OMAHA - POLICE \$584.00, FLOYD'S TRUCK CENTER, INC. \$2,448.35, FRANK PARTS COMPANY \$1,752.14, FRESH FOODS INC. \$10.99, FURST-MC NESS COMPANY \$192.09, GALLS, AN ARAMARK COMPANY \$241.91, GOLDSTAR PRODUCTS INC \$1,057.62, GREATAMERICA FINANCIAL SERVICE \$167.45, GREGORY'S LOCK SHOP LLC \$48.00, GROUND UP CONSTRUCTION & CLEAN \$678.50, HACH COMPANY \$1,626.88, HYDRO OPTIMIZATION & AUTOMATION \$161.25, IDEAL LAUNDRY AND CLEANERS, INC. \$239.64, INDOFF INCORPORATED \$348.54, INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES \$158.04, INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE \$47,579.57, INTERSTATE BATTERY \$287.90, INTRALINKS, INC. \$7,467.46, IRBY TOOL & SAFETY \$925.09, JOHN HANCOCK USA \$16,985.20, JOHN HANCOCK USA FIRE \$761.78, JOHN HANCOCK USA POLICE \$9,245.78, JOHNSON CASHWAY CO. \$125.07, JUSTIN BERNHARDT \$200.00, LEAGUE ASSOC./RISK MANAGEMENT \$331.67, LEE ENTERPRISES \$705.55, LOST RIVER SAND & GRAVEL, INC \$6,751.90, MALY MARKETING \$1,727.05, MATHESON TRIGAS INC \$447.59, MCLAUGHLIN WATER CONSULTANTS, LLC \$2,297.32, MEAT SHOPPE \$32,487.35, MENARDS \$419.35,

MIDWEST CONNECT \$2,645.03, MOBIUS COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY \$30.00, MOTOR FUELS DIVISION \$2,094.00, MUNICIPAL ENERGY AGENCY OF NE \$340,472.10, MURPHY TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT CO. \$1,496.70, MUTUAL OF OMAHA \$4,493.40, NEBRASKA CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT CENTE \$714.93, NEBRASKA DEPT OF ENVIRONMENT AND EN \$10,703.72, NEBRASKA DEPT OF REVENUE \$50.10, NEBRASKA DEPT OF REVENUE \$9,092.00, NEBRASKA DEPT. OF REVENUE \$61,321.29, NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT \$1,762.12, NEBRASKA RURAL RADIO ASSOC. \$583.18, NORTHFIELD VILLA \$31.61, NORTHWEST PIPE FITTINGS, INC \$140.00, OPEN A NINE, LLC \$1,839.23, PANHANDLE COOP ASSOCIATION \$175.00, PANHANDLE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE, INC. \$1,443.00, PANHANDLE HUMANE SOCIETY \$3,168.50, PATTLEN ENTERPRISES, INC \$3,021.27, PAUL REED CONSTRUCTION & SUPP \$2,440.00, PERMA-BOUND \$78.68, PIPE WORKS PLUMBING LLC \$350.00, POWER SCREENING, LLC \$1,212.61, PT HOSE AND BEARING \$225.40, PVB VISA \$6,299.07, REGION 22 EMERGENCY MANAG \$4,418.39, REGIONAL CARE INC. \$9,020.99, RIVERSTONE BANK \$616.71, SANDBERG IMPLEMENT, INC. \$81.45, SARAH WYNN \$425.00, SCB COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS \$90.00, SCB. COUNTY AMBULANCE SERVICE \$316.23, SCI SALES, LLC \$2,893.16, SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY COURT \$126.00, SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY TREASURER \$10.00, SCOTTSBLUFF-GERING UNITED WAY \$230.67, SCS ENGINEERS \$2,560.52, SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER \$1,000.00, SHAWNA WINCHELL \$520.00, SHERWIN WILLIAMS \$861.40, SIMMONS OLSEN LAW FIRM, P.C. \$1,500.00, SOUTHWESTERN EQUIPMENT COMPANY \$3,028.71, STEVE SHAW \$160.18, TEE CEE WILLS \$65.00, TERESA TOSH \$5,416.67, TERRY CARPENTER, INC. \$650.00, TERRY YEAGER \$300.00, THE CIT GROUP \$507.50, TRANSUNION RISK AND ALTERNATIV \$75.00, TRANSWEST \$872.25, TYLER TECHNOLOGIES \$5,363.75, VALLEY AUTO LOCATORS LLC \$214.78, VAN PELT FENCING CO., INC. \$144.79, VERIZON CONNECT \$38.38, W & R INC. \$6,283.16, WESTERN COOPERATIVE COMPANY \$7,012.68, WESTERN PATHOLOGY CONSULTANTS \$111.00, \$860,891.20

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

BIDS/PROPOSALS:

1. Award bid for Pole-mount Transformers – Electric Department

Per City Engineer, Annie Folck, as the City continues working on the electrical conversion from 2400 voltage to 7200 voltage, it is necessary to replace the old transformers with new transformers that will work on either 2400 voltage or 7200 voltage. This expenditure was budgeted, and the transformers were publicly bid. Five bids were received. Staff is recommending awarding the bid for the overhead transformers to Midwest Electric Transformer as the low bidder on the project. The Electric Department has worked with Midwest in the past and staff considers them to be a qualified bidder. This is the first round of transformers that will be ordered for this year. Additional transformers are anticipated to be bid and ordered in a few months. This allows our Electric Department to get everything installed as we receive it, maximizing the advantages of the one-year warranty. Staff recommends awarding the bid to Midwest Electric Transformer in the amount of \$332,855.

Motion by Councilmember Wiedeman to award the Pole-mount Transformer bid to Midwest Electric Transformer in the amount of \$332,855. Second by Councilmember Gillen. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, O'Neal. Motion carried.

2. Reject all bids for Pad-mount Transformers – Electric Department

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to reject all bids for pad-mount transformers for the Electric Department. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, O'Neal. Motion carried.

3. Rescind motion for the emergency purchase of Alto-Shaam Combi-Oven in the amount of \$33,606.88 from JES Restaurant Equipment – Civic Center

Engineer Folck stated that Council approved an emergency purchase of an Alto-Shaam Combi-oven at the January 8, 2024 Council meeting. A new unit was ordered through JES Restaurant Equipment for \$33,606.88, as this was the lowest cost that staff could find. The order stated that payment would be on Net 30 terms, meaning that the City would not be invoiced until the unit was delivered. After the order was placed, the company came back and asked for \$15,000 up front in order to place the order. This is not how the City normally does its purchasing, and staff was not comfortable paying this amount up front to a

company that the City has never done business with. Staff would like to rescind that order and place an order with TriMark Marlinn LLC for the same product. While the cost is slightly higher at \$35,037.87, the purchase will be on Net 30 terms, and the City will not be invoiced until the item is delivered.

by Councilmember Morrison to rescind the motion made at the January 8, 2024 regular City Council meeting for the emergency purchase of an Alto-Shaam Combi-Oven in the amount of \$33,606.88 from JES Restaurant Equipment for the Civic Center. Second by Councilmember Gillen. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, O'Neal. Motion carried.

4. Approve emergency purchase of Alto-Shaam Combi-Oven from TriMark Marlinn LLC – Civic Center

Motion by Councilmember Wiedeman to approve the purchase of an Alto-Shaam Combi-Oven from TriMark Marlinn LLC for the Civic Center in the amount of \$35,037.87. Second by Councilmember Morrison. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, O'Neal. Motion carried.

5. Award bid for 2023 Dodge 1500 SSV Pickup – Police Department

Lieutenant James Jackson stated that funds were budgeted in the FY24 Budget to replace two vehicles in the Police Department fleet. Police personnel sought bids for a law enforcement-rated pickup from several dealerships, both locally and out of the region. Staff were not able to obtain a bid from Transwest Ford, Team Chevrolet or Reganis Auto Center. A dealership in Wyoming had this particular unit, but it was already sold. Staff found a 2023 Dodge 1500 SSV Pickup at Nelson Auto Group in Fergus Falls, MN for \$40,665. This particular style is needed as the officer who will be driving it is very tall; this will accommodate his needs.

In comparing with the State Bid, there is a 2024 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 SSV Pickup and a 2024 Ford F150 Police Responder Pickup which are equivalent to the 2023 Dodge 1500 SSV. The Dodge 1500 SSV at Nelson Auto Group is \$2,218 to \$4,481 less than the State Bid options and is available immediately.

This vehicle will replace a 2017 Ford Explorer with 80,000 miles. The 2017 Ford Explorer will most likely be acquired by another City Department.

Motion by Councilmember Morrison to award the bid for a 2023 Dodge 1500 SSV pickup to Nelson Auto Group in the amount of \$40,665 plus an additional \$14,000 for equipment and uplifting for a total of \$54,665.00. Second by Councilmember Wiedeman. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, Morrison, Cowan. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, O'Neal. Motion carried.

CURRENT BUSINESS:

1. Electrical Study Update – RVW Incorporated

Jim Herchenbach, Electrical System Analyst and GIS Specialist with RVW Incorporated, joined the Council meeting by Zoom and presented an update regarding the Electrical Study. He stated they've been in business a little over 80 years. They've been doing electrical engineering for towns, such as Gering, and for rural electric organizations across the state of Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Kansas. He has been doing this since the late 90 and has over 20 years of experience. He has three other engineers, GIS and support staff. They have about 80 total employees.

He said they were hired by the City about four months ago and are still collecting data, which takes a while. They have to digitize every piece of equipment on the line and underground, and anything that's electrically related has to be put into a digital electrical model. That's what he uses to run a system analysis. They are about 50% to 60% complete on that data. They are going back-and-forth on a weekly basis with Annie and others at the City. This time frame is very normal, nothing out of the norm. MEAN is

also helping with some of the field work. After that process is done, they'll do an in-depth analysis of the system and will come up with recommendations on how to make the system more efficient - especially regarding the current situation the City is going through. Regarding the outages at the ballpark substation, they are looking at that substation first to get that data in ahead of the rest of the systems. They sent Annie some information on recommendations of how to fix the issue. What they found was during the conversion process, some of the 4160 equipment is still on that 4160 voltage. Though Gering is a 12,500, that equipment settings didn't change. They found that that should change in order to coordinate the fuses with the electronic recloser in the substation and the electronic recloser to the transrupter on the high side of the substation. The device has faulted and caused the outage. Everything he is recommending (in information he has sent to City staff) are small cost items along with some settings changes; it should take care of the problem. Now that that's done, they'll get back to the rest of the system analysis. He added that he has been very happy working with City staff so far. The communication back and forth has been good and prompt. If they keep going at this progress, he hopes to have something done in the next three months. They will also come out and do a physical inspection in the early spring. Mayor Ewing stated that it's good to know a timeframe so that can be shared with constituents. Mr. Herchenbach stated he thinks they can have things wrapped up towards the end of spring.

Councilmember Bohl asked more about the findings and recommendations with the outages at the ballpark substation. Mr. Herchenbach replied it wasn't all related to fuses; that was the first point of an issue. With the 4160 voltage, the amps are much higher than they are with the 12,500. The existing fuse sizes were set to a much higher value. They're assuming those fuses were not changed out, from what he has been told. They were probably two to three times the size they should have been as far as amps. They lowered the amps and recommended a 25 or 30 amp fuse at the initial point of failure. There is another fuse in line with that and that one will be a 50 amp fuse. From that fuse it went to the electronic recloser, and that electronic recloser was sized higher than what he would recommend. He recommended that trip at the recloser (at the feeder) below lowered by half of what it was.

Councilmember Morrison asked Electric Superintendent, Doug Parker, if these have been changed. Mr. Parker replied that staff just got this information this morning. She asked if it's hard to change them. He replied that it's not hard; there are a couple different ways to do it. He further explained. He added that part of the issue is that there is a loop system and he explained how that works. He stated there are a few things they have to work through. He said as far as the reclosers inside the substation, they were set by a previous engineer that designed the substation. Staff are not engineers; it was thought that when they came in to set it, they were setting it correctly. Now that Mr. Herchenbach has had an opportunity to look it over, it sounds like it was set too high. Instead of the recloser opening up, it was the transrupter which caused a bigger outage. He stated that the ultimate reason for the outages was still the squirrel, but instead of the squirrel being the problem and causing just a blink, it wanted to open the whole transrupter because of the other fuses being too big and the recloser not being set at the right level. They will look at getting the reclosers reprogramed and getting the fuses changed out and will try to do it in a way that they don't cause any outages.

Councilmember Bohl asked if staff are still dealing with some clearance issues. Mr. Parker replied, no. His staff were able to go out over the last couple weeks and take care of that issue. Engineer Folck stated that this has been a pretty big undertaking trying to get this all mapped, but it will be very helpful once it's done. RVW has set up an interface with GIS and City staff are updating the maps. Councilmember Gillen asked who will be responsible for keeping everything current. Engineer Folck stated that Superintendent Parker and his staff would be responsible for that. Councilmember Gillen stated he just wants to make sure that the City doesn't get into an incident where our data is out of date. Mr. Parker explained how they will be sure to stay on top of that once RVW is done with the study and assisting the City. Engineer Folck stated that Electric Department staff are excited to see how this information is going to help them and she feels confident they'll keep it current.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

1. Tree Inventory Report by the Nebraska Forest Service - Chrissy Land, Western Community Forestry Specialist

Parks and Recreation Director, Amy Seiler, stated that the Park, Cemetery and Tree Board has been working with the Nebraska Forest Service to conduct a comprehensive tree inventory of all city trees which includes trees in the right-of-way, city parks, golf course, county and school properties. The inventory was free to the City but is made possible through a contract between PlantGeo and the Nebraska Forest Service. The inventory system used is TreePlotter INVENTORY. PlantGeo inventory is "a globally comprehensive GIS tree management and tree inventory software application for field data collection and data management." This is an inventory system that can be constantly updated and used as a management tool in the future to better maintain the public tree canopy within the City of Gering. The inventory was done with the efforts of the Park, Cemetery and Tree Board members doing most of the inventory work under the direction of Kaden Voyers, Assistant Community Forest Specialist with the Nebraska Forest Service and Chrissy Land, Western Community Forestry Specialist with the Nebraska Forest Service. Chrissy Land then presented the findings of the inventory. The Tree Inventory Report is on file in the City Clerk's Office for public inspection.

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

Mayor Ewing noted that last Friday night he presented a key to the City to Tim Maxcy, who was in the audience, for 50 years of service in the Gering Fire Department. Mayor Ewing stated that he and the Council really appreciates what he has done and still does for the City.

Don Gentry addressed Council and stated that the Statue of Liberty statue at Carl Gray Park was erected in 1950 to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Boy Scouts of America. He further explained that J.P. Whitaker, Scout Commissioner of the Kansas City Area Council, came up with the idea of Scout units throughout the country earning money so a replica of the Statue of Liberty could be placed in their communities. They were replicated by a company in Chicago. Each statue is eight and a half feet tall weighing 290 pounds and cost \$350 plus shipping. Over 200 were placed in 39 states in 1950. Both Gering and Scottsbluff units earned money to place a statue in each community. Scottsbluff's was placed in Pioneer Park. He added that Gering should be proud to have this statue because many cities that had them don't have them anymore. Gering needs to take care of that statue.

ADJOURN:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.



Kent E. Ewing, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kathleen J. Weffl, City Clerk

