

McFarland City Council Minutes May 13th, 2024

At 6:00 pm, Mayor Ron Nehring called the regular monthly city council meeting to order with the following city council members present: Darrin Dillingham, Joel Green, Spencer Parker, Tom Dillingham. Council member Lori Senne was absent. Also in attendance was Superintendent Jeff Osif and City Clerk Larry Senne. Public attending the meeting were Katie Miller of Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU) Wabaunsee County Undersheriff Eric Kirsch, Travis Poovey of Fire Dist. No. 7, Joshua Chamberlin and Stanley Havenstein. Mayor Nehring asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no questions or comments from the public.

Katie Miller representing KMU (Division of Water Services) attended the meeting at the request of Superintendent Jeff Osif to discuss membership with KMU to the city council. Katie stated that their purpose is to support Public Utilities in Kansas by providing training in gas, water and electrical services, thus enabling cities to stay in compliance with regulations by providing natural gas operator qualification workshops. She went on to say that KMU has a training field in McPherson with classroom and outdoors training facilities. KMU also offers mutual aid resources with the focus on water, wastewater, natural gas and electric utilities only. The annual cost for membership is \$600 but would be prorated accordingly if the City of McFarland were to join in 2024.

In Attorney News, City Clerk reported that Municipal Court Case No. 2024-01 has been dismissed without prejudice based on defendant Tony Morway removing the vehicle from his property. Superintendent Jeff Osif attended the bench trial concerning damages to city infrastructure by Joshua Chamberlin and testified on the city's behalf. Osif reports that the damage to the culvert was not due to him hitting the culvert based on Google Earth. The only damage done by Chamberlin was him scrapping the concrete on the southwest side. Osif recommends to the city council not to proceed with litigation against Chamberlin. The \$2,600 in repairs would be put onto the city to pay. Mayor Nehring stated that there was no blame being placed on Chamberlin by the city and the issues of making repairs to the culvert are to be tabled until later in 2025. City council agrees with the decision.

In City Maintenance:

Water: The water plant operations are normal. Met with Lindsey Spring Water and briefly discussed the water softening equipment. We had a small, pressurized tank spring a leak, it was promptly replaced. No action taken this month with water well number five.

Sewer: The lift station is operating normally with regular maintenance going on. There was no discharge from the lagoons this month.

Gas: Regarding locating services, I have been trained by Alma to perform utility locates. I am requesting of the city council that I be allowed to hook up the city tablet to our Verizon account so I can complete documentation at the site as well as having access through Google Earth to map water and gas lines.

Retention Dam: After working with the landowner Josh Huff, we have an understanding of the area of responsibility for the city regarding maintenance. Initial

cleanup has been completed by Darrin Meseke and the city will continue with the maintenance after we have completed the tree trimming in town.

Streets: Culvert damage at Wheeler & E. Market streets was determined after further research that Josh Chamberlin did not do the major damage to the culvert.

Recommendation, to leave it as is, it does not appear to be impeding the flow of water. Will put up reflectors on each side of the culvert. We have the majority of the trees trimmed on the west side of town and west of Main street completed. Tomorrow and Friday look good weather wise and anticipate three more days and we will be finished trimming trees. Street crack repair will begin shortly after tree trimming.

Park: I had KA-COMM., Inc. come out to look at the storm siren. They took the mother board back to their office and soldered numerous loose connections. It worked the following Monday. It did not work today when prompted by the county at noon. The cost to replace all the “guts” of the storm siren is \$1,575.

Equipment: Still working on the equipment inventory and maintenance. Still looking for a trailer as well. Fire Dist. No. 7 asked to use the lift to replace light bulbs at the fire station.

Misc.: There will be a new empty roll-off container behind city hall until June 10th.

Mayor Nehring commented that in light of tornado season, we are having trouble with the company Sentry Siren who services the storm siren, and we are now playing catch up on maintenance. We have another technician here in Kansas that wants the chance to look at it before we spend \$1,500 with KA-COMM. Mayor Nehring also touched base on a storm management grant to replace the siren, costs could range between 28 to 30 thousand dollars for a new siren. The city could then have a redundant system, the old siren is estimated to be good for at least 10 more years. Mayor Nehring stated that he would be looking for a grant from the State of Kansas for around \$36,000. Ron said that he would also check on the radio frequency at the county level to see if it matches our siren, as the county is unable to set it off.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on April 8th, 2024, were read. Council Member Darrin Dillingham made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes. The Treasurer’s Report was reviewed. Council Member Spencer Parker made a motion to approve the report. Seconded by Darrin Dillingham, motion carried with all voting yes. The monthly bills were reviewed. Council Member Darrin Dillingham made a motion to pay the bills as presented. Seconded by Spencer Parker, motion carried with all voting yes.

In New Business: Wabaunsee Co. Under Sheriff Eric Kirsch made an introduction and gave a little background on himself to the city council and goals of the sheriffs dept. and discusses a variety of topics, one is the license plate readers that are being installed in the county. One will be placed at the McFarland exit. Other projects in the works include security cameras at night around the county and communities sharing the expense of having part-time police dept. patrolling the area. One example could be Paxico and McFarland sharing the cost.

Travis Poovey representing, Fire Dist. No. 7 asked if there was any resolution on the “Fire Station Lease” agreement. Travis stated that he attended a work session two months ago and asked where the city is headed in regard to the lease agreement. The city council heard discussion on upgrades being proposed to the maintenance building

behind city hall. Mayor Nehring commented that it would be discussed at a future work session.

Josh Chamberlin commented to the city council that he had a speech planned out but wasn't able to print it. He had pictures of the so-called damage to the culvert. He discussed having his drivers license suspended among other things. Mayor Nehring said that the city would contact his insurance company and inform them that there was no damaged caused to city property.

At 7:04 pm, council member Tom Dillingham made a motion to go into Executive Session for 10 minutes to discuss non-elected personnel. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes. At 7:12 pm, city council came out of Executive Session with no action taken at this time.

Also, in New Business, The City Council heard discussion on its annual appointments and made couple of changes. Council Member Tom Dillingham made a motion to approve the following annual appointments; City Clerk – Larry Senne, City Treasurer – Tracy Logan, City Superintendent – Jeff Osif, Official Newspaper - *the Wabauunsee County Signal-Enterprise*, Official Bank – *Stockgrowers State Bank*, City Attorney – Tim Liesmann, Municipal Court Judge - Josh Douglas, Municipal Court Clerk – Larry Senne, Zoning Administrator Representative – Darrin Dillingham, Park Coordinator – Jo Nehring, Cemetery Sexton – Jeff Osif, Governing Body President – Tom Dillingham, Budget Director – Larry Senne, Utility Billing Representative – Larry Senne, Public Works – Ron Nehring, Jeff Osif and Tom Dillingham, Retention Dam Representative – Ron Nehring and Darrin Dillingham, Public Health Officer / Hazzard Mitigation – Spencer Parker / Joel Green, Building Permit Administrator – Darrin Dillingham, Compliance Officer – Lori Senne. Seconded by Darrin Dillingham, motion carried with all voting yes.

Mayor Nehring presented Ordinance No. 276 an ordinance amending ordinance No. 232 Dangerous Dog Ordinance and Ordinance No. 277 an ordinance amending Sidewalk Ordinance No. 30, for consideration. City council reviewed the amended dangerous dog ordinance. Council Member Darrin Dillingham made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 276 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 232 DANGEROUS DOG ORDINANCE. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes. City Council reviewed the amended sidewalk ordinance and discussed issues with existing sidewalks and where there used to be one to who pays for sidewalks and placement on tax rolls for payment of sidewalks. Council Member Tom Dillingham brought up the need for penalties to be included in the amended ordinance. Mayor Nehring asked city council to add and take out what they didn't want or need to have in the ordinance. City Clerk remarked that he would have a new version ready for next months meeting.

Under Questions and Comments, City Clerk reported that 61 dog tags have been sold so far and that last year the city issued 91 tags. The City Clerk also reported a rise in complaints that rural and out of town utility bill customers not getting their bills in the mail in a timely manner, and some are requesting that penalties be removed from their bills. The City Clerk reviewed solutions proposed in the past such as "Front Desk" as a solution. This comes as a cost to both the city and the customer, but gained no traction last time it was proposed. The simplest solution would be for that customer to sign up for ACH debit account to pay their bill on the 20th. City Clerk also reported that the 2024 Spring CCR Report has been completed and the 2023 annual audit has started. The clerk reported that he would be gathering information and data to start work on the

2025 budget. Mayor Nehring remarked that he would like to discuss spending and request for the budget at the next work session which has been moved to Saturday, May 25th. Also in closing, Superintendent Jeff Osif reminded the city council that the \$600 investment in membership with KMU was an investment in his training. Mayor Nehring asked about replacement of the skylight on the roof at the water plant with tin, that we needed another piece of tin and would like to do the job while the city has the lift.

At 8:25 pm, council member Tom Dillingham made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Spencer Parker, motion carried with all voting yes.

City Clerk
Larry Senne