

McFarland City Council Minutes August 12th, 2024

Mayor Ron Nehring called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6 pm, with the following city council members present: Darrin Dillingham, Joel Green, Spencer Parker and Lori Senne by conference call. City officials present were City Clerk Larry Senne, Superintendent Jeff Osif, City Treasurer Tracy Logan and City Attorney Tim Liesmann. Public attending the meeting were Jim MacGregor, Avery Trecek, Ron & Kate Nolan, Janice Nehring and John Walker. Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Nehring opened the meeting with comments or concerns from the public. There were none. City Attorney Tim Liesmann asked if there were any questions for conducting the hearing on property located at 509 Main St., if not the hearing is scheduled for 1:30 pm at City Hall. Council Member and Compliance Officer Lori Senne asked Liesmann to assist with writing up an order for the meeting. Attorney Liesmann also commented that family of the other Kansas Statute 17 case on property located at 601 Main St. has been contacted with no good leads in locating the owner's current location and we will be moving forward to publish notice on that property.

City Superintendent Jeff Osif gave his monthly maintenance report:

Gas: Ownership of the trailer court has changed hands. Ashton Torrey is now the owner, Russell Torrey had indicated previously that he would pay the expense in having the gas line moved and replaced. City of Alma estimates the cost about \$6,500 to get this project completed. Just need a contact number for the new owner. Treasurer Tracy Logan commented that she has her number and will give it to Osif. Otherwise I have had only one locate this month.

Water: All is well at the water plant. Water tower maintenance UCI extended the overflow pipe at the water tower to within 2 feet of the bottom to stay compliant to regulations. They will come back this fall when the tower is drained to repaint the inside and perform several welding repairs. Once that is completed, Alexander pump will schedule a time to replace the remaining galvanized piping in the water plant. Regarding Well No. 5, it takes a certified engineer to oversee the project for KDH & E. I am in discussion with a civil engineer Matt Steele he has a PHD, and is putting together a proposal for services as well as the steps we need to take to get the well in operation. The City of McFarland needs to secure his services and get a preliminary test completed through KDH & E, in addition to installing a temporary pump to determine the output of the well and have another water test performed by KDH & E. If the water tests and pump output are good we can start the installation of the pump and laying the pipes to our existing lines.

Sewer: All is well at the lift station. Regular maintenance is ongoing. I have quotes for insulating the building at approx. \$5,800 and for a mini-split heating and cooling at \$2,800. There was no discharge from the lagoons this month.

Retention Dam: Ron and I mowed this month, we will be burning later on in February, and Fire Dist. No. 7 will assist. I have put together a memorandum of understanding concerning the maintenance of the dam between the city and Josh Huff. Once the city council approves the memo, it will be attached to the lease.

Streets: I haven't gotten all the estimates for curbing yet and will table this until next meeting. Soon, we will continue with crack sealing the streets once the mowing lets up.

Park: Nothing new.

Equipment: I have two estimates for a new snow plow from Coldwell Equipment and American Equipment both of Kansas City; they are almost the same coming in at approx... \$6,500 to \$6,700. The city council wanted me to get prices on a utility vehicle (UTV); I need a dollar amount to spend if the city council approves the spending towards the purchase, when one is found it sells almost immediately. The UTV will be used for hauling the sprayer and the smaller trailer.

Misc.: In working towards getting my certificates in water and sewer, I had math class and attended Class 1 of the Water Distribution Academy. I have been approached about obtaining cemetery lots where none exist. I have check and not aware of any rule for official surveying of the cemetery, we can extend the cemetery lots to the south 31 feet. That would be wide enough for a block up along the fence and 15 feet wide path east to west for lots to be plotted. We would just need to purchase more markers to place in the ground. End of report.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on July 8th, 2024 were read. Mayor Nehring asked for the last line of the minutes referencing the scoreboard LED lightbulbs be deleted and to read as follows; (Mayor Nehring reported that the funding grant for ball field lights had ran out before the paperwork could be completed.) Council member Spencer Parker made a motion to approve the minutes as written including the mentioned deletion. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes. The monthly Treasurer's Report was reviewed. Council member Lori Senne made a motion to approve the report. Seconded by Darrin Dillingham. The monthly bills were reviewed. Council member Darrin Dillingham made a motion to pay the bills presented totaling \$24,233.35 Seconded by Spencer Parker, motion carried with all voting yes.

In Old Business; the review of the City's 2025 budget with city council members was tabled until the budget hearing being held at 6:00 pm, on August 15th, 2024 at City Hall. City Superintendent Jeff Osif commented on the cost of the security cameras for the city buildings and provided rough estimates from ADT and WTC at approximately \$25,000 to \$35,000 for the number of cameras requested. Jeff mentioned that we need to narrow down to a couple of spots due to the expense and commented that internet / Wi-Fi would be a necessity considering the areas that the cameras are placed. Council member Lori Senne suggested to looking into a grant for funding. City Clerk brought up for discussion an individual's gas account that is still outstanding with ongoing payments from the high gas utility bills of 2021. Former Mayor John Walker stated that those who were placed on a payment plan were given "at most 18 months" to pay back the city for their arrears on gas utility bill. City Clerk commented to the city council that this balance is still considerable and feels that it should be paid off by the end of the year. City council members were in agreement. Mayor Nehring asked that a letter be drawn up explaining such and that any remaining balance at the end of the year will be placed on their property tax roll, thus ending the "pay what you can" revolving payment plan on the gas utility account.

In New Business; Wabaunsee County Commissioner Jim MacGregor came to speak briefly to the city council as budget season is upon us. Jim stated that the county has spent a lot of its cash reserves and has come up with a 10 year plan for its departments to have a more accurate documents used in budgeting. This should help eliminate the peaks and valleys in the county's budget. Jim also reported that all the counties Senior Centers budgets will be fully funded. City Clerk reported to the council that the current penalty section of the dog ordinance is in conflict with what was reportedly the city's penalty rate of \$10 its charging (per past minutes) for late payment of dog taxes. The clerk suggested that in fairness the city will finish

out the year at the rate of \$10, and asked the city council to review the penalty section and determine if they want to keep the current penalties or come up with an amendment to the ordinance reflecting updated changes to the delinquent dog taxes.

Under Property Concerns; Compliance Officer Lori Senne reported on an individual in town that needs her yard mowed, she is unable to do it and has health concerns and her mowers are not working. City Council heard discussion on last year's issues with this property and how it was brought into compliance with a lot of volunteers helping out, and the property has been allowed to backslide into being non-compliant. Lori also brought to the attention of the council a citizens complaint of a vehicle that reportedly hasn't moved in over a year and a car body in need of removal as well. A 30 day letter shall be sent out requesting those be addressed. Lori asked the city council for their input on the property with high weeds, grass and tree limbs down on the property making it difficult to begin mowing. Mayor Nehring asked that a letter be sent stating it is the homeowner's responsibility and if the city needs to bring the property into compliance the cost if unpaid, will go onto the tax rolls. City council is in agreement with the decision.

Under Closing Comments or Questions; Mayor Nehring asked the city council for a nomination of Council President, after some discussion council member Darrin Dillingham nominated council member Lori Senne to be Council President. Seconded by Spencer Parker, motion carried with all voting yes. Mayor Nehring also reported that Ed Dillingham has been storing the left over fireworks in his garage and would like the city to take that over. If the city council agrees and insurance permitting we would store them in the shed at the ball field. Scott Murray has been contacted about this but hasn't returned with any answers. Council member Lori Senne commented on the new signs for children at play, dogs on a leash sign and a population sign. City Council heard discussion on the locations for the signs. Mayor Nehring said that he would like to see one of each on both entrances to town and additional signs at the post office area.

At 7:17 pm, council member Spencer Parker made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes.

Larry Senne,
City Clerk