

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PAWNEE CITY, HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE CORNERSTONE BUILDING, 601 G STREET, ALL IN PAWNEE CITY, PAWNEE COUNTY, NEBRASKA.

Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by advertising in the Pawnee Republican, a designated method for giving notice as shown by the Affidavit of Publishing on file in the office of the City Clerk. Notice of this meeting was given to the Mayor and City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of the notice and the Agenda are on file in the office of the City Clerk. The availability of the agenda was communicated in advance and in the notice to the Mayor and Council of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Present: Council Members Pat Hatfield, Donnie Fisher, Susan Eisenhauer and Vickie Zelenka; Deputy City Clerk Kellie Wiers, City Clerk/Treasurer Tamela Curtis and Foreman Spencer Cumley. **Absent:** Mayor Charlie Hatfield.

Council President Donnie Fisher called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. informing all those present of the Poster stating the Open Meeting Law Changes on the West meeting room wall, next to the storage closet, accessible to the public. At this time, all those present stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Member Eisenhauer moved to accept December 9, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Council Member Zelenka seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

The Treasurer submitted the following claims for consideration: **12/16/25 Payroll:** \$11,331.99; **Union Bank & Trust**, FWH 3,260.19; **NE Dept. of Rev**, SWH 438.27; **John Hancock**, retirement 1,635.01; **Windstream**, phone service @ swr plant 64.55; **Amazon Capital Services**, office, safety & repair supplies 866.65; **NPPD**, electric service 3454.24; **Eakes Office Solutions**, IT & Elevate ph system 971.89; **American Legal Publishing**, 2026 League Ordinances 670.00; **Hometown Leasing**, Library copier lease 100.79; **JEO Consulting Group**, 2025 STR supt. services 1000.00; **Mitchell Electric**, electric supplies 5.50; **PC Public Schools**, 2025 Liquor & Tobacco license, dog & parking tickets 2440.00; **Pawnee Co. Register of Deeds**, release mow lien 10.00; **Pawnee True Value**, repair supplies 237.91; **Seneca Sanitation**, city-wide clean up 968.00; **Stallbaumer Lumber**, GFCI cover 6.79; **Ty's Outdoor Power & Service**, snow plow parts 1210.34; **Casey's Bus. Mastercard**, equip fuel 439.78; **Access Systems Leasing**, 232.14; **Black Hills Energy**, gas service 510.54; **Econo Signs**, Vonderfecht street signs 129.60; **Hach Co.**, pH buffer solution for swr plant 94.40; **Iowa Pump Works**, swr jet pump 9181.64; **Lancaster Co. Sheriff's Office**, civil service fee 8.92; **Pawnee Co. Sheriff Office**, civil service fee 18.50; **Pawnee County Memorial Hospital**, pre-employment physical empl #1009 162.00; **Pawnee Republican**, subscription renewal 50.00; **Seneca Sani**, dumpster @ pond 120.00, Nov 2025 garb service 8274.76; **OPPD**, electric @ wells 279.79; **Spectrum**, internet & phone @ shop 184.99; **Stehlik Law**, filing fee deed 16.00; **Pawnee City Development Corp.** Oct 2025 sales tax 8726.88. Council Member Zelenka moved

to approve the claims as submitted. Council Member Hatfield seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Brittany McCullough/SENDD--Presentation of Community Needs Survey results: Brittany explained in order to complete the certified leadership community application; a survey had to be completed on various items. A survey was completed in 2024 on community satisfaction on appearance, condition of streets, parks and the city library. Generally, 75% of the people who participated in the survey feel the streets are in good condition; 52% feel drainage issues are a problem; 43% feel nuisance properties are bad. The Demolition Program is still active with a balance of around \$26,000 in the account. 46% feel the parks are in good condition while 35% feel the streets are in the worst condition. Next, the survey included people's opinion on City Services including the Mayor & City Council, the City Clerk, Fire & Rescue Services, Maintenance, Sewer, Water Quality, Emergency Services and Library. The survey results reported 23% are unsatisfied with the Mayor & City Council, about the same are unsatisfied with maintenance. 75% reported being satisfied overall. Most needed: demolition of dilapidated houses. 28% reported safe drinking water, 28% also streets & maintenance. Priorities: 61% streets, 32% housing, 30% streets, 29% recreational facilities, attracting new businesses & visitors and then housing. Recently, a survey was conducted on Healthcare and Broadband because those two topics were not included last year. People were asked about satisfaction, access, quality and availability. Broadband: 85% are satisfied with their access to broadband and 75% with the quality. Healthcare: 50% are satisfied with access and 80% are satisfied with quality. 94% have some kind of internet access, 50% are paying more than \$80.00/month for internet, over 30% are struggling to pay for it. Healthcare: 87% use the local hospital and there were notes that some bedside manners are not ideal. 127 people participated in the 2024 survey while 67 people participated in the last survey of approximately 300 households. SENDD can still accept surveys and can complete it online at "pawneecitynebraska.com" for the link. There are some posters around town that have a QR code and people can complete it on their phone. Brittany explained most surveys list housing as a number one priority but Pawnee City's survey didn't list housing as the number one priority. Clerk Curtis explained the City has spent over \$100,000 in the last 5 years through the Demolition Program to clean up dilapidated houses.

Julie Bauman, Present Draft FY 2024-2025 Audit: Julie Bauman met with the Mayor and City Council to discuss the 2024-25 Fiscal Year Audit. Ms. Bauman explained the audit went well. She looked at all the funds and performed a risk-based audit, meaning she didn't look at every invoice but randomly pulled specific invoices from every fund. The financial statements provided, balance sheets, income statements, etc. were given an unqualified opinion, which is the best type of opinion to receive. The audit did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls considered to be material weaknesses and disclosed no instances of noncompliance. The General Fund is looking better since a month ago. Part of the problem was the timing of a large payment on the street bond plus Clerk Curtis had found that a "sweep" was made and deposited into the wrong account. Ms. Bauman gave credit to the Council for being good "watch dogs" in regard to City operations and credit to Clerk Curtis for being detail oriented.

Treasurer's Report on General Checking & NFIT Savings Acct. Balances as of 12/22/25: Clerk Curtis explained the accounts are setting pretty steady. These numbers include recent sales

tax and the quarterly law enforcement claim has been paid plus the ½% sales tax for street repair and payment to PCDC will be coming out.

Discuss Nuisance Issues: City Atty Jennifer Stehlik-Ladman was present to discuss these issues.

1120 5th Street & 728 9th Street (Parker): Clerk Curtis explained she had sent Ed & Barb Parker a letter in a plain envelope (hoping they would open the letter) explaining the City really doesn't want to go through abatement and there were people who have contacted the City about purchasing these properties from the Parkers but she has not received a response. She had also included a copy of the proof of publication that was printed in the Pawnee Republican. City Atty Jennifer explained she had also mailed a letter to the Parkers but had not received a response. Discussion was had that the 5th street property has new sewer and water pipes but boarded up windows. The property on 9th street has sewer problems that have never been fixed. There is also a camper parked in the yard on 9th street but it is not known whether the license is current or not. City Atty Jennifer suggested getting an estimate from Gyhra to demolish the house and buildings on 5th Street plus have Foreman Cumley write up an estimate to clean up the overgrown weeds and trees on the 9th Street property then wait until January 30, 2026, to start abatement.

522/526 G Street—Updates on InLine Construction re: building debris removal: There is an excavator parked at the back of the property. Clerk Curtis explained Steve from InLine Construction was waiting on a part to repair some machinery and then he would be up to start working on the debris.

1145 G Street (Percival-Lewis): Updates on City Crew removing items from inside house/push house in a pile: the City Crew removed items from inside of the house which included a bathtub, furniture, furnace and a water heater and then hauled them to Seneca Sanitation. The City Crew then demolished the house and garage then put the debris into a pile. They have kept receipts and Foreman Cumley has kept track of the number of hours spent on the demolition.

Updates on Controlled Burn Date submitted to State Fire Marshall: Council Member Hatfield explained he had talked with Fire Chief Russ Smith about the burn date which has not yet been set. Now, instead of a two-week window to set a date, the Fire Dept. only has a two-day window from the burn date to complete the actual burn. Council Member Hatfield talked with Greg Olberding from Seneca Sanitation and he can accept the ash from the controlled burn but we will need to give him notice but he cannot accept rock or wet ash. The neighbors surrounding the property have been given notice of the controlled burn a few months ago. Council Member Hatfield suggested another letter be sent to the neighbors or a phone call letting them know the controlled burn is imminent.

826 4th Street: Updates on water shut-off due to non-compliance of nuisance letter from City Atty Stehlik-Ladman & progress on property clean-up: Clerk Curtis explained Mr. Morehead had contacted her and stated he had cleared a path to the water meter plus trimmed the overhead branches but asked for more time to comply with the terms of the letter. He said that he had been working on the items and asked until the weekend after Christmas to clean up the rest of the yard. Discussion was had to check on the yard next week to see if Mr. Morehead had cleaned up his property.

1038 7th Street (C. Johnson): Re-visit nuisance property complaint – review past meeting discussions on this nuisance property: Council Member Eisenhower stated Ms. Johnson was supposed to sign over the property to the Pawnee City Development Corporation (PCDC) by Oct. 31st but has not yet done so even though Cindy had stated it wasn't feasible to remodel the property. The roll off dumpster that was in the yard has been removed and it wasn't full. Ms. Johnson had stated to PCDC that she wanted to clean items out of the house plus have other family members remove things before she signed over the property. Therefore, the City needs to follow up with Ms.

Johnson or start the abatement process. City Atty Jennifer suggested waiting until Dec. 31st and then send another letter to Cindy and ask her if she needs help moving items out of the house that she wants to keep. Council Members offered to help with removing items.

Review email from Jill @ Stehlik Law re: Airport Authority Board Re-Appointments

needed to separate those needing to be re-elected by 2-years so the board members are all elected for 6-year terms: *Take Action on Re-Appointing Brandon Willey to continue serving on the Airport Authority Board with his term to expire in Dec. 2028:*

Council Member Eisenhower moved to re-appoint Brandon Willey to the Airport Authority Board with his term to expire in Dec. 2028. Council Member Hatfield seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried. ***Take Action on Re-Appointing Clayton Branek to continue serving on the Airport Authority Board with his term to expire in Dec. 2028:*** Council Member Eisenhower moved to re-appoint Clayton Branek to the Airport Authority Board with his term to expire in Dec. 2028. Council Member Hatfield seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried. ***Take Action on Re-Appointing Larry Borchert to continue serving on the Airport Authority Board with his term to expire in Dec. 2030:*** Council Member Eisenhower moved to re-appoint Larry Borchert to the Airport Authority Board with his term to expire in Dec. 2030. Council Member Hatfield seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried.

Review emailed correspondence between Deputy Clerk Wiers and ED Co-Directors re:

Recycling: DC Wiers explained RJ Hamilton had called the City Office to ask if the City would be interested in a recycling program. He had recently set up a “spoke & wheel” program and would like to add surrounding cities to the program. Mr. Hamilton explained that he also provides garbage service and would be interested in providing that in town. DC Wiers had explained to RJ that the City currently uses Seneca Sanitation and has a good relationship with them so the City would probably not be interested in changing providers but would be interested in recycling. Josie explained that she talked with Mr. Hamilton about providing recycling service to Pawnee City. Mr. Hamilton has contacted area towns to see if there is enough interest in recycling for it to be feasible to provide recycling service to the southeast corner of the state. RJ recommended having a drop off point close to the grocery store. Josie explained that she had spoken to Greg Olberding from Seneca Sanitation but it is not feasible for him to provide this service. Discussion was had about the recycling service Pawnee City had at one time but the business, Recycling Enterprises, stopped providing this service because it wasn’t feasible to travel from Lincoln to provide the service. They would charge a trip fee but the clerks could not recall what Recycling Enterprises charged. Clerk Curtis explained there use to be a \$1.00 charge on the water bill to help pay for the monthly cost. Josie said Jess Colo has a spot next to her rental house across the street from the City Shop that may be big enough to set up recycling bins that she would be interested in donating. RJ Hamilton would charge a trip fee but would like an answer from the Council if Pawnee City is interested in being a part of the recycling program. Josie will talk to RJ again to see what he would charge for each trip and get back to the Council. Josie explained she felt having recycling service available to the public would attract people to the community to do business here and live here. Council Member Harfield asked if it would be possible to add Recycling Services yet within this budget year? Clerk Curtis explained Recycling

could be added and the Council would have to amend the budget. Council is interested in discussing recycling services with RJ Hamilton.

Review/Discuss Tax Year 2025 Real Estate Tax Statements – need motion to pay before due dates: The first half of the 2025 real estate taxes are due before 5/1/26 and the second half of the taxes are due before 9/1/26. Council Member Eisenhower explained the walking park south of PCAL should not be taxed and she had talked with the county assessor earlier this year about the matter and it was to be taken care of and it hasn't. She would like to talk with the assessor again before the Council votes to pay the real estate taxes. Therefore, this issue is tabled until the next meeting.

Report and Update from City Foreman Cumley: *Discussion on things going on in the City:* Foreman Cumley explained earlier this week there was a water leak earlier in the week downtown that started at the sidewalk and then the crew ended up next to the water main and it wasn't service for The Shop. The leak was actually coming from the service for a business across the street. The saddle was rusted through and broke off the main. This water main was installed in the downtown project over 35 years ago. The house at 1145 G Street has been demolished. Council Member Hatfield stated the City Crew did a very good job. The City Crew will use the skid loader to clean up little pieces of debris. Foreman Cumley is working on computing the total cost of the demolition. Foreman Cumley admitted to breaking a couple windows on the mini excavator when dealing with tree branches. Discussion was had that the next mini excavator the City purchase should be one with a track instead of tires because of the various debris that the City Crew encounters in their job.

Report and update from Council Member Hatfield: *Review/Discuss quote from GPM on Velocity Flowmeter System at Sewer Plant:* Council Member Hatfield moved to approve the quote from GPM on the Velocity Flowmeter System at the Sewer Plant. Council Member Zelenka seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all present voting in favor of the motion, whereupon motion carried. ***Discuss how continual accidents at work should be disciplined:*** Council Member Hatfield asked City Atty Jennifer Stehlik-Ladman to discuss this issue with the Council. Council Member Hatfield explained there have been several incidents involving city employees where items have been damaged which include an employee hitting the fire hall with a mower, an axle broken on a trailer and windows have been broken on equipment. It looks like this is continuing and shouldn't there be some employee discipline on these issues? Keep documentation? Jennifer explained the department heads have the authority to take disciplinary action as listed in the employee handbook. If an employee disagrees with that action, then that employee can request a hearing. Clerk Curtis explained currently, the employee is writing an incident report when something happens. Foreman Cumley asked if the incident report is sufficient to use for disciplinary action against accidents versus insubordination? Jennifer recommended reviewing the incident report and if someone felt it needed to be looked into further, then document who you spoke to, what the violation would be, the discipline imposed and corrective action taken. Document this. Council Member Fisher recommended keeping a folder in the office for incident reports available for review to see if there is a pattern of negligence and Council Member Eisenhower suggested this information could be used in the annual performance evaluation. For example, if an employee had several accidents in a year's time then points could be deducted on the performance review. Council Member Eisenhower

mentioned the incident in the past year where a city employee backed into her car with a city vehicle while it was parked in front of the city office. Council Member Hatfield explained some employers would fire employees if there is a pattern of accidents within a year's time, especially if the accidents cost the employer money. Foreman Cumley stated there are times when accidents happen due to nobody's fault and do not warrant disciplinary action. He is concerned that an employee could be written up for an accident. Council Member Fisher commented that it could warrant corrective action be taken due to safety concerns. Jennifer suggested reviewing each incident report and then determine whether disciplinary or corrective action needs to be taken such as installing extra mirrors on a vehicle so the employee can see better. Clerk Curtis explained LARM has free training available and safety videos available that employees can watch which could be used as part of corrective action for an incident. Jennifer suggested keeping documentation in a personnel file especially if there is a progression of disciplinary action. Discussion was had about the incident involving Council Member Eisenhower's car and if she or another person had been standing between the two vehicles and was hurt. Also, it was suggested that the Safety Committee review incidents at their meetings which could influence how to use the LARM grant money but also discuss these reports every month at the Council Meetings. Clerk Curtis suggested writing a form that would include a place to document an incident, corrective action taken, verbal warning, etc. Council Member Hatfield is also concerned that council members were not notified when the axle broke on the trailer.

Review email re: costs to purchase additional Community Guides through NPPD: Clerk Curtis explained the City has received 50 free community guides but if the City wants additional guides, then there will be a charge. The City Office has handed out at least 25 copies to customers and community groups. Josie Friedly stated there is an online version available that could be uploaded to the City website. She will talk to Jess Colo about uploading this to the Chamber and City Office websites then report back to Clerk Curtis. Council Member Eisenhower stated that PCPN should have a brochure available that could be handed out or maybe they have funds to develop one to share. Josie is a member of PCPN so she will bring this up at the next board meeting and report back to the Council.

Review PCAL's November Meeting Minutes & December's Meeting Agenda: Council reviewed PCAL's November meeting minutes. Clerk Curtis explained they are now making the reserve payments mandated by USDA and they are making payments on the current building insurance reimbursement. They still haven't submitted receipts to the USDA for reimbursement of repair expenses that were discussed last spring even though Luann from USDA has reminded them.

Report and update from Deputy Clerk Wiers: *Report on Mitten Tree & Angel Tree Success:* Dc Wiers reported there was at least 50 pairs of gloves and mittens plus hats collected this year for the mitten tree. Also, there were 70 angel ornaments for the Angel Tree this year so 70 kids benefited this Christmas season. Union Bank & Trust brought their toys they collected from the toy drive up to the angel tree gift pick up day. Parents were able to pick out additional toys for Christmas gifts. Krystal Nichols from SENCA (Southeast Nebraska Community Action) and Debbie Green from the SENCA CASA (court appointed special advocate) also helped with the Angel Tree gift pick up. Krystal had a few leftover holiday food baskets that she distributed and also gave each Angel Tree family a \$15.00 gift card to Pawnee City Thriftway.

Review Correspondence: Council reviewed the spreadsheet on the October 2025 Total Sales Tax of \$25,747.69 with \$2,476.00 being Motor Vehicle Sales Tax and ½% Street Repairs Sales Tax totaling \$5,817.92. President Trump signed an Executive Order declaring Dec. 24th, 25th & 26th as a federal holiday in observance of Christmas. All Federal Offices will be closed during that time. Therefore, Council was in agreement to observe the federal holiday.

Council Member Zelenka moved to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Hatfield seconded the motion. Roll Call vote indicated all in favor of the motion and meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

ATTEST: Kellie A. Wiers, Deputy City Clerk

Donnie Fisher, Council President