

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES July 1, 2025

A regular meeting of the Ashland City Council was held at the Ashland City Hall Council Chambers on the 1st day of July, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor James Anderson
City Council President Chuck Niemeyer
City Council Member Michelle Libal
City Council Member Jerry Lofberg
City Council Member Jim Pinkman
City Administrator Jessica Quady
City Clerk Kristina Stoki

Others: Tim Adams, Merrett Lane, Rick Johnson

Notice of the meeting was posted in the Ashland Gazette on June 20th, 2025. The Mayor and all Council Members received advance notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda as shown by the Acknowledgment of Receipt of Notice. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the public.

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll Call was taken, and a quorum was declared. Anderson noted the Open Meetings Act located on the south wall of the room.

Motion by Lofberg, second by Pinkman to adopt the regular agenda.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Public comment opportunity given. Rick Johnson of 609 N. 15th St. spoke. Johnson stated he obtained a permit to cut down 21 trees at his house, and stated the difficulties he had during the project. Johnson stated concerns about the City dump and stated he has told the City Administrator how to fix the dump then provided specifics to the Council. Johnson stated concerns about the soccer field parking and the need for a parking lot. Johnson stated the city pool has several problems. Mayor Anderson stated the allotted time for public comment has concluded.

Motion by Libal, second by Pinkman to approve the first reading of Ordinance 1247 to amend Municipal Code regarding City Council meeting time and procedures.

City Administrator Quady and the Council clarified this is to move the regular meeting time to 6pm.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Motion by Pinkman, second by Niemeyer to approve awarding the 2025 Water Supply Improvements to General Excavating in the amount of \$1,004,933.95

Merrett Lane from JEO spoke and gave a summary of the bids submitted and gave the recommendation the bid be awarded to General Excavating. Lane answered questions from all, providing clarification on the project. Lane stated Group B of the documentation provided is just for fire hydrants and is taxed differently by the State of Nebraska, which is why Group B is separate, and that everything else is in Group A, including the generator. Lane stated the project includes just over 2,000 feet of 8" and 10" pipe which takes it straight from the wells through well buildings to the blending building and there are no water services on this line.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Motion by Pinkman, second by Niemeyer to approve change to scope of services to JEO Consulting Group for 2022 Dennis Dean Road Improvements in the amount of \$8,500.00.

Tim Adams from JEO spoke and stated a summary of the changes needed due to the water main replacement on Fir Street, and the need to install insertion valves, which extended the contract with M.E. Collins due to additional inspection and coordination time.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Tim Adams spoke and stated there are two different agreements, one for a lower-level design and one for a ground-level design, out at the building where the wastewater comes into the plant. Adams stated in this building the City has an old auger grinder unit in the lower level that has not been operational for several years now and the Utilities department has been going down and manually clearing out what the bar screen catches. The Utilities department recommended putting in a mechanical bar screen but in order for that to be done a Preliminary Engineering Report was needed, as one has not been done in several years. Adams stated this is the phase currently in progress, at 60%, and has allowed JEO to determine the size of screen needed for current volumes and future growth volumes. Adams stated the project would involve putting a screen in the lower level along with a wash press, which consolidates everything and discharges the waste into a dumpster. Adams stated if everything is left down below, there are no modifications needed to the building. Adams stated most new systems have everything in the main level of the building which results in a larger piece of equipment. Adams stated the challenge for the City with bringing everything up to the main level is none of the electrical or HVAC meets code or standards for main-level infrastructure, and different electrical component standards have to be met when there are two levels involved, due to corrosion susceptibility. Adams stated if the ground-level design is selected, the electrical components will be upgraded to code standards, or if everything is kept on

the lower level where it is now, those upgrades are not needed, hence the lower engineering and construction costs. Adams answered questions from all, providing clarification. Adams stated there are safety issues with workers going into the pit, although the proper ventilation does exist today, but operations and maintenance efforts would be reduced and simplified. Adams stated the screen and drive unit itself will exist in the lower level regardless of the option chosen, but the screenings can be taken up to the upper level if that is the direction chosen. Adams stated trips down to the lower level would be limited to whenever that screen or drive unit needs maintenance or service. City Administrator Quady stated the Utilities department is estimating the team would only need to go down there once per year instead of multiple times per week currently. Quady stated the current safety and communication process for the Utilities workers when they go down into the pit today. Adams stated how the old system operated, which has degraded over time and broke down and is no longer operational, and explained the current manual process performed by the Utilities department. Adams stated this current manual screening and cleaning process catches the big stuff but doesn't catch everything it should, allowing material to make it into the influent pumps and other treatment equipment, which causes more wear than desired. Adams stated with the new screen, significantly more extractions are expected. Quady clarified this item is just the engineering fees. Adams walked through the construction estimates provided for both the lower-level option and the upper-level option. Adams stated the ideal design today would be on the main floor. Adams stated while it is safe the way it is today, the City does introduce risks by leaving things in the lower level. Quady made mention of fatalities in other communities. Adams stated the current pit was put in in 2005 and noted equipment lifespan of 20 years due to the harsh environment underground. Equipment lifespan and safety considerations were discussed by all for the two options presented, and made clarification that the vote tonight is choosing between the lower-level or the upper-level design, or to table the decision. The option was also given to bid out construction costs for both designs.

Motion by Niemeyer, second by Lofberg to put in the bid for the ground floor level bar screen.

Adams stated if they made it all the way through to bids, there still would be other ways to explore the other option.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

City Administrator Quady summarized the county-wide owner-occupied housing rehab program through SENDD, of which Ashland was the host/sponsor and did all the paperwork, and there were four other communities in Saunders County who participated. Quady stated the program provides a grant for property upgrades and repairs not to exceed \$24,999, and if the homeowner lives in the house for so long the grant is forgiven. Quady stated the homeowner on this agenda is having health issues and is selling her home. Quady stated the homeowner was under the impression the lien was put on her house earlier than it was, and is asking if the city is willing to forgive any of the lien amount so she has to pay back less. Quady stated if there is money paid back, it will go to the City of Ashland since we were the sponsor, and it can be used for more of these types of

projects. Quady explained the documentation and financials provided in the letter by SENDD and stated there were close to 20 property owners total in this project, and money is only received back when a property owner moves out before a specified amount of time. Quady stated there is a matching portion for the entire amount put in by each participating community, and the rest of funds comes from DED. Discussion ensued amongst the Council and City Administrator regarding precedence that may be set based on this decision, communication efforts made by the homeowner, likelihood of this happening by the other program grantees, potential financial hardships faced by the homeowner, etc.

Motion by Libal, second by Lofberg that the homeowner pays \$5,500, dropping the total remaining by around \$1,500.

Further discussion by the council ensued stating this decision means less funds for the city for future programs vs. the benefit of helping others. Quady restated the motion made for clarification.

Roll Call: Ayes: Niemeyer, Libal, Lofberg Nays: Pinkman Motion Carried

Motion by Libal, second by Niemeyer to approve the consent agenda which included approval of the June 11 and June 23, 2025 Budget Workshop minutes, the June 19, 2025 City Council meeting minutes, and approval of Pay Requests from JEO Consulting Group Inc. for General Engineering \$2,742.50; for Dennis Dean Road Improvements in the amount of \$1,000.00; for Ashland Water Supply Improvements in the amount of \$5,850.00; for WWTF PER in the amount of \$8,125.00; and for Water Main Furnas & 30th Streets in the amount of \$1,500.00.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Motion by Niemeyer, second by Lofberg to approve the second half of June 2025 Claims.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried

Mayors report and communications given on meetings and events attended.

Motion by Lofberg, second by Libal to adjourn at 7:54 p.m.

Roll Call: Ayes: All Motion Carried


James Anderson, Mayor


Kristina Stoki, City Clerk



I, the above signed City Clerk of Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of the proceedings had and done by the Council on July 1st, 2025 that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk; that such subjects were contained in said agenda for at least twenty four hours prior to said meeting; that said minutes from which the foregoing proceedings have been extracted were in written form and available for public inspection within ten business days or prior to the next convened meeting of said body.