

# REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

VILLAGE OF HEMINGFORD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

May 21, 2024-6:00pm

700 Box Butte Ave. Hemingford, NE. 69348

**Zoom Virtual Meeting information**

**Meeting ID 853 8189 4475 Passcode 674968**

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening prayer by – Jake Frost

Public Open Meeting Act poster location was pointed out on the north wall of Council Chambers located at the Village office.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

Absent: Mahony

Motion to excuse Trustee Mahony from the May 21, 2024 meeting of the Village of Hemingford Board of Trustees by Frost Second by Hunter

Voting Aye: Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker.

**Consent Calendar** items included the Minutes of the April 16, 2024 Regular meeting Claims against the Village of \$46,445.49, Claims against the Utilities of \$128463.06. Claims against the 2024 Street Project Phase 1 \$70,594.75. April 2024 Village Financial Statements and Bank Reconciliations reports. April 2024 Library Report.

**Motion** by Novotny, second by Hunter to approve the consent calendar as read.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Discussion and possible action:** Hemingford Community Foundation representative Joni Jespersen requested permission to work with Village Administrator to apply for a grant from Nebraska Game and Parks on behalf of the Village of Hemingford for new park playground equipment. The Foundation is willing to provide \$25,000 towards the match of the grant, and conduct fundraising efforts to raise another \$25,000. The grant is a 50/50 match and the application is due by September 1, 2024

**Motion** by Frost, Second by Novotny allowing the Hemingford Community Foundation to apply for a Nebraska Game and Parks grant for playground equipment on behalf of the Village of Hemingford.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Discussion and possible action:** Hemingford Chamber of Commerce is requesting a street closure of the 700 block of Box Butte Ave. on Friday June 21, 2024 from 4pm to 10pm for the annual Bands on the Butte event.

**Motion** by Hunter, Second by Novotny to close the 700 block of Box Butte Ave. on June 21, 2024 from 4pm to 10pm for the annual Bands on the Butte event hosted by the Hemingford Chamber of Commerce.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Discussion and possible action:** Street Project Phase 1, bid Review and recommendation from MC Schaff and associates, Don Dye. Four (4) bids were presented, Paul Reed Construction, Gering \$2,374,664, with a start date of 8/5/2024, Eric Reichert Insulation and Construction, Scottsbluff \$1,908,436.51, with a start date of 8/1/2024, Peltz Companies, Alliance 2,223,905 and a start date of 9/24/2024, and Fuller Construction, Chadron in the amount of \$2,953,900 and a start date of 8/24/2024. Don Dye recommended that the Board accept the bid from Eric Reichert in the amount of \$1,908,436, which was the low bid and under the engineer's estimate for the project. Mr. Dye told the Board that Eric Reichert's company provides excellent quality work, timely, and efficiently. Members of the Reichert company were in attendance and assured the Board that they would be ready to start the project on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August so long as weather permits.

**Motion** by Novotny, Second by Hunter, to accept the 2024 Street Project, Phase 1 bid submitted by Eric Reichert Insulation and Construction Co. of Scottsbluff, NE. in the amount of \$1,908,436.51

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Discussion and possible action:** There was a request to consider Handicapped parking at The Body Shop. In the past Dave's Pharmacy has also mentioned the need for handicapped parking near their business entrance. After discussion regarding the placement of such parking spots, signage and marking, Board Chairman directed the Utilities Superintendent to paint and mark handicapped parking places as follows: one on Niobrara near the entrance to the Pharmacy, one spot on Box Butte in front of Sand Canyon Therapy, and two spots near the corner of Box Butte and Custer near The Body Shop.

**Discussion and possible action:** Follow up on the possibility of drawing Wheatridge Apartments under Village umbrella or other options. Straub informed the Board that she spoke with USDA representative Mr. Hernandez, who indicated that it is possible for the Village to assume the USDA loans on the Wheatridge facility and transfer assets to the Village but not very practical. The paperwork would be overwhelming and the process could potentially take up to 3 years from start to finish. His thought would be to help Wheatridge secure a tax exempt 501 (c) (3) status with the IRS in order to alleviate property taxes. While this is still not a simple process it is a more favorable than a assigning the USDA loans.

**Discussion and possible action:** 604 Park Ave. is looking 100% better than prior to abatement, Jacob Rogers was unable to attend the meeting but sent pictures for the Board to review. All Board members are grateful for the progress being made on the property and thanked Mr. Rogers. The Board ask that Code Enforcement keep an eye on the property going forward for continued progress.

**Discussion and possible action:** Follow up on Employee Sick Time payout Policy. Two possible resolutions were presented to the Board for review. Resolution 2024-02A allows for a set amount of sick time (up to 240 accrued but unused hours) to be paid out at the time of separation from the Village if the employee has worked a minimum of 10 years. Resolution 2024-02B allowed a payout of 33.3% of accrued, unused sick time hours after 10 years, 66.6% after 20 years and 100% after 30 years

**Motion** by Hunter Second by Frost to approve and adopt Resolution 2024-02A providing sick time payout at the time of separation from the Village of up to 240 hours of accrued sick time provided the employee had been employed by the Village for at least 10 years.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Discussion and possible action:** Animal Control in Hemingford is becoming a large problem with more complaints than ever before. The Village presently has no one qualified to act as Animal Control. Code Enforcement Officer Cotant has suggested she would be willing to increase her hours to full-time and take the Animal Control Training in addition to code enforcement duties. The Box Butte County Sheriffs Office would still respond to dangerous animals. Animal Control Training and Certification is all on line and would be a cost of approximately \$500.

**Motion by Hunter, Second by Frost** to enroll Ms. Cotant in on line Animal Control Courses for Certification with a cost up to \$500, with the intention that Cotant perform animal control duties for the Village upon completion.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Administrators Report:** BBCSO reports 24 calls for service. A full description of service calls is provided in the Board Packet, open application period for Utility Crew position opens on May 20, 2024 and will remain open until filled. Installation Crew for the splash pad should be out here just after Memorial Day and the splash pad should be up and running by middle June weather dependent. Check washing fraud in the panhandle and positive pay protection. Check washing is when someone copies a check changing the payee and amount. Nebraska Bank offers positive pay protection. Positive pay compares incoming checks with an uploaded file from our office for accuracy. If there are checks that don't match the uploaded file, the Village Administrator has the opportunity to accept or reject that check, adding another layer of security for the Village. Accounting and Finance Conference is June 12-14 in Lincoln, and will provide all the continuing ed hours required by the State Auditors office for Municipal Treasurers. The street project CD will mature on June 4, 2024 funds used to pay engineering expense from the sales tax account will be repaid, funds needed to make the first interest payment will be held out. \$1,000,000 will be put in a money market account to pay any expenses related to the street project and the balance will be placed into another 6-month CD with a 4.75 APY. The Strategic Planning Session will be recapped at the next meeting. Legacy COOP is spraying a dust coating in Roland Street to help keep the dust down and is suppose to last for 1 year. Mr. Moseman is speaking with other businesses on Roland Street to consider cost sharing and is also asking the Village to consider sharing the cost.

**Splash Pad Update:** Installation crews will be on site shortly after Memorial Day with the project to be up and functional by mid-June.

**Utilities Department Report:** Summer Season help has started, Russ will be working 1-2 days a week mowing in the park and the islands, Caiden and Emily will be mostly in town but will also be helping Cheryl at the cemetery getting ready for Memorial Day. The pool will be filled in the next week to 10 days. Parking lines down town will be painted, dandelions and puncture vine has been sprayed.

The old bucket truck has a blown hydraulic hose in the boom, if replacing that hose it would make sense to replace the other hoses and cable replaced. (In order to maintain the safety and integrity of hydraulic lines they need to be replaced regularly and those in the old bucket truck are scheduled for replacement this fall.) This type of repair will cost approximately \$8,000, this probably more than the truck is worth.

The Board suggested that repairs on the old bucket truck be put on hold for now and continue to work with Flannel Brothers or Sorensen's Irrigation if a second truck is needed for certain projects.

**Code Enforcement Report:** There has been 1 case closed in the past 2 weeks.

**Public Comment:** There were no comments or questions from the public.

**Motion** by Frost, Second by Hunter to go into executive session for the prevention or needless injury to the reputation of an employee to discuss a personnel matter at 7:14pm

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Motion** by Novotny to return to regular session by Hunter and Second by Novotny at 7:40.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

**Absent:** Mahony

**Motion** by Hunter, Second by Novotny to adjourn at 7:41pm., as no further action was necessary at this time.

**Voting Aye:** Novotny, Mahony, Hunter, Frost, Wacker

ATTEST:

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Richard Wacker, Chairman

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Barb Straub, Village Clerk