

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA  
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING  
Monday, September 11, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted at the Hastings Public Library, 314 N. Denver Avenue, on September 11, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in Special Session by Mayor Stutte with the following members present: Jeniffer Beahm, Brad Consbruck, Butch Eley, Joy Huffaker, Marc Rowan, Matt Fong, Steve Huntley, Shawn Hartmann. Absent: None.

The following City Officials were present: City Administrator, Shawn Metcalf; City Attorney, Jesse Oswald; Utility Manager, Kevin Johnson; City Clerk, Kimberly Jacobitz; Police Chief, Adam Story; Fire Chief, Brad Starling; Parks & Recreation Director, Jeff Hassenstab; Finance Director, Roger Nash; Information Technology Director, Erik Nielsen; Director of Engineering, Lee Vrooman; Director of Development Services, Chad Bunger; Director of Human Resources, Lori Hartman; Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson; Library Director, Amy Dissmeyer; Safety Director, Trent Clark; Chief Building Official, Kevin Kubo; Landfill Superintendent, Michelle Hill; Public Information Manager, Tony Herrman; Director Energy Operations, Derek Zeisler; Underground Operations, Brandan Lubken; Manager of Administration, Karl Block; Superintendent of Substations, Communications, and Support, Noel Nienhueser.

The Mayor led the group in recital of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Shawn Hartmann to adopt current agenda for September 11, 2023 Special Council Meeting. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** - Official Notice of the Special Council Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, September 8, 2023. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available for public review. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted and accessible to members of the public.

**COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

None.

**CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: (Only for agenda items not related to a public hearing.)**

None.

**MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. All Consent Items.

None.

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

2. Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting.

None.

3. Public Hearings.

(a) Public hearing on the proposed 2023-2024 Annual Budget for the City of Hastings  
Shawn Metcalf reported that we have a balanced budget and staff will answer questions from City Council. Against: Paul Dietze, 1825 W 12th Street; Curtis Johnson, 926 St Joseph; Mike Anderson, 1405 S Baltimore Ave; Peg Wallace, 2825 N Columbine. City Clerk received no objections.

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Shawn Hartmann to adopt Ordinance No. 4745 on first reading. Councilmember Eley stated that the Assistant City Administrator position has been on the docket for a few years. The City Administrator has sixteen direct reports, which is a poor span of control. This position has been put off because of budget issues. There are only three departments with a maintenance person on staff, so he agreed that we need a maintenance person to help with building repairs. Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson reported that the Museum has one maintenance person on staff. She was part of the Facility Maintenance Assessment Committee, along with Amy Dissmeyer. Most communities in our array have maintenance departments or are planning to develop a department. The question was brought up about handling the maintenance with fewer staff. Shawn Metcalf stated that we have three full-time staff in maintenance positions, but need a few more to take care of all buildings. He explained that the \$600,000 in the budget includes the three current full-time staff, so only \$300,000 would be a new request. Councilmember Fong stated that he sees value in getting a maintenance department, so we don't need to do large renovations, as items would be maintained over time. Councilmember Huntley asked if Fire Department had a tradition for cooking and maintenance. Fire Chief Starling stated that only out of necessity do they handle their own maintenance. The Assistant Fire Chief is assigned to major renovation projects, and spends almost 50% of his time handling maintenance issues. That is not what we are trained for, but do it because it needs to be done. Councilmember Huntley suggested that staff in the Engineering Department or Development Services could do maintenance jobs. Mayor Stutte stated that the maintenance department is needed to take care of our buildings. We have talked about this for a few years, and it is important to our citizens that we take care of our buildings. We are planning for the future to effectively use the tax-payer's money. Councilmember Eley stated that department heads need a one-stop shop to call for repairs and someone to help set maintenance priorities. Councilmember Huntley stated that we need more details to make a decision. Lee Vrooman explained the projects included in the Professional Services portion of the engineering budget: one-way to two-way conversion, two floodway mitigations (FEMA/NEMA Grants), Pawnee Creek, and new project is the design of round-a-bout about 12th Street and Marian. Councilmember Fong said that he appreciates the department heads' time on preparing the budget, going all the way back to the Council Retreat several months ago. We have had a lot of time to work through questions and detailed information. Councilmember Hartmann commented that this budget is very interactive for things people have asked for, such as a lack of maintenance that citizens continue to bring to council's attention. The biggest subject since he has been on council is maintenance. An Assistant City Administrator was discussed back when the previous City Administrator was employed. We have three new council members that are taking time to understand the budget items. We have gone down line items from the retreat on and asked questions. We are trying to be as efficient as we can. We need to do the right things or we will fall behind. Councilmember Huntley stated that he is not against the maintenance program, but is against expanding government. He asked if the engineering department could do the maintenance. Councilmember Consbruck stated that he would have liked to see the City scale back on some of these items. Shawn Metcalf reported that the engineering department is capped at what they have time to do. It does not make sense to have engineers over facility maintenance. Councilmember Rowan thought vehicle maintenance was a good idea, but believes the building maintenance department is overboard. Councilmember Beahm asked what the possibility would be to create the maintenance department, but find a balance and create it with four individuals instead of six. We can then see how that fits into the structure. Shawn Metcalf commented that the maintenance manager would be very critical position and will take hold of all of our buildings and taking care of them into the future. It would be great to do it with less, but we do not know. Roger Nash reported that September 30th is the deadline to send our budget to the State of Nebraska. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Butch Eley to suspend the rules and adopt Ordinance No. 4745 on second and final reading. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion failed.

#### 4. General Business.

(a) Moved by Shawn Hartmann seconded by Matt Fong to approve the City of Hastings, Nebraska 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Salary Schedule. Shawn Metcalf reported that the salary schedule for most employees is on a 3-year schedule. Comparability of pay is every three years. Human Resources did a good job at putting the numbers together. Lori Hartman reported that comparability is something that is mandated by the State of Nebraska. Public employees in the State of Nebraska do not have the right to strike. So as a trade-off they are ensured comparability, which means that employees are measured to employees in different cities doing the same job. The City of Hastings does the comparability every three years. It is a time-consuming process. Employees are given a sheet on cities they were compared to and how it was measured. Mayor Stutte stated that all of these salaries are compared to other cities in our array. Councilmember Eley said the City of Hastings takes the median, which is the mid-line average. Lori Hartman stated that benefits must be comparable as well. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

(b) Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Matt Fong to approve the Wage Addendum to Hastings Firefighters Association Local Union 675, IAFF, AFL-CIO Collective Bargaining Agreement for Fiscal Year October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. Councilmember Consbruck asked if these fall under the arrays for every three years comparability. Lori stated theirs are done every year in the bargaining unit. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

(c) Moved by Shawn Hartmann seconded by Joy Huffaker to approve Wage Addendum to Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 9 Collective Bargaining Agreement for Fiscal year October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. Councilmember Rowan asked if someone bargains with the union? Mayor Stutte stated that a team negotiates and works with fire and police. Shawn Metcalf said the contract is updated every three years. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

(d) Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Matt Fong to approve of Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce Funding Agreement in the amount of \$30,000. Shawn Metcalf stated that it helps with advertising and development issues. It is funded through the Utility Budget. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

(e) Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Shawn Hartmann to approve Hastings Economic Development Corporation Funding Agreement in the amount of \$175,000. Shawn Metcalf reported this is the same budget request as last year. It is given through the Utility Budget. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

#### 5. Ordinances and Resolutions.

(a) Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Jeniffer Beahm to approve Resolution No. 2023-29 adopting the 2023-2024 Annual Fee Resolution. Shawn Metcalf reported that staff goes through all fees annually to make sure they are where they need to be. The departments are familiar with the amounts other cities charge. Councilmember Fong stated there have been conversations about fees over the years. We want to ensure that we are competitive and cover any fees or expenses associated with the service. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

#### (b) ORDINANCE NO. 4741 TO PROVIDE MODIFICATION OF MONTHLY BILLING FOR ELECTRIC SERVICE AND RATES FOR THE CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Shawn Hartmann to approve Ordinance No. 4741 on First Reading. Shawn Metcalf reported that a third party does a rate assessment. They take a look at revenues and expenditures. Kevin Johnson reported the increases are: Electric 4%, Natural Gas 6.3%; Water 5%. The cost of service study is driving those numbers, except for electric. We have a primary duty to serve. We

have an electric cost study planned next year. Kevin Johnson explained the Cost of Service Study. On the administrative side, they constantly try to improve efficiencies. We are competitive with our rates. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Shawn Hartmann to suspend the rules and pass Ordinance No. 4741 on Second and Third Reading. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion failed.

(c) ORDINANCE NO. 4742 TO PROVIDE MODIFICATION OF MONTHLY BILLING FOR GAS SERVICE AND RATES FOR THE CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Butch Eley to approve Ordinance No. 4742 on First Reading. Kevin Johnson reported that we have an advisory board who vets our budget and our rates, and they recommend approval of the budget and all rates. Councilmember Consbruck asked about the cash reserve and why we are not using the reserves to cover? Kevin Johnson stated that we use those reserves. When we look at using those reserves, we also look at staying within a target of 50% operating ratio, so we still have approximately six months of operating ratio as our buffer. That is guidance from our auditors years ago. We can incrementally increase the rates because we are still able to use the cash on hand. Roger Nash stated that the process for the general fund is the same as the utility. We use cash reserves every year to balance the budget. We are not generating enough revenue to cover all the expenses. Shawn Hartmann said that there is one member on the Utility Advisory Board who is concerned with the cash reserve number. She brings up how we can increase rates to keep the reserves up. It is monitored by the Utility Advisory Board. Kevin stated that it is not bad to use those cash reserve funds. We quite often use them for our capital requirements, but it does not cover all of it. We do not want to get out of the six month target ratio. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Shawn Hartmann to suspend the rules and pass Ordinance No. 4742 on Second and Third Reading. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion failed.

(d) ORDINANCE NO. 4743 TO PROVIDE MODIFICATION OF MONTHLY BILLING FOR WATER SERVICE AND RATES FOR THE CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA

Moved by Jeniffer Beahm seconded by Shawn Hartmann to approve Ordinance No. 4743 on First Reading. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Shawn Hartmann to suspend the rules and pass Ordinance No. 4743 on Second and Third Reading. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion failed.

(e) ORDINANCE NO. 4744 AMENDING THE RATE RIDER FOR CUSTOMERS RECEIVING ELECTRICITY FROM THE HASTINGS COMMUNITY SOLAR FARM

Moved by Shawn Hartmann seconded by Matt Fong to approve Ordinance No. 4744 on First Reading. Kevin Johnson reported that the per panel price drops \$10 and the credit back for solar use drops a minor amount. Derek Zeisler stated that certain prices were going to be fixed. As you lose years, the price of panels depreciate and it gets cheaper. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Butch Eley to suspend the rules and pass Ordinance No. 4744 on Second and Third Reading. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: Marc Rowan, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley. Absent: None. The motion failed.

6. Final Passage of Ordinances.  
None.

7. Appointments.  
None.

8. Miscellaneous and Other Business.  
None.

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Jeniffer Beahm there being no further business to adjourn at 6:47 P.M.  
Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

APPROVED:

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Corey Stutte, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Kimberly S. Jacobitz, City Clerk

( S E A L )