REGULAR MEETING

CITY COUNCIL

April 10, 2024

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Syracuse, Nebraska met at Syracuse City Hall Council Chambers at 495 Midland Street at 6:00 P.M. on April 10, 2024 for a regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public and notice of meeting was given by posting in five places: Syracuse City Hall lobby, First Bank of Nebraska lobby, Countryside Bank, U.S. Post Office lobby and Syracuse Market window. Proof of publication in Syracuse Journal Democrat was shown. Mayor Dettmer was present and requested roll call; present were Council members Wesley Halvorsen, Orv Gigstad, Jerry Werner, Nate Patton. Mayor Deb Dettmer read the following: We will work collaboratively to achieve consensus while valuing differences of opinion both within our Council and when considering the input of others. We will gather the necessary data; seek expertise from city staff; provide questions to staff prior to meetings and hear from citizens to make wise decisions that achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens. We will each individually support the collective decisions of Council. A copy of the publication notice and acknowledgement of notice to the Council is attached to these minutes. Dettmer noted the Open Meetings Act was posted. Availability of the agenda was communicated in advance notice. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the meeting was open to the public. Minutes for the March 13, 2024 meeting were approved as written.

Mayor Dettmer led the Recognition of Employee, Todd Aksamit who passed away this Spring. The Mayor recognized the many duties Todd played a part in while employed with City of Syracuse since 2008.

Mayor Dettmer led the approval of claims and Treasurers Report; Todd Blome of BMG not present. The March Treasurer’s Report has been distributed. Mayor Dettmer read comments provided by Blome with the report. Council Member Jerry Werner moved to approve the Treasurers Reports and to pay the claims, Orv Gigstad seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Nate Patton, Wesley Halvorsen, Orv Gigstad, Jerry Werner. Nays: none.

AFLAC - 124.44, AKRS - 347.54, AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION - 1240.64, ANDY BRACE - 720.00, ANTES FAMILY HARDWARE LLC - 291.49, 105.35, BMG CPA'S - 2800.00, BORDER STATES INDUSTRIES, INC. - 2120.29, BOUND TREE MEDICAL, LLC - 2992.62, BRANDT, HORAN, HALLSTROM & STILMOCK - 1033.50, BRIAN WERNER - 40.00, BROWN GLASS CO., INC. - 15642.00, BRUCE NEEMANN - 270.00, CANON FINANCIAL - 127.68, CAPITAL APPRAISAL CO. LLC - 2000.00, CAPITAL BUSINESS SYSTEMS, INC. - 74.91, CAPITAL BUSINESS SYSTEMS, INC. - 225.90, 17.53, CAROL LINQUIST - 10.59, 650.00, CHRIS WATHER - 35.00, CHRISTA REISDORFF - 600.00, CITY OF NEBRASKA CITY - 152.86, CITY OF SYRACUSE - 1281.55, 347.43, CLEANING AUTHORITY - 301.40,

349.32, COLUMN SOFTWARE PBC - 81.11, CONCRETE INDUSTRIES - 970.00, CSG FORTE

PAYMENTS, INC. - 416.83, 416.83, 5.00, CUBBY'S INC. - 1877.81, CULLIGAN WATER - 63.39, DAN MASTERS - 40.00, DTS TECHNOLOGY - 10.64, ELECTRIC PUMP - 121.97, ERIN BETH DESIGNS - 1470.00, FIREGUARD, INC. - 663.75, FIRSTBANK OF NEBRASKA - 25.00, FIVE NINES TECHNOLOGY GROUP - 20.00, 3060.56, FOOD MAGAZINE - 12.00, FRONTIER COOPERATIVE - 1258.18, HAWKINS, INC. - 208.72, HILLARY WIEBUSCH - 1050.00, INVOICE CLOUD INC - 463.80, JEFF VOGT - 100.00, JEN STAACK - 400.00, JEN WALLMAN - 32.71, 330.00, JEO CONSULTING GROUP, INC. - 10996.25, JOE REISDORFF - 40.00, JUDSON IRRIGATION INC. - 9643.30, KANEQUIP, INC, - 274.83, KENNETH HALVORSEN - 40.00, KODY CARDINAL - 180.00, LEAGUE ASSOCIATION OF RISK MANAGEMENT -

563.20, MATHESON TRI-GAS, INC - 195.99, MID-AMERICAN BENEFITS, INC. - 120.00, 197.66, MIDWEST BREATHING AIR LLC - 809.40, MIDWEST LABORATORIES, INC. - 73.90, MOLLY VETICK - 75.00, MUNICIPAL SUPPLY OF OMAHA - 3089.34, MURPHY TRACTOR & EQUIPMENT CO. - 6782.81, NE DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY - 160.00, NE TURF PRODUCTS - 811.20, NEBRASKA CITY UTILITIES - 1019.89, 217.60, NEBRASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL LAB - 30.00, NMC EXHANGE LLC - 8386.11, ONE CALL CONCEPTS, INC. - 28.64, OPPD - 123193.04, OTOE COUNTY - 43.20, PAPER TIGER SHREDDING - 199.94, PETTY CASH-CONCESS. - 1830.00, PETTY CASH PARK & REC. - 3350.00, QUINTIN BAUMEISTER - 360.00, RONDA STINSON - 378.00, SARGENT DRILLING - 850.00, SCHOEN'S ROOFING - 5515.54, SECURITY EQUIPMENT INC. - 205.92, STOCK SEED FARMS, INC. - 1600.00, SYRACUSE IRON WORKS - 51.47, SYRACUSE LUMBER CO. - 156.24, SYRACUSE MOTOR SUPPLY - 685.28, TAMI ANDERA - 300.00, THE ADDED TOUCH - 48.00, TIM WILSON - 1050.00, U.S. POST OFFICE - 320.00, ULINE - 5973.71, UNITE PRIVATE NETWORKS - 2332.78, VERIZON - 769.96, WESLEY HALVORSEN - 560.00, WINDSTREAM - 91.28, YONG CONSTRUCTION - 27293.50

Claims paid out prior to the April 10th meeting date included: TODD AKSAMIT – 1938.10, ADAM BADBERG – 3213.78, JARED BICKFORD – 1675.32, TYLER COLLIN – 2897.91, TERA EDEN – 2782.54, KELLY FARMER – 4867.74, LEAH GANZEL – 908.31, SONNI GRAVES – 3961.24, DAYTON GRAVES – 162.08, MELISSA JUILFS – 3325.69, JESSICA MEYER – 5487.44, IAN MITCHELL – 3025.61, JULIE SLAFTER – 2361.07, CURTIS STANBERRY – 3726.70, BRENT TETEN – 3854.76, SHARON VANHOUSEN – 271.51, DEB MCWILLIAMS – 200.40, BRIAN VODICKA – 3577.83, JEFF VOGT – 4160.10, MEDICA – 17344.82, MID-AMERICAN BENEFITS – 53.61, 197.66, PRINCIPAL – 1421.88, DEB DETTMER – 620.88, KRISTINE GERKING – 156.99, ORV GIGSTAD – 207.78, WESLEY HALVORSEN – 207.79, BRUCE NEEMANN – 1410.04, NATE PATTON – 207.79, JERRY WERNER – 207.79, DAVID SABATKA -150.00, SCHUYLAR ARGO – 150.00, SCOTT WIEBUSCH – 450.00, HILLARY WIEBUSCH – 200.00, JEN STAACK – 250.00, KODY CARDINAL – 300.00, MARCIA SCHEINOST – 350.00, TAMI ANDERA – 300.00, TIM WILSON – 400.00, ELAN CARDMEMBER SERVICES – 8443.27, U.S. POST OFFICE – 320.00

HEARING OF THOSE PRESENT – Syracuse resident Brian Graham of 1355 Thorne Street present. Graham inquired “why the City is trying to get rid of the scrap guy?” Syracuse resident Dana Anderson has started a scrap business. Syracuse Building and Zoning Inspector Bruce Neemann explained the City is not trying to get rid of him, but he has been asked to keep his Downtown Commercial lot cleaned. Graham then asked the question, “okay what about the crap houses around here?” Neemann and the Mayor explained that is a law enforcement issue. Graham explained “I mean the crummy houses that you see on Highway 50 as you pass through town; are you going to fix them or tear them down?” Mayor Dettmer explained some are working on their properties. Council Member Gigstad explained it’s not the most simple process. Graham went on to say, “that’s why the City should keep the scrap guy around” and went onto suggest maybe he could put a fence up. The Mayor and Gigstad told Graham he is welcome to have a private conversation with Dana Anderson if he wishes.

Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and update on the Burr-Cook Irrigation Efficiency Project; Kyle Hauschild of Nemaha NRD present. Hauschild distributed data on irrigation wells located South of Syracuse including the area with the Syracuse wells. Supporting graphs show the drop in the Cook Recorder Well and the chatter and a separate graph for the Syracuse wells. Aerial electromagnetic flights have been conducted to assist in looking for aquifers. The NRD are currently working on a cost share agreement with the landowners and well owners to replace inefficient nozzles with new ones to save approximately 1.2 to 1.6 million gallons per irrigated session. Typically 3.5 million gallons are used on a quarter-turn pivot; potentially a million gallons of water could be saved per use. The first year the NRD is going to try to replace seven. They are working on some grants to help with funding the replacement nozzles. These nozzles are $6500.00 per nozzle package per pivot. Replacing seven will use up all funds available at this time. NRD and Rural Water have each donated $6000.00 per year for a two-year grant period. They also applied for Water Sustainability Funds and are asking for more than just a letter of support from the City. They are asking for education to be pushed out to Syracuse residents to help use less water, especially in the summer. This process is to ensure everyone is working together in helping reduce water usage allowing for more water to be held in the aquifer. Hauschild also discussed people to use water sensors in rural areas to ensure the nozzles are working; this would require for a meter to be installed. Rotating water usage would allow for a more drawn out usage session. If this process turns out to be successful, NRD would like to go after federal funds to help with funding. Hauschild also spoke about the energy savings from running pumps a lot less. Gigstad explained with the grants, the more partners on board and matching funds helps put you in the running for more grant money. Gigstad explained local farmers are concerned about running out of water. Educational materials on scheduling yard and farm irrigation is available by the University of Nebraska. NRD has a verbal commitment with Rural Water #3. City Administrator, Jessica Meyer, suggested looking at an interlocal agreement with the City.

Mayor Dettmer read a Proclamation for Municipal Clerks Week May 5th thru May 11th. 2024 is the 55th year recognizing municipal clerks. The office is the oldest municipal held office in the State of Nebraska. The proclamation is attached to these minutes.

FIRE REPORT – Chief Keith McWilliams present. Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and approval to send SVFD members to Fire School. McWilliams explained the department is looking at sending two members to the annual schooling held in Grand Island. Council Member Orv Gigstad moved to approve sending SVFD members to Fire School, Wesley Halvorsen seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Jerry Werner, Nate Patton, Orv Gigstad, Wesley Halvorsen. Nays: none.

AMBULANCE REPORT – Chief Tim Wilson present. Mayor Dettmer led SRS updates and discussion on volunteer incentives. Wilson presented information on repairs scheduled to be done on #712 due to a deer running into the rig; the vehicle will be out for approximately three weeks starting April 22nd. The rig may also need to be sent back out to Aurora to replace the graphics. At the March meeting, Wilson spoke about participating in telehealth training. This will go live on April 22nd. This will give the squad access to various services especially on critical calls for approximately one year to start with. EMS Week is May 19th thru May 25th; this is the 50th year of the event. The SRS will be holding an event Saturday May 18th at Williams Park; SRS volunteer Hillary Wiebusch is coordinating the event. Wilson requested the event flier could be shared on the City’s Facebook and website pages. Wilson reported they currently have three teams consisting of 17 members therefore they are basically on call all the time. Two of these members are outside of town, one on a leave of absence and also members who are looking at retiring soon from the squad. This could bring the number down to 12 which is critically low. Council Member Wesley Halvorsen is a volunteer on the SRS and reiterated the need for recruitment retention. During the first quarter of 2024, the squad had 128 calls compared to 2023 first quarter numbers at 76; this is 69% increase in call volume in three months. Wilson is concerned the SRS will not be able to retain this volume if the increase due to staffing issues. Wilson explained a lot of their call volume especially this year have been extremely sick, critical patients. Wilson is concerned the squad is going to get burned out. This is prompted discussions on recruitment retention and reiterated this is not just a Syracuse problem but a national issue. One of the biggest factors holding back volunteers is their time and how to juggle their full-time jobs as well as families, many with young children. One suggested idea is to put a daycare at the new facility the SRS and SVFD is hoping to start moving forward on. This would have spots reserved for SRS members needing to go on a call and would be able to drop off their children and go on the call. Also suggested are work rooms for remote work to be able to be done. Wilson also discussed a possible utility bill discount incentive for emergency response volunteers.

LIBRARY REPORT – Director Melissa Juilfs not present; a report was distributed. Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and Resolution No. 24-14 to approve Memorandum of Understanding for agreement between Syracuse Library Foundation and Syracuse Public Library regarding Library’s use of Summer Blast materials. Jessica Meyer explained this would allow the Library to use the summer blast materials. This includes laptops and tablets as well as additional materials purchased by the Summer Blast program. Jessica also reported for Melissa summer opportunities being scheduled and announced Deb McWilliams has been hired as part-time Library Assistant to help fill in hours as needed. Council Member Nate Patton moved to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding, Jerry Werner seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Orv Gigstad, Wesley Halvorsen, Nate Patton, Jerry Werner. Nays: none.

PARKS & REC REPORT – Director Sonni Graves present. Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and Resolution No. 24-15 to approve Agreement between owner and contractor for construction for Williams Park Basketball and Pickleball Courts; Shayne Huxholl of Olsson present. Huxholl explained the next step is to schedule a pre-construction conference in May. The bid award went to MTZ Construction. There has also been a reduction of the original bid price. This new price will be in the formal signing of the contract. This is due to the reduction of the bleachers, mobilization costs as well as reduced cost of the basketball goals. Council Member Orv Gigstad moved to approve Resolution No. 24-15, Wesley Halvorsen seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Jerry Werner, Nate Patton, Wesley Halvorsen, Orv Gigstad. Nays: none.

PUBLIC WORKS – Superintendent Jeff Vogt present. Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and Resolution No. 24-16 to update and revise sewer rates pursuant to Syracuse Code of Ordinances Section 32-101, authorizing Mayor’s signature. Jessica Meyer explained discussion and review of sewer rates has concluded over the past couple of years sewer expenses are exceeding sewer revenues. This aligned with Randy Hellbusch of Nebraska Rural Water Association and his review of our current water rates. During his review, Randy suggested the City implement updated sewer and water rates. The resolution suggests the new sewer rate to go in effect June 15, 2024. Notice will be posted and published regarding the rate increases. Randy will do another rate increase study in two years for both the sewer and water. Council Member Jerry Werner moved to approve Resolution No. 24-16, Wesley Halvorsen seconded. Roll call: Yeas: Orv Gigstad, Nate Patton, Wesley Halvorsen, Jerry Werner. Nays: none.

Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and Resolution No. 24-17 to update and revise water rates pursuant to Syracuse Code of Ordinances Section 32-101, authorizing Mayor’s signature. This rate will go into effect October 15, 2024. The service charge is the only rate being increased at this time for water, not the usage rates. Council Member Wesley Halvorsen moved to adopt Resolution No. 24-17 regarding water rates, Nate Patton seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Jerry Werner, Orv Gigstad, Wesley Halvorsen, Nate Patton. Nays: none.

OLD BUSINESS – Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and approval of bid for removal of exterior awning on City Hall building. The Mayor explained beginning in the 2022-2023 Budget Year, discussions on updates to the exterior of City Hall began. City Hall staff and the Mayor began to meet with Brianne Wilhelm of D3 Exteriors for design consultation. In May of 2023, Wilhelm began to contact contractors to obtain bids and estimates for work discussed during her meetings with City Staff. In the Fall of 2023 the City received recommendation to reach out to Schoen’s roofing to inquire on removal of the box awning on the City Hall building; Dustin from Schoen’s said he could remove the box and submitted a bid for approval at the next City Council meeting. The item was tabled at a following City Council meeting for further information to be gathered. A committee was formed included Orv Gigstad, Mayor Dettmer, Wesley Halvorsen, Jessica Meyer and Brianne Wilhem in February 2024 to discuss the updates further. Mayor Dettmer recommended the City Council accept the bids for the removal of the exterior box awning and painting of the City Hall building. Council Member Orv Gigstad moved to approve the bid for the exterior awning at City Hall, Wesley Halvorsen seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Orv Gigstad, Wesley Halvorsen. Nays: Nate Patton, Jerry Werner. Tie vote, Mayor Dettmer voted yea, motion carried.

Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and approval of bid for exterior painting of City Hall building. Council member Wesley Halvorsen moved to approve the bid for the exterior painting, Orv Gigstad seconded. Wesley Halvorsen expressed his dislike of the exterior awning and how it covered up the original uniqueness of the granite after seeing pictures of the original building. Painting will help cover the difference of the color of brick where the south portion was added years ago. Jerry Werner does not agree with the painting of the building but if it is to be painted he doesn’t agree with the dark color as it will reflect somewhat of a black hole at this end of the downtown area. Mayor Dettmer suggested looking at a different shade; Werner suggested less of a trendy color. Wilhelm suggested painting some larger samples on the building and taking a look at how it looks against the granite. Werner doesn’t want the City to open up ourselves for a constant maintenance issue. Roll Call: Yeas: Orv Gigstad, Wesley Halvorsen. Nays: Nate Patton, Jerry Werner. Tie vote, Mayor Dettmer voted yea, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS- Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and approval of SDL request for Roc Hopper anniversary party on June 1st, 2024 from 10:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. to be held on north side of Roc Hopper Brewing Co. property at 448 5th Street; Ben Biehl present. The area is concrete and abuts the alley; the space will be fenced off and is approximately a 30’ by 40’. An employee will be present in the area and Roc Hopper will try to not allow glass in the area. Council Member Nate Patton moved to approve the SDL, Orv Gigstad seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Wesley Halvorsen, Orv Gigstad, Jerry Werner, Nate Patton. Nays: none.

Mayor Dettmer led the discussion and update from the Syracuse Mural Committee; Deb McWilliams present. McWilliams explained *Painting the Town With Murals* started this process last fall with several community members to engage the enthusiasm of the community. The first building to participate is the former Hometown Variety Hardware Store located at the intersection of 5th and Thorne Streets. The committee is asking for submissions of artwork to be considered for the first project. City Attorney, Jerry Stilmock, has been brought in to discuss any legalities due to the painters utilizing the City streets and sidewalks. More murals are anticipated in the future but the committee is starting with just the one and go from there. The funding for the 1st mural is already in place.

Mayor Dettmer led the discussion to accept dedication of infrastructure improvements to Zahn Meadows 2nd Addition, authorizing Mayor’s signature; Ron Zahn present. Jessica Meyer explained the dedication consists of sanitary sewer and water main the re-dedication of easements and right of way for streets. This is something Ron Zahn did during the 1st Addition. These items are at the point where they can now be dedicated to the City. Jeff Vogt and Ron Zahn discussed a sewer system on one of the lots. Stilmock suggested the City do a conditional approval so when City Engineer Justin Stark is satisfied with the work a formal document can be signed. Council Member Jerry Werner moved for the conditional approval of the infrastructure improvements to Zahn Meadows 2nd Addition, Orv Gigstad seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Nate Patton, Wesley Halvorsen, Jerry Werner, Orv Gigstad. Nays: none.

Mayor Dettmer announced the May 8th City Council will be moved to the Wednesday May 15th, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. A tentative second meeting scheduled for May 29th was also discussed. All members confirmed their availability.

Mayor Dettmer asked for a motion to go into Closed Session for the purpose of potential litigation inviting Jessica Meyer and Kelly Farmer to stay. Council Member Nate Patton moved to go into Closed Session at 7:32 P.M., Jerry Werner seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Wesley Halvorsen, Orv Gigstad, Jerry Werner, Nate Patton. Nays: none.

Wesley Halvorsen moved to come out of closed session at 7:59 P.M., Nate Patton seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Orv Gigstad, Jerry Werner, Wesley Halvorsen, Nate Patton. Nays: none.

Mayor Dettmer led the approval of authority for City Administrator of City Attorney to act regarding items discussed during Closed Session. Council Member Orv Gigstad moved to approve the City Administrator to act in regards to the items discussed on the appraisal documents, Nate Patton seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Wesley Halvorsen, Jerry Werner, Nate Patton, Orv Gigstad. Nays: none.

Council Member Nate Patton moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 P.M., Wesley Halvorsen seconded. Roll Call: Yeas: Orv Gigstad, Jerry Werner, Nate Patton Wesley Halvorsen. Nays: none.

I the undersigned City Administrator hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the proceedings had and done by the Mayor and Council; that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting; kept continually and available for inspection at the office of the City Clerk; that such subjects were contained in the said agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to the said meeting; that at least one copy of the reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for the examination and copying by members of the public; that the said minutes were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days or prior to the next convened meeting of the body; that all news media requesting notification concerning time and place of said body were provided advance notification of time and place of said meeting and subjects to be discussed at said meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City Administrator Mayor