

MINUTES
North Newton City Council – Regular Meeting
June 8, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
North Newton City Hall

1. Call to Order

Mayor Braun called the meeting to order. Those present and constituting a quorum were:

COUNCIL: Dennis Campbell, Gregg Dick, Kurt Friesen, Jim Goering and Ron Ratzlaff

STAFF: John Torline, Danny Entz, Greg Nye, Randy Jordan and Pat Redding

OTHERS: Vonda Brecheisen, Grace Wild and Wendy Nugent

Mayor Braun talked about the significant changes in the last months during the COVID pandemic. We have experienced lockdowns, loss of life and more recently have seen troubling scenarios around the world involving death, protests and riots. Braun stated it is hard to understand the issues that people of color experience every day. He asked that we have a moment of silence for 8 minutes and 46 seconds and reflect on what we can do to be a part of the solution to the racial issues we are facing. The meeting resumed after 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence. We live in difficult times and need to respect the lives of all people. Braun thanked the North Newton Police Department for their diligent work in keeping our community safe during this time.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the May 11, 2020, regular meeting were presented.

MOTION: Goering moved, Ratzlaff seconded, to approve the May 11, 2020, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes from the May 18 work session were included in the council packet but they are informational and don't need to be approved.

3. Citizen Comments

Mayor Braun thanked Grace Wild for her attendance at City Council meetings over the years. Grace and her husband will be relocating to California in the next month.

4. Consider the Mayor's appointment to fill two unexpired term on the North Newton Housing Authority.

Mayor Braun recommended Marcia Friesen and Jackie Jordan be appointed to the North Newton Housing Authority to fill two unexpired terms. Jordan's term will run until December 2022 and Friesen's term will run until December 2023.

MOTION: Friesen moved, Campbell seconded, to appoint Marcia Friesen and Jackie Jordan to the North Newton Housing Authority. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Receive representative of Knudsen, Monroe & Company for presentation of the 2019 audited Financial Statements

Vonda Brecheisen of Knudsen, Monroe & Company, LLC presented the annual financial statement. Brecheisen explained the governance letter and stated there were no significant audit findings. She stated there were no budget violations and no violations of cash basis accounting laws.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Dick seconded, to receive the audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Braun thanked Brecheisen for the financial report and thanked staff for their diligent work reflected in the clean audit.

6. Consider amendments to the North Newton Personnel Policy.

Torline stated that the changes to the Personnel Policy have been discussed at the May Council Meeting and also at the May Work Session. Council requested one revision in the "Employees with Special Skills" section changing salary increase to a stipend. The amended Personnel Policy reflects this change.

MOTION: Dick moved, Friesen seconded, to approve the revisions to the Personnel Policy. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Consider an ordinance amending Article XIII of the Newton/North Newton Zoning Ordinances concerning the Joint Board of Zoning Appeals Procedure and Variances.

Attorney Nye stated that Article XIII of the Zoning Ordinances deals with the Joint Board of Zoning Appeals and Variances. The Newton/North Newton Planning Commission approved the changes to Article XIII on June 1, 2020. The substantive change increases the days from fifteen to thirty to appeal a final decision of the Harvey County District Court. Language was also added that list three variance circumstances that are not within the jurisdiction of the Joint Board of Zoning Appeals:

1. Building or fire code variances;
2. Variances that would allow a prohibited use or prohibited sign; and
3. Variances used to vary state or federal laws or regulations unless such authority is expressly granted to the City.

Nye recommends approving Ordinance 635-20 stating the above changes.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Campbell seconded, to approve Ordinance 635-20 amending Article XIII of the Zoning Ordinances. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Consider a 2020 Budget Work Session

JUNE 2020 Minutes

Mayor Braun called for discussion on inclusions or exclusions in the 2021 budget. Torline reported that due to the recent pandemic 2020 revenues are estimated to drop by \$100,000 between sales tax and gasoline tax. Our financial future will be determined by how quickly the economy rebounds. Torline reported there are some capital improvement projects in the works: the water line connecting North Woods Plaza to the water tower, the water line looping 24th Street to Anderson Ave., the entrance signage project and playground equipment. There was discussion about repairing sidewalks in the older part of town, periodic clean-up of Kidron Creek and continuing to buy smart meters. Staff will consider these items when preparing the 2021 budget. Some of these expenses would be paid for out of the Capital Improvement Fund or the Equipment Reserve Fund which are not budgeted funds. Staff will work on a draft budget for presentation at the July Council meeting.

9. Reports

a. **Mayor/Council.** Councilman Goering reported that the North Newton Community Foundation recently awarded \$10,000 to eligible organizations in and around North Newton. There will not be an awards celebration this year due to COVID. Award checks have been mailed this past week and the recipients will be highlighted with videos and stories on Facebook.

b. **Staff Update.** Torline reported that the Post Office has renewed their option to lease the building for another five years. There is a small increase in rental fees. After the work session discussion on entrance signs, Torline has met with Chuck Regier regarding sign locations. The following three locations are being pursued: the main sign at 36th and Anderson near the hiking/biking path, a pillar sign across from Chongs and a pillar sign near the prairie restoration area by the exit ramp of I-135. The committee will meet to discuss these locations. Prestressed Concrete is interested in rezoning some land from agricultural to industrial west of the North Newton city limits. Torline is hopeful that a solution can be negotiated. City Hall will open in the afternoons starting on June 15.

Entz reported that spring clean-up was last week and they hope to finish in the next couple of days. Entz and McBeth have already hauled away 17 truckloads of limbs, 7 truckloads of trash and 7 truckloads of bags. Entz stated there have been fewer issues with the sewer pump at 30th Street. The volume of rags has decreased and Entz appreciates the efforts of our residents to help remedy this issue. This past month Ken Janzen retired from meter reading. Entz is looking for a reliable replacement that would be available two days a month. Mayor Braun thanked Entz and McBeth for all their work with spring clean-up.

Chief Jordan reported that the State of Kansas requires patrol officers attend racial bias training yearly. Choke holds are not taught and officers are instructed not to strike above the shoulders unless it is a life threatening situation. Jordan is willing to sit down with anyone in the community that wants to discuss policing issues and listen to their feelings/concerns. Mayor Braun commended Jordan for the department's response to humanly arresting suspects.

Attorney Nye reported Harvey County is in phase three of reopening. If all goes well, the county will move to the final phase in the near future.

JUNE 2020 Minutes

c. **Clerk/Treasurer.** Redding presented accounts payable and payroll for consideration.

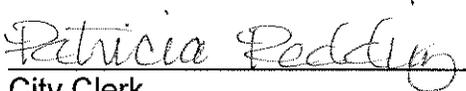
MOTION: Friesen moved, Dick seconded, to receive the June accounts payable and miscellaneous checks in the amount of \$91,980.19 and May/June payroll in the amount of \$27,338.39. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Non-Agenda Items

No one presented.

11. Adjournment

There being no other business Mayor Braun declared the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.


City Clerk


Mayor


Date Approved