

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF PERU, NEBRASKA ON THE 20<sup>th</sup> DAY of JANUARY 2026 AT 6:00 P.M.

The Mayor and Council of the City of Peru, Nemaha County, Nebraska were called to meet at City Hall at 614 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Peru, Nebraska 68421, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of JANUARY, 2026, at 6:00 P.M., for a Regular Meeting. This meeting was open to the general public with advance notice of said regular meeting, the designated method of giving notice, including the agenda for said meeting, or the availability thereof was posted at: Peru City Hall, Western National Bank (Bank of Peru), and the Community Bulletin Board.

Mayor Katy Novak called the meeting to order and informed the public of the location of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

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**Agenda Item 1 – Roll Call**

At 6:00pm a roll call was taken and the following was recorded for attendance.

PRESENT – Mayor Katy Novak; Councilmembers, Rachel Brown, Theresa Westfall, and Josh Whisler.

ABSENT – Councilmember Brent Brown.

A quorum was declared pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 17-105.

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**Agenda Item 2 – Recognition of Visitors:**

Mayor Katy Novak informed the public that a copy of City Resolution #2017-02 Pertaining to Conduct Rules for City Council Meetings may be requested from the City Clerk.

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**Agenda Item 3 – Public Hearing:**

None for this meeting.

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**Agenda Item 4 – Consent Agenda:**

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

(i.) Approval of Minutes from the December 15<sup>th</sup>, Regular Council Meeting.

**B. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:**

(i.) Ratification of Claims already paid pursuant to Resolution No. 2018-01.

(ii.) Claims still needing approval.

**C. APPROVAL:** Allowing the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk to Attend the Nebraska Municipal Clerks Institute and Academy from March 15th-20th and the Authorization for Registration Fees, Mileage and Related Expenses if Applicable Pursuant to City Ordinance 2024-02. | *Agenda Item from City Clerk/Treasurer.*

**D. APPROVAL:** Allowing the Maintenance Supervisor to Attend the Nebraska Rural Water Association Annual Conference on March 9th-11th and the Authorization for Registration Fees, Mileage, and Related Expenses if Applicable Pursuant to City Ordinance 2024-02. | *Agenda Item from Maintenance Department.*

E. APPROVAL: Acceptance of Donations: \$10,000 from J. Rottman and \$750 from Lifetime Vision Center. Both for the Sid Brown Park Playground. | *Agenda Item from Parks and Recreation Commission.*

F. APPROVAL: Rachel Brown Rescue Squad Application | *Agenda Item from Peru Rescue Squad.*

G. APPROVAL: Ratification of FEMA/NEMA Interfund Transfers by City Clerk /Treasurer. | *Agenda Item from City Clerk/Treasurer.*

Councilmember T. Westfall pulled item 4B. "Approval of Claims" and item 4C. "Allowing the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk to Attend the Nebraska Municipal Clerks Institute and Academy from March 15th-20th and the Authorization for Registration Fees, Mileage and Related Expenses if Applicable Pursuant to City Ordinance 2024-02" from the consent agenda.

Councilmember T. Westfall moved to approve the remaining items on the consent agenda. J. Whisler seconded the motion.

On this roll call vote, the vote was as follows:

T. Westfall – AYE, R. Brown – AYE, J. Whisler – AYE, B. Brown – ABSENT.

On this vote, the AYES are 3, the NAYS are 0 with 1 marked ABSENT.

Motion Carried.

On Agenda Item 4B – There was discussion regarding the claims as presented. There was discussion about the two sewer jetting claims, and the state of the water accounts. There was discussion about the bills for the water tower and the logo installation. There was discussion about the FNBO claim, including the purchase of USPS pre-stamped envelopes, and a new computer for the deputy clerk. There was further discussion about buying surplus computer equipment. There was also discussion about employee timecards, PTO policy, and the city's on call policy. There was no further discussion.

Councilmember J. Whisler moved to approve item 4B. "Approval of Claims." T. Westfall seconded the motion.

On this roll call vote, the vote was as follows:

J. Whisler – AYE, T. Westfall – AYE, R. Brown – AYE, B. Brown – ABSENT.

On this vote, the AYES are 3, the NAYS are 0, with 1 marked ABSENT.

Motion Carried.

The following claims were presented to the City Council by the City Clerk/Treasurer and were subsequently reviewed, and approved for payment:

**Claims Previously Paid:** Auburn Board of Public Works (Wtr) - \$14,736.16 // Black Hills Energy (Fire/Res) - \$332.35 // Black Hills Energy (Gen) - \$65.97 // Kinetic (Gen) - \$806.69 // OPPD (Gen) - \$704.63 // OPPD (Gen) - \$1,589.66 // Personnel Payroll including taxes for 12/31/2025 (Gen) - \$15,323.73 // Personnel Payroll including taxes for 01/15/2026 (Gen) - \$12,022.48 // Quick Med-Claims (Rescue) - \$171.99 // Sinclair/WEX Bank (Gen) - \$825.67 // Xpress-BillPay (Wtr/Swr) - \$228.14

**Regular Claims:** Access Systems Leasing (Gen) - \$606.65 // American Recycling & Sanitation (Sanitation) - \$2660.00 // ASLAN Mechanical, LLC (Swr) - \$575.00 // Action Technology Services, Inc. (Gen) - \$375.00 // Auburn Auto Center (Gen) - \$23.50 // Badger (Sewer) - \$4,246.07 // Decker, Miranda

(Rescue) - \$200.00 // Egger Bros, Inc. (Rescue) - \$88.48 // Nebraska Public Health Environmental Lab (Water) - \$56.75 // FeldFire (Rural Fire) - \$979.80 // First National Bank of Omaha (Gen) - \$3,744.50 // Harms, Sarah (Gen) - \$330.00 // Heather Pemberton, CPA (Gen) - \$665.00 // KJ Whitehorse Bar & Grill, LLC (Gen) - \$84.00 // Lottman, Brent (City Fire, Rural Fire) - \$366.56 // MacQueen (City Fire, Rural Fire) - \$1,122.38 // NAPA Autoparts (Rural Fire, Gen) - \$301.62 // Nebraska Rural Water Association (Wtr, Swr) - \$300.00 // Nemaha County Clerk (Gen) - \$16.00 // Nemaha Valley Observer (Gen) - \$175.24 // One Call Concepts (Wtr, Swr) - \$6.09 // Tri-State Plumbing (Sewer) - \$875.00 // Utility Service Co., Inc. (Water) - \$8,217.30 // Verizon (Gen) - \$20.02 // Williams, Mary (Gen) - \$10.18 // Wyn-Mill Garage Door Service (Gen) - \$951.50

On Agenda Item 4C – There was discussion regarding the benefits of the Clerk’s Academy to the city, and the cost of attendance including mileage. There was also discussion regarding City Hall being open during the academy, and what was done in the previous years. There was also discussion regarding the scholarship that Deputy Clerk Mary Williams had gotten. There was no further discussion.

Councilmember R. Brown moved to approve item 4C. “Allowing the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk to Attend the Nebraska Municipal Clerks Institute and Academy from March 15th-20th and the Authorization for Registration Fees, Mileage and Related Expenses if Applicable Pursuant to City Ordinance 2024-02.” J. Whisler seconded the motion.

On this roll call vote, the vote was as follows:

R. Brown – AYE, J. Whisler – AYE, T. Westfall – AYE, B. Brown – ABSENT.

On this vote, the AYES are 3, the NAYS are 0 with 1 marked ABSENT.

Motion Carried.

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#### **Agenda Item 5 – Correspondence**

None for this meeting.

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#### **Agenda Item 6 – Old Business**

H. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: “Helping Pay for the Rest of the Concrete Job” Agenda Item Request. | *Agenda Item Request from Joe Burgert.*

Mayor Katy Novak stated that Streets Committee did not recommend any payment for the job. There was no further discussion and no action was taken.

J. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Installation of Military Flags on City Hall. | *Agenda Item from Deputy Clerk/Grant Coordinator and Maintenance Department.*

There was discussion regarding the flags and how they were already available to be used and just need to be installed. There was discussion about community sentiment for the installation of the flags. There was no further discussion and no action was taken.

#### **K. CITY REPORTS:**

(i.) Water Report: Mayor Katy Novak stated that there is a copy of the water report in the Clerk’s Office. There was no further discussion.

(ii.) Mayor's Report: Mayor Katy Novak gave the Mayor's Report  
(1.) 2026 Committee Information

Mayor Novak reported that she had been trying to get people to join committees in the fall and that there had been a tepid response. She stated that she continues to encourage people who are interested to join committees. She then stated that she would be instituting a closed meeting policy for all mayoral committees. She stated that she wanted committees to be used to hammer out the details and the minutia of the operation of the city so that when decisions are made in a public format, they are polished and easily digestible. There was further discussion regarding transparency in government and in the finances of the city and citizen involvement in that process. There was also discussion about allowing multiple council members in on meetings and compliance with the Open Meetings Act. There was also discussion about preparation of materials for meetings and potentially altering when council meets. There was no further discussion.

(iii.) Clerk's Report: City Clerk/Treasurer Dennis Kirkpatrick gave the Clerk's Report  
(1.) Financial Reports: January 2026: He stated that the financial reports were in council packets.

He reported that he had a meeting with City Accountant Heather Pemberton to discuss city finances and how to bill Rural Fire for Q3 & 4 of 2025.

He reported that he was going to hold off on a check proposal until some stuff is figured out for fire department billing.

He reported that he had sent dog and cat license fees to the NE Department of Agriculture for 2025.

He reported that Dana F. Cole, LLP had dropped the city as a client. He stated that he had been in contact with the City Accountant to help the city find new auditors. He stated that the audit this year may be tight again due to the sudden drop. He stated that he will update council next meeting.

He stated that city employees will be transitioning to a new pay period system. Paydays would remain the same, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the end of every month, but after an adjustment period pay periods would be from the 26<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> paid on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> paid at the end of the month. He stated that the current system would result in guessing after the payroll was sent to the accountant 3 days before payday. This new system would have at least 3 days of processing time.

He reported that the Board of Health would be meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup> for a regular meeting.

He reported that the 2004 Ford Ambulance was up for bid on Purplewave.com. He stated that more information regarding the auction could be found at the city's website ([perunebraska.org](http://perunebraska.org)) and that the auction would last until February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

He reported that Casey's General Store's Liquor License would be up for renewal on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and that residents have until February 10<sup>th</sup> to file written protests with the city.

He stated that the League of Nebraska Municipalities' Midwinter Conference was open for registrations and that council was free to sign up and the city would reimburse those fees as was approved by council at the last meeting.

(iv.) Grant Report: Deputy Clerk/Grant Coordinator Mary Williams gave the Grant Report.

She reported that she had applied for grant funding for the Sid Brown Playground Project for Parks and Rec. She stated that they were in phase two of the plan which they reported would be long and drawn out. She stated that they have a better chance of getting the grant because they are asking for a smaller amount relative to the cap.

She reported that community block grants open in September, so she was going to ask committees for recommendations of programs that can be applied for.

She reported that the Rural Housing Grant will reopen in the fall and that she was working with SEND on possibly applying for the grant. She stated that these grants would be for new construction only.

She stated that she will be reapplying for the Verizon Grant and that she would like to have council and the community's ideas on what they would like to see in the community development grant.

She reported that SENCA has a weatherization program that they can offer to help weatherize homes including windows, insulation, roof repairs, and furnace repairs. She stated that there is more information on filling that out at city hall. She stated that she can help people see if they qualify and help fill out applications.

She reported that there are NOAA radios available for free, and that she has the packets available at city hall.

(v.) Facilities Report: Maintenance Supervisor Donald Roberts gave the Facilities Report.

He reported that he attended the League of Nebraska Municipalities' Public Works Conference. He stated that he was able to do a lot of networking at the conference. He also stated that the state had said that there was some mandated work that needed to be done before the end of 2027. He also stated that anyone with lead or galvanized has to be replaced by 2029. He reported that there is some funding available, but that it would only cover 10% of the cost. He stated that under 10% of the town would need to be investigated and that Water Committee is discussing a plan of action.

He reported that the tree dump was open again. He noted that only yard waste and trees are allowed to be dumped there.

He reported that the city had purchased some new tools off of surplus, and that they'll go a long way with helping the maintenance department do everything that needs to be done.

There was some discussion regarding a possible water leak at 7<sup>th</sup> and Washington and that there were discussions about solutions to the problem.

#### L. COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:

(i). Parks and Recreation Commission: Commission Chair Nick Novak gave the Parks and Recreation Commission Report.

He reported that Parks and Rec had received a large donation from for the playground project. He stated that they are hopeful that the project will get some grant funding soon. He reported that they have three subcommittees that are talking frequently.

He reported that they are planning an event during Super Bowl Sunday at City Hall. He stated that there will be warm soup and some ice cream. They anticipate that it would start at 11.

(ii.) Finance Committee: Mayor Katy Novak gave the Finance Committee Report.

She reported that the General fund is just over break even with income and expenses at this point. She stated that Parks and Rec had received a donation in the amount of \$10,000 and that Fire and General need to have some transfers made to replace funds spent with the grant fund reimbursement as well as MFO agreed upon levies.

She stated that proprietary accounts are as expected, though water continues to be a concern, as it appears that we are billing / being paid for well less than half of the water that we are purchasing. She stated that they are looking to get exact meter usage between readings to get close to exact reading to compare to tower output.

She reported that no new information on FEMA/NEMA reimbursement for the water project, so exact amounts and timing for reimbursement are unknown and therefore the State Revolving Fund remains out as a long-term liability.

She reported that there was discussion on purchase of locator and phone/network for city hall were briefly discussed and that they were essentially a council decision.

There was discussion about the close outs for the North End and FEMA/NEMA reimbursements for the water line. There was discussion about when that should come in and relieving the strain on the city's finances. There was no further discussion.

(iii.) Water and Sewer Committee: Mayor Katy Novak reported that the Water and Sewer Committee had met and that a committee output sheet had been filled out for it.

There was discussion regarding the sewer pipe that runs under the street in front of the bank and the timeline for repairs. There was no further discussion.

(iv.) Streets and Alley Committee: Mayor Katy Novak reported that Streets and Alleys had met. She reported that there was discussion regarding the water pipe break next to city hall and the possible undermining of the street.

There was discussion regarding the status of the North End project. It was noted that the situation had been turned over to City Attorney Morgan Homolka. There was no further discussion.

(M.) REPORTS FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Mayor Katy Novak welcomed Student Senator Evelyn from Peru State College who was attending the meeting as a representative of Student Senate. Evelyn stated that she was a freshman at PSC and that the Student Senate President had sent her so that Senate can be more involved with the city and the community.

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**Agenda Item 7 – New Business**

N. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Decommissioning of Emergency Sirens – Agenda Item Request. | *Agenda Item Request from Kim Tanner (On Behalf of Cooper Nuclear Station).*

Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dakota Schulenberg and Nemaha County Nebraska Emergency Management Director Renee Critser addressed the council regarding the decommissioning of the emergency sirens system in Peru. They stated that CNS would be transitioning to the Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS) which is managed by FEMA. Instead of using the sirens, alerts would be sent out via electronic communication, including cellular phone, email, landline, weather radios, etc. The information on how to sign up for emergency notifications is on the county's website. It was stated that there may be some issues receiving notifications when people are in dead zones, but that once they get cell signal, they would receive the notification. Any questions can be deferred to the Nemaha County Emergency Management's office or to NPPD.

There was discussion regarding possible purchase of the current emergency sirens. It was noted that in order to purchase the sirens, the city would have to purchase them from CNS and NPPD via bid. There was no further discussion and no action was taken.

O. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL: Purchase Proposal to Upgrade Computers and Networking Technology in City Hall. | *Agenda Item from City Clerk/Treasurer.*

City Clerk/Treasurer Dennis Kirkpatrick addressed the council regarding the need for upgraded computer and networking equipment at City Hall. There was discussion regarding the proposed technology, the cost savings involved, and looking into alternative options to be considered by council. There was further discussion about the current state of technology in City Hall and the need to upgrade to better systems.

There was also some discussion regarding the installation of fire suppression equipment in City Hall. There was no further discussion. No action was taken.

P. ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01 (First Reading): AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS REGARDING VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND MONETARY PENALTIES THEREOF; PROVIDING FOR A CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROVISION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPEAL OF ALL PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND TO PROVIDE THE EFFECTIVE DATE HEREOF. | *Agenda Item Request from Kim Allgood.*

There was discussion regarding the number of vacant commercial buildings in town and their effect on the rest of the businesses in town. There was further discussion about the effects of the proposed ordinance on other businesses and the effects of similar ordinances in Auburn. There was also

discussion regarding alternative proposals, general enforcement of the ordinance, and grant funding. There was no further discussion.

Mayor Katy Novak stated that the introduction of the proposed Ordinance was in order.

Councilmember Rachel Brown moved that the minutes of these proceedings be kept in a separate and distinct volume known as the "Ordinance Record of the City of Peru". J. Whisler seconded the motion.

On this roll call vote, the vote was as follows:

R. Brown – AYE, J. Whisler – AYE, T. Westfall – AYE, B. Brown – ABSENT.

On this vote, the AYES are 3, the NAYS are 0, with 1 marked ABSENT.

Motion Carried

Councilmember R. Brown introduced the proposed Ordinance as Ordinance No. 2026-01, AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS REGARDING VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND MONETARY PENALTIES THEREOF; PROVIDING FOR A CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROVISION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPEAL OF ALL PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE EFFECTIVE DATE HEREOF.

Councilmember R. Brown then read the proposed Ordinance No. 2026-01. The ordinance having been read, Councilmember R. Brown moved that the proposed Ordinance No. 2026-01 be approved on its first reading and its title agreed to.

Motion Fails due to Lack of a Second.

Q. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL: Authorization to Purchase Utility Line Locator. | *Agenda Item from Maintenance Department.*

Maintenance Supervisor Donald Roberts addressed the council regarding the need to purchase a new Utility Line Locator. There was discussion regarding the new water line from Auburn and the responsibility of the city to locate the line and to locate water and sewer lines for 811 Digger's Hotline. There was also discussion regarding the state of the old locator and the features of a newer one. There was also discussion about the continuing state of the water/sewer bank account and the ability to pay for future things. There was no further discussion.

Councilmember J. Whisler moved to approve the purchase of a Utility Line Locator from Win Water for \$4,933.34 as presented. R. Brown seconded the motion.

On this roll call vote, the vote was as follows:

J. Whisler – AYE, T. Westfall – AYE, R. Brown – AYE, B. Brown – ABSENT.

On this vote, the AYES are 3, the NAYS are 0, with 1 marked ABSENT.

Motion Carried.

R. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION: Authorization of Maintenance Work Phones from Straight-Talk Wireless and Autopay Authorization. Further Authorization of \$500 Yearly Stipend for Maintenance Supervisor for Supervisor Phone. | *Agenda Item from City Clerk/Treasurer and Maintenance Department.*

City Clerk/Treasurer Dennis Kirkpatrick addressed the council regarding the need to purchase on-call phones for the Maintenance Department. There was discussion regarding the need for the phones and the on-call policy that the city has. There was also discussion about the supervisor having the only city-emergency phone that they pay for on their own. There was discussion about the costs involved, and possibly looking for government rates. There was no further discussion and no action was taken.

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**Agenda Item 8 – Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned on the same day at 8:16pm CT.

**HEREBY ATTESTED AND ACKNOWLEDGED:**

  
KATY NOVAK, MAYOR

  
DENNIS KIRKPATRICK, CITY CLERK

