

Ralston City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 5, 2019

The Ralston City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 5:30 PM at Ralston City Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll was called with the following present: Mayor Groesser and Council members Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, Sanchez, and Preis. The agenda was available at City Hall for public inspection and posted prior to the meeting. The legal notice for the meeting was published in the Ralston Recorder. Claims listed are approved and part of these minutes.

Pastor Greg Berger, Messiah Lutheran Church, gave the invocation. Mayor Groesser welcomed the press and guests. Groesser said the meeting is subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and a copy of the Act is posted at the rear of the Council Chambers.

The City Council reviewed the following items under the consent agenda:

1. Minutes from the February 19, 2019 regular city council meeting;
2. Claims; and
3. Department Head and/or Commission Reports.

Fidelity moved and Preis seconded to approve the Consent Agenda minus Maria's claim. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, Sanchez, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried. Fidelity moved and Kavanaugh seconded to approve Maria's claim. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, and Preis. Nay: None. Abstaining: Sanchez. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Groesser thanked the Public Works Department for their work on keeping the streets clear.

Leonardo reported he has hired Zachary Byers as the new police officer.

Benis reported on arena events including: Lil Baby on Thursday and a Zamora Concert on Friday. One Night of Queen on Saturday night has been sold out and there will be another Beerfest this weekend. The Lancers will play next Friday and the Omaha Beef will play beginning next Saturday. PJ Masks Live will be on Monday, March 18th.

Forrest reported on the notice for a three day design workshop on the Hinge project. HDR will conduct the workshop and the public is invited to attend. The workshop starts at 5:30 PM and will be held in the Ralston Arena sideroom on March 13th, 14th, and 15th.

Ali O'Connor and Deb Glazebrook, no addresses given, provided an update on the community cats discussion from a previous council meeting. They wanted to thank the City Council for the time they provided at the February meeting. O'Connor indicated that Terry Ryan has become quite an advocate for them now. He showed himself to be a man of good integrity and apologized. O'Connor reiterated that she and Feline Friendz are

happy to contribute to any progression on the ordinance. O'Connor inquired if Ralston has ever considered establishing a dog park. She would be happy to help with that as well if the City is interested in doing that.

Lawrence Shackman, 6515 Stones Throw Drive, Omaha, President of Feline Friendz of Nebraska, a cat rescue group, appreciates the opportunity to speak. He is at this meeting to see that the City of Ralston develops an ordinance that promotes a community cat program as a means to control the population of community cats. Shackman has been in contact with Alley Cat Allies, a national organization, to assist the City in developing the ordinance and distributed a guideline in drafting a trap neuter return (TNR) ordinance.

Shackman provided information of other communities that have adopted community cat ordinances and indicated the community cat program has advanced in the last few years. The movement for community cats is spreading across the country. These ordinances do not depend on the size of the city but are based on local citizens wanting to do the right thing.

Shackman said copying the City of Omaha ordinance is not enough because the City of Omaha community cat ordinance was passed in 2009 and needs to be updated. Feline Friendz will be working with the City of Omaha to update it and would be willing to meet with anyone with regard to drafting up an ordinance.

Groesser opened consideration to increase the number of sworn police officers from 13 to 14. Krause moved and Sanchez seconded to approve increasing the number of sworn police officers from 13 to 14. Leonardo thanked Forrest for speaking with and listening to the police officers with regard to restoring the 14th police officer position. Being short staffed not only creates safety issues, but also creates overtime costs. Leaving only one officer on days or two officers on night shift leaves the City severely unprotected especially if there are two officer calls or if they are tied up on lengthy calls.

Leonardo commented on relying on backup from other agencies and the difficulties related to that. The City of La Vista will no longer come to Ralston to assist on two-man calls, such as domestic violence calls, etc. They will only respond to help an officer for active robbery calls or a shooting. One reason for that was their calls for assistance to Ralston were spiking. Another reason was the radio signals and the inability to communicate through their dispatch and Ralston's dispatch.

Police Departments the size of Ralston and above do not typically have officers working alone. Ralston is a small department and sick time, vacation time and unexpected things will occur so some shifts will not be covered occasionally. However, being down one officer has created somewhat of a problem. Fourteen officers will provide a full complement of two officers on days, three officers on nights, an investigative shift and a SRO shift.

Officers worked alone 12.8 percent of the time from January 1, 2018 to January 6, 2019 and Leonardo commented on the impact felt by officers working alone. There is a

commitment to the schools to leave the SRO in the school as a dedicated shift. Not having a 14th officer puts a strain on the other officers and a 14th officer will help immensely.

Bohling reviewed the schedule of budget availability that was included in the council packets. There was an administrative staff person who left the Police Department last fall. He compiled the total cost for the annual budget and recalculated the cost they were paid and took an average of the two lowest paid officers. There is enough budget availability to hire a 14th police officer through the end of this budget period. Leonardo said the money is there and the need is certainly there. Preis fully agrees that the Ralston Police Department needs the 14th police officer.

There being no further discussion, Groesser called for the vote. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, Sanchez, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Groesser opened consideration for a new police cruiser. Leonardo indicated the 2014 Dodge Charger is the main (duty) cruiser used by day and night shift personnel. He distributed a vehicle cost sheet that shows that within the past 14 months it has cost approximately \$7,000 to maintain the Dodge Charger. Leonardo has been reviewing state contract bids for a new cruiser and can lease a new SUV for approximately \$37,000, which would be approximately \$13,000 a year for a three year lease.

Leonardo commented on the additional costs to outfit the vehicle being about \$8,000. In addition to a camera system that would be about \$6,000. Leonardo can get a grant through the state for \$3,500 which will help pay for the camera system. Leonardo commented on the advantages of having a four wheel drive vehicle and the difference between a Ford SUV and a Chevy Tahoe.

Bohling indicated upgrading the Sleuth software was addressed during the budget process and there was originally \$35,000 budgeted for that. After some research by Leonardo, it was determined that the Police Department could purchase a system that would “piggy-back” with Douglas County’s system and it would only cost approximately \$1,000. That would free up over \$30,000 of lottery project money that would be available to pay for the lease for this year.

Leonardo also commented on a 2013 Ford Explorer that cost about \$5,000 last year to maintain. He and Bohling had talked about the possibility of leasing a second vehicle and Leonardo commented on the possibility of leasing a Ford for the second vehicle. He would prefer two Chevy Tahoes, but needs to think about equipment because the Ford SUV’s equipment could be used on a new Ford.

Krause said he is not ready to vote to lease two vehicles at this point. He is fine with the one vehicle at this time but Leonardo should come back at another time for the second vehicle. Krause commented on paying out some big wins for Keno and that the City needs to be careful to not get too carried away. Discussion was held on the timeframe for delivery and Leonardo indicated it is a process and will take approximately four months.

There being no further discussion, Krause moved and Sanchez seconded to approve the police cruiser lease to replace the 2014 Dodge Charger. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, Sanchez, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Konwinski introduced Ordinance No. 1231. Russell read Ordinance No. 1231 by title only: AN ORDINANCE TO REVISE AND AMEND ARTICLE 11 OF CHAPTER 11 OF THE RALSTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ZONING-SIGN REGULATIONS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPEAL OF ALL PROVISIONS OF THE RALSTON MUNICIPAL CODE WHICH ARE IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND TO AUTHORIZE THAT SAID ORDINANCE BE PUBLISHED IN PAMPHLET FORM.

Groesser opened the public hearing and first reading of Ordinance 1231 at 6:09 PM. Rich Onken, Planning Commission Chair, indicated that some months ago, the amendments were brought before the City Council and Council members requested more information on removing pole signs. Onken said the new section indicates the pole (non-conforming) signs are illegal and shall be removed or shall conform upon 30 days of demand by the City of Ralston.

Onken and Forrest also met with the Downtown Business Group and received further suggestions to incorporate. Onken thanked Ficenec for putting the ordinance together. The Planning Commission recommended approval at their February 11, 2019 meeting.

Groesser closed the public hearing at 6:13 PM. Krause moved and Kavanaugh seconded to approve Ordinance 1231 on first reading. On roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Konwinski, Fidelity, Kavanaugh, Krause, Sanchez, and Preis. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Public comment: George Sevick, 8001 Main Street, informed council members of the Ralston Legion Baseball Program pancake feed fundraiser on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon at the high school.

Council comment: Groesser reminded everyone of the wine walk in April.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.

Next regular meeting Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 5:30 PM.

Rosemarie D. Russell
City Clerk

Donald A. Groesser
Mayor

CLAIMS – 03-05-2019 – Action Batteries, Inc., 37.90, Batteries; Aflac, 847.92, Insurance; American United Life Insurance Company, 976.14, Life Insurance; Ameripride Services, Inc., 96.53, Building Maint/Rugs; Barton Solvents, Inc., 3,386.88, Supplies; Benis, Stan, 60.90, Reimbursement; Black Hills Energy, 7,470.33, Utilities; Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Nebraska, 61,841.96, Health Insurance; BMI Janitorial Group, 325.00, Janitorial; Bohling, Timothy, 119.64, Reimbursement; Canteen Refreshment Services, 14.34, Supplies; Carpenter Paper Co., 2,380.46, Supplies; Central States Group, 1,659.33, Supplies; Century Certified Services, 125.50, Pest Management/Control; Chair Cover Elegance, 452.00, Supplies; Chick Fil A, 884.03, Sales Commissions; City of Omaha Cashier, 41,964.06, Sewer Billing; Command Center, 1,481.37, Contract Labor; CompChoice, 668.24, Medical Svcs; Cox Business Services, 568.59, Cable/Phone; Cutchall Management, 3,649.28, Sales Commissions; Dave Adams, 38.58, Lancer Ticket Refund; Donut Express, 1,437.76, Sales Commissions; Eakes Office Solutions, 146.31, Supplies; Enviro-Master Services, 30.00, Janitorial; Experian, 27.48, Svcs; First State Bank, 3,478.85, Loan Pymt; Fleek, Brianna, 120.00, Janitorial; Flood Communications, 5,000.00, Marketing Svcs; FP Mailing Solutions, 66.00, Postage Meter; Fraser Stryker, PC LLO, 1,047.44, Professional Svcs; Fraternal Order of Police, 600.00, FOP Dues; Gale/Cengage Learning, 66.74, Books; Great Plains Uniforms, 744.99, Uniforms; Great Western Bank-Pension, 24,933.36, Pension; Great Western Bank-Visa, 3,365.84, Supplies/Subscriptions/ Reimbursement; Groesser, Donald, 1,366.60, Reimbursement; Hayes Automation, 818.15, Repairs; HDR Engineering, Inc., 6,126.94, Hinge Planning & Design; Helget Gas Products, 91.54, Supplies; Hometown Leasing, 383.96, Leasing; Humana Insurance Co., 2,502.94, Insurance; Integrated Solutions, Inc., 80.00, Computer Support/Svcs; JEO Consulting Group, Inc., 2,095.00, Professional Services; Kapco – Kent Adhesive Products, 138.11, Supplies; Klabunde’s Delivery, Inc., 29.00, Delivery Service; Klinker, Mark, 1,000.00, Legal Services; LaVista, City of, 943.63, Special Services Bus; M & M Staffing, 932.25, Contract Labor; Main Street Café, 941.50, Sales Commissions; Maria’s Enterprises, 7,693.46, Sales Commission; Menards-Ralston, 119.71, Supplies; Michael Todd & Co, Inc., 571.03, Supplies; Mid-American Benefits, 60.00, Flex Insurance; MUD-Utilities, 2,006.74, Utilities; Nebraska Iowa Supply Co., 3,956.54, Fuel; Nebraska Salt & Grain Co., 3,275.00, Supplies; Nebraska Supreme Court, 238.10, Publications; OCB Plumbing, 234.50, Services; Omaha Compound Company, 632.18, Supplies; Omaha Lancers, 600.00, Refund; Omaha Public Power District, 40,231.78, Utilities; Omaha World Herald, 1,119.58, Publications; O’Malley, Margaret, 291.50, Janitorial; Oriental Trading Co, Inc., 266.90, Supplies; OS Sales Co, Inc., 645.78, Food; Papillion Sanitation, 26,862.40, Trash Collection; Paul Bartels Trucking Co., 1,649.64, Salt; Pepsi-Cola, 6,157.12, Soda; Protective Security Advisors, 11,470.00, Security; Purchase Power, 150.00, Services; Puritan Manufacturing, Inc., 310.00, Supplies; Quill Corporation, 52.97, Supplies; Ralston Arena Operating Acct, 30,071.07, Sales Tax & Meeting; Ralston Automotive, 292.27, Repairs; Ralston Fire Dept, Inc., 2,977.16, EMS Provider; Ralston Volunteer Fire Department, 16,250.00, Fire Protection Agreement; Recorded Books, Inc., 31.25, CD; Reinhart Foodservice, LLC, 1,127.78, Food; Ridder, Justine, 22.15, Mileage; Rotella’s Italian Bakery, Inc., 248.42, Bread; RYBA Construction, Inc., 17,477.50, Snow Removal; S & S Pumping, 300.00, Services; Sarpy County, 1,802.70, Animal Control; Shell, 12.12, Fuel; Sign-It, 46.01, Supplies; Slingshot Promotions LLC, 254.63, Marketing; Sno Floss, 1,567.29, Sales Commissions; Solution

One-TX, 614.97, Copier; Spin Linen Management, 1,021.28, Linens; Steve Charleston, Treasurer, 190.00, Conference; T.N.T. Cleaning, 500.00, Janitorial; Titan Machinery-Omaha, 197.22, Parts; Trede Electric & Lighting, 1,379.85, Labor & Materials; U.S. Foods, Inc., 4,672.39, Supplies; United Rent-All, 314.65, Services; Venue Solutions Group, LLC, 6,895.80, Services; Verizon Wireless, 2,206.46, Cell Phones; Voss Lighting, 774.63, Lighting; Voya Institutional Trust Company, 4,150.00, Pension; Waldinger Corporation, 3,647.22, Services; Walmart Community, 1,719.34, Supplies; Westlake Ace Hardware, 86.06, Supplies.