

The City of Winfield met in regular session on Thursday, March 13, 2025 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers located at 115 N Locust Street with Mayor Willie Bender presiding. Council persons present: Jennifer Lemke, David Pieart, Matt Hernandez, Brandy Smith, and Randy Redlinger. Others present: Angie Oepping, Lisa Rees, JR Herrick, Elizabeth Hernandez, Scott Roen, Scott Jennings, and Angie Wilson.

**Approval of Agenda**-Council approved the agenda by a motion of D. Pieart, J. Lemke 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda – Bills and Minutes from February 12, 2025 Regular Council Meeting**-Consent Agenda approved by a motion of J. Lemke, M. Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Departmental Reports**-Electronic reports were provided by the department for review. JR Herrick stated that the generator was sold for \$17,000. J. Lemke attended the library board meeting and was asked if the city was taking care of selling unwanted items in the building and passed onto the council that the librarian is working on a floorplan. Officer Roen stated that they have trapped and re-located 4 cats and that several junk vehicle letters were sent and vehicles moved/removed. Officer Roen will participate at career day at the school on March 14<sup>th</sup> as well as the Prom Accident Simulation on March 27<sup>th</sup>. A. Oepping reminded the council that a second meeting will be needed in April to approve the FYE26 budget. This meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:15pm. A. Oepping will reach out to the pool manager to get a count of the lifeguards that are planning to return this summer as well as advertising for new lifeguards.

**Public Forum**-Resident Elizabeth Hernandez addressed the council about the high utility bills for February and asked that the council and city employees work together to generate good PR for the council. She provided the council with a history of their past 15 months bills on average for her home and shop. Mrs. Hernandez asked how the council plans to address the issue with the up and down spikes in people's bills and would like to be on the agenda for April's city council meeting. Resident Angie Wilson also addressed concerns with the cost in her city bills. In addition, Mrs. Wilson would like to open a café at her residence by converting her front sunroom to a café/coffee shop and was wanting guidance from the council on steps that would need to be taken. A. Oepping will do additional research and report back to the council and Mrs. Wilson.

**Sidewalk Rebate Program**-Council discussed the amount that the city reimburses for the sidewalk rebate program. No action taken and topic will be added to the April council meeting agenda. A Oepping will reach out to a couple of concrete contractors to get an estimate on the total cost per linear foot for a 4-foot-wide sidewalk.

**Resolution 20-2025 – Authorizing Bid Process and Setting Public Hearing for Proposed Sale of 306 E Ash Street**-Council approved the resolution by a motion of D. Pieart, M. Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Ordinance 361 – Amending Chapter 55 Animal Protection and Control**-Council approved the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the ordinance by a motion of J. Lemke, M. Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Ordinance 362 – Amending Chapter 56 Dog License Required**-Council approved the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the ordinance by a motion of J. Lemke, B. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Public Officials Gas Training**-JR Herrick reviewed the different types of gas emergencies that the public works department would have to respond to and how public officials can assist. Training focused on having one person be the one who addresses the public along with the assistance of Henry County Emergency Management. Emergency Response books will need to be updated with current contact information.

**P.M. Septic Pumping LLC – Septic Waste**-Council approved the agreement with P.M. Septic Pumping LLC to discharge home septic waste at the WWTP at a cost of \$100 per load by a motion of R. Redlinger, B. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Stormwater Runoff Improvement Project – West Central Ave**-JR Herrick was approached by Sunrise Terrace to assist in water runoff from the west parking lot and south ditch along the property. After discussion, the council decided to begin the project by ditching from the east drive parking lot to the west around the corner at West Central and Nebraska Avenue. JR Herrick will reach out to the county as well as the farm ground owner with plans and seek approval to complete the project.

**4H Livestock – 103 S Olive Street**-No action taken due to resident deciding against housing livestock for 4-H project.

**Accounts Receivable for City Parts on Projects**-Council approved the 20% markup on city parts and setting the labor rate at \$50 per hour per employee for residents'/businesses' water/sewer/gas projects that the city bills out by a motion of J. Lemke, B. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-0 Carried.

**Old Business** – In regards to the payment for the Economic Development Loan Agreement, the council asked that the business owner attend the April's city council meeting with an update if payment not made prior to the meeting. The school board is looking into tearing down the house creating a parking lot at 310 S. Olive once property is purchased. A. Oepping will reach out to the school for additional information. The council discussed being more vocal when changes happen with billing and utilities as well as getting quotes for gas/water auto readers. J. Lemke thanked employees for their work during the time when residents were seeking answers to their higher-than-normal city bills.

**Mayor's Comments**-Mayor Bender stated 'Citizens I feel your pain; it was my largest bill as well'. The increased bills were due to a longer billing cycle due to extreme weather when it was time to read meters as well as the increase in sewer rates (effective December 2023) due to the wastewater treatment plant project. Mayor Bender would like to assure residents that the city works to keep the utility funds at an acceptable balance to pay for the cost of running those utilities and loans associated to those utility projects. Mayor Bender also asks that residents please respect yard waste dump site during the final stages of construction at the wastewater treatment plant (if dry you can dump yard waste, but please do not dump yard waste if the area is muddy and wet).

**Adjournment**-The meeting adjourned at 6:39pm by a motion of J. Lemker, B. Smith 2<sup>nd</sup> Ayes-5, Nays-Carried. The next regular session meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm.

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Angie Oepping, City Clerk

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Willie Bender, Mayor