

Ralston City Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 2, 2024

The Ralston City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 5:30 PM at Ralston City Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll was called with the following present: Council members Brousek, Kjar, Preis, Kavanaugh, Krause and Fideline. Absent: Mayor Groesser.

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 Daily Record. Claims listed are approved and part of these minutes.

Councilman Brousek gave the invocation. President Kavanaugh welcomed the press and guests. Kavanaugh said the meeting is subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. A copy of the Act is posted at the rear of the Council Chambers and is available to view on the City's website at www.cityofralston.com.

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

1. Approval of City Council Minutes from March 19th Council Meeting.
2. Approval of Claims
3. Liberty First Credit Union Arena Financial Statements for period ending February 29, 2024.
4. Department Head and/or Commission Reports

Fideline moved and Krause seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. On a roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Brousek, Kjar, Preis, Kavanaugh, Krause and Fideline. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Leonardo gave March's traffic report. There were one hundred twenty - one traffic stops, ninety-two citations or arrests, fifty-seven warning or defect tickets, fifty-seven parking tickets and three warrant arrests.

Peña reported there were over one hundred people who came to the Easter egg hunt. On April 4th the Omaha Symphany will visit the library and have story time. Monday, April 8th the Solar Eclipse will happen. We have five hundred glasses to hand out after story time at the Granary Green.

Utterback reported there were seventy-six calls for the month of March, including a house fire, nobody got hurt and everyone made it out safely. Kjar asked what the source of the fire was. Utterback replied that it is currently under investigation.

Schulz reported preparing for the spring craft fair happening this weekend. Omaha Lancers last home season game is next week. April 8th there will be a new show announcement.

Roeder reported April 27th is spring cleanup day. Roeder noted work is being done to finalize Tunes series and Independence Day planning is in the works.

Engberg reported that in March she issued twenty-four permits bringing in two thousand seven hundred eighty-two dollars and twenty-eight cents in fees.

Hoppe directed council to the map on their desks involving a project going on downtown. Hoppe noted that we have a contract to reconstruct Park Drive between 76th and 77th Streets. The topography is such that we are having drainage issues that are affecting some of the private businesses. The reconstruction project is being done in six phases to minimize the impact on individuals and businesses in the area. Hoppe noted the work starts tomorrow

President Kavanaugh read and signed proclamations for Arbor Day and Earth Day.

President Kavanaugh presented a proclamation to Library Director Amanda Peña declaring April 7 - 13, 2024 National Library Week in the City of Ralston.

Leonardo provided a biography of Officer Jordan Monk and background information on the hiring process. Leonardo explained that the process to hire a police officer has changed. He noted that the application packet is forty one pages. A pre-background interview is a new step in the process. Leonardo stated that an investigator does a check on the candidate's background. The hiring process begins with a board interview comprised of the Ralston Police Department. The candidate appears in front of the civil service interview panel. An interview with the Chief of Police and the Mayor occurs and a conditional offer is granted. The candidate goes through a polygraph, psychological and medical exams before a one week transitional phase. Field training is started after the transitional phase.

Officer Monk graduated from Lincoln Northeast High School. He attended Doane College and Wayne State, earning a bachelor's degree. Leonardo stated that Monk's family is present. He has worked for the UNO Police department, Boys Town Police department and the Crete Police department.

Ficenec administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Police Officer, Jordan Monk.

Fideline introduced Ordinance 1328. Kelly Ryan read Ordinance No. 1328 by title only: **AN ORDINANCE REVISING SECTION 1-1501 OF THE RALSTON MUNICIPAL CODE TITLED "PURCHASES; HOW MADE" TO INCREASE THE LIMIT FOR BIDDING REQUIREMENTS; TO REPEAL PROVISIONS IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND TO AUTHORIZE THAT SAID ORDINANCE BE PUBLISHED IN PAMPHLET FORM.**

President Kavanaugh opened the public hearing and first reading of Ordinance No. 1328 at 5:53 PM.

Hoppe explained we bid everything, however, the level of effort we make changes as the potential cost of the bid goes up. For example, projects of \$30,000 or less, we do three informal bids. That means we call three vendors for whatever the product is, give them the specifications, and they give us an informal bid. That has been very successful. If the project is going to be above \$30,000, we advertise over two periods of time and write the specific specifications which takes a lot of time. Then you have to wait ten days, advertise again, give a deadline, collect the bids, and then

make a decision. That whole process does two things. One thing is the process is very time consuming. The second thing is putting a burden on those businesses. Our purchasing power has gone down with inflation and now we are asking firms, who are generally smaller, to come up with some sophisticated submissions. Hoppe noted we are asking to increase the informal bid from \$30,000-\$50,000. With the increase to \$50,000, it will allow us to be more efficient and still have the intent of getting the lowest cost for the project. Any bid over \$30,000 we would still take to council for approval.

Kjar asked why this ordinance does not include an escalation clause for inflation so it automatically goes up and we do not have to do this. Hoppe replied that is a great suggestion and if the City Council wants to do that, he is happy to authorize an amendment with our city attorney to get that done.

Krause asked how often do we ask for a bid over \$50,000. Hoppe replied several times a year. Krause asked how many times do we get a bid between \$30,000-\$50,000 in a year. Bohling replied about four to six times a year. Krause explained he does not agree with an escalation clause as council should be more aware of what the city spends their money on and who it goes to. Krause noted he believes \$50,000 is enough for now and can be reevaluated in another five years.

Brousek stated that he does not see a problem with making this change. Brousek noted that the city has great department heads and we need to trust their judgement.

Preis stated that when it is informal and we get three bids, if someone in this town provides the service the city needs to contact them so they are given an opportunity to bid that project.

Kavanaugh asked if there has been difficulty getting bids back that are between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Hoppe replied no.

There being no further discussion, President Kavanaugh closed the Public Hearing and first reading of Ordinance No. 1328 at 6:03 PM

President Kavanaugh opened consideration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the members of the Ralston Arts and Creative District.

Krause motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the members of the Ralston Arts and Creative District.

Hoppe explained two years ago we developed the Ralston Arts and Creative District to promote art and culture in our community. We defined it as the Hinge Redevelopment Area and up to the high school. We appointed a board of fourteen people the first time. Hoppe noted that there are permanent main partners including the City of Ralston, the Ralston Foundation, the Ralston Economic Development Corporation and Debra Joy Groesser Fine Art. Hoppe stated that we have gone through a thorough process with the Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) to certify the Creative District. There is a significant amount of funds available when certified. Initially we may receive ten thousand dollars from the NAC. This then makes us eligible for grants that can total as high as one hundred thousand dollars. We have gone through the NAC application, they did a site visit

and we submitted a strategic plan. During the site visit the NAC came back with some concerns. These concerns are reflected in the memorandum in front of council. First, the NAC did not like the name. They wanted the name “Hinge” in the title to better brand the area. We are proposing to rename this creative district “The Ralston Hinge Creative District.” Now that the two years has passed, it is time to reappoint the board, the foundation and the economic development core have to reappoint their members so we are doing this in advance. Secondly, we appointed the original members of the board at City Council. This memorandum gives the board the option to have up to twenty members. This memorandum gives the authority of appointing additional members to the board members themselves. We are proposing that the board must have two thirds of its members voting to add an additional member. Kavanaugh stated that he wants to better define what the permanent members are representing as. Not the individuals themselves, but the positions. Thirdly, the NAC requires that the strategic plan be reviewed annually. The memorandum states this and requires that the review be done in front of council so the public has an opportunity to comment on it. Any revisions made are then submitted to the NAC.

Brousek asked Hoppe if he has discussed this proposed plan with the NAC. Hoppe responded that he has. Brousek stated his only concern is keeping it from exclusivity.

Krause asked if there was any consideration given to staggering the terms. Hoppe stated that staggering the terms is a great idea.

Kavanaugh reiterated that his suggestion is to define some of the members as permanent roles by position not by person.

Krause moved and Fideline seconded to postpone consideration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the members of the Ralston Arts and Creative District to the April 16th City Council meeting. On a roll call vote, the following votes were recorded on the electronic voting board. Aye: Brousek, Kjar, Preis, Kavanaugh, Krause and Fideline. Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

Council Comment: Brousek stated his appreciation to Peña for the library pictures in the Omaha World Herald. Brousek thanked Chief Utterback and the fire department for their quick response to the house fire. Brousek also thanked the department heads for their good work. Krause complimented Hoppe on the good news coverage on Ralston. Kavanaugh congratulated the newest police officer, Monk and thanked the fire department for their hard work.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM.

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 5:30 PM.

Maura Kelly Ryan
City Clerk

Donald A. Groesser
Mayor

Claims – April 2, 2024: american united life insurance company, life insurance, \$656.21, andrew kanngieser, fire department, \$720.00, black hills energy, utilities, \$126.37, blackstone publishing, books, \$130.39, blue cross & blue shield of ne, health insurance, \$49,639.84, cengage learning inc, books, \$128.96, center point large print, books, \$49.14, century certified services, pest control, \$30.00, city of omaha cashier, sewer fees, \$66,405.68, cox business services, telephone, \$601.97, cummins sales and services, parts, \$1,291.80, demco, supplies, \$137.59, eakes office solutions, supplies, \$31.37, fireguard,inc, fire extinguishers, \$1,955.22, first interstate bank-pension, pension, \$25,482.86, first wireless,inc, sound system, \$4,354.80, green inc omaha, field repair, \$4,948.10, humana insurance co, insurance, \$2,502.33, jeo consulting group,inc, engineer fees, \$7,338.75, loveland grass pad, turf & renovator, \$1,414.70, macqueen equipment, equipment, \$6,810.87, mausbach grounds maintenance, turf management, \$7,002.50, menards-ralston, supplies, \$262.94, mud-utilities, utilities, \$514.88, napa auto parts, parts, \$249.00, nebraska iowa industrial fasteners corp, supplies, \$6.79, nebraska iowa supply co, fuel, \$2,425.91, omaha compound company, supplies, \$122.00, papillion sanitation, trash services, \$29,151.60, papillion sanitation waste connections, trash services, \$200.12, point c health, admin fee, \$152.00, quill corporation, office supplies, \$259.90, ralston automotive, shop repair, \$97.24, ralston volunteer fire dept, dues, \$18,289.52, ralston-byers insurance agency, insurance, \$225.00, sarpy county, animal control, \$1,736.00, the daily record, legals, \$362.30, trans union risk & alternative, reports, \$75.00, trede electric & lighting, electricians, \$1,694.95, university of nebraska-dept pub safety, reimbursement for galls, \$549.11, voya institutional trust company, trust, \$900.00, westlake ace hardware, supplies, \$140.87.