

CITY OF IMPERIAL CITY COUNCIL

May 19, 2025

A regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Imperial was held in the Council Chambers, City Council Chambers, 740 Court Street, Imperial, NE 69033 on May 19, 2025 at 6:00 PM. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by notice of meeting being published in the Imperial Republican and posted at the Imperial Lied Library, City Office and Imperial Post Office. Notice of this meeting was communicated in advance notice to the Mayor and Council. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the public.

Mayor Craig Loeffler called the meeting to order and instructed the Administrator to call the roll, with the following results:

Present: Nick Colton, Jan Elliott, Julie Gockley, John Miller. Also present: Mayor Craig Loeffler, City Attorney Josh Wendell, Tyler Hillmer via Zoom, Public Works Superintendent Pat Davison, Christie Davis, Ron Berry, Chad Thies, Officer David Ripley, Pam Jensen, Jewell Jensen, Gina Blocher, and City Administrator Tyler Pribbeno recording the minutes.

A quorum was declared present, and the meeting continued.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

The Mayor announced this meeting is being conducted pursuant to the Nebraska Open Public Meetings Act and that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted on the east wall of the Chambers.

Motion by Jan Elliott: To accept the consent agenda as presented, second by John Miller. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Chad Thies of Zelle, a Human Resources firm, presented to the City Council. Thies described the services Zelle offers, including assisting with creating and implementing policies and procedures; recruiting, hiring, and onboarding new employees; assisting with employee grievances; and many other day-to-day HR responsibilities. Zelle would assign three employees to Imperial. Most of the meetings would be virtual or via phone, but Zelle has an office in Ogallala and would make multiple trips to Imperial to meet with employees and otherwise assist with operations as needed. Zelle could be contracted to assist the City of Imperial, the Imperial Manor/Parkview Heights, or both. Zelle would be retained for these services in a monthly amount, while payroll and other needs could be added on for an additional fee.

Chad Thies left at 6:29 p.m.

Tyler Hillmer of Miller & Associates presented the updated renderings and features of the City Square Renovation project. Hillmer walked through the changes of the layout from the initial feasibility study conducted for the project several years ago, and includes space for the Gazebo and Lappsett Memo purchased previously by the City for the project. Councilmembers suggested changing the layout of the concrete around the Gazebo for easier maintenance and to prevent trails being made in the grass. Councilmembers questioned the number of parking spaces available near the public library. Pribbeno stated there was street parking available on all of the bordering streets, including angled parking on Broadway, but additional off-street parking spaces could be created on 7th street if the need arose. Hillmer discussed potential City Square or other welcome signs in the space, but indicated the sign could be something the City adds at a later date if a design hasn't been settled on at this time. Hillmer announced he would like approval from the City to proceed to go out for bids, with construction planned for this summer or fall if the bid process is successful.

Norma Hickman joined the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

Motion by Nick Colton: To approve the proposed City Square Renovation plan as presented and authorize Miller & Associates to go out for bids., second by Jan Elliott. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Officer Dave Ripley discussed the Memorandum of Understanding for The Set Me Free Project. Pribbeno indicated the Imperial Police Department was successfully awarded \$25,000 for the HALT Human Trafficking Fund grant to help combat human trafficking. Part of IPD's application for the grant was programming designed to help identify victims of human trafficking. The Set Me Free Project will help "train the trainers", providing resources and instruction to Imperial Police Department officers and other community stakeholders to help further train additional people in healthcare, education, and other sectors to be able to identify victims and assist with human trafficking prevention. The Set Me Free Project would be purchased utilizing the HALT grant funds.

Motion by Julie Gockley: To approve the Memorandum of Understanding with The Set Me Free Project as presented and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of the City, in the amount of \$6,532 to be paid and an annual fee of \$250 for by the Imperial Police Department donations fund, second by John Miller. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Jim Pirog presented on behalf of the Prairie Sage Trail committee, updating the Council on the status of the Recreational Trails Program grant award. Pirog indicated that approval of the RTP Project Agreement was the necessary next step toward developing the trail around the Chase County Hospital. Nick Colton identified the 25-year maintenance requirement in the agreement, and asked if the City of Imperial was prepared and able to meet that commitment, including what specialized equipment needs would be necessary to maintain the trail even in the winter months. Pirog stated the Friends of the Trail volunteer group hope to take care of as much maintenance of the trail as possible, including purchasing or borrowing additional equipment to help maintain it or hire out the work if needed. Ron Berry asked about de-icing the trails in the winter, and whether the City would have any liability if the trail is used in winter months. Nick Colton offered some communities simply closed their trails during inclement weather, and that's something the City might need to consider when the time comes. Jan Elliott suggested addressing some of these concerns with signage. Julie Gockley asked about the local match for these funds and where that source of money has come from. Tyler Pribbeno explained this is a reimbursable grant, requiring the City as the project sponsor to expend the full amount to construct this portion of the trail, and later ask for reimbursement up to the \$250,000 awarded from the grant after the work is completed. Jan Elliott stated that nearly more than \$60,000 was raised in donations from community members to help raise the required local match, indicating strong community support for the project.

Motion by Nick Colton: To approve the Recreational Trails Program Project Agreement for the Prairie Sage Trail as presented and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of the City, second by Julie Gockley. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Nay. Motion Carried.

Jim Pirog left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Mayor Loeffler announced he'd like to consider moving the June meetings to Tuesday, due to his unavailability on the regularly scheduled evenings. Tyler Pribbeno indicated West Central Nebraska Development District notified recipients of nuisance letters that the City Council presentation on those alleged nuisances was scheduled for Monday, June 16, 2025, and encouraged the Council not to reschedule that meeting because it would require more than 100 letters needing sent to these nuisance letter recipients. Council suggested foregoing the Monday, June 2, 2025 meeting unless an emergency need arises and conducting the June 16, 2025 meeting as planned.

City Attorney Josh Wendell stated he believes a settlement agreement has been negotiated with Jewel and Pam Jensen concerning ongoing litigation concerning the property located at 1739 Wesley Drive. Wendell stated he spoke briefly with the Jensens' attorney just before the Council meeting that indicated there may be some minor revisions to the written agreement. One such revision, Wendell stated, was replacing "ancillary building" with "accessory building as defined in the Imperial Building regulations." Pam Jensen requested to go into closed session with the Council to discuss the settlement agreement. Wendell asked Ms. Jensen if she is requesting to go into closed session to discuss the matter with the City Council outside of the presence of her attorney. Ms. Jensen indicated her attorney could not attend the meeting tonight and desired to talk about the matter in a closed session. Jan Elliott asked to take a short recess to allow more opportunity to review the proposed agreement.

Mayor Loeffler announced that the meeting was in recess at 7:24 p.m. and to return in session at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:30 p.m. Present were Councilmembers Colton, Gockley, Miller, and Elliott; Mayor Craig Loeffler; City Attorney Josh Wendell; City Administrator Tyler Pribbeno; Public Works Superintendent Pat Davison; Jewell Jensen; and Pam Jensen.

Motion by Nick Colton: To enter executive session for the purposes of discussing the proposed settlement agreement between the City of Imperial and Jewel Jensen and Pam Jensen, with the City Council, Mayor, City Administrator, City Attorney, Jewel Jensen, Pam Jensen, and Pat Davison present., second by Julie Gockley. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Executive Session started at 7:31 p.m.

The meeting resumed in open session at 7:46 p.m.

Ron Berry, Norma Hickman, Gina Blocher, and Officer Dave Ripley rejoined the meeting.

Pam Jensen and Jewel Jensen left at 7:46 p.m.

Motion by Nick Colton: To exit executive session, second by John Miller. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Motion by Jan Elliott: To enter executive session for the purposes of discussing the proposed settlement agreement between the City of Imperial and Jewel Jensen and Pam Jensen, with the City Council, Mayor, City Administrator, and City Attorney present, second by Nick Colton. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Gina Blocher, Ron Berry, Norma Hickman, and Pat Davison left the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Executive session started at 7:48 p.m.

The meeting returned to open session at 8:19 p.m.

Motion by Jan Elliott: To exit executive session, second by Nick Colton. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Motion by Jan Elliott: To amend Paragraph 2 of the proposed written settlement agreement to change "ancillary building" to "accessory building as defined by the City of Imperial Zoning Regulations", second by John Miller. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Motion by Nick Colton: To approve the written settlement agreement with the Jensens as amended and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of the City, second by John Miller. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Motion by Nick Colton: To approve General Check Numbers 26213-26237, 26239-26240, 26242-26249; and Utility Check Numbers 25232-25264, second by Jan Elliott. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Motion by Nick Colton: To approve General Check Numbers 26238 and 26241 to Prairie States Communications, second by Julie Gockley. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Abstain (With Conflict), Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

Mayor Loeffler announced he had sent the remaining department superintendents home due to the length of the meeting and with the executive sessions, and there would be no superintendent reports given that evening.

Motion by Jan Elliott: To adjourn the meeting, second by Nick Colton. On call for the vote, the following votes were shown on the voting lights: Nick Colton: Yea, Jan Elliott: Yea, Julie Gockley: Yea, John Miller: Yea. Motion Carried.

SEAL:

Mayor

Attest: City Administrator