

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting
April 29, 2025

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session in the City Council Chambers on April 29, 2025, at 6:00 PM. The following were present: Brent Clark, Holly Hafer, Kirk Highfill, James Letcher, Kent Long, Rick Paulsen, Kevin Willis, Frank Wolff. Also present were City Administrator Green, Assistant City Administrator Barrow, Director of Public Works Heaton, Non-Lawyer Assistant Ferrari, Library Director Lukert, Finance Director/Treasurer Bach, HR Manager Guhl, Community Development Director Beiermann, and Chief Kinsey.

The Mayor publicly stated to all in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available for review and indicated the location of such copy posted in the room where the meeting was being held. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Enterprise or the Pilot -Tribune as shown by the affidavit of publication filed in the City Clerk's office. Notice of the meeting was simultaneously given to the Mayor and all members of the City Council, and a copy of their acknowledgement of receipt of notice and the agenda is filed in the City Clerk's office. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Mayor and Council of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Agenda Item #1, #2, and #3 – Mayor Rump called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by roll call vote and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item #4 – Consent agenda approved the minutes of the April 22, 2025, meeting. Motion by Kirk Highfill, second by Rick Paulsen to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2025, meeting as presented. Council members voted as follows: Brent Clark: Yea, Holly Hafer: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Yea, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 8, Nay: 0. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #5 – Assistant City Administrator Barrow introduced Dr. Steve Rathman to present the Strategic Plan prepared by him for the City of Blair. Dr. Rathman stated he is a subject matter expert in strategic planning. The strategic plan has been generated by research and interviews with approximately 70 people that included City of Blair employees, Mayor and Council members and Community Stakeholders. Rathman stated the plan begins with a historic synopsis about Blair. The core purpose of the city is to provide high-quality public services to the community and region, ensuring a safe and well-functioning community that addresses the needs of those we serve. The core ideology is “we specialize in public service and all city operations are carried out with this in mind.” This is accomplished through collaboration, dedication, resiliency, leadership, and strategic growth. A mission statement was created through this process as follows: “The City of Blair aims to enhance the quality of life in our community by providing a sustainable level of municipal services that balance physical, economic, and social quality. A vision statement was also created “To maintain a vibrant city guided by history, governed by contemporary opportunities, and shaped by small-town ideal and a sense of community. The plan included core values as follows: 1) Community – provides belonging, support and identity, 2) Quality – a standard of excellence, 3) Respect – a high level of understanding, empathy, and a sense of dignity, 4) Service – taking action to create value for the public, and 5) Transparency – building trust through promoting accountability. Rathman then reviewed the SWOT Analysis that included a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the TOWS Analysis that includes threats, opportunities, weaknesses, and strengths taken from the SWOT information through comparison to provide the following: 1)

Strengths/Opportunities-leveraging internal strength to capitalize on external opportunities, 2) Weakness/Opportunities-leveraging external opportunities to address internal weaknesses, 3) Strengths/Threat-using the organizations strengths to minimize the impact of threats, 4) Weakness/Threats -focus on handling both outside dangers and internal shortcomings and 5) Challenges-obstacles that have the potential to hinder success. The plan continues with 1) Strategic Initiatives/Pillars - action oriented concepts used to drive the organizations long-term goals including quality of life, family friendly, safety and security, sustainability, leadership, quality vs quantity, 2) Targets - short term goals (2025-2026) focus on short-term growth, staffing and succession planning in line with strategy, increase affordable housing, establish and utilize city social medial platforms, employee training and development, manager/supervisor leadership development to enhance the organizations mission and vision, challenge the status quo and live within physical limitations (balanced growth driven by strategic thought), 3) Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG) - long term goals (2030) - north bypass, measurable and sustainable growth, long-term organizational improvement, streamline hiring process, overcome the status quo, strategic professional growth for all staff, balance between industry and community, economic balance (high, middle and entry-level jobs), decrease commuters/increase people who live and work in Blair, positive atmosphere for families/middle class and retirees, increase staffing levels to meet community expectations, develop a plan for city facilities and volunteer services. The plan concluded with Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which are measurable values that demonstrate how effectively an individual, team or organization is achieving a specific objective as follows: 1) Community Satisfaction, 2) Quality of life factors critical to the organization, 3) Employee recruitment and retention, 4) Economic accountability; (budget and tax revenue), 5) Employee development and growth, 6) Leadership development and mentoring, 7) Business retention and strategic business recruitment (shopping, restaurants, retail, etc.) and 8) Quality vs Quantity. Discussion was held regarding a proposed catch phrase for the city. Rathman thanked everyone for allowing him the opportunity to prepare this plan for Blair. The council took no action.

Agenda Item #6 – City Administrator Green lead a discussion regarding the components and purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and a possible timeline for updating Blair's Comprehensive Plan in 2026. If the strategic plan is an internal document created by and for city staff, comprehensive plans are designed to be documents created with maximum citizen input. In Nebraska, every city with Zoning Regulations is required to have a comprehensive plan. The last update to the City's comprehensive plan was completed in 2015. The comprehensive plan has two fundamental purposes: 1) It provides an essential legal basis for land use regulations such as zoning and subdivision regulations, 2) A modern comprehensive plan presents a far-reaching and compelling vision for a community, derived component by component from the feedback and desires of its residents, appointed and elected officials, and establishes the specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision. Developing a comprehensive plan will include involvement of Blair residents, appointed and elected officials led by professional city planners and engineers selected through an RFQ process. A Steering Committee will be appointed by the Mayor to work to help develop the plan with final recommendations made by the Planning Commission and final approval and adoption by the City Council. A comprehensive plan is made up of the following elements: 1) Demographics, Economy, and Employment, 2) Existing Facilities and Services, 3) Housing: Existing and Future Needs, 4) Land Use: Current and Future, 5) Transportation: Current and Future and 6) Energy Element and Utilities. The entire process would likely take 12 to 18 months and could cost as much as \$150,000. No action was taken following Green's presentation.

Agenda Item #7 – Motion by Rick Paulsen, second by Brent Clark to adjourn the meeting 7:36 pm. Council members voted as follows: Brent Clark: Yea, Holly Hafer: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Yea, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 8, Nay: 0. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Melinda K. Rump, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brenda Wheeler, City Clerk

Seal