

McFarland

Unapproved McFarland City Council Minutes April 14th, 2025

The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm, by Mayor Ron Nehring with the following city council members present; Darrin Dillingham, Joel Green, Avery Trecek, Spencer Parker and Lori Senne. City Officials present were City Attorney Tim Liesmann, City Clerk Larry Senne, City Treasurer Tracy Logan. City Superintendent Jeff Osif was absent. Other officials attending the meeting were BG Consultant PE Brian Foster, City of Alma Superintendent Michael Slobodnik and Wabaunsee County Commissioner Jim MacGregor. Public attending the meeting were Beverly Johnson, Jo Nehring, Diane Hauer, Susan Chapen. Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Nehring opened the meeting with questions or comments from the public. There were none. Jo Nehring representing TEAM McFarland reported to the city council about sponsoring a service grant for \$250. Two are available for the year, one would be paid by TEAM and the other by the City of McFarland to be used for flag poles at each entrance to the City to help beautify the city. Council member Lori Senne made a motion to sponsor one of the service grants for \$250. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes.

City Clerk Larry Senne read Superintendent Jeff Osif's maintenance report due to his absence.

Gas: I had three locates this month. K-99 for fiber installation, Marie Miller and Dan Herren.

Water: All is good at the water plant. The maintenance for the water tower was completed without issues. I have completed a step by step procedure for the next time we have to empty the water tower.

Sewer: We are set up for quarterly sampling from our lagoons with Pace Analytical; we should have results to the sample submitted this month.

Retention Dam: The retention dam was burned on 4/9/25. I want to recognize Mayor Nehring, Richard Feyh, Josh Huff, and District No. 7 fire department, including Travis Poovey, Dick Poovey, Shawn Flach, and Austin DeJean for helping us by providing support and fire control.

Streets: Sidewalks on Main Street have been completed. The majority of the cameras have been installed around town. I am still working out a few bugs and the other two will be installed within next couple of weeks.

Equipment: Nothing new.

Park: I received the parts for the damaged playground equipment. They fell under warranty so

there was no cost to the city. They will be installed within a week.

Misc.: Spraying and mowing will start this week. City-wide cleanup from Waste Management will be on April 25th. I am requesting from the city council to bring in a 40 yard roll-off dumpster at the end of the month for our residents. Mayor Nehring asked the city council getting a tire shredder for those who drop off tires. Council member Darrin Dillingham commented that he could ask the tire shredding company about shredding the tire collected at the city dumpsters. Council member Spencer Parker suggested that it be a fall endeavor, city council agreed.

At 6:15 pm, Compliance Officer Lori Senne opened the public hearing meeting on the uninhabitable structure located at 601 Main Street owned by Joseph Torneden II. Lori made the official remark that no one was in attendance representing Joe during this public hearing. Attorney Tim Liesmann remarked that the city needs to make some findings on the structure that makes it uninhabitable and a determination on the value of the property versus the cost of repairs, whether it being 50% more or less than the value of the property. Attorney Liesmann also suggested for consideration how fast the city would like to move on this property, regarding the fact the city would incur the cost of demolition of the property. Attorney Liesmann commented the city should do nothing and allow this property to naturally go on the county tax sale next year, the property is delinquent since 2022, giving the city time to see what its spending tolerance is on this property. Attorney Liesmann said the city's next step is to develop the order and post it on the property and have it published in the newspaper. Compliance Officer Lori Senne asked about having another public hearing, Attorney Liesmann said that would not be necessary, the tax sale is next summer 2026. Attorney Liesmann said he would check again for any liens that may have recently been placed on the property. At 6:27 pm, the public meeting was closed.

Compliance Officer Lori Senne reported on Municipal Court, there were two nuisance ordinance violation cases this month with Ricky Smith property located at 221 Agnes and Mike Newton property located at 513 Main St. The case against Ricky Smith has been dropped; Lori commented that his property looks really good, in sharp contrast to Mike Newton who inferred that he has made some changes. However not enough and he has received another 30-days to make drastic changes in how his property looks. His court date is May 15th, 2025. Royce Nelson has received a 30 day letter on his vacant mobile home located at 103 Wheeler St.; the tin roof has been peeled back during the last wind storm mak-

ing it an uninhabitable structure. There has been no contact by Royce to anyone about his plan of action to address this hazardous condition. Council member Spencer Parker wants him to have more time to fix the problem. Council member Joel Green agreed with Parker. A 30 day extension has been given on the property. Council member Avery Trecek and council member Darrin Dillingham both agreed after 30 days if nothing has been done, he gets a court date.

In Old Business; Mayor Nehring announced that he invited Brian Foster PE with BG Consultants, City Superintendent for Alma Michael Slobodnik and Wabaunsee County Commissioner Jim MacGregor to attend the meeting. This gave the city council members the opportunity to ask question they might have regarding the proposal by BG Consultant for a \$10,000 preliminary engineering report (PER) required for an application for a project grant funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Brian stated that he proposed to do a report on our gas system just as he did with the City of Alma; this document would be submitted in December. This would help the city apply for a grant from USDA / RD and PHMSA and would allow us to do more things such as move the gas meters from the alleys to house eliminating meter strikes and gas loss in the alleys. Council member Lori Senne asked how long is the proposal good for? Brian commented that funding is allocated for 5 years and we are in year 4 of the process. Council member Lori Senne asked again how long is the report good for, Brian commented for as long as it's kept updated it can be kept ready and included in any report paperwork being submitted on other projects. Jim MacGregor cautioned being on year four the money maybe out. Council member Avery Trecek asked what other grants this can be used for. Brian Foster replied that USDA Rural Development have other options for grants for this project, the city needs to have a plan ready for a quick response to grant program. Alma City Superintendent Michael Slobodnik asked to move the gas meters to the houses as well as replacement of the feeder lines in McFarland similar to what is going to be done in Alma, this would help with the safety aspect of the plan. He went on to say that McFarland has an issue

with meter strikes. Mayor Nehring asked Michael how much money is in the grant to move the meters, he replied that they are figuring much the same as in Alma an average cost of \$2,500 a meter to move them from the alley, city clerk reported that we currently have 134 meter connection for a total of \$335,000. Mayor Nehring asked Jim MacGregor about writing the grant. Jim said the questionnaire is 12 pages long and read off some requirements of the questionnaire for the grant. Doing the homework for the agreement for the grant and knowing what to include is like having your homework done. Think of it as an investment in the gas system.

Brian Foster commented that it typically takes 3 months to complete the preliminary engineering report before it can be submitted for a grant. One month is very hard to do a turnaround for grant being released. City council heard discussion about the grants and reports. Mayor Nehring discussed McFarland's history of meter strikes and replacing anodes. Michael Slobodnik replied that they are looking for safety issues, anodes and cathodic protection is not a reason. Council member Avery Trecek asked about capacity of our gas lines. Michael said that our feeder line is not at capacity but in town the lines are at capacity. Jo Nehring asked about the \$10,000 payment. Brian said he will provide a contract with monthly payments and bill accordingly until the completion of the paperwork. Brian commented that he can always update the report according to the time to do the report. Then Mayor Nehring asked the city council if there were any further discussion.

Council member Avery Trecek made a motion to hire BG Consultants and get us a contract. Seconded by Darrin Dillingham, motion carried with all voting yes. Mikael Slobodnik reported to Mayor Nehring that KCC will be in Alma next week and would more than likely come to McFarland as well. Mayor Nehring then asked Commissioner Jim MacGregor about the Retention Dam being a part of the water shed district and the watershed being responsible for maintenance of the dam. Jim explained the purpose of the watershed and commented that he would research the watershed district and find out if our retention dam falls under that.

Also in old business Mayor Nehring asked for discussion on replacing Paxico Insurance policy

with the insurance proposal from Continental Western. City Clerk reported that Scott Murray had reported a recent reduction to our policy in the amount of \$5,000 by increasing the deductibles and was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Council member Lori Senne made a motion to replace our insurance carrier with Continental Western and drop our EMC Insurance Policy with Paxico Insurance. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on March 10th, 2025 were read. Council member Spencer Parker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes. The Treasurer's Report was reviewed. Council member Lori Senne made a motion to approve the report. Seconded by Darrin Dillingham, motion carried with all voting yes. The monthly bills were presented for payment. Council member Darrin Dillingham made a motion to pay the bills totaling \$47,279.67 for payment. Seconded by Joel Green, motion carried with all voting yes.

In New Business; Mayor Nehring presented Resolution No. 2025-02 for consideration. A resolution establishing employment health care insurance and compensation for mayor and compliance officer pay for the City of McFarland, Kansas. Council member Avery Trecek made a motion to pass Resolution No. 2025-02. Seconded by Spencer Parker, motion carried with all voting yes. City council heard discussion on utility rate increases. Mayor Nehring asked for more study on utility billing charges and will discuss this at the next work session on May 5th, 2025.

Under Property Concerns; Compliance Officer Lori Senne discussed with the city council a 30 day letter sent to Vera Gilbert owner of the schoolhouse and the concerns with that property. She still has some time left on her 30 day notice. City Clerk reported that there has only been 34 dog tags sold and they are due by the end of April, also city-wide cleanup day is the 25th of April.

At 7:50 pm, council member Joel Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Spencer Parker, motion carried with all voting yes.

Larry Senne
McFarland City Clerk



Come Join Us to Celebrate

Community Bank Month



Friday, April 25th with Root Beer Floats!

Discover the power of community banking
with our multiple loan options!



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Look for us Saturday, May 3rd,
at the Flint Hills Festival at the
Flint Hills Discovery Center
in Manhattan! You will find
Mount Mitchell and the

Native Stone Scenic Byway represented too!
Live music, food trucks, activities, and more!

227 Missouri Ave.
Alma, KS 66401 • 785-765-2200

Website: wabaunseecomuseum.org
Email: wabaunseecomuseum@gmail.com