MINUTES OF THE

REGULAR SCHEDULED

CROFTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 4 2023 6:30PM

**Mayor Robert W. Evans** opened the City Council meeting at 6:33PM. The Mayor pointed out the Open Meetings Act poster on the wall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Mayor took roll call present were, Council Chairperson Larry Peitz, James Murphy, Jamie Miller. Absent Jason Wavrunek. Mr. Wavrunek did join the meeting at 6:45.

Motion to adopt the agenda for the meeting was made by Miller 2nd by Murphy. Vote Yea Peitz, Miller, Murphy. Absent Wavrunek. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the minutes from March 7, 2023 meeting was made by Peitz 2nd by Murphy. Vote-Yea Miller, Murphy, Peitz. Absent Wavrunek Motion carried.

**Claims**: Before the council voted to approve the claims presented, Mayor Evans gave the floor to City Clerk Donna Cook. She presented two ordinances to go along with the claims. The audit report stated that nothing should be paid before it is approved by the council, this will work soon but isn’t ready to be implemented just yet. The treasurer will be putting many bills into auto pay and she and Cook are working to make sure all invoices are received before each meeting. Because they aren’t quite there, they need a couple of months yet to get prepared. Payroll will never be able to be preapproved at a meeting unless the employees are paid monthly. She reported to keep employees happy and working at their best it is better to be non-compliant with this one factor. But with ordinance 4-4-23 and 4-4-23-2 by June 1st they will be compliant with the audit suggestions. This will include a date change for meetings but that ordinance is coming later in the meeting. Motion to approve the claims as presented and approve ordinance 4-4-23 (1-No claims shall be paid before authorization from the council at their first meeting of the month, 2-Only the employee payroll payments will be pre-approved by council to be paid prior to the council meeting, 3-That this ordinance shall become effective June 1st 2023 upon passage and approval by the Mayor and Council of the City of Crofton), and 4-4-23-2 ( an ordinance of the City of Crofton Nebraska, setting and establishing increase in the pre-paid amounts for pre-paid claims for the month of April and May 2023), made by Murphy 2nd by Peitz. Vote-Yea- Miller, Murphy, Peitz. Absent Wavrunek. Motion Carried.

**Pre-Approved Claims** paid in March 2023-Payroll -$7494.18-NE withholdings-$1112.55-Arts Garbage-$5793.46-Black Hills Energy-$1065.92-Cedar Knox PP-$2740.62-Cedar Knox Rural Water-$13909.50-Colonial Life-$74.78-fed payroll withholdings-$6197.62-Great Plains-IRS-(penalties & fees 2nd quarter)-$4557.94-IRS-(penalties & fees 3rd quarter)-$5460.03-IRS-(penalties & fees 4th quarter-$2567.33-Leaf Property tax-$17.22-Leaf & One Source office(copier)-$182.12-Modern Woodman-$899.06 & 285.68-One Call Concepts-$9.54-Sun Life-$21.70-US Cellular-$143.61

**Claims approved** for payment in April-Tim Arens(Hwy 12 Main repair& 5th ‘St)-$1400.00-CMart LLC-$658.29-Crofton Community Club(membership)-$60.00-Crofton Lumber-$64.98-EMC (insurance) $10416.33-FNBO-visa bill- Lisa Skroch (QuickBooks yearly subscription) card on file-$2273.14-Anderson-$128.55-Chief Carter-$39.96-City Clerk office supplies-(cornhusker conference rooms) -$740.45-Kayton Payloader switch-$59.38-Mernards-$493.42-Midwest Lab-$1497.62-Milbrath-Sayler(amend W2s)-$275.00-Moody Motor Co. Cruiser repair-$705.54-Muncipal Supply-(curb stop clamp)-$2025.87-NE Public Health Environmental Lab-$515.00-One Office Source ( final bill)- $36.04-Quill (shredder)-$174.62-Steffens Station-(past & current charges)-$1689.63-TransUnion(police)-$364.00-

**No Considerations and Petitions and other Communications**.

**Public Comment**: Carissa Christensen commented that the $20000.00 spent on the audit in Dec was a waste of money. So much money going out. She commented the litigation the city is facing will cost to much money too. And said the council doesn’t need to go into closed session all the time. To do business in the open in the public. The Mayor thanked her. Jay Christensen said “The Mayor should please step down that your mouth is costing us money. If you’re the one who said what you did to Officer Miller please step down and save us the cost.” Mr. Christensen loudly repeated “Please step down and save us the money. The Mayor thanked him.

**Unfinished Business**: The letter for water bill collection was presented and discussion ensued. Murphy asked if everyone was getting one. Mr. Peitz said yes. Murphy asked even if they don’t have an outstanding bill? Peitz yes. Miller wants to revise the letter. Peitz says everyone gets this one to show procedure. Miller asked if she could revise it. Wavrunek said it should be revised so its not so confusing, and make it presentable to the council. Peitz said Donna will write on every letter who owes an amount and send with the water bills. Murphy asked how much is overdue amount we send out? Peitz said everything over $250.00. Wavrunek asked what is second step if letter is ignored, to shut water off? The Mayor said yes, a payment agreement or water shut off. Peitz said to give ten days to contact the office to arrange payment or a payment agreement or have water shut off after 30 days. He said the electric company doesn’t hesitate to turn power off if you owe. The Mayor says there are major consequences as auditors said there is no where for delinquent water bills. Murphy says to send only to customers who are delinquent not everyone. He said see what response we get. Miller says there are programs to help pay utilities that are outstanding. She will get a list of these programs. The Mayor said Donna will include them with the bills this month, and send them with bills to everyone $250.00 and more overdue.

The council discussed selling the 2014 Ford Explorer the former police interceptor vehicle. The Mayor drove it back from Moody Motors and said it drove well. It has nearly 90000 miles, new tires, and recently worked on. The blue book lists it at $7500.00 - $8000.00 dollars. He said interior is bad because all police equipment has been removed. Murphy said to place the ad for sealed bids with a set reserve on bids to start at $4000.00. The bids will be opened at the May 8th meeting. The city reserves the right to accept or refuse any and all bids.

Waste water testing is being done by Midwest Laboratories for now and Dustin Anderson is looking into waste water classes.

Security cameras for the city, city office, and pool were put on hold so more estimates can be acquired.

The support of the Cedar Knox Rural Water Project was reexamined. Two gentlemen from Cedar Knox were present and asked by council to speak. Scott Feidler and Russ Schmidt explained the support is for the request for funding to pay for the engineers, research, and testing of the proposed areas for the wells. Many questions were asked and clarification of the previous presentation information was given. Peitz asked about the proposed areas and about alternative well sites. They were discussed in length. The council was convinced that no site has been chosen as not enough testing has been done. That’s what the money will be used for. Mayor asked what the council wanted to do? Murphy says the support is just for the money for testing. He said to support the grant request. They were satisfied with the presentation and agreed to sign the letter in support of the funding request as voted on originally.

The proposal from Tim Arens Construction for the repair or replacement of the fire hydrants in the city was discussed. The new hydrants will cost $1200.00 excluding the hydrants and materials. The repair of the existing hydrants is $800.00. The repair includes digging them up and repairing the tubing to the drain back. Twelve need work. Motion by Miller to approve hydrant repair and replacement by Tim Arens Construction was 2nd by Murphy. Vote-yea Miller, Murphy, Peitz, Wavrunek. Motion Carried.

A Public Hearing for questions and comments about the selling of the city’s Omaha Street Lots, has been set for May 8th at 6:30PM prior to the monthly scheduled City Council Meeting. The Mayor said he has a bid on them and Council Member Jamie Miller told the council and the public she plans to bid on them too.

**New Business**: The American Legion has approached the Mayor about the timeliness of their requests for special liquor license for special events. Because of meeting times, they have been late in getting them before. The Mayor said Clerk Cook looked into this and found Ordinance 12-6-2021 that gives the authority to approve or disapprove special designated liquor license applications to the City Clerk without Council consent. Clerk Cook did comment the application still has to be requested with time enough for the license to be sent back from the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.

The city was looking into the possibility of selling off some of the surplus equipment at the shop yard. Council member Jason Wavrunek had contacted an online auction firm about doing the selling on line. Brett Hopkins will put equipment online for sale and 15000-20000 or more people will see it and hopefully bid on it. They take a percentage of sell price. There are two trucks, a little tractor, the street grinder and possibly a few other items. The Mayor will contact Knox County to see if they are interested in an oil tank with oil for chipping streets. Motion by Miller 2nd by Murphy for council to agree to let Wavrunek sign the sell agreement. Vote- Yea Peitz, Wavrunek, Miller, Murphy. Motion carried.

The council was looking at repairs on 2nd street when Clair Miller was asked about her concerns for the street in front of her house on 6th St. She says when it rains the water flows with dirt and debris across her driveway and has in the past entered her garage. She asked if the council could find a remedy for her problem. Murphy said they could have the street superintendent look at it. Peitz said we can dig it up slant it to the drain grate. Another Crofton resident has done this with great results. They will have Tim Arens take a look at it and get some costs to do that. Peitz told council Doyle Stevens has given a bid on repairing 2nd street. There is a crack that is getting deeper and wider in the street. It will be trenched out and repacked. He also would use a spider grinder to repair the cracks by South Park. His bid is $49900.00. he also looked at repairing the 5th and Main Street intersection and that bid is $16000.00. Mayor said we have street allocations to pay for the repairs. Motion by Murphy 2nd by Miller to accept Stevens bid to repair 2nd street and get a second bid on repair of 5th and Main. Vote-Yea, Murphy, Peitz, Wavrunek, Miller. Motion carried.

Council had requested Dustin Anderson summit a drawing of a potential office to be added to the city shop building. He was asked if he wanted his office in the shop. He replied it didn’t matter. Clerk Cook reminded the council that putting in the new office would require some extra things. The new office would need internet, phone service a copy and fax machine and office furniture. Peitz said as long as there is room in the city office, they will hold off on the one at the shop. They would like to put up a shelter or lean-to for the protection from weather of the equipment at the shop. They will look into that.

The Mayor gave the floor to Clerk Cook about the need for a procedure for handling cash for the city. Clerk Cook would like a security camera in the office as many residents pay with cash and it would be a way of accountability for everyone. She also requested a cash register with tape and memory for the pool this summer. Receipts can be given to customers and the register will have a day end tally for the turning in of the pool proceeds. A motion by Murphy to pre-approve $300.00 for Cook to purchase a cash register for the pool 2nd by Wavrunek. Vote-Yea-Miller, Murphy, Peitz, Wavrunek. Motion carried.

The council took a look at the prices for the pool from an information sheet dated 2021. They wanted to talk more to Niki Sprakel about last years prices so tabled any action.

Two people have been hired to help with the summer mowing. One gentleman will mow North Park and maybe South Park. The other gentleman will mow the water reservoir out of town. They will get the standard rate of pay. The Mayor will be riding along with Dustin to see what he can do to take over some of Dustin’s weekend duties so he can have some time off.

The city was interested in selling the ground up rock from the old cement plant but found out Dustin has been using it to fill in and repair the alleys in the city. Thank you, Dustin, the Mayor and Council said.

The council was presented with resolution 4-4-23-1 to change the dates of the City Council meetings to the second Monday of the month at 6:30 PM Cook explained to become compliant with the audit suggestions all bills or claims have to be approved before paying, by the council. To do this the office needs time to compile the invoices. The later meeting date will help the office have all of them ready for approval. Motion by Murphy 2nd by Peitz to approve resolution 4-4-23-1 to change dates of the City Council meetings to the second Monday of the month at 6:30pm. Vote-Yea-Murphy, Peitz, Wavrunek, Miller. Motion carried.

**There were no committee reports.**

**Administration Reports:**

**City Clerk**: Donna Cook reported the audit was done and was filed with the state before the deadline. One day before but before. It wasn’t the best of audits but it wasn’t as bad as they thought it would have been either. Shawntel Tramp had the financials finished and reconciled before the end date and that was a big accomplishment. Cook said Shawntel and herself would use this audit as a learning tool for the office and with that knowledge could work at helping them have a much better audit next year. She had provided reports to the council from treasurer Shawntel Tramp. They were income for the month of March and expenditures. Cook provided the bank statements for the bank accounts. It showed all the activities with the accounts through March. She showed them water usage for the last billing period. She explained it shows less water used than we are billed for. That’s because the city pays for water for different accounts associated with the city that aren’t charged for it, like the fire station, auditorium, and parks. She explained a paper that showed the cities unemployment rates. They had been 1.3% and because they had not been paid for so long the percentage rose to 5.4%. The taxable wage base also rose from $9000.00 to $24000.00. If we pay regularly and are not late it can be reduced in a year. She said new employee Marlene Hynes hired through a grant program, was a blessing to the office. She said Marlene could run circles around her, she gets exhausted watching Marlene work. She has helped so much already with straightening files. She reported Main Street Treasurers has called and will be starting flooring replacement in the auditorium very soon. We are so grateful for that. She reported Shawntel Tramp works tirelessly to get the books straight and reconciled.

**Head Maintenance**: Dustin Anderson reported he has been working on getting the bathrooms in the parks ready for the summer. He had the bid the council asked for from Johnson Service Co. to repair more manholes this summer. The bid is $39940.00 to do eleven manholes. Motion by Wavrunk 2nd by Miller to approve Johnson Service bid to do manholes. Vote-Yea-Peitz, Wavrunek, Miller, Murphy. Motion carried.

The Mayor said he will volunteer to help Dustin with the annual City Clean up. They will pickup garden and yard waste, tree branches and brush, and will take concrete. Clean up will last the week of April 24-28th. Residents will put the piles at curb side and it will be picked up as Dustin can get to it. Motion by Murphy 2nd by Wavrunek to have clean up day April 24th -28th. Vote-yea-Miller, Murphy, Peitz, Wavrunek. Motion carried.

**Police Chief**: John Carter reported the grant for the vehicles and equipment went in on the 15th so he checks every 15th to see if it has been awarded to Crofton yet. He said monies will be done by July so shouldn’t be long now. He was asked by Peitz about bill for storage of car from Dec accident. John said it was held in case there was a fatality and was needed for evidence. The county had asked for it to be stored. Chief Carter said the bill for the storage should go to the county. He will talk with Mr. Guenther and have bill sent there.

**Closed Session**: Motion to go into closed session for discussion of possible litigation made by Peitz 2nd by Wavrunek. Vote-Yea- Peitz, wavrunek, Miller, Murphy. Motion carried Closed session began 9:22pm.

Motion to come out of closed session and resume open meeting by Peitz 2nd by Wavrunek at 9:30pm Vote-Yea-Wavrunek, Miller, Murphy, Peitz. Motion carried. No action on Closed Session.

**Announcements**:

Next City Council meeting will be May 8th at 6:30PM following the Public Hearing for the Omaha Lots.

**Adjournment**:

Motion to adjourn by Peitz 2nd by Miller. Vote yea- Miller, Murphy, Peitz, Wavrunek. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 9:31PM.