

Kearney, Nebraska
May 14, 2025
5:30 p.m.

A special meeting of the City Council of Kearney, Nebraska, was convened in open and public session at 5:30 p.m. on May 14, 2025 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Present were: Jonathan Nikkila, President of the Council; Peggy Eynetich, City Clerk; Council Members Randy Buschkoetter, Tami James Moore, Kurt Schmidt and Alex Straatmann. Absent: None. Brenda Jensen, City Manager; Michael Tye, City Attorney; Kayla James, Director of Finance; Sarah Sawin, Director of Utilities; Andy Harter, Director of Public Works; Bryan Waugh, Chief of Police; Jason Whalen, Fire Administrator; Shawna Erbsen, Administrative Services Director; Scott Hayden, Director of Recreational Services; Lauren Brandt, SportsPlex Director; Eric Hellriegel, Director of Parks; Matthew Williams, Library Director; Jim Lynaugh, Airport Director; Taylor Jaeger, Assistant Director of Finance; Luke Dutcher, City Engineer; and Brad DeMers, Assistant to the City Manager were also present.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Kearney Hub, the designated method for giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was also given to the City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment or receipt of such notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the Agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Mayor and City Council. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

I. ROUTINE BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Nikkila announced that in accordance with Section 84-1412 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes, a current copy of the Open Meetings Act is available for review and is posted on the wall of the Council Chambers.

DISCUSSION OF CITY OF KEARNEY BUDGET

Mayor Nikkila opened the discussion on the City of Kearney Budget.

Brenda Jensen, City Manager presented this matter to the Council. Ms. Jensen began by reviewing the timeline that demonstrates the yearly process of developing the City's annual budget. Further discussion included LB647 regarding Property and Occupation Tax Changes and the reimbursements the City makes to the State. Ms. Jensen moved on to compensation and benefits of City employees and how State Statute will affect the City's upcoming budget with increases to both Police and Firefighter Pensions. Discussion moved on to All Fund Expenditures and included an in-depth review of the General, Special Revenue and Enterprise Funds and how they are funded as well as what is paid out of each fund. Ms. Jensen noted that inflation and growth have both significantly impacted the City's budget, including higher operational costs, increased labor expenses, infrastructure and construction costs, population and business growth, and new services that have been added, including: the Tennis Center, Yanney Gardens

and SportsPlex. Ms. Jensen concluded the presentation with a discussion on the addition of Fire Station No.3 to serve Northeast Kearney, as this area has seen significant growth over the past several years. There was further discussion on possible long-term projects and how they would potentially be funded. Mayor Nikkila stated the City has never requested funds that weren't needed and noted large, costly City projects have always had a plan in place prior to spending any funds.

Council members thanked Ms. Jensen and Staff for the discussion and their continued hard work.

VIII. ADJOURN

Moved by Straatmann seconded by Schmidt that Council adjourn at 7:19 p.m. Roll call resulted as follows: Aye: Nikkila, Moore, Schmidt, Straatmann, Buschkoetter. Nay: None. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

**JONATHAN NIKKILA
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
AND EX-OFFICIO MAYOR**

**PEGGY EYNETICH
CITY CLERK**