

City of Valentine  
Special Council Meeting  
City Library Meeting Room  
January 20, 2005

A special meeting of the City Council of the City of Valentine, Valentine, Nebraska was held January 20, 2005, at 6:00 p.m. in the Valentine City Library Meeting Room, the same notice of meeting being posted in three public locations on January 19, 2005. An agenda packet was available at the public information table.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.

**1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chairperson of the Council, Wescott, presided at the meeting with the following Council members in attendance: Wescott, Neujahr, Nelsen, Kluender and Petersen. Also in attendance was City Manager New. John Hanzlicek recorded the minutes.

**2. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION ON INTERIM CITY MANAGER**

This item was addressed after agenda items two and three. Councilmember Petersen noted that City Manager New had legal representation with Rob Coupland being in attendance. Councilmember Petersen suggested that this might make for an adversarial discussion and that the City of Valentine will not waive any conflicts.

Councilmember Petersen asked Mr. Coupland if he had any city files or electronic files of the City. Mr. Coupland answered that the City of Valentine files were copied and presented to the City.

Mr. Coupland asked Councilmember Petersen if he suggested to someone that City Manager New was shredding City of Valentine files. Councilmember Petersen confirmed that this was a possibility.

Councilmember Wescott asked City Manager New if she wanted this item left in open session or in executive session. City Manager New requested that this item be left in open session.

Councilmember Petersen made the motion to terminate Norma Jean as interim City Manager. Mayor Wescott stated that this motion died for a lack of a second.

Councilmember Nelsen commented that he appreciates how the City Manager has gone out of her way for the City of Valentine and that he would be honored to present her a plaque. He stated that we need to treat people with respect and dignity. This is a small community and we need to work together and we have been setting a bad example for the young people in the community.

Councilmember Neujahr stated that the City Manager has worked hard for the City of Valentine and that she appreciates the things that the City Manager has done.

Councilmember Wescott wanted to clarify that the interim City Manager was hired until the job was filled and the new City Manager on the job. The City budget was prepared with just one City Manager. It was discussed by the Council and the public that there may be some transition time from the time that the City Manager contract is signed and when the new City Manager is on the job. When the new City Manager starts drawing a salary then the interim City Manager position is terminated.

Pat Petersen was in attendance and spoke about the actions that had taken place at the meeting tonight and that there should not be any animosity.

City of Valentine  
Special Council Meeting  
January 20, 2005

Mr. Coupland suggested to the Council that the records at City Hall are public records and open to the Council and the public. Privacy laws should be respected.

Councilmember Neujahr asked about the status of the Administrative Assistant. Interim City Manager New stated that we do not have one. Councilmember Neujahr suggested that the new City Manager should do the hiring for the Administrative Assistant position.

**3. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION ON PROPOSAL FOR CITY CLERK/TREASURER**

The City Council received a letter from Deanna Schmit requesting \$30,420 for the City Clerk/Treasurer position. Previously the Council voted to hire her for the position with a salary of \$27,000. Deanna Schmidt was in attendance and stated that the position requires more than 40 hours per week and the \$27,000 figure was based on a 40 hour week. The other items in the employment understanding were agreeable. There is money in the current budget for this requested increase.

Councilmember Nelsen made the motion to offer Deanna Schmit \$30,420.00 with 6 month review plus health benefits (for the City Clerk/Treasurer position). Second by Councilmember Neujahr. Roll call vote: Aye-Wescott, Neujahr, Nelsen, Kluender, Petersen. Nay-none. Motion carried.

**4. REVIEW/DISCUSSION/ACTION ON APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR CITY MANAGER**

The City Council reviewed a proposed Employment Agreement from Richard S. Blecker for the City Manager position. This was reviewed by Susan Neujahr Beel and she provided suggested modifications to the Employment Agreement. The Council reviewed the contract section by section and came up with an agreement to offer to Mr. Blecker.

The proposed contract included various items of interest. Some of the items discussed and agreed upon include a starting salary of \$57,500/yr with a review and increase to \$60,000/yr after six months. Mr. Blecker currently has insurance and does not wish to participate in the city plan. According to City policy he would be eligible for the City of Valentine pension plan. He will be allowed \$9,000 in moving expenses, \$86/per day per diem during his relocation and receive 20 personal days during the first year of the agreement and 25 personal leave days per year for the remainder of the three year contract. He will also be granted a long term disability plan and paid membership in professional organizations.

Councilmember Neujahr made the motion to offer the contract as amended to Mr. Blecker for the City Manager position. Second by Councilmember Nelsen. Roll call vote: Aye-Wescott, Neujahr, Nelsen, Kluender, Petersen. Nay-none. Motion carried. Councilmember Wescott will take the amended contract to Susan Neujahr Beel for final drafting and presentation to Mr. Blecker.

City of Valentine  
Special Council Meeting  
January 20, 2005

**6. MEETING ADJOURNED**

With no further business before the Council, Councilmember Nelsen made the motion to adjourn. Second by Councilmember Kluender. Roll call vote: Aye-Wescott, Neujahr, Nelsen, Kluender, Petersen. Nay-none. Motion carried.

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President of Council

I, the undersigned City Clerk of the City of Valentine, Nebraska, hereby certify that all of the subjects including the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting; kept continually current and available for public inspection in the office of the City Clerk; that such subjects were published in the Midland Newspaper; that said minutes were written and made available January 24, 2005.

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John Hanzlicek  
For the City of Valentine