

The Newell City Council met in regular session on Monday April 6th, 2026, at 6:00pm in City Hall with Mayor Justin Lyman presiding. Council members present Larry Nielsen, Bill Henrich, Steve Taylor, Quinten Robinson, & Dennis Ziegler. City employees, Ginger Lyman, Chad Wilson, Doug Lange, Jodi Rojas, Heather Copp, town reports & Cornbelt Telephone.

Mayor Lyman called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. Approval of Agenda Motion by Taylor, 2nd by Robinson, all ayes.

Consent Agenda: 2/25/26 Special Session, 3/2/26 Regular Session Minutes, Claims Report 3/15/26 through 4/15/26 (Bills), March Treasurers Report including Revenues \$75,811.54 Expenses MTD \$82408.26 & Bank Balances. 3/24/26 Foundation Minutes, Fire Truck Claim, Gun Sale, Increase in Garbage Fees, Copies of Nuisance Letters, and Additional bills. Items discussed within or related to the Consent Agenda included: Water main repairs on Madison St, Nielsen questioned the location and cost difference? Lange explained, breaks were on Madison St., an old line was abandoned at the main. Cost difference related to severity (e.g., breaking concrete) and help received on smaller repair. Fire Truck claim / insurance, Nielsen raised a question about turning a fire truck-related claim into insurance and the impact on premiums. Concerns expressed about safety and potential future insurance increases. Henrich asked Copp if the city would take a hit by the Landfill increasing rates. She said that coverage had already been increased (about 3%), and after review she believes coverage levels are adequate. Nuisance letters, Lyman reported: 23 properties identified as nuisance properties in need of attention. 7 properties have either made improvements or fully resolved the issues. Additional properties will be added to the list. Police firearms/weapons auctioned off and city received \$3900. Motion to approve by Taylor, 2nd by Henrich, 4 ayes 1 nay (Nielsen), motion Mayor Lyman summarized the written report before Deputy Rodriguez arrived. Approximately 197 hours spent in town. Increase in traffic enforcement: Prior month: 4 traffic stops. This month: 17 traffic stops. Some minor vandalism issues: sheriff's office has addressed them. No concerns or complaints from council regarding sheriff's office performance.

Fire Department Chief Erie, New firefighter approval needed. Motioned to approve by Nielsen, 2nd by Robinson, all ayes. Fire station building repair (roof/wall area requiring lift): Erie located a scissors lift that can be used at no cost. Waiting for availability and aiming to complete repairs before rainy season.

Ambulance / EMS Interim service director Mayor Lyman clarified that Degner's resignation was her own decision, not a request from the city. He voiced concern over inaccuracies in The Times article: He will release an official statement on the city's Facebook page to correct the record.

Library representative Marie Eckerman reported: Ongoing review and updates of library policies. Preparing for summer reading/programming. Council noted Newell's library is continually active and vibrant compared to many communities.

Park Board / Community Garden & Green Spaces, discussion led by Mayor Lyman: Question: What role should the Park Board play in overseeing the community garden and other green spaces? Park Board would like a clearer answer. Henrich: Believe city code already indicates the Park Board oversees all open areas in town. Suggests Park Board should: Oversee community gardens and other green spaces. Not necessarily “run” them day-to-day, but function as the steering body: Determine who is allowed to manage specific spaces. Bring ideas and plans to the council for approval. Mayor will draft a written summary/expectations for the Park Board

Hometown Pride / Community Foundation - Council and Foundation have been exploring joining Hometown Pride. Margo Underwood is the Hometown Pride coach with ~15 years’ experience and strong grant-writing track record. Hometown Pride benefits: Access to a grant-writing coach. Return on investment historically about 8:1 for communities. Supports not only city projects but also: Community groups (locker, Legion, etc.) via grant assistance. Potential projects discussed: park upgrades, bike/walking trail, ADA compliance improvements (shelter house, golf course clubhouse), dog park, and other quality-of-life improvements.

Discussion on Participation issue (historical): Previous attempt stalled due to lack of consistent “champions.” This time, all Foundation members present agreed to serve as champions, and they will seek others from school and businesses. Program Details: Annual cost: \$2,500. Commitment: 5 years. Application deadline: May 15.

Foundation Relationship: Foundation is a separate entity from the city: Allows access to grants that cities cannot directly receive. No additional city taxation tied directly to Foundation projects. Motion by Nielsen to move forward with the Hometown Pride application process, 2nd by Robinson, all ayes.

Golf Course: No dogs allowed on course/driving range or in carts (consistent with park rules). New POS system to go live around May 1, after fee-structure and training readiness. Stumps: Public works and course staff to: Trim stumps as time allows. Plan for stump grinding in the fall. Fountain: Mayor to coordinate with Wes Bunjes for repairs in spring. Shed/Well building: revisit in May. G. Lyman reports on the golf course’s activities, including a successful band event and ongoing improvements.

Public Works Lange reported he will manage lagoon release timing (around mid-April or later). Continue storm & sanitary system maintenance and investigate problem inlets/lines. Cemetery cleanup is underway all memorials will be removed.

The Council discussed an open city position currently dependent on Cross passing a required test. Mayor Lyman noted applications are “on hold” pending Pat’s test but need to be ready to move forward on hiring. Nielsen favored beginning interviews soon, noting: It takes time to schedule interviews, a special meeting will be required for hiring. After hire, notice periods mean it may be ~2 months before a new employee can start. Ziegler raised concern about interviewing before the exact duties/position level are determined, as it may waste applicants’ time if the role changes. Consensus: Wait for

Cross's test results first, then hold either a special meeting or discuss at the April 22 Personnel meeting before proceeding with interviews. The Council wants to ensure they are "interviewing for the right position."

Summer Help – Mowing & Seasonal Labor the Council reviewed summer help applicants and the Personnel Committee recommended two student workers and a possible part time 3rd. Lange stated: He ideally needs three workers for mowing and maintenance. The timing between now and Memorial Day is especially critical. If a third full-time hire (permanent city position) is delayed, temporary summer help is needed to stay caught up. Following discussion, the Council agreed on: Proceeding with two primary summer helpers and authorizing backup use of a 3rd only if needed. Motion to approve seasonal help by Taylor, 2nd by Henrich, all ayes.

Corn Belt Telephone / Fiber Internet Project – Wuebker of Corn Belt Telephone provided an update on the fiber internet/telephone project: Estimated construction period in town: approximately six months, weather permitting. Residents can sign up now: Online sign-up is available. Pre-signups help contractors run drops to homes while installing the main fiber line. An open house is planned for the week of the 20th (exact date TBD): Purpose: Q&A, signups, education about services. Wuebker also stated that Corn Belt has an affiliate that offers Grants and Community Support he emphasized the company's willingness Sponsor golf tournaments and Watermelon Days. Participate in the parade with a float and possibly an information stand. Collaborate with the school to: Add internet/phone to football field and other school spaces. Lee reported:

Construction Coordination Discussion: Lange and Wuebker discussed coordination between the contractor and Public Works: Contractors will notify where they plan to start so locates can be completed ahead of excavation. Concern from Council: Need for clear communication before digging (locates, schedules, contact for issues).

Wuebker confirmed: Residents or staff can call him directly with complaints or clean-up issues.

Clerk's Report - Copp asked for an Alcohol License Approval for Al's Corner AKA Sparky's. Motion by Henrich, 2nd by Nielsen, all ayes. Garage Sale Weekend & Citywide Junk Day will be in June after coordinating dates with local carriers are agreed on.

Motioned by Ziegler and 2nd Henrich, all ayes. Clerk to post final dates.

Musical Playground Invoice Error - While preparing a report for the BV County Foundation, Copp discovered an error in the contract pricing for the musical playground. The vendor had mistakenly charged more instead of applying a discount. After correction, the city received a credit/refund of \$4,554. Council acknowledged and appreciated the correction. Fuel Rebate was also processed by the state and deposited. She Noted that on April 14, the city will receive a work sign recognizing a grant award.

Copp also addressed council about her continuing education classes scheduled.

Mayor Report -Buildings on Main Street, Lyman provided an update: He spoke with owners regarding their building on Main Street. Owner plans to: Start

with stabilizing the basement and the east portion of the building that has not collapsed. Then, gradually work westward to attempt to salvage as much structure as possible. Concern: If the remaining building is not stabilized, the adjacent building to the south may also need to be taken down, risking impact on Neighboring building. Progress is hoped for by Memorial Day, particularly for access to the area containing veterans' names or memorial elements. Options such as removing front sections but allowing access from the side were briefly discussed. No formal action taken; item to return in May with a detailed plan.

Mayor Lyman opened the Public Forum at 8:13 p.m., no public comment Forum Closed 8:13pm

New Business – The Council briefly discussed city insurance: Annual insurance cost is believed to be around \$50,000–\$60,000, with a possible \$10,000 increase (exact numbers to be confirmed). Questions raised: Whether the City has sought quotes from other insurance companies recently. If current coverage is appropriate for all vehicles, equipment, and buildings (e.g., removal of full coverage from older equipment). Copp referenced city code, which states: There should be an Insurance Committee comprised of Council members. The committee would review policies, coverage, and recommend any changes. Mayor asked Clerk to add an agenda item for June to establish or confirm an Insurance Committee. Begin a formal coverage and rate review with multiple providers in July/August, ahead of renewal. No formal motion recorded; consensus to move forward with a June agenda item.

Meetings Dates: Community Foundation April 16th 5:30 p.m.

Budget Adoption Hearing: April 22nd 5:30 p.m. Personnel-Related Meeting to follow. Next Regular City Council Meeting: May 4th 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment at 8:44 p.m. Motion by: Taylor, 2nd Henrich, all ayes

Heather Copp – City Clerk

Justin Lyman- Mayor