

VILLAGE OF DUNCAN BOARD MEETING

August 11, 2025 7:00 PM – Village Hall, 906 8th Street, Duncan, NE 68634

The monthly board meeting of the Village of Duncan Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairperson, Gary Schlesinger. The Chairperson publicly stated to all in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available for review and indicated the location of such copy in the room where the meeting was held in the Village Hall. Board members present were Nick Wagoner, Gary Schlesinger, Jerusha Ratcliffe and Van Steyn. Lance Denbo arrived at 7:10pm. Also in attendance were Village Staff: Marianna Evans (Clerk), Michelle Schindel (Treasurer) and Doug Michalak (Utility Superintendent). *A motion was made to approve the July 14, 2025 meeting minutes by Ratcliffe, second--Wagoner. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. Denbo absent from this vote. The Chairman carried the motion.* The Chairman provided an opportunity for public comments. Each individual is allowed to have a 5-minute time limit. The Board may only listen and add to the next agenda if approved. No visitors presented any comments.

New Business

Public Hearing – Water Rate Increase *A motion to open the public hearing for water rate increase at 7:05pm was made by Ratcliffe, second Wagoner. Vote was as follows: Voting aye-- Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. Denbo absent from this vote. The Chairman carried the motion.* Chairman Schlesinger welcomed public comments. John Massman (resident) asked if the water treatment plant debt was paid off yet. Schlesinger responded that it was not and it is scheduled to be complete in 2032. Paige Young (resident/former Board member) presented the Board with a plan to create a tax levy to help pay for water costs in order to keep residents' water rates down. She suggested to look into exactly what water expenses are and if they are accurate, such as the time the utility super is spending on water and what he is being paid for water time. Young offered to meet with any Board member to give a more detailed presentation if wanted. Schlesinger explained that Duncan has one of the lowest levies around and it should be increase more than what Young even suggested. He reiterated his belief that water rates should have been increased a certain percentage every year and Duncan would have prevented the issue now. Massman reminded the public that Schlesinger was on the Board a long time ago and commented that there was no increase in water rates at all back then. A comment was made about meters being defective and reading too high. Don Reves (former Utility Superintendent) responded that if there is ever a question on a meter functioning properly, residents should call the Village and they can test it and replace it if needed. However, Reves also stated that in his years of experience, he has never seen a meter defective that causes high readings. He explained that when a meter becomes defective it either slows down or quits all together. So readings would be zero or less than they should be. Massman reported he was bringing up issues that Dave Iwan asked him to. Evans stated that Iwan had presented to her office earlier in the day and asked her to mention the sales tax that was started in Duncan, years ago, was supposed to completely go to the water account. She stated that he also wanted to have the Village check into whether or not the businesses in town are paying their proper tax. Reves stated that the water and sewer services charged should pay for themselves. There should not need to be transfers from other accounts. He reported that during his time at the Village, he was made aware that the water rate had not been increased for decades until 2015. He stated that all of the sales tax was going to pay for water, which left nothing for streets. Schlesinger reported that he had inquired about a grant for a new water tower. However, he found that the cost for a new tower was a lot more than the grant that was available. He stated that would have to wait. He again stated that the previous Boards didn't raise rates, which is why we are having this problem now. Joe Boruch (resident/former Board member) presented to the microphone and stated that he recalls during his time as a Board member, rates were raised several times after water rate studies were completed. Evans confirmed that water rates were raised in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2021. Boruch reported that the first raise was large and so the Board did a 3-year increase in order to soften the expense to residents. He suggested that this could be an option. Wagoner reported that there are large expenses for the water department that may be affecting the Village soon. Such as, the water treatment facility is in need of new media. He explained that the media are little 'pellets' that help filter the water. He stated the media is said to last

around 20 years and our media is over 20 years old. He stated the cost of replacement is \$200,000. Jeff Oppliger (resident/former Board member/Chairman) also stated that rates were raised while he was in office and that they relied on the experts who performed the rate studies. Josh Dahlberg (resident/former Board member) also stated that rates had been raised when he was in office. And, he reported that CVA's rate is reviewed and changed every year based on their usage. Evans explained what the rate study was and that Nebraska Rural Water Association is the entity that performs the study based on the prior 3 years of water sales and expenses. She stated that the study is presented to the Board with two options to choose from. One is the 'break even' option which would not allow for any unforeseen expenses but should pay for the expenses. The second option is a rate that would hopefully allow the Village to have a 15% reserve to cover any unforeseen expenses that may arise. Evans stated that each study that had been done in the last ten years, the Board had always chosen the 'break even' rate to avoid large increases for residents. However, she stated that the Village has been in the red the entire ten years. She reported that they were getting closer to a positive each year but that it was not enough to cover all of the expenses the water department incurred. She stated that she asked the NRWA rate study person in the past, if it would be better to just increase the rate a percentage every year. She stated that the answer was that the best choice was to do a water rate study every 3 years to get a good average of how much income you need. This is better justification of the water rate that may be chosen. She stated that it was explained that a flat percentage annual raise would not always be justified to the residents. And may not be enough certain years due to expenses changing such as the media at \$200,000. Whereas, other years there may not be a need for an increase. Evans also stated that in her meetings with the Village accounting firm, she was advised that the Village should be increasing rates prior to any big project or expense, in order to accumulate enough reserve to pay for the added debt. Reves also reported that NRWA also did a leak detection for any underground leaks in Duncan that would cause water loss. He stated that there were no leaks found at that time. Massman inquired about whether the Fire Dept. pays for water when they fill up their trucks. Evans responded that the Village has an interlocal agreement with the Fire Dept. where they provide their services to the Village of Duncan and in return they do not pay for the water they need to fight fires. Schlesinger stated that if we do nothing, we will lose \$96,000 in the water account this year. He stated that this is a business and we cannot keep losing money. He thanked the public who came and commented/discussed this issue. He stated he wanted to be open with the public and get ideas. He stated that the Board had previously discussed raising the water rate \$8 or \$9. He also reported that it was brought up to raise sewer rates however, he refused to do that. He stated he would not do \$12 increase but cannot go lower than \$8 increase. Denbo agreed rates need increased stating that we would have a big problem if the water tower went down. Evans reported to the public that there are several assistance programs that can help the elderly or low-income families that may have trouble paying their water bill. She stated she would be happy to refer anyone who inquires. No further comments or discussion. *A motion to close the public hearing on water rate increase at 7:40pm was made by Wagoner, second Denbo. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion. A motion to approve water rate increase of \$8/mo. + \$2.80/1,000 gallons was made by Schlesinger, second Denbo. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.*

Public Hearing -- Ordinance 25-212 Amend R1, R2 Conditional Uses—add Barber/Hair Salon *A motion to open the public hearing Ord. 25-212 at 7:42pm was made by Schlesinger, second Ratcliffe. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.* Reves explained the amendment to the zoning ordinance was to add hair salons to the list of conditional uses. He stated that a conditional use permit must be approved by the zoning committee as well as the Village Board and that restrictions or denial can be made. It would be a case by case basis for approval. *A motion to close the public hearing Ord. 25-212 at 7:45pm was made by Ratcliffe, second Steyn. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion. A motion to waive the 2nd and 3rd readings was made by Steyn, second Ratcliffe. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.* Evans read the entire ordinance aloud. *A motion to approve Ord. 25-212 Amend R1, R2 Conditional Uses—add Barber/Hair Salon was*

made by Schlesinger, second Steyn. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.

Proposed Well Valve Replacement Michalak reported that Sargent quoted \$5,054.17 to replace the valve however, Municipal Supply can sell the materials for approximately \$2,000 without labor. Michalak stated that he could install the valve himself to save the Village on the labor costs. *A motion to approve purchasing the materials from Municipal Supply and allowing Michalak to install was made by Steyn, second Ratcliffe. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.* Michalak reported that once the valve is replaced he can have the efficiency testing completed.

Proposed Duncan Water Tower Improvement Project Final Approval The Board reviewed the project proposal from JEO Engineering and *a motion to approve the Water Tower Improvement Project Final was made by Ratcliffe, second Denbo. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.*

Proposed Water Sprinkler Reconnect Project Final Approval *A motion to approve the Water Sprinkler Reconnect Project Final was made by Denbo, second Wagoner. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.*

Review Budget Draft The Board reviewed the budget draft provided by the Village accounting firm. No questions/concerns noted from the Board or public. *A motion to approve the 2025-26 Budget Draft was made by Ratcliffe, second Wagoner. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.*

Unfinished Business

Back-up Utility Superintendent Job Posting Review Evans stated that the interested party Schlesinger mentioned in the last meeting did call her and ask questions about the job duties. He stated to her that he would not be able to help snow plow but thought he would be able to leave his work if there were an emergency. Michalak reported that he had spoken to him since and they are no longer interested in the job. Schlesinger suggested keeping it posted. The Board agreed.

Departmental Reports:

Utilities The Board reported on few properties that need mowed. Michalak will notify owners.

Parks & Rec no report.

Planning & Zoning no report

Clerk Report no report

Treasurer Report After the Treasurer reported on the bills for the month and the Board reviewed the monthly recap, *a motion to pay the bills was made by Ratcliffe second—Denbo. Vote was as follows: Voting aye—Denbo, Wagoner, Schlesinger, Ratcliffe and Steyn. Voting nay—none. The Chairman carried the motion.*

All meetings are open to the public and a current agenda for said meetings will be posted and available for public inspection at the office of the Village Clerk, Post Office, T-Bone 2 and the Village website on the Thursday prior to the meeting. The next meeting will be on **September 8, 2025 at 7:00 PM.** Being no other business, adjournment was made by Chairman Schlesinger at 8:12p.m.

Minutes recorded and submitted by: Marianna Evans (Clerk)