

MINUTE RECORD

FRIEND CITY COUNCIL MINUTES-REGULAR MEETING November 4, 2025

Mayor Judith Knoke called the regular meeting of the City Council to order at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall. Advanced notice of the meeting was given by publication in The Sentinel, the appointed method for giving advanced notice. All proceedings shown were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Mayor Judith Knoke presided, and Deputy City Clerk Heather L. Varney recorded the proceedings. The following Councilmembers were present: Kristen Milton, David Sladek, Phyllis Schwab, and Jeremy Collier. A quorum being present, the meeting was duly convened. The following proceedings were had and done.

Mayor Knoke led the meeting in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

As required by the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, Mayor Knoke announced that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act has been posted on the south door of the City Hall meeting room for all in attendance to review.

Motion by Sladek, seconded by Schwab to approve the minutes from October 7, 2025 Regular Council meeting. On roll call voting aye Collier, Milton, Sladek, and Schwab. Nays none.

Motion by Schwab, seconded by Milton to approve the October Treasurer report. On roll call voting aye Sladek, Collier, Schwab, and Milton. Nays none.

Motion by Schwab, seconded by Sladek to approve October claims and payroll. On roll call voting aye Milton, Schwab, Sladek, and Collier. Nays none.

No Hospital Financial Report was available for October at this time.

Mayor Knoke made her comments.

Public comments included updates on clean up of property at 503 Cherry St, update that trees/storm debris were being taken to a site at the cemetery to be burned, announcement of a Benefit Burger Feed at the American Legion Hall on November 9th, and report of about 250 kids at Trunk-or-Treat, and reminder of Community Christmas Celebration on December 17th.

The claims approved were as follows: October Payroll, 13826.68; Ameritas, 1634.47; EFTPS, 3550.36; NE Dept of Rev SWH, 612.76; Aqua-Chem Inc., su 3575.80; BOK Financial, fe 87737.50 Beaver Hardware, su 36.98; Black Hills Energy, se 387.75; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, fe 4608.24; Brother's Equipment, su 264.46; Cengage Group, su 197.92; Center Point Large Print, su 98.28; Jacob & Johnathan Clouse, fe 850.00; Keith Clouse, re 92.28; Core & Main LP, su 1268.61; Country Compost LLC, fe 2000.00; Crete Area Medical Center, se 300.00; Culligan Water Service, se 113.25; DWEE, fe 150.00; Eakes Office Solutions, su 455.23; Farmer's Union Cooperative Co., su 261.29; Hometown Leasing, fe 98.60; J & C Cemetery Repairs, se 1075.00; MMC Consulting, se/re 8429.20; MacQueen Equipment, su 305.40;

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Rosemarie Markus, se 50.00; Mastiff Systems, se 210.00; Midwest Laboratories Inc, se 188.12; NE Dept. of Revenue ST, fe 2649.25; Nebraska Sign, se 1303.14; Norris Public Power District, fe 6989.00; Diane Odoski, re 25.18; One Billing Solutions, LLC, se 79.18; One Call Concepts, Inc., se 21.63; Pepsi-Cola of Hastings, su 90.25; Qwik 6, su 626.35 Saline County Clerk, fe 159.00; Schindler Elevator Corporation, se 206.49; Marvin Slepicka, su 200.00; Sudrla Water Service, se 4500.00; TextMyGov, se 300.00; US Cellular, se 354.52; Waste Connections of Nebraska, se 6844.38; Windstream, se 1601.41; Workwise Compliances, su 484.69. Total Claims Approved: 158812.65

Motion by Schwab, seconded by Sladek to allow Mayor Knoke to sign Resolution 2025-07, to adopt the Revised Employee Handbook. On roll call voting aye Sladek, Milton, Collier, and Schwab. Nays none.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-07

WHEREAS, the City of Friend desires a comprehensive set of general guidelines and policies governing all personnel matters for all city employees, including employee conduct, workplace conditions, drug and alcohol policies, policies implementing state and federal employment laws, and other aspects of public employment and city service; and

WHEREAS, the City Council had previously adopted an Employee Handbook; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed and considered the proposed changes in Section 400 to the previous handbook incorporated into the Employee Handbook attached hereto as Exhibit A,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIEND, NEBRASKA AS FOLLOWS:

1. Any previous versions of the Employee Handbook are hereby declared null and void as upon passage of this resolution.
2. The attached Employee Handbook is adopted as the City's personnel policies and shall be applicable to all employees unless preempted by state or federal law or in conflict with an existing employment contract or collective bargaining agreement.
3. Use of the attached Employee Handbook shall be effective upon passage of July 1, 2025.
4. The Mayor, upon approval of the City Council has the authority to make changes, adjustments, or interpretations to the attached Employee handbook that are necessary to effectively and efficiently manage the daily operations of the City.

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At this time a Deputy from Saline County Sheriff's Department made the police report. No action taken.

Motion by Sladek, seconded by Milton to approve Resolution 2025-08 to Suspend Forfeiture of Vacation Time for 2025 due to extreme staffing shortage. On roll call voting aye Schwab, Collier, Sladek, and Milton. Nays none.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-08

WHEREAS, the City of Friend is facing an extreme staffing shortage which is precluding City employees from taking vacation time without compromising the safety and efficient conduct of the City's critical operations; and

WHEREAS, the City Council had previously adopted an Employee Handbook, which, pursuant to Section 402, mandates the forfeiture of any vacation leave exceeding 24 hours above the employee's annual allocation of leave time effective December 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed and considered the proposed disparate impact or such forfeiture of vacation time upon City Employees during this extreme staffing shortage,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIEND, NEBRASKA AS FOLLOWS:

5. In lieu of forfeiture of vacation leave exceeding 24 hours above the employee's annual allocation, employees shall be entitled to payment for any excess hours at the employee's base pay effective December 31, 2025.
6. This Resolution shall be effective for December 31, 2025 and shall not continue in future years without a separate finding by the City Council of a similar extreme staffing shortage.

Motion by Schwab, seconded by Milton to authorized Mayor to sign Resolution 2025-09 Year-end Certification of City Street Superintendent Chris Miller of Miller & Associates. On roll call voting aye Collier, Sladek, Milton, and Schwab. Nays none.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-09

Whereas: State of Nebraska Statutes, sections 39-2302, and 39-2511 through 39-2515 details the requirements that must be met in order for a municipality to qualify for an annual Incentive Payment; and

Whereas: The State of Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) requires that each incorporated municipality must annually certify (by December 31st of each year) the appointment(s) of the City Street Superintendent(s) to the NDOT using the Year-End certification of City Street Superintendent form; and

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Whereas: The NDOT requires that each certification shall also include a copy of the documentation of the city street superintendent's appointment, i.e., meeting minutes; showing the appointment of the City Street Superintendent by their name as it appears on their License (if applicable), their License Number (if applicable), and Class of License (if applicable), and type of appointment, i.e., employed, contract (consultant, or interlocal agreement with another incorporated municipality and/or county), and the beginning date of the appointment; and

Whereas: The NDOT also requires that such Year-End Certification of City Street Superintendent form shall be signed by the Mayor or Village Board Chairperson and shall include a copy a resolution of the governing body authorizing the signing of the Year-End Certification of City Street Superintendent form by the Mayor or Village Board Chairperson.

Motion by Schwab, seconded by Sladek to approve Resolution 2025-10 to have question on November 2026 ballot for Electing Council Members at large rather than by wards. On roll call voting aye Milton, Collier, Sladek, and Schwab. Nays none.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-10

WHEREAS, the City of Friend currently elects its candidates for City Council by ward;

WHEREAS, the City of Friend believes that it would be beneficial for the City and its patrons to change from nominating candidates for City Council by ward to nominating candidates at large, thereby opening up the electoral process to broader participation;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIEND, NEBRASKA AS FOLLOWS:

1. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 32-554(1)(b), the Friend City Council calls for the proposition set forth below to be placed on the ballot at the general election in November, 2026:

Shall candidates for City Council of the City of Friend, Nebraska,
be nominated at large and elected at large.

2. The notice of election shall be given to all legal voters of the City of Friend, Nebraska and a copy of the sample ballot shall be published as required by law.
3. The City Clerk is authorized and directed to certify a copy of this resolution to the Saline County Clerk or Election Commissioner who shall designate the polling places, appoint the election officials, publish notice and all other required publications, and otherwise conduct the election as provided by law.

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Tracy Berggren from Zito Midwest LLC spoke about renewing city's Zito franchise. Motion by Collier, seconded by Sladek to approve franchise renewal. On roll call voting aye Schwab, Collier, Sladek, and Milton. Nays none.

Keitha Beck spoke about water issue at her house at 811 Main St. She was advised to bring invoice from plumber itemizing charges into City Hall for further consideration. No action was taken.

Council acknowledged Lori Sizer's resignation from Library. No action was taken.

Discussion about putting hold on Grange Community Building rentals until doors are fixed. Told to get bids, separating bids for south door which was damaged in August windstorm. No action taken.

Discussion on EMF post Prom support. Motion by Collier, seconded by Sladek to approve donation equal to what was made in the past if one was made, otherwise, will be added to agenda for December meeting. On roll call voting aye Sladek, Schwab, Collier, and Milton. Nays none. (Records found no similar donation made).

Discussion about special zoning permit for Payne Automotive. Motion by Collier, seconded by Sladek to approve special zoning permit based on Planning and Zoning Board discretion. On roll call voting aye Milton, Sladek, Schwab, and Collier. Nays none.

Discussion about winterization bid for the pool. No action taken.

Diane Odoski, Head Librarian, gave Library report. No action taken.

No Friend Community Healthcare Systems report.

No Building Inspector report.

Stanley Krause, Assistant Fire Chief, gave Fire report. No action taken.

Ray Rohrig gave Rescue Squad Report. No action taken.

Kristen Milton gave Pool Report. No action taken.

Public Works reported by Mayor Knoke. No action taken.

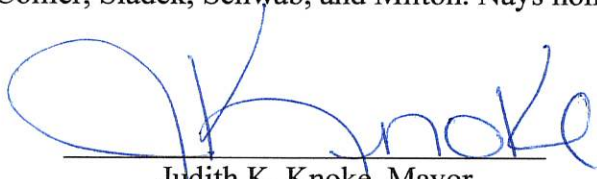
Heather L. Varney, Deputy Clerk, gave Clerk's report. Motion by Collier, seconded by Sladek to approve Heather registering once open and attending Clerk School in March in La Vista. On roll call voting aye Milton, Collier, Sladek, and Schwab. Nays none.

Motion by Milton, seconded by Sladek, to enter executive session to discuss potential hiring of Public Works Supervisor, personnel, and strategic planning for police department. On roll call voting aye Collier, Schwab, Sladek, and Milton. Nays none. Entered executive session at 8:45 pm.

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Motion by Collier, seconded by Schwab to exit executive session. On roll call voting aye Sladek, Schwab, Collier, and Milton. Nays none. Executive session exited at 9:27 pm.

No further business to come before the City Council, motion by Schwab, seconded by Milton to adjourn. On roll call voting aye Collier, Sladek, Schwab, and Milton. Nays none. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



Judith K. Knoke, Mayor

ATTEST



Heather L. Varney, Deputy City Clerk

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I, the undersigned, City Clerk of the City of Friend, Nebraska, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of proceedings had and done by the Council on November 4, 2025; that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the office of the Clerk; that such subjects were contained in said agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available at the meeting for examination and copying by members of the public; that the said minutes from which the foregoing proceedings have been extracted and were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days; that all news media requesting notification concerning meeting of said body were provided advance notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting.


Deputy City Clerk

NOTICE OF MEETING CITY OF FRIEND, NEBRASKA

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Friend, Nebraska will meet at 7:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, December 2, 2025**, at the City Hall, which meeting will be open to the public. Agenda for said meeting is kept current and is available in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours. Request to be on the agenda must be in the City Clerk's office 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.

Heather L. Varney, Deputy City Clerk