

# **MINUTES OF THE PONCA CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD 1.26.26**

**Mayor DJ Smith** called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and referenced the meeting recording process, optional sign-in sheet and Open Meetings Law posting. All those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members, Josh Blatchford, Dillon Rickett, Dacia Jensen, Ron Mahler were present for Roll Call. Mahler entered late, which is the reason for the late start of the meeting. Excused was Bevelhymmer and Henjes. Prior notice of the meeting and agenda were provided to the Mayor and all Members of the Governing Body. Notice of the meeting was distributed and posted at the Ponca City Hall, US Post Office-Ponca, Ponca City Library, Bank of Dixon County, Keller's Pharmacy, and the Dixon County Courthouse.

## **Mayor Communications**

The firemen had their annual steak dinner at Cedar Hills. We appreciate our fire and rescue volunteers and are proud of their accomplishments.

The council members that are running for another term have until February 17<sup>th</sup> to file.

## **Consent Agenda**

Mayor Smith stated to the Governing Body that the City Clerk-Finance Directors' January Claims & Accounts Payable Report, Fund Balance/Treasurers Report, City Budget Cash Report, General Journal Entry Report, Bank Statements and Check Register Report, and NPAIT statements were included in the Council Meeting Package sent out. A Motion was made by Rickett and a second by Blatchford to approve the Consent Agenda. The following Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Rickett, Jensen, Mahler. Councilmembers voting "NAY": None. Motion passed 4-0.

## **Proclamations, Presentations, Appointments, Affirmations & Introductions**

### **Reports & Updates**

Travis Olander gave an update on the street and admin. He had made corrections to flood plain ordinance with the recommendation of FEMA, sent in yearly gas paperwork assisted with police issues, spoke with auditor about street project and funding. Requested bids from spraying companies, met with Chad on Washington and West Street, has an ad ready for part-time help in the spring and summer, dealt with building questions, assisted with water leaks, removed playground from ball field, re-installed signs on Union. Maintained Ashwood and alleys when possible, picked up tree branches, trash cans and other objects due to wind, and played dog catcher for a while.

Steve Brinkmann gave report on water and sewer department. He had fixed the leak on Washington Street and behind Meyer Bros. Meyer Bros was at their expense as it was at their hydrant and had hydrant removed. There is a leak at the sewer plant that will need to be fixed soon. He did DMR's for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. He spent time with a service man at sewer plant due to transfer switch not working properly. They are slowly taking down the old water tower. He had worked on keeping buildings warm and worked bugs out of the booster pump controls. He had continuing education classes for water/wastewater in Lincoln.

The library board did not submit a report.

The Volunteer Fire and Rescue submitted their report.

### **City Attorney's Report**

Matt was absent.

### **Public Hearings**

The 1- & 6-year plan was presented for public hearing at 7:24PM. Chad Kehrt spoke about the plan and stated that West Street was added, and Union was removed as it was completed. Washington Street was also added due to the water leak that had just occurred. Travis stated that due to the increased cost, the city is at the point where we may only be able to complete a street every other year. A motion to close the public hearing at 7:29PM was made by Blatchford and seconded by Mahler. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

### **Unfinished Business**

None.

## **Agenda Comments/Speakers**

None.

### **New Business**

Larry and Jennifer Wright submitted an application for a kennel license. Larry is the new pastor at the Lutheran Church, and they had moved here with 5 small dogs. The church and neighbors submitted letters of approval within the application. A motion to approve Larry and Jennifer Wright's kennel license was made by Blatchford and seconded by Rickett. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Rickett, Mahler. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Smith presented a list of his appointments for 2026. He had added a Police Board and will have them meet sometime between March and May 2026. Within those appointments, Matt Munderloh was appointed to continue as our city attorney for 2026, Chad Kehrt was appointed to continue as our Street Superintendent for 2026. A motion was made by Rickett and seconded by Jensen to approve the mayor's appointments for 2026. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY" none. Motion passed 4-0.

Olander presented Resolution 2026-01; 1- & 6-Year plan. A motion to approve Resolution 2026-01 was made by Blatchford and seconded by Jensen. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Rickett, Mahler. Councilmembers voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Olander opened discussion for which street project from the 1- & 6-Year plan council would like Kehrt to open for bids. Council decided that West Street should be the project for bid. A motion to direct Kehrt to go out for bid for West Street was made by Blatchford and seconded by Mahler. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Olander suggested a bid opening date of March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, for West Street Project. A motion was made by Rickett and seconded by Jensen to approve March 30<sup>th</sup> as bid opening date for West Street. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Olander submitted 3 bids for surfacing of the pickleball court at Friendship Park. The lowest bid was submitted by Tennis Courts unlimited in the amount of \$16,600 dollars for surfacing and \$4,600 for option 2 of net installation. Total bid award of \$21,200. A motion to approve the bid from Tennis Courts Unlimited was made by Blatchford and seconded by Rickett. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY" none. Motion passed 4-0.

Schweers presented Ordinance 493; setbacks for corner lots. This was presented at last meeting, and Matt had taken back to add the edits from the last meeting. A motion to approve Ordinance 493 made by Rickett and seconded by Blatchford. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Rickett, Mahler. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Schweers presented Ordinance 494; Utility Ordinance. This ordinance is presented after the switch from Gill Hauling to S2. The changes are in the trash service section only. A motion to waive the 3-reading rule was made by Rickett and seconded by Jensen. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Councilmembers voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0. A motion was made by Rickett and seconded by Blatchford to approve Ordinance 494; Utility Ordinance. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Schweers stated that the council will need to find a different date for the February Council Meeting as council and staff will be at Mid-Winter Conference in Lincoln. A motion was made to move the Council Meeting to February 19<sup>th</sup> at 7PM by Blatchford and seconded by Rickett. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

A motion was made by Mahler and seconded by Blatchford to enter into executive session for agenda items J and K for no longer than 25 minutes at 7:47 PM. Council Members voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0

Council entered into open session at 8:03 PM. A motion was made Blatchford and seconded by Jensen to close executive session at 8:03PM. Council members voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Smith presented Code Enforcement/Police Officer in Training resignation drafted by Crawford. A motion was made by Blatchford and seconded by Mahler to accept the resignation. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Councilmembers voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

Council discussed options for the police department moving forward and what the Police Chief position will look like. There were many thoughts and issues to work out. Mayor Smith will do some research and present a clearer path at a future meeting. No Action Taken.

Mayor Smith opened discussion on the possibility of partnering with Newcastle on Police/code enforcement duties. The council was open to the Mayor to initiate a conversation with Newcastle to see if they were interested. An update from the conversation will be presented at a future meeting. No Action Taken.

#### **Governing Body Comments and Correspondence**

Mayor Smith asked if there were any future agenda requests for consideration or administrative action. Next Ponca City Governing Body Meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

#### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Blatchford at 8:12 PM and seconded by Mahler. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Jensen, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 4-0.

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Mayor; DJ Smith

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City Clerk- Finance Director; Jaime Schweers