

# **MINUTES OF THE PONCA CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD 10.27.25**

**Mayor DJ Smith** called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 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, Kristie Henjes, Josh Blatchford, Dillon Rickett, Dacia Jensen, and Ron Mahler were present for Roll Call. Bevelhymmer was excused. Also present were representatives from S2 and Gill Hauling and City Engineer Chad Kehrt. 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**

Mayor Smith stated that there was a formal proclamation for the Ponca Cross County Team that was presented by Jensen at the school. Smith has spent most of the month working on items to be presented later in the meeting.

## **Consent Agenda**

Mayor Smith stated to the Governing Body that the City Clerk-Finance Directors' October 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": Henjes, Blatchford, Rickett, Mahler, Jensen. Councilmembers voting "NAY": None. Motion passed 5-0.

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

### **Reports & Updates**

Travis Olander updated council on admin and streets over the last month. There were a lot of building permits issued and zoning questions, he set up meetings and public hearings, the city had its playground equipment inspected by LARM, a tree fell in the cemetery, the new truck is here and fitted for snow removal, there were multiple records requests for Pioneer Square and with those he stated that there is a need for the City to update zoning maps. Schweers will be working on grants for tree planting and GIS Mapping for utility lines with Midwest Assistance. Mowing and weed eating is done for the season and the crew is going to be crack sealing in early November. The new brackets were installed by NNPPD to hang the new Christmas lights. There was dirt work completed at Friendship Park and there was water main break in front of the school and service line break on East Second Street.

Steve Brinkmann updated the council on the water/sewer department. He has had 15 one calls, completed his DMR's for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, cleaned up buildings for sanitary survey that will be completed on October 29<sup>th</sup>. HOA put in new controls for wells and booster pumps which resulted in the booster pump being off. There was a power outage for 3 hours and everything that was hooked up to generators were running. A new fire hydrant was hooked up at the tower to be used to drain the old tower. The new tower is hooked up to the system, and a valve was installed. Spoke on the 2 water lines/main breaks that happened on the same day. The sewer plant will need a new transfer switch installed as it is not functioning automatically, it needs to manually be switched. A plan is in place to fill the new water tower during the second week of November.

Omar Crawford gave Code Enforcement update. He has issued 4 formal notices for yard violations, 2 notices for property violations. There were also many dog issues this month. He is preparing to go to the academy in January and will see his doctor this week to see if he is released from care so he can meet with Josh for his physical testing. All of his paperwork has been updated and turned in.

The library board submitted a report.

The Volunteer Fire and Rescue submitted their report.

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

Matt states that he has worked with City Staff on the building and zoning issues stated by Olander in his update and agrees that the zoning map needs to be updated. Matt will be changing law firms this week. His last day with Johnson and Mock is on Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. He will be joining Goosman Law Firm. He is still wanting to keep Ponca as a client and will need to be re-appointed in December if Ponca wishes to do so.

## **Public Hearings**

None.

## **Unfinished Business**

None.

## **Agenda Comments/Speakers**

None.

## **New Business**

Smith opened the discussion on trash collection services. He stated that Gill Hauling had come back after the bid was awarded to S2 stating that the City had misinterpreted the contract, which our attorney did not feel was accurate. Matt Munderloh had helped to navigate the ongoings of this situation throughout October. Representatives from both Gill Hauling and S2 were present to speak and there were questions presented by council and staff. After both parties had time to speak, the question was whether this information changed the council members vote on the award in August. There was no motion on this item, the award remains with S2 Refuse and Recycling, and Schweers was directed to send the termination of contract letters to Gill Hauling.

Schweers presented sealed bids for the 2004 Truck. She opened the bids during public forum, and the highest bid was from Zane Webb for \$3,000. A motion to accept the highest bid was made by Blatchford and seconded by Mahler, Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented sealed bids received for the Allis Chalmers Tractor. She opened the bids during public forum, and the highest bid was from Mikey Riffey for \$1,400. A motion to accept the highest bid was made by Blatchford and seconded by Henjes. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented Resolution 2025-08; Year End Certification of Street Superintendent. Our current superintendent is Chad Kehrt from Veenstra and Kimm and he was re-appointed for the 2025 year in December of 2024. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-08 was made by Rickett and seconded by Blatchford. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Kehrt presented a final change order on the Union Street project that was submitted by TR Harris in the amount of \$4,836.70 increase from the original bid. The items on the order have already been received and installed. A motion to approve the change order was made by Blatchford and seconded by Rickett. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented a notice of completion TR Harris for the Union Street Project. This was drafted by Kehrt and a formal acceptance that their portion of the project is completed. A motion to approve the Statement of Completion for TR Harris was made by Henjes and seconded by Blatchford. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Councilmembers voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented a Final Pay Estimate to TR Harris for Union Street Project in the amount of \$46,999.15. A motion was made by Mahler and seconded by Jensen to approve the Final Pay Estimate. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Councilmembers voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented Pay Estimate 12 to Maguire Iron in the amount of \$11,377.85. A motion was made by Henjes and seconded by Rickett to approve Pay Estimate 12 to Maguire Iron. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented an email from Clint Simmons with LARM, our insurance company, and it stated that if we raised our deductible from \$1,000 to \$2,500 the city would save approximately \$12,000 in premiums. It would still be a per occurrence and not per property. A motion was made by Blatchford and seconded by Henjes to approve the higher deductible for the lower premium. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Councilmembers voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented the notes from James Kelly with LARM. He had performed our playground inspection, and a full report was in the packet. No issues were found with the new playground at Standing Bear Park. Upon inspecting the equipment at the ballfield, the equipment was found to be worn and had hazards and is not recommended for use. There was discussion on what to do with the equipment and the council wished to revisit this item at the November meeting. No Action Taken.

Smith presented a bid for the playground equipment at Friendship Park. It is for the younger kids and the total cost of the equipment was \$35,996. A motion to approve the cost of the equipment was made by Blatchford and seconded by Mahler. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented the Master Fee Schedule that needed amendments in September. The amendments were added, but Crawford wanted to add excess dog fines. There was a price submitted with the cost surrounding areas are using. Upon the request of our attorney, there was more research and clarification needed. The council wished to revisit at the November meeting. No Action Taken.

Schweers presented Ordinance 490, Utility Ordinance. When the auditors were here on October 25<sup>th</sup>, they suggested to put the Gas Rate (which is in a separate ordinance) on the utility ordinance so that way all charges are in one spot. A new ordinance will need to be drafted with a new number to be presented in November. No Action Taken.

Schweers presented the current sick leave policy from the Employee Handbook. When the auditors were here, how it was written was not how it was calculated in the system. The adjusted verbiage reflects how sick time has been accrued according to the Wage Ordinance. A motion was made by Rickett and seconded by Blatchford to approve the adjusted verbiage to the Employee Handbook. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Smith addressed the council that he would like to form a Police Board. Ideally, the board will consist of himself, 2 employees, and 2 council members. Smith will still be the Police Chief's direct supervisor. A motion to form a Police Board was made by Henjes and seconded by Blatchford. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Olander stated to the council that they need to set a date for the 1- & 6-year workshop. A motion was made by Henjes and seconded by Rickett to have the meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers stated to the council that a Strategic Planning meeting would be necessary to have all council members work together to plan for the future of Ponca and address how to make those goals happen. A motion was made by Rickett and seconded by Blatchford to have the meeting in the morning of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

Schweers presented future council dates for 2026 to the council. A motion was made by Mahler and seconded by Blatchford to approve the dates submitted. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

### **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 Monday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Blatchford at 8:34 PM and seconded by Mahler. Councilmembers voting "YEA": Blatchford, Henjes, Jensen, Mahler, Rickett. Voting "NAY": none. Motion passed 5-0.

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Mayor; DJ Smith

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City Clerk- Finance Director; Jaime Schweers

