



CITY OF MINATARE
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES JANUARY 20, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was set up as a Special Meeting because the Clerk/Treasurer was in a car accident and was not available on January 13th, for the Regular Meeting.

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated that a quorum of the Council was present, and City business could be conducted.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT - NEB.REV.STAT. CHAPTER 84, ARTICLE 14

As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act, posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Mayor. Additions may not be made to this agenda less than 24 hours before the beginning of the meeting unless they are considered under this section of the agenda and Council determines that the matter requires emergency action”.

- 1. Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Roll Call: Mayor and Council present, except Barb Ross. Also present were: Chris Lally, Caryle Covalt, Christy Manka, Michael Winget, Logan Weiss, Cheryl Spencer, Wayne Kilmer, Rodney Howlett and Mike Nuss.**
- 3. Excuses: Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Main to excuse Barb Ross due to illness. “AYES”: Lally, Main and Costa. “NAYS”: None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Barb Ross. Motion Carried.**

CONSENT AGENDA:

(Items under the Consent Agenda are proposed for adoption by one action for all items unless any member of Council requests that an item be considered separately.)

- 1. Approve minutes of the December 9, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting & December 15, 2025, Special Meeting. (Because of the clerk’s car accident, the Minutes were not finalized in time for the meeting. The Clerk will send them around to the council and Mayor once they are finalized.) Minutes for December 9th were completed and sent around to Council on January 27th and approved. Minutes for December 15th were completed and sent around to Council on January 27th and approved on January 30th.**
- 2. Approve Claims, attached**

Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Costa to approve the Claims as submitted. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

CURRENT BUSINESS:

1. Brandon Smith – Chief update; fire truck update

Brandon was not at the meeting.

2. Melissa Lally – Shipping container/storage containers

Melissa brought to the Council’s attention that there are several residents with shipping containers on their properties. That is in violation of Minatare’s Zoning regulations 9-402, 403. There was a lengthy discussion about the containers that involved the Council, the Police Department, former Mayor Cheryl Spencer and various residents. City Attorney Jim Ellison said that if we want to go ahead and allow them, then we need a different ordinance than the one that is currently in place. There are several already in town that are against the current ordinance. It was discussed that there needs to be some parameters, and they must ask permission from the Council, and then meet the requirements accordingly. Bill Mabin would need to be involved in the placement of the container on the property.

Motion by Council Member Costa and seconded by Council Member Main to table this until further research by Council Member Lally. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

3. Mayor Nelson – Service Contract with Sheriff’s Department

Mayor Nelson asked to table this matter until all council members are present.

Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Costa to table this until the February meeting. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

4. Mike Winget – On-call pay/Scheduling coordination

Council Member Lally handed out a spreadsheet for November and December for each officer, showing how much, they worked vs. how much on-call pay they receive. Right now, the officers make half of their hourly wage to be at home and on-call. For Officers Rockwell and Weiss that is \$12.50 per hour and for Mike Winget it is \$15.50. Officers Winget and Weiss shared their thoughts about on-call and being in town for more than just emergencies. The Council shared their thoughts as well, wanting more from the department than just emergencies and a high on-call rate. Interim Chief Winget said he thought that lowering the on-call rate to \$3 per hour would be fair to all the officers. Council Member Main brought up the fact that there should be a written policy in place for Officers who are being paid to be on call and who don’t answer when the Communications Center calls them out. Interim Chief Winget also proposed a raise for all Minatare officers by \$3 per hour – so we can compete with Lyman. The City Attorney went over the three options he was proposing, and discussion was had about paying more to have a full-time chief and then fill in with part-time officers. Interim Chief Winget is working on other part-time officers. Minatare getting a full-time Chief would be a good way to go so there is oversight of the part-timers and someone here in town for 50+ hours per week patrolling and being visible to the public. There was additional discussion regarding on-call and hiring someone and paying to send them to the

academy and having them work for X number of years at Minatare. Council Member Lally suggested we should make a decision on the on-call pay and Mayor Nelson wanted to table it for now.

Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Costa to table this until the other decisions and discussions can take place. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

5. Mayor Nelson – Raise for Clerk/Treasurer

Mayor Nelson proposed a \$1.00 an hour raise. Council Member Costa asked how much the City is saving by the Treasurer doing the majority of the bookkeeping and Judy’s services are cut way down. Interim Chief Winget stated the Clerk/Treasurer has learned more than anyone else who has been in that position and he thought she should have \$4.00. Council Member Costa offered up a compromise of \$2.00 instead of \$4.00. Mayor Nelson said she wouldn’t have a problem with another raise once the Clerk/Treasurer was done training and Judy wasn’t coming in anymore.

Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Costa to give the Clerk/Treasurer \$2.00 an hour more for now so her pay will be \$24.00 per hour. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

6. Mayor Nelson – Set a special meeting for a workshop to make changes and additions to the employee handbook.

The Council discussed what date would work to start discussing changes and/or additions to the employee handbook. Mayor Nelson wants to take a little time to go through it before bringing it to the meeting for a vote. It was decided that the initial meeting would be February 3, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. The Clerk/Treasurer will email a copy of the handbook to all of the Council Members and post a meeting Notice. All Department heads should be at the meeting. We will likely have another meeting regarding the handbook in March also.

7. Minatare Rural Fire Board --

No one from Rural Fire Board was in attendance.

BIDS/PROPOSALS: None

REPORTS: None

OPEN COMMENT: Discussion or action by Council regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only.

There were no open comments.

CLOSED SESSION: (Council reserves the right to enter into closed session if deemed necessary.)

Motion by Council Member Lally to move into Closed Session to discuss a personnel issue, seconded by Council Member Costa. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

8. Police Dept. Personnel – Logan Weiss CLOSED SESSION

Motion by Council Member Lally to move out of Closed Session, seconded by Council Member Costa. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Costa to pay Logan Weiss as a part time officer according to his schedule with the City of Minatare during the period of time he is under administrative leave by the Mitchell Police department. The Clerk/Treasurer will compute what his average hours are for this purpose.

Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

Motion to Adjourn was made by Council Member Costa and seconded by Council Member Main. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** Barb Ross. **Motion Carried.**

ADJOURN: 7:35 p.m.

Carolyn Nelson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Karen L. Lojka, City Clerk/Treasurer