



CITY OF MINATARE  
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES APRIL 14, 2026

**CALL TO ORDER**

**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. Also present were: Chris Lally, Street Superintendent; Karen Lojka, Clerk/Treasurer; Caryle Covalt, Librarian; Jim Ellison, City Attorney; Pattie Yowell; Mike Winget, Minatare PD; Eric Thacker Minatare PD, Christy Manka, Shawn Green Waste Connections, Troy Brown, Chief Deputy, Scotts Bluff County Sheriff’s Office, Brandi Ehler, Chief Minatare VFD.**
- 3. Excuses: None**
- 4. Public Announcements: Clean Up Day 5/2/6 from 8-11:30. Building north of the City Office may be purchased by a Minatare couple from Nestor Sanchez to put a business or businesses in.**

**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 March 10, 2026 City Council Meeting.**
- 2. Approve Claims, attached**

Chief Deputy Troy Brown took questions regarding his first billing for our contract with the Sheriff’s office. The Council liked the format of the bill, didn’t have any questions and shared positive comments given to them from community members about Deputy presence in town.

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

## CURRENT BUSINESS:

1. **Shawn Green – Waste Connections – garbage pickup service** Shawn stated that the increase for the next four-year contract would be 2.8%.

Motion by Council Member Costa and seconded by Council Member Ross to approve the rate increase and for Mayor Nelson to sign off on the new contract. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Ross, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** None. **Motion Carried.**

2. **Karen Lojka/Brandi Ehler – Burn ban, fire pits and fireworks**

Brandi said that she is still only issuing burn permits for irrigation companies. She said that backyard fire pits should have a screen over them. Discussion was had regarding fireworks and a possible ban closer to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Brandi said she didn't have a problem with banning them this year if we don't get some moisture. Mayor Nelson said she wanted the Fire Department to make the decision. Mayor Nelson asked City Attorney Ellison to draft an Ordinance for us that would be determined on a year-to-year basis, depending on moisture conditions in the area.

3. **Chris Lally – Summer help**

Chris asked if he could hire a couple of guys that are interested as part-time summer help. He would really like to have 3, but one was only 15 and Mayor Nelson said they have to be 16 to run the mowers and stuff. Last year he had two, but one only lasted 3 weeks, so he ran with just one last summer and really needs at least two this summer.

Motion by Council Member Main and seconded by Council Member Ross to approve the hiring of two summertime workers at \$15.00 an hour. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Ross, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** None. **Motion Carried.**

4. **Mike Winget – Introduce Eric Thacker, take home vehicle**

Mike introduced Eric to the Mayor and Council. Eric has been in some sort of law enforcement role since 2016. Currently he works at the Comm Center as well as driving for First Student and as a part-time Deputy in Deuel County. (Chappell, NE) He has also served as a Paramedic during his career. He would like to have his patrol car at home for instances of having to be in Minatare and ready to go for emergency calls. Eric offered to kick in for gas in the car from his payroll. After some discussion, everyone agreed that no one else has had to chip in for gas when they have taken the patrol car home, and that Eric shouldn't have to either. It is to the City's benefit for him to be able to respond quickly when he is on duty or on call.

Motion by Council Member Lally and seconded by Council Member Main to approve the request by Officer Thacker to have his police vehicle at home. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Ross, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** None. **Motion Carried.**

**5. Karen Lojka – Pay for Killifer from Street Sinking?**

Mayor Nelson said it would be appropriate for the Clerk/Treasurer to pay for the killifer out of street sinking.

**6. Karen Lojka – May meeting needs moved because of primary election**

Do we need to move the May meeting to Wednesday, because the polls are open on Tuesday? Melissa is working the polls, so everyone thought it was fine to move it.

Motion by Council Member Main and seconded by Council Member Ross to approve changing the May meeting to the second Wednesday, May 13, 2026. Mayor Nelson called for the vote. **“AYES”:** Lally, Ross, Main and Costa. **“NAYS”:** None. **Abstaining:** None. **Absent:** None. **Motion Carried.**

**7. Mayor Nelson – Communications between City staff, council and Mayor re: City business.**

Mayor Nelson just wanted to make sure we were aware of the Sunshine Law and that all City business is being conducted at the meeting. Nothing bad happened yet, but she wanted to make sure that we aren't emailing business items to the whole Council and that type of thing. So many of the other municipalities are having problems and she wants to make sure we don't. Any emails or communication to the whole Council at once should be for informational purposes only.

**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.**

Caryle said the garage sale for the splash pad project made \$659 and that the Minatare Action Committee cleared out their bank account and donated \$70.

Brandi said the new fire truck is in service now and the department brought it down to the meeting for show and tell if people wanted to check it out at the close of the meeting.

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

**ADJOURN: 6:50 p.m.**

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**Carolyn Nelson, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

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**Karen L. Lojka, City Clerk/Treasurer**