

**THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GERING CITY COUNCIL,
SEPTEMBER 18, 2024**

A special meeting of the City Council of Gering, Nebraska was held on September 18, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. at Gering City Hall Council Chambers, 1025 P Street, Gering, NE. Present were Mayor Ewing and Councilmembers Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison. Absent were Councilmembers Backus, Cowan. Also present were City Administrator Pat Heath, Finance Director Lyndsey Mathews, Deputy Finance Director Cheri Hutchison, City Clerk Kathy Welfl. Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Star-Herald, the designated method of giving notice. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public except as otherwise indicated.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ewing called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. A quorum of the Council was present and City business could be conducted.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call

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

Mayor Ewing stated: 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. As required by State Law, 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.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Public Hearing for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions or observations of taxpayers and citizens relating to the City of Gering Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Proposed Budget

Mayor Ewing opened a public hearing for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions or observations of taxpayers and citizens regarding the City of Gering Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Proposed Budget at 5:16 p.m.

Mayor Ewing stated the following:

FY25 Budgeted Government-Wide Total Revenues net of transfers \$33,690,272 (increase due sales tax revenue projections and LB357 sales tax)

FY24 Budgeted Government-Wide Total Revenues net of transfers \$32,561,426

FY25 Budgeted Revenues - General Fund only \$5,944,530 (includes enterprise transfer in of \$2 Million, and \$687,500 sales tax revenue, no transfers in from sinking fund for capital purchases)

FY24 Budgeted Revenues - General Fund only \$5,831,048 (includes enterprise transfer in of \$2 Million, and \$662,500 sales tax revenue, no transfers in from sinking fund for capital purchases)

FY25 Budgeted Property Tax Revenues \$2,181,743

FY24 Budgeted Property Tax Revenues \$2,130,611

FY25 Municipality Levy 0.320630

FY24 Municipality Levy 0.342697

FY25 Budgeted Sales Tax Revenues \$2,525,000 (includes estimated LB357 sales tax of \$475,000)

FY24 Budgeted Sales Tax Revenues \$2,425,000 (includes estimated LB357 sales tax of \$450,000)

FY25 Budgeted Enterprise Transfers \$2,060,000

FY24 Budgeted Enterprise Transfers \$2,060,000

FY25 Budgeted Gov't Wide Total Expenditures \$45,504,410 (includes capital expenditures of \$9,787,966, debt service \$855,256, contingencies \$1,000,000)
FY24 Budgeted Gov't Wide Total Expenditures \$43,439,115 (includes capital expenditures of \$8,032,404, debt service \$856,719, contingencies \$1,000,000)

FY25 Budgeted Total Operating Expenses (excludes debt and capital expense) is \$31,895,767 (the largest increase was payroll and benefits with the COLA Increases of \$745,512). There is an increase of 12.2% increase in property insurance, 13.0% increase in liability insurance and a 29.6% increase in workers comp insurance.

FY24 Budgeted Total Operating Expenses (excludes debt and capital expense) is \$31,249,960 (the largest increase was payroll and benefits with COLA Increase of \$907,753). There is an increase of 37.6% increase in property insurance, 8.4% increase in liability insurance and a 3.6% decrease in workers comp insurance.

FY25 Budgeted Expenses - General Fund \$6,585,336 (includes \$147,000 in capital expenditures and \$45,421 in transfers out)

FY24 Budgeted Expenses - General Fund \$6,471,875 (includes \$75,000 in capital expenditures and \$305,421 in transfers out)

FY25 Budgeted operating expense General Fund without capital improvements or contingency \$6,438,336

FY24 Budgeted operating expense General Fund without capital improvements or contingency \$6,396,875

Fiscal Year 25 Budgeted Full-time employees authorized is 88

Fiscal Year 24 Budgeted Full-time employees authorized was 87

Mayor Ewing asked if anyone in the Council Chambers wished to speak regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 proposed budget.

Mike Brunner 1785 21st Street, Gering, NE, addressed the Council and stated: *"Finally some give and take, I hope. First, they did come around and paint my curb this morning, first time in four years, but it looks nice. I read all 97 pages of this budget document, by choice, and that just adds to my gratitude to you who have to read it. A lot of it I don't understand, but I have a calculator that I do understand, so let me state my findings and ask a few questions. Parks and Pool up 25% last year, this year just 8%. Administrative services up 82% last year, so this year a 37% decrease seems pretty easy to hit. Engineering Services was up 8% last year and this year budgeted a 35% increase. The sinking fund was down 54%, not surprisingly because two years ago it went up 400%; \$124,899 to \$675,272. Then last year a 21% increase up to \$807,800. Tourism has a new line item of \$200 for a promotion. An occupation tax tourism promotion. You've budgeted nearly a quarter of a million dollars on a promotion for a tax. The RV Park Fund shows a 146% increase in operations & maintenance, that's a pretty big bump. Streets has a less than 6% increase, which seems kind of light to anyone who drives our residential streets. Special projects fund is up 64% to nearly three million dollars. It makes the two million one total for the street department look a little out of place. They must have been very special projects. And finally, the Electric, only a 2% increase this next year, last year it was up 8%; two years ago, their budget was up 36%. Which is a perfect segue to the Disbursements and Transfers, the transfer of surplus funds. So noteworthy it warrants a special form. \$2,360,000 of surplus funds transferred out of the Electrical Fund. Two million of that into the General Fund. I don't know if you all know but a large portion of the downtown area was out of power last night. Maybe those surplus funds could be spent on the line item that they were earmarked for instead. This budget document has a September 30 deadline so I don't expect anything to change, but I do wish more people knew in advance what you're doing with our money. This can't be an easy job but as my late father said 'If the job was easy, everyone would do it.' Thank you for your time and for what you do."*

Mayor Ewing asked if anyone else wished to speak regarding the proposed FY25 Budget. With no further comments, the administrative record was closed and the public hearing closed at 5:28 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

(Council reserves the right to enter into closed session if deemed necessary.) None.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn by Councilmember Gillen. Second by Councilmember Bohl. There was no discussion. Mayor Ewing called for the vote. "AYES": Shields, Gillen, Bohl, Wiedeman, O'Neal, Morrison. "NAYS": None. Abstaining: None. Absent: Backus, Cowan. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.



Kent E. Ewing, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kathleen J. Welf, City Clerk

