

Village of Elwood and Elwood Community Redevelopment Authority special joint meeting minutes, February 13, 2024

A special joint meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Elwood, Nebraska and the Elwood, Nebraska Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA), was held at the Elwood Public Library at 306 Calvert Avenue on February 13, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Village Board Chair Martin who acknowledged the Open Meetings Act was followed and available for public inspection on the table by the door of the Library meeting room. Present were Village Board Trustees Tilson, Townsend, Kleine and Fong, and CRA Board Members Weissert, Schwarz, Houlden, Sheets and Schutz. Village Clerk Jauken was present to take minutes and Attorney Huyser was also present. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by posted notices at Security First Bank, Pinnacle Bank, Elwood Post Office, and the Village Office on January 30, 2024 and by publication in the Valley Voice Newspaper on February 1, 2024. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

CRA Chair Weissert provided a review of the strategic plan that was created with assistance by West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD). It was determined from the plan that there is a need for affordable housing and possibly for retirement/senior living housing instead of workforce housing. Other projects discussed that would bring families to our community included a new pool and recreation center. Discussion was held regarding hiring an economic director to assist with grant writing and coordinating this effort. Several areas were identified as potential locations for duplex/retirement housing. The CRA's ability to assist with redevelopment is limited to those areas that have been determined as blighted and substandard, which definition is provided in Nebraska Revised Statute 18-2103. It is important to note that this designation looks at more than dilapidated or substandard structures in determining the area and such designation can open upon opportunities for the CRA to assist with such development. Discussion was had regarding authorizing an updated comprehensive plan and blight and substandard plan, which would also be required for upcoming grant applications.

CRA Chair Weissert will research the qualifications of an economic director and gather information from other communities about obtaining matching funds for grants and other funding sources. The CCCFF (Center & Community Center Financing Fund), HUD (Housing and Urban Development) and the NAHTF (Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund) program were noted as possible funding sources. Most grant opportunities require matching funds before applying. Sales tax funds cannot be used unless there is a vote according to LB840 that the already approved sales tax funds can be used for more varied purposes than was previously specified, which would provide a way to underwrite business loans or other business incentives in Elwood

Another area of concern are the numerous vacant commercial buildings and residential properties in the Village. The Vacant Property Registration Act was discussed as an option as it allows a municipality to require the owners to register and pay a fee for any vacant properties. This was not a favorable option at this time considering additional conversations with properties owners may result in meaningful opportunities prior to enacting further law.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) was also discussed as a way to attract contractors/businesses to develop in Elwood.

CRA Chair Weissert asked for a motion from the CRA Board to approve the bills for the CRA including: Dawson Public Power, \$44.74 for utilities at the Veteran's Memorial, Hart, Huyser & Miller, P.C. L.L.O., \$105.00 for attorney fees, and Lawn In Order, \$80.00 for snow removal at the Veteran's Memorial. Said motion was made by Houlden, seconded by Sheets, and there being no further discussion, the roll call vote was: ayes: Houlden, Schwarz, Schutz, Sheets, Weissert; nays: none; motion carried 5-0.

Board Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Laurie Jauken  
Village Clerk/Treasurer