

# ALLIANCE CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2007

STATE OF NEBRASKA            )  
   )  
 COUNTY OF BOX BUTTE        ) §  
   )  
 CITY OF ALLIANCE             )

The Alliance City Council met in a Regular Meeting, December 20, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., in the Board of Education Meeting Room, 1604 Sweetwater Avenue. A notice of meeting was published in the Alliance Times Herald on December 13, 2007. The notice stated the date, hour and place of the meeting, that the meeting was open to the public, and that an agenda of the meeting, kept continuously current, was available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk in City Hall; provided the Council could modify the agenda at the meeting if it determined an emergency so required. A similar notice, together with a copy of the agenda, also had been delivered to each of the City Council Members. An agenda, kept continuously current, was available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk during regular business hours from the publication of the notice to the time of the meeting.

Mayor Kusek opened the December 20, 2007 Regular Meeting of the Alliance, Nebraska City Council at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Kusek, Council Members Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, and Yeager. Also present were City Manager Caskie, City Attorney Miller and City Clerk Jines.

- Mayor Kusek read the Open Meetings Act Announcement.
- The first item to come before Council was the Consent Calendar.

Motion by Councilman Dickenson, seconded by Councilwoman Rowley to approve the Consent Calendar which follows in its entirety:

**CONSENT CALENDAR - DECEMBER 20, 2007**

1.    Approval:    Minutes of the Regular Meeting, December 6, 2007.
2.    Approval:    Payroll and Employer Taxes for the period November 17, 2007 through November 30, 2007, inclusive; \$168,374.95 and \$11,967.88 respectively.
3.    Approval:    Claims against the following funds for December 3, 2007 through December 17, 2007; General, General Debt Service, Trust and Agency, Street, Electric, Refuse Collection and Disposal, Sanitary Sewer, Water, Golf Course, Downtown Improvement Districts, R.S.V.P., Keno, and Capital

Improvement: \$724,319.35.

4. Approval: To purchase a 3 Phase Power Quality Analyzer for the Electric Department. Currently we can only check voltages and only 1 phase at a time. This device would allow us to measure all parameters to better analyze our system and solve customer problems. This \$6,000 purchase would be made from the Electric Fund with it being split between overhead and underground material.
5. Approval: Budget Transfer for the Water Department moving \$1,786.10 from a Capital Account No. 07-045.10-464.100 to Operating Account No. 07-045.10-444.100. Water and Sewer Superintendent Hulquist will be utilizing excess funds from the pivot replacement to purchase two concrete breaking jack hammers needed for water main, sewer main, and street repairs.

NOTE: City Manager Caskie has reviewed these expenditures and to the best of her knowledge confirms that they are within budgeted appropriations to this point in the fiscal year.

Councilman Yeager asked how many jack hammers the City currently owns. City Manager Caskie explained that the Street Department owns two jack hammers currently that were overused during the extended use at the swimming pool. The water main break during sub-zero temperatures rendered them useless. The Water Department has more need for them than the Street Department. Councilman Benzel asked for an explanation of the 3 Phase Power Quality Analyzer. City Manager Caskie explained that the Electric Department is in need of the ability to better check voltages for customers.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- The next item on Council's agenda was the second reading of Ordinance No. 2590 which will amend the Alliance Municipal Code in Chapter 2, Article 4 regarding Telephone Companies and Telecommunication Companies.

Motion by Councilwoman Rowley, seconded by Councilman Dickenson to approve Ordinance No. 2590 on second reading. City Clerk Jines read the ordinance by title which follows in its entirety:

### **ORDINANCE NO. 2590**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA, AMENDING ARTICLE 4, CHAPTER 2, TO EXTEND THE OCCUPATION TAX FOR TELEPHONE

COMPANIES TO INCLUDE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES AND AMENDING THE ENFORCEMENT AND REPORTING PROVISIONS FOR TELEPHONE COMPANIES AND TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES, PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND REPEALING EXISTING PROVISIONS OF THE CITY CODE NOT CONSISTENT HEREWITH.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA;

SECTION 1: The City of Alliance has adopted the City of Alliance Municipal Code which provides the assessment of an occupation tax on the telephone companies doing business within the City of Alliance.

SECTION 2: Chapter 2, Article 4, Sections 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408 and 409, of the Alliance Municipal Code shall be amended as follows:

TELEPHONE COMPANIES AND TELECOMMUNICATION  
COMPANIES OCCUPATION TAX  
2-401. REVENUE MEASURE

The provisions of this Section are enacted solely as a revenue measure of the City.

2-402. OCCUPATION TAX; REQUIREMENT TO PAY.

An occupation tax is hereby levied and imposed on every person or business entity who engages in the business of providing local exchange telephone service, intrastate message toll telephone service and mobile telecommunications services for revenue in the City of Alliance. All telephone companies ~~and telecommunication companies~~ doing business in the City are required to pay an occupation tax in an amount equal to 3% of the gross receipts ~~from legally established basic monthly charges collected for local exchange telephone service from subscribers within the City. There shall be exempted from the provisions of this Article all receipts for telephone service to the United State Government and its departments, and the State of Nebraska and its departments.~~

All telecommunications companies shall pay 3% of the gross receipts, from ~~If the telecommunications services provided are mobile telecommunication services as defined in this Section, the tax shall be a percentage, as set by the City Fees Ordinance, of the gross income~~ **received from furnishing mobile telecommunications service that originates or terminates in this** ~~the same~~ state to a customer with a place of primary residence or place of business ~~use~~ within the corporate limits of the City of Alliance, Nebraska.

Gross receipts shall not mean (1) the gross income, including division of revenue, settlements, or carrier access charges received on or after January 1, 1984, from the sale of a telephone communication service to a communication service provider for purposes of furnishing telephone communication service or (ii) the gross income attributable to services rendered using a prepaid telephone calling arrangement.

#### 2-403 MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, DEFINED.

As used in this Section, mobile telecommunications services shall mean a wireless communication service carried on between mobile stations or receivers and land stations, and by mobile stations communicating among themselves, and includes: (I) Both one-way and two-way wireless communications services; (ii) a mobile service which provides a regularly interacting group of base, mobile, portable and associated control and relay stations, whether on a individual, cooperative, or multiple basis for private one-way or two-way land mobile radio communications by eligible users over designated areas of operation; and (iii) any personal communications service.

#### 2-404. OCCUPATION TAX; QUARTERLY PAYMENTS.

Payment of the tax levied herein shall be made four times annually, using the calendar quarter year as a basis for computing the amount due. Each quarterly payment shall be due within 45 ~~30~~ days after the end of each calendar quarter year.

#### 2-405. OCCUPATION TAX, PAID TO TREASURER.

The occupation tax levied herein shall be paid to the City Treasurer as prescribed and he shall furnish a proper receipt upon payment. The amount of payment shall be recorded, and credited by the Treasurer to the City General Fund.

#### 2-406. LATE PAYMENTS INTEREST PENALTY.

Payments of the occupation tax as provided herein which are made after the due date as prescribed in 2-404 shall be subject to a penalty of 1% of the amount due for each month or fraction of a month past due; this amount shall be paid in addition to the tax which is due. In the event any person or business entity doing under the provisions of this Article shall refuse, fail or neglect to furnish or file the required statement at the time or times specified in addition to the interest charge, a penalty of five (5) percent shall be added thereto.

#### 2-407. STATEMENT OF GROSS RECEIPT UPON PAYMENT.

Payment of the occupation tax shall be accompanied by a statement of gross receipts subject to the tax; such statement shall be certified by an authorized representative of the paying company.

#### 2-408. ADJUSTMENT OF OCCUPATION TAX.

Each succeeding payment of the occupation tax levied pursuant to this Article may include any adjustment which is shown on the report provided for by 2-407; such adjustments may include uncollectible amounts or other amounts which cause an increase or decrease in the amount of tax paid in any previous quarter.

#### 2-409. INSPECTION OF RECORDS.

The City shall have the right at any and all times, during regular business hours, to inspect, through its officers, agents or representatives, the books and records of any telephone company, or telecommunication company for the purpose of verifying any report submitted pursuant to the requirements of 2-407.

2-410. NONCOMPLIANCE; PENALTY.

In case any telephone company shall refuse, fail or neglect to furnish or file any report required by 2-407 at the time required for such filing, or shall fail or refuse to permit the City to inspect the books and records of such company for the purpose of verifying such report, then the occupation tax for the preceding quarter shall be the sum of \$5,000.00 and such amount shall be paid within 45 days following the end of the calendar quarter as required by 2-404 and such amount shall draw interest and be subject to penalties as provided by 2-406.

2-411. CITY REMEDY IN COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION.

In case any telephone company shall fail to make payment of the occupation tax provided for by this Article at the time specified for such payment, the City shall have the right to sue any such company in any court of competent jurisdiction for the amount of such occupation tax due and payable under the terms and provisions of this Article and may recover judgment against any such company for such amount so due, together with interest and penalties, and may have execution thereon.

2-412. STATEMENT TO BE FILED.

Every person or business entity coming within the provisions of this Article shall, on or before the fifteenth day of the month immediately following the termination of each calendar year, file with the city clerk, in the case of those persons taxed by Section 2-402, a full, complete and detailed statement of the income and gross receipts of said person or business entity for the preceding three (3) calendar months, omitting therefrom the appropriate exceptions and exemptions, if any. All statements shall be duly verified as true and correct and sworn to by the manager or managing officer of such person.

2-413. DISPOSITION OF RECEIPTS.

The occupation taxes paid under the provisions of the Article shall be credited to the General Fund of the City.

The Calculation of the amount of occupation tax due under Section 2-402 of this ordinance as amended shall commence \_\_\_\_\_, 2008.

That any other ordinance or Section passed and approved prior to the passage, approval, and publication or posting of this ordinance and in conflict with the provisions is herewith repealed. This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage, approval and publication or posting as required by law.

Mayor Kusek asked for verification of the parameters of this occupation tax. City Manager Caskie explained that the primary residence is the key. If the City of Alliance is the primary residence, the cell phone company from another location should be remitting the tax collected to the City. County residents that receive mail at a post office box in Alliance will be a variable since the cell phone company will not know the residents primary address.

Motion by Mayor Kusek, seconded by Councilman Dickenson to amend the ordinance to set a commencement date of July 1, 2008.

Roll call vote on the amendment with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

Motion by Mayor Kusek, seconded by Councilwoman Rowley to amend the ordinance to accept all redline and strike-outs.

Roll call vote on the amendment with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

Roll call vote on the second reading of Ordinance No. 2590 as amended with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- The next item for Council's discussion was the second reading of Ordinance No. 2591. This ordinance will amend the Alliance Municipal Code in Chapter 4, Article 3 regarding water and sewer regulations.

Motion by Councilman Dickenson, seconded by Councilman Yeager to approve Ordinance No. 2591 on second reading. City Clerk Jines read the ordinance by title which follows in its entirety:

**ORDINANCE NO. 2591**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ALLIANCE MUNICIPAL CODE AT CHAPTER 4, ARTICLE 3, SECTIONS 326, 328 AND 624, REGARDING FIRE HYDRANTS, TYPE SERVICE PIPE AND DISCHARGE INTO SANITARY SEWERS - TYPES NOT PERMITTED AT DISCRETION OF CITY.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA;

SECTION 1: The City of Alliance has adopted the Alliance Municipal code which provides regulations for the Alliance Municipal Utilities, Sanitary Landfill and Solid Waste within the City of Alliance.

SECTION 2: Chapter 4, Article 3, Sections 326, 328 and 624, of the Alliance Municipal Code shall be amended as follows:

4-326. FIRE HYDRANTS

All hydrants connected to City Water Mains for the purpose of extinguishing fires, are hereby declared to be public hydrants, and it shall be unlawful for any person other than members of the Municipal Fire Department under the orders of the Fire Chief, or the Assistant Fire Chief; or authorized employees of A.M.W.S. to open or attempt to open any of the hydrants and draw water from the same, or in any manner to interfere with the hydrant. Public hydrants on private property are to be maintained in working condition by the property owner. All newly installed, re-installed or fire hydrants being moved shall have an auxiliary valve (resilient seat gate valve) installed not more than four feet and not less than two feet away from the barrel of the hydrant.

4-328. TYPE SERVICE PIPE

All service pipes, 1 inch or larger in diameter, shall be type "K" copper tubing or AWWA C-901 *approved* "pure core, eagle core, clear core" plastic pipe or P.V.C. Pipe, bell and spigot, conforming to ASTM D2241. Standard Dimension Ratios shall be SDR 26 for 160 psi and SDR 21 for 200 psi pipe. The pipe shall be extruded from clean, virgin, approved class 1245-AP.V.C. resin compound conforming to ASTM Specification D 1784, rubber ring shall conform to ASTM C 1869 and F477. These materials are to be used from the main to the shutoff box, which shall be located at the property line or edge of the sidewalk line and continue from shutoff box to the water meter. All copper type "K" tubing shall be laid five feet below the established grade in a manner sufficiently waving to allow an extra length of not less than one foot in such a manner as to prevent rupture by settlement. All others shall be buried to a depth of not less than five feet below established grade.

Stainless steel metal inserts are required at all pipes ends or coupled joints when using clear core, eagle core and pure core plastic tubing. All non metallic water service lines shall be installed with tracer wire. The tracer wire shall be not less than #14 gauge insulated solid copper wire. The tracer wire ends shall be (one end terminated, single wrapped and connected to the corporation valve at

the water main, the other end exposed to allow attachment of pipe locating equipment), terminated and attached to the inlet side of the service pipe to the water meter.

4-624. DISCHARGE INTO SANITARY SEWERS -S TYPES NOT PERMITTED AT DISCRETION OF CITY

(1) Any waters or wastes having (1) a 5-day BOD greater than 250 parts per million by weight, or (2) containing more than 275 parts per million by weight of suspended solids, or (3) having any average daily flow greater than 2 percent of the average sewage flow of the City, shall be subject to the review of A.M.S.S. Where necessary in the opinion of A.M.S.S., the owner shall provide, at his expense, such preliminary treatment as may be necessary to (1) reduce the biochemical oxygen demand to 250 parts per million by weight, or (2) reduce the suspended solids to 275 parts per million by weight.

Councilman Dickenson inquired about the verification process of maintenance of private hydrants. Councilwoman Rowley asked whether the verification process is paid to the City. City Manager Caskie will investigate the entire process.

Motion by Mayor Kusek, seconded by Councilman Benzel to suspend the statutory rule requiring three separate readings of Ordinance No. 2591.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

Roll call vote on Ordinance No. 2591 on final reading with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

Mayor Kusek stated, "the passage and adoption of Ordinance No. 2591 has been concurred by a majority of all members elected to the Council, I declare it passed, adopted and order it published."

- Resolution No. 07-141 which will amend the City of Alliance Personnel Manual to allow the use of annual leave to be considered hours worked in computing compensatory time or overtime was the next item on Council's agenda.

Motion by Councilman Benzel, seconded by Councilman Rowley to approve Resolution No. 07-141 which follows in its entirety:

**RESOLUTION NO. 07-141**

*WHEREAS*, the City of Alliance recently completed a compensation audit which was prepared by Capital City Concepts, Inc.; and

*WHEREAS*, the report determined that an employee's annual leave should be included in the computation of overtime hours; and

*WHEREAS*, the City of Alliance Personnel Manual and Safety Handbook currently provides at Section 2.02 (f) that

“When computing overtime; sick leave, annual leave, floating holidays, compensatory time, funeral leave, and military leave are not counted as hours worked.”; and

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, by the Mayor and City Council of Alliance, Nebraska, that Section 2.02 (f) of the City of Alliance Personnel Manual and Safety Handbook be amended to state as follows:

“When computing overtime; sick leave, floating holidays, compensatory time, funeral leave, and military leave are not counted as hours worked.”

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, the revised Section 2.02 (f) will be effective with the pay period beginning December 29, 2007.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- The next item for Council's discussion was Resolution No. 07-142 awarding the purchase of office furnishings for the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center to Nebraska Total Office of Alliance, NE in the amount of \$43,167.01.

Motion by Councilman Yeager, seconded by Councilwoman Rowley to approve Resolution No. 07-142 which follows in its entirety:

**RESOLUTION NO. 07-142**

*WHEREAS*, The Knight Museum building has been expanded and the new building is now completed; and

*WHEREAS*, The new building has office space for employees of the City of Alliance; and

*WHEREAS*, Said offices need to be furnished; and

*WHEREAS*, a Request for Proposal 2125-08-06 was issued; and

*WHEREAS*, One (1) invitation to bid was issued, and one (1) response was received; and

*WHEREAS*, The bid of Nebraska Total Office, of Alliance, Nebraska appears to be the lowest, responsive, and responsible bid in the amount of \$43,167.01.

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, by the Mayor and City Council of Alliance, Nebraska, that the Request for Proposal 2125-08-06 is hereby awarded to Nebraska Total Office of Alliance, Nebraska in the amount of \$43,167.01.

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that City staff shall notify the successful bidder so that ordering, delivery and installation can proceed according to the bid specifications.

City Manager Caskie indicated that the Eldred Foundation agreed to pay for the installation of a new outdoor bathroom facility near the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center and the City agreed to pay for the furnishings.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- The next item for Council's consideration was Resolution No. 07-143 approving the seventh series of various Police Department Policies.

Motion by Councilwoman Rowley, seconded by Councilman Benzel to approve Resolution No. 07-143 which follows in its entirety:

### **RESOLUTION NO. 07-143**

*WHEREAS*, The Alliance Police Department is revising certain Police Department policies; and

*WHEREAS*, The proposed policy revisions have been prepared and reviewed by police and the legal staff; and

*WHEREAS*, The proposed Policy revisions provide for:

- Policy 44.1, 44.2, 44.3, 44.4, 44.5, 44.6, 44.7
- Policy 46.1, 46.2, 46.3, 46.4, 46.5,

- Policy 51.1, 51.2, 51.3

*WHEREAS*, City Council has reviewed the proposed Policies and finds them appropriate for the needs of law enforcement.

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, by the Mayor and City Council of Alliance, Nebraska, that the Police Department Policies as revised, set forth herein, are hereby approved, and adopted effective December 20, 2007 as the Policy of the City of Alliance.

Councilwoman Rowley asked Chief John Kiss several procedural questions related to several of the policies.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- The next item to be presented to Council was the Fourth Quarter Financial Report by Finance Director Leah King.

Motion by Councilman Dickenson, seconded by Councilman Yeager to approve the Fourth Quarter Report as presented by Finance Director Leah King.

Councilman Dickenson questioned the percentage of budget indicated for Fleet Services. City Manager Caskie indicated that the intent was for Fleet Services to bill out time and services to each department so they would have an operating budget of nearly zero. Fleet Services could not maintain the level of activity required to fund their expenses which is reflected in the percentage amount.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- The Mayor's State of the City address was the next item on the agenda and follows in its entirety:

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS  
MAYOR DAN KUSEK  
DECEMBER 20, 2007

2007 is about to end. This past year has been eventful for the City. We have seen many positive developments, and some negative. We have lost some fine citizens this past year including three former City Council members. We have had new residents come to the community and we have seen new houses started this year. I would like to review a few of my thoughts on the events of 2007 and some of the City's plans for 2008.

In 1987 Rutgers University graduate student Deborah Popper and Professor Frank Popper issued their study called "The Great Plains: From Dust to Dust". In this study they reviewed the history on the great plains of America and suggested that the plains would become de-populated and should be taken over by the federal government and turned back into what they called the "Buffalo Commons". Western Nebraska was included in this area. Over these past 20 years many of the events they predicted have come true; decline in population, loss of water and higher prices among them. While no one can predict if their conclusions will be reached, we can work to prove them wrong. Some are even suggesting that this area will see a rebound as young families around the country will look to the plains as a great place to work and live and raise their families in less stressful areas than the east and west coasts. Alliance continues to work to position ourselves for this possibility.

With the advent of the internet it is possible to access the world. The City has been working on improving the internet capabilities of the city and in the community. Fiber Optic cables are being placed in the business district and, hopefully, will be expanded to other areas. The internet is another tool that puts Alliance "in the middle of everywhere" and shows that we are an available, accessible, "open" Alliance.

In 2007 the City put two new wells on line in the well field. We continue to upgrade our water system and replace older water lines. This will continue in 2008. The federally mandated Arsenic ruling takes effect in January of 2009. Unless Congress acts to put this on hold, the City will be forced to begin a remediation program that could cost our residents over \$15 million. This could double or triple the cost of water.

In the sewer department we replaced one center pivot at the sewer lagoons in 2007 and will replace the other in 2008. The department will continue to upgrade the sewer system and replace older lines.

The electric department continues to inspect the entire system to upgrade older equipment to help eliminate disruptions of service.

A housing study was begun in 2007 and we look forward to those results in 2008. Several houses were started in 2007 and more are planned in 2008. Senior housing developments for low and medium income citizens are under construction or in the planning stages. The over 65 age group is the fastest growing in Alliance and, while we are working hard to bring in younger people, we must provide for our older generation.

The voters of Alliance passed a renewal of the 1.5% city sales tax in November for ten years. This sales tax helps fund the General Fund of the City and is used to fund capital projects in the city. This renewal allows the City to plan for the future. We thank the voters for approving this extension and we continue to encourage our citizens to shop at home and make their purchases

locally whenever possible. That keeps businesses open and helps fund our local projects.

A study was started in 2007 to update the City's Comprehensive Plan. This State mandated plan was last updated in 1998. This plan is used by the city, and others, to plan the growth of the city. This current study will also include the city owned property at the Municipal Airport. That area has great potential for economic growth. Congress just approved an Omnibus Budget Act that contains over \$400,000 for the completion of the ILS navigation system at the airport. Work on providing this equipment has been ongoing for over ten years. 2008 should see its completion. This Budget Act also contains the funding for the State Veterans Cemetery to be located at the airport. This project, also over ten years in the making, will be a fitting final resting place for our veterans and will bring people to visit our area.

The cost of repairing and replacing streets continues to escalate. In 2008 the City will replace West 10th Street from Sheridan to Box Butte. This project will cost over \$1million. This is double the estimate from just two years ago. There are other street projects in our One and Six Year Street Plan. These are prioritized and will be repaired or replaced as funds are available. Federal and State funding for streets continues to drop so different and additional funding sources will be needed.

Tourism is a high potential industry. While Alliance will always be an agricultural area with a large transportation and manufacturing base, we need to expand. We must continue to create jobs for all ages in our community. Tourism will bring people to the area which will create employment opportunities for our citizens.

2007 has seen great strides in improving our tourism potential. Carhenge, Central Park, Big Blue Bay, Dobby's Frontier Town, Central Park Fountain, Snake Creek Trail, motocross, Skyview Golf Course, the rifle club, the trap club, the roping club, the rodeo group, Sallow Military Museum, the new Knight Museum and Sandhills Center, baseball and softball, inspiring sunrises and sunsets, fresh air, the beautiful sandhills and our friendly residents will bring people to our area and will bring them back. The City will implement our new marketing program in 2008. With a grant from the State of Nebraska, and LB 840 funds, we will have over \$70,000 to be used in 2008 to market our "Open Alliance".

Main Street is the heart and soul of a small community. Alliance has recently rejoined the Main Street Program. Our Historic Downtown is vital to the growth of Alliance. Our main street needs some attention. We need to decide where City Hall will be located. We need to renovate the 1938 Municipal Building. We need to make decisions with the County Commissioners concerning the updating of the Regional Law Enforcement Center. We need to enhance the shopping opportunities for our residents. These decisions need to be made in 2008 and reasonable and prudent funding sources must be found to fund whatever is done.

In late July, just after Heritage Days, City Council and city staff received a letter from a native son who had come home to visit. The letter, rightfully so, took us to task for the appearance of some of the city property, especially along Third Street. If we want people to visit and re-visit Alliance we need to have the city be pleasing to all, residents and visitors. This letter, along with the very valid complaints from residents about our code enforcement efforts, has made us look at how the city operates in this regard. We have recently hired a new employee who will be in

charge of code enforcement. We will stress the appearance of our community. This has to start with our city property and our city staff. We will set a good example. We do not want to be known as "Alliance-that dirty city in the Panhandle of Nebraska". I ask everyone's help in this endeavor. In this regard, I will propose in January that we have a city wide cleanup in April that will use all city assets and equipment to work with Keep Alliance Beautiful and our citizens to "recycle it, remove it, clean it, mow it, spray it, and paint it". I will propose that we waive landfills fees for city residents for all items taking to the Alliance landfill except for hazardous materials and commercial items. Let's be a Clean and Open Alliance.

Highways 2, 87 and 385 are the first views that visitors have of our community. The appearance of the property along these routes is essential to getting people to stop and visit and revisit Alliance. I ask all property owners to keep their property pleasing to the eye. Again, this includes the City. I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the staff and members of the Box Butte Employees Federal Credit Union on West Third Street for the appearance of their property. Their property is continuously immaculate.

In May of 2007 I held a Mayor's Town Hall meeting. It was a good beginning to create a dialog with local residents. I plan to hold another such meeting in the spring. I will also attempt to start a dialog with our young people by hosting a youth forum. Our young people are our future and we need to hear what they have to say about their community.

Too many people say that Alliance is in the middle of nowhere. I consistently say that we are in the middle of everywhere. It is our attitudes that make the difference. It makes no difference if you have lived here for 75 years or 75 days, while you are here, this is your home. What are important are FAMILY, NEIGHBORHOOD, and COMMUNITY. In 2008 let's all strive to improve our relationships within or families, our neighborhoods and our community.

I would be remiss if I did not mention and thank all of the staff and employees of the City. They are good people striving to serve their fellow citizens. We ask a lot of them and they deliver. They have seen changes that have disrupted how things have been done and they have adapted. They will see more changes as we work to be more efficient, and they will adapt and improve. I thank them all for their efforts.

In the ancient Athenian City State an oath was administered to the leaders of that city. It is a fitting oath thousands of years later. It reads: "We will ever strive for the ideals and sacred things of the city both alone and with many; we will increasingly seek to quicken the sense of public duty. We will revere and obey the city laws; we will transmit this city not only not less, but greater, better and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."

I wish everyone happy and holy holidays and a GREAT 2008 in OPEN ALLIANCE.

- The last item on Council's agenda was an Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a performance evaluation of City Manager Caskie.

Mayor Kusek motioned pursuant to Section 84-1410 Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska 1943 that the Alliance City Council hold a closed session for the purpose of conducting a performance evaluation of City Manager Caskie. The motion was seconded by

Councilman Dickenson.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

The closed session began at 8:00 p.m. and ended at 9:25 p.m.

Motion by Councilman Dickenson, seconded by Councilman Benzel to award City Manager Caskie a salary adjustment to \$88,000.00 and a bonus of \$1,250.00.

Roll call vote with the following results:

Voting Aye: Kusek, Dickenson, Benzel, Rowley, Yeager.

Voting Nay: None.

Motion carried.

- Mayor Kusek stated, “there being no further business to come before the Alliance City Council, the meeting is adjourned at 9:27 p.m.”

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Dan Kusek, Mayor

(SEAL)

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Linda S. Jines, City Clerk