

City of Blair Regular Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 18, 2026

Agenda Item #1 – The Blair Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board met in regular session in the City Council Chambers on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 5:30 PM with Chairman Anderson presiding.

The Chairman publicly stated to all in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available for review and indicated the location of such copy posted in the room where the meeting was being held. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Washington County Enterprise as shown by the affidavit of publication filed in the City Clerk's office. Notice of the meeting was simultaneously given to the members of the Blair Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board and the agenda is filed in the City Clerk's office. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Blair Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Agenda Item #2 – Roll Call of members – The following were present: Betsy Anderson, Sarah Boeka, Corey Hafer, Kristi Rounds, and Dean Thoene. Absent Joe Burns. Also present were Deputy City Administrator of Public Works Heaton, and Cemetery/Parks Director Bilsend.

Agenda Item #3 – Approval of minutes from the June 16, 2026, meeting – Motion by Sarah Boeka, second by Kristi Rounds to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2026, meeting as presented. Council members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Absent, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea, Dean Thoene: Absent. All Board members voted: Yea: 4, Nay: 0, Absent: 2. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Dean Thoene arrived at 5:34 p.m.

Agenda Item #4 – Budget Report for June 2026 –No questions were raised by board members, and no action was required, so the board moved forward without discussion.

Agenda Item #5 – Request by Dawn Nielsen to appear before the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board for an update on the Depot – Dawn Nielsen, 102 Courtvue Dr., appeared before the board to provide an update on improvements made to the depot since her last appearance in February. Key completed items include: floor refinished in the passenger (west) room by end of April; three workbench-style serving tables with built-in power strips and wheels ordered by CJ; building and deck power-washed by Hydro Hank; cargo room floor cleaned and sealed; light fixtures dusted; Blair Historic Preservation Alliance 25th anniversary banner hung on the east side of the building; exterior doors, windows, and brackets under the roof repainted; restroom facility door painted; and interior brown paint touched up in the cargo room. Items still in progress include deck finish (no finish applied yet) and a new water fountain. Nielsen noted the Depot is used every weekend and serves as a "welcome to Blair" facility for visitors. She hosted a family reunion there on August 1st and expressed pride in the facility's improved appearance. The board thanked Nielsen and her organization for their efforts and funding contributions to the community.

Agenda Item #6 - Request by Roger Steinbaugh to appear before the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board to discuss the obstruction of his parents' monument, Wayne and Gladys Steinbaugh buried at Blair Cemetery – Roger Steinbaugh, 860 Skyline Dr., appeared before the board to address a concern about a monument obstructing the view of his parents' headstone at the Blair Cemetery. His parents, Wayne and Gladys Steinbaugh, are interred in Block 88, Lot 14, grave spaces 5 and 6. The Steinbaugh family purchased their eight lots in September 1991. The obstructing headstone is placed at the east end of grave space 4 in Block 88, Lot 13. The obstruction arose because individuals purchased spaces 5 and 6 in Lot 13 in January 1991 and placed their headstone at the foot of their grave near the road leaving no room for the headstone that is obstructing the view of his parent's stone except at the east end of space 4 which is directly adjacent to the Steinbaugh headstone with only a two-foot alleyway between lots 13 and 14. Cemetery Supervisor James Bilslend explained the cemetery layout: Block 88 falls within blocks 1–109, which allow unrestricted monument privileges (Article 4, Section 5, Rule 8), permitting monuments at either or both ends of a grave space as long as they do not interfere with future grave openings. The two-foot alleyway between lots is a standard feature throughout the entire cemetery, functioning as a buffer and utility corridor. Lot purchase chronology: spaces 1–2 in Lot 13 sold in 1982; spaces 5–6 in Lot 13 sold in 1985; spaces 3 and 4 in Lot 13 sold in 2023 and 2025 respectively; Steinbaugh's spaces 5–6 in Lot 14 sold in September 1991. Deputy City Administrator Heaton confirmed the city attorney reviewed the situation and concluded no cemetery rules were violated. The Steinbaugh headstone faces the road, which is what causes the visual obstruction. Turning the stone around was ruled out because reversing it would misalign names with burial locations. The best proposed solution discussed was moving the Steinbaugh headstone approximately 10 feet east to the foot of their grave spaces. This would create approximately 10 feet of unobstructed space and allow future family members buried in spaces 3–4 to also place their stone at the east end, creating another 10-foot clear section. This move would be at the Steinbaugh family's expense. Steinbaugh agreed to visit the cemetery to visually assess the option and consult his family before deciding. He also requested a drawing showing surrounding lot ownership and the effect on adjacent sites, particularly his own future burial space.

Agenda Item #7 – Consider a recommendation to the City Council of updated rules, regulations, and fees for the Blair Cemetery – Deputy City Administrator Heaton stated key changes from the previously approved version include: the \$100 layout fee for headstones was rolled into the grave space purchase price bringing the total grave space purchase to \$700; grave opening fee remains at \$600; the \$100 Catholic layout fee is retained as a separate charge for the additional work the cemetery personnel performs for Catholic cemetery layouts; a new section was added establishing rules for the 100-year cemetery reclamation repurchase program. Nebraska state legislation passed last year allows cemeteries to reclaim lots unused for 30 years; Blair extended this to 100 years, identifying approximately 2,600 grave spaces. The new section outlines documentation requirements such as proof of family relationships and sets a repurchase fee of \$275 for verified family members. A board member asked whether the Catholic layout fee would be eliminated if the Catholic cemetery is re-marked to match the rest of the cemetery. Heaton confirmed that there would be a future discussion with the park board depending on time savings. Motion by Corey Hafer, second by Sarah Boeka to recommend to the City Council the updated rules, regulations, and fees for the Blair Cemetery. Board members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Absent, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea,

Dean Thoene: Yea. All Board members voted as follows: Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item # 8 – Discussion of Park Draft Budget – Deputy City Administrator Heaton presented the draft 2027 parks and pool budget, which will be presented to the city council for final budget approval scheduled for September 8th at the council meeting. Key budget highlights include Recreation Assistance Fund: Increased from \$60,000 (current year) to \$120,000 for 2027. This fund supports Blair youth sports organizations (softball, soccer, and baseball) at the Sports Complex, as Blair does not have a city-staffed recreation program. Heaton noted he is researching whether this model is the best fit for Blair and plans to have more analysis over the winter. Equipment: \$60,000 allocated for either a new flatbed truck or a replacement UTV. Originally staff requested enough for both, but the budget only allows one. The decision will be made based on needs assessment. RV Park Restroom Facility: \$400,000 budgeted for a prefabricated concrete storm shelter-style restroom/shower building with four self-contained bays. A two-stall version would cost approximately \$280,000–\$290,000; the four-stall version costs approximately \$380,000. Josh Nichols is pursuing a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant covering 50% of the cost. Without the grant, the full project cannot proceed. Lions Park Surfacing: \$80,000 earmarked to redo the surface at Lions Park, which was first installed 11 years ago and has known issues. Paving: Funds allocated for additional trails or replacement paving at existing parks, including the new Southern Hills park. NRD Grant Projects include \$240,000 for various projects including creek bank restoration at Rhodes Park, \$50,000 for trails, with matching NRD grants already approved in the NRD budget. If grants proceed, approximately \$100,000 in bike trails (5–6 blocks) can be completed with city staff doing the work. Pool Painting: \$75,000 accumulated (\$25,000/year over three years) for pool painting and patchwork, due this year on the standard three-year cycle. Chairman Anderson encouraged all board members to attend the city council meeting and/or write letters to council representatives to support the parks budget items.

Agenda Item #9 – Deputy City Administrator of Public Works Heaton Report – Deputy City Administrator Heaton and Cemetery/Park Supervisor Bilslend provided operational updates. Park staff have been focused on weed control and general park maintenance. The pool closed for the season and Heaton described it as a successful year based on candy and ice cream sandwich order volumes. The splash pad and associated bathrooms will remain open as long as weather permits. At the cemetery, Scott Swenson of Swenson Monuments in Oakland, Nebraska has been assisting with restoration of headstones in the older section of the cemetery, including stones knocked over by last year's storm. Routine cemetery maintenance continues with tree trimming, sidewalk edging, and weed spraying. Regarding vandalism, nothing major was reported. Camera installation is underway with cameras operational at Lions Park, Depot, and Generations Park and will soon be installed at Black Elk Park and the dog park. The city is taking the opportunity to install fiber at Black Elk which will enable camera placement on the water tower with a direct view of the dog park parking lot.

Agenda Item #10 – Adjournment – Motion by Kristi Rounds, second by Sarah Boeka to adjourn the meeting 6:25 p.m. Board members voted as follows: Betsy Anderson: Yea, Sarah Boeka: Yea, Joe Burns: Absent, Corey Hafer: Yea, Kristi Rounds: Yea, Dean Thoene: Yea. All Board members voted: Yea: 5, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Chairman Anderson declared the motion carried.

Brenda Wheeler, Recording Secretary