City of Blair Regular Council Meeting
October 27, 2026

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session in the City Council Chambers on October 27, 2026, at 7:00 PM. The following were present: Gary Banner, Brent Clark, Kirk Highfill, James Letcher, Kent Long, Rick Paulsen, Frank Wolff. Absent: Kevin Willis. Also present were Deputy City Administrator Barrow, Deputy City Administrator Heaton, Deputy City Administrator Scott, City Attorney Talbot, Library Director Lukert, Community Development Director Beiermann, IT Director White, Public Safety & Communications Coordinator Dunn, and Police Chief Kinsey.

The Mayor 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 Mayor and all members of the City Council, and a copy of their acknowledgement of receipt of notice 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 Mayor and Council of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Agenda Item #1, #2 & #3 – Mayor Rump called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by Roll Call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item #4 – Consent agenda approved the following: 4a) Approval of Minutes of the October 13, 2026, meeting. 4b) Clerk report of Mayoral Action of the October 13, 2026, meeting, 4c) Claims as approved by the Finance Committee, 4d) Motion to approve the mayoral appointment of Rebecca Brunick to the Blair Housing Authority Board, 4e) Consider Resolution 2026-111 adopting the year-end certification of City Street Superintendent and 4f) Consider Resolution 2026-112 designating Charles Heaton as the City's Street Superintendent effective January 1, 2027. Motion by James Letcher, second by Brent Clark to approve the Consent Agenda. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #5 – Tom White, IT Director, requested approval to spend up to $70,000 on Phase 1 server replacement. The FY 26-27 budget includes $50,000 for the library and $70,000 for City Hall. IT staff would install and maintain the servers, collaborating with vendor Thompson Solutions. White also asked for flexibility to buy from multiple vendors, since prices are volatile and now three to five times what they were in 2024. Quotes on refurbished gear expire quickly, and refurbished enterprise servers with new drives cost about half the price of new ones while carrying similar support. Problems with the current equipment: 1) Library servers are 9 years old and City Hall servers a little over 5, and all are out of warranty, 2) The library OS loses security updates in January, 3) There are drive failures, and City Hall is running out of storage, 4) VMware pricing has risen about 10x since the original contract, so the city will move away from it and 4) There is no quick recovery capability. Phase 1 provides: 1) New servers at City Hall, the core system for file storage, logins, and department applications used by Parks, the PD, Public Works, and others, 2) The library as a backup and recovery site, with failover, 3) A unified platform with more storage, and 4) added CJIS security separation for the police department while keeping redundancy. Installation is targeted for mid-to-late January, followed by data migration and a working backup site. A future phase would address any gaps. Council member Highfill asked about going. White said it would cost more long-term and lock the city in.

The city also has legacy data, and cloud outages such as yesterday's Microsoft Teams outage would hurt authentication. The city will keep evaluating cloud options. The Technology Committee met with White and requested by January a firmer completion date and final costs. They also want future budgets to set aside about $20,000 per year, so the city avoids a lump sum of roughly $120,000 in five years. Council Member Banner introduced the Resolution 2026-113 approving the purchase of new server hardware for Blair City Hall and the Blair Public Library and Technology Center. Motion by Gary Banner, second by Kent Long to adopt Resolution No. 2026-113 as presented. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #6 – Captain Lyon presented bids from Jones Automotive and EVO Outfitters for equipping the new police vehicle. EVO Outfitters was the low bid. The department has used EVO Outfitters on their last few vehicles and has been satisfied with their work. The chief had contacted the Police Fire Committee and received no concerns. There was no public comment. Motion by Rick Paulsen, second by Kirk Highfill to receive and place on file the bids for the installation and outfitting of the new police department vehicle. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted as follows: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried. Council member Paulsen introduced Resolution No. 2026-114 authorizing the purchase and installation of equipment and related outfitting for the new police department vehicle. Motion by Rick Paulsen, second by Kirk Highfill to adopt Resolution No. 2026-114 as presented. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #7 – Deputy City Administrator Heaton presented an agreement with Alex Meyer, a farmer near Modale, Iowa, for land application of sludge from the Blair Wastewater Treatment Plant. The sludge cannot be returned to the river. Finding ground is increasingly hard because of the stigma around applying sewage waste, though the practice is permitted, licensed, and tested to EPA and state DNR standards. Rules require limited application rates per acre, no rain, no irrigated or sloped ground, incorporation by disking within about 24 hours, and regular soil and nitrate testing. The agreement covers about 130 acres for the next year at about $1,000 per acre, or $130,000, with the fields rotated between two plots. Fremont has a dewatering and composting system and will take some sludge, but not as sole source. The city would be the first cut if Fremont had problems. It is the backup for events such as snowstorms. SMS/S&S Pumping plans its own dewatering system in town, expected hopefully within a year, plus extra permitting. When it is running, it will become the primary option, with about a truck a day, and Fremont will remain the backup. Heaton stated the plant has storage for several days, with about 5,000 gallons hauled daily and the hauler catching up after weekends. The Finance Committee said this is effectively the only reliable option for the next 12 months. Council Member Clark introduced Resolution 2026-115 approving the sludge application ground rental agreement between the City of Blair and Alex Meyer for land application of sludge from the Blair wastewater treatment plant. Motion by Brent Clark, second by Gary Banner to adopt Resolution No. 2026-115 as presented. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #8 – Mayor Rump asked for reports from the Deputy City Administrators. They had no reports.

Agenda Item #9 – City Attorney Talbot stated that attorney's Molly Miller and Craig Dirrim are invited to stay and be part of the Executive Session with the Mayor and Council. Council member Brent Clark moved to recess at 7:21 p.m. for an Executive Session stating the closed session is needed for the protection of the public interest for the following: 1) Potential Litigation and 2) Possible Litigation involving the City of Blair. No action to be taken. Motion was seconded by James Letcher. Council members voted as follows: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried and stated the Executive Session will be limited to discussion regarding potential litigation and possible litigation involving the City of Blair and preserve the attorney-client privilege. Council member James Letcher moved to come out of Executive Session and reconvened as a City Council at 8:54 p.m. which motion was seconded by Council member Brent Clark. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

Agenda Item #10 – Motion by Gary Banner, second by Kent Long to adjourn the meeting 8:54 p.m. Council members voted as follows: Gary Banner: Yea, Brent Clark: Yea, Kirk Highfill: Yea, James Letcher: Yea, Kent Long: Yea, Rick Paulsen: Yea, Kevin Willis: Absent, Frank Wolff: Yea. All Council members voted: Yea: 7, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Mayor Rump declared the motion carried.

The following claims were approved: Access Technologies, Inc., Inv, 141.20; AFL, LLC, Inv, 46,937.00; Air Products & Chemicals, Inv, 10107.32; Akrs Equipment, Inv, 469.07; Amerisource Hr Consulting Grp, Pyrl, 2250.00; Arps Red-E-Mix Inc, Svc, 784.69; Assethr, Pyrl, 259216.33; Automatic Systems Co, Svc, 87.04; Black Hills Energy, Inv, 1038.27; Blue Cross & Blue Shield Of Ne, Ins, 132819.77; Bobcat Of Omaha, Inv, 410.40; Bomgaars Supply Inc, Inv, 1867.95; Braniff Service, Svc, 276.00; Brodart Co, Inv, 723.77; Bs&A Software Llc, Inv, 40815.00; Cede & Co, Invest, 133041.25; City Of Blair, Inv, 750.80; Civicplus, Inv, 17387.65; Crowne Plaza, Inv, 1394.55; Datashield, Svc, 87.53; Detectachem Inc, Inv, 138.74; Eakes Office Plus, Inv, 57.58; Friends Of The Jeanette Hunt, Inv, 43750.00; Gillespie, James, Ref, 200.00; Gis Workshop Llc, Inv, 1500.00; Governmentaljobs.Com, Inc, Inv, 4326.00; Grainger, Inv, 742.62; Hach Co, Inv, 1965.63; Heartland Natural Gas Llc, Inv, 35.20; Henton Trenching Inc, Inv, 370.00; Holly Hafer, Reimb, 1301.15; Hsa Bank, Ins, 92.50; Icma, Dues, 799.50; James Nielsen Dba, Svc, 245.00; Josh Hatheway, Reimb, 95.00; Kelly Mcmanigal, Reimb, 399.00; Larm, Ins, 953921.14; League Of Ne Municipalities, Inv, 100.00; Midwest Fire Protection Inc, Svc, 4384.86; Midwest Laboratories Inc, Svc, 729.00; Midwest Maritime Services, Svc, 49620.00; Midwest Mudjacking Inc, Svc, 1623.75; Mississippi Lime Co Llc, Inv, 50029.16; Monroe Engineering Group Llc, Inv, 533.35; Nebraska Dept Of Revenue, Tax, 15214.09; Nebraska Dept Of Revenue - Keno, Tax, 8651.00; Nebraska Municipal Clerk, Dues, 300.00; Nebraska Public Health, Inv, 343.00; Onsite Services Solutions Llc, Inv, 8609.00; Point C, Ins, 6863.87; Principal Financial Group, Pen, 86173.47; Proquest Llc, Inv, 1982.23; Randy Harwood, Inv, 73000.00; Rolling Acres Complex, Inv, 390.00; Sams Club Mc/Syncb, Inv, 65.24; Sara Bach, Reimb, 1172.27; Saunders County Sheriff's Office, Inv, 20587.00; Sid Dillon Ford Inc Wahoo, Inv, 56186.00; Sorensen Sod Llc, Inv, 750.00; Streakwave Wireless Inc, Inv, 426.56; The Guardian Life Ins Co, Ins, 7848.41; Thompson Solutions Group, Svc, 2253.25; Trekk Design Group, Inv, 6029.00; Ty's Outdoor Power & Service, Inv, 126.59; Us Postal Service, Inv, 890.00; Washington Co Sheriff, Inv, 2108.33; Waste Management Of Ne, Svc, 112.65.

Melinda K. Rump, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brenda Wheeler, City Clerk

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