

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

City council members will consider an ordinance at an upcoming meeting that would extend the hours for liquor sales on Sunday.

Currently, Imperial's city ordinance doesn't allow liquor sales until noon on Sundays, although beer and wine can be sold starting at 6 a.m. seven days a week.

A local liquor store owner requested that earlier alcohol sales on Sunday also be allowed starting at 6 a.m. If changed, alcohol, beer and wine all could be sold starting at 6 a.m. every day of the week.

At Monday night's city council meeting, Kristi Musick, owner of Capitol Liquor, said it becomes an issue when holidays fall on Sundays.

Musick said she was aware of other communities that have changed their codes to allow the earlier sales on Sunday.

"It doesn't hurt to ask," she said.

City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland said communities are allowed to make their codes more restrictive on liquor sales than what the state allows.

The state of Nebraska does allow sale of alcohol, beer and wine starting at 6 a.m. seven days a week.

City Attorney Phil Pierce was directed to draw up the ordinance with the change.

Leyland said the ordinance could be addressed as early as the council's April 27 meeting.

Council President Doug Gaswick conducted Monday night's meeting in the absence of Mayor Annie Longan.

Other council business

- While the Imperial Manor opted not to take part in helping pay for the county's hazardous mitigation plan, the city council overrode their decision with a Monday night vote. Manor Administrator Kathy Andersen said she was not aware their participation in the plan would result in their entity paying for a portion of it. The Manor's cost was \$199.33. Andersen said they had no money budgeted for that expense. However, the council voted 3-0 that the Manor pay the claim and participate in the plan. They felt it was important for the Manor to be a part so that federal funds could be sought on a 75/25 cost share, if a local purchase is warranted. Cost of the plan developed by JEO Consulting was about \$9,000, and is also being shared by the county, city of Imperial, village of Wauneta, Chase County Schools, Wauneta/Palisade Schools, CCC Hospital and the Upper Republican NRD.

- The council approved recommendations from the Citizens Advisory Committee of use of \$4,540 from the economic development half of the city sales tax fund. The money was requested by Community Development Director Carlholm for three areas—\$1,750 for program administration, \$2,000 for a donation to the Imperial Chamber for business recognition/appreciation activities and \$790 to reimburse the city utilities department for rebates given to utility customers who completed the recent Community Survey.

- The city's auditor, Terry Galloway, offered to provide some additional budget preparation work for a cost of \$4,000, that would include recommendations on reserves, rates and fees. The three council members present, Dustin Weiss, Sue Moore and Doug Gaswick, felt the cost was too much. Weiss said he felt it was their job as council members to review the budgets "line by line" rather than have someone else do it. No action was taken.
- A bill to the city from NKC Rail was turned over to City Attorney Phil Pierce. Public Works Supt. Pat Davison said the railroad company increased that fee from \$25 to \$900 the past year for an easement of the city's eight-inch water line that runs underneath the tracks. In the past, Pierce has recommended not paying the bill, but Davison said he continues to get calls about it. Pierce said the railroad would have a difficult time justifying the huge increase if it went to court. The city pays leases to two other railroads of \$75 and \$90.
- A business that had borrowed funds from the city's revolving loan account has been delinquent on payments since the first of the year. The council suggested that Leyland see if a payment plan can be set up to pay the \$1,683 balance.
- Two new employees' wages were approved and another was given a 50-cent per hour raise. Joining the public works department are Jon Fenwick, who will start at \$10 per hour, and Ivan Hansen, a returning employee, who will be paid \$13.50 per hour. Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Janiel Kimble earned a raise from \$11 to \$11.50 after completing her six-month orientation.
- Either an "option to buy," a "right of first refusal" option or a combination of those may be pursued by the city concerning property in the southeast part of Imperial, now owned by Melvin Miller. The availability of an industrial site for potential businesses/industry is necessary for Imperial to be classified a "Certified Community," said Leslie Carlholm, the city's community development director. Being a "Certified Community" opens up additional doors for funding from the state and other sources, she said.