The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Mayor Jacobsen. Council in attendance were Weihs, Griffith(5:35pm), Hemmingsen, and Jacobsen. Absent was Hocker. The Mayor introduced the Council and the City staff in attendance to the public that was present. The Mayor then asked the public to introduce themselves. The Mayor explained the session would go over certain topics that were relevant to the City, infrastructure, economic development, services, and parks and recreation.

**Infrastructure-**  PW Director Bohlmann gave a summary of the status of the sewer project and of the water project. The additional money left after the primary work is done will be used to video the rest of the sewer lines in town and begin to CIP line as resources are available. Questions were raised on how much flow was decreased since many lines have been fixed and affluent water is not making its way into the system. Bohlmann did not have exact numbers, but said that there has been noticeable change, especially in West Audubon. The Mayor explained that the system overall is very old and the City has been lucky to get this far with the condition.

The Water project is progressing well. The largest portion will be the addition of two new wells. The City will also be looking to replace meters in many homes to prepare to go to a monthly billing of utilities instead of the quarterly billing. One resident asked why the rates went up on sewer if there was grant money. Griffith explained that it was because of the debt that was incurred on the sewer work, not all was grant funds. He went on to say that the Council is in the same situation as the residents, the rate increase effect the members of the Council equally as the residents.

**Economic Development-** The City has started to look at a blight study to prepare for setting up tax abatements for residential, commercial, industrial and multi-residential. Laurie Gilbert explained that there is a housing program in the works that will remodel 4 to 5 homes in town and will be sold to income eligible residents. A resident asked if it was only for abandoned or non-occupied houses. Gilbert said it was, but that other programs were available for owner occupied residences. Another resident stated that it is difficult to move to town because if a person wants to build there is a two- year delay in getting started. Gilbert stated that this was due to the local contractors being booked up until then. Sam Kauffman stated that another issue if when an old house is demolished, the lot is too small to rebuild on. Another resident pointed out that the community needs to look at a variety of housing options, apartments for lower income residents, apartments for higher income residents, as well as housing for both lower and higher incomes. Gail Richardson commented on the lack of handicap accessible homes and assisted living options forcing residents to leave Audubon. Another resident asked that several years ago annexation was discussed. Where is that at? The Mayor said that this option hasn’t been ruled out, but it would likely have to be a non-voluntary annexation. A resident asked about the 70 homes that Gilbert has mentioned as being evaluated as options to the housing program. Gilbert explained that some were on tax sale, some the owners simply don’t want to sell. The same resident said many would be livable if someone could purchase and renovate them.

**Services-** One resident asked what are the incentives from the City? The Mayor stated that the Council is working on a tax abatement system for all types of property. Something the City has not had before. A resident pointed out that there are a lot of different avenues like Region XII and ACED to help. Sara Slater explained that ACED had applied for a grant to paint up to 5 building in downtown. A resident stated that the Highway 71 corridor was not appealing to encourage relocation to the area. The Mayor stated that there are a lot of opportunities with other agencies and we need to do a better job of informing the public of those options. The City needs to look at branding itself more. She receives many complaints of neighbor on neighbor about how property looks. Gail Richardson stated that since moving to town in 1975 the number of properties with junk in the yards, both front and back has increased. A City-wide cleanup would be beneficial to helping this problem. Sue Cooner explained that the Hospital has struggles as all rural hospitals do. That the community needs to support the hospital by using it and not going to other hospitals and clinics. While its not in jeopardy of closing down, several years of low use may change the status. A hospital in the community is an important draw to new comers. Griffith wanted to commend the administration for drawing new staff in and increasing the population.

**Parks and Recreation-** Kristin Foran explained why she had originally went on the board. She then explained that the community pool is showing its age and does not have many years left until something major will need to be done. She asked what would be done with the soccer fields in west Audubon now that there is not a soccer program. Laurie Gilbert stated that with the theatre, rec center, golf course and other areas the City has a lot of recreational opportunities. Sara Slater said that ACED is working with the City to get the designation as a home base. This program would attract veterans to the community through targeted incentives. Laurie Gilbert explained to the audience that Manning has gas and electric utilities and that helps tremendously toward finding the funds for matching grants.

adjourn at 6:36p.m. ALL AYED.

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Barbara Jacobsen, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Joseph Foran, City Clerk