



City Manager's Report

March 13th, 2018

Honorable Mayor Cole and City Commissioners Gwin and Brecheisen-Huss,

Over the past couple of months we have been extremely busy with staff shortages. Many different City departments, including City Hall, have been hit hard by sickness, especially over the past couple of weeks. As always, we have been taking necessary measures to get through the challenging times, but we expect some shortages to maintain for a significant amount of time due to some unforeseen and unavoidable upcoming absences. We are moving forward with interviewing and hiring for vacant positions within City Hall and the Sanitation and Transportation department. As I previously mentioned, Les Garber, one of our wastewater operators is retiring next Thursday, March 15th. Les should be commended for serving all but forty (40) years with the City of Garnett, always providing exceptional service to our residents (in a field which never gets much glory).

I attended the U.S. 169 Coalition meeting in Chanute this week with County Commissioner Howarter as we are striving to work together as communities and businesses along highway 169 to expand the highway to four lanes for our mutual economic and safety benefits. I also spoke with our wholesale water customers to discuss with them the proposed water rates ordinance and make sure we all understood the plan moving forward. I believe the proposed ordinance will set us on the right path. I also spoke with Dan Fischer with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding our possibility of obtaining some grant financing through USDA and his initial comments were that we were not going to be eligible. This was based upon their review of our financial data from the past three years. After I explained to him that not all of the water fund's expenses have been reflected in our financial documents for the water fund over that time

period (for instance insurance and utility costs were never accounted for in the water fund) they are willing to reconsider. Therefore, I am working to schedule a meeting with Mike Billings from the USDA to sit down with him and explain what our expenses have truly been for the water fund historically in order to give them a better picture of our financial need.

President Trump just recently announced plans to implement tariffs on imported steel and aluminum. If such tariffs are in fact implemented, the cost of steel for our plant will likely increase by twenty percent (20%) or more – increasing the overall cost for the plant. I have our engineers working on how much such an increase could actually end up costing us. Director of Community Development Wettstein put together a proposal for a new economic opportunity zones program which could be a valuable economic development tool for Garnett if we are selected by the Governor. Each Governor can select up to twenty-five (25) census tracts in their State to participate in the program which provides tax incentives for investors wanting to invest in an economic development project in the local community. Mrs. Wettstein put together an excellent project proposal and we hope to hear back on this initiative sometime next month.

As for the agenda, I have received a request from East Kansas Agri Energy (EKAE) to close Main Street from Thirteenth (13th) Avenue to Highway 169 on Saturday, March 24th as the *American Chopper* television show is going to be at the Ethanol Plant filming the unveiling of a motorcycle for the Renewable Fuels Association. We will be partnering with the Ethanol Plant to utilize the school district's busses to transport interested spectators from the High School parking lot. We will pay for the lease of the busses and the corresponding insurance and East Kansas Agri Energy is going to reimburse us. I recommend approval of this closure as the local home owners most directly impacted are being contacted to have any concerns addressed and Chief of Police King has no objections.

The Water Rates ordinance on Item B is for your review and discussion. As you will see, I went ahead and built out increases for the next couple of years as a part of this ordinance. The purpose in this is that our existing contracts with the rural water districts stipulate that we can only pass an ordinance increasing rates on them once every three years. Therefore, we are forced to either increase their rates immediately to what they will be at the end of the planned increases – or we have to incorporate all of the planned increases in this one ordinance. Likewise, we are

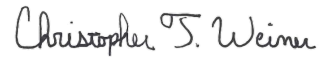
only able to increase rates on the water districts when we pass a corresponding increase onto our other customers. I welcome any feedback and request your approval at the next Commission meeting on March 27th barring no significant obstacles arise. Unfortunately, with Item C you will see that our ISO rating for building codes and code enforcement has went down. This will negatively impact our property owners in the community as they will likely see increased premiums on their property insurance moving forward. The most significant way to improve our rating is to adopt the new, or at least newer, building codes. I fully recommend we do so. If the Governing Body is so inclined to look at updating our codes to the most recent version, the ISO rating organization is willing to give us a grace period to discuss and adopt the new codes prior to finalizing the most recent rating downgrade. After visiting with staff and Sheriff Valentine, I believe we have found an alternative location to house the vehicles needing to be stored for law enforcement purposes. This location is much better in terms of zoning regulations as it currently sits in an industrial zone, which allows for this activity. This location is just east of the City's utility shop on South Oak. I have attached a few pictures of the location for your review. We plan to move forward with an intergovernmental agreement with the County for the joint use of this property. The County will pay for and put up the fence and gravel the location. We will put up a power pole and provide a security light. In the event you have a significant concern or questions regarding this plan, please let me know.

We are still working on the budget conversion unfortunately, although as our new software system requires the year to be closed out by the end of March, we will be doing everything we can to get this completed as quickly as possible.

February's employee of the month is Mr. Gary Giczewski. Gary always has a great attitude and there is never a time when he is asked if he can take care of something or look into something that he doesn't get right on it. He shows great moral character when dealing with difficult individuals and situations. He takes his role as the Planning Commission Facilitator very seriously and is always extremely prepared. Gary has taken on a lot more responsibilities an projects than the previous zoning administrator including the new flood plain mapping and ISO projects. Gary is an excellent employee and I am proud to have the opportunity to work with him and all of our wonderful City staff.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions and I appreciate the opportunity to serve you and the Garnett community as your City Manager.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher T. Weiner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Christopher T. Weiner, City Manager