



City Manager's Report

July 28th, 2020

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

As we had our annual financial audit presented at our last City Commission meeting, last week we also had our annual gas utility system audit conducted by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC). I am pleased to announce that we had zero violations or concerns from the KCC. I have to give a tremendous amount of credit here to our gas utility supervisor Raymond Arnett and our other gas operator John Rogers. Ray and John have done an absolutely tremendous job keeping our gas system functioning at a high level through a challenging set of circumstances without a Director of Public Works for the past year, and being short an additional crew member for a good portion of that time. Ray and John both are terrific at their jobs and commend them for yet another yet of exceptional work.

I met with our U.S. Representative Steve Watkins this past week regarding our water plant project and other challenges our community is facing. I also met with and gave a tour of our community to our Kansas State Treasurer Jacob LaTurner on Monday. Mr. LaTurner is running against Mr. Watkins for the U.S. House of Representatives seat encompassing Garnett. I also met with a group of residents from the Lakeshore Drive neighborhood to discuss their concerns regarding their deteriorating street. I am hoping to have enough resources to rebuild the road within the next few years. I also attended the tax sale today and all but one property within the Garnett City Limits up for bid at the sale sold. Thankfully, the condemned downtown structure which was formerly Denise's Café was purchased and we met with the new owner and discussed steps toward getting the property up to code. We will continue to meet and work with the property owner toward this end.

On Wednesday the 22nd, the Kansas State School Board overruled Governor Kelly's executive order regarding delaying the beginning of school until after Labor Day. That same day, USD 365 announced that they are planning to begin school on the 19th of August. Based off these decisions, as previously decided at the last meeting, we will keep the pool closed this season.

We have hired two additional employees to fill the open positions at the Utility Plant. I would like to welcome Jeff Mucklow and Jeff Finn! This fills all of our open positions except Director of Public Works and, of course, the open Patrol Officer positions. I was contacted and have met with a student from Anderson County High School who is requesting to work study with us for this coming school year.

The first item on the agenda is the consideration of Resolution 2020-8 concerning the Coronavirus Relief Fund. This Resolution is required to obtain funding via the CARES Act for the costs accrued during the COVID-19 pandemic. We currently anticipate receiving reimbursement for more than \$10,000 worth of expenses. The second item on the agenda is the consideration of Ordinance 4213 which amends Ordinance 4212 relating to Food Trucks. Attorney Solander has drafted this ordinance with the addition of a 72 hour permit for which you can set the fee as it has been left blank. Attorney Solander has also left the time limit section blank for your determination if you would still like to limit the amount of time per day food trucks can operate. Next on the agenda is the Water Treatment Plant Supplemental Agreement from PEC. This is for the architectural services from Yaeger Architecture as previously selected. Item D on the agenda is the update to the residency policy in the personnel manual. Please refer to City Clerk Wilson's report from our meeting on the 14th and the plethora of information he provided in regards to this policy. As directed, residency requirements have been removed for all positions except those in department head positions or on call positions. On call positions will be required to live within a thirty-minute drive time at the legal rate of speed. Item E is the Agreement with the Garnett Country Club as previously discussed with Mr. Solander's modification to invalidate our previous agreement.

Item E on the agenda is the discussion of a mask mandate. As you know, the County Commission has opted out of a mask mandate for Anderson County. The Anderson County Reopening Task Force has discussed the mandate on multiple occasions and the health care professionals feel as if a mask mandate is necessary. Currently, as of Friday morning, we have 6 active cases of COVID-19 in the county. I have met with the County Commission on this particular issue a few different times and thus far they are still reluctant to issue a mask mandate. They suggested that the City issue one instead as we are the dense population center of the county. This has been done in other cities when the county has opted out, such as Parsons and Wichita, and you do have the authority to issue such a mandate. I initially had no issue with the County opting out of the Governor's order as there is no true mechanism for enforcement. However, based upon my experience over the past few weeks in other communities that do have mask mandates, a significantly higher percentage of the population were wearing masks

in stores and such situations as are recommended by the CDC. They as well are not enforcing the mask mandate to my knowledge. This leads me to believe that the only variable between the higher rate of compliance is the difference between a recommendation and a mandate.

Finally, the last item on the agenda is the consideration of semi-monthly bills and payroll in the amount of \$226,995.86.

Continued safety and health to all your families. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Christopher T. Weiner, City Manager