



## **City Manager's Report**

November 12, 2019

Honorable Mayor Gwin and City Commissioners Brecheisen-Huss and Cole, Unfortunately, the autumn weather seems to have passed us by this year. City Departments are gearing up for the cold and snow that is creeping towards us. Bettis Asphalt has completed the street improvements that you approved earlier this year. As you know, this year we mainly addressed badly potholed intersections and a couple of blocks of street. We were able to include Elm Street as you requested from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Kaw in the improvements. Unfortunately, our street projects this year will end up using up almost every bit of our budget and therefore we will not have much excess carryover to help save up for the upcoming maple street drainage project. As I've mentioned previously, in my opinion, we need to look into generating more revenue to put into street improvements. As has also been previously addressed, I believe it is of paramount importance to start performing routine maintenance, via sealing our roads, on our street infrastructure. As I mentioned previously regarding available resources, I recognize that they are very limited compared to our community-wide need; however, if we don't take efforts to preserve the investments we've made over the past few years through new asphalt overlays by sealing those streets, I believe we will be right back fixing those same roads through much more expensive pothole repairs and another mill and overlay will be needed.

Since our last meeting I attended a couple County Commission meetings including one to discuss the possible transportation improvements as being considered in the new airport master plan update. I also attended the open house for WestRock Solutions in their new facility downtown. I have to mention that I was extremely impressed with their facility and operation and encourage you to visit their business if you have not had the opportunity yet. I also conducted interviews with multiple candidates for our open Director of Public Works position as well as for

an opening in our utility production department at the water and power plants. As I mentioned previously, we were pleased to be awarded the Leadership Transformation Grant that we applied for through the Kansas Leadership Center and I, along with our Core Team of Susan Wettstein, Kurt King, Raymond Armond, and Nancy Hermreck attended the kickoff meeting for the leadership program. All of us, including Core Team member Travis Wilson who couldn't make the kickoff meeting, will look to begin the program next year and start to have others in the organization start shortly thereafter as well. I also met with the Chamber on the Christmas Parade and Lighting Ceremony preparations, local Contractor Tom Adams on our upcoming sewer point repair project, and multiple staff members, Mayor Gwin, and a resident concerning a code enforcement complaint.

Now that we are at a calm point in the year with the budget and audit being complete, I would like to continue with your review of the Municipal Code Book as soon as possible. We have been running into some issues that I believe it would be advantageous to have a clear consensus on what the Governing Body desires the law to be, whether it is to keep current with what is on the books, or if you would prefer to change the law. If each of you could provide me with the best dates to meet over the next month, that would greatly help this process. I will be attending the League's Regional Supper in Burlington on the 14<sup>th</sup>. As I mentioned in my email last week, I encourage any of you who are able to attend. The League has also emailed out the link for their Strategic Plan Survey. You may remember that this was brought up at the League Conference. They are asking that all Municipalities participate by November 22<sup>nd</sup> at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/55JMZJM>. We are planning the City's annual Christmas Party for December 13<sup>th</sup>. The City will also have a float in the Chamber's Annual Christmas Parade on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

We are very close to reaching an agreement with the Anderson County Fire Department. City Attorney Solander and I attended the County Commission meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> to express the concerns we had with the wording of the document. The County Commission appeared open to discussion on these topics. City Attorney Solander and I will again be attending their meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> for further, hopefully final, discussions. I recently attended the Housing Authority Advisory Board meeting after Mr. Jim Cooper asked me to have him added to the agenda to

discuss the need for additional senior housing. Mr. Cooper is a previous Housing Authority Board Member and played a role in the development of the Park Plaza North apartments we have today. The need for more senior housing, or at least a feasibility study to consider it's merits, was discussed and I believe will be an ongoing discussion in the future. As you know, Housing Authority Executive Director Karlyn Hulett and I have had meetings with multiple contractors regarding the need for senior housing as well as possibly partnering on a project to add units to the Park Plaza North development as we have a significant waiting list. I also attended the Garnett Community Foundation Board meeting in which we discussed the function and structure of other foundations. The Board discussed developing a set of their own bylaws and regulations to help guide future decisions and direction for the organization. Last month, I attended the Tax Sale for the properties in Anderson County which have a minimum of three years of delinquent taxes. Out of the fourteen (14) properties listed on the tax sale in Garnett, five (5) of them were not sold. According to County Counselor James Campbell, these properties will remain with their current owners. Therefore, it is likely that these same five (5) properties will be put on the next tax sale, possibly in 2022. Each property could have been purchased for \$46.00 a piece at the Tax Sale; however, given that they did not sell, all the back taxes remain with the property now and any transaction to obtain the property would require those taxes be paid. The Denise's Café building was one property that did not sell and I have met with Director Giczewski to begin advertising to complete demolition of the structure as it has already been condemned.

On this agenda you will notice a claim for damages from the Dutch Country Café in the amount of \$4,022.07. This claim comes from one of our trash trucks hitting their utility pole's guide wire with the dumpster while it was being emptied. Unfortunately, this resulted in the electrical service being torn off the side of the building and disconnecting service to the restaurant. Our Refuse Supervisor had mentioned the issue with the placement of the dumpsters to the business owner prior to this incident, but this location was still utilized to try and conserve parking spaces. I met with the owner and operator of the facility and we have since been able to resolve the placement issue to hopefully ensure this does not occur again. The second item on the agenda is a recommendation from myself that we look at changing the date of our second

meeting in December as it falls on Christmas Eve. This cycle's total for bills and payroll is \$197,964.52.

We have received word back on our proposal to relocate the playground area (park land) that will be displaced by the construction of the new water treatment facility to the other side of the south lake. Unfortunately, our proposal was denied as the proposed area is already part of an area deemed "parkland". KDHE's decision is as follows:

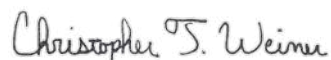
"After initial review, the conversion replacement site does not qualify as an appropriate site. Since the site is located within the park, it doesn't qualify. You have to find property that isn't already considered park land. According to our park property maps, the entire south park is within the 6(f)(3) boundary. If the city has land that isn't currently deemed parkland, they can possibly use that as conversion land. Or they can purchase other property elsewhere that would be developed into outdoor recreation for the community."

We are looking into other possible city-owned, non-parkland, areas to propose, prior to looking into purchasing additional land. Additionally, I would like to note that we have thankfully received comments back on the preliminary engineering report (PER) quicker than expected. Professional Engineering Consultants (PEC), our engineering consultant, will be addressing these comments to make the necessary changes to the PER, and we hope to have full PER approval by Christmas. Based on this scenario, we hope to have a full plan set of design documents completed by May and be ready to go to bid for the new water treatment facility in June or July.

This month's Employee of the Month is Travis Wilson. Travis has been doing an excellent job as our City Clerk and he is always helping others. Travis is a terrific team player and goes above and beyond to make sure the job gets done. He is excellent with customers and is able to effectively handle the stress and pressure of a very challenging job.

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

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Weiner, City Manager