



City Manager's Report

January 28, 2020

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

January is coming to an end and we are almost out of the hustle and bustle of the beginning of the new year. City Hall staff has made the transition of meter books and accounting information look almost effortless as they dive into 2020. Human Resource Director Hermreck has been extremely busy preparing W2's, ensuring that all employee benefit information has been updated, while also transferring all employees over to our Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Health Insurance plan. The Gas Department is gearing up for their annual inspections by completing the required reporting and I would like to thank Director Wettstein for once again assisting the Gas Department with this task. We have started fully utilizing our new timeclock system and while we've had some hiccups, it is working marvelously and is proving to be a much more efficient process than our previous system. I, along with Directors Hart and Arnett, and City Clerk Wilson, attended the first of a six-week program at the high school where we presented on City operations and answered questions. I think this program will be terrific and we are all happy to meet with our local youth and help educate them on what services the City provides. I also attended the County Commission meeting and spoke with them about the possibility of a temporary prohibition of heavy trucks for park road of which they were not in favor. However, I also spoke with Donna Schmidt of the Kansas Department of Transportation and it appears that we may not have as much rerouting heavy truck traffic on our local roads as initially expected as the highway will not be completely closed until they have completed the section north of the US-59/US-169 junction (5-mile junction) and no detour signs will be posted until shortly before the junction, thereby eliminating much of the concern from the trucks.

I also spoke with the County Commissioners regarding the situation with Denise's café and if we can obtain significant verified and committed interest in rehabilitating the property, they have indicated a willingness to consider working with us and the prospective buyer on the back taxes. I have asked the school superintendent, Don Blome, about the same and he indicated he would speak to the School Board regarding the situation. I also met with the local property owners on Neosho road just outside of City limits, and those who I was able to obtain a response from considered the proposition of being annexed, but favor being left in the county. I informed them that the City Commission may still elect to annex the properties regardless, but that I would relay their preference. I also have been working with Economic Development Director Julie Turnipseed on an industrial development opportunity presented to us this week. While this is an exciting opportunity, it would come with costs – as we would need to expand our plans for the new water treatment facility. Earlier this week I attended the monthly Planning Commission meeting with Zoning Administrator Giczewski and Director Wettstein where we discussed Dr. Henderson's variance for the storage container. During this meeting, we discussed the challenges presented given that the storage container had been left in the front yard for approximately three years. The City had previously agreed to allow Mr. Henderson to utilize the storage container due to the devastating water damage at his home from a water leak. The original intent was to have temporary storage accommodated for furniture and the like, but it obviously took much longer than either the City or Dr. Henderson expected. As the City had agreed to this arrangement, we worked with Dr. Henderson to try and get the storage container out of his yard as soon as possible. He was finally able to have the repair work completed here a few months ago at which point we expected the container to be moved. He then decided that he wanted to keep the container, moving it to his side yard, and convert it into a storage shed. We informed him that this was not allowed via our zoning regulations, at which point he proceeded to request a hearing in front of the Board of Zoning Appeals in order to try and obtain a variance to store his container in his side yard. Which has brought us to where we are today, requesting your action upon the special use permit for the eight-foot tall fence he desires to build around the container, thereby shielding it from view. Moving forward, we will be issuing temporary written agreements for any such usage of these containers to avoid similar situations from occurring in the future.

I also attended the League of Kansas Municipalities' Local Government Day this past Wednesday and listening to Governor Kelly, and multiple legislators give an overview of expectations for this year's legislative session. I also met with our local Kansas House Representative Mark Samsel and State Senator Caryn Tyson. I had good conversations with both of them and am hopeful we will see some positive changes for municipalities this year, including the restoration of the Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund and progress toward repealing the tax lid.

Our community development team has been working on submitting a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Pathways to a Healthy Kansas Grant. They wrote and submitted the grant application this past week. We are calling this proposal (mainly comprised the Garnett Community Development Team) - SING - Simply Inspire a New/Healthy Garnett. This was Director Phil Bures' idea. We will let you know if the letter gets us to the next level - Application Packet. The grant could potentially be \$50,000 for four (4) years (\$200,000) with project money to be granted up to a total of \$500,000. The goal is to be able to write part of our current part-time rec center employee's, Sami Jo, salary as a full-time position into the grant, thus being able to fully utilize her expertise and she also be the coordinator of the grant.

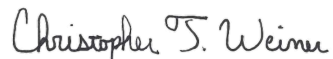
The first couple of items on the agenda are the annual appointment amongst yourselves for the positions of Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tempore. Item C for your consideration is the Special Use Permit for David Henderson that was tabled at our last meeting. The Planning Commission met on January 21st, an overview of the variance granted from that meeting are included in your packet. The Planning Commission approved the variance for the storage container pending your approval of the Special Use Permit. If you do not approve the Special Use Permit, then the variance becomes null and void. Director Giczewski has asked Attorney Solander to review the information and he will provide guidance or tweaks, as needed, at the Commission meeting.

Items D and E are both agreements for annual events, first from the Kansas City Karting Association for the races on the Sprit Track, the next from Christians Always Ready to Serve (CARTS) for the Community Easter Egg Hunt. Finally, is the consideration of the bills and payroll in the amount of \$331,337.70.

You will also see a letter from the League explaining the benefits of utilizing the Service Line Warranty Program through USP. We discussed this last year as well, but you were not interested at that time. I just thought I would check and see if your interest has changed at all. As you can see the program has saved Kansas homeowners over \$4 million in repair costs over the past three years. The program is endorsed by the League of Kansas Municipalities as well as the National League of Cities. Last but not least, some highlights of the State's new transportation strategic plan, *Forward*. This plan will call for projects to be selected every two years through local consultation meetings rather than at the start of the planning process as was done with T-Works. Hopefully, this means positive things for the US-169 corridor and Garnett in particular as we'll have multiple opportunities over the coming years to plead our case for a safer and more well-developed highway. As with anything, this plan is largely dependent upon available resources and the State's ability to fund it. The Secretary of Transportation plans to seek legislative approval of the plan in the coming weeks.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher T. Weiner".

Christopher T. Weiner, City Manager