



## **City Manager's Report**

February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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

The past few weeks have been busy with laying out plans for this year and into the future and making trips to Topeka to visit with our Legislators. I've attended multiple events in Topeka here recently, namely, the League of Municipalities' Legislative Day, the Kansas Economic Development Authority's Legislative Day, and Kansas Municipal Utilities' Legislative Day. All of these events proved to be valuable as I was able to have valuable conversations with legislators, other leaders from around the region and State, and attend excellent presentations and workshops. Due to connections and ideas obtained from these workshops we will be attempting to bring some best practices and successful programs from elsewhere, into Garnett. I am working on setting up a regularly scheduled conference call with our Kansas House Representative, Mark Samsel, to keep him abreast on how legislative bills being considered in Topeka affect our cities. We've been researching possible grant opportunities for a variety of possible projects. I have also been completing interviews for our open City Clerk position and hope to be able to announce the permanent hire at the City Commission meeting. I also attended the County Commission meeting and have been working with department heads on their planned equipment purchases for this year.

This meeting's agenda starts with a presentation from Jay Norco, at the Commission's request, to present on our plan for wastewater line and plant improvements. Jay is our wastewater engineer and developed the plan which we have been working with for the past couple of years. Jay is extremely familiar with our system as he designed our existing plant. Item B is consideration of the Charter Ordinance setting the structure of a five-member City Commission. Item C is an ordinance adopting the recommendation of the Planning Commission

and rezoning two properties next to Anderson County Hospital from “Residential” to “Office – Institutional”. This is the same proposal which previously came before the Governing Body and had to be tabled due to the need to restart the process because of a miscommunication on the part of City staff. At this meeting, there was discussion from concerned residents regarding the impact on neighborhood property values and increased traffic flows. They were encouraged to attend the City Commission meeting to express their concerns to the City Commission, if they still had reservations. Item D is the re-appointment of myself for the Director #1 position on the Board of Directors for our power purchasing group, the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency (KMEA). Director Mills is our other Director and Director Hart is our Alternate. The Tourism Committee heard three requests for transient guest tax funding from the BPW, Farm Bureau, and Chamber Player’s. The Tourism Committee recommends approving the request from BPW and Farm Bureau for the Women’s Fair in a reduced amount, from \$817.63 to \$585.13, and recommends that they look to reinvent and find ways to draw in more people from outside the area. The Planning Commission recommends approval of the requested amounts from BPW and the Chamber Players Community Theatre for the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Square Fair in the amount of \$1,630.57 and the Live Dinner Theatre events in the amount of \$3,450, respectively. The bills and payroll this past cycle total \$294,804.70.

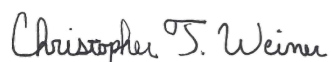
This month’s employee of the month is Julie Turnipseed. Julie has done an absolutely tremendous job since joining the team as our Director of Economic Development. She is an extremely positive person and consistently brings out the best in others. We have recently attended meetings and conferences together and she always handles herself very professionally and exudes enthusiasm for Garnett. She has a great attitude and work ethic and is a tremendous asset to the City of Garnett and Anderson County.

I’ve also completed our unofficial end of year financial report (the official will obviously come when the audit is completed later this year – Jarred, Gilmore, and Phillips are planning to be here in May to start the audit). As I’ve mentioned before, we had a good year financially, as we ended the year with \$1.1 million more than we started it. This is a seventeen percent (17%) increase in our financial reserves in just one year. As you will be able to discern from the report however, not every fund saw an increase and some saw significantly more than others. I do not

have any concerns regarding any of our funds' cash reserves position for 2019. Long term, as I've mentioned before, I do have some concerns regarding a few funds. Every fund came in under budget except for one, the Equipment Reserve Fund, which is an unbudgeted fund statutorily and therefore is not a problem. Given the request Commissioner Cole made of the Commission at the last meeting and the suggestions I offered for some long-term goals and vision, the increases in our cash balances in a few funds provide us with an opportunity to plan more or larger projects with these resources. I will specifically highlight the Special Highway Fund, as it is sitting with almost \$100,000 in it – we are still awaiting bids from some area contractors on curb cuts and ADA ramps – we expect to accomplish quite a few of these improvements this year. However, this \$100,000 could be utilized to put toward a grant match on a major sidewalk or street project. I have been speaking with a few different engineering firms regarding a drainage improvement project for Maple Street which KDOT may help us fund, but would require a match from us as well. The Tourism Fund also has a nice balance in it at just over \$30,000. These resources will be valuable in helping to grow and improve our local events and improve tourism in our community. The electric fund is sitting well at almost a two (2) million dollar reserve, still posting an increase this year even after purchasing some significant equipment. Due to this reserve level, I believe we could look toward potentially financing power plant upgrades while also continuing on with the next step in the electric department's equipment reserve plan or looking toward other system improvements. The Gas Fund is similarly in good shape and has resources to make system upgrades as well. However, given the pending water plant financing, and the corresponding decrease in water fund transfers to subsidize our tax levy funds, we will likely need the Gas reserves to supplant those transfers. The electric fund will also likely see its transfer burden increased in order to support the tax levy funds once our water fund resources are consumed via debt service.

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