



City Manager's Report

May 12th, 2020

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

I am looking forward to being back in our Commission Chambers for this meeting. I would like to begin by thanking Director of Electric Production Bob Mills and his department for installing the plexiglass barriers in the front lobby of City Hall. As you know, we have reopened to the public as of Monday, May the Fourth (be with you). Most other departments remain closed to the public as per the Phase 1 guidelines. We are all hoping to open back to full operations in the coming weeks. Staying on the topic of COVID-19, I spoke with Anderson County Hospital CEO Rich McKain and the Hospital is gradually resuming outpatient and elective services. Their plan is to follow a four-phase approach based on the state and national guidelines.

We have been fortunate to avoid significant storm damage over this past week as those around us have been hit rather hard. We sent a mutual aid crew of an electric bucket truck and two electric linemen to assist getting power restored in Ottawa this past Monday evening. We have been getting our own severe weather plans in place and I spoke with Anderson County Director of Emergency Management J.D. Mersman regarding the FEMA safe room we are hoping to have installed. Mr. Mersman indicated that unfortunately the state emergency management staff who were working on this program have been reassigned.

I spoke with Chris Greenwell, the owner of ProSeal (the company we have hired to perform our street preservation maintenance this year), regarding the possibility of providing a discount on the per unit cost price on our agreement due to the significant decline in oil prices. Unfortunately, he indicated that their price has not gone down at all and he does not expect it to, if the market for the oil their product needs follows the same trend that the last oil crash (2008) did, their product cost will actually increase rather than decrease. He mentioned they hope to be here sometime late summer, assuming the weather cooperates.

I spoke with a concerned resident regarding the parks and playground equipment. He was insistent that we open up the playgrounds as he didn't feel there was much risk involved. I informed him that our plan was to allow playground access with the beginning of phase II of Governor Kelly's plan, currently slated for May 18th (I've attached her plan for your review). He mentioned that he plans to attend the Commission meeting and argue for an immediate opening. As the Governor's plan does not explicitly prohibit use of playground equipment in Phase One, this is a local decision. We have made this decision based upon a recommendation from the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to not use playgrounds – I've attached the applicable section for your review. Additionally, given the lifespan of the virus on solid surfaces (plastic and stainless steel up to three days) and our inability to disinfect each surface between users, we kept the playgrounds closed in the interest of safety.

Another couple of important recreational issues are the summer baseball and softball season and the swimming pool. At our most recent community reopening task force meeting, we discussed the restrictions provided for playing ball this summer. Some of these very challenging restrictions were reduced to make it more possible to play this season although that will still depend on the decision from other teams in our recreational league. We play in a recreational league with multiple other communities as we do not have enough local teams to play intramurally (especially with the significantly reduced participants we have this year). There is a League meeting planned today to make a decision on whether or not to play or cancel the season this year for the entire league. As for the swimming pool, we will hold a discussion regarding it at our task force meeting next week. This is another challenging situation as we have a significant challenge that even once the Governor allows pools to open (Phase II), we will have a shortage of certified lifeguards. We are trying to get lifeguards trained and certified, but this is a significant challenge this year due to the restrictions on social distancing and lack of training opportunities from certified trainers. There are also concerns regarding the safety and ability to maintain social distancing at the pool, but there is conflicting information on the risk involved in this activity. As of today (May 7th), nine Kansas communities have already decided to not open at all, nine are going to try and open June 1st, and nineteen have indicated that will not open until June 15th, if it all. It is going to be a difficult decision no matter what decision is made. The swimming pool is a tremendous public amenity, especially for our youth. Unfortunately, training guards, keeping guards, cleaning, liability, and all of the extra cost this year are significant concerns.

I have spoken with multiple businesses and discussed their reopening plans with them as well as Director's Turnipseed and Hix (Economic Development and Garnett Chamber of Commerce) continued their ongoing communication efforts with local businesses to help them prepare for reopening in Phase I of the Governor's plan. As you know, I have been working with a local property owner to try and obtain some land for our water plant project, for the park land conversion. I believe we are close to an agreement and hope to have one secured by our next meeting. We have also had both of our water towers inspected over the past week and the older tower is in good shape while the newer tower, out on Westgate, needs some interior repairs. I should be receiving a formal inspection report and pictures and will share them with you for our next meeting. We are finalizing logistical plans with U.S. Cellular to have a new antenna placed upon the Main St. water tower as we've previously discussed.

As we need to have the notification for a public hearing published at least ten days prior to the meeting, we will hold our public hearing for the USDA grant for new police vehicles at the beginning of the next City Commission meeting. Additionally, we are planning to apply for the same grant program for the Library for a new roof – as it is in need of replacement. We are expecting the \$20,000 grant from the FAA from the CARES Act. Between this and the KDOT Crack Sealing grant, we will more than cover the cost of our share of ineligible expenses for the airport fueling apron and taxiway rehabilitation project at \$17,550. I have attached the updated Airport Capital Improvement Plan Data Sheet (ACIP) for reference. We are still awaiting responses from contractors on crack sealing bids and work at the airport for this summer.

The first item on the agenda is a proclamation designating May 2020 as Community Action month at the request of the East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation (ECKAN). This proclamation is a customary show of support for ECKAN. The second item is the Landbank Discussion as requested by the Anderson County Development Agency (ACDA) last meeting. I am expecting a couple of ACDA board members to attend during this discussion. Item C is the consideration of waiving late fees for April 2020 Utility Bills. As you know, it was decided to evaluate this on a monthly basis. I have included the breakdown for revenue loss for the disconnection and late fees from March and April. Thank you to City Clerk Wilson and Billing Clerk Schooler for coming up with these numbers.

March Reconnection Fees: \$5,150.00 (103 Accounts)

April Reconnection Fees: \$3,100.00 (62 Accounts)

April Late fees waived: \$3,157.20 (261 Accounts)

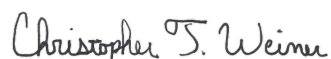
Total fees waived: \$11,407.20

This does not include the 10% give back in which 36 non-essential businesses were given the discount for a total of \$957.86. This amounts to a total of \$12,365.06 in utility charges waived. Please let me know your decision on if you would like to continue waiving these late fees for the bills due in May (for March – April service). Item D is a project consideration from the Police Department. Information concerning the details of the project is included in this packet and Chief King will be at the meeting to discuss the benefits of these plate readers. Next, at the request of Commissioner Gwin, is discussion regarding possible food truck regulations. You may recall we discussed food trucks briefly at a previous meeting with some support for regulating them. I have included the City of Lawrence's Ordinance concerning their food truck regulations, as a reference. I have also included our fee breakdown sheet that lists what all city charged fees are for Garnett. It is my hope that we might draft a single ordinance to set all fees for each year. Finally, for your consideration is the semi-monthly bills and payroll in the amount of \$252,234.84.

Our employee of the month for April is John Rogers. John has been nominated for having an upbeat and positive attitude. John is always eager for any task and to help his fellow departments. John is one of our most recent hires but he is very quickly learning the in's and out's of the Gas and Water Department and he is always eager to learn more. We are very lucky to have John on our team! I have also included the April financial report as well as further information of the airport project and the State's reopening plan. Financially, you will notice a significant uptick in expenses for the month of April. As you may recall, this was substantially due to paying our annual property and liability insurance premium, as well as significant payments for engineering work on the water treatment facility and construction work on the sewer point repair project. We have started to feel the impact of reduced taxes and utility revenues due to the economic shutdown. I expect this month's revenues to be significantly worse unfortunately.

Safety and health to all your families, and if you have any questions or concerns please let me know.

Sincerely,

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

Christopher T. Weiner, City Manager