



## City Manager's Report

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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

Thank you for bearing with us through another Zoom meeting. Hopefully, before much longer we can return to the regular Commission Chambers. As you probably have heard, the White House has released new guidelines articulating the process they are recommending for reopening our economy and daily lives. Here's how the new guidelines envision easing social distancing restrictions:

**Phase one:** Restaurants, movie theaters, sporting venues, places of worship and gyms can reopen if they observe strict social distancing. Elective surgeries can resume when appropriate on an outpatient basis.

Schools currently closed should remain shut and visits to senior living facilities and hospitals should be prohibited. Bars should remain closed. High-risk individuals should remain at home.

**Phase two:** Schools and organized youth activities like camps can reopen. Nonessential travel can resume, and people can start circulating in parks, outdoor recreational areas and shopping centers, while avoiding gatherings of more than 50 individuals unless unspecified precautionary measures are taken. Restaurants, movie theaters and other large venues can operate under moderate social distancing rules.

Vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place, and employers should continue to encourage telework whenever possible. Common areas where people congregate in close quarters should be closed. Bars can operate with diminished standing-room occupancy.

**Phase three:** Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions but practice social distancing. Employers can resume unrestricted staffing of workplaces. Large public venues can operate under limited social distancing rules. Visits to senior care facilities and hospitals can resume.

The document also outlines "core state preparedness responsibilities," including having adequate testing and screening, the ability to supply enough protective gear and medical equipment and plans to surge intensive care beds, if needed.

**The big picture:** It leaves the final say in any loosening of restrictions to state and local officials, adding that governors should work on a regional basis to progress through the phased recovery. The document repeats past federal guidance on personal hygiene — including urging people to wear masks or face coverings when in public. Employers should consider temperature checks, social distancing and doing their own testing and contact tracing. It urges barring anyone with symptoms from returning to work until they are cleared by a medical provider.

As for the drug we discussed last month, hydroxychloroquine, which showed promising signs of treating the COVID-19 illness – a couple of different studies released this week (one from France and the other from the University of Virginia and National Institute of Health, have shown that this drug unfortunately has no statistically significant difference in a patient's chances of being admitted to an intensive care unit or the death rate. While these are just two small samples and more testing will continue to be done, this data is certainly disappointing.

On a more positive note, Anderson County Director of Emergency Management JD Mersman is putting together a "Restart Committee" comprised of local governmental and healthcare leadership. We plan to start holding conference calls soon to craft a game plan for once the expected stay at home order is lifted and decision making is returned to the local level. Director of Economic Development Julie Turnipseed and Chamber Director Kris Hix have continued reaching out to our local businesses to offer them support and make sure they are aware of both the federal assistance programs and the Community Give Back Program (CGBP) available to them.

Director Turnipseed and I have also been working with a couple of different prospective business owners. They both appear to have serious interest in available properties in town and we hope to be able to bring these new businesses to town. Property taxes, as you know, are a significant burden for our community members and businesses and this is one of the key obstacles to overcome for at least one of these businesses. We are continuing to work with them to try and find a solution. Director Turnipseed has been extensively involved with our local Morning Mingle group and they are hoping to obtain some planters to place around the square, which would be a nice aesthetic addition to our downtown. They were hopeful the school might

be able to build the planters, although that is obviously a challenge right now and so they are looking for ways to possibly purchase them.

We have continued to take measures to protect our staff and have obtained extra hand sanitizer and are working to procure masks. Our staff continues to work staggered shifts in teams and engage in social distancing as much as possible. As Anderson County Hospital (ACH) CEO Rich McKain mentioned at our last meeting, ACH has established a special program to test first responders for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms. This is to get them tested and back to work as soon as possible, hopefully avoiding the 14-day quarantine. As you know, Fire Chief Pat Tate is retiring at the end of next month and we still hope to be able to hold his retirement party as scheduled on May 29<sup>th</sup>. We obviously may end up having to postpone this, however. If so, I will let you know when we are able to get it rescheduled. I have appointed Wesley Skillman, our current Assistant Fire Chief, to succeed Pat as Fire Chief. Mr. Skillman will be taking on Pat's position in a volunteer capacity, as the Fire Chief's position was prior to Mr. Tate taking the position. Code enforcement responsibilities, currently a part of the Fire Chief's role, will be transitioned over to the Police Department. I have also started the process of interviewing applicants for the open Director of Public Works position. As I mentioned last meeting, we have purchased a new Gator and lawn mower for the parks department as was planned in the equipment reserve plan for this year. The parks department purchased a larger, 72-inch mower and traded in one of our three tractors. As Director Phil Bures will I'm sure address in his next monthly report, the larger mower will allow our staff to get significantly more mowed in the same amount of time, freeing up time to improve maintenance efforts elsewhere. The tractor we traded in was rarely ever utilized and no other department had a use for it. Unfortunately for the Parks and Recreation Department, we were not successful in our Pathways grant application. We have asked for feedback to be able to draft a more competitive application the next cycle. I would like to thank Sami Jo Peine, Phil Bures, Kris Hix, Julie Turnipseed, and Susan Wettstein for all of their hard work on this application.

As you know, we are working on the curb and gutter at First Avenue and Spruce Street. As we need to lower the street surface to mesh with the new gutter pan, we are planning on renting some equipment to do this work ourselves. We have traditionally contracted this work out (laying hot-mix asphalt), but given that we don't expect any significant asphalt work to be contracted out this year (due to the engineering costs for the Maple St. project and the Reclamite

application to preserve our existing good condition streets), our public works staff will remove some existing poor condition asphalt at this intersection and adjacent to the new curb line and replace it to improve this intersection in both condition and drainage. We were planning on installing a concrete flume to mitigate the risk of the street deteriorating quickly as it previously did, and in the process of preparing for this, uncovered an existing concrete flume that was previously covered up. We are evaluating whether we can find a way to reuse this flume or if we will need to replace.

With the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act many aspects of the economy, national and local, were impacted. As you know, this was the legislation which brought about the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) among others. One thing it also does is to provide funding for every airport in the nation. Our Garnett Industrial Airport will be receiving a grant of \$20,000. These are to help offset lost revenues from reductions in aviation activity. In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is offering 100% grants rather than their usual 90%. As we have planned on saving up for the master plan runway reconstruction project, we did not plan on doing any major projects at the airport this year other than crack sealing (which is part of a previously received KDOT grant). Now that the FAA is offering 100% funded projects, we have quickly put together – much credit has to go here to Airport Manager Pat Schettler and our Airport Consultant Caleb Coltrane – a project to reconstruct our fueling apron. Our existing apron is in very poor condition and has reached the end of its useful life. I have included the capital improvement program sheet for this project outlining the project scope and estimated cost. If funded, we expect to have a \$335,000 project completed rebuilding the fueling apron for our airport.

Jason Hoskinson has completed his evaluations of both the North Lake and Cedar Valley Reservoir spillways – I have also included them for your review. In order to improve these areas and prevent similar damage and deterioration from occurring in the future, Jason has prepared multiple options for us on both locations. Option one on both is repairing to pre-flood conditions. Options two are improvements over the current design while the third option on both provides for the best mitigation potential. While all of these repairs are estimated to be extremely expensive (combined \$401,775 to \$1,311,775), thankfully the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM) are potentially willing to assist with funding these repairs and potential improvements. Our share would be 15% as FEMA

reimburses 75% and the State of Kansas would reimburse us 10% of the project cost. We are likely aiming for option 3 for the North Lake Spillway and option 2 at the Reservoir. If these were our selected projects, the estimated total cost of the projects would be \$646,800 and our share would be \$97,020. As both of these are considered “large” projects for FEMA, we would be required to front the money, and we would be reimbursed upon submitting invoices. We are now awaiting FEMA’s response to these studies.

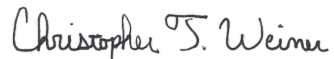
I also had a conference call with our water plant engineers, Amelia Jordan and Sarah Unruh with Professional Engineering Consultants (PEC), regarding continued design work on the new water treatment plant. I believe we are close to agreement on acquisition of property for the park land conversion required by this project. I also spoke with Frank Hayden, the new Director of Facilities for Anderson County Hospital as to the Hospital’s concerns with our current gas rates. I informed him that we have discussed these rates in the past and that I would let him know when we discuss them again in the future – as I believe he plans to attend.

As for the agenda, the first discussion item is a letter from the Anderson County Development Agency (ACDA) who at their meeting this week decided to formally endorse establishing a land bank for our community. They have presented a letter requesting to be on next meeting’s agenda to discuss this potential with the City Commission. They have also offered to serve as the Board of Trustees for the Land Bank if necessary. I will place them on the next agenda for a discussion with you. The second item is for discussion and consideration of the sponsorships in the Kansas Travel Guide. Director of Community Development, Susan Wettstein, has suggested looking at these listings as another opportunity for the City to help some of those businesses hardest hit by this current pandemic. Last year, the City’s cost to promote our own listings (and the lodging establishments – a courtesy traditionally provided for collecting transient guest tax [TGT]) and first-time listings (the City pays fifty percent (50%) of the cost of first-time listings) paid from TGT funds totaled \$1,040. The businesses, attractions, and events that purchased listings totaled \$1,680. All together, our community spent \$2,720 last year in the Kansas Travel Guide. These listings in the Kansas Travel Guide are distributed in a book of which approximately 500,000 copies are made available at tourism destinations, CVB’s and state travel information centers across the state. The listings are also promoted on the state’s [www.travelks.com](http://www.travelks.com) website without additional cost. Mrs. Wettstein’s suggestion was that the City, using TGT funds, pays for 100% of the renewals for those businesses, attractions, and events

that participated last year. Most of whom have participated for years and these are often those who work the hardest to market our community. At an additional cost of \$1,680, from our Tourism fund, I believe the financial burden is manageable and the assistance it will provide our struggling tourism businesses and attractions is worthy of the cost. The last action item for the agenda is your consideration of warrants. The total amount of bills and payroll for this meeting is \$166,001.99.

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