



City Manager's Report

April 14th, 2020

Honorable Mayor Brecheisen-Huss, and City Commissioners Cole and Gwin,
To say these past couple of weeks have been a learning experience would be a vast understatement. All of our Departments have been working diligently to ensure distancing and safety. All services are still being provided without interruption even though it has taken some adjusting to the staggered schedules and working remotely. Some of our departments such as public works and electric distribution have adjusted schedules to isolate employees while City Hall staff is working on a rotating schedule of teams working remotely and others in the office. During this challenging time we are working closely with surrounding municipalities and we appear to be following the same protocols, generally.

Since we are still meeting remotely, I have attempted to keep the agenda light. The first item for your consideration is Ordinance 4210 relating to increasing the length of stay limitations at all City owned Campgrounds. The second item for your consideration is the two bids that we received for architectural services on the new water treatment facility. The contract we have with Professional Engineering Consultants (PEC) only covers the design engineering work. This expense for architectural services has been expected and is included in the cost estimate that the water loan is based upon. The first bid is from Yeager Architecture, Inc. in the amount of \$43,550 and the second is from Gravity Works Architecture in the amount of \$45,000. As you can see from the cost estimate completed back in 2017, the estimated cost for architectural services is \$48,000 – so thankfully, even a couple of years later than planned, the cost is still less than expected. I have included email correspondence from Sarah Unruh, our Water Plant Project Engineer, she states that the two firms can provide equal services. She has also worked with both firms in the past with no issues, so she is comfortable with proceeding with the lower bid if we so choose.

Item C on your agenda is to allow for discussion and potential action regarding a community economic stimulus or recovery programs. As was discussed at the special meeting last week, I believe the Garnett Area Chamber of Commerce and Anderson County Development Agency are going to unveil a *Community Give Back Program* here shortly to stimulate economic activity at our local businesses. As these organizations are partnering on this program, I believe the City could as well as funding is likely to be the biggest issue. The two organizations met this afternoon and jointly worked out the finer details of the program. We plan to communicate with local businesses and hopefully begin to publicly promote this program at the beginning of next week. Alternatively, the City could do an entirely separate program or offer some other form of incentive or relief to our residents and/or businesses. Just a couple ideas we could consider would be:

- Waive penalties for late utility payments
- Discount utility payments
- Waive utility bills
- Something similar to the *Community Give Back Program* – such as for every \$100 spent at a qualifying business, the City will provide a \$10 discount on your utility bill
- Mail out two \$10 coupons to any qualifying business in the Garnett City limits to all utility customers.

I would love to hear your thoughts and discussion regarding these possibilities and any other ideas you may have. I would also like to thank Commissioner Gwin for bringing the idea for the *Community Give Back Program* as I believe this will provide a welcome boost to many of our local businesses suffering due to the pandemic and shut down order. The last action item for the agenda is your consideration of warrants. The total amount of bills and payroll for this meeting is \$492,735.50. The largest chunk, \$183,951.00, is for our property and liability insurance with Trustpoint Financial. I have also included information that I received from Jason with BG Consultants; based on how the government responded to the 2008 recession with regard to increased infrastructure funding for programs, there is a strong potential for government stimulus initiatives in the form of infrastructure funding. I have asked him to put together a proposal laying engineering ground work on a few projects we've discussed in the past (park road improvements, safe routes to schools sidewalks, downtown streetscape, etc.) in the event such

a program is rolled out by the Federal Government. How it was handled the last time, the money was awarded on a first come first serve basis, with shovel ready projects being prioritized to get people back to work and money flushed back into the economy. I obviously wanted to make sure I shared it with you as I believe we could possibly have an opportunity to obtain significant funding for some major, much needed, improvement projects in the future. In the event this type of funding is not distributed or we are not awarded it, having this groundwork in place will still benefit us by having a plan for these various projects and we can submit them for other funding opportunities in the coming decade.

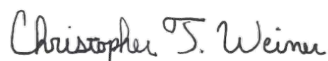
As for the informational items, you will see our usual departmental reports and the end of March financials. As I addressed previously in an email, I have amended our projected end of year reserves downward as we will obviously see significant reductions in revenue due to the decreased local economic activity. While we will likely be cash flow negative for the next few months, we have enough reserves built up that we should be able to weather the storm – assuming that the pandemic and stay-at-home order don't last into the fall. As it stands now, we have some positive data in that it appears as if the nation and statewide peaks in COVID-19 cases should be sooner rather than later. This hopefully holds true and we can gradually lift the restrictions, thereby opening our local and national economy back up to normal operations. We have also been communicating with as many of our businesses as possible to let them know we are here to support them through this difficult time and letting them know about the federal government's COVID-19 assistance programs, such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Each of these programs is designed to assist small businesses and non-profits with low-interest, payment deferred loans. The PPP loan is also 100% forgivable as long as they spend the money within eight weeks on eligible purposes (mainly payroll costs). I have included a breakdown of the two programs for your information as well. As you may recall, last year we planned to have the curb and gutter replaced on 1st Avenue close to the intersection with Spruce Street. Unfortunately, due to the weather last year, this project was postponed. I am pleased to announce that by our meeting on Tuesday evening, this replacement project will hopefully be completed. Bill Lickteig is completing this project for us. City Clerk Travis Wilson and I have been discussing the damage and expenses we incurred from the storm damage last year (which caused the erosion at the reservoir and the North Lake bridge to collapse) with FEMA. As I have previously mentioned, FEMA needs us to have an engineer prepare a report

articulating the work and expected cost of putting the damaged areas back to pre-existing condition. I asked a few engineering firms for proposals on this scope of work and we have BG Consultants moving forward on completing these reports. One report is for the damage at Cedar Valley Reservoir, while the other report is for the spillway at the North Lake. As I mentioned previously, we are looking at putting together a priority list of infrastructure projects for the future with the idea of possibly utilizing the list to take advantage of an expedited federal infrastructure funding package. Additionally, as you know US-169 is being reconstructed from just south of Garnett to Welda. As of April 15th, US-169 will be completely shut down from the US 169 and US 59 junction to the City of Welda. This stretch of highway is planned to remain closed until late this year.

Finally, our employee of the month for March is Randy Weimer. Randy has been a dedicated employee here at the Housing Authority for 10 years. He comes to work ready and willing to do everything that is asked of him. Randy rarely misses a day of work due to being sick, only takes time off when he is close to maxing out his vacation or has a doctor's appointment of which he generally returns to work from. He takes great pride in how the grounds and apartments look and works hard to keep them looking nice. Randy's knowledge of how everything works, as well as how to repair things, is extremely valuable.

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