

**CITY OF LOUISBURG, KANSAS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 4, 2021**

The Council of the City of Louisburg, Kansas met at 6:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Marty Southard presiding.

Council Members Steve Town, Donna Cook, Thorvald McKiernan, Kalee Smith, Sandy Harris
City Administrator Nathan Law
City Clerk Traci Storey
City Attorney
Police Chief Tim Bauer
Fire Chief Gerald Rittinghouse
Communications Coordinator Jean Carder
Public Works Supervisor Craig Hufferd
Visitors Toby Cummings, Laura Gray

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Thorvald McKiernan led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmembers Donna Cook and McKiernan had questions that were on the bills list. City Administrator answered their questions. Councilmember Sandy Harris moved, seconded by Councilmember McKiernan and carried 5-0, to approve the consent agenda to include adoption of the agenda and approval of the regular meeting December 21, 2020 minutes.

VISITORS

Robert Tooley did not attend the meeting as requested. City Administrator Nathan Law presented a Resolution authorizing the Public Officer or Other Agents of the City to abate nuisance items located at 804 S. 10th Street in the City of Louisburg. Councilmembers all agreed this is long overdue and the neighbors should not have to live next to this. Councilmember Kalee Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember Harris and carried 5-0, to accept Resolution 1-4-2021.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Toby Cummings of 800 S. 10th Street stated she lives next to the Tooley residence. She said this property has been a nuisance for a number of years. Once they get it cleaned up it is just a matter of time before it gets out of hand with trash and other items in the yard. The rodents are becoming a big problem. Councilmember McKiernan asked if there was a repeat offender's fee that could be looked into. Administrator Law said he would check and report back.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Fire Department: Fire Chief Gerald Rittinghouse reported that in 2020 the department had over 320 calls. The rural fire district area covered by the fire department has increased and will now service from county line to county line, so calls will increase.

Police Department: Councilmember Harris asked Chief Bauer about body cameras. Chief Bauer said the officers have had body cameras since 2016, but each vehicle will now have dash cams.

Public Works: Public Works Supervisor Craig Hufferd said the light poles on A field are up and should be operational as soon as Evergy can get to them.

Councilmember McKiernan asked about the leaf debris loader and trailer. Hufferd said it was working but with the water breaks and weather there are still leaves to haul away. McKiernan said adding a net will allow leaves to be stacked higher.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

MAYOR'S REPORT

None

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Wastewater Treatment Plant – Engineering Change Order Continued: Laura Gray representing Lamp Rynearson said she was here to answer any questions from the Council. City Administrator Law discussed the breakdown of

costs for the change order for engineering on the wastewater treatment plant project. Councilmember Cook asked what the original cost of the project was. Law said the original estimate was \$10.5-11 million for the wastewater treatment plant. The City portion is \$8.4 million, which we have paid 85% of that amount already. Gray said this is an amendment to the engineering contract. It is proposed to be an hourly rate. Councilmember Cook said we shouldn't have to pay more than what was bid. Councilmember Smith said she would like City Attorney to take a look at this and stop the work on the project until it is reviewed. City Administrator Law said we may be out of compliance with KDHE or risk the loan forgiveness if it is stopped. Everyone agreed that they would like this project to be finished. Councilmember Smith said this is getting out of control and we are being backed into a corner. Nothing about this seems legit and we need someone to look at it, she said. Councilmembers had discussion. Administrator Law will bring this back to the January 19th meeting. Councilmember Town asked Gray how was this project compared to others. Gray said this is by far the most challenging project she has done due to the issues with the North Lagoons.

Master Planning Review Continued: City Administrator Law included as part of the administrative goals list a regular review of master planning projects, goals and objectives. This is the fourth section of the City Strategic Plan, as found within the Bright Future Comprehensive Plan.

Enhance Downtown Identity:

1. Maintain Downtown gateway arch and consider installing other arch treatments around Downtown as community gateway & wayfinding
2. Consider repainting or rebranding the water tower

The arch concept was copied and applied to the Welcome to Louisburg sign located adjacent to the Phillips 66 on K-68/Amity as traffic enters Louisburg on the west side. That was a relatively minor cost of the sign overhaul and is the same consideration as listed above. This could be included as well with the eventual replacement of the community sign. As for the repainting or rebranding of the water tower, as discussed during the previous meeting, that is on hold as of now. Without utilizing the water tower for storing water, there is less of a safety consideration for repainting the tower currently. There will be a time soon when that tower will need some form of maintenance to preserve the metal structure. That water tower serves as a large antenna location for several communications companies and would be costly to replace.

Councilmember Cook asked about the wayfinding signs. Councilmember McKiernan said he will continue to work on this. He is not in favor of the small wayfinding ones. Councilmember Town asked about an Amoco sign that would be coming soon and heard the monument sign could be interfering. Administrator Law said the new Amoco sign variance included a concern about that, but the variance was approved based on other considerations.

Water Leak Adjustment: City Administrator Nathan Law presented a water leak adjustment for Andrew Hill (3 S. Berkley) for \$224.48. Councilmember Steve Town moved, seconded by Councilmember McKiernan and carried 5-0, to approve the one-time leak adjustment to Andrew Hill Optometry.

Administrator Law presented a water leak adjustment for Megan Basore (1300 Sutherland Drive) for \$48.29. Councilmember McKiernan moved, seconded by Councilmember Smith and carried 5-0, to approve the one-time leak adjustment to Megan Basore. Councilmember Harris asked how we could warn homeowners of a leak. Administrator Law said when they read meters that is how leaks are usually caught. Councilmember McKiernan asked if the new radio reads would be able to help. Mr. Law said those meters are only read once a month. Councilmembers had discussion. Councilmember McKiernan would like to see a payment plan set up for those that may need help with a water leak. Administrator Law will look into it.

KDHE Recycled Tire Grant Application Authorization: City Administrator Law said staff is looking at another grant opportunity to replace existing picnic tables at various park locations with new tables made from recycled tires. Grant dollars are made available through KDHE and would reimburse 50% of the cost of the tables. Currently staff is seeking authorization to purchase eight (8) tables at a cost of \$7,162. The cost after reimbursement is \$3,581. If authorized, and if awarded, funds would be available through April of 2022, allowing for purchase either in 2021 or to budget and spend in 2022.

Councilmember Cook asked where the funding comes from. Mr. Law said from the Parks Department within the General Fund. If we did not get the grant, then we would not order the tables. Councilmember Town asked if the old tables could be used for Freedom Fest for the fireworks display personnel. Mr. Law said yes, we could keep a few. Councilmember McKiernan moved, seconded by Councilmember Harris and carried 5-0, to authorize staff to complete, sign and submit the application for KDHE recycled tire grant funds for eight picnic tables.

Personnel Pay Considerations: Each year staff requests pay consideration of Council through the budget process and any additional consideration at the beginning of the budget year to coincide with annual evaluations. Staff is seeking approval from Council for pay considerations for pay-for-performance totaling 3%, and Cost of Living Adjustment for 1%. The approved budget for 2021 currently includes 3% performance pay consideration. Each year staff reviews cost-of-living, basing any additional consideration on the year over-year information found within the Consumer Price Index for Urban areas (CPI-U). The most recent year-over-year information shows a 1.2% increase in consumer pricing, which is kept lower this year than previous because of the decreased energy index, presumably related to the pandemic.

General Fund bears 63% of all salaries, with each 1% equating to approximately \$12,000 in that fund; the remaining 37% is spread among the three enterprise funds. In total each 1% equates to approximately \$19,100 across all funds. As a directly tax supported fund, the General Fund is usually emphasized during these reviews.

Administrator Law suggested a salary survey be done as he is seeing a compression of pay grades especially for employees receiving certifications and other promotions. The last survey was completed five years ago through the League of Kansas Municipalities. A survey compares salaries in our region. He said a survey could be used to adjust pay scale grades as needed.

Councilmember Cook asked how many employees are there. Mr. Law stated around 35, which of those 3 are part time. Councilmember Cook asked if the evaluations have been done yet. Mr. Law replied they have. Councilmember Cook asked if everyone usually get the top percent. Mr. Law said it is up to the department head and is based on employee evaluations. Not everyone gets the max, but many do.

Councilmember Cook doesn't think all employees are worth 3%. Councilmember McKiernan said he thinks that a majority of employees always get the maximum allowed. He wants to set a limit on merit pay. He suggested to use a percentage method to limit the number of employees that may receive full consideration. Administrator Law said he would rather see a 2% allowance be granted and awarded based on the evaluation process, than make department heads pick who their top employees are. Councilmember Cook asked if this had to be decided

tonight. Councilmember Smith said she doesn't think 100% of employees are exceptional. Councilmembers had discussion.

Councilmember Town moved, seconded by Councilmember McKiearnan to have staff look into a salary survey. Councilmember McKiearnan would like to amend the motion and cap the survey cost to \$5,000. Administrator Law said he would bring back to Council a survey recommendation before initiating a contract. Councilmember McKiearnan then withdrew his amendment. The original motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Southard asked the Council what course of action they would like to take. Councilmember McKiearnan said it is not a merit raise if most employees get the same increase.

Mayor Southard asked what direction the Council would like to take. Councilmember Town moved to have a 1% COLA with a maximum of 2% for merit. Motion died for lack of a second.

Mayor Southard asked the Council what course of action they would like to take. Councilmember Smith doesn't want to cap increases at 2% because some employees deserve 3%. Councilmember Smith suggested that the matter be tabled to the next meeting. Councilmembers Smith and Cook both stated they plan to reach out to other communities to see how this process is handled elsewhere. Mayor Southard instructed Staff to add this item to the next agenda.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Cook: Councilmember Cook asked if there is supposed to be another yield sign by Price Chopper. Administrator Law said that is on a private road.

She asked if any new information is available regarding the gravel drives on 5 acres. Law said the Council denial of that issue was returned to Planning Commission, along with a statement that Council will work to form specific recommendations for the Planning Commission regarding gravel drives. Planning Commission is waiting on Council direction.

Councilmember Harris: Councilmember Harris said we really need to find a way to warn people about water leaks, by finding some technology to warn people.

He thanked Public Works for doing a great job plowing the streets.

He asked if there is a way to go inside the home located on S. 10th Street. He said if the outside was as bad as the pictures the inside can't be good either. Administrator Law said the City focuses on the exterior of properties, adding that there is a different level of concern that will arise from interior review and inspection.

He thanked Councilmember McKiernan for his service on the Council, his insight over the years, and for the advice and encouragement he received from McKiernan.

Councilmember McKiernan: Councilmember McKiernan said it has been a pleasure working on the Council, feeling that the City has made good strides, and noting it has been a learning experience. He commented he may be back.

He stated that while not much has been done, he would like to see the continuation of cleaning culverts.

He commended Public Works for plowing during the recent storm. He would like to see the piles of snow on Broadway moved to another location. This way it doesn't block parking spots.

He recommended hiring an asphalt company to complete crack seal on city streets this summer, noting the last work quality was not good.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:18 p.m. Councilmember Smith moved, seconded by Councilmember McKiernan and carried 5-0, to adjourn the meeting.

Approved:

Marty Southard, Mayor

Attest:

Traci Storey, City Clerk