

**CITY OF LOUISBURG, KANSAS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 20, 2023**

Livestream link:

<https://boxcast.tv/view/louisburg-city-council-3-20-23-htxjnrcnrwmbbp3gij>

The Council of the City of Louisburg, Kansas, met at 6:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Hall Council Chambers. Councilmember Clint Ernst attended by virtual means. Mayor Donna Cook presiding.

Council Members Steve Town, Scott Margrave, Tiffany Ellison, Clint Ernst and TJ Williams
City Administrator Nathan Law
City Clerk
Finance Director Richard Mikesic
Police Chief Josh Weber
Fire Chief Gerald Rittinghouse
Communications Coordinator Jean Carder
Public Works Supervisor Craig Hufferd
Visitors Elizabeth Ellis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember TJ Williams led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Cook said she would like to remove the executive session until a City Attorney is appointed and present. Councilmember Williams moved, seconded by Councilmember Steve Town and passed 5-0, to approve the agenda.

Councilmember Tiffany Ellison moved, seconded by Councilmember Scott Margrave and passed 5-0 to approve the March 6, 2023, meeting minutes.

SCHEDULED VISITORS

Elizabeth Ellis, representing the Louisburg Library, asked Council to waive the fee for Fox Hall for the Summer Blessings program. She said Summer Blessings provides a meal once a week in the summer for children in the community and is the summer extension of the Blessings in the Backpack program. She said the program started in 2016 with the aid of a grant from the Baehr Foundation and the library assists with the program by providing an educational component with the meal. They served between 30-215 children and families last year. Last year they alternated between Fox Hall and Ron Weers Park for locations but said it would be much easier for all involved if one location could be utilized. She said Fox Hall is perfect and asked for the rental fee to be waived for Summer Blessings on Tuesdays in June and July. Councilmember Margrave moved to waive the rental fee. Councilmember Ernst seconded the motion. Discussion occurred. The motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police – Chief Weber said the department is presenting a new hire for consideration. Ellison asked if this is a current employee. Weber said the candidate is currently working part time and if hired full time will need to attend the full-time academy. Ellison moved to hire Cruz Gillespie as presented, seconded by Town and passed 5-0.

Weber said the prox card process has started. He has begun research on sound containment at the potential range location. They are having some issues with the new cameras recently ordered. New radios recently received have been having issues so the company is updating to newer models. He reported he is continuing to work on information on new firearms.

Public Works – Craig Hufferd, public works supervisor, said the landscape estimates presented are based on previous costs plus discussions with the new contractor. Hufferd said he would bring back the final costs for review at the end of the first contract year.

Ellison asked about the digital locating of gas as part of the USDI contract. Hufferd said this is in regard to the mapping portion. USDI has an agreement with Esri, a

GSI mapping software firm, and we will be able to access the digital mapping and add notes and make changes for our use. Ernst asked about Section 3D and if this section was above and beyond what was on the RFQ. Hufferd said this section refers to extra costs that would not be covered in day-to-day operations. These charges would have to have approval by City staff before any work commences. Ellison moved to approve the contract pending attorney review, seconded by Town and passed 5-0.

Hufferd presented a rock bucket for purchase approval. Mayor Cook asked if this could be used to add dirt to the burn pile to help smother the fire. Hufferd said he thinks it can but still thinks water will be needed to put out any fire. Town moved, seconded by Williams and carried 5-0, to purchase the rock bucket at the price presented and to include a shipping fee.

Fire – Rittinghouse provided three bids to replace fluorescent lights in the office and basement areas of the fire station. He said the bay and outside lights would be switched out at another time. He is presenting the low bid from B J's Electric Inc. and would like to allocate the budget money set aside for painting the interior of the station for light replacement. Williams moved, seconded by Ellison and carried 5-0, to accept the bid from B J's Electric LLC in the amount of \$15,600.

Rittinghouse reported the county has purchased another engine and all engines use different nozzles. He would like to standardize the nozzles on the City's trucks so they match with the County units. The County has already purchased the nozzles for its units. Rittinghouse said this will be more user-friendly for operators during calls. Williams moved to approve the request for the nozzles at a cost of \$4,572. Margrave seconded the motion. Town asked when delivery is expected. Rittinghouse said he is unsure. Motion passed 5-0.

Rittinghouse said there is a career day coming up at the high school and the department will participate in it to encourage students to think about a career in or volunteering with the fire department.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Suddenlink – Administrator Law said there have been a few more issues, including a damage to a sewer service line but has been informed the communications firm will pay for the repair. He reported the infrastructure at S. 16th has been corrected.

Tourism Advertisement and Committee – Mayor Cook suggested the city consider advertising in the Kansas tourism magazine. She said the cost for a full-page ad is \$6,000 and a half page is \$4,000 and is published annually with distribution of 275,000. Cook said she and the City Administrator could work on this. Williams suggested talking with other entities to potentially share ad and cost space. Cook said she would gather information and return for additional discussion.

City Clerk/Court Clerk Job Descriptions – Mayor Cook presented job descriptions for the two positions, which are based on City Code and current position responsibilities. Cook said there would likely need to be a workshop to discuss compensation. Ellison asked if these should be approved tonight with everything in red added to the descriptions, strike-throughs removed and to add the Municipal Court Judge and City Administrator as the supervisors for Court Clerk. Discussion included to add 2 years of preferred experience to the Court Clerk requirements. Ellison asked if this action changes the two roles. Law said it did not. Margrave said pay should be decided before the position is advertised. Ellison asked if a special meeting would be more beneficial than a workshop so action can be taken. Council decided to check calendars and schedule a special meeting to further discuss this topic.

City Attorney – Mayor Cook would like to appoint Mary Stephenson as the city attorney at the rate of \$150/hour for meetings, special meetings and reading of agendas prior to meetings and official legal work at the rate of \$250/hour. Stephenson had indicated a desire to go to the city attorney's conference and have that paid. Cook said Stephenson is licensed in Kansas and Missouri. Cook would like to have a contract for the city attorney. Ellison asked if Stephenson was previously the city's attorney. Cook and Law said she was. Town asked how these rates compare to previous attorney rates. Cook said it would be less because meetings are running longer and there are more special meetings. Ellison moved to accept the appointment of Mary Stephenson as City Attorney. Town seconded the motion. Ellison confirmed it is a one-year appointment. Cook said it is and she will need to sign the contract. Town asked if this will coincide with the appointment calendar. Cook said it would. Motion passed 5-0.

Cook reiterated the discussion that occurred in the workshop prior to the meeting that in the event she is unable to attend a meeting and the Mayor Pro Tem is also

absent, the remaining Council members would select an acting chair if there was a quorum present.

City Underwriter Insurance – Law said the proposed update to the plan is included in the agenda packet and indicated Brock Elliott, representing Elliott Insurance Group, was present to answer any questions. Law said an increase in the premium can be offset by increasing the wind/hail deductible. He said that if a storm were to damage city facilities, all buildings would be counted in the same event rather than as separate incidents. Cook said she would like to bid this out. Law said the underwriter’s portion was bid out last year. Law said it could be an option to bid out annually but many underwriters do not prefer that option. Elliott explained the bid process. He said in Kansas there are three companies that provide municipal services. Ellison asked if increasing the deductible made financial sense. Elliott said it probably would and noted that many nearby cities have a premium double what Louisburg officials are considering. Williams asked if it is possible to consider wind instead of wind and hail. Elliott said no as those two events are tied together. Ellison had questions about workman’s compensation which Elliott explained. Discussion occurred. Ellison asked if there is money in the budget to incur the higher deductible cost. Law said there is in the carryover reserve. Town moved, and Williams seconded and passed 5-0, to accept the renewal policy and to change the deductible to \$25,000.

Stormwater – Law reviewed these projects and said they are sizeable. Ellison asked if these projects are open swale or buried infrastructure. Law said the project estimates are for buried HDPE piping not reinforced concrete so is cheaper and acceptable structurally. Law reviewed the financing options and noted there is a funding gap. Cook asked if there is consideration for open swales. Law said it is designed and engineered for buried infrastructure. Ellison said the load in this part of town is established, there should not be much change and thinks the areas just need new culverts, which could move the water as needed. Cook asked if it were possible to change it to include a green design. Law said it would need to go back to the engineers to be redesigned. Williams said he thinks culverts are a bandage solution. Ernst asked if it were possible to do the project in stages and cash fund rather than take on debt. Law said it might be possible to save up for the first downstream project and pay cash. Law said doing the projects in stages will result in repeated mobilization charges. Ellison asked if Law could check for a comparison cost for green infrastructure. No other action was taken.

Backflow – Law reviewed the information in the memo. Discussion occurred. Law said he would bring back a sample ordinance to the next meeting.

Use of Funds from Sale of City-Owned Property for Park Improvements – Law said the Park & Tree Board provided its recommendation to use the park share of the funding for pour-in-place playground surfacing at the LAC playground and trail lights at The Lake trail. Law said staff just learned that morning that a 50 percent matching grant for the surfacing was not awarded. He said the playing surfacing will cost about \$40,000. Discussion occurred about the playground surfacing maintenance needs and longevity. Ernst pointed out the recreation fund could be used to make any repairs over the course of the surfacing's life. Staff will check into maintenance needs and longevity of the product and bring back at a future meeting.

Job Titles & Organizational Chart – Law said in the next budget year he would like to fill the Public Works Director job position. If agreeable to Council, Law would like to see the job titles and Public Works flow chart approved, which was distributed prior to the meeting. Discussion occurred. Law said Hufferd has started on job descriptions but this flow chart and titles hones in on previous discussions about advancement tracks. Ellison moved, Margrave seconded and carried 5-0, to accept the flow chart as presented.

Amity Trail – Law said Huffed put together some estimated costs and staff reached out to a local contractor and a local engineer about alternate paths, slopes, and costs to relocate the proposed trail to parallel Amity. Law said this is a conceptional proposal for consideration only. Ellison asked if the budgeted funds allocated for the trail could be used for stormwater. Law said it could. Ernst asked how much has been allocated to the project to date. Law said \$250,000 in the current year budget, Ellison noted plus \$8,000 for utility relocation. Ernst said he thought an asphalt trail would hold up well as it has at The Lake trail. He also noted that retaining walls might be needed at some of the locations along Amity. Cook asked if we have talked to any property owners about a changed route. Law said no, not until there is further direction from council. Discussion occurred. Town asked if there is any vested interest financial wise in project as it currently stands. Law said only in the design. Ellison moved, and Town seconded and passed 5-0, to direct staff to notify of the city's intention to not pursue this grant and for the council to look at other options within the city to enhance sidewalk travel.

Leaf Burning Inside City Limits – Law said the survey provided in the packet was updated today with a few more responses received. Discussion occurred. Williams said if we ban burning, we don't have a good alternate. He also said we need to keep in mind the nuisance to the fire department to respond to burning calls. Rittinghouse noted repeated response to the same residences indicate those homeowners don't care which day of the week it is or what the weather conditions are when burning. He said they will often burn in a fire pit that creates dense smoke, which is not allowed. Rittinghouse recommended that if burning is banned a fine be established. He said when called on an open burn call in the city limits, fire personnel will be sure the complaint is valid. A valid complaint, he said, is one where smoke is filling the caller's house. Discussion occurred. Ernst said he is leaning to placing a burn ban inside the city limits. Ernst said any leaves hauled to the brush dump aren't burned but hauled off so we as a city are doing the right thing. Ellison asked if fewer people are burning. Rittinghouse said he thinks so. Ellison said she is more in favor of protecting property values and owner rights but when living in a city you also have to be more aware of how you manage your property. She said if burning is banned would that potentially upset people that prohibits them from burning when it seems to be trending downward anyway. Ernst said right now we are giving people the authority to burn and for people that don't do that and don't want it they have no voice in it. Cook said this situation is an issue when people burn wet leaves. Discussion occurred. Town said before a ban would be considered a plan needs to be in place for residents to dispose of leaves. Cook and Williams said if we ban we are defeating the survey results. Rittinghouse noted that about 90 percent of people who complain don't call 911 to lodge an official complaint as they don't want to be that neighbor. Ernst pointed out the use of resources when responding to calls. He said he would be the voice for those that don't want burning. Staff said if a burn ban would be considered that a fine schedule similar to dogs running at large could be implemented. Ernst said we have a solution and it's the brush dump. He said people don't haul because they can burn. Cook would like to leave it as is. Margrave said he agrees with Ernst. Williams is in favor of burning. Town and Ellison said they are split. No action was taken.

Master Plan – Law said he is happy to answer any questions about the memo. Ellison asked staff to provide information from 2022 FLIP applicants and how the recent increase in property appraisals might have affected those numbers. Staff will return that information to a future meeting.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Williams – He said Metcalf 2.0 is looking great and while he has heard complaints, he thinks the contractor is doing a great job.

Ernst – no report

Ellison – She plans to attend her first LRC meeting of the year with the other meetings occurring on the same day as council meetings. Ellison said she met with the Finance Director Mikesic who educated her on the city's financial structure.

Margrave – no report

Town – said the council will need to consider fireworks purchase for Freedom Fest. He said last year fireworks cost \$7,500. He said this year that number will need to increase to have a similar show or the show will be smaller if spending the same amount. He said he will bring back information once he has firm numbers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:20 p.m., Williams moved, seconded by Ellison and passed 5-0, to adjourn the meeting.

Approved:

Donna Cook, Mayor

Attest:

Jean Carder, recording secretary