

**THE RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNING BODY
CITY OF CHETOPA, KANSAS**

August 20, 2024

The Chetopa City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., at City Hall.

PRESIDING: Mayor Ryan Darnell.

PRESENT: Council Members/Bob Boyd, Linda Seaman, Brenda Dominguez, Ernie Wulf, Justin Nading and Maria Billingsly.

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Toni A. Crumrine, Police Officer Jason Wammack, Attorney Shane Adamson, Assistant City Clerk Amy Wilkinson, Utility Bookkeeper/City Treasurer Krystal Adams, Court Clerk Patty Wilkinson, Bonnie Mazingo, Pauline Brecheisen, Jessica Morgan, Tammy and Lee Bushong, Pam Ballard, Nancy and Dale Miller, Daniel Bentley, Debbie Yost, Joe Durnell, Carla Duggan, Rebecca Sanders, Josh Russell, Jeff Johnson, David Hubbell, Jay Young, Veronica Wasoski, Jase M. Villasenm, and Gustavo Luna.

Mayor Darnell called the meeting to order and led the council and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance. Nading opened the meeting in prayer.

It was requested that visitors Tammy Bushong, Carla Duggan, and Rebecca Sanders be added to the agenda.

Motion by Nading, second by Dominguez to approve the agenda with additions.
Motion carried.

Motion by Seaman, second by Billingsly to approve the minutes of the last regular meeting. Motion carried.

Motion by Seaman, second by Nading to approve the Treasurer Reports. Motion carried.

Motion by Nading, second by Wulf to approve the warrant register. Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE # 3712 as follows:

Payroll Funds	\$ 42,827.53
Other Funds	<u>\$ 89,543.30</u>
Total of all Funds	\$ 132,370.83

Motion by Wulf, second by Nading to approve the municipal court report. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING-ADOPTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN

The Public Hearing for the adoption of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was opened by the mayor. No one was present to address the plan.

Motion by Dominguez, second by Wulf to adopt the 2024 NRP as presented. Motion carried. The public hearing was closed.

MAYOR, COUNCIL, EMPLOYEE & VISITORS

Carla Duggan was present to voice concerns about the increase in utility rates, and the effect it will have on businesses, the elderly, and people on a fixed income. Dugan also raised significant concerns about the closure of the swimming pool and the condition of numerous properties. Nading explained that the utility rate hikes were necessary due to rising supply costs, which have significantly impacted the city's finances. Duggan requested the total gross for each city employee and suggested that all city electric issues be communicated to residents via Facebook. Duggan also expressed concern about speeding vehicles in town, the lack of issued tickets, and the collection of camping fees by the police department to generate revenue. Dominguez stated that, despite higher prices from other local electric companies, our electric rates per kilowatt remain lower. Wulf noted that the city website posts approved meeting minutes that address current city challenges. There was also a discussion about the closing of businesses in town that has significantly affected the city's revenue.

Boyd expressed the need for citizens to look at their personal electric lines and trim their trees as needed. Boyd also expressed the need for people to pay their taxes.

Rebecca Sanders expressed the recent utility rate increases are too high for her two businesses. Sanders asked what citizens could do to address the unsightly condition of many yards, noting it deters visitors. Mayor Darnell mentioned working with the school about the high school students doing community service around town. Sanders also pointed out that the Chetopa Resident's Facebook page presents the town in a negative light and inquired about the collection of camping fees at the parks. Sanders suggested organizing a community clean-up day and Nading agreed this is urgently needed. Sanders also requested that residents outside the city limits be allowed to use the bulk pick-up service. Mayor Darnell commented that the Fall clean-up plans are already on the agenda and the outside city limits will be addressed.

Due to the various complaints, Boyd suggested the need to address the police department. The two-year contract for new hire police officers was discussed.

Tammy Bushong inquired if the 10% increase was the automatic yearly rate increase. Clerk Crumrine stated no. Bushong questioned the firefighting equipment balance and why the recent equipment purchase was taken out of the general operating fire dept fund. Nading clarified that this fund is allocated to cover substantial repair costs. Bushong questioned the ½ cent sales tax and how the tax percentages were split between the parks and spec city co-highway. Clerk Crumrine informed her that the council delegates what percentage goes into what fund. Bushong also inquired if the fire hydrants were going to be sold in a surplus sale, she would be interested in purchasing one.

Josh Russell commented on the many vacant lots that need mowing.

Utility Bookkeeper/City Treasurer K. Adams discussed late fee penalties. Adams requested that a list of deceased customers' utility balances be removed from the utility billing system.

Motion by Wulf, second by Nading to allow the deceased utility accounts to be charged off. Motion carried. Boyd voted no.

Court Clerk P. Wilkinson discussed the municipal court bench warrants that have not been served to the defendants.

Assistant City Clerk A. Wilkinson informed the council that the grant application for the waterline replacement through the Kansas Water Office had been submitted.

Mayor Darnell updated the council about the reclosure at the electrical substation that was sent to Solomon to be refurbished. Darnell noted that several tree limbs need to be trimmed and plans to schedule a day for brush pickup and will post this information for the residents.

Wulf thanked the residents who showed up tonight and for voicing their concerns. Mayor Darnell agreed. Wulf encouraged community involvement, expressing the need to come together.

Gustavo Luna and Jase Villasenm, food truck owners, attended the meeting to address questions about sitting up in Chesnutt Park. However, they left before the discussion was held later in the meeting on the food truck policy.

Debbie Yost mentioned that many food trucks have contacted her, expressing interest in coming to town and emphasizing the need to install a 220-volt outlet at Chesnutt Park to accommodate the electrical needs.

Dominguez was approached by a resident interested in donating to an elderly resident's utility account to cover the \$10 monthly fee for the waterline replacement set to be collected for the next 10 months. The council agreed this was an excellent idea to help each other out in our community. Tammy Bushong suggested posting this option on the city's informational Facebook page. Dominguez also requested to receive a quote for installing larger one-way signs with flashing lights on Elm Street, between 5th and 6th Street, North of the school. It was requested to collect a quote for the next meeting.

Billingsly inquired about the possibility of impounding illegal cars. Attorney Adamson explained the legal process involved. There have been multiple complaints about the property at 1504 Maple Street, and a resolution to clean up this property was discussed. This issue will be addressed with code enforcement. It was noted that the residents at this address have already been fined. Debbie Yost suggested contacting the property owner. Mayor Darnell agreed to check with Police Chief/City Supervisor Feagan to identify the property owner. Billingsly requested updates on this matter for the next council meeting.

Clerk Crumrine explained the process for mowing abatements notices. Bushong inquired about who sends out these mowing violation letters. Clerk Crumrine clarified that the council has decided that the city office will send the letters from now on. Bushong commented that code enforcement falls under the Police Department's jurisdiction. Sanders asked who the code enforcement officer was. Mayor Darnell agreed to consult with Feagan and Rakestraw to determine the code enforcement officer. K. Adams stated she would prepare the letters but required a copy detailing all the necessary information and a list of the properties involved.

Seaman requested that the alley north of the Belmore Apartments be inspected for repairs.

Boyd addressed the town's electrical issues, commended the Police Chief/City Supervisor Feagan for his prompt response to repairs and noted that ongoing improvements are being made to

the electrical system. Boyd pointed out that the financial records from the last council meeting showed a need for department heads to address overtime to manage expenses.

Court Clerk/Payroll Clerk P. Wilkinson noted that the water plant department seldom incurs overtime since Water Plant Supervisor Tyler utilizes compensatory time. P. Wilkinson also mentioned Tyler makes it a priority to avoid overtime in his department. Boyd indicated a preference for employees to use compensatory time, pointing out that over \$112,000 had been paid in overtime. Boyd also presented the Parsons land bank information to the mayor for review, suggesting that copies be distributed to all council members for consideration in addressing the city's mowing issues. Dominguez suggested asking the County to conduct a tax sale for the properties within the town.

Dale Miller discussed the need for tax sales on many properties around town since they are not maintained.

David Hubbell commented that the land bank works out great for other communities.

Clerk Crumrine announced that Assistant City Supervisor M. Adams passed his wastewater operator certification exam on his first attempt and is now the city's certified wastewater operator.

Motion by Boyd, second by Nading to give Adams a .50 cent raise effective August 2, 2024. Motion carried.

Clerk Crumrine reported that she had not received any communication from Kathy Pease regarding the special assessment letter. Crumrine discussed the need for a policy concerning food trucks setting up in Chesnutt Park, particularly to address any utility fees. Wulf suggested researching food truck policies from neighboring communities. Debbie Yost emphasized the importance of ensuring that sales tax is collected. Mayor Darnell agreed the city needed to establish a food truck permit. Mayor Darnell will consult with Police Chief/City Supervisor Feagan about potential upgrades to the electrical system at Chesnutt Park. Mayor Darnell also encouraged the council to investigate how other cities handle the food truck charges and whether they use meters. Clerk Crumrine will inquire with Thompson's Insurance about the liability insurance requirements for parking on city property. It was noted that sales tax from the food trucks could generate revenue for the city.

OLD BUSINESS

PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL REVISION

Boyd proposed revisions to the policy and submitted his suggestions to the mayor for review. Clerk Crumrine will update the Table of Contents once all revisions are finalized.

KMU TRAINING DISCUSSION

Discussion took place regarding the employee training for the electric class at KMU. Mayor Darnell mentioned that there might not be an appropriate candidate for this training. A discussion included whether Jason Morgan had expressed interest in participating. Additionally, there were questions regarding Jason Shields's progress in obtaining his CDL. The mayor will check with Police Chief/City Supervisor Feagan about Shields's CDL testing status.

RESOLUTION TO REMOVE TRAILER

Clerk Crumrine stated that according to the city code, a new building permit must be applied for the property at 110 S. 13th Street before a removal resolution can be drafted. Crumrine inquired if this was a nuisance. At the last meeting, the council requested a resolution for removal. The city code mandates that the owner be notified of the nuisance before the resolution can be prepared. Billingsly indicated she would contact Waylon Johnson, as it has been over six months since this building permit was approved with no progress on the property.

CONDEMNATION BIDS FOR 414 MAPLE ST.

Clerk Crumrine reported that she had requested a bid from Collins Construction, while the Police Chief/City Supervisor Feagan contacted B3 for their bid. B3 assessed the situation and indicated that saving the adjoining building would be challenging. No bids have been received as of this time. The council decided to have the code enforcement officer prepare a statement for the condemnation of the adjoining building. Mayor Darnell stated he would consult with Police Chief/City Supervisor Feagan about this.

SEWER PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

A preconstruction meeting was held on Tuesday, August 13th with the project contractors and engineers. Clerk Crumrine reported that the contracts are still pending signature. Boyd inquired about the total cost for BG Consulting’s services on this project; Clerk Crumrine will obtain this information for Boyd.

NEW BUSINESS

SCHEDULE FALL CLEAN-UP DATE

The council discussed extending the fall city cleanup to include residents outside city limits who are on our trash route. It was noted that the city-wide yard sales are scheduled for September 7th, so the fall clean-up should follow shortly after.

Motion by Billingsly, second by Dominguez to draft an ordinance for the fall city-wide cleanup, scheduled from September 9th through September 23rd. The ordinance will entail the right to refuse non-acceptable items and include all residents who pay for sanitation services. Motion carried.

Clerk Crumrine will draft a new ordinance to reflect these changes.

Discussion was held over the pending items on the back of the agenda. The surplus list needs to be updated. It was reported the city building is empty of police surplus for file storage. The park camping payment boxes as well as the police patrolling of the parks was discussed.

Motion by Wulf, second by Seaman to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Seal

Mayor

City Clerk