

COLDWATER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING

Monday, August 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

The governing body of the City of Coldwater met in regular session, with the following present: Mayor Joe Ceballos presiding, Council members Mike Bushnell, Robert Cardoza, Cleta Lampe, Britt Lenertz and Ashta Rosson, Public Works Director Danny Shaw, Lake Co-Manager Don Dutton, Chief of Police Devon Duffield and City Clerk Kristal Sherman.

Visitors: Pete Earle, Alexis Starr, Teresa Brooks, Brian Smith, Vanita Blundell, Lorinda Duffield, Matthew & Elsie and Chris Mills

Mayor Ceballos called the regular council meeting to order, City Clerk, Kristal Sherman conducted roll call. Minutes from the July meeting were approved as written, motion by Cleta, seconded by Mike and all voted Yes.

Teresa Brooks and Brian Smith gave an update on the progress of repairs and clean-up of the property on North Washington Ave. Brian said the roof has been patched and doesn't think it's leaking but we haven't had any rain since it's been patched, said the plumbing is done and he needs to finish the bathroom, he said he's waiting till the first of the month to have funds to be able to buy more materials. The council agreed to give them another 30 days and meet with them at the September 11th council meeting.

Pete Earle with Earle's Engineering & Inspection based in Liberal, KS introduced himself and his co-worker Alexis Starr, he told the city he started in 1992 working with water, sewer, streets and utilities for cities and has 9 engineers on staff, he also helps with funding and said "there isn't much I haven't done for cities". He said he mainly works with smaller cities with populations of 20,000 and below. He told the council he would like to work with the City and help with the water project that is planned.

Vanita Blundell, as a member of the Coldwater Chamber of Commerce, asked for permission to block off the first block of East Main Street and North New York Ave. to Home Lumber and South New York Ave before you get to the fire station on Saturday, September 2nd for the car show. Mike made a motion to allow the Chamber to block off the streets as named above, seconded by Britt and everyone voted Yes. Vanita also said the Chamber is interested in working with the City to purchase new Christmas decorations and Britt said she is going to try to attend the Chamber meetings which are the 3rd Monday of each month at 5:30pm, anyone else on the council is welcome to go as well.

Public Works Director Danny Shaw asked if the council had reviewed the quote from Ray Lindsey Company of Belton, Missouri, at a cost of \$14,096.34 for repairs that need done to the sewer lift station after the flood we had toward the end of July. Danny did report he got permission from the landowner to build a terrace to deter the rain from going into the lift station, also the sewer pumps are running less than 50% and these parts are 8 weeks from delivery. Mike made a motion to approve the repairs to the sewer lift station at a cost of \$14,096.35, seconded by Cleta and everyone voted Yes. Danny also told the council that when we get the funding for the water project, we also need to include lining 6 sewer lines and replace 11 manholes, said there are some lines that are getting really hard to get through and need lined. Mayor Ceballos said that Stephen Bryant had told him he has made phone calls to try to find someone to clean up the elevator that burned, but is having a hard time finding someone and asked if the city wanted to take it over so that government funding might be available to remove the old building which is reinforced concrete. After discussion, Mayor Ceballos asked Danny to look into the possibilities of the City taking over the property and to talk to Stephen Bryant about the need to put up a barricade around the old grain pit to prevent any injuries.

Lake Co-Manager Don Dutton thanked Danny and the city crew for all their help fixing the washed out roads at the lake after the recent heavy rains. Don reported he wants to paint the lake bathroom floors with epoxy, where you mix the sand in with the paint to make it non-slick, the council agreed. Don also reported he is concerned about Labor Day weekend, law enforcement wise.

Chief of Police Devon Duffield reported, as code enforcement officer, he has sent out a condemnation letter on the “Robert Lee house” on North Central Ave. City Attorney Skip Herd told the council that instead of pursuing condemnation and cleanup efforts on some of the vacant residences in the city, they might want to wait until after the county tax sale to see if some of the local carpenters purchase and fix-up some of the properties without the city getting involved. Devon told the council of his plans to resign from the position of Chief of Police, which will be effective after tomorrow, August 15th since he had given them each a letter of resignation 2 weeks ago. He said he will be going to work for BTI in Greensburg beginning August 17th, because they offered full, family insurance which he needs for his son’s meds every month and he needs to be with his family more than the law enforcement job permitted. Devon then asked the council to keep him on as a part-time officer until his replacement is found, saying he thought he could work 40 hours a month. He also asked the council to let him keep his 2 badges he had special made and to buy his firearm from the city, saying when he bought it for the City he had to put it in his name and if there would be an issue with the next officer, it would still be in his name. After discussion, Ashta made a motion to allow Devon to purchase his firearm for \$700.00, seconded by Robert and everyone voted Yes. The council agreed to let Devon keep the 2 badges as well.

Council member Britt Lenertz, as the Comanche County Emergency Manager, gave an update to the damage done during the heavy rain storm on July 21st, she said the City streets and the sewer lift station did receive a lot of damage. She met with State assessors and estimated the damage to the lift station was \$19,000.00 and \$15,000.00 for repairs to the lake & city streets, and has turned in those two amounts for reimbursement if they are approved for FEMA funds.

Mayor Ceballos told the council they need to think about painting the outside of the veteran’s building before it gets any worse. The council agreed to advertise for bids to paint the outside of the veteran’s building.

Bills in the amount of \$211,091.33 were presented for payment. Mike made a motion to pay the bills as presented, seconded by Cleta and all voted Yes.

Under unfinished business, the council discussed the banners vs. flags from the last meeting, there was also an idea brought up to cut down all the trees and put flag poles where the trees were. Britt said they could apply for main street revitalization grants to help with the flag poles/flags costs. Britt also reported that an Economic Development person is coming to Comanche County soon to head up a public forum and thought that would be a good place and time to get the public’s ideas about upgrades to the water system and raising water rates. The council discussed the need to get new businesses to come to town, noting that our population has dwindled in the last few years.

Britt made a motion to go into executive session for 10 minutes to discuss personnel matters, with the City Attorney and City Clerk present, seconded by Cleta and everyone voted Yes. After returning to open session, Cleta made a motion to accept the resignation of Chief of Police Devon Duffield, seconded by Ashta and everyone voted Yes. Cleta then made a motion to reinstate Devon as a part-time law enforcement officer at the rate of \$20.00 per hour with a maximum of 40 hours in a 28 day period for law enforcement duty only, with a review at the next meeting on September 11, 2023 and also with the stipulation that he may not take any calls that would affect his primary job. The motion was seconded by Ashta and everyone voted Yes. The code enforcement position was discussed briefly with the council asking City Clerk Kristal Sherman to email the city clerks and see if there are cities that may know of someone out-of-town that would do code enforcement.

With no other business presented, Cleta made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m., seconded by Mike and all voted Yes.