

COLDWATER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING

Monday March 11, 2024, 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, Makenzie Dunn, Gary Haulmark, Leasa Huck and Britt Lenertz, Public Works Director Danny Shaw, Lake Co-Managers Debbie and Don Dutton and City Clerk Kristal Sherman.

Visitors: Aaron Koehn, Pete Earles, Alexis Starr and Donna Brosius,

Mayor Ceballos called the regular council meeting to order, City Clerk, Kristal Sherman conducted roll call. Mayor Ceballos asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February meetings. Leasa and Gary both said they did not agree with the minutes, Joe said it will be discussed toward the end of the meeting.

Aaron Koehn with the accounting firm of Adams Brown LLC, presented the 2023 audit report. He went through the report with the council and said there were no statutory violations. Aaron told the council if they have further questions, they are welcome to call him anytime and he would see them in a few months to work on the 2025 budget.

Pete Earles with Earles Engineering met with the council, Gary had asked that he attend to answer questions he had about a water/sewer project the City may be doing in the future. Gary said he wants to see what an “overall project” of upgrading the water and sewer systems would look like, broke up into phases. Pete explained prices have gone up and he will put together some figures on what the project would be and if we can handle the payments. He said he can do a rate study and also will look for grants to help with the project. He did point out that a water project has to be paid back with water funds and a sewer project has to be paid back with sewer funds.

Donna Brosius, who is a seasonal camper at Lake Coldwater, said we’re losing trees at the lake and asked the council for permission to plant some new trees. The council agreed. She said it would be nice to get a solution to the shoreline washing out the trees. Danny said they have talked about installing “jetties” to help with shoreline erosion. Donna also asked if they could sign a waiver so they could mow the grass in between their camper, she said since there is no grass there (because of carpets having to be moved inside each site’s markers) the mowers are throwing up rocks and damaging the campers, she said they would rather mow their own grass between the camper than taking a chance of their camper being damaged, and it would also make the job easier for the city employees plus take the liability off the city for any damage that may be done to campers. After discussion, Mayor Ceballos said they would discuss the matter further toward the end of the meeting.

Public Works Director Danny Shaw told the council that last year the city purchased water conservation training materials for the elementary/middle school students to teach the kids about water conservation at a cost of \$780.00, he asked if the council wanted to do the same for this year. After discussion, Gary said he thought that was a lot to spend when we’re talking about needing to upgrade the water system. Makenzie asked Danny to check with the Kansas Water Commission to see if they might have material that would be cheaper or at no cost to the city. Danny reported he has received one bid to replace the sidewalk in front of the Veteran’s Building - \$25,020.00 and repair the storm drain at the west park - \$6,250.00. The bid is from Pueblo Concrete from Greensburg which totals \$31,270.00. Britt made a motion to approve the bid from Pueblo Concrete for \$31,270.00, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes. Mayor Ceballos told the council Evan Cook talked to him about having the City help him tear down the house he purchased at 200 N. Washington. After discussion, the council asked Danny to look into different options and costs of tearing it down and report back to the next meeting. Danny also reported he had talked to Samantha

Denney about the basketball goals that were in the street and said they had moved them, but a few weeks later, they were back in the street. He said he had his guys put them back up in the yard today and he will go talk to her again about keeping them out of the street. Britt asked Danny if he can get basketball nets for the basketball goals at the park, Danny said he would. Gary asked Danny about painting the lines at the tennis courts for tennis & pickleball. Danny said he knows nothing about where the lines should be painted the last time the tennis courts were painted, Jim Blundell painted them. After discussion, Britt made a motion to buy paint for the tennis courts, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes.

Lake Co-Manager Debbie Dutton told the council John Osborn, who has been a seasonal camper, was sent three different notices to pay his final 2023 electric bill with the last bill being sent December 6th. The bill stated if he did not pay the total due by December 31, 2023, he would forfeit his campsite for the 2024 season. He called Kristal February 26th to say his payment (which he said he had paid on December 8th) had never cleared the bank and asked what he needed to do to keep his campsite. Debbie passed around the final bill & payment policy that was sent to John on December 6th and showed them text messages he had sent her. After discussion, Gary made a motion to follow the rule which states John Osborn will forfeit his campsite because he did not pay his electric bill before December 31, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mike and everyone voted Yes.

Lake Manager Don Dutton told the council he has been receiving a lot of calls from seasonal campers asking if they can move in before the April 1st date. After discussion, the council agreed since the lease agreement says the season begins April 1st, they can't move in till the 1st. Don reported there is one bathroom & storm shelter that doesn't have electricity, he said he would like to try installing solar lights to see how they would work, he has ordered a set and has it charging to try. The council agreed.

Public Works Director Danny Shaw said he was going to leave the meeting, but before he left he wanted to give his opinion on an item he saw a ways down on the agenda. He said that if the council starts live streaming the council meetings, he will be giving his reports by paper and not attend the meetings. He doesn't want to be on camera.

Mayor Ceballos asked the council to review the employee evaluations for the full-time employees which were passed around and said they were welcome to add comments if they want. After reviewing the evaluations, Mayor Ceballos said he recommends \$1.00 per hour raise for all employees. Gary asked what was put in the budget for raises, Mayor Ceballos told him he wasn't sure what the auditor added in for raises. Makenzie said she would like to see some form of merit pay for employees with better evaluations and/or longevity pay for employees that have been here longer. After discussion, Leasa made a motion to give \$1.00 per hour raise "across the board", seconded by Mike and everyone voted Yes. Gary made a motion to give Don and Debbie Dutton \$250.00 per month raise in their seasonal salary, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes. Mike made a motion all existing lifeguards will be raised \$1.00 per hour to \$11.00 and all new lifeguards will start at \$10.00 per hour, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes. Britt made a motion to add \$100.00 per year to the salaries of Judge Rustin Martin and Treasurer Johnita Stalcup, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes.

Council member Leasa Huck said she had asked for "unapproved minutes in the paper" to be on the agenda, she said she didn't agree with the minutes that were published in the paper regarding Sheriff Mike Lehl telling Gary Haulmark he didn't feel Chief Renison was ready to patrol solo, she said she didn't hear Mike Lehl's name mentioned and if she would have, she wouldn't have gone against the Sheriff and agree to let John patrol solo for two days. City Clerk, Kristal Sherman said she wouldn't have typed it in her minutes had she not heard it. Gary said it was John Renison that

said Sheriff Lehl's name. Dennis Anderson explained that he is usually at the meetings and has only printed the minutes verbatim once in the 43 years he has been covering the council meetings, he said it happened when he was absent for a couple of weeks and couldn't work, other than that one time, after each council meeting he has written an article himself and the council has no control over the articles that appear in the newspaper. He did say he meets with the city clerk the day after the meeting to clarify any questions he might have had during the meeting. Leasa said that John Renison's resignation wasn't the fault of the sheriff or anyone on the council, he just didn't work out. The council agreed there was a lot of discussion going on regarding the Chief of Police and some of their statements could have been misunderstood. Both Leasa and Mike made the statement they feel the matter should be put behind them, we should all move forward and do what's best for the City. Kristal asked what they wanted her to change in the minutes so they can be approved, no one spoke up and said they should be changed. Gary made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mike and everyone voted Yes.

Mayor Ceballos and Council President Britt Lenertz gave a report on two applicants for the chief of police position they had interviewed since the last meeting. Tanner Maas, who has family ties to Coldwater, has graduated the KLETC academy 8 or 9 months ago and has been with the Liberal Police Department since March, 2023. Robert Cates just graduated from the KLETC academy, is currently employed by the Fort Hays State University police department and has no patrol experience. Britt did say they learned from Robert Cates that under the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Act if an officer has been employed by a department for less than a year from their graduation from the academy, the department wanting to hire them is to reimburse the department that paid the tuition/expenses for training the officer. Robert thought it would be around \$17,000 to \$20,000 for his reimbursement. Britt said she was not ready to recommend either one for the position until she had some more details. It was discussed to reach out to other cities to get their policies and procedures of their police departments. Makenzie said she would like certain criteria set for a police schedule to be approved through the council.

Council member Gary Haulmark handed out sheets that show which cities and counties have levied a transient guest tax and a letter from a League of Kansas Municipalities attorney that gives the statute to go by in order to enact the tax. Gary proposed the City charge a six percent (6%) transient guest tax to the two motels in the City, and with the money that it generates, he would like to see it go to the water fund to help fund the water project. He said the Airbnb houses we have here in town are too small to charge the tax to. After discussion, Makenzie said she would like to do some research into this before it went to a vote. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

Council member Gary Haulmark told the council he would like to see the meetings live streamed so those that are unable to attend a meeting can see what goes on at the meetings. Mayor Ceballos told Gary he is not in favor of live streaming, and said he feels if citizens really wanted to know what goes on at meetings, they would attend. Mike Bushnell said he feels the same, he is not for live streaming meetings. Gary made a motion for the council to endorse live streaming the council meetings. The motion died for lack of a second.

Council member Britt Lenertz said she was asked by the SCHS Sophomore class to see if the City would be interested in donating to the After Prom Party. Kristal said the past few years the City has donated lake permits. Makenzie made a motion the City donate 10 lake permits for the SCHS After Prom Party, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes.

Bills in the amount of \$84,930.99 were presented for payment. Britt made a motion to pay the bills as presented, seconded by Leasa and all voted Yes.

Under new business, Mayor Ceballos asked the council if they wanted to approve the 2023 audit report that was presented by Aaron Koehn earlier in the meeting. Makenzie made a motion to approve the 2023 audit report, seconded by Britt and everyone voted Yes. Mayor Ceballos asked the council about Donna Brosius' request regarding mowing around the campers. The council agreed to let the mowers keep mowing what they're supposed to mow. Gary passed around a proposed ordinance making council committees become part of Coldwater City Code and asked that this be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Kristal passed around seasonal camper lease agreements for the council to sign.

With no other business presented, Gary made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 p.m., seconded by Mike and everyone voted Yes.