

COLDWATER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING

Monday February 9, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

The governing body of the City of Coldwater met in regular session, with the following present: Mayor Paul Alvarez presiding, Council members Devon Duffield, Makenzie Dunn, Gary Haulmark and Leasa Huck, Public Works Director Charlie Austin, Chief of Police Tanner Maas, Lake Co-Manager Don Dutton and City Clerk Kristal Sherman.

Visitors: Matt Christenson, Pete Earles, Vanita Blundell and Tim Erickson

Mayor Alvarez called the regular council meeting to order, City Clerk, Kristal Sherman conducted roll call. Minutes from the December meetings were approved as written, motion by Makenzie, seconded by Devon and all voted Yes. Mayor Alvarez told the council he would like to appoint Sam Oller to fill the vacancy on the council. Gary made a motion to approve Sam Oller as the newly appointed council member, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes. Sam was then sworn into office by City Clerk, Kristal Sherman and joined the meeting.

Matt Christenson introduced himself as the Mayor of Greensburg, he said they have been live streaming the council meetings in Greensburg for several years, at least since covid, he said they use a wireless system to run it over a phone or tablet and that 20 to 30 people view a typical meeting, but there have been times where they have had 60 views. The purchase of a camera was the only cost at the time, there is no charge to run it on Facebook, but now they have moved to streaming it on YouTube which is a minimal monthly charge. He also said they move to a separate room for their executive sessions, but if you wanted to stay in the meeting room you could simply shut off the camera and microphone during executive sessions.

Under Administration:

Pete Earles from Earles Engineering of Liberal passed out the overview of the entire water/sewer project to let the new members of the governing body review what has been discussed the past couple years and show cost figures of the project. Pete said KDHE loans and four Kansas Water Office grants have been applied for and should know by the end of February whether they will be approved. He explained the City has already contracted with his company for the survey and design work for \$142,272.00 which is being billed monthly. He said an addendum needs to be added to the design for 700 feet of sewer line moved into town a block for \$7,000.00. Gary made a motion to re-approve 700 additional fee of sewer line at a cost of \$7,000.00, seconded by Devon and everyone voted Yes. Pete said he will be back after he hears from the Kansas Water Office.

Vanita Blundell told the council that with the sell of the new lot from last month, they need to approve a resolution to sell, per requirement of the title company. Gary made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-2, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes. She also reported that she has another possible sale of a lot and will know within the week, and there are three lots that have been purchased, but the buyers for those lots have not begun construction within the time limit set in the protective covenants. The council discussed Vanitas' contract to continue selling the lots, which was tabled to the March meeting and they also asked to put the covenants on the March agenda for discussion.

AJ Prusa was to report on the ballfields, but since she couldn't make it to the meeting Mayor Alvarez reported he had a conversation with AJ and she is asking for answers about repairs and maintenance to the ballfields. 1. Received wind storm damage months ago, what is the plan to fix the damage? 2. Need fill-in dirt 3. Need additional dirt hauled in to be able to host high school softball. Mayor Alvarez said the 1st part that needs fixed is the fence, which is estimated to cost \$1,040.00. Wade Beal with Superior Athletic Fields (who maintains our fields) says it cost \$1,500.00 for a load of dirt and they also need to haul additional dirt onto both ballfields for \$3,755.00 The north field is planned for softball and the south field is planned for baseball. The council discussed

who should have to pay for the extra maintenance for the ballfields, the school, recreation commission or the city. Mayor Alvarez asked Tim Erickson how many softball games they were wanting to host here at the ballfields, Tim said 2 games here and 2 at Ashland and from March to May there would be practice on the field every other day. After a lengthy discussion Gary made a motion to approve \$2,650.00 for 2 loads of dirt for the ballfields as a 1-year expenditure, with the money coming from savings in the police budget and the council expects to move forward with a meeting between the recreation commission, school and city as to what years to come will look like, the motion was seconded by Devon and everyone voted Yes, except for Makenzie voted No. At this time there is no estimate for the repair to the dugouts, but the fence will cost around \$1,000.00 with the City maintenance employees doing the work to fix the fence. Gary made a motion to spend \$1,000.00 to fix the fence on the north field, seconded by Devon and everyone voted Yes, except Makenzie voted No. Tim Erickson also added there is a need to put in a temporary fence in the outfield at the softball field and if the school buys the fence, can the city help install it? The council agreed.

Mayor Alvarez asked the council for nominations for president of the council. Gary made a motion to elect Leasa council president, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes.

Mayor Alvarez reported that Melissa McGuire would no longer be filling in for Kristal and for a short term solution, Debbie Dutton would fill that position, but a long-term fill-in city clerk needs to be hired. The council agreed to advertise for that position.

Discussed the Prairie Plaza Apartments having trouble paying their bills last month and what a solution could be to the problem. After discussion, Gary made a motion January through July Prairie Plaza reimburse the City \$350.00 per month for the insurance premium, instead of the \$1,951.30 it had been paying each month, and with the payments that have been made since last August, would pay half of the total insurance premium, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes.

Reviewed a letter of resignation from Chief of Police Tanner Maas, it was noted that Tanner is going to go work as a deputy for the Comanche County Sheriff's Department. Gary made a motion to accept Tanner's resignation, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes. Mayor Alvarez asked the council to keep in mind for discussion next month if they have a need for a law enforcement officer or just a code enforcement need.

Mayor Alvarez said the city has surplus vehicles that could be sold, there is the oil truck, chat spreader, and the second police car. Selling these vehicles could help fund the equipment fund which could pay for a newer truck for the public works department and the Dodge pickup could go the lake. Sam made a motion to sell those vehicles mentioned above and give a limit of \$29,000.00 to purchase a new pickup for the public works department, seconded by Devon and everyone voted Yes.

Mayor Alvarez told the council he has gone completely through the employee handbook and made some recommended changes, which were sent in the email last Friday for them to review. He pointed out the longevity pay which has changed from giving employees Christmas bonuses. He recommends giving \$50.00 for each year an employee has been with the City and it would be capped at \$1,000.00. Gary said he thought that was too much to give. After discussion, Devon made a motion to accept the employee handbook, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes, except for Gary voted No.

Mayor Alvarez said he would like to see changes made for employee evaluations. In the past evaluations were done as a whole before the March meeting, then the council had to go through each evaluation one at a time at the March meeting. He would like to see a change to have the employee evaluations done on their anniversary month. After discussion, Leasa made a motion to change to do employee evaluations on each employee's anniversary month, seconded by Devon and everyone voted Yes.

Gary asked to have the City's snow/ice removal plan on the agenda, he said with the recent snow he thought all the city streets should have been cleared with the 3 or 4 inches we had. Charlie said they were out Saturday afternoon and Sunday doing emergency routes, he said the way it has been done in the past is to clear downtown main street and routes to the hospital first, then to the high school, their parking lot and the bus barn, then the street to the west of the medical clinic and health department. After discussion, the council agreed that what has been done in the past has been working and they should continue on that plan. They did discuss all streets should have a path made if we get 8 or more inches.

Mayor Alvarez said he doesn't like the council committees and doesn't want to do them. After discussion, he said if he ever felt like there was a need for council committees, they could be appointed at a later date.

Mayor Alvarez said he would like to purchase a TV for the meeting room for zoom purposes, he said it would come in handy for people who want to present something to the council and don't live around here. Kristal said an example would be the auditor that will be presenting the audit report lives in Hays and asked about doing it over zoom. Gary made a motion to purchase a TV for the meeting room for zoom purposes, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes.

Gary said he put live streaming meetings on the agenda, he thinks it's a good idea for transparency, for senior citizens that can't make it down to the meeting and said he will raise the funds to do it. Sam said he had heard there were a number of people against the idea, Makenzie said she saw disadvantages of putting the meetings online. After discussion, the majority of the council agreed they were not in favor of live streaming the council meetings.

City Clerk Kristal Sherman reported she received a letter today from the SCHS Sophomore Class asking for donations to after prom. She said in the past the City has given 10 lake permits as a donation. Makenzie made a motion to give 10 lake permits to SCHS for after prom, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes.

Public Works Director Charlie Austin gave his report on the different departments: 1. Water: he reported the water line to Clark Bibb's and Phillip Underwood's houses have had samples done and cleared, the water meters have been installed and they are ready for service, also adding the Underwood's still have not completed the back flow preventer so will not be able to have service until that is completed. Charlie also reported he will need to make a sizable order for 1 inch and 2 inch pipes and fittings, plus will need to order approximately 400 feet of 2 inch pipe for the new main to tie in the new Blasi 1 inch line. He is also going to see what the new meters cost to see if we're charging enough to install a new meter, and bring that to the next meeting 2. Sewer: he reported they need to build a berm at the main lift station because whenever we get a heavy rain, water travels down the road and into the pit causing the sewer pumps to run longer to clear it out. 3. Streets: he reported he had to buy 3 new batteries for the orange truck/snow plow because of the cold spell and age of the batteries. Charlie passed around before & after pictures of his work with the new soil conditioner, he said it works great. Charlie also reported they are currently grading dirt roads and had to replace 2 front grader tires with Mayor Alvarez' permission. Lake: he said he has staff painting sucker rod fences at the lake since he is out of community service hours for now. He has been repairing roads at Comanche Estates with the soil conditioner. The county pulled the markers at each campsite and after discussing it with the Mayor, thought it would be a good idea to let them keep all but 50 for us, free of charge, they were only worth \$1 to \$5 each in good condition and these were in poor condition, the county saved us approximately \$4,000.00 in freight charges transporting the grader back and forth to Dodge City for repairs. They have pulled the wooden posts in E section and are waiting on Wildcat electric for repair to camping spots in D section, he will probably move that job over to Don since he's more familiar with the lake electrical. Charlie also reported Danny Rich is currently out at the lake pulling trees.

Chief of Police Tanner Maas said he didn't have a lot to report on, but asked about being able to keep his bulletproof vest since it was made specifically for him. The council agreed Tanner could keep his vest.

Lake Co-Manager Don Dutton reported he has the posts done for the fence repair at the Comanche Estates and will bring them back soon. Don asked the council to get a couple of toilets to have on standby in case the automatic ones, which are currently in the bathrooms, quit. The council asked him to get quotes and bring back. Don also reported the renovated west side bathroom will take 10 sheets at \$63.70 per sheet, totaling \$650.00. He also said he wants to build a rock retaining wall around the lift station in the D section "to bring the lake into the 21st century." He wants to do this on his own time and costs to give back to the lake. The council agreed.

Bills in the amount of \$126,231.37 were presented for payment. Devon made a motion to pay the bills as presented, seconded by Leasa and all voted Yes.

Under unfinished business, Tim Erickson reported there will be 4 softball games to be played here at the ballfields. The council passed around and signed 39 lake seasonal lease agreements.

With no other business presented, Gary made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 p.m., seconded by Devon and all voted Yes.