

COLDWATER CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING

Monday March 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 Makenzie Dunn, Gary Haulmark, Leasa Huck, and Sam Oller. Public Works Director Charlie Austin, Lake Co-Manager Debbie Dutton and City Clerk Kristal Sherman.

Visitors: AJ Prusa and Vanita Blundell

Mayor Alvarez called the regular council meeting to order, City Clerk, Kristal Sherman conducted roll call. Council member Devon Duffield was absent. Minutes from the February meeting were approved after Gary asked that an addition of KDHE loans are being applied for, as well as the grants from the Kansas Water Office, by Pete Earles, motion by Leasa, seconded by Sam and all voted Yes.

Under Administration:

AJ Prusa gave an update on the ballfields, she said Mike Jellison is no longer on the rec board as a member and thanked the council for having a budget for the ballfields. She reported that JT Prusa is the new maintenance guy for the rec at the ballfields and they have spent \$2,400.00 for extra clay, she said they have added high school softball and are going to hold 19 practices for high school baseball, and because of adding baseball, have had to do some extra clay work on the pitcher's mound on the south field so they can hold baseball practices, she said they have also had to buy a new drag. She told the council the rec commission is trying to raise funds to be able to cover some of the costs of maintaining the ballfields. Gary also talked about being able to apply for a South Central Community Foundation grant for \$2,000.00 to go towards the ballfields. Charlie said he used the soil conditioner at the ballfields the day Wade Beal was there working on the fields and it worked really well. The council agreed that as long as the additional work was done to the south field, the city was ok with the baseball practices. Mayor Alvarez asked the council to review the Home Lumber quote to rebuild the ballfield dugouts at \$2,086.90. Gary made the motion to spend out of the police budget to build back the dugouts, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes. AJ also reported that South Central High School football coach Brett Westrup is making plans for the football team to sell fireworks this year. They would like to sell starting the 29th thru the 4th and also discharging them on those days as well. Since the 4th falls on Saturday she has planned the lake firework show for the 4th, but didn't know if the council wanted to approve a rain date for the show on the 5th or hold them over for next year. Mayor Alvarez told the council he had the fireworks city code copied for them to review and he proposed we follow what the code says, which is: person(s) may sell and discharge fireworks from June 27th through July 5th between the hours of 8:00am and 10:00pm on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and between the hours of 8:00am and 10:00pm on Fridays, Saturdays and July 4th, the council agreed. After discussion Gary made a motion to allow July 5th for a rain date if needed, seconded by Sam and all voted Yes.

Mayor Alvarez told the council he has spoke with Justin York regarding the proposed three-year contract between Red Hills Waste Solutions and the City. He said the contract stayed the same except for a five percent increase in his rates, noting the last time he raised rates was three years ago. He said he would like to see the wording changed for the Comanche Estates since they don't use the "trash bin service", they have a dumpster they take their trash to and believes that is the way to handle the Estates since most homeowners don't live there full-time. After discussion, Gary made a motion to accept the Red Hills Waste Solutions contract with the five percent increase, and the exception of Comanche Estates from the trash bin service, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes.

The council discussed the contract for Vanita Blundell with United Country Real Estate to sell the lots at Comanche Estates and also discussed changes they would like to see made to the current Comanche Estates protected covenants. Gary said he would like to see the square feet of living area

lowered from 1,200 square feet to 800 or 900 square feet. They also discussed changing the time limit to build and lowering the price of the lots to \$1.00 each. After discussion, Sam made a motion to hire Vanita Blundell with United Country Real Estates as the City's realtor to sell the Comanche Estates lots, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes. Sam made a motion to have Vanita sell the lots for \$1.00 each and we also buy them back for \$1.00, seconded by Gary and everyone voted Yes. Mayor Alvarez said he will take the proposed changes, rework the covenants, and bring back to the next meeting for approval.

Gary asked that the meeting agenda and budget documents that are emailed to the council every Friday before the meeting, also be posted on the City's Facebook page and website. After discussion Gary made a motion the meeting agenda, and monthly minutes be posted on the City's Facebook page and website the Friday before council meeting, seconded by Makenzie and Sam & Leasa voted No. With a tie vote, Mayor Alvarez voted No, the motion was denied. Gary said he felt the council needed transparency and to keep the public better informed, members of the council said the information could be easily misunderstood. Kristal said anyone is welcome any time to come to City Hall to ask about the financial reports. Gary then made a motion to post the meeting agenda on Facebook and the City's website the Friday before council meeting and post the minutes on the website after they have been approved by the council, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes.

Leasa presented the City's insurance policy renewal with EMC Insurance. She said the premium has gone up to \$72,443.00 which is a raise of \$2,313.00 from last year and the deductible for the larger buildings has gone up to \$10,000.00, but staying at \$5,000.00 on the smaller ones. Sam made a motion to accept the insurance policy renewal with EMC Insurance, seconded by Makenzie with Sam, Gary and Makenzie voting Yes. Leasa abstained from the vote.

Gary reported he is proposing the City combine the water and sewer funds to be able to fund a large project without raising rates, he said he has spoken to KDHE and with attorneys from the League of Kansas Municipalities, who said we can legally combine the two funds. After discussion, the council agreed to leave the two funds separate.

Mayor Alvarez presented a CMB renewal application from Dollar General. Gary made a motion to approve the application for the Dollar General CMB renewal license, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes.

Gary said he asked that the employee longevity pay cap be put on the agenda, he said he's a fan of the longevity pay, but after speaking with the local hospital and county, he felt the cap should be lowered to \$500.00 from the \$1,000.00 that was approved at the last meeting. Gary made a motion to cap the longevity pay at \$500.00. The motion died for a lack of a second.

Mayor Alvarez reported since Melissa McGuire retired at the end of last year from working at the lake booth on Debbie's two days off, and wondering whether to hire the position back, he started going through the financials of the lake. He has a spreadsheet that shows the average money brought in each day of the week against what the City paid to man the booth, and saw the biggest loss of revenue on Mondays through Thursdays. His proposal is to not man the booth each day, only Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with a potential savings of \$8,900.00. Makenzie wondered if a pay station would work out there, Sam said they could set something up like they have at the golf course. Paul said he would look into the pay station idea and bring back to next months' meeting. After discussion, Gary made a motion to accept the Mayor's proposal and not man the lake entrance booth Monday through Thursday and to change that position from salary to hourly pay, seconded by Makenzie and everyone voted Yes.

Mayor Alvarez asked the council what they wanted to do concerning the police department. He said he talked to Devon whose thoughts are to hire a part-time person for law enforcement/code enforcement. Makenzie made a motion to go into executive session for 5 minutes for personnel, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes. After returning to open session, Gary made a motion to

disband the police department and advertise for a part-time code enforcement officer, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes.

Public Works Director Charlie Austin gave his report on the different departments: 1. Water: he reported Core and Main can supply pipe directly to us for any contracted water project, he said they will upcharge the contractor to make money and the contractor will upcharge us, but since they already sell to us and want to keep our business, they will sell at regular price. He also reported they will probably start Aaron Blasi's main line as soon as he receives the pipe order. 2. Sewer: he reported he had a sewer inspection with KDHE on February 20th, he doesn't have the inspection back yet, but the inspector said there were no issues. He also reported he will contact Wildcat Electric to begin burying the lift station line 3. Streets: Charlie reported most of the alleys are fixed with the soil conditioner and about 25 percent of the streets, and also will be sending the maintenance guys down the alleys to trim back trees hanging into alleys. He also went through the chip seal plan for this summer. 4. Equipment: the Purple Wave contract is signed and will start the motion to sell the vehicles which have all started and run, and they are in the process of pulling the chat spreader out of the shed. All four vehicles will be displayed outside the big lake shed. 5. Lake: he reported all roads and parking areas have been fixed, all low hanging branches have been trimmed throughout the lake, he's also having concrete contractors look at the washout of the west culvert on the north side of the lake due to high water last year, they will also look at the ditch running by Pioneer Lodge on west third street to see what needs to be done there. 6. Ballfields: he reported he took the soil conditioner out to the ballfields and helped Wade Beal with the dirt work, which worked really good. He also let AJ Prusa know they can't open up the ballfield bathrooms yet due to the risk of freeze, but advised her they could use the lake entrance bathrooms which are heated. 7. Personnel: Charlie asked the council to go into executive session for 20 minutes to go over Rodney and Don's completed evaluations. Leasa made a motion to go into executive session for personnel reasons with Charlie for 20 minutes, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes. After returning to open session, Leasa made a motion to raise Don Dutton's monthly salary by \$90.00 and hourly salary by 50 cents, seconded by Gary and everyone voted Yes. Sam made a motion to postpone Rodney's evaluation to line up with his last raise date which is September 8, 2025, seconded by Gary and everyone voted Yes. Gary made a motion to move Don to salary in March instead of April, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes.

Bills in the amount of \$128,384.56 were presented for payment. Leasa made a motion to pay the bills as presented, seconded by Gary and all voted Yes.

Under unfinished business, Mayor Alvarez said he wants to replace the 10 year old computer in City Hall since everything in on that computer, then can use the current city hall computer to run the tv in the meeting room. The council agreed. Discussed the fact that Debbie Dutton will now fill in for the city clerk when she's gone, but on the days Debbie can't fill in, Melanie Hoffman has applied to fill-in and we need to set an hourly salary for her. After discussion, Gary made a motion to hire Melani Hoffman as fill-in city clerk for \$13.00 an hour, seconded by Sam and everyone voted Yes. Discussed the purchase of the "new" 2020 Chevy Silverado truck for the public works department and the Dodge truck they were going to make the lake truck just had the water pump go out on Friday, so discussion was held on whether to fix the Dodge truck for the lake or look for another truck to replace it. After discussion, the council agreed Charlie is going to contact Jeremy or Grant Dunn with Dunn Auto and get a quote to fix the Dodge pickup. The council discussed the need to get the vehicles on a replacement plan. Mayor Alvarez presented the snow removal policy that he put together and asked the council to review it. Gary made a motion to approve the snow removal policy, seconded by Leasa and everyone voted Yes. Mayor Alvarez said the plan is to keep all the policies made from now on into a "policy binder" to keep them together.

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