

City of Smith Center
City Council Meeting Minutes
January 27, 2025

I. Call to Order

Mayor Bryce Wiehl opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. on Monday, January 27, 2025, at the Srader Building.

Attendance

Council Members: Don Wick, Everett Mansholt, Ty Wallgren, Tracy Kingsbury, and Chris Cole.

Others: Kim Phelps, Dana Peterson, Brady Peterson, Art Befort, Chris Huffmann, Melissa Colby, Melissa Westbrook, Jamie Marshall, Curtis Peterson, Kim Maudlin, Rick Hileman, Scott Roth, Nick Rhodes, and Jill Conaway.

II. Consent Agenda

Following review, a motion was made by Cole, seconded by Kingsbury, to approve the January 13, 2025, minutes, vouchers, and receipts. Motion carried.

III. Chamber of Commerce

Chris Huffman presented and reviewed the Chamber's proposed 2025 budget with the council. The organization would like to increase advertising, attend quarterly meetings, increase work on the Main Street Project, and other improvements. The Chamber asked to increase the amount allotted from the city to \$18,000 from \$12,000. Also discussed is the potential cost of the director position, that will be a shared role with economic development. The council asked if the funds that were not expended last year due to staffing were still available. Melissa Westbrook shared that the remaining funds are held in a savings account. The council asked if the Chamber could utilize some of the funds in savings, then if needed, re-evaluate the need for additional funds from the City. Following discussion, a motion was made by Cole, seconded by Wick, to allot \$15,000 to the Chamber of Commerce. Motion carried.

IV. Previous/Ongoing Business

- a) Disposition and Procurement Policy-Attorney Owen reviewed the reason for the policy. Wick asked that in regard to the section defining the disposition of personal property, is the department head referenced the member of the council designated to that department or the employee department head. Owen replied that it would be the employee. Following review, a motion was made by Wick, seconded by Wallgren, to adopt the policy as written. Motion carried.
- b) Garage Door Bids-Two bids were shared with the council to replace the doors on the building south of the Srader (previous firehouse). Hileman asked if it would be beneficial/less expensive to look at lining the current doors with polystyrene foam. Cole shared his concern of the lack of seals around the doors, Hileman confirmed that there are no seals, the doors sit up against the block. A motion

was made by Kingsbury, seconded by Cole, to table this item to the next council meeting. Motion carried.

V. Department Reports/Committee & Board Reports

a) Airport-Hileman and Art Befort discussed the bids to finish the taxiway, explaining that this would give pilots an access way back to the flight shack while also getting off of the runway. Funding is in place to proceed with this project with the city's responsibility of 5% of the total, \$66,000. The federal funding the city qualifies for was explained. Befort also shared that after the 2023/2024 bipartisan infrastructure law change, the city responsibility decreased from 10% to 5%. Befort also shared that the city and county collaboration on work at the airport was also a factor in enabling the city to continue to receive these funds. Befort thanked the city for their support of the airport. A motion was made by Wick, seconded by Wallgren, to approve the project as discussed. Motion carried.

b) Economic Development-Nick Rhodes introduced Scott Roth, new chairperson, to the governing body. Rhodes presented items from the board's last meeting. A motion was made by Cole, seconded by Kingsbury, to appoint Matt Haack to the economic development advisory board. Motion carried. A motion was made by Wick, seconded by Wallgren, to remove Erika Kingsbury from the board. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Kingsbury, seconded by Mansholt, to approve a Commercial Revitalization Grant of up to \$5,000 in matching funds to Buffalo Moon, for building renovations. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Cole, seconded by Wick, to appoint Doug Armknect to the Housing Committee. Motion carried. A motion was made by Wick, seconded by Kingsbury, to remove Tony Church from the Housing Committee. Motion carried. Discussion was held on the Land Bank. It is recommended that the Housing Committee become the Land Bank Board or Trustees. Attorney Owen will research the requirements and report to the council at the second meeting in February.

Rhodes shared that the advisory board had allocated \$50,000 for housing; and that the board would like to use those funds to put towards the project of repurposing the prior hospital building into apartments/housing. Peterson explained the building rehabilitation project, sharing that a developer would be moving forward to redevelop the structure into one and two bedroom apartments, similar to what has been done in Iola, Fort Scott and communities close to Kansas City. The project is projected to cost 3.5 to 4 million dollars. The County has committed \$125,000 and the property towards the project; Prairie Land Electric has agreed to contribute the meters and work, valued at approximately \$150,000; The NRP value is estimated at \$150,000; and with the economic development funds would bring this total to \$475,000. The developer has committed his own funds to the project. The developer plans to complete the apartments in blocks of 6, anticipating the first ones to be completed this year. The Wellness Center and Daycare facilities will both remain. Following discussion, a motion was made by Wallgren, seconded by Wick, to approve allocating \$50,000 to the housing project. Motion carried.

Rhodes shared information from a recent interview, asking to offer the position of economic development program assistant and Chamber director, recommending pay at step 8. It was the consensus of the council to offer this candidate the position as presented.

A motion was made by Cole, seconded by Wick, to approve a reimbursement of \$164.25 to Scott Roth for food purchased for the economic development meeting. Motion carried.

- c) Police Department-Chief Marshall has been checking on vehicle prices and reported that Officer Niles has completed the first half of the academy.
- d) Hileman-Will have bids to purchase generators for the wells at the next meeting. Hileman explained that Ken Depperschmidt visited with him today. Ken would like to know if he paid the annual cart rental fee and cart shed rental fees, if he could put a windshield and golf ball washer on one of the city carts to use. The cart will still be available for the city to utilize for rent when needed. It was the consensus of the council to allow Depperschmidt this use.
- e) Clerk-Conaway reported on the payment received for scrap items sold. The HOA maintenance program was reviewed. It was the consensus of the council to pass on the coverage offered.
Conaway asked if the council had any suggestions for the Risk Management grant options, and offered to meet with the department heads to choose options that would provide the best benefit at this time.

VI. Governing Body Reports

- a) Wick-Asked if there was an update on the pool bathhouse. Wiehl replied that the trusses have been ordered.
- b) Wallgren-Talked with Art Befort and will catch up with the airport board at one of their meetings coming up.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Kingsbury, seconded by Wick, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.