



# City Council Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2021  
6:00 p.m.

**Mayor:** John McTaggart  
**Councilmember** Carolyn Caiharr Margaret Shriver  
Chuck Stites

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1. **Consider approval of consent agenda items**
  - a) **Approve minutes of July 12, 201**
  - b) **Statement of bills paid in the amount of \$304,140.81**
    - **Motion:** Councilmember Caiharr made the motion to approve the consent agenda items
    - **Second:** Councilmember Shriver seconded the motion
    - **Vote:** Passes 3-0
2. **Requests or Comments from the public**
  - Major Brooks, 407 S. 110<sup>th</sup> St., took the podium and expressed his concerns about the lack of storm drains along north 110<sup>th</sup> St. He also noted that several residents in his area use outhouse due to lack of sewer access. City Manager Michael Webb noted he would be happy to meet with Mr. Brooks about his concerns.
3. **Consider staff updates related to the property located at 9711 Steele Rd. and take any necessary actions**
  - Assistant City Manager Zack Daniel provided an update on this item, summarizing the Council's previous actions on this property. Mr. Daniel also noted the recent tax sale that took place, which transferred ownership to a new owner while the Council was taking its actions.
  - Mr. Daniel noted that the new property owner intends on rehabbing the property and is currently seeking cost estimates for the work.
  - Being that the original resolution called for the demolition of the property if conditions were not abated by July 31, it is not realistic that the new property owner will have the work completed by that time. Since it appears the property owner is making good faith efforts to rehab the property, staff recommends allowing an additional month for the necessary permits be submitted. An updated resolution is included in the packet which would give the owner the additional 30-days.
  - The property owner has been notified of this meeting as well as the staff recommended action.
  - Councilmember Shriver asked when the date it was purchased, which Mr. Daniel noted it was prior to the public hearing. Councilmember Stites asked when the next update to the Council would be, which Mr. Daniel noted it would be the first meeting in September.
  - **Motion:** Councilmember Stites made the motion adopt Resolution 2021-12
  - **Second:** Councilmember Caiharr seconded the motion
  - **Vote:** Passes, 3-0
4. **Consider recommendation of approval from the Planning commission regarding a replat/final plat for 1857 S. 105<sup>th</sup> Terrace (2021-02-FPT)**

- City Planner Bradley Hocevar reviewed this item, summarizing the actions at the recent Planning Commission.
  - Mr. Hocevar clarified that this was not a rezoning effort, but will reset the setback lines to allow for more buildable area in his side lot.
  - City Manager Michael Webb provided additional context on the location of the utility easements.
  - Councilmember Stites asked if there would need to be two actions, which Mr. Webb noted that only a single vote was required to approve the replat/final plat.
  - **Motion:** Councilmember Shriver made the motion to approve the Planning Commission recommendation regarding a replat/final plat for 1857 S. 105<sup>th</sup> Terrace with the staff conditions noted in the agenda memo.
  - **Second:** Councilmember Caiharr seconded the motion
  - **Vote:** Passes, 4-0, with Mayor McTaggart voting
5. **Consider motion to recess into Executive Session pursuant to K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(2) for consultation with legal counsel for matters which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client relationship for discussions related to a project in the City's industrial park**
- **Motion:** Councilmember Caiharr made a motion to recess into executive session for the reasons stated to return at 6:40 p.m.
  - **Second:** Councilmember Shriver seconded the motion
  - **Vote:** Passes, 3-0
  - *Executive Session takes place with the group returning at 6:41 p.m.*
  - **Motion:** Councilmember Caiharr made the motion to return to regular meeting.
  - **Second:** Councilmember Shriver seconded the motion
  - **Vote:** Passes, 3-0
  - No action was taken as a result of the executive sessions.
6. **Hear staff presentation regarding the development of the 2022 Annual Budget focusing on proposed General Fund expenditures**
- City Manager Michael Webb reviewed the budget priorities which were discussed in previous meetings. He thanked Assistant City Manager Zack Daniel and Finance Director Sean Milleson for their work in putting all the materials together for the presentation.
  - First priority is increased funding for road projects, including \$50,000 in General Fund dollars, \$100,000 in Special Sales Tax dollars, \$245,000 in Special Highway funds, and approximately \$200,000 in bonded projects. This would make the FY22 street maintenance funding amount to about \$600,000.
  - Councilmember Caiharr asked what Special Highway funds were used for in previous years. Mr. Webb replied that \$125,000 of those funds were used to make debt payments. This will not be the case this year and that money will be reallocated to street projects and equipment.
  - Councilmember Stites asked if it was expected that road projects would be contracted out. Mr. Webb responded that most major projects would be contracted out, but routine maintenance (like patches or sign replacement) would be handled by in-house staff.
  - The next priority discussed was employee compensation. Mr. Webb noted that the previously approved compensation plan will not be changed, but certain positions may be realigned based on research of peer communities in order to remain competitive for those roles. This will most effect police officers and master firefighters. The current budget also includes an annual adjustment of 3% for all positions.

- Mr. Webb then discussed staffing. Councilmember Shriver previously pushed for more contracted labor for routine work to allow staff more time for other projects. The most significant change to staffing was the recommendation of an additional EPD officer, which would allow for a dedicated detective without pulling that staff member on the street. Also included is a part-time position to assist with administrative duties in Municipal Court and administrative duties.
- Councilmember Caiharr had questions about current staffing practices, which Mr. Webb reviewed. Councilmember Stites asked about preferred staffing levels, which Mr. Webb noted that studies show the City is understaffed. Police Chief Mathies also provided input on the current staffing practices in each PD division. Chief Mathies noted he has advocated for additional staff in the past but this was the first time the recommendation had made it into the proposed budget. Councilmember Caiharr asked if the K9 officer still responded to calls, which Chief Mathies confirmed that he did, though he may not transport suspects in custody.
- Councilmember Caiharr asked about the groundskeeping staff, which Mr. Webb noted that a staff member was reassigned from Public Works to Parks, where he is primarily tasked with park maintenance, cemetery maintenance, and maintenance of other public spaces. He noted that some of these duties may be contracted out in the future to allow for more beautification vs. maintenance.
- Councilmember Shriver asked about the part time staff recommendation, which Mr. Webb noted it would be capped at 1,000 hours to avoid the KPERS threshold. The final staffing model is not yet determined and may be flexible depending on workflow periods.
- The next priority discussed was capital planning of public facilities. Primarily, this refers to areas like the Community Center, City parks, and cemeteries. Currently, \$50,000 is being recommended for improvements and maintenance of these areas used most frequently by the public.
- Mr. Webb then reviewed the proposed mill levy, which represents a 1 mill decrease from the final FY21 tax rate. He noted that it is not common that a community would lower the mill levy during this period of time as consistently as what this governing body has done. He noted that revenues continue to come in strong this year, but that staff recommends being conservative in FY22 estimates.
- Staff expects a slight spend down of the fund balance in FY22, but that is following a year where revenues are expected to overperform budget by an estimated \$326,000 (most notably in the areas of Sales Taxes, Gaming Revenue, and other departmental fines and fees).
- Overall, the general fund budget represents a 6% increase over the adopted FY21 level.
- Councilmember Caiharr asked what level revenue was expected to going up. Assistant City Manager notes that from budget-to-budget, revenues are expected to rise at about the same rate. Estimated final revenue to FY22 revenue is less of an increase due to the increase in revenue collections previously noted.
- Councilmember Caiharr asked what was the estimated increase in adjustment to pay. Mr. Daniel noted that increases in compensation (which includes anticipated increases in benefit rates) was about \$300,000. He noted that about half of this increase can be attributed to the new proposed officer position as well as the inclusion of the City Planner in the General Fund vs. the Economic Development fund.
- The current proposed budget leaves a fund balance of just under a million dollars at the end of 2022, which is in line with the 15% of expenditures.
- Mr. Webb then noted that staff is not proposing a change to the mill levy in debt. Debt payments begin to go down in FY22, but Special Highway Funds are no longer being used to pay debt. As such, more of the mill levy will be used to pay

down debt, which is a more appropriate funding model. The Sewer Fund will continue to pay its share of debt as scheduled.

- The debt service fund is expected to have a fund balance of about \$360,470 at the end of 2022.
- Mr. Webb summarized the report and turned to the Council for additional questions and comments.
- Councilmember Caiharr noted that just because property values are going up it doesn't necessarily mean that spending should increase at the same rate. Mr. Webb pointed out that property values increased by about 9.8% while spending is only increasing at 6%. Councilmember Caiharr asked about the Revenue Neutral Rate consideration. Mr. Daniel reviewed the actions the Council have already taken, which is to hold a public hearing on August 23 to consider exceeding the RNR. Due to this action, the maximum the mill levy could be set is at its current level, meaning that a mill levy increase would be impossible at this point. As pointed out earlier, the recommended mill levy represents a decrease of 1 mill from FY21, or an increase of about 2.7 mills over the RNR. Councilmember Caiharr also asked for clarification on street maintenance funding, which Mr. Daniel noted that only the \$50,000 for general maintenance will affect the General Fund.
- Councilmember Stites asked whose responsibility it was to dedicate funding to street funding and why wasn't it done over the past six years. Mr. Webb noted that while the area was recovering from the economic downturn, it was only beginning in 2017 that property values began to catch up the levels they are at now. Over the last 5-6 years, the City Council has stressed the need to reduce the property tax burden on residents, which prioritized lowering the mill levy.
- There was additional discussion on the various street projects currently planned for this year and next and the importance of keeping with the maintenance rotation programs in place.
- Mr. Webb noted that the staff expect to wrap up the budget process on its usual timeline.

## **7. City Manager Report**

- City Manager Michael Webb noted he will be on vacation later on this week and will return to the office Wednesday, August 4.
- Assistant City Manager Zack Daniel plugged the upcoming community cookout happening at the City Park on Thursday.
- There was some discussion on the City's role in the upcoming Big Boy Steam Engine visit scheduled for August 9.

## **8. Council and Mayor Comments**

Councilmember Caiharr noted concerns she had heard about the headstones not being blown free of grass after meetings. Assistant City Manager Zack Daniel noted he has communicated to the contractor and will be performing quality checks after the upcoming mows to ensure that the work is being done properly. Caiharr also brought up repairs that have taken place on 102<sup>nd</sup> St., which Public Works Director Dustin Zenger noted that a private property owner did those repairs. He noted that the business that the resident runs out of their property likely contributes to the increased wear and tear on that section of road and that staff appreciate the assistance. She also asked for an update on the surface seal project, which Mr. Zenger noted the work will likely begin early August. She closed encouraging residents and Councilmembers to reach out to the County as they work through their budgeting process, specifically how they allocate ARPA funds.

Councilmember Stites asked what studies support the addition of an additional officer. Chief Mathies responded that several staffing equations exist which point to a lack of staff, but that the studies they refer to are ones conducted internally based on the level of activity for the department. Mr. Stites also thanked Mr. Brooks for his comments.

Councilmember Shriver echoed concerns she has heard about the Cemetery and appreciates staff's attention. She asked about volunteer staffing at the EFD, which Chief Whitham responded to. She also asked about what appeared to be a cost overrun in non-vehicle repairs at the Fire Department, which staff provided additional context on. In short, those are likely repairs for rescue or SCBA equipment. Shriver had additional questions regarding EPD staffing and the use of officers during Council meetings. There was additional discussion about the planning for the Big Boy visit. Street projects were then discussed and Councilmember Shriver asked for regular updates on those efforts. She also thanked staff for their work on the budget.

Mayor McTaggart thanked staff for their work in developing the budget.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Zachary Daniel  
City Clerk