

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINUTES

CITY OF GREENLEAF

The Greenleaf City Council met June 9. Present were mayor Dave Savage and council members Mike Hoover, Tony McGatlin and Kevin Buhrman. Council members Hockett and Bruna were absent. Wanda Uffman and Jerry Baker were also absent.

Ken Kickhaefer will be at the July 14th meeting to begin the 2026 Budget.

CITY OF MAHASKA

The Mahaska City Council met June 11. Present were Marcus Daniels, Cal Livingston, Wiley Kerr, Kirk Gallion, Doug Lambert and Dale Kearn.

Communication: Ryan & Mullin (Attorney) notice of rate increase.

Old business:

- Tim Galloway, Water Operator, gave an update on the water tower project. The tower has been switched from the old to the new. The chlorination building is complete. There are final items to be completed such as grading the site, final inspections and submittals to KDHE.
- The nuisance property on south Main has not been resolved. The City will contact the City Attorney to start legal proceedings.

WASHINGTON COUNTY HOSPITAL

The Washington County Hospital Board of Directors met June 16. Present were Jana Rollman, Mike Kongs, Scott Bokelman, and Cindi Ohlde. Staci Cardenas joined via telephone. Others present were Roxanne Schottel, CEO.

Schottel informed the Board that Union State Bank, Barnes ,was the high bid on the recent CD.

Susie Pallais was recently hired as a nurse's aide.

Discussion was held regarding the recent closure of Friendly Corners.

Schottel reported that the annual Cost Report has been filed.

WHC/FMWC will be par-

ticipating in Washington 4th of July, Hanover, Linn and Washington County Fair parades.

The board went into executive session for non-elected personnel at 8:15 a.m. and returned to regular session at 8:25 a.m. Included in the session was the board and CEO.

USD 224

The USD 224 Clifton-Clyde Board of Education met July 7. Present were AJ Goeckel, Shawn Taddiken, Audra Walter, and Kirstin Wernecke. Absent was Bill Genereux, Grant Knoettgen, and Cade Winter. Others present were Derek Drake, Superintendent Art Baker, Principal Eric Sacco, and Clerk Denise Cyr.

Mr. Baker reported that USD 334 asked for assistance with the legal descriptions for boundaries from the surrounding districts. USD 334 plans to have their disorganization of the district to the Kansas State board for their approval at the September or October meeting so the patrons can then vote on the disorganization during the November election.

The Washington County Clerk is continuing to work with our attorney at KASB to get the land transfer that was done in early 2024 with USD 379 recorded so that Shawn Taddiken can be listed on the ballot for November.

The board approved the FFA officer retreat to Lake of the Ozarks on July 29-31 as presented.

Concession Stand Supervisor Job Description: The board had the first reading on a job description for a concession stand supervisor. The supervisor would be responsible for inventorying and purchasing supplies necessary for all fall home events (CCHS and CCMS volleyball and football) and winter home events (CCHS and CCMS basketball). The supervisor is responsible for constant communication with the building admin on the schedule, expected crowd size, and any potential need for pricing changes. The su-

pervisor will need to do the initial setup for each event night and ensure the groups can access additional supplies as they run out.

Revenue Neutral Rate: The board voted to notify the Washington County Clerk that it is the intent of USD 224 to exceed the revenue neutral rate for the proposed 2025-2026 budget. Motion carried 4-0. The district is required to report to the county clerk by July 20th if the district will exceed the revenue neutral tax rate. The neutral tax rate is the tax rate that will raise the same tax dollars as were raised in the prior year and is calculated using the Washington County assessed valuation for the district.

The board met in executive session to discuss a proposal for certified staff salary incentives pursuant to the employer-employee negotiations exception under KOMA. Invited into the session were Mr. Baker, Mr. Sacco and clerk Cyr.

The board accepted the resignation of Lori Porter as CCHS Co-Cheer Sponsor.

Board Member Comments and Requests for the Next Meeting: Goeckel asked for an update with the City of Clifton on the grade school curb repair.

HADDAM CITY COUNCIL

The Haddam City Council met June 4. Present were mayor Steve Zenger, council members Michael Welch, Thad Corbin, Joe Greenwood, and Amanda Ritter, and clerk Brandi.

Delinquent water accounts were discussed. Brandi was instructed to send disconnection notices to two residents.

No updates on the road project.

The City Hall kitchen renovations are moving along nicely.

Thad has cleaned the culvert at the City Hall.

The alley behind 517 Kansas Street is currently fenced / blocked off. Several utility companies have complained about not being able to access service lines in the area

because of the blockage. Joe stated that he will reach out to the resident and ask that the fence/blockage be remedied.

Brandi presented a proposed ordinance for dogs to the council. The council approved the ordinance as presented. Brandi will prepare for signature and publishing.

CITY OF GREENLEAF

The Greenleaf City Council met May 12. Present were mayor Dave Savage, and council members Melissa Bruna, Kevin Buhrman and Mike Hoover. Councilmen Hockett and McGatlin were absent. Also present was Claire Burch and Jerry Baker.

Presentation of public comments: Claire Burch spoke with council about having a grocery store and more housing options in town.

Report of the city officers: Pool is scheduled to open Saturday, May 24th. Ken will be at July meeting to begin the 2026 Budget. Jerry reported that the house on Commercial Street has been taken down.

CITY OF MAHASKA

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- The nuisance property on south Main has not been resolved. The city will contact the city attorney to start legal proceedings.

CITY OF CLIFTON

The Clifton City Council met July 28. Present were

mayor John Tillinghast, council members B. Cyphers – J. Lange- K. Stienbrock– A. LeClair-G Pruser; employees R.Stephens – C. Finkbinder- Cody VanCampen; and guests Matthew Jorgenson – Mike McCaddon, Milton Leiszler, Deb Ohlde.

Public comment: Art Baker, USD 224 Superintendent- Brought to attention that grade school curbs need to be fixed. Railroad street and Clyde street. Milton Leiszler – concerned about children driving around golf carts, Mike Mccadden- Concerned with communication about road work, and a dog at large.

EMS director: Mayor John T. and council member Key-na S. attend the commissioners meeting in Washington County. No resolution as of yet.

Westview: 16 occupants.

Beautification committee: Volleyball court is up and running, Volleyball project came in the less than grant amount. Money refunded back to Greater Salina Community foundation.

PWO – Chip sealing project finished. Storm cover replaced at car wash, will be replacing fire hydrant at car wash. Discussed trading in grasshopper and replacing budgeted for 2025.

Tony Vancampen is donating black walnut lumber for new Berner Memorial Park sign.

Clerk- KDOT HWY 9 LINK contract– Council voted to accept and sign contract.

Twin Valley grant due Aug. 1. Applying to replace picnic table at the park.

Unfinished business: Lagoon Lift Station- Deb Ohlde discuss options to fund this project. Council voted to apply for KWO, KDHE and CBDG, and to hire Northern Central Regional Planning Commission to help with administration.

CCLIP 106-U-2549-01 KDOT

Fowl Ordinance- Decided to leave ordinance as is.

New business: 2026 budget: Budget reviewed, questions answered. Revenue neutral rate not exceeded.

Factors that reflect ‘welcoming communities’

BY PAT MELGARES
K-State Extension news service

According to the U.S Census, nearly 14% of people currently living in Kansas moved to a different home in the past year, and about half of those – nearly 200,000 people -- came from a different city, state or country.

Recognizing those statistics, Simone Elder of the Kansas Sampler Foundation thinks Kansas communities can benefit from being welcoming to new residents.

“Welcoming communities are the communities of the future,” said Elder, who manages the Foundation’s Power Up and Engagement program.

Elder was a featured speaker during the July 11 First Friday e-Call, a monthly online series hosted by K-State Extension that helps to nurture small businesses and inspire entrepreneurship in Kansas. The online discussions, which routinely host dozens of Kansas citizens from the public and private sectors, are available free each month.

In a survey of 500 Kansans and follow-up interviews with 175 of them, the Kansas Sampler Foundation found that when communities are welcoming

to newcomers, those people want to stay. She cited four factors, listed in the organization’s Power Up and Go report, that will symbolize communities of the future:

- They like themselves.
- They are welcoming.
- They engage all residents.
- They invest in themselves.

“Welcoming communities are interested in supporting all who live in their town, and they have a desire to engage residents in moving their community forward,” Elder said. “They find ways to be inclusive and supportive. They support the arts with creative local projects that reflect and amplify the vibe of their community. They listen, they engage, and they believe in and invest in themselves.”

Residents in Emporia have rallied around a program that helps newcomers adjust to their new community more quickly. Rebeca Herrera, membership director of the Chamber of Commerce, said the program – called Mi Negocio, or My Business in English – helps Spanish-speaking business owners get started.

“The mission of the

Chamber of Commerce is simple...to support businesses of all sizes and backgrounds,” Herrera said. “This was a way for us to create a Spanish speaking environment for entrepreneurs, and a way for us to support our community.”

In Lawrence, local residents also are encouraging entrepreneurship as a gateway to welcoming new community members.

“We believe the vibrant culture, creativity and talent in Douglas County should be the driving force behind our local economy,” said Monique Mercurio, a co-leader of the nonprofit Douglas County CORE, an acronym that stands for Connections, Opportunities and Resources for Entrepreneurs.

“And we believe that the support systems to help businesses grow should reflect the people who make this place what it is.”

The Kansas Sampler Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to sustain rural culture in the state. More information about the Kansas Sampler Foundation is available online.

The full July 11 talk and other First Friday presentations are available online.

Isolation, loneliness impacts personal health

BY PAT MELGARES
K-State Extension news service

Kansas State University health professional Elaine Johannes says that a recent report indicating that about one-in-six Americans feels lonely or socially isolated is an important reminder of the value of social connections.

The Pew Research Center released findings earlier this year on the report, ‘Men, Women and Social Connections,’ indicating that roughly equal shares of American men and women say they’re often lonely.

But the nonpartisan research group also reports that women are more likely than men to reach out to a wider network for emotional support.

Johannes, the Kansas Health Foundation’s Distinguished Professor of Community Health at Kansas State University, said awareness of social isolation and loneliness among Americans became a greater focus during the latter part of the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

“We started to understand what the pandemic led to when we became socially isolated and we felt the loneliness of being isolated,” she said.

Health experts – including the U.S. Surgeon General – have since reported negative impacts to personal health as a result of social isolation and loneliness.

Social isolation is not having relationships, contact with, or support from others. Johannes notes a 2024 study from Harvard university that indicates

those who are socially isolated have a 32% increase in earlier death.

Loneliness is the feeling of being alone, disconnected, or not close to others. That group, according to the 2024 study, has a 14% increase in early death.

“If you are socially isolated and also lonely...my goodness,” Johannes said. “It is no wonder our lifespan in the United States seems to be shorter than it once was.”

According to the Pew report, men and women most commonly rely on a spouse or partner for social connection. But women are far more likely than men to spread their support network, including parents, friends, family members, mental health counselors or online platforms and communities.

Perhaps a surprise finding, older Americans – over the age of 50 -- are less likely to feel socially isolated or lonely compared to younger Americans. Johannes says many in the older generation “were raised in a time where institutions were prevalent.”

“We were connected to a workplace, a business, a school, a faith community, and other places,” she said.

Johannes said today’s youth are more likely to participate in some sort of remote learning, or as they age, work remotely. They are much more connected to technology, though some of the current tools do provide social connection.

“Some research does show that texting still pro-

vides a social connection,” Johannes said. “When the person is socially connected, they have an identity, or they have a group they can affiliate with, and thus they are less likely to feel emotionally lonely.”

Johannes touted the importance of the state’s extension network, which provides numerous local programs for residents that include physical activity, leadership, health, nutrition and more.

“If the psychological effects of understanding that you’re disconnected and then feeling some discomfort about that lasts for 6-8 weeks persistently, then the person may be feeling depressed,” she said. “That’s when the person needs to have a provider who could support them.”

She adds: “In our society, there’s a malaise. Our society, as a whole, does not know that being lonely is not typical. If people are persistently socially isolated, feel lonely and tend to think that this is the way life is, then we need to reach out and support them.”

Johannes said online behavioral health providers can be an effective way to address issues of isolation or loneliness. She also encourages Kansans to contact their local community mental health center or local extension office to learn of programs and resources available in their geographic area.

Online, help is available at <https://988lifeline.org/> or by texting or calling 988.