

REGULAR MEETING
January 20, 2015

The Board of City Commissioners of the City of Herington, Kansas, met at City Hall at 4:30 p.m. on the above date—the following being present: Mayor Beth Wade, Commissioner Fred Olsen, Commissioner Chuck Miller, Commissioner Michelle Stanford, Commissioner Kitty Walter, City Manager Ron Strickland, City Attorney Brad Jantz, and City Clerk Debra Wendt.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. A motion was made by Commissioner Stanford, seconded by Commissioner Olsen, to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 6, 2015. The motion passed, with Mayor Wade and Commissioners Olsen, Stanford, and Walter voting “Aye,” and Commissioner Miller abstaining. Appropriation Ordinances #C1230-14 and #P0110-15 were discussed and reviewed. There was one additional agenda item. The Mayor added George Yang, Panda Kitchen, as #4A. A motion was made by Commissioner Olsen, seconded by Commissioner Stanford, to approve the agenda, with the addition of #4A. Motion carried, all voting, “Aye.”

Bill Alcorn and George Yang invited everyone to the ribbon cutting and opening of the Panda Kitchen, on February 11th at 9:00 a.m., at 201 West Trapp.

A contract renewal with M & K Trash Service was considered. It would run from 1-1-15 through 12-31-16. Mike Walsh said that the contents of the contract and the fee, \$16.75/month per customer, would remain the same. A motion was made by Mayor Wade, seconded by Commissioner Stanford, to authorize the Mayor to sign the two-year contract for solid waste collection and disposal with M & K Trash Service. Motion carried, all voting, “Aye.”

Bids for a bucket truck were presented:

Altec Industries	\$149,900
Terex Hi-Ranger	\$181,000
Utility Equipment and Bodies	\$168,467

Utilities Superintendent Mike Wendt recommended the truck from Altec, which is a demo truck, and would replace a 1985 unit that is in need of \$40,000 worth of repairs to the lift unit, or it will be tagged out of service. It is also having engine problems. The electric fund has been putting money in the equipment reserve fund for seven years, and it has a sufficient amount to purchase the truck. Mike said that our small service truck would reach a height of 35’, and it is used for service lines and hard to reach areas. He noted that our Freightliner truck reaches 55’, and the new truck would reach 50’. Both are needed, as most poles are 45’, and wire is strung between them. Mike added that in order to complete the on-going voltage change, as well as day to day operations, proper equipment is needed. Fred said that even though safety is at the top of his list, we have to start saving. Ron pointed out that we don’t have any kind of emergency fund, and Beth asked if the equipment reserve fund could be used for anything other than equipment. Michelle had several questions. Stephanie Gilbert, 6 West Main, asked if the old truck would be sold, and Rick Freeman, 201 East Helen, insisted that two big trucks are not needed. Mike reported that the electric crew uses all three trucks every day for maintenance, as well as for the voltage change. He added that even though the project is taking a long time, there is a significant savings from doing the voltage change ourselves, instead of contracting it out. Ron reminded everyone that we are the utility and that we need to have safe and proper equipment. A motion was made by Commissioner Stanford, seconded by Mayor Wade, to accept the bid of \$149,900 from Altec Industries for a bucket truck. The motion failed, with Mayor Wade and Commissioner Stanford voting “Aye,” and Commissioners Olsen, Miller, and Walter voting, “Nay.”

Bids for a filter and valves for the swimming pool were considered. The low bid was from Chemquest for \$20,969. Michelle suggested keeping the pool closed and having everyone swim at the lake. Tandi Arevalo mentioned that the Herington swim team practices at the pool, and holds swim meets there. A motion was made by Commissioner Olsen, seconded by Commissioner Miller, to purchase the pool filter and valves from Chemquest for \$20,969. The motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Stanford casting the dissenting vote.

An ordinance that would raise the meter service charge for residential customers to \$15.00/month, and for commercial customers, to \$20.00/month was considered. Ron reported that some months we are not taking in enough money in the electric fund to pay the bills, and we're not able to absorb the increased Westar rates. Kitty said she talked to Westar and they went over their rates and policies with her. Fred said that our electric crew does a wonderful job, but he feels there are places we can save money, instead of raising rates. Michelle pointed out that the Commission was not given any other options, other than raising the meter charge. She suggested brainstorming and going about this in a different way that would still meet our needs. Chuck said we "can't keep doing this," and Fred said he wanted some other options looked at. Michelle suggested a work session with the department heads. Ron presented a spread sheet showing a cost analysis of electric costs from 2011-2014. Debbie Goembel brought up that the utilities at the Hilltop and Homestead Village are included in the rent, and no money is going to the electric fund. Ron added that Westar has raised our rates, and Fred said that he wants to listen to the whole community. Ray Perez suggested checking into the possibility of selling our system to Westar, so we could save the cost of employees and equipment. Rick Freeman said the citizens can't afford an increase. Gloria Boomer suggested cutting the City Manager's salary. Ron was directed to meet with department heads and come up with some cost-saving options. A motion was made by Commissioner Stanford, seconded by Commissioner Olsen, to table the ordinance until more information can be obtained. Motion carried, all voting, "Aye."

Ron gave an update on the highway project. Kitty said it would make good business sense to use time clocks. Michelle commented on some recent tree trimming, and reported what needs to be published in the "County" newspaper.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stanford, seconded by Mayor Wade, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, all voting, "Aye."

Also present at the meeting were Tammy Miller, Stephanie Gilbert, Ken Walters, Leslie Mayes, Ray Perez, Rohani Alcorn, Bill Alcorn, George Yang, Lisa Williams, Bret Beye, Mike Wendt, David Kahle, Carl Brown, Mike Walsh, Mike Ryan, Buck Buckner, Charles Ray Karen Ketterer, Debbie Goembel, Rick Freeman, Kat Souza, Gloria Boomer, John Bell, Eric Gares, Ken Staatz, Tandi Arevalo, Cynthia Naylor, Robyn Heitfield, Brandy Collins, and J.R. Sparke.

City Clerk