

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**March 3, 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 Olsen, seconded by Mayor Wade, to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 17, 2015. Motion carried, all voting, “Aye.” Appropriation Ordinance #P0225-15 was discussed and reviewed. There were no additional agenda items. A motion was made by Commissioner Olsen, seconded by Commissioner Stanford, to approve the agenda. Motion carried, all voting, “Aye.”

A motion was made by Commissioner Olsen, seconded by Commissioner Walter, to accept the resignation of Rick Freeman from the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Motion carried, all voting, “Aye.”

The Mayor read a proclamation declaring March 20-22, 2015 as “Branson in Chapman” weekend. A motion was made by Commissioner Stanford, seconded by Mayor Wade, to approve this proclamation. Motion carried, all voting, “Aye.”

Sandra Barnum from Kan-Equip was present to ask the Commission if they can bring equipment into the Community Building for their open house. She said the equipment would all be new, nothing would be running, and it would be moved in with a propane generated forklift. Sandra passed around pictures of the equipment. Ron said that nothing of this sort had ever been allowed in the building before, and we do not want to destroy the floor. The weight of the equipment was a big concern. Sandra was told that the equipment would need to go outside, but not on the grass.

Brad presented a draft ordinance, bylaws, and policy for the proposed land bank. He went over the changes he had made, answered questions, and said that the Commission would appoint the land bank board. It was decided to put this on the next agenda for more discussion and review, and to consider the passage at the first meeting in April.

Ron brought up the potential sale of our electric utility to Westar. He said he would like to get a vote on this in order to proceed. He presented a report that gave the potential increase in water and sewer rates and the mill levy if the system were sold. Beth asked who would pay for the inventory of the system, and Chuck said that 167 mills is not acceptable, and he asked what the current balance in the light fund is. Mark Hager said he compared our electric bill for 909 Kwh to Westar’s, and ours was only \$9.00 higher. Chuck read the list of all of the city electric meters and donated electric that is read but not billed at this time. Ron said that if the Westar rates keep increasing, we may need to increase our rates. Michelle noted that many people in town are at the poverty level. Kitty thought that with 1200 customers, 300 late notices are too many, then added that 10% penalty is too much, and that we don’t treat people well. Several of the Commissioners indicated that they would like to see how every

penny is spent. Ron said it is not their job to micromanage. Carl Brown commented that it is not micromanaging, but it is holding Ron accountable.

Fred suggested postponing the decision for a while, since money has been removed from the equipment reserve fund and put in the light fund, and the hospital is now receiving sales tax money and paying their bill. Michelle noted that even though Westar would make us an offer, we wouldn't have to sell the system. Fred commented that the whole process would be very lengthy. D.J. Neuberger said he has no problem paying more for electric if it is needed, but he thinks citizens would also accept an increase more readily if they know how the money is being spent. He suggested a comprehensive rate study. Ron said that a consultant would give a presentation at the next meeting on how to set rates. Proceeding with the authorization to sell to Westar was tabled.

The Commission appreciated that Ron went to Topeka to lobby on behalf of the railroad union. Michelle asked about the signs at the Industrial Park and also what fund the utility late fees go in.

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

Also present at the meeting were Brandy Collins, Kat Souza, Paula Strickland, Mark Hager, Mike Wendt, Rick Freeman, Linda Herbel, Ruth Clark, Bob Clark, Ethan Moorman-Meador, Sandra Barnum, Ken Walters, David Gehrke, Mike Ryan, Curtis Hartman, Leslie Mayes, Laurie Brunner, Tandi Arevalo, Mitch Gehrke, Ray Perez, Cynthia Naylor, Jessica Echelle, Andrew Reese, Cathy Hagerman, Stephanie Gilbert, Ron Biehler, Mike Herbel, David Kahle, Wendy Jones, Dave Jones, Carl Brown, Gloria Boomer, D.J. Neuberger, Virginia Neuberger, and J.R. Sparke.

Debra Wendt  
City Clerk