

December 13, 2023

The scheduled monthly meeting of the Chapman City Council was held Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at City Hall at 7:00 pm. Mayor Howard Battishill was present. Councilmembers Jim Bell, Sheryl Coyner, Mary Monasmith, and Dale Nelson were present. Also in attendance were City Administrator Bill Flanery, Director of Public Works Edward Wehrmeister, Police Chief Kevin Diercks, Sergeant James Reynolds, Golf Superintendent Austin Murphy, Fire Chief Cecil Thrush, Jeffery Wenger, Douglas Kiessling, Ray Daisy, Brandy Sensmeier of Dickinson County News-Times, Christy Loy, Kim Bomberger and Blaine Stroble of Kansas Forestry Service, Glenda Dixson, Rose Lindsay, Logan Lehmkuhl, Chance Hultgren, Shawn Monasmith, Brian Sweet, Dennis and Susan Steinour, Crystal Reynolds, Mertle Brown, Kyle and Cathy Fahey, Craig Klukas, Phyllis Cheney, Mike Brown, Joshua and Jennifer Chambers, Bryce Forth, John Vahsholtz, and John Harris.

#2 Consent Agenda

Motion by Bell to approve the consent agenda as presented, 2nd by Nelson, vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

Motion by Bell to move the Tree Inventory Discussion to Item #3 on the agenda and move Public Comments to Item #4, 2nd by Nelson, vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

#3 Tree Inventory Discussion

Kim Bomberger of the Kansas Forest Service thanked everyone for their assistance with the tree inventory. Kim had previously submitted the results of the tree inventory in a 21-page report and the report is included in the council packets. The purpose of the tree inventory is to inform the council and residents of the status of the trees and develop a plan for tree maintenance over the next 5 or 10 years. Tree care and tree management is a long-term investment. The inventory included trees within the street right of way, the City Park, and Sheeran Park. The inventory states the type of tree, the species of tree, the condition of the tree, and the size of the tree. Identifying the species of trees is important due to the current hazards posed to certain types of trees. American Elm trees have been devastated by Dutch elm disease. Pine wilt disease has been present in Kansas since 1979 and Scotch Pine and Austrian Pine populations have greatly decreased as a result. The Emerald Ash Borer has also been located in Kansas. It is an exotic insect and ash trees have no natural defenses against it. The Emerald Ash Borer has not been located in Chapman but has been located in Shawnee County and Jackson County. It is an insect that may be in the community for a couple of years before the damage is noticeable. The Asian long-horned beetle has been located in four states on the east coast. They are drawn to Maple trees. Twenty four percent of Chapman's trees are Maple. Kim recommended not planting additional Maple trees and stated that Maple trees are probably not the best tree for the community based on the soil. Having a very diverse forest is very important and homeowners should not plant all the same types of trees in their yards. The inventory rated trees under several conditions. The conditions included good, fair, poor, dead, and dying. The inventory listed 429 trees of 48 different species. Hackberry is the most abundant of the population at about 14% of the total. The dead and dying percentage of the inventory is pretty good and is in line with most communities. The average diameter of the trees was about 16 inches. Kim recommended the City maintain and regularly prune trees in the parks and the right of way. Having an annual pruning cycle is important. Trees and tree canopies are incredibly beneficial in absorbing air pollutants and carbon dioxide. The percentage of trees in poor condition in Chapman is a little high compared to other cities. Many trees are damaged by lawnmowers. Kim recommended using mulch around trees to prevent damage.

December 13, 2023

#4 Public Comments

Shawn Monasmith asked the City Administrator to clear up some of the misinformation that was posted on Facebook about the City getting rid of the fire department.

City Administrator Bill Flanery stated that there has been a lot of information about the fire department on Facebook. The City Council was looking into the possibility of contracting with the District 1 Fire Department to provide services to Chapman. The District 1 Fire Department is a mile away from the Chapman Fire Department. The goal would be to use the same resources the City is currently using. If they approve a contract with District 1, the Council wants to continue to use the same list of fire and EMS volunteers that currently serve Chapman. The budget for the fire department increased from \$40,000 to \$73,000 for 2024. The question posed by the Council was if District 1 could provide the same level of service to Chapman using the same resources and people that are currently being used for less money. There has been no discussion about disbanding the fire department or reducing fire/EMS coverage in Chapman. There has also been no discussion about disbanding the police department. The goal was to see if it was possible to contract with District 1 and maintain the same level of coverage we currently have using the same wonderful volunteers that already service our community for substantially less than \$73,000.

Phyllis Cheney – I have been a resident of Chapman for five or six years. My son is a Lieutenant with a Fire Department in Kansas City and is a full-time firefighter. I served as an EMS in western Kansas for over 20 years. I ask everyone to keep an open mind and not rush to any conclusions about the fire department. There are extreme expenses with keeping the fire equipment up to date. If the equipment is not kept up to code, we are putting our firefighters and the community in danger. I definitely believe the fire department should stay in the city and not change to the county. Often times, the largest seat of the county receives the biggest benefit. Time matters when responding to emergencies.

Mike Brown – I was the Police Chief in Chapman for 10 ½ years and was with the Junction City Fire Department for 21 ½ years. I do not have any issues with volunteer firefighters because they are wonderful to have. While serving as the Police Chief, residents would approach me and say that they were so happy they lived in Chapman because they were safe and secure. That was due to the police department, fire department, and first responders. I depend on the first responders and a lot of people in town depend on them. The concern with District 1 taking over is that they have a lot of area to cover, and we want the protection to remain in this community. We do not want to give that up. I would like to keep the fire department where it is currently located and have them respond locally. If it is transferred to the county, at least keep someone in town that can respond to a fire. I recommend the Council table the discussion on the fire department and send a survey to the residents to get their opinions.

Bryce Forth - The City approved new radios for first responders. If the City decides to contract with District 1, what will happen to the money set aside for those radios? City Administrator Bill Flanery stated that the City Council did not approve the radios for the first responders. The matter was presented to the council, but the tax increase for the radios was submitted by the County and was voted on and approved in November during the election. The County controls the money for the radios and will provide them to the first responders.

Rose Lindsey – I do not want to lose the fire department in town, especially if it is going to affect the time it takes to respond to an emergency. Years ago, my parents went through a fire and the volunteers responded quickly and my parents only lost part of their home. Years ago, a house caught fire south of the railroad tracks and a little girl died in the fire. The volunteers did everything they could for that little girl. As a resident, I want to know that we will still have that response time if we lose our local fire department. I want to know that people will be there to respond if my house catches on fire. It is not just

December 13, 2023

the Council that should decide, the community should decide. The residents should have a voice and they should attend the meetings.

Dennis Steinour – I have been a resident for five years and only know one firefighter, Craig Klukas. I was a volunteer firefighter in Pennsylvania for 14 years. My first concern with contracting with District 1 would be the response time. I have never seen a District firehouse manned, but I have seen people at the Chapman Fire Department daily. Everything costs more today. In Pennsylvania, they have a Life Support Training Tax that goes to the fire department to fund equipment. I would support a similar tax here. My house is 100 years old. If it catches fire, I would rather have someone that is three blocks away respond rather than someone a mile away.

Councilmember Monasmith stated that the discussion was about more than just \$70,000. The discussion started when the Council was told we needed a new fire department and a new fire truck that would be closer to a million dollars.

Rose Lindsay – Chapman was once almost a desert town and now there are a lot of new businesses. I want to know who decided to put in a dog park. The City does not even have apartment complexes. The City has a problem with dogs running loose. Is the City cracking down on them or fining them? Police Chief Kevin Diercks stated that the Police Department picks up every dog that is reported and takes them to Abilene Animal Hospital. Owners must pay a fee to pick up their animal at Abilene Animal Hospital. The City also issues citations for dogs at large. City Administrator Bill Flanery stated the dog park will not open until an ordinance is published to establish the rules and procedures of the dog park. One of the rules for the dog park is that people must clean up after their pets. That is the rule for every dog park you go to. The goal is for people to do the right thing and clean up after their pets. The land where the dog park is located is the former city dump. The City owns the land and cannot build anything on the lot. A suggestion was made to the Council that the property be used for a dog park and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) thought it was a good use for the property. The cost of the dog park is mostly fencing around the park.

Phyllis Cheney – For clarification, I am not against volunteers. I grew up in a small town that was strictly volunteers.

#5 Fire Department Discussion

City Administrator Bill Flanery stated he had spoken with Paul Froelich of District 1. Paul spoke with the District 1 Board on Monday, and they will submit a proposal to the City of Chapman before the next council meeting. The item will be placed on the agenda again in January. The goal would be to use the same list of volunteers that we use now. Unfortunately, at least six of our volunteers have contacted the office and stated that they would be unwilling to transfer under District 1.

The agendas are published at chapmanks.com on the Friday before the council meeting. That is the day it is sent to the council members. The minutes from each meeting are approved at the next council meeting and are published at chapmanks.com the following day.

Fire Chief Cecil Thrush stated he would provide the Council with the numbers of responses from the Chapman Fire Department, a list of personnel and certification levels. The proposed budget for the fire department was \$52,600. The Council offered to increase the fire department budget to \$73,000. Unfortunately, the previous City Administrator cut the fire department budget to \$20,000 per year for two years. This year, the fire department upgraded all the air packs to 4500s. The upgrade was coordinated with Junction City Fire Department for little to no cost. The biggest upcoming cost will be for a new fire station. The fire trucks recently passed the pump test and will work for now.

December 13, 2023

No action taken by council.

#6 Youth Center Discussion

The attorney for 4:10 Irish Den requested some changes to the contract for the land at 2000 Block of 2650 Avenue. The recommendations have been submitted to the City Attorney for review. The item will be placed on the agenda in January.

No action taken by council.

#7 Old Grocery Store Discussion

The closing date for the property located at 105 East 3rd Street has not been set. The City Attorney is working on getting a closing date in the next few weeks. The item will be placed on the agenda in January.

No action taken by council.

#8 Fitness Center Discussion

The equipment in the fitness center needs to be replaced. The equipment was used when the City purchased it and it has been moved a few times. The Director of Parks and Recreation, Tori Heller, has some recommendations for additional programs using the fitness center and will present those at the next council meeting. The item will be placed on the agenda in January.

No action taken by Council.

#9 Quotes for Library Roof Repair

The City received three quotes to replace the library roof. Wray Roofing's proposal is for a roof replacement and covers the entire roof of the library and fire department. It does not include the roof of the fire department bays. The other bids are for the same area but are quotes for re-covering the roof with modified roll roofing and silicone covering the existing roof. RDL Construction and Superior Roofing submitted proposals as well and they are included in the council packets. Quotes were also requested from Murdock's, Weddle and Sons, and Skyview but they did not provide quotes. The Library Board is going to put in a dropped ceiling and need the roof repaired before they can proceed. There is money available in the Capital Improvement fund and the General fund for building repairs. The roof at City Hall will need to be replaced next year. Councilmember Monasmith recommended accepting the bid from Wray Roofing and doing the job right this time. Councilmember Bell recommended accepting the bid from Superior Roofing. Wray Roofing did core samples and looked at everything.

Motion by Nelson to accept the quote from Wray Roofing for \$38,360.13, 2nd by Monasmith. Vote: Yes, (Nelson, Coyner and Monasmith), No (Bell). Motion carried (3-1).

#10 Discussion on Neighborhood Revitalization Program

The Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was modified to include all residential properties in the City of Chapman except for those properties located in Irish Acres. The Neighborhood Revitalization Plan provides a potential tax break for owners that make a substantial improvement to a property identified in the plan. The goal is to improve downtown, bring new businesses to Chapman, and have individuals invest in their properties.

Motion by Nelson to approve the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan to include residential areas, 2nd by Bell. Vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

December 13, 2023

#11 Discussion on COLA Increase

The City has traditionally provided a three percent Cost of Living Allowance increase for full-time and part-time employees. The increase does not include seasonal employees. The approved budget for 2024 included funding for a three percent increase in wages. Councilmember Bell stated he was not in favor of an across the board increase for all employees. Councilmember Nelson stated the current inflation rate is worse than it has been, and everything costs more now. Keeping good employees is important and we need to figure out a way to keep them. When you give a raise based on a percentage, the employees that make the most money receive a larger increase. Councilmember Monasmith stated that is very deflating to an employee when they do not receive an increase. This increase is not based on performance, it is strictly a cost-of-living increase. Performance increases can be given to deserving employees throughout the year.

Motion by Nelson to approve the three percent cost-of-living pay increase, 2nd by Coyner. Vote: Yes, (Nelson, Coyner and Monasmith), No (Bell). Motion carried (3-1).

#12 Governing Body Handbook

The Governing Body Handbook outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Governing Body.

Motion by Nelson to adopt the Governing Body Handbook, 2nd by Bell. Vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

#13 Recreation Software with CivicRec

The City is currently using RecDesk for recreation programs and reservations. RecDesk is not very user friendly and has limitations with placing funds in the appropriate line of accounting. CivicRec is more intuitive and provides much more flexibility to the Director of Parks and Recreation. CivicRec does not have the same limitations on accounting as RecDesk. CivicRec will cost \$600.00 more per year than RecDesk but it is a much better product and provides more functionality.

Motion by Bell to approve entering into a contract with CivicRec for \$3,800, 2nd by Nelson. Vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

#14 Lead and Copper Survey Incentive

The City must submit a Lead Service Line Inventory for all water connections within the City before 16 October 2024. A survey will be mailed to everyone in Chapman that has a water connection. The City must identify the service lines to the house, the lines from the meter to the house, and the water line material within each house. The only way to know the type of plumbing within each house is with the cooperation of the residents. The survey can be completed online or on paper and submitted to the City. City Administrator Bill Flanery recommended the City Council approve a \$10.00 credit on water bills for each resident that submitted a completed survey. The \$10.00 credit will hopefully provide an incentive to residents to complete the survey. Residents that do not complete the survey will have their plumbing material listed as unknown. KDHE will consider any lines classified as “unknown” to be lead lines.

Motion by Bell to approve a \$10.00 water bill credit for every resident that submits a completed lead service line inventory survey before 1 September 2024, 2nd by Nelson. Vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

December 13, 2023

#15 Holiday and Key Date Schedule

Motion by Bell to approve the Holiday and Key Date Schedule, 2nd by Nelson. Vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

#16 Reports

Mary Monasmith – Housing Authority Committee

The composition of the Butterfield Apartments has changed significantly over the last 10 years. In the past, it was mostly composed of elderly and low-income residents. Over time, it has become a much younger crowd, and they are seeing a lot more problems than they did before. There are problems with security, drugs, and those types of things. Elderly and disabled people get seniority over younger people, but it is mostly income driven.

Police Chief Kevin Diercks

Statistics for 2022 and 2023 are included in the council packets. The numbers are close to the same for each year. There were over 80 calls for animals this year and the majority of those were taken to Abilene Animal Hospital. The Holiday Lighting Ceremony went well. It was a small turn out, but everyone had a good time. All three full-time officers went to Junction City and participated in Shop with a Cop. Junction City sponsors the event and invites us along with Grandview Plaza and the Geary County Sheriff's Office. This year there were 65 children and around 50 police officers. Residents must pay a fee when they pick up their dogs from Abilene Animal Hospital and they must show proof of rabies vaccination. All dogs within the city limits must be registered with the City. This is the only way we can ensure they have up to date rabies vaccinations. The registration requirement will be posted on Facebook and the city's website in January.

Fire Chief Cecil Thrush

We are looking to add a couple more firefighters. They are on different work schedules, so we can have one respond to calls in the day and the other at night. The fire department has had a total of 156 calls for the year. Seventeen of those calls have been for fires. One hundred and thirty-nine have been EMS/first responder calls. Twenty-five of those were at Chapman Valley Manor. There was a structure fire call today on Noble Street. The response time for the first responder to go enroute was two minutes. The first engine on scene was four and a half minutes. The average response time for EMS and fire calls within the city is three to six minutes. Over 50 percent of our firefighters are professional EMS or fire service somewhere else. This is our career, and we volunteer our time for the City of Chapman. We have four paramedics on our staff. We have two AEMTs and the other first responders are EMT basic or above. We have one nurse on staff. The vacant lot next to Stalder's would be a good location for a new fire department. It is a 150 x 150-foot lot. The city already owns the property, and it is no longer located in the floodplain. Morton style buildings are fairly inexpensive, and the volunteer staff could complete the inside of the building to cut down on costs. We could also use volunteers from the community to help with the project and have a plaque that names everyone that volunteered and assisted. Some quotes for various size buildings will be presented at the next council meeting.

Director of Public Works Ed Wehrmeister

The public works team put up Christmas decorations throughout town. They also conducted the leaf pick-up the week after Thanksgiving and came back out again to pick up leaves because of the snow. We

December 13, 2023

cleaned up streets after the big snow. There were a few water leaks during the month. We are training a couple of new employees on the street sweeper.

Golf Superintendent Austin Murphy

Things are going well at the golf course. There are several parties planned for the banquet room. Dorrie Atkinson has lots of great ideas for upcoming events and has already had one event. She has a magician coming to the golf course on January 20th. The new shop should be completed by the end of the month. The golf course is \$86,000 ahead of where it was this time last year.

City Administrator Bill Flanery

Thanked everyone for attending the meeting and voicing their concerns. The holiday party for city employees is on the 21st of December.

Councilmember Dale Nelson

Thanked everyone for attending and voicing their opinion.

Councilmember Jim Bell

Thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. It is great to see members of the community at the meetings.

Mayor Howard Battishill

Thanked Councilmember Jim Bell for his service on the council and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

#18 Adjournment

Motion by Bell to adjourn, 2nd by Nelson, vote: yes, unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.

Howard Battishill, Mayor

ATTEST:

Bill Flanery, City Clerk