

CITY OF SEVERY
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
MARCH 2, 2026
7:00 P.M. AT CITY HALL, SEVERY KS

Present: Council members Marc Warren, Lyle Riggs, Ron Robert, Bryan Hampton, Rodger Kraft, Clerk Tessa Riggs, City Attorney William McClendon, Water Superintendent Paul Schmidt and Treasurer Madelyn McClendon (via zoom)

Absent: Mayor Donna Wiss

Guests: Ed Cornett, Tamara Higbee, Vicki Hinkle, Marvell & Jenelle Summerow (via zoom) with WaterWise Enterprises

Council President Warren called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The pledge of Allegiance was cited and roll called.

Riggs moved to approve the February 2026 minutes. Hampton 2nd. Motion passed 5-0.

Robert moved to approve the February 2026 bills. Riggs 2nd. Motion passed 5-0.

Riggs moved to approve the February 2026 treasurer's report as presented. Kraft 2nd. Motion passed 5-0.

Guest Tamara Higbee addressed the council regarding the lineup process at the Harvest House Food Pantry. Higbee reported that the mayor attended the previous food distribution and asked if there was different way the lineup could be organized. Higbee noted that everyone working at the food pantry is a volunteer. Higbee stated that the mayor attended the food distribution again this month and was upset that the lineup had not changed. According to Higbee, the mayor became angry, and the pastor asked her to step outside so they could speak. City Clerk Riggs reported that the city office had received complaints that the lineup was blocking access to the insurance office and the bank during the distribution. Councilman Robert noted that the Harvest House did make an adjustment this month by creating two lines instead of one. Robert reported that volunteers were able to move 242 families through the line in 49 minutes, compared to two or three hours previously. Robert also stated that the only additional improvement Harvest House may be able to make is to ensure that

business driveways remain clear. Robert suggested placing traffic cones near the businesses and informing participants not to park in front of driveways or block business entrances.

Water Superintendent Schmidt reported the water testing results came back good and are well below average. Schmidt had to order a new pump for the chlorine reader and will get it installed. New electric poles are being installed around town by Evergy and Schmidt has been doing several locates. Dylan with WaterWise Enterprises will be training on how to do a backwash at the water plant. Schmidt is needing 8 – 4” elbows and 2 connectors for the Salt Creek pump. Schmidt also will be attending water conferences in Wichita at the end of the month, and part-time employee Mark Mitchell will be taking care of the water plant.

Marvell with WaterWise Enterprises explained that the SCADA system the city is using for the water plant only has one user that has access and that user is Schmidt. If something goes wrong or the account is hacked, others are using one username and password, and it is not good business practice. The City is paying \$420.00 per year which includes 1 PC and 1 user account. Marvell is recommending the city upgrade to the Pro level which includes unlimited users and administrators, two computers enabled for remote access (this would allow WaterWise to remotely access the computer so they can help administer the system as needed), individual logins for each user, usage monitoring and comprehensive reporting. The annual cost for the Pro level would be \$792.00 per year.

Warren moved to upgrade the SCADA access to the Pro level for \$792.00 per year. Hampton 2nd. Motion passed 5-0.

Jenelle with WaterWise Enterprises explained the KDHE lab results to the council on what the city test for each month.

Clerk Riggs reported she contacted Drew Ramsey with Ramsey Concrete from Eureka regarding getting a quote for improvements on the roundabout. She also noted she contacted Chris Carlson from Howard regarding the generator. Chris thought he might be able to get it all unhooked and brought to Severy this coming week. The generator will need to be put at the water plant, so it doesn't have to be moved twice. Clerk Riggs contacted Vic's heating and air from Fredonia on installing a mini split for the office. Riggs explained that a letter was delivered to the ladies that addended last month's meeting on the requirements from the city for improvements at Brody's Park. Riggs stated there was a issue over the weekend with a customer with a delinquent

water bill along with a shut off. The customer had not paid in 6 weeks, but when the water was shut off, the customer had reached out to the clerk via phone, social media, email, the water superintendent and a councilman after hours. The city had sent the water bill, a delinquent letter and a 24-hour shut off notice prior to shutting off the water. Clerk Riggs explained that Mayor Wiss would like someone to check out the office for possible mold issues.

With Mayor Wiss being absent, Clerk Riggs reported that Mayor Wiss would like to know what the council's plan is for summer mowing/weed eating and she would like to recommend hiring a part time employee only for the mowing season. If the part-time employee is out of hours, then Schmidt will pick up the remainder of the mowings. Clerk Riggs stated there have been 2 applications turned in. Robert moved to approve hiring a part-time employee for only the mowing season with maximum of 19 hours per week at \$10/hr. starting with the applicants first. Kraft 2nd. Motion passed 5-0.

Old Business.

Clerk Riggs noted the audit went well. Kyle Spielbusch with Jarred, Gilmore and Phillips, PA transferred \$2,500 out of the water utility fund and applied it to the Municipal Equipment Fund.

Ed Cornett noted the heater in fire station is making a noise.

A discussion was held regarding a potential community revitalization program. Councilman Hampton presented draft examples that the City could use to assist the Council and the City Attorney in developing formal guidelines. In order to keep the City's financial records balanced, Councilman Riggs explained that property owners would continue to pay their full property taxes to the county, as usual. The county would then distribute the city's portion of the tax revenue, and the City would reimburse the approved rebate amount to the property owner. This only applies to the Severy mil levy, not what is assessed for county or the school district. Riggs also suggested structuring the agreement as a five-year term, after which the property owner could reapply for an additional five-year term, allowing for a potential ten years of participation. Riggs noted after this ten-year period, the City would be in a significantly stronger financial position and would likely have only one to two years remaining on the water plant project debt. Councilman Riggs also stated that an amendment should be included allowing the Council to review and approve

applications on a case-by-case basis. Additional proposed program guidelines discussed included:

*Commercial and Industrial Construction – 75% tax rebate for 5 years.

*Revitalization Projects – 50% rebate of the additional assessed value, with a minimum improvement threshold of \$5,000.

*Residential New Construction - \$15,000 additional assessed value minimum improvement threshold.

It was discussed that the program would not go into effect until 2027. An application process would also be required for participation. City Attorney McClendon stated that applicants would submit an application to the City, the Council would review and approve or deny the application, and if an application were denied, the applicant would have the right to appeal the decision.

New Business.

Clerk Riggs reported the CD's interest. The CDs are renewed every 6 months.

Hampton requested Clerk Riggs to have Ramsey Concrete give a quote on a sidewalk for Brody's Park and Warren suggested having him give a quote on the concrete pad at the water plant for the generator to sit on. At this point the city has 4 projects going on such as, cemetery directory, roundabout, Brody's Park sidewalk and install water plant generator.

Hampton moved to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Kraft 2nd. Motion passed 5-0.

/s/ Donna Wiss, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Tessa C. Riggs, City Clerk