

Regular Council Meeting
June 23, 2025

1. **Mayor Amanda Milne called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.** Present were Council members Robert (Bud) Erskin, Kale Dankenbring, Larry Finley, Dara Carmichael, and Justin Lohr. Also present were City Superintendent Dan Blair, Interim City Clerk Lila Whitmore, City Treasurer Jennifer Blair, City Attorney Lauren Reyelts, and Sheriff Cody Beeson.
2. **Visitors/Audience:** Keesha Lesuer, Scott Lesuer, Travis Howard, Kris Oldsen
3. **Minutes** from the June 9th Council meeting were distributed and read. A motion was made by Kale and seconded by Justin to approve the minutes as written. Motion passed.
4. **Sheriff Report:** Sheriff Beeson reviewed the statistics for March, April, and May. There has been an increase in traffic stops. With the updated fine schedule tickets will now be written for traffic violations in the City limits. Traffic Safety is a goal for 2025. Cody indicates they are committed to addressing property cleanup issues for the City. There was discussion regarding electric bikes and scooters. Cody explained there are three classifications and only class 3 requires a license. Officers have been speaking with kids regarding the importance of wearing helmets while riding the bikes and scooters. A motion was made by Larry and seconded by Kale to accept and file the Sheriff report. Motion passed.
5. **New Business:**
 - Jennifer Heckler, Executive Director with Options Domestic Violence, joined the meeting via phone. She talked about the services the organization provides to communities in Western Kansas and shared the statistics for Cheyenne County. She thanked the Council for the financial support the City has provided in the past and requested the amount of \$2,750 be considered for the 2026 budget.
 - *Sheriff Beeson left the meeting.*
 - Carol Redding gave a report on the St. Francis Senior Center. She talked about what the Senior Center offers to the community. She shared a summary of their expenses as well as an update on improvements that have been made. They are in need of a manager. She explained that while they have received grants, these funds cannot be used for general operating expenses. The Senior Center relies on the City and County for support to maintain the center and they appreciate the contributions the City has made in the past. She will provide a budget for the Council to review for the 2026 budget.
 - Zona Potter gave a report on the Cheyenne County Food Pantry. They have seen an increase in the number of families utilizing the Food Pantry as the cost of food continues to rise. She thanked the Council for their past support and shared a budget sheet for consideration for funding in the 2026 budget.
 - Lisa Krull, Cheyenne Community Development Corporation Housing Director, provided additional information regarding their proposal for the development of the Empire Motel property on Highway 36. She shared a housing impact report from the Kansas Department of Commerce and explained the financial impact the project would have for the City, County, School District, and State. The project plan is to build duplexes that would be rented to traveling/temporary professionals who serve the county hospital, nursing home, and school districts. It would not be used for long-term rentals or AIRBNB. Bud mentioned that as a non-profit there would be no return on taxes. Kris stated that the project will need to go through the non-profit for grant purposes and then at some point in the future be deeded to the for-profit side of CCDC. Eventually there will be property taxes paid. CCDC has marketed the property since 2020 and the asking price was and still is \$15,218. Kris Oldsen stated that in the past 3 years since she has been Director of CCDC she has had around six calls inquiring about the property, one from a chemical company, but none were for creating hotel lodging which has been the intended use for the property. The Mayor expressed her opinion that if the intended use of lodging is now being changed the property should be offered for sale for others who may be interested. Lisa indicated they would like to obtain the property for less than the asking price. The Council requested that a written offer be submitted to Attorney Reyelts who will review it prior to bringing it to the Council.
 - The Council gave approval to CCDC Director Kris Oldson to paint the information Kiosk at the Roadside Park.
 - *All visitors left the meeting.*
 - Attorney Michael Baxter with Jeter Law Firm and Tyler Hillmer with Miller & Associates joined the meeting via phone. At 8:03 a motion was made by Kale and seconded by Justin for the Council, Mayor, Attorney

Baxter, Tyler Hillmer, Attorney Reyelts, and all City Personnel present to recess into executive session per the attorney client privilege exception for potential litigation, the open meeting to resume at 8:18. Motion passed. The open meeting resumed. No decisions were made.

- A motion was made by Bud and seconded by Kale to approve the Temporary Alcohol Permit for Tammys Country Catering DBA Whiskey Wagon for the Concert in the Park. Motion passed. A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Kale to approve Resolution 2025-2: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS, KANSAS APPROVING A TEMPORARY PERMIT ALLOWING FOR THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR ON CITY STREETS. Bud – yes, Kale – yes, Larry – yes, Dara – yes, Justin – yes. Motion passed.
- A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Kale to approve the Tree Spraying Contractor License for Mark Leitner. Motion passed.
- A motion was made by Kale and seconded by Larry to approve the Fireworks Licenses for Milne's Mayhem/Jennifer Milne at 215 N. Adams and Poling Pyros/Cynthia Poling at 709 S. Benton. Motion passed. Attorney Reyelts updated the Council on Senate Bill 199, recently signed into law which extends the length of time fireworks can be sold. Local ordinances can still regulate when fireworks can be sold and set off. However, the City can amend the code to match state laws if they decide to.
- A motion was made by Larry and seconded by Kale to approve a building permit for the St. Francis Senior Center for a storage shed. Motion passed.

6. **Old Business:**

- **Shipping Containers** – Shipping containers being used as storage in the city limits was discussed. This is against current City Code and three property owners have been identified as being in violation. Attorney Reyelts stated that the code either needs to be enforced for everyone or it needs to be changed. The Council spent a great deal of time talking about possibly changing the code to allow them. At one point a motion was made by Kale to change the code so that shipping containers can be used if they are enclosed, sided, and roofed but there was no second. There was lengthy discussion, but no decisions were made. The topic will be added to the next meeting agenda for further discussion.
- **Property Cleanup** – There are two properties currently on the cleanup list. One on Denison has made progress but is still out of compliance. They will be sent a second letter. Nothing has been done on the property on Webster and the property owner will be issued a citation.
- **Projects Pending** – no updates
- **Streets Project** – There will be a special meeting on June 30 to discuss the Street Project. The Budget Workshop will be added as a topic for the special meeting as well.

7. **Attorney Report** – Lauren presented an ordinance which would grant a contract franchise for IdeaTek Telcom to construct, operate, and maintain a telecommunications system in St. Francis. They will use the City's right of way (ROW) to install fiber network services. Per the franchise agreement the City would receive \$1,000 for each DAS Facility installed within the public ROW and 5% of gross receipts quarterly. State Statute requires that the contract franchise be approved. Lauren has made a few minor revisions to the ordinance which she explained. The Council approved the changes, and Lauren will send it back to IdeaTek requesting these changes be accepted. A motion was made by Kale and seconded by Dara to accept and file the Attorney report. Motion passed.

8. **Visitors** - None

9. **Theater Report**

- The minutes of the June Theater Board meeting were shared.
- Lila updated the Council on the status of the Marquee Sign grant applications. The application for the Dane G. Hansen grant has been started. The Hansen Grants typically require some amount of matching funds, typically 20%. The Council approved applying to the Cheyenne County Community Foundation for assistance with the matching funds.
- A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Larry to accept and file the Theater Report. Motion passed.

10. **Pool Report** – none

11. **Superintendent Report**

- The forklift has been purchased at a cost of \$18,750.
- Dan will be contacting Western Auction to sell city equipment that is no longer needed.
- The County will be borrowing the City's truck the last week of July for chip sealing.

- There are three water taps that need to be done and one water line repair.
- A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Kale to accept and file the Superintendent report. Motion passed.

12. Treasurer Report

- The library audit was not included in the cost of the city's audit. This was in the Audit Engagement letter that was signed showing that the cost for the library audit would be \$3,000. A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Kale for the City to pay for the cost of the 2024 Library Audit. Motion passed. This topic will be revisited at a later date to decide if the Library audit is necessary.
- Jen shared updates regarding the new phone system. She has been working with Nex-Tech and Vyve to obtain quotes and is still waiting for more information. Vyve is requesting a response by the end of the month. The phone proposals will be added as a topic to discuss at the June 30 Special meeting.
- A motion was made by Justin and seconded by Dara to accept and file the Treasurer report. Motion passed.

13. Clerk Report

- Lila shared the SLFRF (ARPA) Compliance Report that was completed in April. The report explains how the ARPA funds received by the City were spent.
- The Council gave approval to offer the Air-Med Fly-U-Home option to employees and to sign the agreement. Lila reminded the Council that the Air-Med plans are paid for by the employees as a direct pay to the City and the City in turn pays the total group cost to Air-Med.
- A motion was made by Kale and second by Justin to accept and file the Clerk report. Motion passed.

14. Council Comments

- Bud – none, Kale – none, Larry – none, Dara – none, Justin - none

15. Mayor Comments – none

❖ Attorney Reyelts left the meeting.

16. At 9:43 a motion was made by Bud and seconded by Kale for the Council and Mayor to recess into executive session for non-elected personnel to review the City Clerk Applications, the open meeting to resume at 9:58. Motion passed. The open meeting resumed. A motion was made by Larry and seconded by Kale to go back into executive session for 15 minutes the open meeting to resume at 10:13. Motion passed. The open meeting resumed. A special meeting will be scheduled to interview three candidates for the City Clerk position.
17. **Adjournment:** It was moved by Kale and seconded by Dara to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.



Interim City Clerk