

City of Clearwater, Kansas
Sedgwick County
City Council Meeting - **MINUTES**
January 13, 2026
Clearwater City Hall – Council Chambers
129 E. Ross Avenue Clearwater, KS 67026

1. Call to Order/ Invocation and Flag Salute

Mayor Burt Ussery called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. followed the invocation and flag salute.

2. Swearing in Councilmembers

All Councilmembers had been sworn in prior to the meeting. Dalton Chambers is new to the Council, Jason Gordon previously filled a term on Council, and Shirley Palmer-Witt has served on the Council for an extended period.

3. Roll Call

The City Clerk called the roll to confirm the presence of a quorum. The following members were present:

Mayor Burt Ussery, Councilmembers; Justin Shore, Jason Gordon, Samantha Warkins, Shirley Palmer-Witt and Dalton Chambers.

The following staff members were present:

City Administrator Zollinger, City Clerk Poe, Kirk Ives, Amber Ives and Cole Hollis. City Attorney Jennifer Hill was present via GoTo Meetings.

Others present who spoke:

Lilly Steiner, Wyatt Thompson, Wyatt Clymer and Carol Barrientez.

4. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Ussery asked if there were any modifications to the agenda, Zollinger added an FFA presentation after electing the Council President and Temporary Permit request from Clearwater Recreation Commission after the Senior Center Design.

Motion: *Warkins* moved; *Gordon* seconded to approve the agenda as modified. Voted and passed unanimously.

5. Public Forum

None.

6. Consent Agenda

Mayor Ussery explained that items on the consent agenda can be pulled off if there are any questions, if not then they are approved without discussion and included in the minutes. He then asked if there were any questions on the consent agenda, there were none.

Previous Council Meeting Minutes

Claims and Warrants

Designate Official Auditor

Designate Official Depository

Designate Official Newspaper

Art Walk Special Event Permit

Accept Resignation – Fire

Mayoral Appointment - Fire

Motion: *Shore* moved; *Palmer-Witt* seconded to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Voted and passed unanimously.

7. Staff Reports:

- Administration Office – Courtney Zollinger – Zollinger notated the first Council Workshop will be on March 31st. Palmer-Witt asked if the \$800,000 in reserves for the budget needed to be increased with costs increasing,

Zollinger stated that it was raised to \$850,000. Shore noted the sales tax amount being \$369,055 with Zollinger stating that does not include any January payments.

- Fire Department – Courtney Zollinger – Warkins asked if a recap of the vehicle usage could be provided, Zollinger said yes. Mayor Ussery mentioned Captain Fry's retirement ceremony to be held on January 14th, staff will provide Council with the time.
- Police Department – Kirk Ives – Shore noted the number of SPV permits issued. Ives mentioned that Tricia has been busy. Warkins thanked the Department for hosting the Dog Tag event.
- Public Works/Parks – Cole Hollis – Shore asked about the leak on Nancy Street and stated that a resident had inquired about the process for repairing leaks over the weekend. Hollis responded that if a leak is affecting the roadway, it will be addressed immediately; if it is not causing damage, repairs will wait until Monday. Mayor Ussery inquired about Diagonal Rd., Zollinger informed him that it is tentatively scheduled to reopen around March 13th. Shore asked about the incorrect measurements of the water main at Diagonal, Hollis stated both engineers had conflicting measurements. When Public Works dug up the water line, it was the same measurements that Clearwater had given them so the relocation of the main was not needed.
- Senior Center – Amber Ives – Shore noted the 84 attendees being a good number and asked how the meal service was working out. Ives stated that they still don't have paperwork, but the food has been good. They dropped off frozen meals the first week of January and this Monday and will continue through the month of January with the frozen meals. For the last week in January, they will have warm meals for delivery and frozen for congregates. She noted that the company has been great to work with and the paperwork is checking off people as they come in. She then thanked Council for being willing to work with this program as other places have decided not to. There are some meals stored for backup. Mayor Ussery asked when he was to be present for the Lunch and Learn, Ives said it is usually in the summer and City staff grills hamburgers.

8. Business

a. Elect Council President

Mayor Ussery explained that the Council President will assume the Mayor's duties if the Mayor is temporarily unable to perform them due to absence or incapacity. He further stated that, by statute, the Council President would become Mayor in the event of a permanent vacancy. Mayor Ussery then asked for nominations for Council President. Shirley Palmer-Witt nominated Samantha Warkins, there were no other nominations.

Mayor Ussery stated the nomination for Samantha Warkins as Council President and asked for all those in favor. Voted and passed unanimously.

b. Hammer's Park Usage by Clearwater High School FFA (added item)

Lilly Steiner, Wyatt Thompson, Wyatt Clymer and Lauren Van Allen presented to Council their proposal to use Hammers Park for Earth Rangers Day. The purpose of this day is to teach youth about the conservation of Clearwater through setting up interactive stations for Pre-K through 5th. The event last year went well. This will be held on March 27th, and each group will be about 1 ½ hours. Lilly noted that the construction should be done by that time, so the buses should be able to drop kids off easily. There will be a couple of other local groups helping with stations such as soil and water conservation and archery. The stations will be 10 minutes each and a snack and prize will be provided after. Council asked if there were any potential conflicts, Zollinger stated if the weather delays the construction on Diagonal they would need to utilize the park and/or church parking lot for turning around. Mrs. Van Allen stated that the students only get one field trip outside of Clearwater and this event gets them get learning outside of the classroom. She stated that a lot of the kids didn't know that this park existed and hoped to get more support for the park by bringing attention and events there. There are 106 people in this group. Mayor Ussery stated that the event went well last year.

Motion: Shore moved; Warkins seconded to approve the Special Event Permit for the FFA to utilize Hammer's Park on March 27th. Voted and passed unanimously.

c. Appropriation Resolution 01-2026

Annually the Appropriation Resolution needs to be considered for city staff to pay debts in a timely manner.

Reauthorizing this resolution would prevent the accrual of late charges and allow the City to take advantage of discounts

for early payment, if applicable. This process is authorized by K.S.A. 12-105(b), the Uniform Processing Claims Act and recommended by the city auditor. Staff will continue to include the claims and warrants list with the agenda packet for review and any questions that could be addressed prior to the Council meeting. If approved all payments must still be presented to the governing body for review. Any payments that are of an extraordinary nature will continue to require authorization of the governing body. Any financial impact on the City would be savings associated with the elimination of late fees and the potential early payment discounts. Shore asked if the spending authority got raised last year, Zollinger stated it did with the purchasing policy.

Motion: *Palmer-Witt* moved, *Warkins* seconded to approve the Appropriation Resolution 01-2026 . Voted and passed unanimously.

d. 2026 Pay Periods

In 2026 there is set to be 27 pay periods instead of 26 due to the extra days in a year that gradually add up over time. This happens once every 11 years. When doing the budget, it is calculated with 26 pay periods. We reached out to the auditor, and he replied that it would even itself out in 2027 with only 25 pay periods. That is not the case, there will be either 27 pay periods in 2026 or 2027. Option 1 would be to keep to the budget and only have 26 pay periods this year, but employees would get paid 4 days late due to the Holiday and weekend. Option 2 is to have the 27 pay periods in 2026 and have the General Fund cover the additional estimated \$43,000. Mayor Ussery inquired on the number of salaried employees, Zollinger stated there are 5 staff, 2 in Fire, all of Council and 1 animal Control. He explained that the bi-weekly pay would be less since it is being distributed 27 times rather than 26 times and with a payroll already being done this year, that would have to be calculated as well. Zollinger mentioned that the salary employees will get what was approved at the previous council meeting and would lower their paycheck, but the hourly employees would estimate an additional \$43,000 that was not in the budget. Council discussed the option of waiting to pay until 2027 and it being a potential hardship especially around the holidays. Gordon asked if it would affect the taxes, Zollinger stated it could potentially put them in a different tier. Warkins asked if this would hurt the budget or Mils, Zollinger stated that the \$850,000 reserves would cover some of the cost.

Motion: *Warkins* moved, *Gordon* seconded to keep 27 pay periods in 2026. Voted and passed unanimously.

e. REAP Facilitation for Western Sedgwick County Coalition

In 2025 City of Goddard City Administrator put together a group for the city administrators/ managers of western Sedgwick County cities to get together and talk about issues or highlights of what is happening in our cities. This group met three times in 2025. The group has been extended to city leaders and with growth, additional coordination has become necessary. Marcy Aycok with REAP assisted with the last meeting. At the last meeting it was proposed that each city involved increase their funding to REAP to be able to continue with this coordination. Zollinger believes the cities involved right now are Cheney, Clearwater, Goddard, Garden Plain, Colwich. The REAP dues are \$650 annually. The additional cost being asked for REAP to continue facilitating is \$250 per group. The funds will support meeting facilitation and coordination, agenda and materials, development, ongoing communication and follow-up, and administrative support. If approved the fee will be included in the 2026 REAP invoice that will be issued on January 15th. Staff does see value in contributing since this group focuses on our area and has the largest group with County Commissioners that represent outside of Wichita.

Motion: *Palmer-Witt* moved, *Shore* seconded to approve the additional \$250 towards REAP. Voted and passed unanimously.

f. Senior Center Design

In June 2025 the City Council approved staff working with PEC and SPT to create a design-bid-build packet for expanding the senior center. Since then, Amber and Zollinger have met with the teams to discuss the needs of the growing Senior Center. The site plan maximized the use of the existing lot to create two additions. 739 sq ft to the South and 606 sq ft to the West. The South addition would be additional dining/lounge area with a partition wall. The West addition would create new office space, storage and seating if needed. With the West extension the current office would then turn into a classroom. Electrical needs were thought out as well as esthetics, so the new additions blend in with the existing. The plan was drawn up to be two different phases for the additions with the South addition being phase 1. In phase 1 Ives and Zollinger wanted to address the current noise problem in the existing dining room due to the vaulted ceilings and asked for a plan to install new or additional sound panels on the ceiling to be added. The exterior on the addition is

designed to match the existing building, new sidewalk, parking, and seating area also on the exterior. The plan will be to bid out the project with both phase 1 and phase 2. The contractors will provide pricing for each phase. This will allow Council to award either or both phases. The bid will be set on or around January 30th and be due on February 27th. We will ask that the bidders hold their pricing for 60 days to give council time to consider the options. The cost for the professional services is \$73,750. Only \$22,125 has been paid and the city's balance is \$51,625. The remaining funds in equipment reserve for a "new building" will be \$185,092.50. There will be an option to obtain a general obligation bond for the project as well. More discussion on this will be held in the future. Council reviewed the drawings. Zollinger did point out that the storm sewer will have to be moved so the bids will include that. Warkins said the bids will be for Phase 1 and Phase 2 to encompass all costs for each phase. The Engineers estimates have broken out to show the details of where the numbers came from but will not be bid that way. Keeping it in Phase 1 and Phase 2 will help to break up the project if Council decides to at their discretion or not at all if so chose. The additional lounge area will have partition and panel storage at the top. Each room will have an additional mechanical room, which is necessary. The office will move into the West addition, turning the old office into a classroom. All the windows, ceiling heights, flooring and electrical were all included in the plans. The existing pillars for the canopy will remain to help keep the cost down, if removed the cost would increase due to the whole roof needing redone. The siding, brick and flooring will match what is currently on and in the building. Warkins said the bid documents will be good and can solicit back out for bid if Council chooses to not build or only build 1 phase unless changes are requested. She mentioned water pump heat will be put in rather than furnaces, so the gas doesn't have to be extended since the utilities enter the building on the North side. Mayor Ussery asked about the increase in capacity for the building, Warkins stated it would be around 53 for the South addition. Palmer-Witt asked about being able to match the material if the project is not all done at once, Warkins said it could change and material could be discontinued at any time, but as of now all material is readily available. Zollinger mentioned the designer suggested white sound panels for a more seamless look. Palmer-Witt asked how much the panels would reduce the sound and asked about dropping the ceiling since it is so loud in there, Warkins wasn't sure but the sample sheets says the acoustical performance is 95% for the panels and mentioned the cost would increase if dropping the ceiling and they were trying to keep it as cost effective as possible. Zollinger stated that Amber could hear a difference in just the single panels that have been installed. The existing double doors will be reused to help with cost. Gordon asked if there was a concern about die lot changes, Zollinger stated that Council is not making a decision yet and was just updating Council on what has been worked on so far, but these things have been taken into consideration during this planning process and will be brought back to Council after bids are received to see if this is a project Council wants to see done. Mayor Ussery pointed out the transitions between the rooms would help in the event of not being able to get the existing materials. The Engineers estimates, which are not bids, came in around \$289,000 for the South addition and \$238,000 for the West addition. They provided an estimate to include high and low overhead and profit around 10% which would be low of \$569,000 and high of \$696,000. Zollinger stated that funding options will be discussed at the next meeting with serious consideration to be brought at the first March meeting. In March a discussion on Janet and Yvonne will also be brought to Council. Mayor Ussery asked if the cost of a new building verses the additions could be estimated, Warkins stated it would be about \$1.3 million. This does not include parking or utilities. She figured this estimate at \$275 per sq. ft. for the total building with the addition being around 4,700 sq. ft. Council mentioned the study that was done and asked if the addition would meet the projected growth capacity, Zollinger answered yes. Palmer-Witt asked if the bathrooms were needed done as well, Zollinger stated no, what is currently there meets all necessary requirements. Shore mentioned the "drop off" area under the existing canopy no longer being available and asked if it was a concern, Zollinger stated there are handicap spots right by the ramp going to the building and does not believe it will be a concern and asked Amber if it was. Amber does not see it being a concern as there are not many people being dropped off currently and mentioned the parking spots in the back being closer to the door with these plans.

g. Temporary Permit for Clearwater Recreation Commission (added)

In accordance with Chapter 3 Section 104 of the City Code, no person shall drink or consume any alcoholic liquor on city owned public property unless a temporary permit is obtained. Clearwater Rec (CRC) will be hosting a Dinner and Art Class at the Senior Center on February 20th. Daycare will be provided at the Clearwater Library for attendees so it will be adults only at the Senior Center. CRC would like to request a Temporary Alcohol Permit for attendees to bring their own drink to the Senior Center if they choose for the evening. CRC will not be serving or providing alcohol. Zollinger checked with legal to make sure this aligns with Codes and Statutes, which it does. Carol Barrientez, the Recreation Director, was present. Mayor Ussery stated that he understood transporting the drink to the Senior Center is no different than going to a liquor store but drinking at the Senior Center and leaving would any liability fall on the City. Hill stated it would not, this is no different than the Fall Festival or Art walk. The City is not serving anyone therefore will not overserve them and

the person will be liable for their own choices if they drive after drinking and gets into an accident. It is no different than them leaving a restaurant. Hill did mention if someone were to get sick or in a fight on the property that it could be different, but does not foresee anything like that happening with this type of event if it goes as planned and presented. Carol Barrientez stated that she is still working on the dinner and pricing for the event but wanted to make it economical for people to enjoy. Palmer-Witt asked who was providing child care at the library, Barrientez stated they would provide 3 staff members so there would be a max of 30 kids allowed and this fee would be additional. She stated the child care didn't have to be used for the art and dinner event and is open to the community as a "parents night out" if they so choose. The childcare will be available for K-8th and the event at the Senior Center will be for anyone 21 years of age or older.

Motion: *Warkins* moved; *Gordon* seconded to approve the Temporary Permit for the Clearwater Recreation Commission at the Senior Center on February 20th. Voted and passed unanimously.

9. Governing Body

Gordon – Gordon asked if there had been any other activity regarding the nuisances that were brought to Council, Zollinger stated the homeowners have been in touch with Code Compliance.

Shore – Shore has received many compliments on the road project. He will be attending Local Government Day in Topeka on the 28th.

Warkins – The first Fall Festival meeting of the year is on Monday, January 19th.

Palmer-Witt – Inquired about ditches at Park and 1st or 2nd, Zollinger stated that Logan has reached out to Pearson to see when they will be getting that done since they are in town working on Indian Ridge Phase 2 and has not heard back yet.

Chambers – Will not be at the next meeting due to coaching wrestling in Harrington.

Ussery – Mayor Ussery asked if Gordon and Chambers were signed up for the New Roles webinar, Poe stated that they were. It is on January 22nd. He is excited for the new year with the governing body and thanked City staff for their work. There is a joint meeting in February with the Recreation and School.

10. Executive Session

None.

11. Adjournment

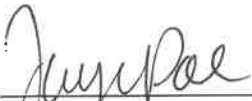
Motion: *Palmer-Witt* moved; *Shore* seconded to adjourn the meeting. Voted and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.

CERTIFICATE

State of Kansas }
County of Sedgwick }
City of Clearwater }

I, Jaye Poe, City Clerk of the City of Clearwater, Sedgwick County, Kansas, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the January 13th, 2026, City Council meeting.

Given under my hand and official seal of the City of Clearwater, Kansas, this 27th day of January 2026.



Jaye Poe, City Clerk

