

City of Clearwater, Kansas
Sedgwick County
City Council Joint Meeting with Chisholm Trail Recreation Commission and School Board- **MINUTES**
February 25, 2026
Clearwater City Hall – Council Chambers
129 E. Ross Avenue Clearwater, KS 67026

1. Call to Order

Clearwater School Board:

Jason Martin, President, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.; Maranda Pike, Vice President; Jessica Mills (Google Meets), Colette Watson, Layne Pike, Terek Wisinger and Leslie Bates.

City of Clearwater:

Mayor Burt Ussery called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Burt Ussery, Councilmembers; Samantha Warkins, Council President (Google Meets), Jason Gordon, Justin Shore, Shirley Palmer-Witt and Dalton Chambers all present.

Chisholm Trail Recreation Commission:

Amanda Germann, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.; Shirley Palmer-Witt, Vice Chairman; John Hurley; Layne Pike; Landon Doll and Director, Carol Barrientez.

2. Recreation Center – Presentation by CRC and discussion

The Clearwater Recreation Commission presented a proposal to construct a 16,700 square-foot recreation center. The proposed facility would include: One basketball court, Turf area, Multi-purpose room, Strength and cardio room, Walking track, Storage area, and Restrooms.

Proposed Locations

Three potential locations were identified: Clearwater Elementary East, Adjacent to the bus barn at Clearwater Intermediate/Middle School, and Chisholm Trail Sports Complex.

Estimated turnkey construction cost is approximately \$4,500,000. Annual operating and program costs are projected at \$254,000, which does not include the Commission's current \$75,000 annual contribution toward City park facilities.

The Recreation Commission currently receives approximately \$280,000 annually in mill levy revenue and has \$1,000,000 reserved for the project.

If no additional funds are secured and the remaining \$3,500,000 were bonded, estimated debt service would be approximately \$275,000 annually for 20 years. The Commission cannot independently issue bonds; financing would need to occur through either the City or the School District. Bonding through the School District would require a public vote unless structured as a five-year capital improvement bond.

Program Growth and Facility Need

The Commission reported significant program growth, increasing offerings from 72 to 218 activities, representing 69 unique activities (some offered monthly). Programs are currently hosted in City, School, Senior Center, and Library facilities, with recreation activities receiving secondary priority to primary facility users.

The proposed facility would provide dedicated space for Commission programming. However, it would not eliminate the need for use of school gyms, City parks, or the sports complex, as only one basketball court is included in the design.

Commission members also noted the facility could enhance community appeal for prospective residents.

Funding Considerations

Both the City Council and School Board expressed general support for the concept but raised concerns regarding construction funding.

The Commission discussed potential membership fees to offset operational costs, particularly to serve families with children under 16 who are no longer permitted at the local Wellness Center. The possibility of leasing space for daycare services was discussed; however, it was noted that any daycare operation would likely need to be

structured as a lease rather than operated directly by the Commission due to insurance and staffing considerations.

Leasing space to tenants as a revenue source was also discussed, though concerns were raised about the risk of relying on lease revenue to support long-term debt obligations.

Phasing the project was suggested as a way to reduce initial construction costs. The Commission indicated they have requested pricing for a shell building option but have not yet received cost estimates.

Location Considerations

Clearwater Elementary East was viewed favorably due to location but could require demolition costs estimated between \$50,000 and \$250,000.

The bus barn site at Clearwater Intermediate/Middle School was noted as potentially more cost-effective, with available parking and proximity to school facilities.

Superintendent Johnson reported a continued decline in student enrollment, consistent with statewide trends, noting that while new residents are moving to Clearwater, fewer are bringing school-aged children. This raised discussion regarding long-term demographic trends and whether a large facility aligns with future community needs.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Community leadership expressed support for the concept and recognized the potential community benefits.

However, significant concerns remain regarding construction funding and long-term financial sustainability.

It was recommended that the Commission explore grant opportunities and private donations to determine the feasibility of reducing the overall financial impact before advancing the project further.

3. Adjournment

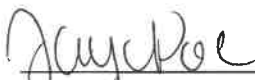
Motion: *Chambers* moved; *Palmer-Witt* seconded to adjourn the meeting. Voted and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM

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 February 25th, 2026, City Council Joint Meeting with Chisholm Trail Recreation Commission and School Board.

Given under my hand and official seal of the City of Clearwater, Kansas, this 10th day of March 2026.


Jaye Poe, City Clerk

