

City of Clearwater, Kansas
Sedgwick County
City Council Meeting - **MINUTES**
June 9, 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 6:00 p.m. followed the invocation and flag salute.

2. Roll Call

The City Clerk called the roll to confirm the presence of a quorum. The following members were present: Mayor Burt Ussery, Councilmembers; Jason Gordon, Justin Shore, Shirley Palmer-Witt and Dalton Chambers.

The following staff members were present:

City Administrator Zollinger, City Clerk Poe, Justin Patrick, Cole Hollis, Kirk Ives and Amber Ives.

Others present who spoke:

Troy Ohlde.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Ussery asked if there were any modifications to the agenda, there were none.

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

City Attorney Jennifer Hill entered at 6:02 pm.

4. Public Forum

Troy Ohlde spoke on his concerns regarding the East pond at Chisholm Ridge. He wanted to thank the City for removing the large number of dead fish today. He is still concerned with the overall condition of the pond and what led to the large fish kill. He observed hundreds of dead fish including bass, crappie, catfish, carp and shad along the shoreline which created a strong odor that attracted a large number of flies and is concerned there is a water quality issue. He mentioned the blue-green algae advisory that was posted and asked the City to provide the public with information regarding the cause. He specifically asked to evaluate if additional water quality monitoring is needed that includes dissolved oxygen testing and algae management, review the condition of the pond fountain, develop a long-term maintenance plan for the Chisholm Ridge Ponds to protect fish, populations, wildlife, and recreational opportunities for the residents, and continue to coordinate with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) and other appropriate agencies regarding the health of the fish and wildlife associated with the pond. He stated that many residents use the ponds for fishing, recreation and wildlife observation and believes it is important to maintain the resource and address the issues to prevent future fish kills. He then asked if the City has determined the cause of the fish kill and when the fountain was last operational on the East pond, if the City has plans to repair said fountain, has dissolved oxygen testing been conducted at all and will the pond be restocked and who will coordinate with KDWP if it is. Lastly, he asked if the City has a management plan for the blue-green algae blooms that are currently on the ponds. Mayor Ussery thanked Mr. Ohlde for coming in and stated that these concerns are proactively being looked into and will prepare a report for the public outlining the City's findings and any actions the City plans to take.

5. Consent Agenda

Mayor Ussery asked if there was any question on the consent agenda and if not asked for a motion to approve.

Previous Council Meeting Minutes
Claims and Warrants
Armory Fireworks Stand Permit
Judge & Prosecutor Agreement
Fall Festival Special Event Permit

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

6. Staff Reports:

- Administration Office – Courtney Zollinger – Palmer-Witt inquired about the handicap spot in the pool parking lot, Hollis stated they will get it done when they do the crosswalks in late July or early August. She then asked about the location on the West side of South Tracy that was marked about 2 months ago, Hollis stated that South Tracy is maintained by County. Zollinger stated that the County is currently working through their plan for that South section. Hollis noted that they did some ditch work on South Tracy. Palmer-Witt asked about the vacant building on the West side of Ross getting mowed, Zollinger stated that she will follow up with Professional Code Compliance (PCC), they are directed to leave a door knocker, then a formal notice with a 10-day compliance window as long as the certified mail is picked up.
- Fire Department – Justin Patrick – Chambers asked how the training went at the high school for driving, Patrick said it went well. This is mandatory training for all of the current drivers so a make-up day is scheduled for those who could not attend.
- Police Department – Kirk Ives – Shore noted the number of SPV permits were good, Ives mentioned they have a total of 125 permits that can be issued but they are at 104 currently. Mayor Ussery has noticed a number of kids driving around on SPV's and asked how closely this was monitored, Ives stated it is monitored well and they had around 4 issues last week. Mayor Ussery asked if they had to be licensed and have valid insurance to operate them, Ives confirmed they did. Shore asked if minibikes fit into the same category, Ives stated it depends on if it is electric and if it is, then it is in a weird category. Chambers asked if the new officer still needed to attend the academy, Ives stated he will be on the road for a couple of weeks after his post-hire testing is complete before a spot is available for him at the academy and then he will be on field training for about 2 months.
- Public Works/Parks – Cole Hollis – Shore asked about the lagoons, Hollis stated they are looking pretty good. They discharged in April and May, April passed the testing and May results have not been received. Hollis is hoping to not discharge in June.
- Senior Center – Amber Ives – Shore stated that the lunch event was good. Mayor Ussery noted that the biggest feedback from his presentation at the lunch and learn was the disappointment in not having a fireworks show or parade since this is the 250th year. Zollinger noted that most other cities do not run or pay for those events, they are normally put on by other organizations such as a chamber of commerce. Mayor Ussery also mentioned the construction going well, Ives noted that the concrete should start getting poured on Monday or Tuesday.

7. Business

a. No Parking Ordinance

The City received a complaint from the resident at 745 E. Ross regarding vehicles parking in the grassy area adjacent to the roadway, resulting in damage to the grass and the creation of ruts. Historically, this area has been used for parking for various purposes. However, after reviewing the complaint, applicable ordinances, and parking conditions along Ross Avenue, staff has determined that this area should be designated as a No Parking Zone. There is a 30' area of no parking near a stop sign and there is no shoulder access in this area to physically park. If approved, the City will install appropriate No Parking signage in the area to notify motorists of the restriction. Other portions of Ross Avenue that accommodate on-street parking contain either designated shoulders or marked parking stalls. Ross Avenue from Third Street to the eastern city limits does not have any designated parking areas along the roadway. While the area in question is located within the public right-of-way and may be utilized by the City for maintenance and operational purposes, staff recommends prohibiting regular vehicle parking in this location. During the review, staff also identified that South Fourth Street is currently marked as No Parking on the east side of the street to the edge of town; however, this restriction was never formally established by ordinance. The proposed Ordinance will formally designate this section as a No Parking Zone and bring City records into alignment with existing signage. The school has been notified that the area is designated as a no-parking zone. Additionally, any ruts or damage caused by maintenance vehicles are to be repaired by the responsible party. The property owners are aware if the proposed locating is approved, they will not be able to park there.

Motion: *Palmer-Witt* moved; *Chambers* seconded to adopt Ordinance 1129 An Ordinance Regulating Parking By Prohibiting The Parking Of Vehicles On A Certain Roadways Within The City Of Clearwater, Kansas By Amending Section 14-306 Of The Clearwater, Kansas Municipal Code. Voted and passed unanimously.

b. Discussion: Fire District #1

Mayor Ussery provided Council with a copy of the request that was sent to Sedgwick County asking for a proposal with regards to the actions taken and their response. He reminded Council that letters were received canceling auto and mutual agreements with Sedgwick County with a 90-day notice on May 8th.

City of Clearwater Request for Proposal - Sedgwick County (Sedgwick County Fire District 1 responses in blue)

The City of Clearwater request a formal proposal for a full fire and emergency support to the Clearwater and Ninnescah Township Area.

To recap the communication from the BoCC as Governing Body of Fire District 1:

The decision of the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners as the Governing Body of Fire District No. 1 isn't intended to end SCFD1's collaboration with these communities. Termination letters were issued May 8, and mutual and automatic aid agreements will remain in effect for 90 days. These 90 days provide community and fire leaders with time to develop plans that optimize fire protection in the region. The leaders in these cities have three options: 1: Accept an open invitation to join Fire District 1. 2: Provide adequate, consistent staffing and quality control measures to meet minimum scene safety standards. 3: Allow the agreements to expire after 90 days.

Mayor Ussery stated if the City can meet the requirements of number 2, then he is convinced they may be able to negotiate a new mutual aid agreement.

Full Service. SCFD1 should provide the following detailed information regarding a full-service support (meeting all NFPA 1710 standards), where all emergency services are provided by the county. This will include;

1. The location where a fully staff Fire Station on a 7 day/24-hour basis.

A tentative proposal, should the City of Clearwater and the Governing Body of SCFD1 mutually desire to enter into a formal agreement and execute such agreement: A SCFD1 fire station could be constructed by an agreed upon date, at an advantageous location within Ninnescah Township, situated to encompass the City of Clearwater boundaries wholly within 5 driving miles of the station. The Ninnescah Township Board, being an independent body politic and corporate, authorized in Kansas State Statutes, will need to establish a formal agreement with the Governing Body of SCFD1 for SCFD1 to be a service provider within the jurisdiction of the township on behalf of the property owners in unincorporated Sedgwick County situated within the boundaries of the township. The estimated cost to build a 24/7/365 equipped fire station, if designed to resemble the Goddard style combined Fire District station & SCEMS post, will be around \$3.5 - \$4.0 million (+/-).

Mayor Ussery stated that this would probably be a 2028 or 2029 fiscal year activity for budgeting purposes. He noted that a document is being prepared to send to Ninnescah Township with this information so that they can also be aware and come up with a decision.

2. A detailed list of the personnel assigned and the equipment that will be maintained in Clearwater.

Under the above assumption, SCFD1 & SCEMS will co-locate in a combined facility. SCFD1 will provide fire and rescue responses, fire inspection and investigative services, and medical first response services as detailed under "EMS" and in the attachment. Fire staffing will consist of no less than three FTE per shift, requiring a minimum of 11 FTE to staff across the three shifts for 24/7/365 staffing. SCFD1 will utilize available resources and negotiated aid agreements to meet applicable scene safety standards. The annual estimated cost for 11 FTE at \$1.26 million. SCEMS will provide medical response and transport services 24/7/365 from this facility or by the closest system ambulance as detailed under the "EMS" section below.

3. A purchase agreement for the Clearwater Emergency Service Department facility and all equipment maintained by the department. A detailed list of the equipment will be provided.

SCFD1 will evaluate the existing Clearwater Emergency Services facility for viability and cost effectiveness to support a 24/7/365 operation with sleeping quarters, employee safety and operational functionality. SCFD1 will evaluate the Clearwater Fire Department fleet vehicles and may acquire the apparatus that are advantageous to Fire District financially and for operational capacity.

4. All costs associated with SCFD #1 providing the ongoing services through county tax.

Based on 2025 Certified Assessed Value for each, City of Clearwater and Ninnescah Township, exclusive of one another, at the 2026 SCFD1 mill levy of 16.754 mills, the table below calculates the revenue that would be generated from all taxable properties within the City, within the Township exclusive of the City, and the two collectively.

SCFD1 Additional Property Tax Revenue from Clearwater City & Ninnescah Township			
	2025 Certified Assessed Value	2025 SCFD1 Mill Levy	Potential Property Tax
Clearwater	27,198,148	16.754	\$ 455,677.77
Ninnescah Township	16,108,799	16.754	\$ 269,886.82
	43,306,947		\$ 725,564.59

EMS for Clearwater is currently supported by Sedgwick County EMS on a 7 day/12-hours a day basis by a CRV. The other 12 hours a day is covered by Clearwater Emergency Services Department. If SCFD #1 assumes responsibility for all fire services in Clearwater, the City will not be able to maintain a volunteer EMS department. It will be required that the CRV becomes a 7 day/24-hour on site resource. Mayor Ussery stated that the estimated 16.754 mills discussed above does not include the cost of constructing new buildings, purchasing additional equipment, or adding staffing. He also reiterated that Clearwater is just one of five communities whose agreements with SCFD1 have been canceled and noted that the mill levy could change depending on how many of those communities choose to join the district. Mayor Ussery explained that SCFD1 is funded through property taxes assessed to residents throughout Sedgwick County, except for communities that have never been part of the district.

Bottom line:

SCFD1 provides 24/7/365 medical first response to all residences, business and areas within the Fire District boundaries. Sedgwick County Emergency Medical Services responds to all EMS priority level calls within Sedgwick County 24/7/365. No guessing which agency or department is covering which 12-hour shift.

Background:

SCFD1 provides medical first response 24 hours, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, from each of its nine (9) fire stations, operating under the county wide EMSS Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) priority system utilized by Sedgwick County Emergency Communications (911). SCFD1 is a member agency of the Sedgwick County Emergency Medical Services System (EMSS), staffed with State licensed Emergency Medical Technicians, Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics, each credentialed by and operating under the protocols and medical oversight of the Sedgwick County EMSS Physician Medical Director. All SCFD1 responders are licensed and credentialed at or above the EMT level as a condition of employment. SCFD1 has a full-time medical officer on staff to provide training and support to the SCFD1 firefighters/ medics. EMD, established by the EMSS Physician in coordination with Sedgwick County EMS, Sedgwick County Emergency Communications (911), and fire officials from SCFD1, Wichita Fire Department and Derby Fire Department determines call priority which informs the units dispatched for response depending on the details-based prioritization.

Fee for Service. SCFD1 should provide a "per activity" charge for any support provided the Clearwater Emergency Services department. This will include;

1. A detailed list of the type of calls SCFD #1 will support. Example, structure only or other services as well.

SCFD1 may provide mutual aid on structure fires with people trapped and structure fires when CFD capacity is exceeded. Grass or "wildland" fires when CFD capacity is exceeded. Member agencies of the Sedgwick County Wildland Task Force (WFD, Derby, Mulvane, Clearwater, Cheney, Colwich, Mt Hope, Valley Center and SCFD1) may also be responding. [sedgwick-county-leop-2025-2030-aod.pdf](#) (see p.105). Regional Hazardous Materials per State Fire Marshal activation and agreement. Regional Water Rescue per State Fire Marshal activation and agreement.

2. The boundaries of such support. It must include as a minimum the Ninescah Township. The current agreement was expanded to include a broader boundary, will this change?

SCFD1 may provide mutual aid within the City of Clearwater. City of Clearwater may provide mutual aid to an agreed upon area within SCFD1 jurisdiction near the City of Clearwater. Any fire service agreement between the City of Clearwater and Ninescah Township to which the SCFD1 Board is not a party does not obligate or bind SCFD1 to provide non- negotiated aid or fire service to unincorporated Ninescah township properties. The Ninescah Township Board will need to discuss and negotiate with SCFD1.

3. The cost per activity and the basis for each charge.

SCFD1 is not currently interested in "cost per activity" billing.

4. Clearwater will expect the same "per activity" charge if support is provided.

SCFD1 is not currently interested in "cost per activity" billing.

Mayor Ussery stated that ISO ratings may improve for some properties in Western Ninescah Township and for properties within a 4-mile section between 103rd W and 119th W, and from 93rd S to 119th S. Currently the City is a 4/10 to 2 and the township is a 6/10 to 2. Mayor Ussery stated that there are still remaining questions for SCFD1 that will need to be answered to make an informed decision. These questions are the exact location of a station if Clearwater decided to join SCFD1, what the exact cost impact would be that include a new building, equipment and staffing, response time expectations, the time frame in which this would be operational, the disposition of Clearwater equipment and how SCFD1 plans to meet NFPA with staffing plans. There is a meeting with CFD leadership to go over all data to

confirm CFD could meet the expectations of SCFD1 to continue with mutual aid. The findings of the meeting is intended to be presented to Council during the workshop at the end of June. Mayor Ussery would like to have a community open house in July to get their feedback before a decision is sent to SCFD1. He pointed out in order to for SCFD1 meet their own standards, they would have to have somebody from another area respond if they are only staffing the proposed 3 FTE's and taking the local fire department out of the mix doesn't make sense. Clearwater is a growing community with a volunteer fire department, what would happen if there were no response to a call? This is why the data research from CFD is important and verifying that it is accurate. He mentioned Clearwater may need to transition into staffing rather than volunteer only to meet the proposed standards, then evaluating the cost to operate the department vs joining SCFD1 and if it makes sense to do so. He noted that he has received comments from community members supporting both options—joining SCFD1 and remaining an independent fire department. He believes that CFD has loyal and dedicated firefighters as well as the City investing as a community in the equipment, staffing and training for the department. Gordon agrees that answers are needed as the responses are more generalized. Mayor Ussery explained that NFPA is not a governmental agency, only an organization that makes recommendations that should be followed as a standard. He also explained that NFPA has separate standards for volunteer departments and full-time, to when he has pointed out to Sedgwick County. Jennifer Hill stated that the Kansas Court claims Act provides municipalities specific exemption from liability for firefighting and police activities, that do have some exceptions. Mayor Ussery asked Hill what the liability would be if a firefighter from any entity was sent into a fire if he was injured, she stated that is where Workers Compensation would take effect and your command staff, policies and training would come into play to help keep firefighters and the community safe. Mayor Ussery stated that those standards and expectations for training should be set and documented as well. Gordon asked if the NFPA standards were the same in the other states or if they vary, Patrick said that it is universal and not interchangeable. Shore asked Patrick if CFD usually has 6 people show up for calls, Patrick stated a majority of the time they do. Shore emphasized that CFD is already meeting the standards that the County specified in their statement of having adequate staffing and quality control measures according to NFPA 1720. Council discussed Sedgwick County not being able to meet the standards and many questions still unanswered. Mayor Ussery noted that if Clearwater joins SCFD1 there is potential that a mile and a half South of Clearwater being another County will not receive support like they have now even though it is in the school district. There are some communities that operate under SCFD1 but still have their volunteers where equipment is provided, Mayor Ussery believes this is not an option for Clearwater. He explained that the fire department comes out of the general budget and that Ninescah Township reimburses the City about \$80,000 per year which brings the fire department budget down from 12 mils to 8 mils. He also reiterated the importance of good data from both SCFD1 and CFD, it appeared that the data reported from SCFD1 was from the whole area of Clearwater zip code. Palmer-Witt inquired about an ambulance being dedicated if a station goes North of town, Mayor Ussery stated no and Patrick added that SCFD1 is not in charge of the EMS, they fall under Sedgwick County Government. Mayor Ussery explained the Commissioners adjourn the County Commission meeting and reconvene as the governing board for the Fire District. While there have been discussions about whether the Fire District should have a separate governing body, the same elected County Commissioners currently serve in both roles. Zollinger pointed out that in SCFD1's response, it said that SCFD1 and EMS would co-locate in a combined facility and would provide medical response and transport service from this facility or by the closest system ambulance as determined. Mayor Ussery stated from an EMS perspective an ambulance would only be dispatched if the local fire EMT determined there was a medical need. Patrick noted that calls go through an EMB protocol which deciphers what priority level is and what units are needed. If it is determined that CFD ends up being independent, if there is a declared emergency, State Statute would activate where a mutual aid agreement with everyone would be enacted. Council then discussed the increase in volunteer participation in the last 5 years. Patrick noted the promotional process just implemented and trying to build up the command staff. Mayor Ussery mentioned the standards in the leadership becoming more stringent and then procedures being followed, he believes joint training such as command-and-control training with the County would be beneficial. There are currently 3 full-time firefighters within CFD. Council then discussed the types of training and noted that participating in the fall festival parade not being training, but should include activities that prepare for firefighting duties. Mayor Ussery has asked for any certifications of the current CFD members that have a firefighter 1 and firefighter 2 as well as what is required annually for training and keep it documented. Palmer-Witt noted that there are a lot of questions for the CFD to answer now, but the governing body will need to answer these questions in which Mayor Ussery reiterated the appreciated effort and volunteers that are part of CFD. He also noted a letter has never been received regarding the CFD failing in any situation. Mayor Ussery stated that Clearwater will hold itself to the standards that are required and let SCFD1 know that as long as there is viable force to do so CFD will remain. There is no sense in paying 3 times more than now with the potential threat to the community of less responsiveness. Mayor Ussery noted that there has been history where SCFD1 pulls units to other communities to respond and could very well do the same if Clearwater joined SCFD1. Shore asked if there were any inclinations as to

how the other cities were responding to SCFD1, Zollinger stated that Valley Center, Colwich and Cheney seem to be taking the same approach as Clearwater by reviewing all information. Mt. Hope does not have as robust of a department, and she is not sure what they are leaning towards.

8. Governing Body

Gordon – He will not be here next meeting due to his sister in law passing away and will be in California for the service.
Shore – None.

Palmer-Witt – She noticed there were no flags at the Sports complex and with the increased number of tournaments being held out there and Kansas Curve, she wondered if there should be one out there. Hollis noted there is a flagpole between the concessions building and field 1, but no light on the pole. If the recreation decided to put one on the pole, it would need to come down every night. Zollinger notated that since it is a recreation event or request, they would be responsible for putting it up and taking it down. Palmer-Witt also mentioned that the recreation spent some money today for City Park field, this may bring more tournaments and people to Clearwater. It was then mentioned that the Boy Scouts organization is not well supported and the City has tried getting them to replace or remove the flag box that is deteriorating outside of the building and has had no luck.

Chambers – None.

Ussery – None.

9. Executive Session

None.

10. Adjournment

Motion: *Palmer-Witt* moved; *Gordon* seconded to adjourn the meeting. Voted and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 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 June 9th, 2026, City Council meeting.

Given under my hand and official seal of the City of Clearwater, Kansas, this 23rd day of June 2026.



Jaye Poe, City Clerk

