

RNR/Budget Hearings & City Council Meeting 8/25/25

RNR & Budget Hearings

Open RNR Hearing: Mayor Gragg opens the RNR Hearing at 6:15pm, August 25, 2025.

Open to Public:

Darwin Stoesz – Expressed how much he likes living in this town, and hopes that if we can start getting new houses and maybe replace the vacant run down ones we can get more people to live here and that could help bring in more tax dollars to help us keep our city.

Bob Bartlett – stated that if we were to drop down to the RNR, that is moving us backwards.

Ben Hirsch – would like to see less temporary street repairs and a more focused plan on having more major street repairs or replacements.

Councilman Bowlin – To allow us to address any of these needs and requests we will need to exceed the RNR.

Mayor Gragg – asks if there is anyone else who wishes to speak? None – He then reads the Resolution 0825-25A to all those present.

Council Member Clark makes a motion to adopt Resolution 0825-25A of the City of Whitewater, Kansas to levy a property tax rate exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate. Bowlin seconds. Coleman votes 'Yes' - Ravenscraft, absent.

Roll Call Vote was signed and documented how each present voted. 3 yes, 1 absent.

Close RNR Hearing: **Bowlin motions to bring the RNR Hearing to a close. Coleman seconds. Ayes carried. 6:27pm**

Open 2026 Budget Hearing: Mayor Gragg opens the 2026 Budget Hearing for the Governing body of the City of Whitewater at 6:27pm

Open to Public:

Ben Hirsch – asks again if there is a plan in place for better street repair instead of the temporary fixes. (responses: requires planning and budgeting, it's on the list, cost is significant)

Darwin Stoesz – his primary concern is the sewer problems our city faces. He views this a more important need than roads and some of the roads might have to be torn up to fix some of the sewer problems. The Lift Station should be the primary concern.

Bob Bartlett, Fire Chief – we have had some work on the fire hydrants but we still have 8-9 problematic hydrants. Some might be able to be repaired while some might not even have parts available. It all will cost.

Melissa Green – recommends getting with former city clerk of Potwin who now works with cities to help with grant writing.

Mayor Gragg – Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? None

Council Member Bowlin motions to adopt the 2026 Proposed Budget for the City of Whitewater, Kansas as presented with a Mill-Levy of 55.809. Coleman seconds. Ayes carried. 6:49pm

Council members all sign the 2026 Budget Certificate.

Close 2026 Budget Hearing: **Bowlin motions to close the 2026 Budget Hearing, Ravenscraft seconds. All ayes. 6:50pm**

City Council Meeting Minutes (8/25/25)

Attendees: Mayor Brady Gragg, Grant Bowlin, Dan Ravenscraft, Kathryn Coleman & Trent Clark

Others In Attendance: Andrew Hanna, Anne Morrow, Jake Callstrom, Bob Bartlett, Sandra Jensen, Melissa Green, Darwin Stoesz, Ben Hirsch, Laura Hirsch, Mark Annen, Kelly Miller, Gene Stanghor, "Jeep" Edris, Bernice Martling, Leon Koehn, Andy Floyd, Tim Stanghor and Scott Silknitter.

6:51pm: Mayor Gragg calls the meeting to order.

Addition to Agenda: The mayor will be recommending an individual to fill the vacant seat on the council. This will be added to Order of Business as Item 2B.

- **Clark motions to approve the agenda with the addition of Order of Business 2B to the 8/25/25 agenda. Second by Ravenscraft. All Ayes, carried. 6:53pm**

- **Clark motions to approve the June meeting minutes as written. Coleman seconds, All Ayes, carried. 6:55pm**

Open to Public:

Thelma "Jeep" Edris – Addressed the council concerning her alleyway & desires the keep the police in our city.

Leon Koehn – Requests the use of Ballfield 1, for a fall baseball team that will be playing in the Goddard League. He would like to host a couple of practices in the afternoons of Aug. 31 & Sept. 7.
-- Governing Body differs this to Andy Floyd of the Park & Rec Board, approved and they will work together to provide bases and other field related needs for the practices.

Letter from Bruce & Kathy Trapp to the Mayor and Council Members of Whitewater - "I want to thank you for serving our community and giving all your time. Thank you for all the information you shared with us last night (public forum). It is important for the community to understand the budget and needs to keep this special town running and safe. Sincerely, Bruce & Kathy Trapp"

Bernice Martling – Keep our law enforcement, even if you must raise costs. It is important to have them here.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1.) Codes of Procedure & Ethics – 7:04pm

(handouts of *City Codes 1-211 & 1-212*; *Code of Procedure for Kansas Cities, Fourth Edition, 2017*). The Governing Body reads through the handouts which provide a refresh of how meetings are structured, motions passed, voting etc. The code of ethics as laid out in the City Codes of Whitewater explain the responsibilities and expectations of the Governing Body, Mayor and city employees; this also includes appropriate behavior even if there is debate or conflict of interests.

2.) Resignation of Council Member – 7:06pm

(copy of Resignation Letter of Kenneth Stringer; *City Codes 1-208*) The Mayor read aloud for all present to hear former Councilman Stringers' resignation letter submitted to the city July 29, 2025.

---- City Codes 1-208 lays out procedure on how to fill a vacancy on the governing body.

2B.) Mayor Gragg has been talking with former council member Jeff Artman, who is willing to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term. He will not accept any write-in votes and will be replaced through the proper voting procedures set in place in the upcoming elections.

The Mayor nominates Jeff Artman to fill the vacancy. Bowlin motions to approve the nomination of Jeff Artman to finish out the 2025 term and fill the vacancy. Ravenscraft seconds. All ayes. 7:11pm

3.) Cemetery Update - Kelly Miller, Board President - 7:12pm:

(revisions handout; city codes Chapter 12, Article 3) Discussed the process of how the cemetery board is working to develop a more current rules and regulations booklet or handout for those who purchase cemetery plots as well as bring the language of the codes into a more current and accurate state of being.

Financial Report – Terry Ullum, 7:26pm

Most everything is running about the same as last year.

Provided with the Maintenance and Office Card statements are all the receipts generated by each card. As you can see each person initials the receipts in acknowledgement, they were aware of the purchases. Clark expresses gratitude in seeing each receipt and desires to see it this way each time.

Ravenscraft motions to accept the Financial Report as it is, second by Coleman. All Ayes, Carried: 7:32pm

Resolution 0825-25B – This was developed to start being proactive in building funds towards the growing need of our sewer and lift station. It will allocate all utility late charges to the Sewer Reserve Fund; currently they just go into the General Fund. It also states that this will be retroactive from Jan. 1, 2025. This can also be undone by the Governing Body whenever they decide to no longer do this if that time comes.

Clark motions to adopt Resolution 0825-25B and allocate the utility late charge funds into the Sewer Reserve Fund. Second by Bowlin. All Ayes. 7:36pm

PERSONNEL REPORTS

Deputy's Report – Tom Moore, 7:36pm

- 3 verbal warnings and 1 ticket for speed, this one going 50 in a 20
- A few more deputies are willing to help in the area now that school has started.
- We need an easier fine schedule for things like speeding; too complicated to do when writing a ticket. (This is set by the Municipal Judge)
- Juggled his schedule to work some nights; but they have been quiet.

Animal Control Report – Jake Callstrom, 7:58pm (provided report)

- A few cats have been returned to their owners.
- A dog was returned to their owner.

Recommends adoption of **Ordinance 641** to Amend what we have to include “surrender” and the proper procedure including those steps with the animals.

Bowlin motions to adopt Ordinance 641, amending CHAPTER 2, ANIMAL CONTROL and REGULATION, providing the definition of “SURRENDER” to 2-101 AND; amending 2-118(b& c) (b) claim animals through payments & when those payments are due; (c) to address time limits for impounded animals, AND establish procedure to deem animals abandoned, including issuing surrender documentation; AND repealing ordinances or parts of ordinances that might be in conflict. Clark seconds. All ayes. 7:47pm

Clerk's Report – Anne Morrow, 7:48pm (provided report)

- Reported both AT&T and Verizon to the FCC; this has provided me with actual human contacts and we have made progress. Hope to have everything done by next week.
- Had a good turn out at the Public Forum, about 30 people showed up.
- Created a FEEDBACK Form – allows people to submit a complaint, compliment or suggestion which will allow the city to better serve the community. Already had a couple filled out.
- Fred Fest information and forms, etc. will be hosted on the city website.
- Processing two tickets; letters have been sent. One has requested a diversion and that has been sent onto the City Attorney.
- Seven shut off notices were sent this month. All but one who happened to be moving that day has made payments.
- A new Renters Utility Application form has been made to include more input and approval from the landlords. Many cities are seeing a lot of squatters and house hoppers trying to set up residence without total knowledge of or approval by the property owners.
- Taking a KOMA/KORA Webinar on 9/4/25
- Looking at a better solution to card and online payments for everything else other than the utilities. That is working great, but we are currently using Square for the office charges and its not a good fit. I've had online meetings with Evolv-GovCard & KanPay; both of which work with municipalities and are in better compliance with card companies, etc. I will bring my report to you next time to see which way we want to go.

Maintenance Report – Andrew Hanna, 7:53pm (provided report)

- Comm-Tronix has installed the new monitoring and alarm call out system at the Lift Station.
 - El-Dorado is doing their annual “burn out” and it should last until the end of the month.
 - Our summer helper, Eli Claassen, has returned to school. We are thankful for his help in keeping the grass mowed and other odd jobs we gave him.
 - A zip tie was jammed in the coin machine at the car wash. Please put QUARTERS ONLY in the quarter slot.
 - Rain keeps falling and the grass keeps growing and we keep mowing. The new mower is appreciated as it doesn't spray grass clippings on us as we mow.
 - There were no water leaks this month.
- Various council members discussing or talking about weeds in streets, properties in code violations and what can be done for “Jeep's Alley.”

Mayor's Report – Brady Gragg, 7:58pm

- Reminder that we had to push the last Code Book Review until September 16th, 7PM. We will pick up at 3-302 of our codes.

Continued & New Business

Comprehensive Fee Schedule, 8:03pm

(current Comprehensive Fee Schedule, Ordinance 642). This is to establish a fee schedule that has everything in one place so we can make much needed adjustments as needed but also review annually. It provides an effective way to look at where costs are and if we need to adjust appropriately we can pass it through a Resolution and not have to pass new Ordinances for each service.

Mayor Reads Ordinance 642 aloud for all present to hear.

Ravenscraft motions to that the City of Whitewater adopt Ordinance 642; An ordinance providing that the governing body of the City of Whitewater shall establish, by resolution, such

license fees, permit fees and other type fees or charges as will adequately compensate the city for its services rendered: providing for an annual review of the same by the governing body; and repealing all existing fees in conflict with those established pursuant to this ordinance. Second by Coleman. All Ayes, Carried: 8:11pm

Budget Requests & Allocations, 8:12pm (handout provided)

With the budget we have going into 2026 decisions need to be made concerning the requests from the Library, Parks & Rec, Cemetery and Planning & Zoning. Discussions between the governing body concerning where the money would come from, budget restrictions, etc.

Library – same as last year; \$18,000

Park & Rec - \$10,000 and no longer be billed for Ballfield #1 light bill unless exceeds \$3000

Cemetery – same as last year; \$6500

Planning & Zoning – no budget, requesting at least \$6,700 - \$3,400 out of General Fund to get started

Coleman makes a motion to provide an allocation of \$3,400 out of the General Fund to Planning and Zoning to get started, with provision to give more if needed/possible. Second by Bowlin. All Ayes. Passed 8:22pm

Bowlin makes a motion to approve allocations to the Library (around \$18,000 same as last year), Cemetery (around \$6,500, same as last year) and Parks & Rec (\$10,000 plus up to \$3000 for electricity to Ballfield 1). Second by Coleman. All Ayes. 8:24pm

Agenda Items for September 22, 2025

- Swearing in of Jeff Artman
- Water Rate Review
- “Jeep’s Alley”

Bowlin motions to bring the August Council Meeting to an end, Second by Coleman. Ayes, carried. 8:30pm

Meeting Adjourned – 8:30pm