

City Council Meeting

7/28/25, 7PM

Meeting Minutes

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

Others In Attendance: Andrew Hanna, Anne Morrow, Jake Callstrom, Jerry Gentry & Zach Stenzel of Aflac, Daniel McLiney of McLiney and Company, Gene Stanghor, Thelma Edris, Mike Claassen, Ben Sweazy, Collen Floyd, Andrew Floyd, Mark Stiles, Thomas Wine and Elizabeth Herbel

7:00pm: Mayor Gragg calls the meeting to order. **Addition to Agenda:** Daniel McLiney of McLiney and Company a bond consultant as the fourth Order of Business.

- ***Bowlin motions to approve the agenda with the addition of McLiney to the 7/28/25 agenda. Second by Clark. All Ayes, carried. 7:01 PM***

- ***Clark motions to approve the June meeting minutes as written. Bowlin seconds, All Ayes, carried. 7:02 PM***

Open to Public:

Thelma "Jeep" Edris – Addressed the council concerning her alleyway. 7:05PM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1.) Aflac Presentation (Jerry Gentry Jr. & Zach Stenzel) – 7:05pm

(folder handout). Explain their services, highlighting their supplemental or group Dental & Vision, Vision Care Direct. Rate lock from the time you start the policy for as long as you have it. Not health insurance but allows cash benefits to employees. A way to protect employees' income. Note that the handouts reflect pricing for weekly pay periods and can be adjusted to our bi-monthly pay periods.

2.) Planning & Zoning (Mike Claassen) – 7:18pm

(cost sheet provided by Foster Design) The Planning & Zoning is asking for money so they can update the zoning regulations and get necessary resources to do their jobs. Looking to work with David Foster of Foster Design that is the company that originally did our regulations and maps back in 1992-93, which is unfortunately where they remain. That is why they are in need of updating. His dad was running the company back then and passed away a year or two ago. You can see a number of services that David Foster provides with estimated costs next to each service. Assuming we are on the low end of the fee range because we are a smaller city if we did the whole thing it would come to at the very least \$6700 and won't know for sure until we actually start working with him. It could get to \$10,000 or more. In one of his emails he recommends the city designate a do not exceed number and we just do whatever we can with that amount each year and check in each year to see how much we can get to move forward until we get it all up to speed.

---- No decision was made due to other budget requests and budget related decisions.

3.) Girl Scouts Presentation/Request (Elizabeth Herbel)- 7:33pm:

(handout) Been working with the Girl Scout council to establish a troop here in Whitewater. Currently Newton or El Dorado are the closest Girl Scout locations. Which limits the girls in our community because travel and fuel costs is expensive. Looking to start in October. Need to work on recruitment to be successful. Requesting to waive fees to use Scout House for troop meetings and

waive fees to help recruiting through three half page ads to run in Aug. - Oct. newsletters. Total waived amount being \$1160 in the effort to start the Girl Scout Troop here in Whitewater. Lists benefits and promotes use of the Scout House. Herbel will coordinate with the Boy Scouts concerning times to use the Scout House, etc.

Mayor Gragg – Do the Boy Scouts currently pay? **Answer:** No

Bowlin motions to approve the request to waive fees to use the Scout House and newsletter advertising in support of establishing a Girl Scout troop in Whitewater. Second by Stringer. All ayes, carried 7:38pm

4.) McLiney and Company (Daniel McLiney) - 7:38pm:

(handout) McLiney and Company is hoping to be hired as Whitewater's municipal adviser for projects. I know you have a Lift Station that needs to get planned. Background: has been helping Kansas municipalities since 1928. Daniel is the 4th generation McLiney to carry on this service. Over that time has worked with many Kansas municipalities. Hiring the company is hiring experience, knowledge and creativity seen through the track record in what they have done. The only firm that they know of that has never had a Bond default in the lifetime of the company. Based out of Kansas City and work both with Kansas and Missouri municipalities. This agreement can be terminated at anytime with or without cause, as simple as a written notice. It costs nothing to hire us and nothing to fire us. We only get paid when there is a successful issuance of debt. We could start a whole process for you, A-Z of a project and then the state decides to give a Grant for that project, we don't get a dime for it, we worked for free and are happy to get you that money even if it cuts us out of it. As a municipal advisor it is our duty to work for the city. Goes over handout that deals with other municipalities bond issues and numbers. Seeing how cities were overcharged, Rated or Non-Rated and been competitive or negotiated issue, insured, etc. Showing how much was overspent on a Bond issue by various cities. We do not write grants, we can work alongside grants we deal with Bonds. We just want to be your municipal advisors for the next 30 years or whatever and be someone you can call on rain or shine to help you get the best rates, explain what's going on, we can look through your financials and advise you in various ways to deal with debt service that is best for the city. Only paid when there is a successful issuance of debt, dependent on the Bond issuance size. We have had clients that have been with us for 15 – 20 years that have never paid us a dime. We see these towns like a family.

Stringer motions to hire McLiney and Company as the City of Whitewater's municipal advisor. Second by Ravenscraft. All ayes, carried 7:52pm

Questions on how soon to get information to them concerning the lift-station project, as soon as possible would be recommended.

Financial Report – Handout provided by Terry Ullum(absent), 7:54pm

Mayor Gragg – Mr. Ullum is not able to attend tonight's meeting so he has provided a short letter of explanation for this month's Financial Report. *reads:* "As we reach the midpoint of the fiscal year, this Treasurer's Report provides a comprehensive overview of the City of Whitewater's financial position and performance for the six-month period ending June 30, 2025. The report reflects the City's ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, and strategic stewardship of public resources. During this period, the City continued to operate within its approved budget, maintaining essential services while advancing key initiatives aligned with community priorities. Revenues and expenditures are presented in detail, along with comparative figures from prior periods to highlight trends and inform future planning. This report is intended to support informed decision-making by city officials, stakeholders, and residents, and to ensure continued accountability in the management of public funds. Respectfully, Terry Ullum, Treasurer"

Stringer motions to accept the Financial Report as it is, second by Coleman. All Ayes, Carried: 7:57pm

PERSONNEL REPORTS

Deputy's Report – Tom Moore, 7:57pm

- 5 verbal warnings for speed and 1 ticket for speed
- Have been watching stop signs because of several complaints
- No leads on stolen items; the detectives were over in Wichita, but I haven't heard anything else.

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

- A Cat that was picked up at the end of May was claimed at the end of June – The lack of policy and procedures became evident at this point on how to claim animals, registered or unregistered. So we are adopting a new process that better aligns with our City policies. All claims have to go through the Animal Control Officer. If an animal is not claimed we will need to officially surrender that animal after a set period of time, we will need to add that as an amendment to our city codes. Currently there is no fine list for unregistered pets, that is something we may need to look into.
- "Sizzy" was picked up July 5th – not chipped and unclaimed. Working on officially documenting the surrender of this animal.
- "Chirp" was impounded July 6th – was claimed by owner and they are working on rehoming.
- Late June a truck was damaged by a cat. The pet owner and truck owner resolved this issue and no fine was applied.
- Another cat in really bad shape was reported. It was non-responsive and did not make it through the night.

Clerk's Report – Anne Morrow, 8:00pm (provided report handout)

- Spent days on the phone with both Verizon & AT&T, even went to physical stores to find out why it has been taking months to get our number ported over from AT&T to Verizon. I had a deadline established with a confirmation date and found out it got cancelled for some reason. Will continue to pursue how to get rid of our landlines with AT&T without having to lose our phone number.
- Provide bids that have come in for painting the various structures owned by the city; 3 stall parking on E. Topeka; and ADA sidewalk ramps at the 4 corners of E. Topeka from Main to Elm. Still open to receive bids and is working on various other bids for needed projects around town.
 - **Mayor Gragg** – Where is the 3 stall parking proposed to be going?
There is an original blueprint of when the city building was being built which originally contained parking stalls. These would go at E. Topeka very similar to how the parking is over at the bank along the street along the south side of E. Topeka. This could allow for a Handicap parking spot and be worked into the ADA ramp at that corner.
 - **Mayor Gragg** – so these are things you are proposing for the 2026 budget?
These are things that are already on the project list, and I am just getting the bids to get the numbers/costs to go beside those projects.
- Correspondence
 - Thank You card from Jake Silknitter Crew.
 - City Attorney has received a very long letter from a homeowner in Whitewater concerning utility billing issues and other things. The city attorney will be visiting Whitewater in August to discuss.

Maintenance Report – Andrew Hanna, 8:07pm

- There were issues with the change machine at the car wash – a new computer board was installed. It was down for about a week and is now working just fine.
 - Storm damage assessments from the June storm has been sent to FEMA and waiting on progress reports from them.
 - Street resurfacing has improved the top coat of the streets it was applied to. The road to the ball diamond has been repaired. The county is coming through to do Central & Main. They will start from Butler come down one side of Central, down one side of Main to 196; turn around and come down the other side of Main to the Business District where they will cover curb to curb and work their way back out of town through the other side of Central.
 - The County will hire a company who will come back in and paint the stripes down Butler Rd. and then they will come through and paint the lines in our town too.
 - With all the rain we have stayed busy mowing around town.
 - We have installed the 3rd hydrant at 1st & N. Elm. Install went well in spite of the heat.
 - Recent storms Friday night caused a computer board to short out in the hut under the water tower. This did not allow the tower and computer here in the office to communicate. The computer continued to show that the tower was at 92% and did not need to call for water. It did not send out any alarm calls either. Cameron from Comm-Tronix was out today, replaced the board confirmed that everything was working before he left.
 - The boil water advisory had been issued Sunday evening due to possible too low of water in the distribution center. This is just an advisory to protect the city from any possible repercussions from the tower issue. Samples have been taken to the lab in Wichita to be tested per KDHE rules. The lab has to hold them for 24 hours before running tests, I should have test results tomorrow, (Tuesday) midday.
 - Related side note: The library's internet was also out from Saturday morning until today when a Velocity truck came to the Tower around 5:30pm
 - When Cameron was here we talked about the board which had an obvious burn spot in it and he suggested that the tower was struck by lightening and burnt the board due to a voltage spike.
- many questions and heated opinions were shared about the standard of work being done by city employees as well as department expenses.

Councilman Bowlin requested to have each receipt present at the next meeting.

Mayor's Report – Brady Gragg, 8:28pm

- John Regier, from the Loyd Group, provided some guidance on our RNR discussion and intent. After the last council meeting we did not take a definitive vote to meet, exceed or drop the Mill-Levy and the date came up where we had to notify the County whether or not we were going to exceed the RNR. Under advisement from the Loyd Group we went ahead and did notify that we MIGHT exceed the RNR but that does not mean we have to exceed the RNR. Simply noted to allow us more time to make a hard decision. So the Mill-Levy as it stands now is 55.809 which is what it was last year. The value of the Mill-Levy rate has gone up. To not exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate we would need to drop that Mill-Levy number from the 55.809 to 54.052, this is not advised by the Loyd Group and frankly I'm not advising it either. We have made some headway in trying to create a reserve fund and for lack of a better term put some cash in the bank. The good work that we have done in the last couple of years would basically be eaten up by this. Our operating expenses will continue to go up.
- Discussion about lowering the City of Whitewater's Mill-Levy from 55.809 to anything inbetween or all the way down the RNR which is 54.052. More 2026 Budget and Tax Rate discussion.
- Councilman Bowlin presented an idea to cut the Butler County Sheriff Contract to save money.

- We need to schedule a Public Forum concerning the budget. Decision to host a Public Forum: August 14, 7pm - check with Library to confirm we can have it there, if not possibly the Scout House. We will check to see if someone from the Loyd Group can attend.
- Do we want to push another Code Book Review work session to September because of all the Budget prep we are dealing with in August? (look through schedules) September 16th, 7PM, Anne will send out reminders and where we left off when we get closer to that time.

Continued & New Business

American Tower Lease Options, 8:52pm

(correspondence handout). The handout covered the councils' questions and the Lease Manager's responses. Talk about reinvesting whichever option is decided upon.

Option #1 – Perpetual Easement lump sum payment - \$77,000

Option #2 – Perpetual Easement lump sum over 5 year period, monthly installments \$1,411.04 final total - \$84,662.29

Option #3 – Perpetual Easement lump sum over 10 yrs., monthly \$774.52 final total - \$92,942.51

Stringer motions to that the City of Whitewater formally accept Option #1 as proposed by American Tower Corporation, which consists of a one-time lump sum payment of \$77,000 in exchange for the granting of a Perpetual Easement on city-owned property currently under lease to American Tower, second by Bowlin. All Ayes, Carried: 8:59pm

Budget Requests from Library, Cemetery & Parks and Rec, 9:00pm

1. **Library Budget Request** – (handout, 2026 proposed Library Budget) Library is not asking for any additional funds beyond the previous year.

Stringer motions to accept the Library's proposed budget requests for 2026, second by Coleman; All Ayes, 9:02pm

2. **Cemetery Budget Request** - (handout) Council is unclear on what the cemetery is asking for with the information they provided. Need to get clarification from Cemetery Board. Desire more understanding how much they have ready for land purchase and for what cost to purchase, etc. Question: Are they requesting \$7000 for maintenance and \$13,000 for land purchase? Concensus of the council – not enough information to vote on how much to allocate towards the Cemetery Board.

Tabled until more information can be provided.

3. **Parks & Rec Budget Request** - (handouts) **Andy Floyd**; Provided a 10 year project budget plan, currently getting about \$3000 which mostly goes to Field 1's electricity costs. Providing explanation of income and funding for various projects and programs. The requested \$10,000 would break even for 2025. Parks & Rec does desperately need more funding from the city, knowing that there is a lot on the city's plate. It is broken down in a way to show needs, wants and projects moving forward. Points out some of the projects that are seen as priorities. Breakdown, 3 biggest needs: Increase funding to help run programs, outreach increased if they could hire a part-time employee, and purchase of a utility vehicle owned by the city for Parks use. Anything that can be increased beyond the \$3000 would be appreciated. \$10,000 would help us break even. What we are asking is we would like to increase over the \$3000 but what we need is something we can budget longer than four years. Maybe something that we can gradually increase as our costs increase. So we know how to budget and we know how to fundraise.

--- Discussion on how to increase the Parks & Rec budget; city pay up to \$3000 for the light bill; How much more could we increase and how would it effect the overall budget, most likely have to exceed the RNR to do any increase.

Stringer makes a motion that we give them the \$10,000 and \$3000 towards their electric bill. No Second.

--- Followed by more discussion and the need for more planning required before any decision can be made.

RNR & Mill-Levy Discussion, 9:30pm

Mayor Gragg – We did already kinda talk about RNR & Mill-Levy when we were trying to schedule the work sessions or Public Forum. Trying to discuss what that means for the RNR, I think Mr. Floyd made a good point, when we have the opportunity to realize the value of the Mill-Levy without raising it. Any other discussion around Mill-Levy and RNR?

--None

Agenda Items for July 28, 2025

- Scout House Options – Mayor Gragg provided his reasons for having this on the next agenda. The Scout House is something we need to look at as far as fund renovations or not. The Scout House is in sore need of repair, it hasn't had anything done to it in at least 20 years. Maybe painted the floor or something, I don't know. We have windows that are busted, siding that needs to be replaced or cover it with something else. Paint it? But it currently is a revenue drain right now on the city and while it is a community building and of value to the community it is not being used because of the various conditions of disrepair or it's too hot or too cold, etc. So, one of the things that I wanted to discuss is what do we do with the Scout House? Do we need to look at closing it to the public and using it for storage at the ball diamonds for athletic gear, do we look at a lease or rental property to the school district, I'm just throwing ideas out there, or does it just become storage for gear – middle school still does football practice over there? If the school wanted it maybe it would prevent us from selling it or donating it...
- Some discussion on ideas and the need to fundraising, ways to bring it before the public.

Mayor Gragg - Reminder that the official RNR and Budget Hearings are at 6:00PM prior to the City Council Meeting, August 25th.

Executive Session: *Bowlin motions to go into executive session concerning personnel issues for 10min. Second by Coleman. Opposed by Stringer. Ravenscraft & Clark vote in favor. - 9:34pm*

Executive Session: Begins at 9:46pm

Bowlin motions to extend executive session for 10 additional minutes. Second by Clark.

Executive Session: Ends at 10:06pm

Clark motions to bring the July Council Meeting to an end, Second by Bowlin. Ayes, carried (Stringer no longer present): 10:07pm

Meeting Adjourned – 10:07pm