

Hillsboro, Kansas  
June 2, 2020

1. The city council met in regular session via Zoom, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. with Mayor Lou Thurston and Council members David Loewen, Byron McCarty, Renee Gehring, and Brent Driggers participating.

2. Others Participating: Josh Boehm, City Attorney; Laura Paulus, Hillsboro Free Press; Jonah Gehring, Marion County Commissioner; Kevin Suderman: Lisa Schafer; Marci Cain, Hillsboro Pool Manager; Doug Sisk, Hillsboro Recreation Director; Mark Chesney & Brooke Carroll, KPP; Matt Stiles, Future City Administrator; Larry Paine, City Administrator; and, Glenda Stoppel, Deputy City Clerk.

**3. CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Thurston called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Commissioner Gehring said he doesn't agree with the pool closure decision at the last council meeting and would like to see it revisited. Some of his comments include: Closing the pool can end up hurting the most in need financially; Possibly add to mental and physical health deficiencies; Liability always exists when kids are at play; Playground is at own risk; Chlorine has been proved to kill viruses on contact; Taxes are up meaning people have been buying and staying local – concerns that Hillsboro will lose this if we're promoting people to go elsewhere; and, look outside the box to make sure we're not creating more harm than good.

Kevin Suderman is a resident outside the city limits; however, he is the owner of a local business inside the city limits. He agrees with Commissioner Gehring's comments. Additionally, he feels that there are tremendous opportunities with economic development and ways to make things work. He's concerned that this decision may scare businesses away as well as people not come to town to do business. He feels the City needs to help businesses by creating a positive atmosphere.

Council member Gehring said she had time to reflect on the council's previous decision from the last meeting and cited several reasons in favor of opening the pool for this summer: Concern for the consequences of the actions of closing the pool for the summer that families will choose to travel outside of Hillsboro to enjoy area pool facilities and in effect, could be bringing illness to our Hillsboro community, which would be negating exactly what Hillsboro is trying to avoid. These families traveling outside of Hillsboro will likely use their hard-earned money at stores and restaurants outside of Hillsboro, therefore decreasing the sales tax revenue that could have been provided to Hillsboro. It was her understanding that sales tax revenue has recently increased likely due to local constituents and families spending their hard-earned money in Hillsboro and feels that it's important to continue this growth trend for Hillsboro. She said that it's also important, and council's duty as elected officials, for the constituents of Hillsboro to also support and be as invested in the continued growth of Hillsboro as our constituents who choose to invest their own time, money, and livelihood in Hillsboro. Motion was then made by Council member Gehring and seconded by Council member McCarty to readdress the opening of the pool for the 2020 season in the safest way possible at this meeting.

Council member McCarty said the research he found said that chlorine kills COVID-19 virus; CDC said that people can't catch the virus from swimming in the water; however, it's advised against spitting and staying close together; restrooms need to be closed; and, items need to be cleaned 1x daily to be safe. Council member Driggers felt there was a disconnect from what Council member McCarty's research provided and what Marci Cain & Doug Sisk are hearing as guidance given to cities. Doug said he was

involved in a 5-state Zoom call where the aquatics manager for the Kansas Parks & Recreation provided the virus info that Doug and Marci were going by. City Attorney Boehm said that the standard normal CDC site for aquatics is separate from the COVID aquatic site for all industries. Doug said that playgrounds won't have the social distancing issues that are present in a pool setting. Mayor Thurston said that COVID-19 hasn't gone away and that the governor's move away from the Ad Astra plan was a political decision and not a health decision, which is concerning. Council member Loewen said it's difficult to weigh the needs of the community as there are people on both sides of the issue and there are so many unknowns. Mayor Thurston said that the League and KS Dept of Revenue calls have indicated that Hillsboro is seeing good revenue numbers and it isn't quite the gloom and doom that was earlier predicted. The State has seen a dramatic increase in online sales tax collections because people have stayed home and completed their shopping through online businesses. Council also discussed the safety and wellbeing of our pool employees. Lisa Schafer shared some ideas as a way to make changes that could possibly allow the pool to be opened. Marci said another problem now is that several of her veteran lifeguards have found other jobs since they were told the pool was closed. She said the discussion wasn't soon enough to get people trained. Mayor Thurston said his biggest concerns are airborne transmission and social distancing, and how do we control these issues in a pool environment?

After further discussion, council voted on the earlier motion to readdress the pool opening at this meeting. Vote: Council member Gehring, yes; Council member McCarty, yes; Council member Loewen, yes; and, Council member Driggers, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was then made by Council member Gehring to reopen the Hillsboro pool in the safest manner possible for the 2020 season. Motion died for lack of a second.

Council member McCarty said he'd like more answers before the pool could be considered open. Council member McCarty then made a motion to study the items brought up at today's meeting before the next meeting. Council member Gehring seconded the motion. After further discussion, Council member McCarty withdrew his motion. The decision stands that the pool remains closed for the 2020 season. Mayor Thurston said this could be considered a tragedy for our community. It's not a popularity contest and the health, safety and welfare of our community is important, and he appreciates everyone's comments and input.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 5-19-2020 REGULAR MEETING** – There is a correction to paragraph #14 to change a typo word from “Dirks” to “Driggers”. Motion was made by Council member Driggers and seconded by Council member Loewen to approve the minutes of the 5/19/2020 meeting with the above correction. Council was polled with the following vote: Driggers, yes; Loewen, yes; Gehring, yes; McCarty, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

**6. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS** – Motion was made by Council member Loewen and seconded by Council member Driggers to approve the vouchers in the amount of \$181,858.18. Vote: Driggers, yes; Loewen, yes; Gehring, yes; McCarty, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

**7. MARK CHESNEY REPORT** – Mark Chesney gave a report on recent happenings with the Kansas Power Pool. In April, an application to Southwest Power Pool for a generation interconnect study was made. It has been a lengthy process and he will update the council as more info becomes available.

The KPP Board/Staff determined to install a 1 megawatt battery storage project. They feel more responsibility as a utility to learn more about that technology. It will be a low cost/low risk project that

will be located in a city where there are serious voltage problems on their transmission system. Council members mentioned the transmission problems in Hillsboro. We've asked Westar to address these problems to no avail. As the cost comes down, this could be a possible fix for Hillsboro.

Work continues on the transmission project in Kingman County and should be online during the first quarter of 2021.

There will be a Cyber Security Working Group Zoom meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup>. An advisor to Dept of Homeland Security will do the presentation. Council was invited to participate in this meeting. The KPP Fall Planning Conference is scheduled for Sept 18 & 19. Hopes are to have this as an in-person event.

Mayor Thurston said he recently received an invitation to be on a briefing call with America's mayors with White House deputy directors of the departments. We're seeing a marked increase in cyber-attacks and denial type of service attacks. This continues to be a very high priority item.

**8. POLICY #50 REVISION** - An electronic message board is currently being installed on museum property at Ash & D. This policy updates the organizations that have access to advertise messages on the board, specifically the addition of Lions Club. This club is offering the money for the sign. The sign will run on WIFI and multiple messages will be entered by city staff. Council member McCarty asked if the weather could be added to the sign.

Motion was made by Council member McCarty and seconded by Council member Gehring to approve Policy #50 Revision adding Lions Club. Vote: McCarty, yes; Gehring, yes; Loewen, yes; Driggers, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

**9. KDHE PAY REQUEST #22** – Motion was made by Council member Driggers and seconded by Council member Loewen to approve EBH payment request #22 for KDHE Water Project, in the amount of \$39,655.28, for water meter installations. Vote: McCarty, yes; Gehring, yes; Loewen, yes; Driggers, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

**10. ELCON INVOICE** – Motion was made by Council member McCarty and seconded by Council member Loewen to approve Invoice #12128 in the amount of \$290.00 to Elcon Services for wiring a new rapid agitator on the raw water side of the plant. Vote: Driggers, yes; Loewen, yes; Gehring, abstained; McCarty, yes. Motion carried.

**11. BOARD APPOINTMENTS** – Motion was made by Council member McCarty and seconded by Council member Gehring to approve the following board appointments:

Planning & Development Commission: Jessie Wiebe (replacing Cynthia Fleming – term expiring 2/1/2022); reappointment of Ken Koslowsky – term expiring 2/1/2022.

Board of Zoning Appeals – Cynthia Fleming (replacing Jessie Wiebe – term expiring 6/1/2023); reappointment of Kakim Kunantaev – term expiring 6/1/2022.

Library Board – Reappointment of Jamie Driggers (2<sup>nd</sup> full term expiring 4/30/2024); reappointment of Don Ratzlaff (1<sup>st</sup> full term expiring 4/30/2023).

Vote: McCarty, yes; Gehring, yes; Loewen, yes; Driggers, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

**12. CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT –**

Council concurred to hold the next city council meeting in-person in the meeting room at City Hall. Social distancing will occur with staff and council; the public may have the capability of moving chairs around the room to comply with social distancing. Council member Gehring asked about the possibility of continuing Zoom meetings in addition to in-person council meetings which would improve an electronic footprint at our city council meetings. It would take the meetings to a broader level making council more accessible. City Administrator Paine will investigate what it takes to continue a Zoom format.

Mayor Thurston said a retirement party is being planned for City Administrator Paine. More info will be forthcoming.

Updates on the hike/bike trail and gigabyte fiber project will be announced soon.

Mayor Thurston said there are a lot of positive things going on in our community, and in spite of making tough decisions, we still need to focus on the positives. His call earlier today with White House staff was pretty sobering. He asked that we keep our nation, leaders, and our communities in our prayers as we work through very challenging issues we face as a nation, and to have peace and calmness return to our nation. Also to keep the family of George Floyd in our prayers.

**13. ADJOURNMENT –** The city council meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

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/s/  
LOUIS THURSTON, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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/s/  
GLENDA STOPPEL, DEPUTY CITY CLERK