

**CITY OF LOUISBURG, KANSAS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
July 21, 2025**

Workshop Livestream link:

<https://boxcast.tv/view/louisburg-city-council-workshop-rltc3nqnl0jfavmzsmh>

Council Livestream link:

<https://boxcast.tv/view/louisburg-city-council-lzli2prbesvfzkip6kips>

The Council of the City of Louisburg, Kansas, met at 6:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Donna Cook presiding.

Council Members Steve Town, Scott Margrave, Tiffany Ellison, Ryan Graves and Kalee Stone

City Administrator Nathan Law

City Clerk Jessica McGowin

Finance Director Richard Mikesic

Public Works Supervisor Ben Miller

Communications Coordinator Jean Carder

Police Chief Josh Weber

Fire Chief Gerry Rittinghouse

Planning & Development Director Katherine Louderbaugh

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilmember Kalee Stone led the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Stone moved, seconded by Councilmember Steve Town and carried 5-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Councilmember Tiffany Ellison moved, seconded by Councilmember Scott Margrave and carried 5-0, to approve the July 7, 2025, minutes as presented.

## **APPROVAL OF THE BILLS**

Town moved, seconded by Ellison and carried 5-0, to approve the bills as presented.

Ellison inquired about the High-Speed Mowing invoice related to mowing abatements. Communications Coordinator Jean Carder explained this is the first bill received for such services this year. Ellison then asked whether the City is reimbursed by the property owners. Planning Director Katherine Louderbaugh responded the abatement costs are submitted to the County to be assessed on the property tax roll.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

**City Burn Pile** – Cook stated the site is currently closed due to illegal dumping and expressed interest in finding a solution to avoid permanent closure, suggesting the possibility of hiring someone to monitor the site and verify residency. Ellison noted that Ben Miller previously raised this concern in a past meeting, proposing limited hours of operation and having the site manned by staff. When asked about the cameras that are currently in place, Miller said the current surveillance cameras are unreliable—solar-powered and often not operational—with limited image quality. He added by the time a violation is discovered, the damage has already been done. Ellison noted if the City intends to keep the site open, a viable solution must be implemented. Graves asked if additional or improved cameras would be beneficial, to which Miller responded that the current solar-powered setup is insufficient for consistent monitoring. All members agreed the burn pile is a valuable asset to the community. Town referenced a program in Overland Park where a staffed drop-off site was established, and a third-party company later mulched the materials, allowing residents to collect free mulch. Miller, along with Administrator Law, will work together to develop possible solutions and bring recommendations back to the group.

**City Attorney Attendance** - The Governing Body discussed the frequency of the City Attorney's attendance at council meetings. Cook suggested attendance could be determined based on specific agenda items. Law noted that if a legal question arises during a meeting, the item could be tabled for City Attorney review and revisited at the following meeting, especially since agendas are typically finalized in advance. Stone agreed with this approach and recommended waiting to vote on such items until the next meeting if legal review is necessary. It was agreed the City Attorney would attend meetings on an as-needed basis. Law added ordinances and other legal documents are already being reviewed by the City Attorney prior to being brought before the council.

### **SCHEDULED VISITORS**

None

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **COUNCIL REPORTS**

**Steve Town** – Town asked if there were any stormwater issues following the recent rainfall. He noted that Overland Park experienced runoff and localized flooding. Miller responded that he believed the City's stormwater systems functioned properly and kept up with the rain event.

**Scott Margrave** – Nothing to report.

**Tiffany Ellison** – Ellison inquired about the date of the next Historical Preservation Committee meeting. Carder responded it is scheduled for the first Wednesday in August. Ellison requested to receive a copy of the meeting packet and agenda. Carder stated that she typically sends the materials to all Governing Body members and will ensure Ellison receives them.

**Ryan Graves** – Nothing to report.

**Kalee Stone** – Stone attended the LRC meeting and provided an update. Stone passed along a thank you from the LRC board to Facilities Coordinator Danny Summa for the upkeep of the soccer fields.

Stone relayed several concerns from citizens regarding the City pool. A complaint was received about a security light shining toward Countryside Drive. Carder stated the light faces east, and Law confirmed that no new lights had been added. Concerns were also raised about the condition of the restrooms, including reports of dirty facilities and missing toilet paper roll covers. Law stated he would speak with staff to address the issue. There was a request to extend shade at the front gate area to protect the workers from the sun. Law noted an awning is currently in place, while Carder added that the area receives direct sun in the late afternoon. Stone will provide Law with photos that were sent to her.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **Finance:**

**Quarterly Composition of Cash** - Finance Director Richard Mikesic presented the quarterly composition of cash. It was noted that a significant number of payments have been processed for major projects, and as a result, the decrease in the cash balance was expected.

**Cash and Budget Report** - This report was also presented by Mikesic providing a reference point for the City's spending year-to-date. There were no questions or discussion from the Governing Body.

### **Public Works:**

**2025 Concrete RFP** - Miller presented the 2025 Concrete Request for Proposals (RFP). Cook asked how the sidewalks listed for replacement were selected. Miller explained many were identified through citizen complaints received throughout the year. He and previous Public Works Director Peter Yazbec developed a plan to begin connecting sidewalk segments; however, the \$30,000 currently budgeted does not allow for extensive progress. Cook expressed concern that some deteriorated sidewalks in the older part of town may warrant greater priority than those listed in the RFP. Ellison inquired whether prioritization was based on foot

traffic volume or severity of condition. Law noted that some of the listed sidewalks do not currently connect to others, which played a role in selection. Law also requested the sidewalk in front of his own home be removed from the list to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Stone suggested developing a formal sidewalk replacement plan that could be budgeted for annually. Margrave reiterated that \$30,000 does not go far in terms of sidewalk repair or replacement. Ellison added this may need to be a discussion item for the 2026 budget. She noted that typically it is the property owner's responsibility to repair sidewalks. She asked whether alternative methods such as grinding down raised edges or applying fillers could be used instead of full replacement. Miller responded while these methods can serve as temporary fixes, they do not address the underlying issues. Town asked whether the bid included any work on storm drains or ditches and if so when sidewalk work is completed in the original part of town it should address stormwater too. Miller clarified the bid is limited to concrete work only. Ellison also asked about the use of gap filler or expansion joints to extend the life of repairs. Miller explained that these are typically not used when replacing only a single square of sidewalk. The Governing Body further discussed Law's request to remove the sidewalk in front of his home from the project list. Stone stated that if all the other listed sidewalks are in similar condition, then either all should be removed from the list, or Law's should remain. Stone recommended leaving all sidewalk segments on the list.

Graves moved, seconded by Ellison and carried 5-0, to approve publication of the 2025 concrete bid information as presented.

**2025 The Lake lift station pump rebuild** - Law stated although this item was budgeted in 2025, due to the significant cost, it is being brought back to the Council for formal approval.

Stone moved, seconded by Graves and carried 5-0, to approve the publication of The Lake Lift Station bid information as presented.

### **Planning:**

**Convention and Tourism Committee Bylaws** - Planning & Development Director Katherine Louderbaugh said CTC made changes to the bylaws as recommended by Council and reviewed those changes. She said Staff discussed the

special meeting section, and since the Governing Body is currently reviewing its Handbook, is recommending final approval be delayed to incorporate any language to the CTC bylaws that might be included in that Handbook on the calling of special meetings. Ellison raised questions about the secretary's role. Louderbaugh stated the committee discussed it but did not reach a conclusion and is open to Council's guidance. Ellison responded that she is hesitant to place additional duties on city staff and felt the current "working alongside" structure created a gray area. Louderbaugh explained this shared approach was intended to prevent the burden from falling entirely on one party. Ellison noted while the structure in our city currently isn't the same as larger cities, this framework is intended to prepare for potential future growth and should not set a precedent that overburdens staff. Cook asked how agendas would be distributed, noting that city staff typically send out all board agendas. Ellison reiterated her concern about overloading staff with additional responsibilities. Louderbaugh agreed to take all comments back to the CTC for further discussion and will bring the revised draft back to the Aug. 2 meeting. Town inquired how this position compares to secretarial roles on other city boards. Louderbaugh responded the process is similar, but she is unsure of the specific duties outlined in those other bylaws. Item will be brought back to the August 2 meeting.

### **Police:**

**Additional hours and benefits for Mark Sullivan** - Chief Weber requested the Governing Body consider reclassifying (retired) part-time employee Mark Sullivan to a 1,550-hour-per-year position, with a maximum earnings cap of \$40,000, in accordance with KPERS/KP&F post-retirement employment restrictions. Weber also requested approval for Sullivan to enroll in the City's health insurance plan, which would result in an additional cost of \$10,031.16 to the City. He emphasized this is a unique situation, noting if Sullivan exceeds the \$40,000 limit, the City would be subject to a 30% penalty under KPERS rules. Weber explained the increase in allowable hours is requested to ensure coverage during large-scale emergencies. He also clarified that Sullivan's requested schedule would remain 550 hours less than that of a standard full-time employee, and the only additional benefit being sought is health insurance. Councilmember Margrave asked whether

this would classify Sullivan as a part-time employee receiving benefits. Councilmember Ellison expressed concern about how a future salary increase, which is already proposed in the 2026 budget, would affect Sullivan's ability to stay under the earnings cap, and potentially requiring a reduction in his hours. Councilmember Graves agreed and noted that, under federal law, 30 hours per week constitutes full-time status; Sullivan's proposed schedule is just below that threshold, which raises additional concerns. Graves noted that Sullivan has been working over the allowed part-time hours and asked how Sullivan's hours and pay were being funded. Finance Director Mikesic stated funds have been drawn from unfilled officer positions. Both Graves and Ellison raised sustainability concerns if those vacant positions are filled. Weber responded he would not leave a full-time officer position unfilled to accommodate part-time hours. Ellison requested clarification on the policy framework. Weber acknowledged the City's personnel manual does not currently provide a clear definition of part-time versus full-time employment. Mayor Cook asked members for input. Councilmembers Margrave, Ellison, Graves, and Stone expressed opposition citing concerns about the precedent of offering full-time benefits to part-time employees. Town was undecided. Cook asked whether the city should limit Sullivan to 999 hours. Administrator Law clarified that at this time Sullivan's hours and pay could be absorbed due to current vacancies. Graves said a concern is Sullivan's overtime hours can be absorbed this year but what about next year. Cook asked if a decision needs to be made tonight. Ellison noted the consensus was not to move forward with the request as presented. Weber then asked for direction on setting Sullivan's maximum allowable hours for the remainder of the year, stating the request stemmed from Sullivan's loss of prior employer benefits and his current need for health coverage due to age. Additional discussion followed regarding Sullivan's eligibility for overtime and legal requirements for compensation beyond 40 hours per week.

Graves moved, seconded by Ellison, to approve Mark Sullivan's pay to not exceed \$40,000 per year based on the current pay rate for the remainder of the calendar year 2025 with that being the sole consideration and without consideration for health insurance for the calendar year. There was discussion about the threshold for KPERS and if the amount needed to be under \$40,000.

Motion failed 0-5.

Ellison moved, seconded by Graves and carried 5-0, to approve Mark Sullivan's hours this year up to \$39,999 for purposes of this motion to remain under the qualifying KPERs amount to avoid penalties to the city and no consideration for health insurance.

**Fire:**

Rittinghouse stated the annual pump service certifications have been completed, and the city engine had a catastrophic failure. It is scheduled to go to Conrad Fire Equipment on July 28. Due to the extensive repair that needs to be done, Conrad Equipment is unable to provide an estimate. Ellison asked how that might affect response time. Rittinghouse stated they will use the ladder truck and with the mutual aid contract we can use the County.

**Administration:**

**City-owned property bid** – Law stated he intends to bring the matter regarding 7 W. Amity to the Planning Commission for further discussion. He noted the property is narrow, and with existing zoning setbacks, any additional restrictions from the Highway Overlay District could further limit potential uses for the site. Bob Bazin, who submitted the bid for the property, requested the original one-year time frame to construct be extended to two years. Ellison and Stone clarified that no formal time frame had been established, only that there had been discussion about not wanting to sell the property if it would remain vacant. The item will be referred to the Planning Commission for review.

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

Nothing to report.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

**Solid Waste Contract Second Review** – Law stated the City Attorney reviewed the contract and had questions regarding a few items. Those items were forwarded to John Blessing, who will provide them to their legal team. Law anticipates having a final draft ready for review at the next council meeting. Ellison requested

it be noted this item did not go out to bid, as it is an extension of the previous contract. Law confirmed this, explaining that while it is technically a new full consideration of the contract, a contract extension is being considered to lock in the first year with no increase. The City is not required to go out to bid and may proceed with renewal.

**Feral Cat Considerations** - Law presented information from a 2020 memo where staff had researched this same item. Law also reached out for additional information via the City Clerk and Administrator listserv. It was noted that Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the most commonly used method for managing stray cat populations. However, current cost estimates and return data from the ASPCA are not available at this time. Law requested direction from the Council on whether to further explore TNR options. Cook noted the City does have an animal control function through the Police Department. Graves asked who monitors the traps. Weber responded that once a trap is loaned out, the resident is responsible for monitoring, and PD only becomes involved after an animal is captured. Margrave raised a concern that not all cats are strays and asked how it is determined if a cat is domesticated or feral. Weber stated trapped cats are taken to the local veterinary clinic. The clinic charges the City unless the owner is identified. He also cautioned against overburdening the clinic with a large influx of animals. Law added that, under a TNR approach, animals would typically be released back to the location where they were captured. There was no desire expressed by the Council to pursue any further options at this time.

**Net Standard Police Department Email Migration** - Law stated he and Weber worked jointly with Net Standard on the proposed email migration for the Police Department. Law stated the cost for Net Standard to complete the migration from the City's email domain would be \$10,000, which is lower than the original quote. Graves inquired whether the issues with Net Standard had been resolved. Law explained this proposal serves as an alternative solution and elaborated on the reasoning. Graves also asked about the status of the current contract with the other IT provider and its expiration date. Concerns were raised about a potential transition period and the possibility of operating under two IT providers simultaneously, despite the goal being to consolidate services under a single

provider. Ellison asked whether approving this agreement would move the City closer to that goal or simply address the current issue with Net Standard's auto-renewal through March. Law responded the transition would allow the City to evaluate both providers before making a long-term decision. Ellison questioned whether the \$10,000 expenditure would be a sunk cost if Net Standard is not retained moving forward. Law clarified the city would retain ownership of the domain regardless. When asked whether this cost would still apply had the contract not auto-renewed, Law said he believed it would. Weber acknowledged he had expressed concerns with Net Standard, but stated the company had lowered its quote and improved its responsiveness. He also mentioned that another IT provider had strongly recommended separating the Police Department's email from the City's system. Weber indicated he believes this approach is the most cost-effective path toward the goal of having a single IT provider. Ellison questioned what would happen if the City renewed with Net Standard based on satisfactory short-term performance, only for previous issues to resurface. There was discussion about whether to hold an executive session for attorney-client privileged discussion and whether a vote on this item should be delayed until a future meeting. Weber noted he has been holding payment on invoices related to this matter and that further delay may result in penalties. Ellison asked if the work had already been completed, to which Weber confirmed it had. She then questioned why payment could not proceed if the services had been rendered. Weber responded that some of the outstanding invoices might be waived if the migration is approved. City Attorney Mark Hagen asked Law if he could share his legal response; a copy of the email was distributed to the Council.

Discussion was paused to allow for review of the email and will resume following the discussion of the Public Works Director position.

**Public Works Director Interview & Additional Considerations** - Law reported the Public Works Director position has been posted for 30 days, and six applications have been received to date. He asked Council if there was interest in forming an interview committee and whether any council members would like to participate in the process. It was noted that former Public Works Director Peter Yazbec has offered to assist with the hiring process if needed. Law also requested

the Council consider appointing Public Works Supervisor Ben Miller to serve as Interim Public Works Director until the position is permanently filled. This interim appointment would include a pay adjustment for the duration of the assignment. Mayor Cook, Town, and Ellison expressed interest in serving on the interview committee.

Graves moved, seconded by Stone and carried 5-0, to have an interview committee consisting of Administrator Law, Mayor Cook, Town, Ellison and Yazbec (if available).

Stone moved, seconded by Ellison and failed 5-0, to approve Ben Miller as interim Public Works Director with a temporary out-of-classification-pay adjustment of 12-5A until the new director is hired and onboarded.

Ellison questioned if Miller's pay would be retroactive to Yazbec's last day. Law said yes. Discussion occurred.

Stone moved, seconded by Ellison and carried 5-0, to approve Ben Miller as interim Public Works Director with a temporary out-of-classification-pay adjustment of 12-5A, making it retroactive to July 14, 2025, and until a Public Works Director is hired and onboarded.

**Net Standard Discussion Continued** - Councilmembers read the email provided by Hagen. Hagen stated he would recommend, out of an abundance of cautio, an executive session to discuss the item. There was discussion on whether to have the executive session at this meeting or wait until a later date.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:41 p.m. Graves moved, seconded by Stone and carried 5-0, to recess into executive session to discuss attorney consultation for an item deemed as privileged in attorney-client relationship according to K.S.A.75-4319(b)(2) to include Administrator Law, City Attorney Hagen and Police Chief Weber for 10 minutes with the open meeting to resume in the City Council chamber at 8:52 p.m.

Regular session resumed at 8:53 p.m.

Graves moved, seconded by Ellison and carried 5-0, to table what was presented tonight and direct the city attorney move forward with what was discussed in executive session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:54 p.m. Stone moved, seconded by Margrave and carried 5-0, to adjourn the meeting.

Approved:

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Donna Cook, Mayor

Attest:

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Jessica McGowin, City Clerk