

# CITY OF COTTONWOOD FALLS

## CITY OF COTTONWOOD FALLS COUNCIL MINUTES

March 16, 2026

The regular meeting of the City of Cottonwood Falls was called to order at 6:00 pm in the Municipal Meeting Room.

Those present at the meeting were Mayor Buddy Sisson, Council Members: Mike Hastings, Greg Campbell, Ryan Spinden, Nick Rogers, and Grant Edwards. Utilities Supervisor, Scott Gumfory, and Tina Andrews, City Clerk.

Agenda Approval: Mike Hastings motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Nick Rogers, passed unanimously.

Previous Minutes Approval: Grant Edwards motioned to approve prior minutes, seconded by Mike Hastings, passed unanimously.

Guests: Deanna Wessel, Kathy Hastings, Pastor David Thomas

David Thomas presented a resignation letter from the CWF Housing Authority Board to the city clerk; he will be leaving the community at the end of March. Deanna handed the council two documents: Multiple Family Housing Project – Utility Allowance & Multi-Housing Borrower Balance Sheet.

### MAYOR REPORT:

Mayor Sisson asked the questions on how the CWF Housing Authority operates and the role of the City of Cottonwood Falls / Council involvement. Deanna Wessel, Director of CWF Housing Authority explained that the property (101 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street) was originally a Nursing Center and was sold to the City for \$1.00. The housing authority is part of the city and uses their FEIN & Sales Tax Exempt Number. They are not owned or run by the city. They meet the Rural Development requirements, because this is where they get their (low interest) loan from and reports to them. If something breaks the city does not fix it, the housing authority fixes it. The checks that were received by the city were from a COVID Relief Grant – to rebuild the four apartments that lost were lost by the fire. The city's FEIN was used to apply for the grant. The state agency accidentally sent the funds by check(s), which should have been a direct deposit to their account.

Mayor Sisson explained the city clerk found the Municipal Warranty Deed (December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1980) where the city sold the property to the housing authority for \$1.00 and they are their own entity. Deanna stated they are the City of Cottonwood Falls. She explained that she works for City of Cottonwood Falls, she brings in her paycheck (written out to the City of Cottonwood Falls), then the city deposits the check, and we issue a check to her with her Social Security and Medicare taxes taken out. She is not eligible for KPERS benefits because she is considered part-time employee. She explained the difference between their housing authority and Strong City, they are HUD and CWF is not, they only allow tenants that are 62 years and older, disabled, and low-income. It was explained that the reason it all began is because the accountant told the city clerk that if the CWF Housing is using the city's FEIN for a grant that the funds need to be audited and explain where the funds were spent and used for. It was asked if she reported to anyone on the funds, she said no. She explained she reports to the board on annual basis and to Rural Development; their YE is December 31<sup>st</sup>, reports are due by March 31<sup>st</sup>. This was a one-time grant offered due to COVID Relief (ARPA) and was only used for the project. It was asked about two other grants, and she confirmed they were not theirs.

David Thomas asked Deanna who prepares their financial reports, she said John Weiss reviews their financial reports and he would be their accountability. The reports are sent to Rural Development, and if there are questions about the reports, she replies and explains. She also explained the amount of the grant, and it was a

matching grant, she has asked for two extensions, and the funds must be spent by June 30, 2026. Their source of funding is the Rural Development grants for their organization.

It was asked if the city's accountant (auditor) asks to audit the funds would they allow that. David Thomas said the board would be okay with it. She said it was one and only time they have used the FEIN for grant funds. Mayor Sisson said it would protect the city, and if the grant funds would be verified since the city's FEIN was used. The city is liable and must be accountable. Interpretation of the agreement will be reviewed.

David Thomas explained she holds two part-time positions, one as maintenance and the other as administrator. Both positions together are not full-time.

Mayor Sisson thanked everyone who helped explain everything to the council and the city clerk.

Khrista Branson has offered to replace David Thomas with the Cottonwood Falls Housing Authority. Passed by consensus.

#### Special Event Request: 2026 Chase County Promenade

Discussion on the street closing on Broadway from Friend to Pearl, and their request to use the barricades from the city. Motion to approve was given by Grant Edwards, seconded by Nick Rogers. Motion carried.

#### Demolition Permit: Tony Mann – 501 Sycamore Street

Discussion on the property and buildings. Mike Hastings motioned to approve the demolition permit, seconded by Grant Edwards, passed unanimously.

EMC Insurance property schedule sent to council emails reference and to review.

Chase County Appraisers' information sent to council emails for reference and to review.

Map grid showing the grid of Swope Park sent to council emails for reference and to review.

The Council reviewed the email received from Kirk Engle of EMC insurance on the options for the fair building insurance. They discussed the options and will refer to Stuart on the matter. No action taken.

Jacob Welsh requested for dog at large ordinance. He would like the City of Cottonwood Falls, Strong City, and Chase County council members to attend the same meeting. March 30<sup>th</sup> is the scheduled meeting date (awaiting confirmation). It is required that three or more council members attend, it must be published in the paper. Time should be changed to 6:00 pm if possible.

The Leading Edge Technology quotes were discussed on the Sonic Wall / Fire Wall.

The information provided and the costs of equipment and the fire wall compared to another quote.

Nick Rogers motioned it to accept the quote from Advantage Computers for the new Sonic / Fire Wall, equipment, server, and installation. Second, by Ryan Spinden, motion carried.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas health insurance was discussed.

Mike Hastings motioned to approve the BCBS of Kansas as the City of Cottonwood Falls health insurance plan for 2026, seconded by Ryan Spinden, passed unanimously.

Mayor Sisson explained the suggestions from the accountant pertaining to the profit and loss of water utility account. The base rate and the increase per gallons rate were reviewed. The council discussed the recommendations of the accountant, and they agreed to her percentage increase and an annual rate increase. They will monitor the water utility profit and loss in case the annual increase rate needs to be amended. Tina will prepare the ordinance as discussed with the effective date of May 1, 2026. A vote would be required once the ordinance is presented.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

Tina explained the situation with the motor vehicle nuisances; she informed them of what she knew of the sheriff's office enforcing the Standard Traffic Ordinance. Council discussed the vehicles, trailers and campers that were parked on the city streets. Tina emailed Stuart about the abandoned vehicles on properties, and he did not have time to look at the resolution and ordinance. He will talk about it at the next meeting. Mayor Sisson and the council talked about the abandoned properties in the city limits.

Nick Rogers explained the sale of a property, unpaid property taxes, and such.

Mayor Sisson discussed the swimming pool email received from Cindy K. She confirmed the details on Brenda Wessel pay for this pool season. Chase County Recreation is still looking for grants to help pay for a new pool.

James Burke is staying at RV Park and asked for an extended stay. Greg Campbell suggested for the city investigate a work extension stay. No decision made.

#### CITY CLERK REPORT:

Chase County Old School – Le Anne Coester – Selling fireworks from June 29<sup>th</sup> & July 5<sup>th</sup> (discounted last day). They will have non-alcoholic beverages and homemade snacks – more information later. Special Event Request application will need to be filled out.

Chase County Council approved purchasing the 4<sup>th</sup> of July / Semi-quincentennial banners and sharing a third of the costs for proposal number one, up \$1,100 on their share. Toni Schneider has a meeting on Friday with their board, and she will let her know about their decision.

Ordinance No. 468 – Aaron Hoffman brought this up to Tina, fishing on the Cottonwood Falls River Bridge on Sunday. No action taken.

#### UTILITIES REPORT:

Scott Gumfory reported that they have been working on pool projects, painting, and repairs.

KDHE (Wichita) inspected the city for their water and sewer, everything went well. Three minor deficiencies on the water. CCR reports were not available (unable to find) we have need to have three years of reports on file. Emergency Response Plan on file, updated information is required. Wastewater went well; KDHE wanted some work on the erosion around one of the lagoons and the ruts. Scott will do some work to make it better.

Tina reported on the KDHE (Topeka) on cross referencing a report to find the missing information. Free Dump Day is not scheduled due to the City of Emporia maintenance work.

#### COMMITTEES:

Staff Policy & Relations:

Streets & Alley: Mike Hastings reported on 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Maple in front of the old school, dust built up. Citizen asked about getting the street cleaned up. Nick Rogers reported on speeding issues on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Parks & Recreation: Nick Rogers recommends another toddler seat for the swing seat.

Grant Edwards reached out to Alissa Capps about the Clean Up Day, scheduled for Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

- Time will be from 9:30 am to 11:30 am – meet under the Shelter House, more info on website.

Sidewalks: Grant Edwards talked to Brandon Schlup about the abandoned vehicles. Brandon mentioned the crosswalk light seemed not to be working properly. Scott has replaced the batteries recently and will check into it. Grants might be necessary to purchase a new crosswalk. Scott will check into the problem and the cost of a replacement crosswalk. New signs might be necessary.

Economics, Tax & Finance:

Community Relations:

Capital Improvements:

APPROVAL OF: Payroll, Taxes, EFT's, and Bills:

Mike Hastings presented the bill payment checks, EFT's, QuickBooks payroll figures, and overtime. Federal, Medicare & Social Security, and State Withholdings, KPERS, Sales Tax EFT's . Motion to approve the information presented by Mike Hastings seconded by Ryan Spinden. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn by Mike Hastings & seconded by Nick Rogers @ 7:28 pm.

Mayor Wiliam Sisson: \_\_\_\_\_ *William C. Sisson* \_\_\_\_\_

Attest:

Tina Andrews, City Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_ *Tina Andrews* \_\_\_\_\_

City Seal: