

Editorial

Now is the time to inform

Although many political scenes across America are fueled by propaganda and political agendas, rural governments have historically been comprised of everyday, average citizens holding the position for a term or two to fulfill their civic duty.

Armed with expertise or experience in this area or that field, these individuals have worked over the years in these city positions that most would not opt to fill. Usually, these representatives are learning the inner-workings of their local government as they go.

These people are not your “typical” government type, dressed in suits and donning briefcases. No, these people are working 40 hours a week or more before coming to the meeting. They are your community’s scout leaders, ball coaches, volunteers and mentors.

These elected officials do not generally look to deceive the public, and are usually open to questions and comments. It’s always best for the community when residents communicate openly with local leaders. It instills an open line of give-and-take, which is vital to community building and transparency.

After years of attending meetings and listening to the public’s comments, certain questions or situations always remind me of an early journalism lesson: due diligence in researching and reporting and how important that can be in a small community, for the local leaders and the general community alike!!

“You are writing a Gospel, A chapter each day, By deeds that you do, By words that you say. Men read what you write, Whether faithless or true; Say, what is the Gospel According to You?” Paul Gilbert, Your Own Version.

The first and most important thing rural journalists learn: work for accurate information before the kindling is ever gathered, as small-town gossip will spread like wildfire, especially when fueled by “big talkers” and “juicy details”, and a community can burn in the wake of idle gossip and misinformation.

Although it is sad to see and hear, all too often “juicy details” are completely fabricated and have nothing to do with the issue that first began the chatter.

In my 20+year experience of watching issues flow from person to person in a small town, one fact rings all too true: big talkers oftentimes have big mouths, and big mouths are usually full of...

In general, these individuals are too lazy to actually ask someone informed to give them the real deal. How do stories get so exaggerated you may ask? Quite simply, these people flat out make them up! Maybe a more important question to ask is *why do people keep believing self-serving individuals who have more in common with toilet bowls than they do the general population?!!*

That the majority of a population will *not* expel effort to know or to find out *anything* is troubling enough. But when these uninformed citizens feel they want to express displeasure, confusion or frustration with decisions made, but do so largely with no information, or information from only one side of the issue, or simply repeat what they’ve seen on social media. Madness!!

Local government and administrative offices are watched by your local newspaper, staffed by many solid, open and willing-to-help individuals. I wish people would take advantage of that blessing and ask the local paper questions!!

“I am not a teacher, but an awakener.”-Robert Frost

We work each day to find information and give it to you in our pages, and we may not be teachers, but we do try to educate the public on what affects them the most!

“Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know; it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave.”-John Ruskin

There’s only one thing level-headed, everyday citizens can do to combat the rumor mill and preserve common sense and community: give the effort to be informed!

It sounds simple enough, but the majority of citizens don’t know their own rights! Below is a rundown of items that bring citizens into our office, who inevitably end up leaving, saying, “Well, I didn’t know that!” I’ve used the local City Council as the example throughout, although these “lessons” can be applied to most public entities and public meetings:

**Public meetings** Most voting citizens

know that City Council meetings are open to the public, but what exactly qualifies as a public meeting? The City Council meets regularly to conduct regular city business.

Sometimes, agenda items need *Work Sessions* to focus on the item and hash out the trouble with it prior to addressing and/or voting on the item during a regular meeting. Additionally, council can sometimes call a *Special Meeting* to conduct city business that is pressing and must be addressed and/or voted on prior to the next regular council meeting.

Both Work Sessions and Special Meetings are scheduled in advance on days agreeable to the quorum of council, and both are open to the public, and by attending regular meetings and/or keeping in contact with your clerk’s office, you can receive timely notification for these additional sessions and meetings.

**Agenda** The agenda for regular City Council meetings is set and distributed to interested parties and your local media source prior to regular meetings. Any citizen may have an item added to the agenda for council discussion, but the item may only be added at a council member’s or the mayor’s request. *You must contact your council representative first to address the issue.* If you are not interested in having a council member put your issue on the agenda, all public may speak freely during the public comments portion of the regular meetings.

**Public Record** Information handled in open council meeting, in addition to other city information, is deemed public record, meaning all citizens have the right to request access to all public record information. There are books upon books and laws upon laws written to tell you what is and what is not public record, a conversation that could be had for years, but for simplicity sake, I’ll focus on an everyday issue. For example, city groups requesting budgets from the city, like museum and tourism groups, must submit a detailed budget request, giving validation to their request for said funds. Those budget requests, and the expenditures of any group funded by the City, are public record. You have the right to ask for copies of all budget requests and expenditures submitted. Be mindful, however; government, in return, has the right to charge you for all copies requested, and the political jargon in some of those items can run for miles...

**Preparing to vote** When council prepares to vote on a “hot” community item, odds are they have discussing the item for some time. For example, the yearly budget. Although it is passed each year following a public budget hearing, the budget discussion begins long before that time. If citizens really want to be heard and possibly make a difference, start attending meetings in January and February! Budgetary items are a constant topic of regular meetings throughout the year, and attending those meetings can give you, the average citizen, a good understanding of what city officials are facing or not facing.

I have to stress to the general public that city government can be a difficult monster to understand. There are bonds, and ordinances, and legal terminology, and budgeted line items, complete with a long list of government cans and cannots. Understanding it all can be quite tricky, but jumping through all the legal hoops and restrictions, while still trying to please everyone, simply cannot be done. Someone will always be upset and angry, that’s just the nature of the public service beast.

But the beast (government) will not bite the hand that feeds it (the taxpayer) if the taxpayer is informed, involved, and trained to know how to handle the government. Let the handler beware, however; if you mistreat the beast, she will bite back, and harder than you could ever think possible. If you are not informed, ask questions of officials who have the information. If you are not trained, talk with people who are!

“I could tell where the lamplighter was by the trail he left behind him.” Harry Lauder

Your local newspaper has been following the happenings and dealings of governing bodies in the area for well over 100 years, and we continue to work each day to lay the path of information for those who live and work in your community. Start by checking your local news source for a change! You might be surprised by the truth that lies within its pages.

Nickole Byers

Political Happenings

By Larry Lambert

The views expressed here are solely those of the author.



Four of us from the class of 1970 attended the Smith Center High School Alumni reunion. Myrna Marple Krug from Dallas, Jerry Kuhlmann from St Peters, Mo. and Larry Lambert and Kathy Ayres Hanson from here in town. 140 attended and enjoyed the evening. Looking around the room the challenge is to get young people to attend.

Of the 250 men who took the clefts at Normandy only 90 made it.

This past memorial day weekend Gas Prices were the lowest price in years. Gas prices are down around .40 from a year ago.

The U.S. Supreme Court barred a student from wearing a tee shirt that said there are only two genders. He was sent home. The school permitted, even encouraged students to express the view that there are many genders but censored an opposing view. Issues like this are of great importance to our country's youth. It is the agenda in America on the left that only one side is allowed to be offended. Free speech is in jeopardy. There is an agenda on the left that if you say something they disagree with, they will punish you. We haven't heard the last of free speech issues.

Now the deadline for the European Union to negotiate a new tariff deal is July 9th.

New research from three sources reveals that U.S. children whose parents divorced when the children were age 5 or younger have reduced earnings as adults, have increased chances of teen pregnancy and incarceration and even death.

Harvard University is one University that has a problem being antisemitic. And they have a \$52 million endowment. Many young people ask teachers what the ten command-

ments mean.

NPR and PBS believe President Trumps effort to cut government tax dollar funding for these organizations is illegal according to the 1st amendment. NPR is not a government entity. Voice of America is a government entity. Why is Congress making President Trump do all the work when it comes to funding when Congress should be involved.

The Democrats are forum shopping for leftist Judges. This is classic lawfare. It is not Constitutional rule of law. Why aren't the Republicans involved?

In Texas restoring prayer and Bible reading during school hours with parental consent has been approved.

Nebraska now has the "Stand with Women Act" preserving fairness, opportunity and safety based on fairness, truth and common sense.

Now it is no longer required for children and pregnant women to take the Covid vaccine.

Michelle Obama said the least important thing about the female reproduction system is having babies.

Canada's Mark Carney is an anti Israel leader.

As far as the Big Beautiful Bill goes it is going to take time to identify waste, root out the corruptions and get the systems in place to be responsible. Waste has been the normal in Washington for 50 to 60 years.

Taxpayer funding for

Planned Parenthood was not included in the "Big Beautiful Bill." P.P. killed 402,000 babies last year, an increase to a staggering record high.

AI is getting more popular with college students.

Elon Musk has left DOGE as the mandated 130 days is up. That doesn't mean DOGE's work is over. DOGE will continue to exist. Focus on the Family has been added to the Southern Poverty Law Center's hate list.

Kansas News by Dan Hawkins: The radical left has filed a lawsuit in Kansas trying to claim that the Kansas constitution gives parents the right to mutilate the genitals of their children. Quite frankly, it's pathetic. This year the legislature successfully passed a law stopping sex change operations and procedures from being performed on children. It's lunacy that such a law was even needed but here we are. We've tried this before but were stopped by Governor Kelly's ridiculous veto. That veto was one of the reasons voters sent an even larger Republican Super majority back to Topeka. Because of this we were able to successfully override the Governor's veto and protect Kansas kids.

"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." I Corinthians 1:9

Brewer hired by County

The County Commissioners met in a regular session on May 19, 2025, in the County Commissioners' room. Present were Commissioners Brady Peterson, Jim Gwennap, and Kurt Ifland. Also present was Ashley Maxwell, Clerk, and Travis Story, Assistant Road Supervisor.

At 8:30 a.m. Gwennap called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

A motion was made by Peterson and seconded by Ifland to approve the 5/12/2025 minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Peterson and seconded by Ifland to approve the 5/19/2025 agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

The commissioners approved payroll #10 for \$141,967.92.

The commissioners and Story discussed the following:

1. Ifland discussed Q Rd, the detour route. Story stated if it is cut, additional BaseOne will need to be added. Ifland stated the area of concern is South of the river bridge.

2. Ifland discussed I Rd between 130 Rd and 120 Rd. Ifland stated the loads of rock need to be hauled to this location.

3. Gwennap asked if the

head had been installed on the blade. Story stated they are still working on it. There have been other issues arise with other pieces of equipment that have taken away from the blade.

4. Gwennap asked what was wrong with the generator. Story is unsure of everything for sure.

5. Gwennap discussed the upcoming request for rock on T Rd, South of Highway 36.

6. Story shared the notice to vacate for E Rd between 10 Rd and 20 Rd. Story stated the notice will be published in the newspaper for 2 consecutive weeks. The hearing is scheduled for June 9, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

7. Gwennap discussed the roadways and the need for crowns.

Chase Brewer joined the meeting.

A motion was made by Peterson and seconded by Ifland to convene in executive session at 8:55 a.m. for 10 minutes to discuss non-elected personnel, potential employee. Motion carried unanimously. Maxwell left the meeting. Also in the session was Travis Story and Chase Brewer. Regular reconvened at 9:05 a.m.

Maxwell rejoined the meeting.

A motion was made by

Peterson and seconded by Ifland to convene in executive session at 9:06 a.m. for 5 minutes to discuss non-elected personnel, potential employee. Motion carried unanimously. Maxwell left the meeting. Also in the session was Travis Story and Chase Brewer. Regular reconvened at 9:12 a.m.

Brewer left the meeting. Maxwell rejoined the meeting.

A motion was made by Peterson and seconded by Ifland to offer full-time employment to Chase Brewer. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Gwennap asked about the truck in Glen Elder. Story stated they are still waiting on a code to do some programming.

9. Ifland asked if a blade man can work on L Rd. Story stated there is a blade man on his way to this location.

Whitney and Kale Newell joined the meeting and discussed T Rd between Hwy 36 and 190 Rd. The Newell's initially contacted Fritz in February of 2024 to discuss road materials. The Newell's discussed rocking the road to their property. The Newell's asked about the possibility of rocking 170 Rd between T Rd and U Rd.

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•Fire Department

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cake feed and other donations we received from various donors around the county and funds from our budget.

The Smith Center Volunteer Fire Department is very gracious to the Smith

County Community Foundation, and any and all donors who help support us in any way. We are very fortunate to live in a community where there are so many opportunities for assistance to help better our

department purchase the equipment needed to make our community members safer.

Submitted by: Dave Tharp