

# ALLEGATIONS: COMMISSIONER SPEAKS OUT

# CHARGED:

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“This week you crossed the line for the last time,” Hightower continued, “I can no longer sit up here silently while you spread fear, ask people to do unlawful things, and you seek revenge in public and try to cover your ass by devious back-channel dealing.”

“I believe you have been acting on your own on these matters, outside of the commission, without being directed by the commission to do so,” Hightower added.

“Jim, this pattern of behavior stops now,” stated Hightower, “I’m going to come in here every week and throw it in your face until one or both of us is kicked out of office; because you should never be allowed to manage anyone, ever again.”

“Nobody should have to put up with your behavior and no one should have to work for you,” he added in conclusion,

“nothing will ever prosper under your constant manipulation. We’re not going to get anything done anyway, but we haven’t been, so what’s the change?”

Hightower then laid copies of the Kansas County Commissioners Associations’ Code of Ethical Conduct for County Commissioners in front of each commissioner, handed one to Linn County Clerk Danielle Souza, handed a copy to County Counselor Jacklyn Paletta and laid a copy on the press table while Johnson closed public comment.

Speaking again from his seat at the commissioners table, Hightower then told Hamilton and Johnson, “Please excuse me so I can continue on with my day, you guys can handle this without me.” Hightower then left the meeting for a short time, returning later to finish out the meeting.

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than 30 days and no more than six months in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,500

Count V - reckless driving, an unclassified misdemeanor which carries a sentencing range of no less than five days and no more than 90 in jail and/or a fine of no less than \$25 and no more than \$500.

Count VI - duty of driver to report damage, a charge that is a class C nonperson misdemeanor and carries a sentencing range of up to 30 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$500.

Oman made his first appearance in district court on April 2 and was assigned Joshua Basely-Tecchio as his court appointed counsel. He was scheduled to appear in court on April 15 for a status conference hearing.

Williams made his first appearance on April 2 as well and was assigned Robert Myers as court-appointed counsel. He was also scheduled for a status conference hearing on April 15.



BARBARA PROFFITT | LINN COUNTY NEWS

**Littles followed closely by parents and family members are off and running in the hunt for Easter eggs at the Blue Mound Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday afternoon, April 12. As usual the park was packed for the annual event and kids of all ages were excited to scoop up eggs in hopes of winning prizes. See more Easter photos on page C1.**

# PROPERTIES: PRESCOTT LOOKS AT SELLING

FROM PAGE A1

to spread the news that the city would like to sell it.

For new business, there was a reminder the citywide garage sale is only about a week away on the 25 and 26 of April.

Every sent City Clerk Kathy Wood a notice that somehow Prescott has not been paying a surcharge for the electricity coming from La Cygne Lake. As of September, the city bill from Every will more than triple in price. The good news is that since Prescott signed up to get electricity from WAPA (Western Area Power Administration) and their hydro-electric plants in Colorado, the total cost of electricity to Prescott has been lower than previous years.

The city superintendent report given by Clerk Wood is that the men have been fixing the mowers so as to be ready

to cut grass. They are now all working, but the truck needs repairs.

City Clerk Wood said the Workers Compensation report only arrived Thursday. The person she called for help was out of the office on Friday. She finished it Monday, but will have to fax it in for it to arrive before their Wednesday deadline. Mayor Wood hopes for a reimbursement of thousands of dollars the city paid last year. She also had to make several calls to Carey Spoon to straighten out the recovery reports to ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act). Next year should be simpler with all the funds having been paid out.

Mayor Wood wanted a 15-minute executive session. When he re-opened the meeting, a motion was made and passed to hire Ron Ingram permanently for two days per week rather than using him as a contract laborer.

# POLICING: PARKER ADDS

FROM PAGE A1

codes’ enforcement official, like the police position with details negotiable, and to hire a municipal law firm to serve as the city’s legal counsel.

Following a 15-minute executive session for non-elected personnel to interview for the open city attorney position, the council approved Lauber Municipal Law, Lee’s Summit, Mo., who will implement a team approach. Representing the firm at last week’s meeting were Deane and Lindsay Kolisch.

Another public safety item broached by Webber was his research on a city storm shelter. He noted an 8-by-10 foot above-ground turnkey pre-fabricated shelter with a 6-foot cement slab floor advertised for \$14,000 by a Texas manufacturer.

The shelter could hold 16 persons, he said.

“This at least gets us to thinking about it,” reasoned Webber, noting that comparable municipalities Blue Mound, Mapleton and Mildred have them.

He asked Chad Page, contracted water and sewer operator, to get “ball park figures” on costs for underground shelters with a roofing cap, that structure’s main expense, for next month’s 7 p.m. May 8 monthly meeting.

# Parker to raise base water rate

BY TONY FURSE  
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Parker has opted to double its monthly base water rate in response to the recent cost increase approved by its supplier.

The unanimous vote at last Thursday’s monthly council meeting will increase the base rate from the previous \$10 to \$20, effective with the next billing. The increase comes after its rate from \$5.90 per 1,000 gallons purchased to \$7.50 was adopted by Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 13 (PWWSO 13) on March 18.

Lisa Leach, city clerk, presented her computations to the council and recommended the base rate increase rather than upping the rate on each additional 1,000 gallons used. She said \$9 of the \$10 increase would cover the increase, with the extra \$1 to go toward future water system improvement.

“Not all will favor this,” Leach admitted in alluding to the current 102 customers.

Chad Page, contracted water and sewer operator and a representative to PWWSO 13, noted that the supply district’s previous most recent rate increase was almost 15 years ago.

“That’s why it’s high,” said Page, adding that the district intends to raise rates more often but in smaller increments in the future. He said that Parker is one of 13 districts/ towns supplied by PWWSO 13.

“We’re part owners, and you want to spend money on your drinking water,” he said.

Added Gary Earley, council president pro tempore, “When we turn it on, we want water to come out.”

Councilwoman Kandice Higgins recommended placing a notice explaining the increase in the upcoming water billing.

Parker customers are charged an additional \$16.50 on the base rate for sewer and \$8.60 per each additional 1,000 gallons of water used per month.

“So, you’re still a dollar ahead on that,” Page said.

Addressing stormwater concerns, the council unanimously voted to seek requests for proposals for phased-in block-by-block ditch drainage and installation of whistles as agreed upon at a March 31 council workshop.

Another approval gives Easton Hurlock, 13, Parker, the go-ahead to pursue an Eagle Scout merit badge project of adding seating at the City Lake. In his prepared request, Hurlock is proposing two benches, to use either “for fishing or enjoying the view,” that are to be in place by June 2026.

Also okayed was purchase of four containers (eight gallons) of mosquito spray that James Hazelet, maintenance, said would cost approximately \$100 per gallon. He reported that the mosquito sprayer “is calibrated and ready.”

In addition to the council okaying monthly bill pay-

ments totaling \$19,451.48, Kathy Harrison, city treasurer, noted March general fund revenue of \$12,377.32 and expenses of \$15,645.72, capital outlay revenue of \$5,764.90, water fund revenue of \$4,538.62 and expenses of \$10,466, sewer fund revenue of \$2,588.74 and expenses of \$7,140.71, and park/lake fund expenses of \$56.12. The street fund showed no March activity.

In other business before the council:

–Leach announced volunteers–Prairie View High’s FFA chapter and the Marvin Stahl family included–for the April 26 citywide cleanup day. She said the city plans to have food for volunteers. She also issued a reminder of the annual pet clinic from 9 a.m. to noon May 3 at the city barn.

–Hazelet said that Page “did an amazing job” of removing the old water plant at City Lake. “He went over and beyond,” Hazelet said.

–Earley suggested that the city purchase a podium with microphone to use for persons addressing the council at meetings.

–Leach read a letter from Lorna Holloway, who praised the city for her use of the Senior Center building, 423 W. Kimball St.

–Mayor Jason Webber reported that Ty Page is changing the city truck’s starter.

–During a property valuation review, Leach reported that most city property “increased significantly,” though their property is tax-exempt.

# Legislative Update

BY STATE SENATOR CARYN TYSON

April 12, 2025

The 2025 session has ended. There were several veto overrides, and more legislation sent to the Governor. Below are some of the vetoed bills and the results of the override.

**Nutrition In Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).** SB 79, directed the Secretary for Children and Families to request a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exclude candy and soft drinks from the definition of eligible foods for the food assistance program, SNAP. The Senate voted to override the veto 29 to 11, but the House did not vote on it so the veto was sustained. I voted for the legislation and for the override. It didn’t stop people from purchasing these items. They just would not have been able to use taxpayer funded SNAP money to buy those products. It was reported before the veto override that the Governor’s office had sent a letter requesting

the waiver and then withdrew it before she vetoed the bill.

**Income Tax** reductions will occur when income taxes collected exceeds inflation and there is 15% or more in the rainy-day fund because SB 269 will be law. SB 269 will help reign in the out-of-control state government growth. In 2023, all funds spending increased over 10%, \$2.3 billion – in one year. State government spending has increased approximately 50% since Governor Kelly took office. Last year, we were able to reduce state income taxes by exempting Social Security, increasing personal exemptions, and reducing the tax brackets. Even with these cuts, the state continues to collect more in income taxes. SB 269 will keep us on the path started last year of limiting government growth. The Governor’s veto was overridden 30 to 10 in the Senate, 87 to 37 in the House. I voted Yes.

**State Welfare** programs will be audited as result of the veto override of HB 2217. We must ensure that state

assistance is getting to those in need and stop the waste, fraud and abuse of these programs. HB 2217 will give the inspector general the authority to audit. It’s disappointing we must pass laws to audit fraud. It doesn’t make sense. However, it is now law. The Senate voted 30 to 10 on the override. I voted Yes.

**Budget Continuous Funding** is ensured in SB 14. Looking forward, there could be a time when the budget is used as leverage to force legislators’ hands. SB 14 would put the previous year’s budget in place if there is a year that a budget doesn’t pass, preventing a government shutdown. It passed the Senate 31 to 9 and the House 85 to 39. I voted Yes on the override.

**“Bidenbucks” No More** in Kansas as SB 5 becomes law. Election officials can no longer accept federal funds unless approved by law. A couple of years ago we passed into law an amendment that I had ran to stop financial influences such as “Zuckerbucks” on Kansas elections. It became law.



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