

Girard City Council *Cont. from Cover*

responders in connection with a Blessing of First Responders planned for September 12. The proclamation recognizes firefighters, police officers, paramedics, emergency medical technicians and dispatchers and calls on residents to recognize their service and sacrifices. The event is scheduled for 10 a.m. at Girard Square, in front of the county courthouse. The community is encouraged to attend.

The Council unanimously approved allowing the Basauri family to place a memorial bench at the city basketball courts in honor of Adam Basauri, who was shot and killed during an argument with another teen in Pittsburg. The family will purchase the bench, likely concrete or steel, and Public Works will determine its location and how to secure it.

O'Brien explained that Basauri attended school in Girard, played football and spent considerable time at the basketball courts. His mother has since advocated against gun and teen violence following his death.

A lengthy discussion followed on the condition and future needs of the Girard municipal golf course.

Council President Darrell Westhoff reported that the Golf Committee has recommended moving from the city's 2011 gasoline-powered golf carts to lithium battery-powered carts.

Brian Cheever from Clear Creek presented pricing for used 2023 lithium carts at \$4,750 each and 2022 models at \$4,250 each. The city's current carts could receive an estimated \$1,500 trade-in value each, or \$30,000 for a 20-cart fleet.

Financing and lease-purchase options are also available. Cheever said the 2023 carts could be financed at \$84.50 per cart per month for 60 months or \$63.50 per month for 72 months. The trade-in value can also be applied to lower the principal.

Cheever said the lithium-powered carts would

offer several advantages over the city's current 2011 gas-powered fleet, including substantially lower operating costs, less maintenance, quieter operation and improved performance. He estimated a lithium cart costs about 20 to 25% as much to operate as a gas cart and said routine maintenance is largely limited to keeping the tires properly inflated and the batteries charged. The used carts he presented also include windshields, USB charging ports and sand bottles for repairing divots, while the lithium batteries can be covered by a one-time \$150 warranty that provides replacement coverage for as long as the city owns the cart. "You keep the right tire pressure in them and you drive them," Cheever said. "That's pretty much it. Charge them and drive them."

No purchase was approved Monday. The committee plans to review additional financing information on the less-expensive 2022 models before returning to the Council with a final purchase recommendation.

The council also discussed deteriorating cart paths. Project Manager Jackie Messer said asphalt materials alone for the remaining two phases of planned path work would cost roughly \$23,000 to \$25,000 per phase, not including labor. City officials are looking at alternatives before deciding how to proceed.

Westhoff also reported that an unusual fungus had appeared on a few greens and had been treated, while other maintenance work continues. Financial activity at the clubhouse, including green fees and cart fees, was reported as generally up.

The Council then unanimously accepted a \$561,000 KDOT Transportation Alternatives grant for the third and final phase of the city's sidewalk improvement program and authorized Mayor Cheney to sign the award.

The project will continue improvements along Western Avenue south

of the elementary school to Orange Street. O'Brien said the wider pedestrian route is intended to improve connections among residential areas, schools, parks and business areas. The first phase is nearing completion, while funding has already been secured and design work completed for Phase 2. "This will be the final phase," O'Brien said.

Council members unanimously approved Girard High School's request to close the 100 block of East Maple Street between Highway 47 and Ozark Street from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. on August 31 for the school/community "Rock the Block" event.

They also unanimously approved closing the 100 block of East Forest Street in front of the Crawford County Courthouse from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on September 12 for the "Blessing of First Responders" community event.

The Council approved an \$18,000 agreement with the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission to administer the city's application for State Revolving Fund financing for proposed sewer improvements, subject to a modification requested by the city administrator.

Messer said the proposed project includes replacing two pumps at the Thunderbolt lift station, installing security fencing, adding an inline grinder to help prevent debris from damaging pumps, installing flow meters and televising approximately 10,000 feet of sewer line to identify infiltration and inflow problems.

Officials said the overall project is currently estimated at roughly \$344,000 and could qualify for low-interest financing with a portion of the principal forgiven.

The Council unanimously approved Resolution 2026-12 beginning condemnation proceedings for property at 213 S. Logan St. and Resolution 2026-13 for property at 414 W. Antelope St. Officials said code enforcement

efforts had previously been made to address conditions at the properties without resolution.

Ordinance 1406 was also unanimously approved, placing special assessments against properties where the city performed compliance mowing after owners failed to maintain them.

The Council entered a 15-minute executive session to discuss nonelected personnel, specifically employee responsibilities and a job audit, with the mayor, Council, city attorney, city administrator and Interim Public Works Director Eric Bailey included. The council held an additional 10-minute session. No action was taken following either session.

Another executive session was held to discuss the deputy fire chief position with the mayor, Council, city attorney, city administrator and Fire Chief Jeff Turner. Following the session, the Council approved hiring Mark McAtee as deputy fire chief. Councilman Lucas Stansbury later congratulated McAtee on receiving the position.

The Council unanimously approved September 11 and 12 as the dates for the fall citywide garage sale, sponsored by Hometown Girard. City officials noted that the city ordinance already waives the garage sale permit fee for the newspaper-sponsored citywide sale.

During governing body comments, Councilman Morgan Johnson said he had no comments. Councilman Lucas Stansbury thanked city employees for their work and congratulated Mark McAtee on receiving the deputy fire chief position. He also encouraged residents to use and take care of city facilities, including the golf course, skate park and Activity Center.

Councilman John Leigh thanked city employees for their work on streets and the waterline project, saying progress was being made despite the disruptions associated

with the ongoing work. He also encouraged residents to support the golf course restaurant and participate in upcoming school and community activities, including Paint the Town Gold.

Councilman Westhoff addressed questions he said he had received concerning cameras at the golf course. "I just wanted to reiterate that I was not in favor of that," Westhoff said. "I just want that to be public record."

Mayor Nick Cheney reported that Public Works continues street repairs and said some asphalt work had been delayed by extreme heat and material availability. He said crews were also working to correct uneven spots at the 4-way intersection and would continue addressing side-street repairs from an existing work list.

Cheney also outlined several planned changes intended to increase use of the golf course restaurant. He said additional televisions were being installed to create more of a sports-bar atmosphere, a new point-of-sale system was being put in place, and the city planned to add online ordering through the city website along with a QR code for customers.

Cheney also said the restaurant plans to expand its hours, including weekday lunch service from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. once preparations are complete, while continuing evening service Monday through Friday and Saturday service beginning at 11 a.m. He said Tuesday taco specials and Friday-night local sports broadcasts with nacho specials were also being planned for September, with the full menu remaining available.

He said the city was also doing routine maintenance inside the clubhouse and looking at grant funding for outdoor seating on the south and east sides of the building, as well as replacing deteriorating fencing. Cheney added that the next monthly utility bill is expected to include a one-time 10% restaurant coupon as part of an effort to make

more residents aware that the restaurant is open to the entire community, not only golfers.

The discussion then turned to how those improvements were being paid for and what spending authority city staff have without individual Council approval.

Council President Darrell Westhoff asked where the money for the televisions, point-of-sale equipment and other improvements was coming from and how much had been spent.

When Cheney said he did not know the total off the top of his head, Westhoff asked, "Why are we spending money that we supposedly don't have, and not know what it is?"

Cheney said the point-of-sale setup work had been provided at no charge by someone he and Scottie Thomas, the clubhouse restaurant manager, had worked with previously, saving an estimated \$3,000 to \$5,000, although some equipment still had to be purchased. He estimated the televisions cost about \$2,000 and O'Brien said approximately \$8,000 remained in golf reserve funds, though the operating account was empty.

"We're trying to create revenue out there, and we thought that was the best way to do that is by getting more people out there to use it," Cheney said.

Westhoff then questioned the city's purchasing process more broadly. After being told that individual purchases under \$2,500 fall within a department head's spending authority, he asked how often that authority could be used, "Once a month, once a year, once a week?" When told the limit applies per item, Westhoff questioned whether that allowed repeated spending without direct Council approval. "Just want to be clear on that, because I never have been clear," Westhoff said.

The meeting then adjourned following a unanimous vote.

Five smart money moves for parents before the school bell rings

STEVEN JOHNSON
Kansas State Treasurer

► New school routines, fresh supplies, and busy schedules put education on every family's mind. As Kansas students head back to classrooms in August, State Treasurer Steven Johnson is reminding parents that back-to-school season is also a good time to think ahead about future education costs, even for children who haven't started kindergarten yet.

"Back-to-school season is a great reminder to start planning for a child's future education expenses," said Johnson. "Whether your child is a toddler, a kindergartener, or even a high school freshman, opening a Quest529 account now gives your savings additional time to benefit from potential investment growth."

Starting early means there is more time to work toward a child's education savings goal. Even small, consistent contributions can add up by the time they're ready for college, trade school, an apprenticeship, or whatever comes after high school.

Five steps Kansas parents can take now:

1. Open a Quest529 account. Starting early means there is more time to make contributions before education expenses begin, while allowing potential investment earnings the opportunity to compound over time.
2. Set up automatic monthly contributions, even in small amounts, to build a consistent savings habit
3. Invite grandparents and other family members to contribute through Quest529's online gifting tool, an easy way to turn birthdays and holidays into education savings.
4. Take advantage of Kansas' state income tax deduction on Quest529 contributions
5. Revisit the account each school year. Checking in regularly helps ensure the account's investment approach aligns with a family's long term education savings goals.

As Kansas families settle into a new school year, Johnson encourages parents to add education savings to their back-to-school checklist. Even a small investment today can make a meaningful difference as education goals become a reality.

NOTICE OF HEARING TO EXCEED REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE AND BUDGET HEARING							2027
The governing body of Girard							
will meet on September 8, 2025 at 5:30 PM at City Hall for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of all funds, the amount of ad valorem tax and the Revenue Neutral Rate. Detailed budget information is available at City Hall and will be available at this hearing.							
SUPPORTING COUNTIES Crawford County (home county)							
BUDGET SUMMARY Proposed Budget 2027 Expenditures and Amount of 2026 Ad Valorem Tax establish the maximum limits of the 2027 budget. Estimated Tax Rate is subject to change depending on the final assessed valuation.							
FUND	Prior Year Actual for 2025		Current Year Estimate for 2026		Proposed Budget for 2027		
	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate *	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate *	Budget Authority for Expenditures	Amount of 2026 Ad Valorem Tax	Proposed Estimated Tax Rate*
General	1,198,668	26.140	1,240,688	31.830	1,329,480	477,188	25.660
Debt Service	495,125	2.812	501,670	2.577	509,820	27,211	1.463
Library	263,327	11.780	259,852	11.966	261,500	217,042	11.671
Public Safety	1,018,816	17.342	1,202,782	8.068	1,188,175	265,370	14.270
Transportation	876,411		687,251		2,587,251		
Special Parks & Recreation					10,000		
Golf	346,144		299,253		305,000		
Business & Eco Devo	20,088		20,000		20,000		
Raymond Community Home	19,779		20,000		20,000		
Equipment Reserve Fund	100,208		417,699		1,130,000		
Capital Improvement Reserve F	641,135		845,000		2,246,000		
Water	1,069,264		1,062,208		1,073,231		
Wastewater	491,238		533,484		513,204		
Electric	3,749,155		4,129,802		4,221,200		
Non-Budgeted Funds-A	957,639						
Totals	11,246,997	58.074	11,219,689	54.441	15,414,862	986,811	53.064
							<i>Revenue Neutral Rate**</i>
							<i>53.063</i>
Less: Transfers	1,760,251		2,038,522		2,001,320		
Net Expenditure	9,486,746		9,181,167		13,413,542		
Total Tax Levied	982,449		986,842		xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		
Assessed Valuation	16,942,082		16,942,082		18,596,331		
Outstanding Indebtedness, January 1,	2024		2025		2026		
G.O. Bonds	5,587,205		15,605,000		15,580,000		
Revenue Bonds	0		0		0		
Other	1,796,064		0		0		
Lease Purchase Principal	10,728		10,728		10,728		
Total	7,393,997		15,615,728		15,590,728		
*Tax rates are expressed in mills							
** Revenue Neutral Rate as defined by KSA 79-2988							
Johanna O'Brien							
City Official Title: City Administrator							

LOCAL NEWS

Hometown

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Girard

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