

STATE OF KANSAS                 )  
WYANDOTTE COUNTY         )) SS  
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS )

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, January 27, 2022, with ten members present remotely and on-site. Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Davis, Commissioner Seventh District; Stites, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO presiding. Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: Chery Harrison-Lee, Interim County Administrator; Emerick Cross, Bridgette Cobbins, and Melissa Sieben, Assistant County Administrator's; Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk; Misty Brown, Chief Counsel; Ashley Hand, Director of Strategic Communication; Dave Reno, Public Works Community Engagement Officer; Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works; Jeff Miles, Interim Fleet Services Manager; Angel Obert, Director of Parks & Recreation; Alley Porter, Commissioner Liaison; and Vincent Billaci, Street Division Manager.

**MAYOR GARNER** said before I call the meeting to order, I want to announce that due to COVID-19, we have individuals attending remotely as well as on-site. All participants joining by phone should mute their phones when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, please make sure that you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is participating knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants in his current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General.

**MAYOR GARNER** called the meeting to order.

**MAYOR GARNER** said I would ask the Clerk to announce the meeting and call the roll.

**ROLL CALL:** Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Garner.

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION** of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted virtually on Thursday, January 27, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. for an update on the Casino Grant Process, Learn to Swim Presentation, and Public Works Winter Weather Update.

Due to COVID-19 the public will be able to observe or listen to the meeting live on YouTube or UGTV or through Zoom. The public may also view the special session from the lobby of the Municipal Office Building.

**CONSENT TO MEETING** of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

**Mayor Garner** said tonight we'll have an update on the Casino Grant Process, a Learn to Swim Presentation, and a Public Works Winter Weather Update. I will turn it over to Assistant County Administrator Emerick Cross for the update.

**Emerick Cross, Assistant County Administrator**, said it's that exciting time of year when we get to start the 2022 Casino Grant process.



Like I said, it's the 2022 Special Session for the Unified Government Hollywood/Hollywood Casino Grant process.

January 27, 2022



- Started in 2009 when Wyandotte County ranked last in the state in both health outcomes and health factors.
- Mayor Reardon convened the community to plan and respond, and after 18 months published, "Recommendations for a Better Future in 2011."
- This document was adopted into the strategic plan of the Unified Government in August 2012.
- As a part of the development agreement with Hollywood Casino and the Board of Commissioners, a charitable contribution of \$500,000 is made annually to the UG.

I know a lot of the commissioners have already been through this presentation and has heard it several times, but I want to make sure the new commissioners and Mayor understood kind of a brief history of how we got to where we are today. So, with that, I'll get started. It kind of all came out of Healthy Communities Wyandotte and this process started in 2009 when we found out that Wyandotte County ranked last in the state for both health outcomes and health factors and this wasn't good. At that time Mayor Reardon convened a community group to plan and respond to this and after 18 months this community group published the recommendations for a Better Future in 2011. This document was adopted by the Strategic Plan of the UG in August of 2012. That's when the Commission adopted this plan and as part of the Development Agreement with Hollywood Casino and the Board of Commissioners, the Hollywood Casino contributes \$500K annually to the Unified Government. Formally the Schlitterbahn Vacation Village used to contribute to this as well through their development agreement. That organization is now gone and defunct.

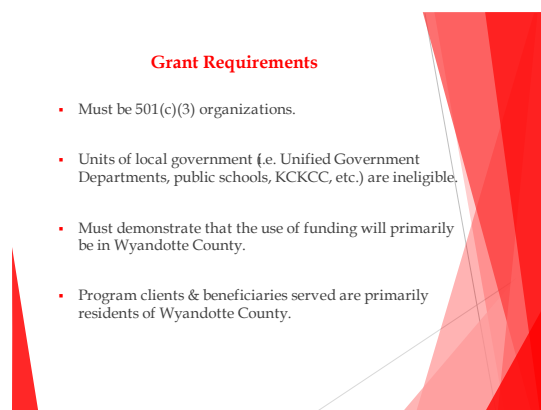
#### Eligible Activities

In keeping with the intent of Healthy Communities Wyandotte, the focus will be to fund programs that increase knowledge and action toward long term changes that enable our Wyandotte County community members to eat healthy food and be physically active

Applications should demonstrate cultural relevance, address opportunities to increase knowledge and improve the food environment and/or support active living through utilization of Wyandotte County's environmental infrastructure.

So, with that being said, we want to move on to this casino grant and what are the eligible activities for this grant. Keeping with the intent of Healthy Communities Wyandotte, the focus really is on

a couple of things. Number one, we want to increase the knowledge and the long-term changes that enable our county and community members to do two things, which is most important and really the crux of the grant. We want folks to eat healthy food and to be physically active. The applications for those folks who apply for this program, for these casino grant funds, should demonstrate cultural relevance, address opportunities to do those two things, increase knowledge and improve the food environment in Wyandotte County and support active living through using our environmental infrastructure. Our environmental infrastructure is things like our streets, sidewalks, our trails, our parks; anything that can help people become physically active.



**Grant Requirements**

- Must be 501(c)(3) organizations.
- Units of local government (e.g. Unified Government Departments, public schools, KCKCC, etc.) are ineligible.
- Must demonstrate that the use of funding will primarily be in Wyandotte County.
- Program clients & beneficiaries served are primarily residents of Wyandotte County.

Some of the grant requirements; you have to be a 501(c)(3), a non-profit and this units of local government such as the UG, our own departments, public school districts, community college, Donnelly College; folks like that, are ineligible for this grant. You also must demonstrate that you'll use the funding primarily here in Wyandotte County. This grant is designed for our citizens and the beneficiaries should be our citizens of Wyandotte County. Those are some of the main focuses on the grant requirements.



**Grant Restrictions**

Grants will **not** be awarded to the following:

- Capital campaign, endowment campaign or annual fund drive.
- Debt retirement or operating deficits.
- Direct support to individuals, including scholarships.
- Lobbying activities, legislation-related activities or political campaigns.
- Activities that specifically benefit the members of an athletic, veteran, fraternal, sectarian or religious group.
- Equipment expenses, unless the equipment will directly improve the organization's ability to provide and deliver services.

What are some of the grant restrictions; grants will not be for things like a capital campaign, endowment campaign, or an annual fund drive. You can't retire debt with these casino grant funds or you cannot use it to fill the hole of your operating deficit. You cannot use it to directly support individuals and this also includes scholarships, things like athletic scholarships as well. You can't use it for lobbying activities or legislative-related activities or political campaigns and you can't use it for things that specifically benefit the members of, like I said, athletic, veteran, fraternal, sectarian or religious group.

Equipment expenses; unless the equipment will directly improve or have really a major impact or be part of the beneficiary program of the organization's ability to provide and deliver services. That's the only time that the casino grant funds would be allowed for that.

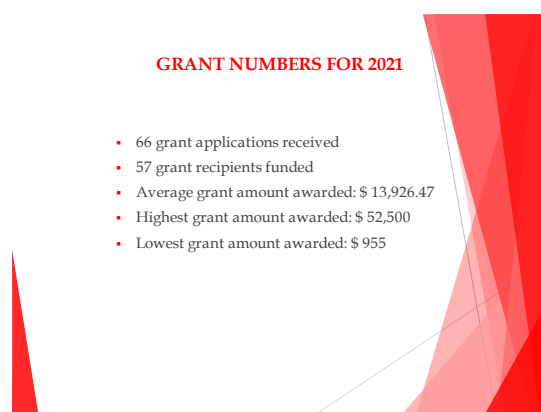


Some of the grant guidelines that we look at and we use, we want the grants funds to leverage additional funding and this can be both public and private. What we want to do is maximize these funds potential and we also want them to demonstrate alignment with the Board of Commissioner's Strategic Plan and this includes the Social Services, the Healthy Community recreation goals of our organization and the Healthy Communities Wyandotte Improvement Plan that was coordinated with the Health Department.

We would like our casino grant recipients to collaborate their efforts among other providers and programs. We would like to, once again, maximize these casino grant dollars and this can be done through that synergy. We would also like to demonstrate an effort to minimize duplication. We don't want to give the same funds out to folks that are doing the same thing. We want to make sure that we use these funds to contribute to all goods and services that will help us reach those two goals of eating healthy and becoming physically active.

You also should have clearly established measurable outcomes and you need to be able to report those and monitor those because those will be checked with the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, the folks that we hire to administer this grant and I'll talk a little bit about them in a moment. We also need programs that reach two important things here; at-risk folks and underserved populations. These are the primary folks that we would like to reach with these grant dollars and probably the folks that will benefit the most from these casino grant dollars.

Requests for general operating support; we'll only consider this if it's going to significantly expand the services of these 501(c)(3) organizations.



Let's take a moment and look back at the grant numbers for 2021. Last year, remember it was another COVID year and we had about 66, we didn't have about, we had 66 grant applications that we received and after those were vetted thoroughly by the Commission and Mayor, we had 57 grant recipients that were funded. The average amount awarded was \$13,926.47. The highest grant that we awarded last year was \$52,500 and the lowest grant amount awarded was \$955. You can see that the amounts are both high and low and there's no specific amount you must award to a recipient.

### GRANT NUMBERS FOR 2022

- There is a total of \$477,500 available for grants in 2022.
- There is no restriction on minimum or maximum size of the grant.
- The activities funded by the grants must be completed within one year.
- Since 2013, we have awarded a total of \$6,000,000 in Casino Grant fund dollars.

Also, for 2022, this year, there's going to be a total of \$477,500 available for our grant recipients this spring and summer. There is no restriction on the minimum or maximum size of the grant. Like we said, we went all the way from \$52,500 down to \$955 last year, so it's kind of all over the board and that's okay. It depends upon the need of the 501(c)(3) and what they want to do to maximize those funds for our community.

The activities funded by the grants must be completed within one year. Now, this is critical, grant recipients have to report what they're doing with these casino grant dollars and how they're achieving their goals and they will also have to turn in, in December, a mid-term report that tells where they're at midway through the grant year. Since 2013 these funds have done a lot of amazing things in our community and we've awarded about \$6M total in casino grant funds since 2013.

### REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

- The Greater Kansas City Community Foundation will review all grant applications for eligibility and will submit the list of eligible applications to the Board of Commissioners.
- Due diligence may include: site visits to interview key staff, board members and key partners (collaborators and funders).
- Application review will include the program budget and the sustainability plan.

The Review and Selection Process, we work with the experts. That's the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. We've hired them to vet through these grant applications. They will review all of them and they'll review them for eligibility and then they'll in return submit the list of eligible applications back to the Board of Commissioners. They will also perform due diligence

and this will include things like site visits. They'll interview key staff, Board members and partners, and the collaborators and funders.

The application review will include the program budget and the safe sustainability plan for these 501(c)(3)s who receive the funds.

#### REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

- The Board of Commissioners will serve as the Selection Committee.
- Each Commissioner and the Mayor will designate in writing how they wish to allocate their share of the total funds \*(\$ 43,409.09).
- The final distribution of funds must be approved by majority vote of the Board of Commissioners at a Commission meeting in late June.

The review and selection process will also include the Board of Commissioners as the selection committee. Our Commission, which includes the Mayor and our 10 commissioners, will have the final say where these funds go. This year, each commissioner and the Mayor will designate in writing how they wish to allocate their share of the funds. This year's total amount will be \$43,409.09 each. We did have a few carryover funds last year for a couple of commissioners and Mayor Garner this year will have additional funds to allocate. I will get with each commissioner and the Mayor and let them know exactly their total number of funds to allocate in 2022.

The final distribution of these funds has to be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners and this will take place at a Commission meeting in late June and we'll look at the dates here in a moment.

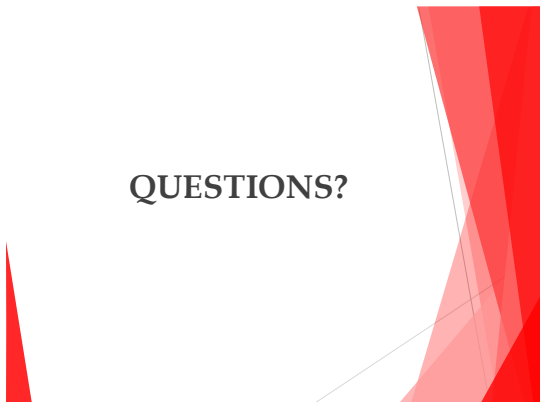
#### TIMETABLE FOR 2022

- |                                                          |             |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Grant Applications Available                           | February 21 |
| • Grant Information Session                              | March 1     |
| • Application Deadline                                   | April 8     |
| • GKCCF Review/<br>Eligibility Recommendations Complete  | May 6       |
| • Commissioner/Mayor Review                              | May 9 - 20  |
| • Commissioner/Mayor Designations Due                    | May 20      |
| • Distribution of Proposed Designations to<br>Commission | June 3      |
| • Commission Meeting to Vote on Distribution             | June 30     |
| • Notifications Sent to Grant Recipients                 | July 15     |

As a matter of fact, we'll look at the dates right now. The timetable for this year's casino grant process; the grant applications will be available online starting February 21<sup>st</sup> and we will use the Unified Government Strategic Planning Department to get that out through all of our social media outlets. We'll make it well known like we do each year. Also, the application—this process will be placed on the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation's websites and outlets as well.

Now, a very important date that everybody needs to know about is this March 1<sup>st</sup> date is the grant information session. This grant information session will be a two-hour session where we, the Unified Government and the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, will go through the entire grant process. The time for that is going to be 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and that will be a Zoom meeting this year due to COVID, but the dates and times of all of these things will be sent out and placed on our social media outlets.

The application deadline, after that grant information session, is going to be April 8<sup>th</sup>, so you've got a month and a half to apply for these casino grants and I always recommend that you apply as soon as possible. When the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation receives these applications, they'll review the eligibility recommendations and they'll complete this process after almost a month and this will be May 6<sup>th</sup>. Once they complete that, they will get those applications and vet those and they will get those applications back to us and then that's when the Mayor and the commissioners will review these grant applications. That's about a two-week process, from May 9<sup>th</sup> to May 20<sup>th</sup>, so you have plenty of time to review those, ask questions, and we can get those turned back in. Those designations are due to us to meet on May 20<sup>th</sup> by the Mayor and the commissioners. After that, the distribution of the proposed designations to the Commission will be June 3<sup>rd</sup> and then those will be voted on by the majority vote of the Commission on Thursday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. After that, once they're selected, we will send all of those casino grant recipients over back to the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and they will send out a notification to the grant recipients, those who are receiving 2022 Casino Grant funds, on July 15<sup>th</sup> and that will also include their monies to complete their grant projects.

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## QUESTIONS?

I know that was quite a bit of information in a short period of time. If anybody has any questions now, I would be more than happy to take those.

**Mayor Garner** asked, do we have any questions or comments?

**Commissioner Stites** said originally you said that it was a \$500K and then you said it was \$477.5 is what would be available. Why the \$22.5 difference? **Mr. Cross** said that's a good question and I should have spoke about that in my presentation. That's the contractual amount that we pay the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation who are experts in vetting and finding out eligibility and also doing due diligence on the grants. That's the amount that we pay them annually to do that work for us.

**Commissioner Bynum** said, Mr. Cross, it's time for my annual question. Are you able to secure for all of us from the Community Foundation any of our grantees from 2021 who owe us a mid-term report, any that owe us any kind of report from any prior year and are they able to gather for us any grantees that are perpetually either tardy or have reports missing? Can you ask them for that and make sure all the commissioners have it. **Mr. Cross** said, Commissioner Bynum, I knew you were going to ask that question. I had a phone call with them three days ago. That's exactly what we're going to do. We will line up all that information and I will disseminate that to the Mayor and all the commissioners as we usually do. One thing, while I have you on the line here, I want to talk a little bit about Mayor and commissioners, I asked the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation where they stand in regards to a lot of 501(c)(3) non-profit groups that really took a beating during COVID, like the rest of us, and they stated they have seen some groups

of those non-profits not really fall off so much and out-of-service, but starting to work together which is going to a good thing. So, you might see some dual applicants or organizations that are working together this year and that will be a good thing and these casino grant dollars will certainly help them do what we need them to do here in Wyandotte County.

**Commissioner Ramirez** said I always look forward to this time of year because I've been through two of these I believe and these funds go to very well-known organizations in our community and they're doing very good things. The only question I have for you—because I know as we all—the whole Commission and the Mayor, we get the same list of organizations that we allocate money to, is there an easy way for us to keep track of which commissioners give to what organizations or the Mayor because I know in the past Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Burroughs have called me and said how much are you giving to RDA, how much are you giving to Argentine, or what have you, just to make it easier for us. I don't know if that's a possibility or not. **Mr. Cross** said that's certainly a possibility, and you'll notice on that timetable how there's kind of gaps of time in between those dates, that's exactly what's that's for. So, you can work through Diana Sequi and Lisa Rangel in the Commissioner's Office and they will keep track of that for you and that will give you plenty of time on the timetable to do exactly that. And certainly if you ever have any issues or questions or you want to know where somebody's at, I'm kind of keeper of those records along with the ladies over there in the Commissioner Office, so you can all me at any time as well.

**Commissioner Ramirez** said sounds good and thank you for everything you do for this. This is a good program that does good work in our community and so thank you for all that you do for it.

**Commissioner Davis** asked, will the training that's on March 1<sup>st</sup> from 2 to 4 be recorded? I'm just thinking there may be some folks that may not have access to it and since it's virtual, that may be an added benefit. **Mr. Cross** said absolutely, Commissioner. That's a great idea and we will make sure that is recorded and then I'll work with Ashley Hand and Krystal McFeders in the Strategic Communications Office and we can put that online so folks can watch that if they have questions. Also, with that Commissioner Davis, the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation encourage these applicants to call them anytime, all the time. Make sure when you talk to folks

about this that they have a number over there and I'll make sure that everybody has that. We put that out each year. Call them any time if you have questions. They can call them or they can call myself and we'd be more than happy to help anybody at any phase during this process.

**Mayor Garner** asked, marketing, if I missed that, I apologize. What does that look like as far as marketing, getting the information out to our community and those interested organizations that would like to have a crack at getting these grant funds? **Mr. Cross** said, Mayor, that's a good question. Each year we use everything we have at our disposal through our Strategic Communications Office, so all of their outlets online that they use, you know, Twitter and Facebook and the UG ENews. We use all of these outlets—Wyandotte Daily online usually picks this up. The great thing about this Mayor, is it's been going on since 2013 so a lot of folks and organizations in the community know about this process, but we still want to try to reach out and I would put it out there, if anybody has any additional suggestions or ideas for other outlets, please contact our Strategic Communications Office and they will get them on there as well.

**Ashley Hand, Director of Strategic Communications**, said we do have several new channels at our disposal as well, so we are very eager to work with the community and get this information out earlier including things like *The Citizen* which we'll be mailing this spring. That will be a great opportunity and the timing will be quite perfect for this grant cycle as well as things like notifications in our BPU bills and other tools that we've been developing to reach more people because our online audience is great, but is not a big enough population and so we're eager and continually looking for new tools. To Mr. Cross's point, if you have additional outlets or places you would like us to be, please let us know, but we will do kind of additional advertising and promotion of this, I think more than you've seen in past years, so very excited for this cycle.

**Commissioner Bynum** said, Emerick, will you clarify that organizations that are a 501(c)(3) can act as a fiscal agent for another organization that's not a 501(c)(3)? **Mr. Cross** said yes, that's when folks come into that situation, and I'm not an expert on that, that's why we hired the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, but I can certainly get those, who have questions for that, to Denise St. Omer and her team over at the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. I don't want to speak out of turn and say something that's not correct, but we've had that happen several

times where organizations will act as fiscal agents who are not, so if you have anybody in that scenario, please send them to me and I will get them in touch with the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and make sure they can check on their eligibility.

**Commissioner Bynum** said I have a second question. The commissioners will see all the applications, correct, including those that the Community Foundation might deem ineligible. Is that right? **Mr. Cross** said yes. They send a letter over. When they do their due diligence with all of these applicants, they will send a letter over with those organizations that they may have questions about or issues to educate the Commission on and/or solicit input or feedback from that organization for us.

**Mayor Garner** said the funding, I know you mentioned the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, do we have any idea of that selection process? What it looks like? Is it predicated on the ask amount from those applicants or is there another criteria that they take into consideration on what the actual funding streams to the individual candidate—organizations, what they stand to receive is part of this grant. I mean how does that process work? **Mr. Cross** said when we go through the grant information process, this is a session we will have on Zoom, we'll get a lot of questions about how much I should ask for and will all the commissioners and Mayor look and read every application. There's some things that we can't answer, but we certainly encourage those folks to kind of do their research and make sure—I mean, you don't want to come into a \$477,500 grant process and ask for a million dollars because that's probably not going to happen. What we encourage those folks to do is look at past grant recipients. And in like 2019, 2020, 2021, look through those and kind of get a feel of how much commissioners are giving out to each grant recipient and what kind of flow is and look at this maybe, the size of their organization and what kind of goods and services, their capacity to provide those. Those are all the kind of criteria and variables that these organizations should look at to get a feel of what their ask should be. That's a great question though.

**Mayor Garner** said I guess what I was going with is there's a cap, you know, out of that amount is it capped at all to make sure that organizations—you know, that it's kind of spread equitably or how does that work? **Mr. Cross** said they're not capped. Each commissioner and the Mayor this year will have \$43,409.09. If a commissioner or Mayor wanted to give their entire amount to an organization, they may do that. If they want to give none to an organization, which

we had about seven or eight organizations who did not receive any funding last year, they may do that as well. There's no amount that a recipient or applicator—application, person with an organization with an application can ask for. There's no set amount with how much or how little. It's up to the commissioner or Mayor.

**Mayor Garner** said this is my last question and this is really important, it's the accountability piece. I know that Commissioner Bynum talked about reporting, are there any penalties when we talk about those organizations that fail to report on time or not at all? What about those organizations when we track how they're using this money, according to what they said it would be intended for, what does that accountability look like and are there mechanisms in place that we use to make sure that these funds are being used for their intended purposes? **Mr. Cross** said that's a great question. The main thing we do is, if these organizations do not turn in their mid-term reports or do not use the funding like they stated they would in their application, they usually don't receive any funds the next year. That's one of the main things. Now, as far as getting funding back from an organization, we've had that happen. We've had organizations that went defunct and returned their funds, so that's probably about the limit to the accountability we have. We can certainly explore other avenues in which we want to hold folks accountable and this is the Commission's process. So, if we want to change that or add additional variables to this equation, we can certainly do that.

**Mayor Garner** said I'm more in line to make sure that there's a strong accountability mechanism in place when you're talking about funds and making sure that they're really being used for the intended purposes based on what the applicant presented and leaving this Commission and Mayor with that belief that the funds are going to be used for those good purposes, that they're being dwelt out. I'm more in line on making sure that we have some good checks and balances in place and penalties if they fail to report as well as some additional accountability mechanisms to make sure that we're being good stewards of this money and that the people that would benefit are actually benefitting from these funds in an equitable way. That's a conversation I would like to continue to have with our commissioners and our Administrator. **Mr. Cross** said yes sir.

**Commissioner Bynum** said I appreciate your comment. I will say that as the Director of a small 501(c)(3) nonprofit, these guidelines that have been created through this grant program are not

terribly different. In fact, they're quite similar to most funders that I write grants for with reporting requirements and caveats in the application itself that basically tells me from the funder that failure to produce reports in a timely manner is going to preclude me from requesting any further dollars from that foundation, etc. So, the requirements that are in place are quite similar to those of a lot of other funders and that is why I believe these 501(c)(3) organizations that make application for this money should all have a pretty good understanding of grant reporting requirements. And, frankly sir, it's why I always ask that same question every year as far as making sure that our grant recipients are in fact turning in their required reporting, but I appreciate your question.

**Mayor Garner** asked are there any more questions or comments from the Commission? (There were none).

**Mayor Garner** said our next item is the Learn to Swim presentation to be presented by Emerick Cross, Assistant County Administrator.

**Emerick Cross, Assistant County Administrator**, said we're here tonight to speak about the Learn to Swim Program and we have been in collaboration with a couple other organizations, USD 500, the Greater Kansas City YMCA, and also this program is going to be funded one year through a grant from the Warner Media and Dennis Wilson. I don't want to steal their thunder, so at this time I would like to turn it over to Dr. Anna Stubblefield from USD 500 to talk about the Learn to Swim Program.

**Edwin Birch, USD 500**, said, Emerick, she may have stepped away. **Mr. Cross** said Mr. Birch is with USD 500 and, Mr. Birch, if you want to go ahead and pick the ball up and get it started.

**Mr. Birch** said I apologize, Dr. Stubblefield had another Zoom meeting tonight for the Enough is Enough Initiative so I'm here. She's trying to do multiple things which you all understand. Here at KCKPS USD 500 we are really excited about partnering with the YMCA of Greater Kansas City, also the Parks & Rec. I'm looking forward to working with my former colleagues again and the project that will help teach our youth how to swim. We are going to start with a couple of our elementary schools which will be Whittier and Hazel Grove. It will be part of our After School

Program and we will start there and then the kickoff is February 2<sup>nd</sup> which I will let Angel and Gary talk more about.

One of the things I want to say is that when you think about what happened to the young man that unfortunately lost his life, we don't want this to happen again. Learning how to swim and the importance of swimming is something that's really important in the African-American and Hispanic community. Again, this is an opportunity for these organizations to work together in the best interest of our youth. When you think about it, it's pretty simple. Your residence at the Unified Government are our residents. Our students and parents are your students and parents. We are all in this together, so this is just the beginning of a long partnership hopefully that we are planning to expand to our other grade levels. This is not the silver bullet right now. This is not the quick fix, but if we can start with our young people, get them engaged, get them to the point where they are not afraid of being around the water. When you think about it, young people are around water more often than they realize, when you think about many of our creeks and our lakes and things like that. Eventually we want to expand to our Middle Schools and then expand to our High Schools and eventually create that pipeline where some of the older teenagers can eventually work for Parks & Rec, contribute back to their community, be employed and maybe become lifeguards.

Again, this is the beginning of hopefully other projects and partnerships that we can get into and I'm just looking forward to be part of it. Our Superintendent is looking forward to being part of it and our school district is looking forward to this partnership.

**Mr. Cross** said I will now turn it Gary Lynn with the Greater Kansas City YMCA.

**Gary Lynn, Senior Vice President of Operations with the YMCA**, said thanks for the opening Edwin. I'm excited to be here, excited to be able to talk about this program with all of you, but I think Edwin said it well in that I don't want to lose sight of the reason we're here and we're here because of a tragedy that took place this past summer. We're also here because there are organizations and individuals that care enough about the Kansas City, Kansas community that they're going to ensure that the proper response or the proper type of program is put in place to hopefully ensure that a tragedy like that never happens again.

I want to give a lot of credit to Dennis Williams. Dennis is a KCK native. Dennis was sitting in his office in Brooklyn, New York when the news feed came over about the tragedy and Dennis said enough is enough and he was the driving force to convene our group and get us together and start working on building a program that hopefully somewhere down the line is a program that allows every child in the Kansas City, Kansas community, regardless of their location, regardless of their family experience, regardless of their background, has the opportunity and the access to be able to access quality swim lessons and that is our goal. This is the start of it. We're excited to start with these couple schools and we'll kick off this program on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and then we're going to move to two more schools, then we're going to keep working until we identify funding, resources, staffing, so we can put this type of program in place.

None of the partners up here feel like this is a one-and-done. This is not something we're going to do for 2022 and then think that we have reached the finish line because we have not. This is an ongoing thing that not only do we have to work at the program and work at educating the kids and the families about the importance of this, but we're also going to work at identifying the funding and everything. I very much appreciate working with these partners that are a part of this process. I think we have—we've not only worked together to put in place what I think is a great start to this program. I think at least I have learned that we are stronger together and I think that this program is going to be an incredibly impactful program when it's put in place and it reaches its full potential, but I think we've also learned that it isn't just a Learn to Swim Program, but I think our three organizations can come together and work on. I think you're going to see—hopefully, you're going to see us leaning more on each other and opportunities to be able to impact the community in multiple, multiple ways.

Again, I appreciate the school district, appreciate the Parks & Rec, and Emerick and the UG and everything for what they've done, but we are kicking off the program February 2<sup>nd</sup>. It's a 12-week Learn to Swim Program where we're working with the kids in the Kids Zone Before and after School Program at two of the schools that we've identified. We'll start with that group, we'll teach them a quality swim lesson over the course of 12 weeks and then we'll move to two other schools and then we'll kind of reconvene and figure out what we're going to do for the summertime and identify some schools for the fall as well.

I think the last thing I'll really talk about and then I'll turn it over to Angel from Parks & Rec to talk a little bit about it. It is no small fee to staff a program like this. You talk about—I've

been in the YMCA for over 21 years and all of that 21 years I've been in programs where we've had to identify and recruit lifeguards and swim lessons and individuals that can help put on a program like this and COVID has impacted in many ways, but recruiting individuals to be lifeguards and swim lesson instructors are at the very top of the list. I'm excited to say we are about 85% of the way there on staffing for this program, close enough to feel good about being able to kick the program off. I also think about as we go into the future and expand on this program, expand on our summer programming, I think the opportunity to work with the school district and Parks & Rec to help solve, and I don't know that we're ever going to solve it, but to help lean on each other and overcome some of these staffing issues is going to be a big part of how keeping this program sustainable and moving forward. I know that's something not everybody thinks about when you're kicking off an impactful program like that, but that has been a major hurdle for us to overcome and one that I don't want to shed too much or make too much light of. With that, I guess I'll turn it over to Angel and then stick around for any questions.

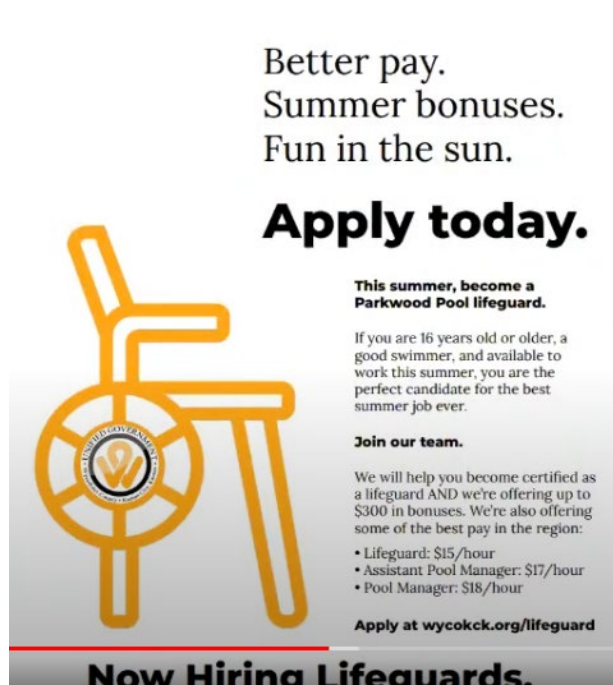
**Angel Obert, Director of Parks & Recreation,** said I just want to take a second to thank the YMCA, thank USD 500, and also thank Warner Media. This is so important to our community. I can remember, I think it was back in 2018, meeting with prior USD 500 leadership at the time and with Commissioner Townsend and some County Administrators and trying to get a program like this off and running. COVID posed a lot of challenges, but to be able to be here today with all of our organizations working together and talking about this pilot program and how we're launching it is amazing. I just really want to thank everybody again. The support that we've had from leadership and commissioners and then also our partners here locally in the community just coming around and making this happen.

So, a little bit too about our efforts and what we're doing in Parks & Recreation is what we've found in years past whenever we would go out to the high schools to recruit for lifeguards for the summer, we would come back from our recruitment efforts during their lunch periods with a list of about 20 to 30 kids who are interested in being lifeguards. We knew that the desire was there to fulfill these summer jobs but what we ended up finding out after we did some digging, talking to the students and making those calls and asking kids why they weren't showing up to the conditioning is they didn't have the skill of swimming. So, while this is a pilot program, this pilot program is so important and, like Gary said, we're going to keep building on that to continue to

have more of these programs for our community so we can build the pipeline of lifeguards and give them the opportunity to have these summer jobs and work right in our own community and then continue to serve right here locally, so we're super excited about that.

As you know, two years having Parkwood pool closed did pose some challenges and so we are really ramping up our efforts this year on recruitment. Last year we did try to run a lifeguard work study, so I will talk a little bit about that because I think it ties in nicely with what Mr. Lynn was saying about getting lifeguards and staffing for these programs can be a challenge because it's such an important position to have. Last year we did run the Lifeguard Work Study Program and passed out roughly 75 applications and from those 75 we had 10 of them submit to HR. We worked with HR on contacting those applicants, getting them down to Parkwood for pre-tests. We had seven applicants show up to Parkwood and then by the time the pre-test was done that day, the WSI Instructor said, you know, only three of them really had the skill to go on to lifeguard training. We sent the three to lifeguard training, paid for by the UG, and then out of those three only one attended both days and passed so as you can see it's very difficult sometimes to get qualified lifeguards because it's a super important job and it's becoming increasingly more important even with the challenges with COVID.

Emerick, if you're able to share that flyer.



Better pay.  
Summer bonuses.  
Fun in the sun.

**Apply today.**

**This summer, become a Parkwood Pool lifeguard.**

If you are 16 years old or older, a good swimmer, and available to work this summer, you are the perfect candidate for the best summer job ever.

**Join our team.**

We will help you become certified as a lifeguard AND we're offering up to \$300 in bonuses. We're also offering some of the best pay in the region:

- Lifeguard: \$15/hour
- Assistant Pool Manager: \$17/hour
- Pool Manager: \$18/hour

Apply at [wycokck.org/lifeguard](http://wycokck.org/lifeguard)

**Now Hiring Lifeguards.**

We're really excited, we've been working really closely with Ashley Hand's team. She's done an amazing job, her and her team, on helping us with recruitment efforts, getting distribution lists ready, preparing marketing materials, just really getting this information out everywhere. So, I'm sharing with you all tonight our flyer for recruiting for lifeguards.

We are beginning, starting today, the job hits, the job board to get online and apply for these jobs. As you can see on the screen, it is going to be a very great robust program. We did some research and we thought really long and hard about this and worked very closely with Mayor Garner and his staff as well to make sure that we were going to be paying our lifeguards very competitively to those in the metro. We're very proud to say that we're going to be paying our lifeguards \$15 an hour this summer and that is—if it's not the highest hourly salary in the metro. Also, along with that, we really want to show our guards and our staff how much we appreciate them and how important this is to our community, so we will also be offering incentives for our guards that stick with us. We are looking to do a \$100 bonus mid-season for those guards that are still with us in good standing and then also at the end of the season we're going to do a \$200 bonus, and again, this has been a team effort by multiple departments, multiple organizations, so we're just really excited to be able to get this going. We'll send this flyer out, start helping us spread the word if you can, if you know anyone who is interested, definitely send them our way because we are going to do everything we can to make sure to have adequate staffing for the summer.

Again, I just can't say enough how thankful we are for the partnership with the YMCA and USD 500, and Warner Media coming together and we've already been discussing opportunities for the future and how we can continue to partner and offer more programs to our community.

**Mr. Cross** said I would like to take this opportunity, we're going to get you and the commissioners a lot of flyers and we hopefully will send it out to all the agencies and all the contacts you have. We're going to have USD 500 helping us with this as well and the YMCA. We're looking at about every organization and agency we have in this community to get the word out. Before Memorial weekend, we're looking for strong swimmers. We're looking for those folks who can work with us at a great salary and be lifeguards and work for their community and give back. This is an important program for us. We're asking for everybody's help. All those folks online tonight watching this, if you know somebody who wants to be a lifeguard, we're going to put these out

online real soon and hand them out and please call Tyrone Weaver at the bottom or Human Resources, our HR Department, if you know somebody who wants to be a lifeguard. We'll take a look at everybody, so with that, Mayor, I appreciate the honor to present tonight to the Commission.

**Commissioner Townsend** said my heart is bursting with anticipation because of this program, so let me start off with some very sincere thank yous and I'll start outside the family. Mr. Lynn, I look forward to meeting you and talking offline about the possibility of sponsoring some kids to learn how to swim. That's how deeply—concerned is the wrong word, but I know how I enjoy it and if Commissioner Johnson wants to put the picture back up there of Sumner High School of which I'm a proud graduate in the northwest part of old Wyandotte. I learned to swim and many of my classmates learned to swim there at Sumner. As Ms. Obert said, it was back in 2019 when she and former Administrator Doug Bach and I paid a visit to the then Superintendent, his assistant, and the CFO of the Unified School District to impress upon them the link that learning the swimming skills at the high school level has on being able to put a pool of applicants to the pool of our lifeguards to make that challenge or that connection.

I'm so appreciative of Mr. Wilson and you and our brother there, Edwin Birch, formerly of the Unified Government to have someone who knows what this means there at the Unified Government. I also met with the current Superintendent to make that pitch, so we have to start somewhere and I am appreciative of Mr. Wilson's and Mr. Lynn's efforts as well as the 500 School District to start off somewhere with these young kids.

Just so everyone is clear, we need 16-year old's up to staff the pool, just so everyone is clear about that. I would like to hear a little bit more of the details about the Learn to Swim. What schools are going to be involved and the age groups there just so the public knows because you got to start these kids and the sooner you can start kids swimming, the more likely they'll overcome that fear. I was 15 when I learned how and I'll never forget how my breath was taken away when I started but I was just determined to learn, but the earlier you can start that, the better off you are with the kids. So, what are the schools, what are the ages, how many times a week will that program go on? I do believe I heard you say it would be 12 weeks, so if you could talk a little bit about those details of the program.

**Mr. Birch** said I would just mention the schools again. We're starting with our elementary schools, Whittier and Hazel Grove. Gary, did you want to go into the details?

**Mr. Lynn** said, Commissioner, you were right on track in that the earlier you can introduce a child to water and get them comfortable in the water, it is absolutely the best medicine for teaching them lifelong swimming and everything. Edwin's right, we're going to start off with Whittier and Hazel Grove. We're working the Kidzone kids of this pilot program, so Kidzone is basically kindergarten through fifth grade, so we're going to have a variety of kids in different ages and we'll work with them in group swimming lessons based on their ability, a little bit based on their age and just their ability to understand and listen and some of those type of things. I believe we're starting with two times a week and it will be a six-week program and then we go twice a week with another group for the following six-week program. That's how it's going to be initially and then we're going to identify another school. I don't—I'm sorry I'm in remote today and I don't have all the details of what the next two schools are that we're kicking off right away after that, but it's two of the other schools that have Kidzones, grades K through 5, but I'll definitely have those details and then on our February 2<sup>nd</sup> event, we'll have all the details out and we'll make sure that it's part of the presentation.

One of the things we want to make sure is that the families of the Kidzones know, parents, that they know is that their schools are on our list. We are identifying and trying to figure out a way now, how do we get every school to be able to go through this and so we're not going to leave a school out.

**Commissioner Townsend** said that's great news to hear. Let me also say that starting young with the kids helps them not just to become acquainted in the pool and what that feels like, but I'm sure it will also help them to appreciate other aspects outside the pool of water safety and that gets us to the sad situation we had last week. There has to be a respect for the exterior of the pool, you know, when it's open, when it's closed, so I think starting younger will also help kids become more aware and familiar with the external, not just what goes in the pool, but what you should or should not be doing even before you get in the water, so I look forward to that. I look forward to working with you to try to sponsor some of our older kids so we have a pool in the pool for lifeguards. I want to extend an appeal to all the people who came to Parkwood last June. Beat the

bushes and let's try to identify and get in the hands of kids who may be lifeguards or interested in these applications. Now you know, let's not hear well I didn't know, now we know, we all want Parkwood pool open, but you can't open any pool without qualified lifeguards, so I look forward to that, COVID allowing. Let me put it that way as well, COVID allowing.

Thank you very much. I look forward to seeing you on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Lynn, Edwin Birch, alumni of the Unified Government and good friend to the Unified Government, thank you. Thank you, in her absence, our Superintendent of schools. I know she is trying to do so many things at one time. I want to thank the ongoing efforts to make things different. We are really trying to do the best we can to make things different for our community last year from our Parks & Rec, Mr. Cross, Ms. Obert, Mr. Webb, Shelly Boyd, Mr. Watson; thanks to all of these people who are working behind the scenes continuously. We only have what, maybe three months of swimmable weather, but there's planning going on all the time, so thank you all very much.

**Commissioner Johnson** said I think my fellow Commissioner Townsend really had said a lot that I was intending on saying. I will say that increasing the hourly pay was a necessity. This summer I had some opportunity to do some aquatic lessons and I had a chance to talk to the lifeguards there and they said they were starting them at \$11 an hour and at the time, I believe, we were somewhere around \$9, so that really puts us in a much more competitive space now with the \$15 an hour. I'm just thankful to all the persons that have already been acknowledged. That puts us—just knowing that puts us in a very competitive landscape now where we can go out and try to be able to obtain the very best persons that will get qualified and be part of this. With that, I'll yield the floor.

**Commissioner Davis** said I'm just going to say real quickly because I think I'm going to be Commissioner Stites to this, right, Turner, Bonner, Piper also more than welcome. All of Wyandotte County is more than welcome to participate and to be a part of this to swim, to apply, so I just wanted to add that. I look forward to participation and collaboration, not just with KCKPS, but with all the other school districts with Turner, Bonner, Piper as well, so just wanted to put that out there because I thought I could see Commissioner Stites about to say that.

Along with that, and I know we talked about it earlier, Emerick, is there a residency requirement for the lifeguard position? Can you all just clarify who can apply to be a lifeguard? **Mr. Cross** said no, there is no residency requirement. We're looking for lifeguards and they are

a seasonal position, so there's no residency requirement Commissioner Davis. **Commissioner Davis** said okay. I just wanted to make that clear for the public. Everybody, so if you're living in KCMO, if you live in Johnson County, whatever, more than welcome. I just wanted that to be clear to the public.

**Commissioner Stites** said thank you Commissioner Davis, you are absolutely correct. I've got a list here and Bonner Springs and Edwardsville and District 204 was on my list. First off, I want to say to Mr. Lynn and Ms. Obert, and all the other folks, I just recently being elected, haven't been through this process. I want to say nice to work with you again Edwin and seeing you again, thank you. We have to do whatever needs to be done so that I hope and pray we never have to experience such a horrific tragedy that occurred. I commend you guys for the hard work that you're doing. If we can save one more child, it's so important and anything that I can do in my position to help further this cause, I'm here.

When you said there was no school that's going to be left behind, what are the plans for Bonner Springs and Edwardsville, if you don't mind? **Mr. Lynn** said let me talk real quick about Bonner Springs. We actually do already have a Learn to Swim Program with second graders in the Bonner Springs school district that we operate right there at the Bonner Springs Y. So with that program every second grader through the course of the school year goes through that Learn to Swim Program and I think we've been able to have that in place seven or eight years I think we've had that in place. We paused it last year due to COVID, but it is back in place and that'll continue.

The other ones, you know, I think we've worked so hard to get this off the ground as a pilot program, we want it to be sustainable. Like I said before, nobody up here thought that this was going to be a one and done program, but I'd be honest and transparent that we haven't flushed out everything for the years '23, '24, and '25. I don't think it's necessarily to flush out years three to five before we get it off the ground and so this is how we're starting, but it is also confirmed, it's just a start. As we start sharing some of the success stories, as we start seeing some of the kids become such talented swimmers and then maybe somewhere down the line they can start moving into lifeguards if we can do them at a certain age and some of those other type of things, then I think we can make some future plans in place, identify some funding. That's always going to be a need, identifying the funding. I appreciate—Commissioner Townsend, I will definitely talk to you on the 2<sup>nd</sup> about sponsoring some kids that we can do year round there, so that would be great.

I'll just be transparent, we haven't flushed out all the years coming forward, but I'm excited that we're going to get it kicked off the ground, but we're also not done working at this.

**Commissioner Stites** said I appreciate that and I agree we have to start somewhere and it starts with the first step. Again, thank you all very much for what you all have done and I look forward to this program for many, many years to come.

**Commissioner Ramirez** said Angel and Emerick, you can always hear my voice every time you give a Parks & Rec presentation in your head of how excited I am for this and thank you for everything you do for our Parks & Rec. Thank you Mr. Birch and Mr. Lynn for coming into this collaboration and coming together, it's amazing. During COVID our Parks Department got CARES Act money, \$2M, and Angel please correct me if I'm wrong, it was \$2M and they did a lot of work within four months. It shows with our parks—our Park Department has shown time and time again if they're given the resources and if they're given the money, they can do the work. They can create programs, they can put more stuff out there for our community and this is another example of that. Giving them the resources and the connections and the collaborations to pull together a program like this is amazing. As Commissioner Stites said, this is just the first step. We have a long way to go and this—the whole Commission knows that Park & Rec is a very big part of my heart. I worked in it for six years over in Johnson County and our After School Programs, I know what Parks & Rec can do for a community.

I cannot thank you enough to everyone who has worked on this. We had a lot of attention when we had closed Parkwood pool, but we had closed it for a reason because of 1) COVID and 2) we didn't have the staff. We didn't have the lifeguards to be able to safely have kids in it and I'm going to do anything and everything I can to get applicants for our lifeguards. I'm going to talk to everybody, I'm going to pass it around to organizations that are within my district, I'm going to post it as much as I can on Facebook. People may get annoyed by it, but until we get applicants in, I'm going to do everything that I can. I'm very, very excited for this. I can't wait to see where it goes, what are the next steps, it's exciting. Thank you again Mr. Lynn, Mr. Birch, Jack, Angel and Emerick for everything you do. We owe it to you, this community owes it to you for everything that you do for our parks.

**Commissioner Townsend** said I wanted to follow up on or expand on something that Commissioner Johnson had said about the increase in the rate of pay. We are truly—I guess will be one of the highest paying employers with respect to lifeguards and it is a dog fight out here for it that still—it's still going to be highly competitive because as you heard Mr. Lynn say earlier, everybody is trying to get those certified instructors and lifeguards. I do want to say that we have been on this road since '19. The last time we had lifeguards and the kids were able to swim and in our pre-COVID life, those were the days, we were then paying our lifeguards a little bit more than \$9 an hour and we were competitive at that time. But because we could see how much more it would take in terms of attracting lifeguards, we were prepared to pay them \$12 an hour last year, so this has been an upward climb for several years, but for COVID that is the rate that our lifeguards would have been paid.

I have to say and just commend what I call the Parkwood Posse Baywatch had nothing on them because you had dedicated young people who were there for \$9 an hour and a good tan and some free hamburgers every now and then that Commissioner Townsend would treat them too, but they were very dedicated. We didn't have any problems in terms of loss of life when those kids were there and the pool was open during its regular hours, so again, teaching kids respect for the pool and the surroundings whether they're wet or not will be, I'm sure, a great outcome also of the program that will be conducted at the Y.

Again, I look forward to meeting and seeing you on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. One last thing, either Ms. Obert or Mr. Cross, if someone would come to you now—come to us now and say I really want to be a lifeguard, not sure about my swimming skills, do we have anything lined up that could help them right now?

**Ms. Obert** said we are still looking for a WSI Instructor to help facilitate the conditioning that took place prior to COVID. The staff member we had before is no longer working in that capacity so we are reaching out to a couple contacts to see if they would be available to assist us with that. We are also having some really good conversations with the YMCA on also bridging that gap and also being able to help us out in that area and so I'm working on getting more information on that, but I feel pretty confidently that we will have something in place for that. As of right now, as Emerick said, our message is that we are recruiting strong swimmers and until we are able to have that staff member or resource in place for those interested, that needs a little bit more exposure and conditioning.

**Commissioner Townsend** said I guess the message is you come and see us if you are interested and we'll go from there. I guess that's the bottom line. Again, you must be 16, but you come and see us.

**Mayor Garner** said, Commissioner, I hope I can answer your last question. Ms. Obert, if you get with LaVert Murray, he may have that person that's certified to train that could probably be of assistance to the Unified Government in that regard, so I'll pass it along to him and hopefully you all can have that communication.

I would just like to make some comments in this regard, I was out this past summer in 2021 when the pool was closed and I think what resonated to me was a community coming together and saying that they wanted to have their pool open. Watching those young folks out there when it was about 95 degrees, seeing water in the pool and the pool will not be open was concerning to me. There were a lot of variables as to why the pool wasn't open, but moving forward, I can truly say that this Commission, this Mayor, this Unified Government staff, I want the community to know we've heard you. You spoke loudly and I can tell you what you've seen tonight is a collaboration like anything you've ever seen. When you talk about a commitment from your Administrator in regards to pay and salary and your commissioners, the Unified Government staff, as well as this public/private partnership that you're seeing, that's unprecedented, to come together to try and make sure that we're meeting the needs of our community, not only just to provide recreational opportunities or to enhance the quality of life for our residents. When we talk about the only public pool in the entire Kansas City, Kansas proper area, but this is more importantly and you've heard that from the onset, it's about saving lives and to me that's the most important thing.

I just want to give a shout out and I'm going to name some names of some of the front line people that I've identified that have really led this charge when you talk about USD 500 and Superintendent Dr. Stubblefield and Edwin Birch and Gary Lynn, Angel Obert, Mr. Wilson, Ashley Hand, Crystal McFeders, LaVert Murray from my office; really trying to get that pipeline of workforce ready individuals at some point that can really meet the need that we have in our community. I applaud Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Stites for saying this isn't just something that's restricted in Kansas City, Kansas, but you know this is about Wyandotte County. When you talk about Bonner Springs, Edwardsville, Turner, Piper and then people outside of

Wyandotte County. We need qualified lifeguards to come provide a needed service right here in Wyandotte County.

I haven't heard, I know the age minimum was 16, but I don't believe there's any age limits based on what the actual qualifications are, so I know we talk a lot about our youth, but we need our adults to step forward and be willing to provide that service as well for our young people. So, what you've seen tonight is you're seeing a commitment from all these stakeholders doing everything to make a difference. The community needs to know that they are that difference, we can't do this alone, and I'm asking you as your Mayor to please be that difference and help getting the word out. We're going to do our part to make this happen. That same energy that I seen when I was out there this last summer of people coming together and saying what we want and it's easy to talk the talk, but I'm asking this community to start walking the walk. Push forward this information, cooperate with your Unified Government.

We need you, we can't do this alone. We can pull all the levers, we can increase the salary, we can provide the leadership, the guidance, come up with the logistics in place, but ultimately, it's up to the community to step forward and say this is our swimming pool, this is our community, the Unified Government has done their part, let's do our part so our children and our adults can have a swimming pool that they can utilize when it's 95 degrees outside as opposed to standing outside looking at a pool that's closed because we just don't have the personnel—lifeguards there to make that a reality. I challenge in my call to action in this community is what you've seen tonight is an unprecedented effort by your leadership with a public/private partnership along with the school district, when you talk about USD 500, to do their part. I challenge this community to meet us where we are to make sure that our kids have those opportunities to have a swimming pool that we all want them to have come the summer of 2022.

I want to say thank you to everyone that's been involved in this effort. The work doesn't stop, it continues. We really need our community to step up and help all these folks that are really putting in a lot of effort and time and energy and money behind this effort to make opening Parkwood pool a reality, so thank you all so very much.

**Mayor Garner** said our last item is a Public Works Winter Weather Update presented by Jeff Fisher and his staff.

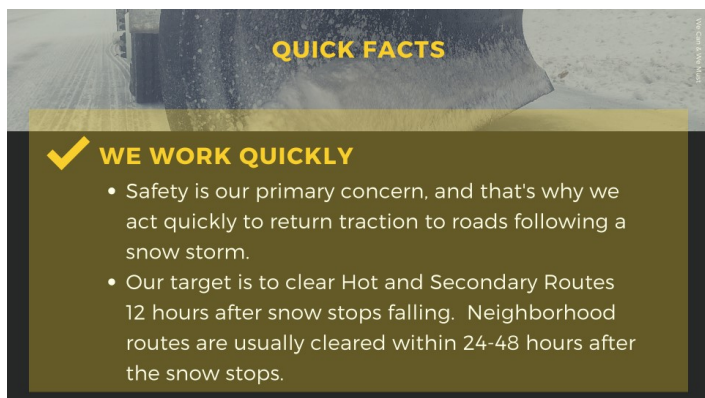
**Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works**, said as we've done the last few years we're here tonight just simply to raise awareness around winter weather operations. We'll describe the how's and why's and tonight we have Vincent Billaci, our Streets Manager, and then Jeff Miles, our Fleet Manager, and Dave Reno, our Community Engagement Officer. I'm going to turn it over to Dave Reno and get started.



**Dave Reno, Public Works Community Engagement Officer**, said winter is officially here and snow removal operations are underway so we're going to spend a little bit of time talking about how snow removal in Kansas City, Kansas works and, of course, answer some frequently asked questions so let's get right in with some quick facts.



KCK has more than 2,400 lane miles of roads to plow or treat during each storm and really that's quite a bit more than neighboring cities like Lenexa which has 638 miles, Overland Park which has 1,900, and Shawnee which has around 800 lane miles.

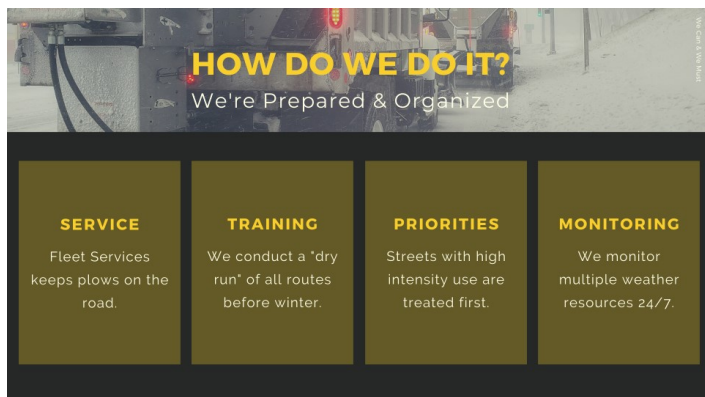


**QUICK FACTS**

✓ **WE WORK QUICKLY**

- Safety is our primary concern, and that's why we act quickly to return traction to roads following a snow storm.
- Our target is to clear Hot and Secondary Routes 12 hours after snow stops falling. Neighborhood routes are usually cleared within 24-48 hours after the snow stops.

Despite the fact that we've got a lot of literal ground to cover, the snow crew's goal is to clear hot and secondary routes 12 hours after the snow stops falling and neighborhood routes are generally cleared within 24 to 48 hours after the snow stops falling. We will talk a little bit more about what hot and secondary are in just a bit, but for now I'm going to turn it over to Vinnie.



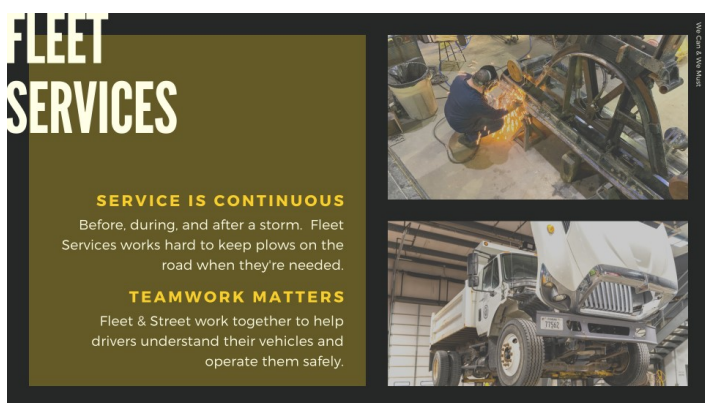
**HOW DO WE DO IT?**  
We're Prepared & Organized

|                                                           |                                                                        |                                                                         |                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SERVICE</b><br>Fleet Services keeps plows on the road. | <b>TRAINING</b><br>We conduct a "dry run" of all routes before winter. | <b>PRIORITIES</b><br>Streets with high intensity use are treated first. | <b>MONITORING</b><br>We monitor multiple weather resources 24/7. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Vincent Billaci, Street Division Manager**, said I'm going to touch on training and monitoring before Jeff Miles talks about the importance of the Fleet Services role in winter weather and then we'll go to prioritizing routes from there. First, we'll cover training. In the fall of 2021 we had our third annual snow plow rodeo. We teamed up with Prairie Village again this year. One of their supervisors has extensive experience at the Regional American Public Works Association Rodeos. With their assistance, we were able to set up an official APWA course for our team to compete on. These events are an opportunity for team building and friendly competition, but most importantly they increase safety and efficiency out on roads during wet winter weather events. Also with training, we perform dry runs leading up to the winter season, so if you see a truck out driving with a salt spreader and plow on a bright sunny day, that's our team doing a dry run. This allows operators to drive their assigned routes and identify any potential obstacles, plan

turnarounds on dead-end roads and mark any steel plates that may be out there in construction zones.

When it comes to monitoring, we are constantly monitoring the weather, the road temperatures and any incoming systems. We utilize a service called Weather or Not which gives us detailed forecasts specific to our county as well as the local meteorologists to get us best prepared for each event. In a few minutes I'll be touching on a new tool that we're going to be adding this year that will take our monitoring to the next level. Now, I'll turn it over to Jeff Miles and he's going to discuss the importance of Fleet Services.



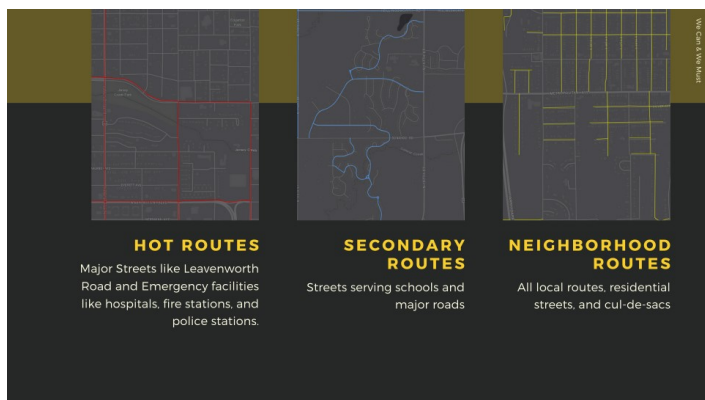
**Jeff Miles, Interim Fleet Services Manager**, said the Fleet Division's preparation for winter actually starts back in the summertime. We have approximately 54 dump trucks that we get prepared from the Parks Division, Street Division and about 24 small pickup type trucks so we spend the summer and the fall months preparing these trucks so hopefully all of them once a winter emergency hits, these trucks are ready to go out on our streets. Once a storm actually starts, we have our entire team in here as well along with all the other guys and gals that are out fighting these storms to supply immediate repairs if there was a major damage or simple damage, a hose broke or something like that so they could respond to it immediately. During those off times, during those times overnight we are repairing ambulances and other things in the Fleet Division while we're waiting for the snow equipment to come in.

From last year to this year we did add 11 new spreaders and 11 new plows to our fleet. When I say added, we actually replaced several. If you could remember from last year, a lot of you guys did the infrastructure tour with us so you got to see the condition of a lot of our street

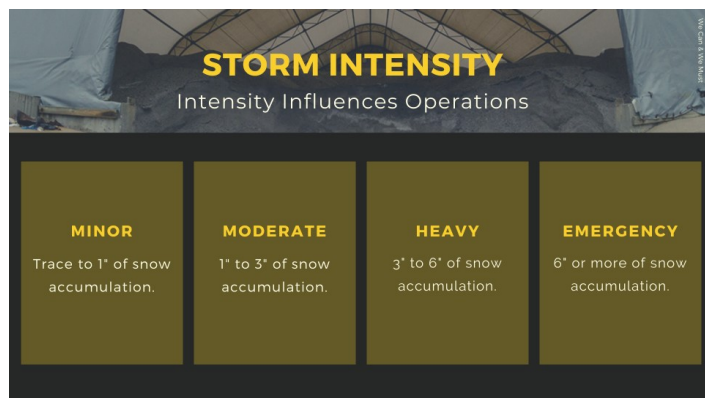
surfaces. That magnifies the damage to these plows and these trucks so we did replenish a lot of these leading into this snow season. With that being said, I'm going to hand it back to Vince.



**Mr. Billaci** said we'll go over the route priorities now. Snow routes are prioritized based on traffic volume as well as the speed of travel on those roads.

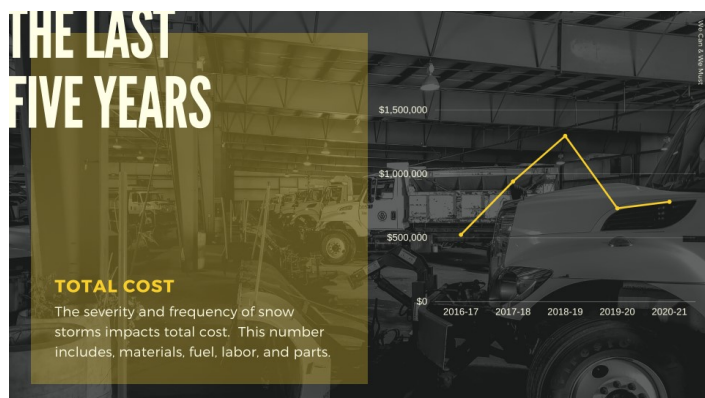


First, we have hot routes and examples of these would be Parallel, State Avenue, Metropolitan and any roads with emergency facilities or hospitals. Next are secondary routes. These are collector roads out of neighborhoods that feed those hot routes and last we have neighborhood routes which are, of course, the residential roads, cul-de-sacs and dead ends.

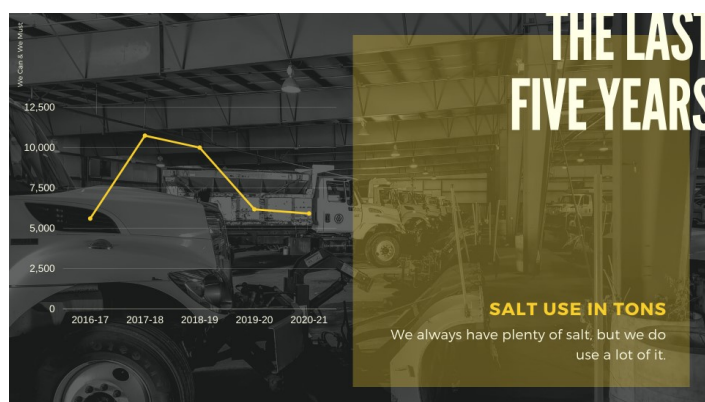


Now we'll look at the different storm intensities and how we respond to each of those. First is a minor event which would be a trace up to one inch of snow and on these we'll have a crew treating bridges and potentially more depending on the forecast and temperatures. Then we have a moderate event which would be one to three inches of snow. We'll be treating hot routes and secondaries on these and we may move into neighborhoods on the higher end. Then we have a heavy event which would be three to six inches of snow and with these amounts we'll be plowing and treating all routes. Finally, we have a snow emergency. This would be six inches of snow or more. By ordinance, the Director of Public Works can declare an emergency at any of these levels, but it will most likely be at this higher snowfall amount.

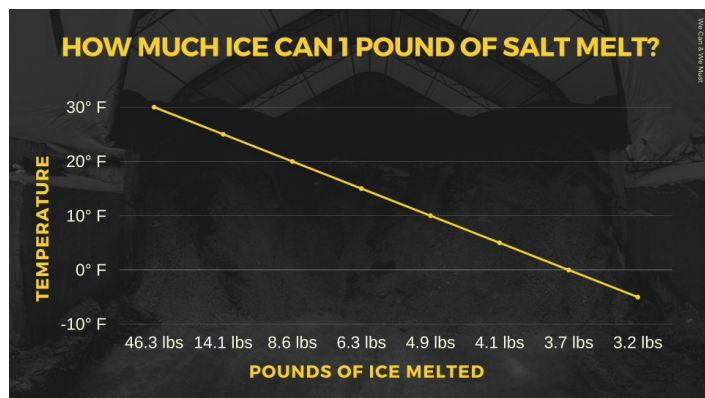
A snow emergency means that until the emergency is terminated, no vehicles should operate in a manner in which they can become stalled by reason of not being equipped with radial tires, snow tires, or tire chains. It's also likely in conjunction with a snow emergency a parking emergency would also be declared. With this no parking is allowed on designated snow routes and all vehicles must be removed within two hours of that declaration. This is to allow plow operators the ability to restore traction to the roads as safely and efficiently as possible. I will also point out that these emergencies are rare so we don't declare them unless absolutely necessary. The last one we declared was in November of 2018. Also, with any of these events treatments could change depending on the forecast and temperatures. Finally, I would like to point out on this slide along with Fleet Services, we receive a lot of assistance from Parks & Rec and Water Pollution Control and also Building & Logistics conducts snow removal operations as well.



On the next slide we'll look at the total cost for winter weather operations. This graph shows a five-year trend of those costs. These costs are directly related to the number of events as well as the accumulation totals. In 2020 and 2021 winter season we had 11 events which included a February stretch of 10 consecutive days with highs below 15 degrees, so that was especially challenging for us.



On the next slide we'll look at average of salt usage. Again, this is related to the number of events and accumulation totals. You will see a fairly large drop in salt usage over the last two years, two seasons. This isn't necessarily due to less events, but it's directly from us calibrating the spreaders. Our team calibrating the spreaders ensures the proper amount of salt is being applied to roads and results in less wasted materials.



On this next slide we will show—you can see how much one pound of salt can melt—how much ice one pound of salt melts so at different temperatures you see it varies, drops down tremendously. So, if you see Dave put out a Facebook post that says we’re going to be getting snow or ice and have super cold temperatures, salt’s going to be less effective. This is what we’re referring to. Salt still works, it just reacts slower and can be less effective. Now we’ll go back to Dave Reno and he’s going to talk about some communications you may see from us throughout the winter.

## COMMUNICATION MATTERS

### HOW DO WE REACH OUR COMMUNITY?

- We go where they already are
- UG TV
- Neighborhood groups
- Business associations
- Public Schools
- Facebook & Nextdoor
- FAQs, interactive maps, helpful hints, policies & more online at [www.wycokck.org/Snow](http://www.wycokck.org/Snow)

**Mr. Reno** said the snow crew stays pretty busy every year and although no snowstorm is exactly the same, the way we talk about snow removal operations doesn’t change a whole lot. KCK is a diverse community in more ways than one. When it comes to gathering information folks use a variety of resources so our team has to communicate through a variety of different channels. We play videos on YouTube TV, we use social platforms like Facebook and Nextdoor and we also post articles on the UG website and maintain a dedicated snow removal page at [wycokck.org//snow](http://wycokck.org//snow). You can access this page year-round to view FAQ’s, interactive route maps, download helpful hints and, of course, read the snow and ice removal policy that governs how winter weather operations work.

We also attend neighborhood group meetings. Vinnie and I were at one earlier today. We speak to business associations and we provide school districts with regular updates to help them keep kiddos safe and make decisions about snow days.



So, speaking of schools, we also like to engage kids and have some fun whenever it's possible which is what you see in this photo. Many thanks to Mrs. Bend at Silver City Elementary School for coordinating this season's snow plow painting. All of the school students work together to create a mural and in their words this mural serves as a visual representation of both their school community and the larger Argentine community. It was a great project. They did a great job and we really are excited to see it out pushing snow this season. I'll hand it back over to Vinnie and he's going to talk a little bit about what we have planned for the future on the snow removal front.



**Mr. Billaci** said I'm happy to share some of the projects we have going that will help us out during winter weather. The first we'll talk about is salt brine. We've talked about this one before, but this is one of the most exciting projects that I've been involved in and it's been the definition of teamwork watching this come together. The Street Division has had a lot of assistance from the

Park Department, Fleet, Water Pollution Control, Engineering, and Building and Logistics. This project will allow us to store and produce salt brine in-house and we will be able to pre-treat before storms more efficiently. Many have seen the white lines on highway, bridges leading up to a snow or ice event, that is KDOT or KTA pre-treating with salt brine and that's exactly what we will be doing. This will allow us all the benefits of pre-treating while also using a fraction of the salt we have in the past. In the future with this program, we will expand to all trucks and we will have the ability to pre-wet all salt as it's being spread out of the trucks. Pre-wetting will again reduce salt usage and allows us to fight storms more efficiently as it allows salt to activate immediately.

Another project we have in the works is pavement sensors. These will be pavement temperature sensors spread across the county which will allow us the ability to check pavement temperatures in real time, so this is especially important leading up to the beginning stages of an event. I think we go back to Dave here for some ways the community can help.



**Mr. Reno** said these are just a few things that you can do during the winter that really do help speed up snow removal efforts, but also help keep you safe and help keep drivers safe. First up, avoid driving during storms. The fewer vehicles that there are on the road, the faster and more efficiently crews can work. So, really, if you don't have to be out, just stay home. Second, avoid parking on the street whenever possible. We know that's not always for folks and that's okay, but if you can move your vehicle off the street, please do so. It helps speed things up and it also helps us clear more of your street. Third, secure your mailbox. Snow is heavy and if your mailbox isn't properly secured, the snow that rolls off the snow plow will absolutely knock it over. Fourth, when you're clearing your driveway and this is if you're facing the street, push your snow to the right side of your driveway. This is going to help reduce the amount of how that gets pushed back into

your driveway when a plow goes by. Lastly, please don't play in the large snow piles or sled in the street. Drivers just cannot always see you and we certainly don't want to see anyone get injured if they're out having a good time.



Before we finish up, Vinnie and I are going to jump into a quick Q&A. I'm just going to read off a couple of questions that we often hear from the community and Vinnie is going to give us some real solid answers.

So, Vinnie, why isn't that snow truck plowing the street? **Mr. Billaci** said depending on the event and accumulation totals, we may not be plowing at that time or it could be the driver is traveling to their assigned route to plow there.

**Mr. Reno** said why is there snow blocking my driveway? **Mr. Billaci** said this is definitely not something we do intentionally, but as you mentioned, if you're looking out to the street, if you shovel that snow to the right side of drive, that can help prevent the plow driver from carrying that back through. Also, plows have to make numerous passes down each street to clear it so waiting for the plow to completely finish your road before shoveling can help this as well.

**Mr. Reno** said this one has actually happened to me personally. What knocked my mailbox over? **Mr. Billaci** said in many cases that answer is the snow knocked it over. Snow can be quite heavy especially when you think of an entire lane of snow being cleared at once, so it's very important to make sure your mailbox is sturdy enough to withstand that weight coming—the weight of the snow coming off the plow.

**Mr. Reno** said last question, why is that snowplow not applying salt to the road? **Mr. Billaci** said we may be plowing only at that time or the operator could be heading to their assigned route or could even be heading back to the shop to refill with material.

**Mr. Reno** said before I hand it back over to Jeff, I just want to remind everyone who's watching that you can always learn more about snow removal operations online at [wycokck.org/snow](http://wycokck.org/snow) and if you have to report a service issue, the fastest most efficient way to do that is by dialing 311 or by visiting [mywyco.wycokck.org](http://mywyco.wycokck.org). Jeff, I'll hand it back over to you.

**Mr. Fisher** said we have some really good men and women doing this work. They do a really good job and sometimes it's very challenging and even stressful especially on the driver. We appreciate all their hard work and we will be happy to answer any questions.

**Mayor Garner** asked are there any questions or comments from the Commission?

**Commissioner Ramirez** said thank you Jeff and your staff for everything you do especially for our snow removal. That was one of the things that I noticed and commented when I first came on the Commission is how well our city does on snow removal and how efficient it is so thank you for all that you do. I noticed in our sister city, KCMO, I see them doing their streets, but for some reason I just feel like we do it more efficient and better. We're always out there giving out information about what we're doing, so thank you for that.

The question I had and it's very exciting, the temperature sensors. How is that deployed, how does that work? I'm very curious. **Mr. Billaci** said there are a couple different styles. You can have in-road like a pug is what they call it, in-road temperature sensors or there's also some that are infrared that would be off of a pole mounted which is probably what we're going to look at getting, then you don't have to worry about replacing them with mill and overlays when you do those. It'll more likely be the infrared and it kind of looks like traffic cameras, similar.

**Mayor Garner** asked, any further questions or comments from the Commission? I would just like to say thank you for everything you all do. I know it's a challenge, especially when you're fighting mother nature and sometimes mother nature can be unpredictable, but you all do an awesome job, even against the odds that are out there and so thank you for what you do from the leadership team as well as the crews that are out there on the front lines when those type of events happen, so thank you.

**MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED  
THE MEETING AT 6:34 p.m.**

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Brett A. Deichler  
Unified Government Clerk

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January 27, 2022