

# EL DORADO

## K A N S A S

TO: City Commission  
FROM: David Dillner, City Manager  
SUBJ: Weekly Report  
DATE: March 25, 2022

### **Items of Note:**

- The City will have to wait to see if it receives a Building a Stronger Economy (BASE) grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce. The department released a statement on Friday saying, *“Due to the extraordinary response of the BASE program and the limitations of available funding, it is taking longer than expected to make a final determination on award selections. As mentioned previously, we expected to announce awardees no earlier than today. The Department of Commerce is planning for an announcement of BASE Grant awardees within the next 10 days. Thank you for your continued patience and interest in the BASE program.”* We will continue to wait patiently.
- A debate started in Congress this past week concerning a possible claw back of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from state and local governments. Senate Republicans expressed a desire to require states and local governments to pay back about \$7 billion in ARPA funds. The cause for consternation stems from the lack of spending of the funds from state and local governments. According to an effort to track how local governments are spending the dollars, some 152 monitored cities and counties have decided what to do with only 49% of their ARPA allocations. Of course, the City designated its funds as “revenue losses” to allow it to spend funds on general government purposes. The City tentatively plans to use ARPA funds as matching funds in the event it receives grants for economic development programs. This issue will be monitored in case changes are made that effect unspent funds.
- The City made its annual sales tax rebate payment of \$24,781 to Cody Foster Motors. This is the largest rebate paid out since 2016. The payment rebates the dealership for a percentage of the sales taxes generated from its sales during the prior year. The original agreement, approved by the City in 2013, provided an incentive for the dealership to remain in El Dorado. To date, the City has paid out a total of \$129,362 with an average annual payment of \$12,936. The agreement will sunset with the final payment in 2027 or when the City pays out an aggregate amount of \$300,000, whichever occurs first.
- The Butler County Appraiser approved the City’s request to include 737 N. Gordy Street in the City’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Silvergate Investments, LLC, the property owner, requested consideration of the property for the rebate program. The City previously razed a structure on the property and then sold it to the Silvergate Investments, LLC several months following demolition. The City accepted other properties with

similar circumstances into the program, so the request was submitted to the County Appraiser for consideration.

- The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) announced its strategy for pursuing competitive grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). KDOT will focus on maximizing Kansas' likelihood of success. About 40% of BIL funding will be through competitive grants. The federal government has indicated grant applications that benefit multiple communities/states and those that connect and build toward long-term priorities across the state will be the most competitive. With this in mind, KDOT's strategy for pursuing and supporting federal BIL grants for **highway modernization and expansion projects** is focused projects in the development/construction pipeline. Butler County does not have any highway modernization and expansion projects in the pipeline, although improvements to the North Junction in Wichita is included. This interchange, while not in the corporate limits of El Dorado, benefits the community by improving maneuverability and accessibility of the region's transportation system.
- Governor Kelly recently announced the addition of \$50 million for affordable housing through a Governor's budget amendment. The additional funding for affordable housing will establish the Rural Housing Revolving Loan Program to be administered by the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation. This housing trust fund will be the first of its kind in Kansas, and is supported by a broad coalition of rural Kansas stakeholders who understand the need for additional tools to increase investment in areas where market rates underestimate the strength and potential of rural Kansas to innovate and grow. Staff will monitor this development and determine how this resource may be accessed for housing needs in El Dorado.
- The Parks and Recreation Department has twenty lifeguards hired for the upcoming summer pool season. Fifteen lifeguards require training, which the department is currently coordinating. The department plans to manage the pool with a pool manager and two co-managers. These manager positions will be part-time and will allow for flexibility throughout the season. The pool is scheduled for open on May 28, and will be closed on Mondays except for May 30 (Memorial Day) and July 4 (Independence Day). Keep your fingers crossed that the pump and internal systems start up properly in the coming weeks.
- The EPA will require the Public Utilities Department to begin sampling for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and lithium next year. There are presently no federal regulatory limits for these two water supply contaminants, although it is likely the federal government will impose limits in the future. Additional regulatory limits means increased treatment expenses as the City will likely need to upgrade its systems to meet new requirements. The Public Utilities Department is monitoring this development so we can anticipate the changing regulatory environment.
- Several elements in the treatment plants require replacement in the coming years as these elements begin to reach their useful life. The Public Utilities Department plans to make several replacements in variable frequency drives (VFDs), actuators, and blower motors over the next few years. These components often come at a high price, so the department is putting together a plan to spread these expenses out over several years.

- The City plans to implement a community service program in the municipal court as an alternative to fines and jail. Many perpetrators cannot pay fines in a timely manner, so a community service option will give these individuals a way to repay the community for violating municipal law while also providing a benefit to the community. The City anticipates starting this program in the second quarter.
- The City will open community storm shelters at City Hall (thunderstorm/tornado warning) and at the Senior Center (tornado warning).

### **Things to Think About:**

- Maryland will end four-year degree requirements for thousands of state jobs, Governor Larry Hogan announced this week. The move comes as the state, like other public sector employers, struggles with workforce shortages across its agencies. Hogan’s office described dropping the degree requirements as a “first-in-the-nation workforce development initiative” and said there are more than 300 job postings now open that would no longer require four-year diplomas. *Source: Route Fifty*

### **Personnel Update:**

- *Vacant and currently advertised positions:* Public Works Maintenance Worker (5) and Assistant Court Clerk.
- April Kitterman, who serves as Assistant Court Clerk, turned in her two-week notice to accept a job at another agency. Her last day of employment is April 7, 2022.
- Marie Vergara, who served as Wastewater Superintendent, resigned her position to accept a job in another community. Her last day of employment was March 21, 2022. The Public Utilities Department plans to assess the department structure before advertising the position.

### **Commission Calendar:**

- *Upcoming City Commission Items (subject to change):*
  - **March 30 Work Session** – Municipal Court Overview
  - **April 4 Regular Meeting** – Authorize Condemnation Proceedings; Sewer Television Equipment Purchase; Hazardous Materials Apparatus Purchase; Lease Agreements for Excavator and Track Loader (Utilities)
  - **April 13 Work Session** – Tall Weeds and Grass Ordinance Amendment
- *Pending Items (Items to be scheduled for upcoming meeting once completed):* Street Cut Ordinance; Food Vendor Ordinance; Transient Vendor Ordinance; Business Park Re-platting and Rezoning

### **Other Events of Interest:**

- **March 29** – Downtown Electric Project Public Meeting, 5:30 pm (Civic Center)