

## Mayor Year End Report - 2020

2020 was an unusual and eventful year. As Mayor, I began my term with a whimper instead of a bang and came down with influenza B and stayed home to swear in over the phone. That set the tone for much of our year it seems because by March the COVID-19 pandemic had arrived and we were dealing with a bigger health crisis throughout the country.

**COVID** - By March – the pandemic hit – we had to cancel one meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> but by March 27<sup>th</sup> we went live video with an admittedly rough meeting and by the next meeting we had most of the bugs worked out for video streaming and were able to meet our open meeting requirements and keep our people safe. Peoples Telecom, helped out by donating to us the ability to host enough people on a conference call from city hall to accommodate our needs until we could meet in person with some safety guidelines in place.

Here are some highlights of actions and responses to the Pandemic within our city:

- First, we locked the city hall doors and restricted access to limit exposure while maintaining all services.
- We had daily contact with emergency management to ensure we were following all guidelines and communicating those out to citizens and businesses.
- Made phone calls and in person visits to most of the businesses in town to make sure they were aware of guidelines
- Converted the Community center to Government use only – City meetings and voting.
- Other changes were:
  - o The pool remained closed for 2020.
  - o Some of the park facilities and equipment were closed for a period of time.
  - o There was an early out for school.
  - o The usual graduation ceremonies were postponed.
  - o Prom was postponed.
  - o No Swanfest for 2020.
  - o Blast in the park was modified to a public firework display on July 11<sup>th</sup>

But our responses to the crisis in many ways made us all proud

- o Senior and Kids meals - provided daily by volunteers at the library. Donations were accepted but these meals were provided with no expectation or promised funds and were no cost to the people getting the meals. Many people helped make this happen but Retia and Greg Grant along with the library staff and other volunteers spearheaded this project and together they made such a difference.
- o CDBG-CV GRANT \$20,000 - The city applied for and received a grant that allowed us to help the library meal group and the La Cygne Food pantry recover a portion of the costs that they incurred during the crisis.
- o Our businesses and churches had to adapt also to changing situations and orders from the government and they did so with grace and ingenuity. And our citizens got creative with drive-by celebrations.
- o By the year's end we had experienced and worked through a COVID-19 case in our city staff and kept our operations going throughout it all.

**Storm on May 4<sup>th</sup>** - On May 4<sup>th</sup> La Cygne was hit with major wind and hail which caused extensive damage to most structures in our city. Today, you will see new roofs all over town, many renovations, fresh paint and facelifts.

With all the challenges the city faced we still accomplished a lot this year.

**A few changes instituted right away were:**

- Changed the City council meetings to.
  - More work done in Committee to streamline council meetings.
  - Written Officer Reports.
  - Purchase order requests – no verbal requests for money without supporting documentation.
- Redesign of City Hall: historical pictures, counter, Mayors office area.

**Library expansion** – The City Council voted to help out by waiving the \$1,682.96 building permit fee for the \$1,637,957 addition to the library (the permit fee was based on \$50 for the first \$5000 and \$1 for every \$1000 thereafter).

**New Police Chief** - We hired a new police chief, Tina Fenoughty.

**Other personnel changes** and additions included:

- Katie Russell – Clerk intern duties include: Social media, receptionist.
- Allison Fox – Part time officer/codes.
- Craig Haley - Part time officer.
- Keith Stoker - Left the Council.
- Logan Smith - Joined the Council.
- Jesse Merrill – Public works.
- Bruce Snyder – Cemetery caretaker.

**Some of the highlights of the city business this year.**

- Finishing the water project punch list and paying the bill.
  - After action review of the water project.
- Leased land for a Verizon.
- KORA KOMA training for boards, council and city employees.
- New computers and upgraded system for city hall.
- Administrative policy for Professional Standards for board members.
- Training reimburse policy.
- Revised our purchasing policy.
- Revised the gas, sewer and water utility policies.
- Adopted a Nepotism policy.
- Trunk or Treat sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.
- Christmas on Broadway sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.
- Outdoor lighting contest sponsored by the La Cygne Community Park Board.
- Two elections – Primary in August and General in November
- 2020 Census

- Sewer line repair under the railroad tracks – completed.
- Sold the city property that housed the old water tower to Beachner’s Grain.

Still underway are

- Revising Article 22 – off street parking facilities/access points – almost complete.
- First steps of sewer rehabilitation.
  - o Preliminary design.
  - o Temporary/interim financing.
  - o Right-of-way and utility easements.
  - o Manhole survey.
- CCLIP project to widen the road at the intersection of Market and Industrial Parkway.
- Water purchase agreement with Linn Valley Lakes – incomplete.
- Working on revising cemetery policy.

**Public works**

- New t-shirts and clothing allowance program adopted in place of the unwanted uniforms of the past.
- Formed and implemented a maintenance program for all city equipment.
- Public works can now monitor the water plant during off hours from the cell phones.
- Added the trash compactor employee to public works list of employees.
- Water settling ponds project research.
- Addressing sewer pond issues.
- Coordinating with new business ventures for utility needs.
- CCLIP project utility concerns.

Big success was

- Codee Blanchett - certified Class 2 water – December – Passed first attempt.
- Jeff Chaplain – certified Wastewater 1 – December – Passed first attempt.

(Eliminating the need to contract out for a trained operator)

**Fire Department**

- Fire department Christmas Sharing tree project.
- Hot dogs for Halloween in the park – 15<sup>th</sup> year.
- New Fire Station project preliminary design.

**Police and Court**

- Purchased animal traps and formed a policy regarding those traps.
- Animal control policy developed and ready for approval by council.
- Dog Days July 25<sup>th</sup>.
- New judge, Sheila Schultz and municipal court changes.
  - o Zoom court initiated – starting January 2021.
- Two Grants submitted by Corporal Kurtis West, one awarded.
- Working on fee schedule and administration policies.

## **Public Building Commission**

- Refinance the 2009 series pool revenue bond.
- Public Building Commission to research the conditions of the Community Building and costs for repairs.
- Community Building survey dispersed to the community.

## **Boards**

### **Planning and Zoning:**

#### Personnel Changes:

- Appointed Devin Canada and Brendon O’Rielly.
- Terry Weitman resigned from the board.
- Allison Fox will replace Connie Gore and Tina Fenoughty as the city representative to this Commission.

#### Highlights of business conducted:

- Pie Pantry - food trailer business – developed and approved a conditional use permit.
- 417 W Grand St – rezoned, conditional use permit in progress.
- 317 Walnut St – application submitted for rezoning or other consideration to allow use.
- Manufactured home parks and RV articles being reviewed.
- Zoning Appeals Board – appointed Chelsie Stainbrook, Randy Broyles, Shawn Hite, Ron Wier and Keith Stoker.

#### Future

- Article 18 and RV regulations.
- Tiny homes consider special zone to allow.
- Annexing possibilities.
- Condemnations.

### **La Cygne Community Park Board**

- Swimming pool closed for 2020.
- Modified Blast in the Park to a special fireworks display for the public on July 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### Personnel changes:

- Appointed Linda Elder and Tony Stallings to the board, Beth Smith and Leslie Mitzner resigned from the board.
- Park maintenance operator Frances Campbell resigned and Jim Johnson was hired.

## Going into 2021

- Storm water survey.
  - Identify areas of concern (if anyone sees water pooling after rains please contact Jodi and add it to our list).
- Sewer rehabilitation project.
- Annual meeting for boards and committees for recognition and training.
- Town Hall meetings.
- Street project planning.
- Water treatment settling ponds.
- New firehouse station.
- Christmas street lighting project.
  - Funding from franchise fee and from the Lincoln township.
  - Electrician repairs of outlets on the poles.
  - New decorations purchased for our market street poles.
  - Storage for our Christmas décor, for parks, street and city hall.