

Citizen Newsletter

City of Tonganoxie, KS

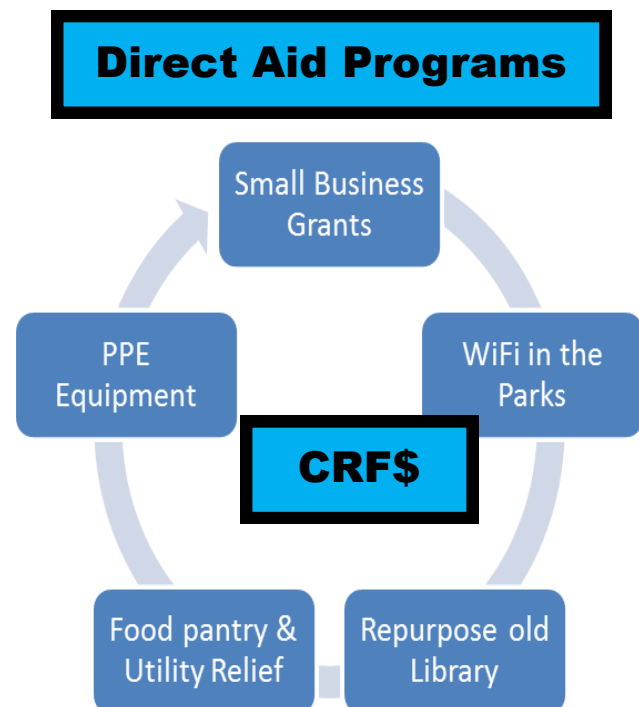
September 2020



CARES Act Spending Plan

As it pertains to the Federal CARES Act Relief Funding (CRF), the State of Kansas chose to send allocations, in the majority of instances, directly to the Counties, and instructed the Counties to work with municipalities, school districts, etc. As such, in June 2020, Leavenworth County staff notified the City of Tonganoxie that we would be receiving a total of \$1,049,157.34 in CRF, based on the available balance of CRF the County received and as allocated by the City's population. The City Council considered the City's Spending Plan during open Council meetings on July 6 and 20, 2020, and elected to allocate approximately \$52k to Reimbursement for COVID related items the City had already used funds for, and allocated approximately \$997k to a variety of Direct Aid programs, including the following: small business grants (approximately \$387k), renovations and technology upgrades to the old Library building to relocate City Council Chambers and Municipal Court there (\$200k), enhanced WiFi in outdoor areas including the Library parking area and Chieftain, VFW and Gallagher Parks (\$175k), PPE and safety equipment (\$100k), Food pantry supplies (\$20k) and Utility Relief Funds (\$10k). The City forwarded the Spending Plan to the Leavenworth County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), and the BOCC approved the Spending Plan on August 12, 2020. At the time of this article, the BOCC also notified us that all the eligible funds must be expended by November 20, 2020, or they would be returned to the County for reallocation prior to the State's deadline in December 2020.

The City has begun efforts to market and promote the Direct Aid programs, and are working with Community partners to submit qualified requests to the County. Although the BOCC has already approved our Spending Plan, each request for funds must be submitted to and approved by the BOCC. The timeframe between the August 12th approval and the November 20th deadline represents only 100 days, therefore City staff is trying to expedite all these efforts in the hopes of providing relief throughout the Community.



Development Activity—Investment in the Community

After opening the new Elementary School in August 2015, in February 2016, USD 464 made a decision to sell the former Elementary School at 304 Shawnee St. Although the original purchaser wasn't able to redevelop the property, and the building began to deteriorate, a group of local investors was able to purchase the site. The new owners began and completed demolition of the old building, and by August 2018, the City was able to purchase 2 acres for the new Library site.



Over \$10M invested in Redevelopment

During the timeframe that USD 464 was making decisions about the old building, the City began a series of planning initiatives. In September 2016, the City Council adopted a Strategic Plan, which included ensuring that Tonganoxie provided a variety of housing choices to attract and retain people of all income levels and stages of life.



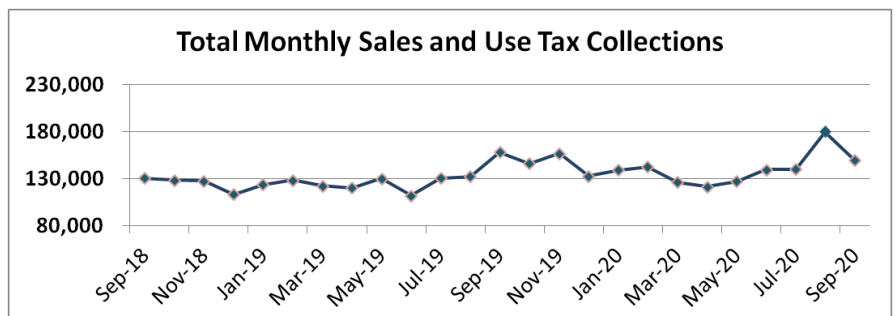
Subsequently, from October 2016 to January 2018, the City updated the Comprehensive Plan, which establishes

guidelines for the future growth of a community, and included providing for higher density residential in transitional areas extending from the downtown corridor. In June 2017, the City completed a Housing Needs Analysis, and the Kansas Secretary of Commerce approved Rural Housing Incentive Districts (RHID) throughout the City. As a result of these planning efforts, Sunflower Development Group and Prairie Fire Development were able to purchase the remaining 2.5 acres of the site for the Schoolyard Townhomes. Schoolyard Townhomes is a 32 unit development, comprised of two and three bedroom units; it is currently under construction and plans to open Spring 2021.

The end result is a joint effort of both private and public financing and represents more than \$10M of reinvestment in downtown Tonganoxie.

FY 2020 Sales Tax performance

As the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on numerous businesses and employment, we continue to track the performance of both the City and County sales tax. Despite the overall negative market influences, local sales tax collections are holding steady. This can be most attributed to an increase in local shopping activity, as well as the increased amounts of compensating use taxes collected when more items are ordered online or over the phone and delivered directly to local residents or businesses. For example, the number of businesses paying compensating use tax to the City of Tonganoxie has increased by 84% compared to last year. Making the choice to shop local or take advantage of free or low cost delivery options from outside companies can directly provide more resources for local services like Police and Fire as well as infrastructure ranging from streets to the new public library.



Fire Department Initiatives

The Fire Department is committed to making Tonganoxie as safe as possible for its business owners and their customers. The department will begin its annual inspection cycle for all registered businesses in the city. Inspections, which are scored during the city's ISO review, allow the department to maintain its current ISO Rating of 3, with the long-term goal of lowering it even more, thus saving everyone in the community money. The ISO Rating is used calculate how well-equipped fire departments are able to respond to emergencies within our community. The more well-equipped your fire department is to put out a fire, the less likely your house or business will be destroyed by fire. An ISO fire insurance rating is a score from 1 to 10 that indicates how well-protected your community is by the fire department. In the ISO rating scale, a lower number is better: 1 is the best possible rating, while a 10 means the fire department did not meet the ISO's minimum requirements. The department has 4 certified inspectors which should help accommodate business owner's busy schedules.

TFD is also participating in Firefighter I and II training for firefighters in Leavenworth County. The department is providing up to 5 instructors at any given time. Individuals completed Firefighter I in the spring and are now completing a modified program, including on line and hands on learning to complete their Firefighter II training. Individuals are tested by the State of Kansas after completion with a current success rate of 95%. This an effort to help facilitate a coordinated cooperative training program within the county to assist individuals who may not be able to attend traditional college classes.



On September 9, 2020, TFD conducted vehicle extrication training and invited several other neighboring Fire departments to participate. This continues a large scale effort to promote partnership County-wide and ensure proper training and professional standards are implemented and followed.

Police Department Initiatives

The Tonganoxie Police Department implements multiple initiatives based on their commitment to a strong Community oriented policing philosophy. During the COVID 19 quarantine, officers drove by numerous houses during children birthday parties to help kids celebrate their special day. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) - TPD offers an evaluation to any community members that are interested in a security evaluations relating to a business or residence. Nightly Door Hangers—TPD Officers working the night shift leave paper hangers on both residential and business locations, indicating that the property had been personally checked and offer an opportunity to visit about findings. Crime Stoppers is still a great success and is a metro wide program that provides the “P3 Tip” program for high school and middle school students. In 2019-2020, the program helped police work in concert with school faculty to deliver services to multiple students, as well as react to important crime tips. TPD partnered with students and faculty to create the high school’s “Chieftain Watch.” Chieftain Watch is a safety committee that empowers students to recognize potential dangers in school, then work with school faculty and the School Resource Officer to create solutions. Lead to Read—Officers read to grade schoolers each week. Lifesaver Program—an initiative that centers on at-risk individuals with cognitive conditions who tend to wander from home, which began with the Tonganoxie Business Association within the City, was expanded to a County wide program.

How to Contact your Council Members



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Use of Grant funds to repair Sewer Crossing

On September 18, 2019 the City received notice that the application for the Kansas Department of Commerce CDBG Urgent Need grant funding support to complete repairs to an aerial sanitary sewer encasement damaged due to flooding in March 2019 had been approved. Since the damages occurred, the City developed a grant application, approved contracts for grant administration services and engineering services, and cleared concrete debris from the site of the damage to mitigate the risk of additional damage to the sanitary sewer aerial line. In continuation of the project to repair the sanitary sewer aerial crossing, located at 4th Street and vacated River Street, the City had to enter into a contract for construction services. The construction services contract represents the largest share of the approximately \$350,000 in expenditures for the project and is entirely funded by grant proceeds. The design was completed by BG Consultants Inc, which are the City's Engineer, and the construction was done by Infrastructure Solutions, with Western Consultants serving as the City's grant administrator as required by the CDBG program.



April 2019



May 2019



August 2020