

MINUTES
AMERICUS CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026
CITY HALL 7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Dustin Wright. Council members present were NUESSEN, HARMON, HINRICHS, and GERLEMAN. BURTON was absent. Also present was City Clerk Dodie Doudna and City Attorney Steve Atherton

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Duane Billinger, Deb Ghare, Kelly Ghare, Levi Young, Austin Hoagland, Tim Burton.

ADOPT THE AGENDA: Moved by NUESSEN to adopt the agenda. Motion seconded by HARMON. 4-0 vote

1. POLICE DEPARTMENT CLOSURE: Open meeting to questions/comments from the public

1. **Who will cover?** *NUESSEN: Problem we have run into in the past is having coverage. We don't want to continue allotting your tax dollars for something you are not getting service for. Coverage will come from Lyon Co. Sheriff's Department, which tax dollars already go to that so no additional dollars will be taken.*
2. **We bought a car and wrap it 6 months ago and you tell us it is about tax dollars; we couldn't have foreseen it 6 months ago that we were going to close the department?** *NUESSEN: The old car was not running. We had to do something at the time, thought it was the right thing to do. We also had officers.*
3. **Why don't we have officers now?** *ATHERTON: That's a personnel question.*
4. **Did we do exit interviews when they left?** *HINRICHS: We had a survey go out to past employees, all the officers said they don't have the time to work for us. ATHERTON: Make more with overtime in Emporia than they can make with us, we can't match it. NUESSEN: Also, a feeling of Lyon Co is their number 1 job and we are number 2. We were unsuccessful in trying to hire a full-time officer, we believe because we cannot be competitive with pay.*
5. **So, you already pay the Sheriff's Department?** *NUESSEN: Tax dollars pay for the Sheriff's Department.*
6. **Our tax dollars pay here as well?** *NUESSEN: Yes, that is correct.*
7. **Now what happens with that money and how are you going to cover ordinances and those kinds of things because the county can't?** *NUESSEN: that is correct, yes.*
8. **Is there a plan? We are going to end this Tuesday at the meeting, and won't have any kind of code services?** *ATHERTON: that is something that will be discussed Tuesday, code enforcement will be maintained. NUESSEN: Correct, we will look to hire code enforcement officer.*
9. **Do you have a plan in place for code enforcement?** *ATHERTON: We will have to hire code enforcement officer, which will be a part-time position, similar to every other small community in this area. They don't have law enforcement.*
10. **But we haven't looked into getting code enforcement before we demolish the police department?** *ATHERTON: we don't have officers working to do code enforcement.*
11. **We don't have any at all?** *NUESSEN: No HINRICHS: There is reporting to the state and KBI that is required to be done by officers and those are not getting done.*
12. **Are there qualifications required to be an officer?** *ATHERTON: Yes, PLTC and have to have hours.*

13. **What is the difference between a code enforcement officer doing the work and Police officer?** NUESSEN: Code enforcement officer isn't required to have all the qualifications of a police officer, no arrest authority.
14. **What is the response time from Sheriffs department?** WRIGHT: it's kind of irrelevant because we have only be getting an hour or two a month from our officers. The odds of them being here when you call is zero. ATHERTON: They keep it staffed, spread around the county. HARMON: we haven't had an officer during day hours for quite some time; you won't see a change. NUESSEN: most of the hours are overnight hours.
15. **What happens to the funds already allocated for that?** NUESSEN: Those can be reallocated to other areas. Could potentially make mill levy go down if all money is not utilized.
16. **How long was the deliberation process, when did this start to pick up in conversation?** NUESSEN: More than a year ago. WRIGHT: Coverage continued to be sporadic. NUESSEN: As far back as COVID, we started noticing officers retiring from Lyon Co., that left us out.
17. **Are you going to repurpose the car that you have as code enforcement instead?** WRIGHT: Not sure, we will talk about that. ATHERTON: Likewise with equipment.
18. **Do you have an estimated amount of money that equipment is worth?** WRIGHT: has to auctioned as public property. ATHERTON: We will need to check on firearms and radios for restrictions of sale. HARMON: could repurpose radios for maintenance. NUESSEN: Some can't be sold to public.
19. **With conversations with the Sheriff's office, did they seem comfortable without putting in any additional resources to have the right coverage to come out here? Are they going to stick with the same resources or invest to make sure covered?** NUESSEN: stick with what they have, like we said for at least a year we haven't had daytime coverage anyway. Just like all the other small towns around. WRIGHT: We hope everyone understands we didn't come to this conclusion easily, we procrastinated hoping it got better, it just didn't. NUESSEN: it got worse.
20. **Any talk with other communities to hire full time and split between the towns?** NUESSEN: The smaller communities can't afford it. ATHERTON: Most don't have courts either, or just code violations.

Motioned to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. by NUESSEN. Motion seconded by HINRICHS. 4-0 vote

Dustin R. Wright, Mayor

Nicky Nuessen, Council President

Danny Gerleman

Britney Hinrichs

Kayla Burton

Bill Harmon

