



Media Release

From: Shane J. Shields, City Manager

Date: October 27, 2020

Re: Information – City of Wellington SPARK Funding

The State of Kansas in June, through the State's SPARK Task Force, distributed \$4,743,639 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to Sumner County to help address the health and economic challenges inflicted by COVID-19. Of that amount \$156,976.03 was designated by Sumner County for the City of Wellington. In addition to that amount, reimbursement for expenses eligible per the program guidelines that occurred from March 1, 2020, to July 31, 2020, could be submitted. The City submitted and received a reimbursement amount of \$36,642.06 for that period. Reimbursed expenses included overtime for essential workers (EMS), payroll costs for Emergency Covid Leave, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, personal protective equipment, technology hardware for remote work, and protective barriers.

The \$156,976.03 is for use for eligible expenses and other eligible projects between July 31, 2020, and December 30, 2020. The funds are being used for additional sanitizing and cleaning equipment, personal protective equipment, other technology hardware, and other equipment items that will reduce physical contact for employees and between employees and the public. The funding will also be used for the Memorial Auditorium air conditioning since it was determined to be an eligible project.

The consideration of the Memorial Auditorium project came about by an inquiry from the Chamber. The Wellington Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB manages the Memorial Auditorium for events and usage. The Chamber inquired about the air conditioning due to several reasons related to helping address health challenges related to COVID-19. The Chamber submitted a letter with the details related to Covid-19. The Chamber had received an inquiry about the use of the Auditorium for physical education classes for home school students. The Kansas Department of Education is recommending unused facilities within the district and community be utilized to spread out students, when necessary. The auditorium can also be used as a larger facility for social distance for conducting blood drives. The City, as owner of the building and supporting the idea, submitted the letter to the Sumner County SPARK Committee for consideration of eligibility. The SPARK Committee submitted the information to the State's Kansas Office of Recovery, Regional Technical Assistance Provider, for input as to usage of SPARK funds. The State response was that the construction (or renovation) expenses proposed qualify for CRF funding because they are reasonable and necessary to respond to the public health emergency by achieving social distancing and enabling compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.

As for the cost of the Memorial Auditorium project, as reported to the City Council at the meeting on October 6, 2020, the cost of the air conditioning units is estimated at \$50,000 and the cost for the necessary electrical work is around \$20,000 for a total cost of approximately \$70,000. That estimate was determined after a quote was recently obtained from a contractor. The project is currently going through the bid process.

Another requirement of the SPARK funding is that funds must be expended by December 30, 2020.