

The Council of the City of Wellington, Kansas, met in a work session with KDOT Aviation on March 9, 2017 at 6:30 p.m., at the Raymond Frye Complex with Mayor Shelley Hansel presiding.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Hansel.

Council members Bill Butts, Vince Wetta, Kelly Hawley, and Jan Korte were present at the meeting. Council members absent were Jim Valentine, and Kip Etter.

Members of the Staff present were, City Manager Shane Shields, Finance Director/City Clerk Carol Mericle, Assistant City Manager/Public Utility Director Jason Newberry, and Building Official Richard Jack.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS

Mayor Hansel called the meeting to order and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves and who they represented. Those in attendance represented Sumner County, City of Wellington, Cowley College, and interested citizens. Mayor Hansel introduced Mr. Rick Hamlin, organizer of tonight's meeting. Mr. Hamlin introduced Lt. Col. (retired) Bob Brock from KDOT Aviation Division. Mr. Brock presented the focus of the meeting as UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) or drones, which is a new industry for Kansas. He told that Kansas has the right environment for economic growth without losing normal protection and property rights. Emergency response and public safety is a top priority before anything else. The need to develop the system correctly is the focus right now. He explained drones could inspect bridges for \$1000, instead of \$4,000-5,000, as it's done now. Our state has approximately 5000 bridges currently so this would lead to a huge cost savings. Mr. Brock added Kansas is known for its floods and tornadoes, so emergency response using drones would help to save lives in these disastrous circumstances. If police and fire had a live video feed they would be able to send and get a quicker response with a drone. He said to drive economic growth in our community it would be beneficial to position Kansas as a national UAS leader. The leading study in the world from 2013 on economic impact for drones had a 13.6 billion dollar impact by 2025. The same study says Kansas is ready to bring in 2.9 billion dollars and create over 3,799 jobs by 2025.

Council member Hawley left the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Mr. Brock added drones will be able to help improve farmer's yield. It is going to be similar to flying a plane over crops and assessing how well did fertilizer work this year. He said using the drones would give us the ability to isolate the need for spraying whole sections of crops. The Research cluster is partnered with WSU/KU/K-State at this time, and in addition to research they are working on field training and making UAS training available in Junior colleges and Tech schools.

Will Ravenstein asked about the rules and regulations of the FAA. Mr. Brock stated that training is the best answer and that need to operate inside of the regulations. He asked for questions from the audience and after discussion, he indicated Wellington would be a great place for this industry with the experience we have from the aircraft industries in our area. Mr. Brock said DJI is the world's largest manufacturer of drones, and it is located in China. Rick Hamlin asked what was needed to get in the business. Mr. Brock answered no runway or huge building is needed. He added that there are medic drones, drones that carry water to fires, drones that do search and rescue in disaster areas, and drones that deliver meds to drop in other countries at this time. The biggest UAS conference this year is in Dallas, TX from May 8-11.

Bob Leftwich asked what Sumner County needs to do to get started. Mr. Brock answered we need to be ready, and decide what are some of the things we are already good at. Such as, there is a lot of aerospace in our community. He added the second thing to consider, if the objective is to bring companies to a local region then the region needs to be prepared with housing available, and be ready to build and pay for it. Mr. Brock stated the need to have information ready to give out to the public.

Drew Fawcett from Blue Chip UAS, showed slides of Wellington's water tower taken with a drone, and a sample video he had previously done with drones. A large commercial drone on display this evening was priced at \$7,500.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried.

Mayor

City Clerk