

When someone has a cardiac emergency and needs CPR, PulsePoint mobile app makes it easier for community to

LEND A HELPING HAND

By Josie Heimsoth

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Community members can support Douglas County fire departments during cardiac emergencies by downloading a mobile app that alerts nearby individuals when someone needs help.

The mobile app, PulsePoint, is a free tool that connects users with real-time emergency alerts in their area. It allows Douglas County residents to assist individuals experiencing cardiac emergencies before professional first responders arrive. Once responders are on the scene, they take over care. The app also helps keep the community informed, encourages quick action, and promotes a safer, more connected community, McKenzie Ezell, chief of staff at Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical, said in an



Adobe Stock Photo

THE PULSEPOINT MOBILE APP alerts people who are near a cardiac emergency that somebody needs help they may be able to provide until emergency services arrive. **BELOW:** A Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical ambulance is pictured on July 5, 2023.

email to the Journal-World.

Ezell said in the email that PulsePoint was first launched for Douglas County fire agencies and the community in 2021, and the service was purchased through

collaborative efforts between the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. The city funded the one-time set-up cost while the county funds the annual reoccurring costs.

LDCFM has been leading the implementation of the PulsePoint project and has been communicating and collaborating with other county first-responder agencies to reach all corners of the county. The county agencies that utilize PulsePoint are LDCFM, Consolidated Fire District No. 1, Baldwin City Fire, Palmyra Fire, Willow Springs Fire and Eudora Fire EMS.

When 911 is called for a suspected cardiac arrest in a public location, the app sends alerts to nearby users, directing them to the victim's location and the closest automated external defibrillator. According to the PulsePoint website, the goal is to notify individuals who are within walking distance of the emergency. However, the alert radius can be adjusted based on local needs and response time data.

➤ **APP, 8A**

City leaders to consider approving utility rate increases

Wastewater and water rates would go up by 7.9%

By Bremen Keasey

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Lawrence City Commissioners will consider approving increases to the water and wastewater rates by 7.9% over the next three years.

The commissioners will receive a presentation from the Municipal Services and Operations department tonight that would set those utility rates for 2026, 2027 and 2028 to increase by 7.9% year over year.

The water and wastewater rates are typically set every three years. The last time the commission set those rates was in 2022, and the rates were increased by 8.75% in 2023 10.25% in 2024 and 11% in 2025, as the Journal-World reported.

The current water and wastewater rates for 2025 would cost \$46.53 and \$66.95 per month, respectively, based on a volume charge of 4,000 gallons, according to numbers provided by the city's MSO department. The proposed increase would raise monthly costs for that scenario to \$50.47 and \$72.50 in 2026 — just under \$4 a month more for water and \$5.55 more for wastewater services, respectively.

If the commission adopts the 7.9% increase until 2028, the city projects it will generate an additional \$5.7 million in 2026, \$6.1 million in 2027 and \$6.6 million in 2028.

According to a city memo, the rate increases are necessary in part because wholesale water and wastewater treatment costs, which account for over one-half of the city's total water and wastewater expense annually, are increasing.

Additionally, the city plans to fund over \$105 million in infrastructure projects related to its water and wastewater operations over the next three years. Those projects include improvements to the Kaw River Waste Water Treatment Plant, Wakarusa Biosolids Management and projects that can expand the capacity and growth of the system.

➤ **RATES, 2A**



Chad Lawhorn/Journal-World Photo

Officials targeted at meetings will be on panel on civility, civic discourse

By Kim Callahan

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A panel discussion titled "Bringing Civility Back to Civic Discourse" is scheduled for next month at the Lawrence Public Library and will feature four public officials who've been aggressively targeted by public commenters.

The event, sponsored by the League of Women

Voters, will be from 6 to 7 p.m. on Oct. 6. It will include Lawrence Police Chief Rich Lockhart, Lawrence City Commissioner Amber Sellers, Lawrence school board past president Kelly Jones, Douglas County Commissioner Patrick Kelly and KU law professor Kyle Velte.

Although the flyer for the event doesn't mention it, Lockhart, Sellers, Jones and Kelly have all been targeted by public commenters



Jones



Kelly



Lockhart



Sellers

at government meetings. The commenters have frequently resorted to obscene name calling and disruptive behavior, prompting

most governing bodies in Lawrence to amend their rules, to move the public commenting period to the end of the meeting and, in

some cases, to ban in-person commentary by certain individuals.

The city, school board and county have all been sued multiple times by frequent commenters who claim that their First Amendment speech rights are being violated when they are asked to refrain from obscene and abusive language and personal attacks at government meetings — lawsuits that the

commenters have so far lost.

Several commenters have insisted that they can use sexually graphic language at public meetings because the obscene language appears in library books, drawing no distinction between choosing to read a book in private and having to listen to obscene language at government meetings.

➤ **PANEL, 5A**

