

"We Have Tomorrow – Bright Before Us, Like A Flame."

Langston Hughes



City of Lawrence

The Flame | June 2022

City hires new Director of Municipal Services & Operations

In late April, the City of Lawrence welcomed Melissa Sieben as our new Director of Municipal Services and Operations (MSO). The MSO department is responsible for much of our City's infrastructure, including solid waste, streets and sidewalks, water, wastewater, stormwater and more.

Melissa comes to Lawrence with 23 years of local government experience, having previously served communities in Illinois, Iowa and Kansas. Most recently, she served as Assistant County Administrator at the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas. While there, she provided direct oversight to various operational departments, including Public Works.

Inspiring teamwork is a core part of her dedication to local government service and she enjoys engaging employees in process improvement and innovation.

"I look forward to working with MSO staff and City leadership to implement the goals of the strategic plan and continue to enhance service delivery," Sieben said. "Lawrence is an amazing community and I look forward to being part of this team that is investing in functional and efficient infrastructure!"

As Director of MSO, Melissa will also lead the Connected City outcome of our City's strategic plan.

Cover photo: In April 2022, the City joined Friends of the Kaw for the 8th Annual Kansas River Cleanup in Lawrence.

Get to know Melissa Sieben

Here is a little more information to help you get to know Melissa better.

Hometown: Ames, Iowa – but I was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Places you have lived: Cedar Rapids, Mason, Story City, and Ames, IA; Wheeling, Glendale Heights, and Carol Stream, IL; Lawrence, Gardner, Lenexa, Overland Park, and Kansas City, KS.

Family: Married to Darren Sieben since 2017 and I have a stepdaughter, Emily (25), and two foster kids we are in the process of adopting this summer – Viviana (11) and Akelino (Lino - 9).

Education: Undergraduate from Iowa State University in history with a minor in political science. Master of Public Administration with an emphasis in local government management from the University of Kansas

Favorite sports team(s): Chiefs, Royals, KC Monarchs, Sporting KC, and KC Current

The last book you read: Building Equitable Cities

The last thing you listened to: KMBZ morning news on my drive – I like news.

The last thing you watched: Good Morning America

Favorite holiday: Fourth of July – warm weather, camping, fireworks and family!

Favorite Lawrence restaurant: I haven't yet found a place that I don't like!



Favorite summer activity: Camping and canoeing in Missouri or Arkansas with my husband and kids.

Bucket-list vacation: Slovenia and Croatia, followed by New Zealand

Favorite way to spend a day off: Hiking or biking

What you're most excited for as Director of Municipal Services and Operations: I am excited to work with my new team and community to provide exceptional services and ensure a vibrant built environment into the future.



Regardless of how you celebrate Independence Day, please remember:

Lawrence is a Fireworks-Free City!

For more information, visit lawrenceks.org/fireworks.

Use your water wisely this summer!

Last year, the City implemented an individual inclining block rate methodology for calculating residential customers' water bills. With this new method, it's important to be mindful of smart water usage this summer.

Residential blocks are calculated using each customer's Winter Quarter Average (WQA), which is calculated from each customer's water usage in December, January and February. The WQA is used to calculate monthly water charges for all subsequent months, until a new WQA is calculated in the following year.

This summer, customers' WQA are based on water usage in December 2021, January 2022 and February 2022. For customers who have very low water consumption totals in winter months, a minimum WQA of 3,000 gallons is used.

Billing blocks are determined each month based on a customer's water usage for that month. Residential customers are billed at the Block 1 rate for all consumption up to and including 125% of the WQA. Any usage in a single month that is greater than 125% through 200% of the WQA will be billed at the Block 2 rate. Any usage in a single month above 200% of the WQA will be charged at the Block 3 rate.

More information on this methodology – and a utility billing calculator that allows you to see how this method affects your bill – is available on our website: lawrenceks.org/utility-billing/inclining-block

Water Usage Tips

Kansas summers get HOT and keeping lawns green can use up a lot of water. If you're irrigating, follow these helpful tips to get the most bang for your buck:

- Water early in the morning or in the evening to reduce evaporation and allow more water to reach your lawn's root zone.
- Water only when needed, not on a set schedule. If your grass springs back after you step on it, it doesn't need watering.

- Water your garden by hand or use drip irrigation rather than sprinklers.
- Use a rain barrel to capture water running off your roof to water your garden. Get information about making your own rain barrel at lawrenceks.org/stormwater.
- Mowing at the highest setting on your mower will encourage deeper grass roots, which will reduce the need for watering during dry spells.
- Use a rain gauge to determine when your lawn needs water and to measure how much you're applying. Generally, turf grasses need $\frac{3}{4}$ -1" of water per week. If rain is forecasted, hold off on watering.

Some other ways to conserve water and keep your water bill low include:

- Fix leaky faucets, showerheads and toilets, which can add up to gallons of water lost every day.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. Letting the water run while brushing can send gallons of wasted water down the drain.
- Take showers, not baths. Showers use less water (just keep an eye on how long you've been in there).
- Plug your sink or use a wash basin if washing dishes by hand.
- Use a dishwasher – and make sure it is fully loaded!
- Scrape your plate, rather than rinsing it, before loading it into the dishwasher.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge instead of letting the faucet run until the water gets cold.
- Thaw meat in the fridge overnight rather than using running hot water.
- Throw food scraps in the trash rather than using your garbage disposal. (This one helps our sanitary sewer system, too!)
- Wash only full loads of laundry or select the appropriate water level or load size on the washing machine.

City Recycling Do's and Dont's

Our Solid Waste Division provides a single-stream recycling collection service for single-family and multi-family customers in our community. With this service, all residential customers have a 95-gallon blue recycling cart that is picked up every other week on the same day as trash collection. All *accepted* recyclable materials can be placed in the blue cart.

Materials that are NOT accepted

Please be aware that the following items cannot be processed at the material recovery facility that the City uses for our recycling. Please do NOT place the following items in one of the City's blue recycling carts:

- Plastic bags and plastic wraps, including bubble wrap and soda rings
- Straws
- Items two inches and smaller, including bottle caps/lids and paper clips
- Some glass items, including pyrex and cooking dishes, glass and ceramic serveware, and window and mirror glass
- Rope-like items, including garden hoses and metal and plastic wire
- Sharp items, such as needles and syringes
- Compressed gas cylinders
- Hazardous waste, including batteries and light bulbs
- Electronics, including TVs, cell phones and appliances

Many items that are not permitted in the blue recyclable carts can still be recycled by different providers in the Lawrence area. For example, plastic bags can be recycled at most grocery stores in Lawrence. Plastic bag recycling bins are typically located near the store entrance.

For more information on recycling in Lawrence, please visit our website: lawrenceks.org/swm/recycling. The website also includes a link to our recyclable materials directory, which has more information on where to recycle items the City does not accept.

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We create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home.