

# CITY OF SMITHERS

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*D. Anne Cavalier Ed. D., Mayor*  
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## Council Members

*Alma Bowles*  
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*Robert Keflor*  
*Thomas Whittington, Jr.*

June 8, 2021

Honorable Kent Carper  
Kanawha County Commission  
P.O. Box 3627  
Charleston, WV 25336

Dear Commission President Carper,

The City of Smithers is but a small footprint in Kanawha County, but we hope we are a mighty service provider to residents in the Upper Kanawha Valley through the City's one-year old GATEWAY Center. The GATEWAY Center houses the offices of long-term tenants:

- Fayette County Starting Points Day Care, After-school Program, and Family Resource Center (serving children from 3 counties: Kanawha, Fayette, and Clay)
- New River Health Clinic: medical, dental, behavioral health, and drive-through pharmacy (serving patients from 3 counties.
- Putnam Aging-Fayette Senior Nutrition Program (serving senior residents in a 15m radius)
- Fish Insurance (state-wide clients)
- Midland Trail Association\* (Rt. 60 Cabell through Greenbrier Counties)
- UKV Strategic Initiative Council\* (serving communities in Kanawha, Webster, & Fayette Counties),
- WV State University Extension Agent\* (serving Kanawha and Fayette Counties)
- WVU Extension Community Garden\* (serving public school children and seniors in a 30m radius)
- City provides free rent, including space, cleaning/maintenance, parking, security, wifi, and reception services.

The above organizations and businesses have employees from 4 counties, including Kanawha.

Programs for residents from all area communities in 3 counties, including Kanawha:

- We offer FREE space and volunteers for Adventure Days for all area children, 2-4 on Thursdays in June, July, and August
- We offer FREE space and volunteers for flu, COVID, and HIV testing and vaccines for a geographic range from Clay, Kanawha, Putnam, Nicholas, Webster, and Fayette Counties.
- We offer FREE space for nutrition and cooking classes for obese children and families in the UKV
- We offer FREE space and classes for Yoga, Chair Yoga, and a morning walking program
- We built and offer an Urban Walking Trail/2 miles marked trail
- We provide FREE space, organization, volunteers, and marketing for 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays Farmers Market
- We provide FREE space, organization, volunteers, and marketing for Plein Air Art on 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays

- Polling place for Smithers and Boomer

Fayette County Board of Education donated the 32,000sqft building, playground, practice ball field, gymnasium, stage, and commercial kitchen to the City of Smithers in September 2019. The facility with 3 acres was valued at \$2.3M at the time of donation and was rated by the WVSBAs as the third best school building in the state. It was and is an excellent, one story, fully accessible, alarmed/sprinkled, brick and block structure, with double pane windows and full indoor/outdoor camera security. The City renovated and updated the building for its current use and filled the building with long term lease holders that offset utilities and normal maintenance and cleaning. The City did have to secure a USDA CFI Loan to renovate the building to reconfigure classrooms into sizes and shapes for the new uses, install a new, safe gym floor, and update the stage for community use. In addition to the donation's value, the FCBOE is paving our large parking lot this week, and while I do not know the cost of the project, I suspect it is several thousands of dollars. This building is self-sufficient for normal operation and maintenance costs, including an escrow account for major expenditures such as HVAC equipment. It is financially managed so that it is not now, and it never should be, a drain on city revenues or its residents.

We also have had grant and/or donated service investments in the building and the programs that originate from it from the WV HUB, WV DEP, WV Brownfields, ARC/Healthy Places for Healthy People, ActiveSWV, WV DOH, the WVHDF, Keys4 Healthy Kids (CAMC), Region 4 Planning and Development Council, WVJIT, Thrasher Engineering, E.L. Robinson Engineering, the Sew Shed, Grants Supermarket, Fayetteville Walmart, Quincy Walmart, private landowners and residents, and WV State University. And, of course, your intervention and influence helped convince WVU to participate as a supporter of our efforts.

The City of Smithers is working with its partners toward providing a wider range of valuable community services and programs to residents in the Upper Kanawha Valley. One of the ways we hope the Kanawha County Commission (KCC) might help us to achieve this goal is for KCC to make a financial contribution toward the balance of the GATEWAY Center renovation loan. The loan balance is \$121,112.00 and the monthly loan payment is \$432.00. If that loan were paid in full, we could use the monthly amount toward even more services and programs.

I totally support transparency and the public's opportunity to hear the vetting of requests coming before the Kanawha County Commission. Please let me know if this is a request that you might consider placing on your agenda for a public Commission meeting in the near future.

With sincere appreciation,



D. Anne Cavalier, Ed.D.