

# It's 8 O'Clock at the



**C**ity Clerk: *noun* – definition of a city clerk: a public officer charged with recording the official proceedings and vital statistics of a city. (That's compliments of Merriam-Webster). Hmm, seems simple enough.

Contacting Webster (whoever "Webster" is) to enlighten him, has crossed my mind. Almost positively would be more effective than distributing this definition at the next council meeting.

Are canine issues part of the "vital" statistics of a city? What about the incredible cosmic happenings as to why those same handful of folks cannot seem to pay their water bill on time? OH!! And the description of how the car acts when backing out of a driveway with a pothole in proximity to it? I'm tempted to go look up "vital".

I am certainly new to this wonderful world referred to as municipal government. I arrived here from many roads, a couple places and maybe even a ditch or two with a certain amount of bumps along the way. Medical transcriptionist, CPA assistant, rural mail carrier substitute, chiropractic

assistant,  
grain clerk,  
office manager,  
bookkeeper, café manager, Paramedic, lived overseas for a stint and mother of two grown boys. The last one preparing me for this seat the best. Be patient, intuitive, consistent, fair, and able to execute the consequence with precision and without hesitation. ALL while smiling, I might add.

Like so many, I had no idea what I was interviewing for when I arrived that night here at our fair city hall. Knowing full well that I probably would not get the position, I still put my best forward. I have been in town less than three years and am not native. No, my mom isn't from here. No, my dad

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**City Clerk - A public officer charged with recording the official proceedings and vital statistics of a city (compliments of Webster).  
 Hmm, they left out the definition of a SMALL Town City Clerk.**

wasn't the principal 30 years ago. Seriously, not from here. I do not say the above with any type of judgment. Only with an understanding of reality. What city clerks do is a huge job in these little towns that are big enough to have a grocery store, café, paved streets and a post office (for now). Yet they are too small to have a city administrator, manager, dog catcher or police department. 'Tis best to bring into the fold someone who is known. High school, marriage, raising kids, football, neighbor and such. They are known. Possibly predictable. Hopefully trustworthy. Yet, somehow they still decided I was "it". Neither of us knew . . . ☺

It was a quiet pool when I came in thru the gate. Had been for quite a spell. Pools are for swimming, exercising – they are to be used. So I did a cannonball and even got the sunbathers wet. I am not sure they quite got what they bargained for – but – Ahhhhhh – neither did I (see Webster). I feel I can say with a certain amount of accuracy that both sides were surprised. In the manner that both sides got something they didn't know they wanted. Yup, exactly.

It has been eight months since I was handed the four keys needed to "record the vital happenings" of our town. The keys were on the ring in the order I would use them. I have

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added two since. And no – there is no longer an order. Two look alike so I sometimes fumble at the second door as if I am trying to break in rather than unlock for the morning. I will fix this someday, but right now that fire does not lick as high as others.

I sometimes like the word "village" better than city or town – has a certain old warmth to it. But my fear of the

border being blurred between village "clerk" and village "idiot" is quite real. So I will stay with one of the two more traditional descriptions of the place to the keys I hold.

For now, my simple thoughts are complete. I am a city clerk (DON'T see Webster – I have no idea WHO he is talking about) . . .

Keys in hand – it's time to cross over. It's 5 O'Clock on Main.

*Rhonda Meyerhoff is city clerk in Clifton, KS. Prior to moving to Clifton, she did a variety of work including serving as a medical transcriptionist, CPA assistant, rural mail carrier, a paramedic, bookkeeper and more.*

