

Observer Reports

July 2021

USD 345 School Board Meeting

May 10, 2021

Observer: Chris Huntsman

All board members were present.

A report from the district Renaming Committee was given by Michelle Stubblefield. The full report is available here.

https://www.seamanschools.org/board_of_education/district_namesake_process

The committee consists of ten alumni to guide the community in the process of renaming SEAMAN. The Board will make the final decision.

District Namesake Advisory Committee

Amy Calhoun, Class of 2004

R.D. Cogswell, Class of 1988

Eric Curls, Class of 1985

Corey Dehn, Class of 1995

Yvonne Etzel, Class of 2001

Paula Frey, Class of 1988

Stephanie Konrade, Class of 1983

Curt Lewis, Class of 1975

Olivia Oliva, Class of 2022

Michelle Stubblefield, Class of 1984

All are alumni of USD 345.

The committee has held several meetings. The April 22, 2021 Zoom meeting had 6 committee members present, the May 4th meeting had 5 committee members present. A retreat was held May 5/6 led by Kansas Leadership Center and attended by 240 people from around the state representing communities with similar challenges.

The committee will meet June 3rd and 4th.

During public comments, three parents asked that the mask mandate be lifted. They all spoke about the ineffectiveness of masks. One parent stated the masks cause harm to her three children's mental health, another said talking to the board is like talking to a brick wall and referenced God and religion.

The remainder of the agenda was routine. One thing to note, a new finance director has been hired, but past director Mr. Horton is filling in until July 1. The board asked member Fred Patton, Rep District 50, to update school finance matters from the legislature.

Under Item 9 Discussion Items, G. was Panaroma, a computer program to monitor student success, measure social and emotional learning and manage academic data, attendance, surveys, etc. Currently, staff use Google to assemble data to analyze for each student. The KSDE is asking for this information to measure student growth. Board members had great questions. The district will ask the board to vote to approve at the June 14 meeting.

The board did adjourn for Executive Meeting negotiations and discussion of confidential student information, and returned with no action taken.

USD 437 Board Meeting

May 17, 2021

Observer: Mary Galligan (via livestream)

Seven members present

Meeting open to in-person public attendance and live-streamed on the District's YouTube [channel](#) where the recording is available.

The USD 437 School Board, approved the following unanimously:

- Meeting Agenda
- Consent agenda items
- Student course, activity, and transportation fees for SY 2021-2022 as presented at the prior meeting
- Motion to go into Executive Session for 15 minutes, from 7:30 PM until 7:45 PM, to discuss personnel matters under the KOMA exception for discussion of matters relating to non-elected personnel and to discuss the exception for employer-employee negotiations under KOMA (*sic*)

The Board also:

- Received an administrator reports regarding the Education Campus Ambassador Program; summer meal plan; summer school; on-site vaccination clinic (Covid) on three dates in June and July; and an update on the master facility plan process
- Discussed

- Expiration of the current pandemic-related safety protocols at the end of the current SY
- MOU with the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library for access to digital resources for students (formalizing current practice)
- Renewal of administrator contracts

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

USD 437 Board Meeting

June 7, 2021

Observer: Mary Galligan (via livestream)

Seven members present

Meeting open to in-person public attendance and live-streamed on the District's YouTube [channel](#) where the recording is available.

The USD 437 School Board, approved the following unanimously:

- Meeting Agenda
- Consent agenda items
- Administrator contracts
- Motion to go into Executive Session for 35 minutes, from 7:01 PM until 7:36 PM, to discuss personnel matters under the KOMA exception for discussion of matters relating to non-elected personnel; to discuss the exception for employer-employee negotiations under KOMA (*sic*); and to discuss student issues under the KOMA exception for discussion of matters relating to actions adversely or favorably affecting a student.
- After Executive Session, student transfer requests.

The Board also:

- Received administrator reports regarding the end of the school year; summer school; on-site Covid vaccination clinic; and an update on the master facility planning process.
- Discussed
 - Property and casualty insurance premium increases
 - Updates to the Classified Handbook
 - Updates to the Administrator Handbook

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

USD 501 Board Meeting

May 20, 2021

Observer: Janet Cathcart

All Board Members Present

School Highlights

Recognition of 2021 Governor' Scholars- This recognizes the top 1% of students across the state of Kansas. There was good representation from all the district high schools.

Recognition of Volunteer Partners- Advisors Excel partnership. They have donated a lot to our district and have provided scholarships to the district college prep academy. Tracy Kilough Advisor Excel representative spoke to the partnership.

Recognition of Dr. Anderson's Finalist Selection as a Kansas Superintendent of the year by OFG Financial Services Inc. with a \$1000 student Scholarship. OFG Ogden Financial Group Ken Ogdon owner. Topeka based broker dealer. They donate every year to the finalist.

Recognition of National Police Week- TPS is one of the few districts with a police officer pathway for students; the Law and Public Safety Pathway. Officer Gogian is the supervisor for the pathway. There are two student interns in the program.

Proclamation of Better Speech and Hearing Month

Recognition of Sharefest Partners- Pastor Jeremy Wynne reported on Sharefest. It was great to be able to get together again. Several churches and Advisors Excel contributed. 800 volunteers and 24 churches all participated. Sharefest video can be seen on the 501 YouTube channel Comm Dept

Public Comment- Carly Vornholt 1259 SW High Special Education Para Requesting that the mask requirement be lifted.

Business by Consent- Rev. Williams made a motion to approve business by consent and Dr. Bonebrake seconds the motion. Rev. Williams said Mr. Menke would like to discuss the winter month heating bill. The February 2021 bill was up to a charge of \$17.88 BTU which is way up from the normal range of around \$3 to \$4.50 BTU. Kansas Association of School boards is working on a settlement with the gas company to get this down and it is looking like the settlement will end up around \$9 BTU charge. The district will pay their January and March bill which is around the normal amount but will wait until the settlement is reached to pay the February bill. Mr. Menke suggests to use the cash balance to help pay the additional cost.

Superintendent Update

Strategic Plan update on Equity will be tabled until June meeting. Dr. Anderson suggests to the board that the 2020 and 2021 goals be continued since the pandemic delayed work on them. The district has added three new bilingual assistant principals.

Update on vaccination Clinics

Dr. Gray updated on the vaccination clinic. The district will have over 700 students vaccinated through the district clinic. KDHE has also agreed to provide mobile immunization clinics along with the COVID vaccine through the summer.

Graduation update- there are two dates and a rain delay plan. Graduation will take place for 2021 graduates on May 22nd Saturday at Hummer and then the 2020 graduates will be on Sunday, May 23 also at Hummer. In the event of rain, the 2021 will be during the afternoon on Sunday and then the 2020 will move to the evening of the 23rd. The ceremonies will also be on the district you Tube channel.

Action Item- Approve the adoption and Purchase of Recommended Instructional resources. Rev. Williams made a motion and Dr. Morrison seconded all approved.

Board Member comments

Meeting adjourned- 8:06pm

USD 501 School Board Meeting

June 3, 2021

Observer: Annie Tietze

All Board members present.

Consent issues were passed unanimously.

A report was given by the District Citizens Advisory Committee “Mental Health in Schools Covid-19 Pandemic and Beyond”. Many recommendations will be applied and there was discussion of continuing this topic next year.

Today was the last full day of school.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

May 3, 2021

Observer: Mary Jo Hobbs

Two commissioners present, Commissioner Cook absent.

The short meeting was mostly routine business. Notable was approval of two Election Office contracts. One for approximately \$67,200.00 was with Kansas Van and Storage- Criqui Corp. for election equipment moving and delivery services for four years, through the 2024 election cycles. The other was with Mainline Printing Inc., also for four years, for election ballot services and printing, and costing approximately \$187,887.85. Though Mainline's bid was 1 penny per ballot over the next bidder, the Election Office has used them for many years and preferred giving the local printer the business.

Commissioners approved a contract with KDHE and the Health Department for grant funding in the amount of \$436,000.00. This money will be used for the Nurse/Family Partnership program.

There was no need for an executive session.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

May 10, 2021

Observer: Mary Jo Hobbs

Three commissioners present.

The business for the short meeting was routine.

There was a need for an executive session for two hours on personnel matters of non-elected personnel, specifically department head evaluations.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

May 17, 2021

Observer: Mary Jo Hobbs

Two commissioners present, Commissioner Cook absent.

The meeting began with the Parks and Recreation Department acknowledging staff member, Olivia Mayer, for her service as the president of the Kansas Recreation and Parks Association for the past year.

The business for the rest of the short meeting was routine. In Administrative Communications, Kellen Seitz, manager of the Stormont Vail Event Center, announced the grand reopening celebration of the newly remodeled facility will be on July 9th afternoon and evening.

There was no need for an executive session.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

May 20, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All Commissioners were present.

The Commission held a public hearing regarding the expansion of Aldersgate. No one spoke and the resolution passed unanimously.

The Commission approved the annual renewal of the Clerk's office agenda management software. Commissioners briefly spoke about planned expansion of the use of the software to provide additional functional technical support to the Commission through the Commission budget.

Solid Waste department received approval to fill a Fleet Supervisor position and to solicit quotations for employee gear locker replacement.

21 applications were approved to sell fireworks.

Public Works received approval to fill a Mechanic position. Public Works was also granted approval to reject a bid for pavement and joint repair on E. 6th St. The proposal was rejected because only one was received and it was believed to not be competitive.

Human Resources acknowledged the increase in the employer rate of contribution for KPERS, KP&F and Working after Retirement rates effective Jan. 1, 2022.

Parks and Rec received approval to fill a Natural Areas Steward position and to reclassify and fill a HVAC Specialists. Approval was also received to close a vacant Park Mechanic position. The positions have been vacant for four years.

Administrative Communications included that Parks and Rec has lots of summer jobs and has a critical need for life guards. Commissioner Cook announced the ribbon cutting ceremony at Adventure Cove will be May 25.

There was a need for an executive session of two hours to discuss non-elected personnel issues.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

May 24, 2021

Observer: Mary Jo Hobbs

Three Commissioners present

Commissioners approved a two-year extension of a contract with It Takes A Village, Inc. to provide programming services for at-risk youth and lease an area at Rice Community Center for a fee of \$2,500 annually. Stephen Massey, director of It Takes A Village, spoke about the performing arts program that operates after school during the school year and from 8am to 2pm during the summer.

Commissioners voted to cancel the June 28th and July 15th Commission Meetings.

There was a need for an executive session for 45 minutes for consultation with an attorney for the public body on two issues deemed privileged in the attorney/client relationship, and one concerning acquisition of real property. There was no need for further action.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

May 27, 2021

Observer: Elvera Johnson

All 3 Commissioners present

The meeting opened with a long presentation regarding the completion of the Stormont Vail Events Center renovation. It included a history of the site, beginning with the old fair grounds, the Expocentre and the transition to the Stormont-Vail Events Center. The opening entertainment will be Hank Williams Jr on July 10.

The Commission approved a contract with Geographic Information Services for the Appraiser's office. They accepted a bid to repair an air conditioner at Maner Conference Center. They approved a request to post and fill a vacant custodian position. They heard a report from Audit finances on revenues (on budget) and expenditures (over budget) as of April 30. They approved a request for operational funding from the contingency funds to address a cash-flow problem at Stormont Vail Events Center. They noted a need to be cautious about declining contingency funds. For Parks and Recreation, they approved submission of a grant application to the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks & Tourism Community Fisheries Assistance Program to fund improvements at Fool's Landing (east of Croco Road on the Kansas River) and one at Horseshoe Bend Park.

Human Resources announced that the county is hiring for summer employees and also regular employees for Solid Waste and Roads Maintenance.

No executive session was needed.

Shawnee County Commission

June 3, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All three Commissioners were present.

The commission authorized public works to amend a contract with Schaffer Manufacturing Co. to cover the revised price of various oils, fluids, additives and lubricants. The revision reflects an increase in price of 7.9%.

The commission approved the lease purchase agreement with TCF National Bank for the purchase and annual payments of the new Stormont Vail Events Center digital highway marquee sign not to exceed \$101,492.67

The commission approved an amendment to the contract with Conroy Contractors to extend the basketball courts in Ripley and Cushinberry Parks delayed due to rain.

The commission approved filling a part time advanced practice registered nurse position for the Family Planning program to be paid with grant funding.

The commission approved the appointment of David Linderman to the Shawnee County Planning Commission.

During administrative communications the health dept. announced they would be giving the Johnson and Johnson vaccine Fri. at NOTO red bud park between 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Hazardous waste announced the first Sat. opening will be this Sat. This will be the last Sat. opening of the facility until Aug. Public works announced that Glick Rd. is open. They also announced that 45th st. project is delayed due to rain. The events center announced that Baby Shark will be performed this weekend. The commission newsletter is available with an article about the history of the zoo by Commissioner Riphahn. Commissioner Riphahn also announced the SPARK team is meeting again about economic assistance.

There were no public comments and no need for an executive session.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

June 7, 2021

Observer: Mary Jo Hobbs

Two Commissioners present, Chairman Cook absent.

Commissioners approved a contract with Lamar Advertising to purchase billboard space for education and awareness of the Kansas Tobacco Quitline. The Health Department will acquire 5 billboards on the topic and will pay for them with grant money.

There was a need for an executive session for 15 minutes for consultation with an attorney for the public body on an issue deemed privileged in the attorney/client relationship, specifically, potential litigation. There was no need for further action.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

June 10, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

Commissioner Mays was not available on camera, although Chair Commissioner Cook did not mention his absence and tallied recorded votes as three.

The Commission approved mill and overlay of South Topeka Blvd North of 93rd to North of Airport Drive in the Northbound Lanes. Work will begin after Heartland Stampede.

The Commission approved a Washburn law school extern to be placed in the County Counselor Jim Crowl's office this summer.

The Commission approved improvements to the Bark Park in Gage Park along with renaming Hill's Bark Park at Gage Park".

The Commission approved use of contingency funds for repairs at Midwest Health Aquatic Center due to damage caused by the Feb. freeze.

The Commission also approved requests for improvements to parks at Hillsdale, Boswell, Horne and Gwendolyn Brooks Parks.

The Commission approved the bid to Curb Appeal Power Wash for pressure washing services at various park facilities.

During administrative communications Randy Luby from Parks and Rec announced that all camps and recreation activities have started. The Oakland pool is now open and repairs are complete. The life guard hiring crunch has eased somewhat but they are continuing to monitor.

Election Commissioner Andrew Howell announced there would be a primary election in August. The election will narrow the races for Topeka mayor, City Council district 3 and USD 345 District A Seaman school board.

There were no public comments and no need for an executive session.

Topeka City Council Meeting

May 18, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All council members, including the mayor, were present either in the council chamber or via zoom.

The mayor read proclamations declaring this week National Police Week and declaring the month of May National Bike Month.

Steve Schoenberg was appointed to the Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Council.

Unanimous approval was provided to Atlantic Signal LLC for zoning changes on property at 115 SW 12th St and 1222 SW Jackson St. from multiple family dwelling to downtown district.

An ordinance was approved for Windward Estates Planned Unit Development amending the district map zoning ordinances on property at the intersection of SE 45th St. and SE California Ave. from planned unit development to two family residential uses and commercial uses. Approval was 9 for and 1 abstention from Councilman Emmerson.

An ordinance was approved for Windward Estates Subdivision acceptance of land dedications in the final plat for Windward Estates Subdivision located on the southwest corner of SE 45th St. and SE California Ave. Approval was 9 for and 1 abstention from Councilman Emmerson.

The council, on final action, approved the transfer of 2.6 million for specified purposes, which included 250,000 to establish the Topeka Housing Trust Fund.

Non-action discussion items included discussion of the proposed repeal of certain license requirements including possible carnival vendors and auctioneers. Much concern was expressed about potential safety risks, including fire hazards due to the fact obtaining a license for a haunted house will trigger a fire inspection, otherwise, no inspection will be scheduled.

The council also discussed the current status of cleaning up the proposed Capital Improvement Plan and the status of current projects planned and unplanned including those funded, budgeted and not funded. A vote is expected June 1.

There were no public comments and no executive session was needed.

Topeka City Council Meeting

June 1, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All council members were present, either in person or via zoom, except Council woman Naeger.

The council heard a presentation by chief of staff Cochran regarding progress made by department heads to align the departments' priorities with the goals and priorities of the governing body.

The consent agenda passed 9-0.

The council passed repeal of certain outdated licenses in Title 5 Business licenses and Regulations and added new Section 9.15.285 and amending Section 10.20.080.

The council passed the proposed Capital Improvement Plan and the Capital Improvement Budget 9-0. The plans and budget fund the priorities of the council; street repair, utility repair and upgrade and building repair.

The council passed 9-0 authorizing revenue bonds for the water/water pollution/stormwater projects in the Capital Improvement Budget. The clerk will authorize the issuance of revenue bonds when it is brought before the council prior to authorizing the work. The city manager does not want the bond indebtedness to exceed 20% of reserve funds. This discussion will be a continuing discussion between the manager and the council. The projects may be able to use federal American Rescue Plan funds.

Joe Ledbetter was the only public comment.

An executive session was held to discuss the acquisition of real property.

Topeka City Council Meeting

June 8, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All council members were present either in chambers or via zoom.

A member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi nation provided the invocation in native Potawatomi language. It was very moving and I highly recommend viewing available on the city virtual network.

The Mayor read a proclamation declaring June 4 National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

The council approved unanimously the purchase of three properties to provide flood mitigation. The council approved 9-1, with Councilwoman Valdivia Alcala opposing, changes to the Topeka Municipal Code to reflect the elimination of the Department of Neighborhood Relations. The changes will modify how NIAs interact with the city. The city manager has been meeting to explain the changes to the NIAs.

The council approved unanimously a resolution to be sent to Congress and state legislators, supporting the expansion of Amtrak services in Kansas and Oklahoma. Topeka continues three day a week Super Chief service, however, there is no agent at the office and the office remains closed. Passengers must purchase tickets on line and wait outside. Only volunteers provide assistance at the station. Legislation is pending before Congress which will expand and add service in Kansas.

The council heard an update about the Neighborhood Health Map from the planning dept. They also heard about how the planning dept. will structure the update to the current Neighborhood Revitalization Plan which expires at the end of the year.

One person spoke about the noise ordinance during public comments.

The council held an executive session to discuss upcoming employer/employee relations.

Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

JEDO MEETING

May 12,2021

Observer: Judy Moler

A local innovation campus that would prove integral in the Topeka partnership with the Silicon Valley based Plug and Play has been awarded set aside funding. JEDO board members voted to approve up to \$5.871 million dollars to build the innovation campus somewhere near downtown Topeka. The exact location was not disclosed, but it would encompass somewhere between 60,000 to 70,000 square feet. As a part of this endeavor, the program is expected to bring up to 10 startups for a 3- month session twice a year. It is hoped some of these startups would remain in the Topeka area.

In total the innovation campus is planned to cost up to \$13 million dollars with an economic impact of \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years. In addition, 20 to 30 jobs would be created.

