

January 2022

Observer Reports

USD 345 Board Meeting

November 8, 2021

Observer: Chris Huntsman

All Board members were present.

Superintendent Steve Noble was firm in his remarks as the district is NOT teaching CRT when providing students equity and inclusion, and diversity. He remarked that the community says we have a bullying problem, but students of color and their allies say it is racism. We are not going to ignore this.

All seven board members attended the KASB meeting and President Griffin asked them for comments. There was mention of a speaker as well as hearing/learning from other boards around the state.

During public comments, as I was watching online, there was an issue of addressing the board in person; all I heard was “the room is at capacity, if someone outside wants to address the board, another will have to leave the room” and there is always the online form for public comments.

There were 20 speakers, each getting 3 minutes. Their names will be in the minutes, but not what they said. In order I’ll give the theme of the communications:

1. Female adult was hard to hear, but remarked that today’s kids are disrespectful and why are you listening to them?
2. Adult female asked the board to listen to the students and if she had kids, she wouldn’t want them attending Seaman.
3. A different mic was put at podium and I could clearly hear the next speaker, female sophomore says please change the name. She elaborated on her love of her English classes and how language and words shape our world.
4. A male adult grad of 1997 describes the Klan culture in the district today.
5. A female 1992 graduate had three issues – opposed to name change, remove mask mandate and the school cannot use her son’s data in the database.
6. An adult male thanked the board and teachers for all their work and asked them to follow science and public health in their decision making.
7. A female sophomore of color said there is racism and hate comments in the high school. No one listens to the students.
8. A female junior of color had spoken up at the community meeting and changing the name is one stepping stone for acceptance

9. A female who is a mom, not a domestic terrorist, ranted that we say the pledge of allegiance but we don't follow the law to not mask children but let parents make that decision and quarantines are not legal.
10. A male student thanked Cherie Sage and Keith Griffith for their service, and commented to each member by name and asked for a name change.
11. A female Spanish teacher of 15 years, and a Kansas Teacher of the Year team (meaning a district winner), remarked that our kids are under attack and that the community dominated the namesake process.
12. A male graduate in 2018 who is the alumni VP had several comments: Three minutes is not enough time, there are crazies on both sides, why support bad teachers, why hand out political buttons and masks, board members are on their phones and devices and the board is failing at the Seaman Dream. (I had noticed one board member on their phone often, all have their district laptop in front of them where documents are for their paperless meeting.)
13. A mother of 5 hoped to hear discussions to heal Seaman.
14. An adult female spoke of how she is so proud of the students speaking truth to power, which is hard. She said there are damning names used against students. She admires students. Her younger son is gay and was bullied a lot. We are asking for a change of culture and of tolerance.
15. A female junior told the board of racist comments against her in the halls and please change the name.
16. An adult male, father of above student remarked, "if we can't address mistakes, we are bound to repeat them." The district slogan "Learning without Limits" is on the wall, but there are limits some students experience.
17. An adult female alumnus who spear headed the non-approved survey shared updated stats from her survey.
18. A female 1957 graduate asked for no name change and this whole issue has divided our community further.
19. A male adult named famous racist people.
20. An adult female said, "students you are our future" and the board really wants to tear down the community.

The agenda continued with administrative reports. The board took a brief break, and came back around 8 p.m. and President Griffin passed out a resolution to the board - another option. He passed out "option C" to denounce the name of Fred Seaman. The board did have a discussion with President Griffin, moving to accept the resolution, saying we need to gather as a community. It was seconded by Michelle Claudill. All Board members spoke up saying they have read all community comments, there is no other good option, they applauded the community saying people come here for the excellent education, not the name of

the school. It was brought up that USD 345 is the legal name of the school. A roll call vote required the passing of a mic but all seven voted to accept Plan C, the resolution, and each signed their name.

USD 345 Board Meeting

December 13, 2021

Observer: Chris Huntsman (virtual)

All members of the board were present.

Three staff were recognized for awards received. The board went into executive session and when they returned moved to use ESSER funds to give staff (except administrators) a \$500 stipend (\$250 now and again in March 2022.) A MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Seaman NEA was approved for such payment.

During Superintendent's Remarks, Dr. Nobel thanked teachers and support staff for all their work and commitment to students. They are fortunate to have a Board that supports this work. He announced accreditation under KSDE for diplomas for academic standards and they received the Kansas Can star Award – one of seven districts (out of 286) to receive 5/8 of the stars. Thanks to parents, family, and community who worked with students and staff to make this happen. District 345 also received a silver award for other areas; mental and social growth, graduation rate, and a copper award for civic engagement, student plans of study, and academic prep for post- secondary.

President Griffin remarked by thanking all for allowing him to serve as Board President. He compared his four years to four quarters: 1st quarter you are a rookie, 2nd you are learning the plays, 3rd you are in the game, and 4th you run with the ball. Stay Strong-it takes everybody here. He also stated he appreciated serving on the board with Cherie Sage.

During Public Comments, four moms and a male graduate spoke. First speaker asked why the mask mandate waited until Jan 4 to be removed when there has been ample time to get children the vaccine. She compared conflicts in mask requirement amongst various buildings/levels in the district. Second speaker is also a nurse who asked to remove mask mandate and not have vaccination clinics in the school buildings. The third mom asked for an open meeting for Q and A from the community – this would not be the usual business meeting. She wants to regain trust and repair the division that has occurred. She also asked them to wait until the new board comes on in January and thanked the two members leaving the board. The fourth mom spent the time reading what appeared to be scripture, however no book/chapter/verse was given. The lone male graduate traveled 500 miles to address the board and did not support the name change. He referenced a very divided country and if the name would change, that would mess with his history.

Business items included; President Griffin moved to make K-12 masks optional, excluding Pre-K because there is no vaccine available to them. It was seconded after Kyle McNorton started the discussion by asking both students and staff about Pre-K. Michelle Claudill asked why wait until Jan. 4, why not start tomorrow. The discussion involved how starting tomorrow was too disruptive for elementary students this close to a holiday. Waiting until Jan. 4 allows more students, staff and parents to be vaccinated. Discussion about why the MELC (Pre-K) numbers testing positive is low took place. It was speculated that because they stay in their cohort groups, Pre-K is only 3 hours and recess is separate from the rest of the school. Kyle McNorton moved and Michelle Claudill seconded to make masks optional for Pre-K as well. Motion failed 2-5 – President asked for show of hands, to be clear on the vote. All students who ride buses need to mask up on the bus, a federal requirement.

At the end of the meeting, Frank Henderson recognized Cherie Sage and Keith Griffin for their work for the students in the district in the past 4/5 years. Meeting adjourned.

USD 437 Board Meeting

Dec 6, 2021

Observer: Mary Galligan (via livestream)

7 members present

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

The USD 437 School Board:

- Received administrator reports regarding 2022 bond election, COVID scorecard, student test data, and repairs on the high school gym wall.
- Discussed KASB legislative positions, curriculum revision for Culinary Arts, curriculum for new Computer Science course, 2022-2023 school calendar, and proposal for replacement of chiller at Auburn elementary.
- Approved unanimously:
 - Meeting agenda
 - Consent agenda items
 - KASB Legislative Positions
 - Shawnee County Legislative Positions
 - Chiller replacement for Auburn Elementary
 - Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:53 PM for 30 minutes to discuss students pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of actions adversely or favorably affecting a student and to discuss personnel matters pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of matters related to non-elected personnel.
 - Subsequent to Executive Session:
 - Motion to approve certain student transfers
 - Motion to allow certain students to attend full time remotely due to COVID

Adjourned at 8:25 PM.

USD 501 School Board Meeting
November 18, 2021 public meeting via 501 YouTube Channel
All Board Members Present
Observer: Janet Cathcart

School Highlights

Topeka Public Schools Foundation Sports Park and Highlander Investments Update
Ms. Johnson Betts gave an update of these two investment funds. The Sports Park Fund is a latte over two million dollars. It started from donations and naming rights for the sports park. The Highlander Fund is \$828,956 and it was started from Highland Parks participation in the A&E series. Highland Park received \$650,000 from being involved in the series.

Two proclamations- School Psychology Awareness Team and American Education Week

Public Comment

No public comment

Business by Consent- Approved by all

Superintendent Update

Update on Principal for the day. It was a great success.

Strategic Plan/Equity

- Native American Land Acknowledgment Ah-Sha-Ni Wabaunsee
- K-5 counselor at Meadows read the Topeka Public Schools District Land Acknowledgment Strategic Plan
- College and Career Readiness Graduation Rate - Dr. Kipp Graduation rates for 2021
 - Topeka High School 91.2%
 - Topeka West High School 95.4%
 - Highland Park High School 83.5%, which is a big jump from last year
 - Hope Street 88.1%
 - Cap City 63.4%
 - Avondale West 21%
 - Overall total 80.2%

- 501 district allows for special ed students to stay longer than 4 years but this does affect our overall graduation rate. The state graduation rate is 88%. 800 students graduated in 2021. The trend across the nation is showing that females are graduating more than male students. Several buildings have placed male mentors to help with this. The equity council is also looking at this.

Discussion Items

High School Course Change Recommendations-Ms. Wallace Four course changes to take affect this year- weighted grades for dual language classes, adding computer sciences classes for core math or science class, work for credit make juniors eligible and standardized the hours to 120 hours, and weight grades for the national equity lab courses and then course changes to next year. Course description changes to several classes.

Action Items

One United Voice Platform- The board approved the document.

Native American Land Acknowledgment-The board approved the land acknowledgment.

Board Members- Dr. Bonebrake wants a longer school year and to pay teachers more and offer more education to teachers.

Dr. Morrison also concerned about the lower male graduation rates. He encourages continuing board members to keep looking at this.

Mrs. Boley thinks a study into the male graduation rate would be a good idea. Acknowledge band directors for hard work this year after losing a year from COVID.

Meeting adjourned-8:28pm

USD 501 Board Meeting December 2, 2021 via 501 YouTube Channel Observer: Janet Cathcart

Dr. Morrison Absent.

Public Hearing on the closing of Stout Elementary began at 6:30pm. Ms. Kopp 501 district attorney began with an explanation of the hearing notices in both the Topeka Capital Journal November 14th and 21st and Topeka Metro News on November 15th and 22nd.

Dr. Kipp discussed the current enrollment at Stout. Stout has 159 students and approximately 70 of those are bused in. Stout is also built on a flood plain so would not qualify as a FEMA shelter so an additional FEMA shelter can't be built on that site. Dr. Kipp said that Jardine K-8 would be able to accept those students, and families have

been offered to go there or Whitson, Randolph or other 501 school. Dr. Kipp explained that enrollment has dropped throughout the state. TPS is projected to drop 720 students over the next three years of which 62% loss will be in the elementary schools. Closing Stout will conserve resources across the district. Stout's enrollment has decreased over the last 6 years with a steep decrease the past three.

There were three public comments all in support of keeping Stout open. One parent was concerned that if her student had to go to a different school she would not be able to get transportation to the new school since she cannot drive due to health reasons. Another speaker felt like the process to close the school was a back door deal and that even though there had been the announcements in the paper that the community was too caught up in Thanksgiving and the holiday break to be fully aware of the announcement and the process. She felt like the process was rushed. The first speaker was upset because when the bond was passed for all the new FEMA shelters and upgrades there was no discussion at that time of closing Stout only three schools were going to be affected so he was upset that now Stout is being included in closing discussions.

Public Hearing ended at 6:56pm

Regular Board Meeting started at 6:56pm

Reverend Williams began the meeting with a moment of silence for the family of the teacher Mr. John Keller, teacher at Topeka High School that passed away before Thanksgiving break and the victims of the school shooting.

School Highlights-Mrs. Cheryl Delacruz was recognized as one of Topeka's 20 under 40.

TPS will be represented in the Miracle on Kansas Avenue Parade by Superintendent, Dr. Anderson as Grand Marshall and Wyatt Starz as Junior Grand Marshall.

Public Comment

Kihoe Chapman 501alumni and current Washburn Student- She praised the relationship between 501 and Washburn and asked the board to support teachers and truth in teaching.

Business by Consent- Approved by all

Superintendent Update

School updates- this was left open for more discussion on Stout's closing. Stout principal Jenna

Abernathy explained that they have been in discussion with all Stout parents and Stout teachers and support staff. They sent out a survey to all teachers to pick their top three schools they would like to teach at if Stout closed. She has been in discussion with Stout's parents to also find out what school choices they would like. She reassured the board that the families and staff involved have been notified. Mrs. Bolley asked about the parent's transportation concerns and Mr. Robbins answered that the district does

help with transportation on a case by case basis. Mr. Munoz asked that with the COVID restrictions can Jardine accommodate the Stout students and Mrs. Sharpe said yes. Mr. Kipp said that there may need to be new boundary lines drawn for the Stout closure.

Discussion Items- 2022-2023 Academic calendar- Mrs. Wallace explained the calendar

Action Items- High school course changes- Mr. Munoz made a motion to accept the changes and Dr. Bonebrake seconded. All approved.

Meeting adjourned-8:12pm

**USD 501 Board Meeting
December 16, 2021
Observer: Janet Cathcart**

All board members present

Recognition of the elementary school holiday card contest winners.

Adoption of Agenda- Motion by Lalo Munoz, second by Scott Mickelsen. Motion carries unanimously.

No public comment.

Approval of the items of business by consent- Motion by Lalo Munoz, second by Richard Bonebrake. Motion carries unanimously.

Action Items

Approval of the Proposed 2022-2023 Academic Calendar - Mrs. Wallace-Motion by Lalo Munoz, second by Scott Mickelsen. Motion carries unanimously.

Vote on Resolution 22-009 to Close Stout Elementary School. Motion by Lalo Munoz, second by Richard Bonebrake. Motion carries unanimously to close Stout Elementary School.

The board recess to executive session with no further action to be taken except adjournment.

Meeting adjourned -12:18pm

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting
November 8, 2021
Observer: Susan Quinn**

3 Commissioners present

The biggest allotment of time for today's meeting was to discuss the capital budget for 2022. Some of the funds are made possible by the American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA SLFRF). The county is taking a measured approach to obligating and spending the funds. At a high level, Shawnee County will be receiving about \$34.5 million from ARPA, which must all be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026. The county plans to obligate roughly half the funds now during "round one" and then reassessing with input from the Commissioners and the allowance of more time to pass to give them the freedom to obligate the other half of funds during a later second round. Major projects included in round one are roughly \$8.2 M for Courthouse building and facility improvements and \$4.2 M for Parks & Rec capital improvements. Some of the fund obligations today were approved after all fund items were presented. Others will be further reviewed/discussed on or by the November 18 meeting. More details on the funds can be found at this website:

<https://www.snco.us/county/arpa.asp>.

Prior to getting started with the capital project review for ARPA funds, the most notable items brought forward today were for Aldersgate expansion and a move of the Topeka Community Cycling Project. All requests were approved by the Commissioners.

The United Methodist homes, called Aldersgate, requested a major amendment to the PUD master plan governing the Aldersgate Village Retirement Community for the purpose of building two additional home-plus dwellings which have 12 units each and an independent living apartment building with 50 units. The location of this property is 7220 Southwest Asbury drive. The only concern from the public was from Indian Hills Elementary School, which is adjacent to Aldersgate. They're concerned over playground safety and security for the children to prevent possible abductions. During the public hearing, Commissioner Riphon asked whether there would be a landscape buffer planned between the school playground fence and the new Aldersgate parking lot behind their new buildings. Jerry Ney, CEO of Aldersgate, answered saying a landscape buffer was expressly requested to not be part of the plans due to playground safety in that it would give possible cover to any criminal activities. He explained additional security lighting is planned, and Aldersgate is allowing the school district to place surveillance cameras on the parking lot light structures so that they can monitor the perimeter of the playground fence while children are using the playground.

Parks and recreation presented a resolution to move the Topeka community cycling project from Oakland community Center to Central Park community Center and to extend their agreement with TCCP until 2025. The current agreement allows TCCP to utilize the community center for \$2,500 annually. TCCP is a non-profit volunteer run organization to promote cycling in the community. They would like to move to Central Park to be more accessible to more people throughout Topeka.

Executive session was not needed and the meeting was adjourned.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

November 15, 2021

Observer: Susan Quinn

3 Commissioners present

Public Works Supervisor Brent Holshouser presented requests for authorization of several additional leases to new trucks mainly. He presented his information which showed that Shawnee County is actually being paid to take leases on vehicles since when reselling them right now the vehicles are reselling at higher values than the amount of money we have leased them for. It was a little puzzling to the Commissioners, but they approved the new lease agreements for 17 vehicles.

During the meeting, while Teresa Fisher was at the podium in regards to a request to consider authorization and execution of a contract renewing an agreement with Custom Data Processing for electronic health record software, Commissioner Riphon asked her a question about the hospital scorecard he had seen. Commissioner Riphon's question had to do with COVID vaccination data. Not being familiar with how Stormont Vail Hospital develops their scorecards, found online [here](#), Ms. Fisher was not able to answer the question. She volunteered to follow-up with their partners at Stormont-Vail for an answer for the Commissioner.

Mary Thomas with Community Resources Council (CRC) spoke on a resolution allocating 2022 Social Services Funds and Service Programs for the Elderly Funds. Commissioner Cook asked Ms. Thomas about new projects that CRC is doing in Oakland. Ms. Thomas explained that there is a new project similar to Avondale East over in Oakland at a building formerly owned by Topeka USD 501 (Lundgren). Last year, USD 501 approached CRC with a 30,000 square foot building that they would repurpose in a similar way to what they had done with Avondale East. CRC has seven tenants who have signed up already. There are about four rooms left to lease. There is a 7,000 square foot gym that can be used by activities in the community.

Executive session was not needed and the meeting was adjourned.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

November 18, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All Commissioners were present.

The commission approved reauthorization of a contract for Solid Waste Department with Teknix Solutions for processing electronic waste collected at the solid waste departments household hazardous waste facility.

Multiple contracts were approved for Parks + Rec. Approved was a contract to lease a new fleet of golf carts, resurfacing of 12 sport courts at Lake Shawnee, Shawnee North,

Aquarian acres and Hillcrest Parks, the purchase of nine Victorian light poles for Collins Park and Boswell Park, a contract with Kenneth Ribelin for lease and haying maintenance of four park properties and upgrades and gable ends to the Lake Shawnee Howey Greenhouse.

The commission approved a contract for pest control services at the Weed Department building. Also approved was a request by Court Administration to add 30 data plans with Verizon to provide court services officers with smart phones.

The commission approved a correction to the contract process for the Shawnee County Department of Corrections for phase 1 of roof replacement of the juvenile detention center and the adult detention center. The commission approved initiating a request for proposals for the establishment of a website for Shawnee County apparel vendors.

The commission approved various Capital Improvement Projects for 2022 budget. The commission approved 47% of the projects be funded through American Rescue Act Funding. The Capital Improvement Projects 2022 budget spreadsheet is available on the Commission website.

During Administrative Communications, it was announced that a COVID booster clinic will be provided for employees, the public is encouraged to review the solid waste collection holiday calendar and the election office thanked the commission for their work as the Board of Canvassers.

There was no need for an executive session.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

November 22, 2021

Observer: Susan Quinn

3 Commissioners present

Today's agenda was very light, but did have 6 items added to it by Chairman, Commissioner Kevin Cook, for considering approval of four new RFPs and two new purchases; all for the Stormont Vail Events Center in light of the Shuttered Venue Grant Funds that were made available recently. RFPs included driveway repair work, a campus wide fire alarm system upgrade, and curtains for the upper balcony of Landon Arena. The fourth RFP was pulled since it had been previously approved and was out for bid right now. The fourth RFP was for roof replacements for Landon Arena, Exhibition Hall and Ag Hall. The two purchases were for a new IT server and steel panels. All items other than the RFP for roof replacements were approved.

Other items included a request for an employee of the Juvenile Detention Center to attend the Mitigation Dynamics STARR instructor training in Johnson County, Kansas for the appropriate use of restraints when needed. The Department of Corrections also requested a renewal of a water quality management service for their facilities. Both requests were approved.

The Noxious Weed Department asked for approval to solicit bids for herbicides for the 2022 season as well as fill two budgeted intermittent positions and an additional full-time Applicator position. All requests were approved.

The Commissioners reappointed Dave Graversen to the Stormont Vail Events Center Advisory Board for a 3-year term. They also reappointed Michael Munson to the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority for a 3-year term.

Stormont Vail Events Center's Demolition Derby was an overwhelming success as reported by Kellen Seitz. Grass around the events center will be replaced that was trampled for parking during the derby. Mannheim Steamroller will be in the event center this December. There will be a number of other events as well as a football league kickoff in mid-February at the events center.

Executive session was not needed and the meeting was adjourned.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

November 29, 2021

Observer: Susan Quinn

3 Commissioners present

Today's consent agenda was lengthy. It contained 13 Social Service Agency contracts totaling \$190,000 and 12 Service Programs for the Elderly contracts totaling \$691,500. Beyond those, additional contracts totaling nearly \$1.5 million were also on the consent agenda. All items were approved. Agencies receiving contracts include:

- Community Action
- Community Resources Council
- Doorstep
- East Topeka Senior Center
- First Tee
- Habitat For Humanity
- Housing Credit Counseling
- Jayhawk Area Agency On Aging
- Kansas Legal Services
- Let's Help
- LULAC Senior Center
- Meals On Wheels
- Medical Society Health Access
- Papan's Landing
- Positive Connection
- Prevention And Resiliency Services Inc. - Safe Streets
- Rossville Senior Center
- TARC Inc.
- Topeka Youth Project
- YWCA

The remainder of the agenda included approvals to fill newly vacant positions in Public Works and the Health Departments. A few contracts for software, vehicle leases and road construction.

Brian Cole with the Department of Corrections requested approval to use \$10,000 from the Inmate Wellness Fund to assist with reentry services for female offenders in support of a humanitarian grant through The Rotary Foundation.

Tim Laurent of Parks & Rec Department presented several items for consideration including two naming rights contracts for James W. Parrish. A contract between Shawnee County Parks & Rec, Visit Topeka, and the Field Museum of Natural History to allow a traveling exhibition SUE: the T Rex Experience to be held at the Great Overland Station from February 4 through May 1, 2022 was approved. If you heard about the upcoming dinosaur fun in Topeka, check out this article in the Topeka Capital Journal: <https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/2021/11/29/topeka-dinosaur-days-next-year-feature-prehistoric-themed-fun/8793903002/>.

Betty Greiner gave a presentation on October 2021 financials. Revenues are right on budget. Expenses are slightly under, but Betty said that we will not end the year that way because of a large number of expenses coming at the end of the year. Almost half of all expenses are for law enforcement.

Executive session was required for personnel issues and the meeting was adjourned.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting
December 2, 2021
Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All three commissioners were present.

The commissioners approved Home Rule Resolution No. 2021-3 adopting the Title VI Plan on second reading.

Several positions were reclassified due to ARPA funds. One in Audit Finance and one in Department of Corrections.

Commissioners approved Parks + Recreation to award a bid to replace the east roof at Helen Hocker Theater using the Shuttered Venue Operating Grant. Commissioners also approved a request to use the emergency wastewater collection system repair contract to repair the storm water overflow in the dam at Westlake Pond at Gage Park due to leaking.

The commissioners approved the renewal of the grant for funding of Keep America Beautiful with the Solid Waste Dept.

The following announcements were made during administrative communications; household hazardous waste collection is Sat. Dec. 4. This will be the last one until Feb. 2022. SE 45th St. is now open at East Edge Rd. There is a JEDO meeting Dec. 8, 2021.

There was a need for an executive session to discuss matters of non-elected personnel with the County Counselor. To be discussed will be the county compensation study and contracts for renovation of the courthouse annex. No action will be taken.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

December 6, 2021

Observer: Susan Quinn

3 Commissioners present

Today's meeting started with a presentation of the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment with an overview and next steps presented by Craig Barnes of the Shawnee County Health Department. That is, it was the first order of business after their customary Pledge of Allegiance to the US Flag.

I found a copy of the detailed 58 page [report](#) on the Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods site.

Groups represented on the Steering Committee are Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods (HHN), Stormont Vail Health and Shawnee County Health Department. They had over 2,500 survey responses, 15 targeted roundtables with 148 attendees, and a virtual town hall with 95 attendees representing 45 organizations.

The Executive Summary documented the following priorities that will drive the improvement plans for the next 3 years:

- Food Security
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health Access
- Health Equity

Those priorities are reworded a bit, but are largely the same ones that were identified for work in the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Mr. Barnes reported that work is ongoing on the 2020-2022 CHIP.

Brett Martin, Chair of Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods, invited people who want to get involved to contact him. I couldn't find his contact information, but [Lissa Stanley](#) is listed on their contact page for more information. A final HHN meeting for 2021 will be held this coming Monday, December 13, and it would be an excellent opportunity to get updated on the work that has happened this year. This may be a good one for the LWVTSC to observe.

Other business was routine. Becky Nioce, Register of Deeds, requested a new records position. The Commissioners decided to allot the 2022 Transient Guest tax to Stormont Vail Events Center. There were more fleet vehicles that they approved to replace on lease because it made financial sense to do so.

Executive session was required for personnel issues and the meeting was adjourned.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

December 9, 2021

Observer: Elvera Johnson, via live stream

All 3 Commissioners present

In routine business, commissioners approved:

A proposal from Corrections to purchase a body scanner to detect contraband without touching the inmate and a proposal to purchase a heating and ventilation and air conditioning system that better meets health standards.

For Parks and Recreation, a proposal to repair the retaining wall at Rueger Park; contracts with Shawnee Yacht Club and Topeka Rowing Development Association to use facilities at Lake Shawnee; a contract for burial services at West Lawn Gardens cemetery; a new schedule of fees for use of Parks and Recreation facilities.

For Information Technology, authorization to purchase additional storage capacity for the existing Nutanix virtualization platform; a contract with Enterprise to lease a vehicle.

For Public Works, a contract with Kansas Department of Transportation to replace a bridge over Indian Creek, with cost sharing between the state and the county; a revised budget to repair failed concrete pavement joints on the westbound off-ramp along E 6th street between Croco Road and Highway K4.

For Health Department, a contract with Enterprise to lease two vehicles.

For the County Counselor, a proposal to update the County Code; a proposal to repair small sections of the Events Center parking lot that were not included in the renovation project budget (as they were not considered as essential for the project.)

For the County Commission, an Interlocal Agreement with the city for the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.

For Audit Finance, review of revenues and expenses as of the end of November. It appears that the county will end up with excess revenue, partly due to staff vacancies. There was some discussion of using some of those funds to increase wages, in an effort to fill vacant positions. No decisions were made.

In administrative communications, a ribbon cutting was announced for the 45th street improvements between West Edge and East Edge.

An executive session was held to discuss pending litigation with the Counselor.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting
December 13, 2021
Observer: Susan Quinn**

3 Commissioners present

Today's meeting lasted just over 8 minutes. A brief consent agenda was approved. They approved voucher payments, correction orders, and resolution for the County's self-insured notary bond. They also approved a contract for a timekeeping system for the Department of Corrections.

Executive session was not required today and the meeting was adjourned.

**Topeka City Council Meeting
November 16, 2021
Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All council members were present including the mayor, either virtually or in person.

Mayoral proclamations were read in recognition of National Home Care and Hospice Month and Family Court Awareness Month.

Carole Jordan was reappointed to the Topeka Board of Zoning Appeals. Lisa Stubbs was reappointed to the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority Board. Helen Crow was reappointed to the Topeka Board of Zoning Appeals. Carly Feldhausen was appointed to the Shawnee County Community Corrections Advisory Board.

The council heard a presentation summarizing the ETC Citizen Satisfaction Survey. Citizen satisfaction reflects "dramatic dips in satisfaction". The council heard an update of winter operations' plans. The snow and ice removal template is to remove snow starting downtown with 2", moving to snow routes at 4" and residential/side streets at 6". The department will have enhanced pre-treatment of streets this year. The department has a strong COVID protocol in place in order to prevent worker shortages. The general public may call 785-368-3111 for any weather-related street problems.

The council heard a 3rd quarter financial report. Revenue is up and expenses are down overall.

The council approved the issuance of industrial revenue bonds for the Flywheel Fairlawn LLC, formerly the Holidome. The bonds will be used to create 140 apartments with removal of the holidome. The city will sell the bonds and pass the revenue to the developer. The developer will experience a 10 yr. saving of property taxes and savings on sales taxes. The liability of the city is limited.

The council set a public hearing date of December 7, 2021 for the 2021 Proposed Budget Amendments.

Councilman Duncan proposed a city ordinance to allow retail establishments to designate parking spaces for curbside pick-up. The proposal was defeated 6-4.

The council heard an update from Bird Scooters. Council expressed concerns about scooters parked in the middle of the sidewalks, enforcement of no riding on side-walks and problems blocking bus stops. The discussion with Bird Scooters will continue.

The council heard a presentation from the city manager regarding updates to ordinances, which address the Citizens Advisory Council and Neighborhood Improvement Associations due to the creation of the city's Community Engagement Division.

The council heard a presentation regarding the Topeka DREAMS grant awardees for 2022 to North Topeka West, Valley Park and Highland Acres Neighborhoods.

During public comments a couple spoke about helicopters flying low and hovering over their home. Additional comments included dissatisfaction with North Topeka West infrastructure, the lack of transparency in hiring a new city manager and chief of police and the need for universal basic income support in Topeka. Comments also requested that the council approve all contracts over \$50,000, the council set the meeting agenda and not the city manager and that the council focus on replacing water lines.

Announcements included no meeting next week, the need for dental services for veterans, recognition of Native American Heritage Month, wishing everyone happy Thanksgiving, the planned multicultural Christmas celebration, NOTO Christmas celebrations starting this weekend, the cost of water and donations needed for the Salvation Army kettles.

The council held an executive session to discuss individual employee personnel discussion. No action is expected.

Topeka City Council Meeting

December 7, 2021

Observer: Vicki Arnett

Seven council members were present either virtually or in chambers. Mayor De La Isla and Mayor elect Michael Padilla were absent. Councilman Lesser was also absent. Councilwoman Hiller chaired the meeting.

Chair Hiller started the meeting with a moment of silence in memory of Pearl Harbor day, Emergency Responders and Bob Dole. She also commented about the need of the Salvation Army due to Red Kettle campaign shortages.

The council reappointed Brad Loveless to the Riverfront Authority Board, Kurt Young, Robert Bergquist and Dean Patel to the Tourism Business Improvement District

Advisory Board, Jeff Romine to the Plumbing Examiners Board and Neil Carlson to the Plumbing Appeals Board.

The council heard a presentation about the 2021 Community Needs Assessment completed by Heartland Healthy Neighborhood. The assessment is available on their website.

The council approved a lengthy consent agenda. The agenda was lengthy due to this being the first- time contracts \$50,000 and over have come before the council for a vote.

The council approved the current service fee imposed on downtown businesses for 2022 per the Downtown Business Improvement District agreement with Downtown Topeka, Inc. The council also approved the tourism fee continue for 2022 per the agreement with Visit Topeka, Inc. The vote was 6-1 with councilman Duncan voting no. He objects to the priority, exclusive funding subsidizing Kids Wrestling Kansas. Other planned projects will fund Dino Days with the Great Overland Station, Kansas Children's Discovery Center and the Topeka Zoo.

The council approved ordinance changes resulting from changing the structure of the citizen's advisory council neighborhood improvement associations to the Community Engagement Division.

The council approved the grantees for the 2022 Topeka DREAMS in North Topeka West, Valley Park and Highland Acres.

The council held a public hearing prior to approval of two 2021 Budget Amendments. The amendments increase information technology funding and increase federal funds balances. There were no public comments.

The council approved the 2022 legislative priorities as approved by the policy committee. There was much discussion about the impact of the legislature eliminating the food sales tax on the city budget.

Non-action discussion items included new information about negotiations with KDOT and the impact on the city's plans for the Polk/Quincy viaduct reconstruction. The cost to the city to relocate utilities and storm wastewater lines will have to be borne by the city and not KDOT. The city has multiple options including geo-bonding, ARPA and the new infrastructure funding federal monies. There were two public conferees who requested using infrastructure funding in a fair and equitable manner through a DEI lens.

The council heard a public health and safety committee report regarding changing code enforcement processes. There were two conferees testifying who requested "going after slum lords" and focus on weatherization assistance in the infrastructure monies.

Public comments included comments about helicopters flying around someone's home since 2000 and the need to get to the bottom of it and request to bundle state, local and federal funds for the public good. Announcements of council included comments on the

Miracle on Kansas Ave., Frank Peterson naval destroyer, Topeka High School 150th anniversary concert, a request to revisit mandatory retirement age for fire and police, remembering Bob Dole, remembering Topeka's birthday Dec. 5, Oakland garden is now closed for the season, council members who attended the meeting of Topeka Alliance for Good Government, a request to develop tools for gauging the level of community growth and to support basic need organizations this holiday season.

Two executive sessions were needed however, the presentation did not elaborate on the reason for the two. Timing and that no action would be taken was announced.

**JEDO Board of Directors Meeting
December 8, 2021
Observer: Judy Moler**

The JEDO Board met on September 8, 2021, via Zoom. There were 7 voting members present.

The JEDO voting members approved 7-0 to use money from the countywide half sent sales to tax to provide for development incentives of \$393, 000 to three Shawnee County companies already located in the county.

Those incentive monies were awarded as follows: \$214,000 to Ernest-Spencer Metals; \$60, 000 to HME; and, \$119,000 to Heinen Brothers Agra Services.

Ernest-Spencer Metals plans to make \$3.8 million in capital investments and create up to 35 new jobs.

HME's awarded incentive money will bring in an anticipated \$15 million in capital investments from the company.

Finally, the money awarded to Heinen Brothers Agra Services will be used to expand its aviation services following their purchase of Hetrick Aviation last year. This expansion will include 20 new jobs in Shawnee County.

The meeting was adjourned.