

# December 2022 Observer Reports

**USD 437 Board Meeting**  
**October 17, 2022**  
**Observer: Mary Galligan**

7 members present

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

There were no comments from the public prior to the meeting.

The USD 437 School Board unanimously approved:

- The meeting agenda
- Items on the consent agenda
- Purchase of generators and associated equipment for Auburn Elementary and Pauline South Intermediate school buildings
- Designation of the board's delegate to the KASB delegate assembly, November 12
- Life House Counseling resources as presented at previous meeting
- A motion to go into executive session at 7:43 PM for 10 minutes, until 7:53 PM, to discuss personnel matters pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of matters related to non-elected personnel and matters pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of matters related to actions adversely or favorably affecting a student
- After Executive Session, separate motions approving out of district students, releasing a certified employee from their contract, and increasing the wage rate for the warehouse manager position

The Board received:

- A report from the Owner's Representative regarding progress on bond-financed capital improvement projects at the middle and high schools

The Board discussed:

- Proposed hourly wage increase for security guards
- Addition of a mechanic position
- Updates to certain Board policies
- The need to order generators and associated equipment due to the extraordinary length of time between ordering and receipt

**USD 437 Board Meeting  
November 7, 2022  
Observer: Mary Galligan**

7 members present

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

There were no comments from the public prior to the meeting.

The USD 437 School Board unanimously approved:

- The meeting agenda
- Items on the consent agenda
- A motion to go into executive session at 7:19 PM for 45 minutes, until 8:04 PM, to discuss personnel matters pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of matters related to non-elected personnel, the budget pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of employer-employee negotiations, and matters pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of matters related to actions adversely or favorably affecting a student
- A motion to go into executive session at 8:06 PM for 10 minutes until 8:16 PM to discuss personnel matters pursuant to the KOMA exception for discussion of matters related to non-elected personnel
- After executive session, separate motions approving out of district students as discussed during executive session and hiring of personnel as discussed during executive session

The Board received:

- Administrator reports regarding the district's receipt of a Candidate Experience Award and the schedule for American Education Week activities in the district

The Board discussed:

- A draft timeline of activities and decisions leading up to opening of the new middle school at the start of the 2025 school year
- A request for approval for 5 students to attend the 2022-2023 Leadership Conference (anticipated placement on consent agenda for the next meeting)
- The draft document outlining the legislative positions of the Shawnee County school districts (anticipated action at the next meeting)
- Bids for installation of the HVAC system at Wannamaker Elementary (anticipated action at the next meeting)
- Updated Board policies regarding public comment procedures at Board meetings, maintaining official policies online, student dress code (to conform with current state law), and references to gang activity (to conform with current law)

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

## **USD 501 Board Meeting**

**October 6, 2022**

**Observer: Janet Cathcart**

Public Meeting started at 6:30pm at Ross Elementary School

All board members present.

### School Highlights

Ross Elementary performed La Bamba for the board at the beginning of the meeting. Principal Nick Gardner updated the board on what has been happening at Ross.

Senior of the Month-- Highland Park High School's Juan Maldonado. He plays soccer for HP and is in the College Prep Academy. He has a great relationship with his teachers and school staff. He is a great student leader at HP. He has been taking college credit classes. He is planning to go to the University of Kansas and major in computer science. He wants to be a software engineer.

Life Saver Award- Stormont Vail, the board recognized Carol Perry, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, and Amy Kincade, Vice President Clinical Integration, for their life saving assistance at TCALC. A student had a seizure and stopped breathing and both Perry and Kincade treated the student until the ambulance arrived.

Recognition of Our Principals for National Principals Month proclamation was read.

Public Comment- Alyssa Jones from Topeka 501 parent and teacher concerned over the new social emotional grading requirement at the high school level coming from the state. There is a potential to create inequity with this new rating mechanism. There may be harmful consequences for student. Asked the board to reconsider this method of evaluation. Also stated that this was too short of notice to start this type of evaluation.

Sydney Hope from Topeka also a parent and teacher. Also commenting on this new grading/rating initiative. Also asked the board to reconsider this method of evaluation. Also stated that this was too short of notice to start this type of evaluation. They were just informed of this new method this past week. Reconsider reporting this for this first quarter since there was not enough notice for the teachers, students and families.

Jeremy Gibson NEA Topeka President also addressing this new evaluation process. If we are invested in social emotional learning then we also need to take the time to invest in training teachers and staff in this and making students and families aware that this is happening.

### Disposition of Business by Consent

Bolley made a motion to adopt the business by consent.

Dr. Randall Schumacher seconded the motion. Motion carries unanimously.

### Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Update- Dr. Anderson and Highland Park principal presented a video and discussed how they are helping high school seniors register to vote and learning the voting process. They have been passing out Vote fliers with a QR code that can direct them to registering to vote. At HP they discuss voting with their students especially seniors and how to research candidates.

Wallace explained the reporting process for the new social/emotional grading process. High school and elementary principle shared their training process for the new evaluation system.

Enrollment update- Mr. Kipp- Actual district enrollment within 8 students of projection  
Projected = 12,803 Actual = 12,795

Elementary enrollment slightly higher than previous year.

Topeka High School enrollment increase.

Kansas in general is losing population and that is affecting enrollment across the state.

### Discussion Items

Proposed Policy revisions- Bolley went over some of the policy changes.

### Action Items

Approval of Proposed Policy Changes

Motion by Melanie Stuart-Campbell, second by Randall Schumacher. Motion carries unanimously.

### Board Member Comments

Dr. Bonebrake commented on current education funding by the legislature.

Encouraged his fellow board members to contact their representative and senators to work on better education funding.

### **USD 501 Board Meeting**

**October 20, 2022**

**Observer: Janet Cathcart**

### School Highlights

Custodian Appreciation Day, October 2, 2022 proclamation was read by Seitz and a video showcasing the department was shown.

Physical Therapist Month Proclamation read by Kara Schuetz.

National Audiology Awareness Month Proclamation read by Dr. Meryl Lockling.

Public Comment: no public comment

#### Disposition of Business by Consent

Stewart Bolley made a motion to adopt the business by consent.

Tatum seconded the motion.

Motion carries unanimously.

#### Superintendent's Report

Major Maintenance Proposal for 2022-2023 presented by Seitz and Robbins. The board discussed the major maintenance proposal and will take action to approve the projects at its next meeting.

#### Discussion Items

Board Work Session-Legislative Committee Report: Bolley explained the final draft of the KASB Legislative Committee Report 2022-2023. Bolley is the Region 2 delegate. It contains the talking points to support public education for the Kansas legislature's 2022-23 legislative session. It will also be an action item for the next meeting.

#### Action Items-None

#### Board Member Comments

Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm

### **USD 501 Board Meeting**

**November 3, 2022**

**Observer: Annie Tietze**

- Motion 1 – Board of Education recess into Executive Session to discuss a confidential student discipline appeal
- Motion 2 – Board of Education recess into Executive Session for consultation with the Board Attorney
- Disposition of Business by Consent – most of the items listed under the consent agenda have gone through Board subcommittee review and recommendation
- \$500 donation from Resers' Fruit Farm to Chase Middle School for the PE department equipment needs
- \$250 donation from California Casualty to Jardine Elementary for the Art department
- Recognition of the 5 High School Principals for Official Increased graduation Rates exceeding both State and National Rates

**Topeka City Council Meeting**  
**October 18, 2022**  
**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All council members were present except Deputy Mayor Duncan, either in chambers or on zoom. Council members Hiller and Ortiz were late.

The mayor presented a proclamation recognizing the Topeka Stars Special Olympics Softball team.

Council approved the appointment of Angel Zimmerman, league member, to the Downtown Business Improvement District Advisory Board and Eliot Kemper to the Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board.

The council heard a presentation from Karen Black, consultant to the Public Health and Safety committee on Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance Final report. The report makes 11 recommendations which the committee indicated they will begin implementation work on soon. The consultant's remarks include 1 in 4 single family homes/properties are investment managed properties. One investor recently purchased 60 properties. The most reported code violation is for trash and weeds in the yard. Property owners which end up in court due to code violation, are usually elderly/low income. The emphasis should be on remediation rather than punishment. One recommendation is how the city and county can work together regarding jointly maintaining property to be sold at auction for both code and tax violations. The consultant also mentioned that many properties are sold contract for deed. The contractor/owner will likely never own the property due to some interest rates of 57%. The "landlord" refuses to maintain the property stating it is the contractor/owner's responsibility. The city and county could work together to record the deeds differently to clarify the owner of the property.

The council approved moving the only action item on the agenda to Nov. 15 meeting. This moves the discussion of the repair of the Uptowner Parking Garage for the third time.

The council heard a presentation of the recommendations of the Citizen Advisory Council for the 2023 Topeka Dreams Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives program funding allocations.

There was no public comment.

The city manager announced the Department of Justice has been notified about the two recent police shootings. The city manager also announced there is no disagreement between the Fraternal Order of Police and TPD command staff regarding staffing patterns. Council members encouraged donation of coats to the Scotch/Salvation Army program. One council member commented on seeing a porch pirate in their neighborhood. Two council members announced reminders to vote. The mayor reminded the public that this is the YWCA of Northeast Kansas Week without Violence.

There was a need for an executive session to discuss employer/employee negotiations with union employees of the water dept.

## **Topeka City Council Meeting**

**November 1, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

Seven city council members were present. Council member Emerson and Mayor Padilla were absent. City Council district 9 position is vacant effective Nov. 1 due to the resignation of Michael Lesser. Deputy Mayor Duncan presided.

The council appointed Johnathan Sublet and Harry Christian to the Affordable Housing Review Committee. The council appointed Shawn Smith to the Board of Electrical Appeals, Walter Schoemaker to the Board of Zoning Appeals and Bill Naeger to the Board of Mechanical Appeals. The vote was 6-1 with Council member Naeger abstaining.

The council heard a presentation about the Changing our Culture of Property Maintenance-Mowing Partners.

The council held a public hearing regarding the redevelopment of the 2880 SE California McDonalds. There was no public comment. The action item passed 7-0. The council approved the contract renewal with Visit Topeka, Inc. The council approved 7-0 the redistricting map recommended by the City Council Redistricting Commission. The ordinance required only 5 votes since it involves Home Rule. The mayor does not vote but may veto. Several council members thanked their appointees for serving. Council member Ortiz commented about how she served the Oakland area for 10 years and how she would continue to serve the city. She also spoke about how the redistricting process only involves making the districts the correct population, "it has nothing to do with precinct size or NIA boundaries".

The council approved the 2023 Topeka DREAMS awards as recommended. The council approved the priorities for the 2023 Kansas Legislative Session. The priorities include requesting the elimination of mandatory jail time for those driving on suspended licenses, recommending local control of common use liquor consumption and transparency in the plans for Docking State Office Building.

The council approved changes to the municipal court procedures for prosecuting international property maintenance code violations, to clarify the responsibility of legal entities in municipal court, establish an appeal process to the district court from decisions of an administrative hearing office and impose high fines for habitual violators of the code. The council approved an ordinance establishing a court cost in the amount of \$72.00 for all dismissals of International Public Maintenance Code cases unless a financial hardship is demonstrated. The municipal code ordinance changes were recommended by the Changing our culture of property maintenance consultant.

There were two public comments regarding the lack of transparency on the part of city government about the recent referral to the U.S. Justice Dept regarding shootings by Topeka Police. Council announcements included 12<sup>th</sup> St. is finished to Washburn, Bethany Gardens at Grace Cathedral is open, remarks regarding a workshop by the Urban Institute on evaluating urban revitalization efforts (Hiller), three reminders to the public to vote, how to apply for district 9 open seat (city website), a Dec. 20 city council meeting will be needed, the Veteran's Day parade is Sat., there is a Thanksgiving season, comments about the Equity Access Shelter meeting today, ARPA grants are on the Nov. 15 council agenda.

There was a need for an executive session to discuss employer/employee relations, union negotiations.

### **Shawnee County Commission Meeting**

**October 20, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

Commissioner Mays was absent. Commissioner Riphahn chaired the meeting.

The commission approved the purchase of new mowers for the Public Works Dept., authorized the Health Dept. to enter into an agreement with Rasmussen College to provide on-site training for nursing students and to contract with Hickok & Associates for provision of laboratory director services. Parks + Rec extension of the contract with Topeka Civic Theatre for the provision of programming and services at Helen Hocker theatre was renewed. The commission also approved was a painting contract at Hillcrest, Rossville and Garfield aquatic facilities. Facilities management requested and the commission approved a contract for trade services for one year for painting and light construction work. The commission approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the state Office of Judicial Administration to provide supplemental compensation for two district magistrate judge positions. This is a state contract request for reimbursement of salary payment for new judicial positions.

One person spoke during public comments. He represents Heartland Catering at Stormont Vail Event Center. He spoke in favor of their bid and would like to begin negotiation.

Administrative Communications included reminder to employees that open health care enrollment has started, an event at Great Overland Station this weekend, Oct. 29 is the last day for the train and merry go round at Gage Park and there were comments about the Indian Encampment at Ward Meade.

There was no need for an executive session.



**Shawnee County Commission Meeting**  
**October 27, 2022**  
**Observer: Elvera Johnson**

Two Commissioners present. Commissioner Cook was absent.

Chair Aaron Mays acknowledged that this was the first meeting in the new location. He opened with a 100+ year old wooden gavel that Commissioner Riphahn explained had been used in the Kansas Legislature. No explanation was given for the absence of Commissioner Cook.

Commissioners quickly proceeded through Consent Agenda, voucher payments and correction orders. For Human Resources, they approved Health Savings Account Funding for county employees; wage increases for Dispatchers, represented by AFL-CIO local Communications Workers of America; and execution of a contract with Compliance One to provide drug testing and training for employees. For Facilities Management, they approved a request to extend pricing for pest control services. For Public Works, they approved purchase of four skid-steers using a government purchasing cooperative. For Parks and Recreation, they approved a contract for replacement of the roof on Lake Shawnee Shelter #6. They tabled a request to fill a vacant Administrative Superintendent, Parks and Rec position that oversees finance, contracts, grants, human resources, marketing, and partnership development functions. This is a new position and Commissioners voted to research this further.

Commissioners then discussed a request for “fence viewing” presented by County Counsel. The fence is between 2 landowners and there is a complaint about the adequacy of the fence. Commissioners appointed the Public Works Director and the County Surveyor with consultation from County Counsel to complete this viewing.

There was no Public Comment. The meeting moved to Administrative Communications. Stormont Vail Events Center talked about their Haunted House and their Trunk or Treat event. Human Resources talked about a vaccine clinic and open enrollment for employees in benefit program. Parks and Rec talked about the Monster Mash Bash at Helen Hocker Theater and the closing of the train and carousal for the season after October 29.

Election Commissioner Howell reported that an average of 1000 people per day are coming in for early voting. This continues weekdays 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and ends at noon on November 7. They are receiving around 500 mail ballots daily and continuing to mail out requested ballots. Deadline to request a mail ballot is Nov 1.

An Executive Session was called to consult with attorney regarding contract negotiations.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting**  
**October 31, 2022**  
**Observer: Susan Quinn**

Today's meeting of the Shawnee County Commission had all three commissioners present.

After the pledge of allegiance, unfinished business started the meeting with a request to fill the vacant Administrative Superintendent, Parks & Recreation Position at about \$92,000 annually. This was approved.

Also approved today were two contracts for Parks & Rec. One was for software for scheduling sporting events. Another was for improvements to golf courses.

No public comments were made. Craig Barnes of the Health Department was recognized by Emporia State University, his alma matter for a "Graduate of the Year" award he was recently awarded.

Executive session for three attorney-client consults were needed today, but no action taken.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting**  
**November 3, 2022**  
**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All three commissioners were present.

Department of Corrections received approval to contract for engineering services to renovate and update the heating, ventilation and air conditioning at the Annex. The Health Department received approval to apply for funding to cover expenses for a public art piece. Parks and Recreation received approval to fill a vacant Recreation Manager Position.

The Commission cancelled meetings on Nov. 10, Nov. 21 and Nov. 24.

There were no public comments. Administrative communications included Solid Waste announcing that this is a holiday week next week and double pick up will be Tues. for Tues./Wed. customers. This weekend Household Hazardous Waste is open Sat. 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> on Quincy will be closed until April, the November Commission newsletter is posted and it includes a thank you to all Election Workers. Commissioner Riphahn announced the dedication of the WWII memorial in Gage Park. Commissioner Mays announced he attended the announcement of the partnership between Stormont Vail and Children's Mercy.

There was a need for an executive session to discuss matters of attorney/client privilege involving contract negotiations for the courthouse renovation.

## **Intergovernmental Cooperation Council**

**October 18, 2022**

**Observer: Susan Quinn**

Present:

- Tim Hallacy, Shawnee Heights Superintendent
- Tiffany Anderson, Topeka Public Schools Superintendent
- Brad Willson, Seaman Superintendent
- Sue Bolley, Topeka Public Schools
- Marie Pyko, TSCPL
- Dr. Scott McWilliams, Auburn Washburn Superintendent
- Larry Robbins, Topeka Public Schools
- Amanda Tituana Feijoo, Auburn Washburn
- Tiffany Fisher, Silver Lake Schools Board of Directors
- Steven Wade, City of Topeka, City Manager
- Marshall Meek, Washburn University, Interim President
- Eric Gropitch, Washburn University, Vice President for Student Life
- Cynthia Holthaus, Washburn University, Special Assistant to the President

Today's agenda was an update on Washburn University from Marshall Meek and Eric Gropitch.

Marshall Meek started the conversation. He said that as interim president he has been doing a lot of listening and has categorized his activities into three buckets:

1. Listening and reporting
2. Listening and recommending
3. Listening and acting

In terms of capital projects, Marshall Meek talked about the building on 21st and Washburn. It is a new law building and is on budget and just slightly over schedule a bit due to delays in getting glass. It should open in February or early March 2023.

Another project is \$6.4 million recital hall just off 17th Street northeast of White Concert Hall. This will be a smaller venue for recitals.

A mid campus plaza is being explored. This would require tearing down and relocating the facilities maintenance department.

Henderson Hall renovation: 25% of classes are held in Henderson Hall. It opened in 1970 and has not been updated since. Giving Henderson Hall the "Morgan treatment" would be a \$35 million project. They are starting a \$15 million fundraising project soon.

Lastly for capital they are also exploring a new residence for the WU President.

Enrollment numbers are down 3.5% but they have had an increase of 4.8% direct from high school enrollment. [US News and World Report has ranked Washburn University](#) so that is a plus. Marshall Meek talked about shedding this “hidden gem identity” for Washburn University.

They are working on a financial aid optimization project with consultants to reconfigure their financial aid packages to get more students.

They have closed the search for the president with 50 to 60 applicants. They are working their way down to 5 to 6 candidates during November and will announce a new president in early 2023.

Tiffany Anderson asked about why there was an increase in high school direct enrollment. Marshall Meek answered that it is compared to last year a 4.8% increase and last year was not a great year. Also there has been stronger collaboration between high schools and Washburn University although he didn't elaborate on what those stronger collaboration efforts have been.

Eric Grospitch said that 48% of their students are first generation students. He talked about how students are happy to be back on campus. They have seen a decrease in suicide hotline calls. He expressed how happy the students are and talked about [Nancy Schlossberg's Marginality and Mattering theory](#).

The last few questions were from Sue Bolley. She wanted to know how many students that Washburn will be graduating with an education degree from Washburn. There were just 17 last May. It was commented that at the career fair, 30 school districts showed up to talk with those 17 graduating students. Several ideas were tossed around about why fewer students are taking up teaching as a profession.

McWilliams closed the meeting by saying the November meeting will be touring the library because of the recent upgrades that the library has rolled out in technology