

# Observer Reports

## January 2023

### **Inter-Governmental Cooperation Council**

**November 15, 2022**

**Observer: President Carole Jordan**

The ICC met Nov. 15 at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library in the Anton Room. The only item of business was the change in leadership. Chair Dr. McWilliams of Auburn Washburn passed the gavel to incoming chair, Dr. Tiffany Anderson of the 501 District. There will be no December meeting.

Also in attendance was League member Melissa Masoner.

Library Director Marie Pyko led a tour of the library's Level 2 Technology Center. Take a virtual tour at <https://tscpl.org/level-2-tech-center>.

### **USD 345 Board Meeting**

**November 14, 2022**

**Observer: Chris Huntsman**

The Seaman Board of Education met November 14 with all members present. 65 people attended virtually. The almost three-hour meeting began with public comments (not on recording) and recognition. Superintendent Willson shared the 2<sup>nd</sup> of four learning trend reports (online). President Caudill reflected on the KASB conference last weekend and how we need to let the students "set the pace".

Under Item 8A, the superintendent began the process of the strategic planning process, which is when the board sets guidelines for the district for the next five years. He asked for a "student centered graduate profile" and his Power Point is posted on the district's website, link is on home page.

8B was a facilities master plan and HTK Architects will begin gathering information. Kyle McNorton asked if the representative saw any major projects like buildings. Answer was by looking at enrollment trends the elementary schools are at capacity; class sizes are not growing, but there is a need for greater space as buildings deal with SEL, flex space and small group learning. SMS was designed to have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade wing if needed. Career and Tech emphasis at SHS will require more space.

Christy Weiler asked how the community would be involved in the gathering of data. Donna McGinty asked about past bond issues and are they paid off? The 2013 Bond issue has a 20-year payoff.

8C was an athletic facilities plan and bid by Mammoth Sports at a cost of \$23,000. HTK's work will include ALL facilities, and if the board later feels the need for Mammoth, it will be later in the process.

8D was information on how "clubs" at the elementary schools are helping students with attendance issues and learning loss during the pandemic.

8E was a review of Curriculum at SMS and SHS with deletions, additions and modifications.

8F was a discussion of next year's calendar and the process.

Agenda item 8, letter I, Legislative Positions, garnered questions from board members. The five school districts in Shawnee County are unified in these legislative positions. See document online. Mr. Willson asked the board to take action on this discussion item since December would be too late to do so.

Chris Travis asked if Mr. Willson agrees with positions and he answered he is a strong supporter.

Christy Weiler asked about the SPED transfer from General Funds to SPED. The Federal Department of Education is authorized to fund 40%. Currently federal appropriations fund about 16% of cost. The state is to fund 92% but is currently at 70% of cost. So, the district general fund supports about 30% of SPED costs. SPED funding is at 100%. All student needs are being met.

Donna McGinty asked a question to clarify the 5<sup>th</sup> bullet on Teacher Recruitment: *The development of relationships among local teachers, students, and families without additional, restrictive legislative oversight resulting in the diversion of time and money from the classroom to bureaucratic tasks.* Superintendent Willson gave the example of last year's bill with restrictive oversight that would require educators to post online lessons and materials, which is impossible within any time frame.

James Adams shared the eight- year history of the united voice overall of our county school boards. Frank Henderson elaborated on the empowerment this gives to the Shawnee County legislative delegation for public education.

Kyle McNorton moved and Christy Weiler seconded to support the document. Vote was 6-0; McGinty abstained.

Agenda item 9-Action Items, all were approved.

At 8:23 the Board went into executive session for personnel discussion. At 8:41 the board returned to open session with no action. Meeting was adjourned.

**USD 345 Board Meeting**  
**December 12, 2022**  
**Observer: Chris Huntsman**

The December 12, 2022, Seaman BOE began at 6 PM with all board members present. I did not attend in person and the video recording was challenging to find.

The Strategic Plan and asking for community input were explained by the superintendent, as well as the community survey. Board members will be serving on a focus group--except the student group. Business and Civic Leaders Focus Groups will be January 4 and 5, 2023 both at 4 PM. Here is the link:

[https://www.seamanschools.org/board\\_of\\_education/board\\_digest](https://www.seamanschools.org/board_of_education/board_digest)

At about 6:25 the superintendent went over a few board policy recommendations by KASB. Policy IDAB clarifies parental notification for students seeking counseling services. If the student seeks this, parents are NOT notified. If the school initiates the assistance, parents will be asked to be involved.

Policy IFA would be a new policy on classroom displays/teacher's desk, etc. No religious, political or personal stuff can be posted/displayed. Member McGinty asked "who makes the call?" The building principal will decide. Member McNorton asked – "can religious, personal (family pictures) or political items be on the desk?" Willson answered "even though the desk is school property, it is personal space for the teacher."

Later in the discussion member Adams asked if "this was a solution looking for a problem?" For the district this is the current practice answered superintendent Willson. Bottom line, if the stuff disrupts learning, staff will be asked to remove it by administration.

Policy LED addresses old policies on saying no school activities on Wednesday evening or on Sundays. Member Travis asked if AD's are having difficulties scheduling all the activities. 345 current policy just says Sundays.

The Board will vote next month on these KASB recommended changes.

Under 8F, the superintendent asked to attend a conference by AASA with a \$6,000 fee. It was moved/seconded/voted to send the superintendent to this national conference.

Under 8G, member Travis asked "if all Board members should attend the NASB national conference yearly?" Even though no monetary amount was mentioned, he and others felt it was expensive and should those funds be redirected to student achievement? Member McGinty asked 501 and 450, and both said only the President and Superintendent attend this conference.

Both members Adams and Henderson, long time board members, explained the great value students get when the board attends this conference and Henderson gave specific examples of how students have benefited from decisions made in his 16 years by attending past meetings – technology was one of those and it positioned our district during COVID to go to remote learning easily.

Henderson is the National NASB President this year and he stated the 2023 conference will have 100 breakout sessions and even sending seven members cannot cover them all. But they can cover many, learning best practices from around the nation.

Superintendents come and go, but board members usually are in the community for a long time and this helps them “get out of their bubble.” Adams said it is a great “team” building time for the seven members. After a robust discussion, no change will be made in current practice.

At 7:35, the board went into executive action for 25 minutes, and no action was taken when returned to the open meeting. Meeting was adjourned.

## **USD 501 Board Meeting**

**December 1, 2022**

**Observer: Annie Tietze**

The Board recessed into executive session to discuss a confidential personnel matter. The Superintendent and Leadership Staff were invited to the session.

On the consent agenda was consideration of a resolution to terminate the employment of a non-tenured teacher. It was approved as presented.

On the consent agenda was a \$152,000 contribution from TPS for the Sports Park Account.

On the consent agenda was a \$1,806 contribution from Southwest Publishing to Ross Elementary to purchase items for staff to continue to build school culture and staff climate.

On the consent agenda was a \$250.00 donation to State Street Elementary by First United Methodist Church to continue to build school culture and staff climate.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting  
November 7, 2022  
Observer: Susan Quinn**

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

The department of corrections asked to convert an existing position to a Juvenile Programs Specialist position for an increase in salary and benefits of \$8,936. They also asked for execution of a contract amendment with Shawnee County Regional Alcohol and Drug Assessment Center for additional care coordination services with adult community corrections. Both items were approved.

County counselor brought a Tax Exemption request for Torgeson Electric and requested for a public hearing which was set for December 5<sup>th</sup>. The tax exemption would run for 10 years.

The planning department brought a major amendment to a conditional use permit for sand mining near the Kansas River on an additional 62 acres. A public hearing was held and with no opposition the request was approved.

No public comments were made.

Executive session was needed today.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting  
November 14, 2022  
Observer: Susan Quinn**

Today's meeting of the Shawnee County Commission had Commissioners Cook and Mays present.

The human resources department brought a memorandum of understanding with Rasmussen College for a 15% discount on tuition for county employees.

The Information Technology department had a request for approving software for time tracking and scheduling.

Parks and Rec brought two items. The first was request to submit a grant to the Kansas Department of Wildlife for maintenance on the Levee Trail along the north side of the Kansas River. Second, they asked to purchase 3 lots in Lindbloom Subdivision to connect the Lindbloom park to Lake Shawnee grounds. Lindbloom park is a 16- acre undeveloped park located south of SE 45th Street near the south end of Lake Shawnee. Both items were approved.

Court administration asked to purchase audio-visual equipment for a couple of court room renovations.

Betty Greiner went through the finances for October. Everything appears to be in order. The only largely unplanned item is the interest income from their holdings that is much higher than they had budgeted.

No public comments were made.

Today's meeting was followed by an executive session and a Public Building Commission meeting to discuss authorizing the issuance of \$20 million in bonds for improvements to the Department of Corrections and the Parks and Recreation facilities.

### **Shawnee County Commission Meeting**

**November 17, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

Commissioner Riphahn was absent.

The meeting started with announcements from the Shawnee County Health Department, Theresa Fisher, of the 2022 Public Health Champion Awards. The awards went to a school nurse in the Seaman district and Jill Wright, volunteer with Hi-Crest Fellowship.

Of note on the consent agenda, which passed unanimously, the Commission approved the purchase of a vehicle for the sheriff's department specifically marked for the DARE program.

The Commission approved renovation of conference and training space within the Community Corrections offices. Also approved was a contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas to include a Qualified High Deductible Health Plan and Rx for county employee group coverage in 2023.

The Commission approved a contract presented by county counselor, James Crowl, to contract with a consulting group regarding seeking grants to plan and implement a Topeka Turnpike interchange in anticipation of Kansas Turnpike Authority approving a project. The Commission approved the purchase of a mobile ticketing system for the Sheriff's department.

There was no public comment. The only announcement was that the Commission meets as the Board of Election canvassers on Mon. Nov. 21, 2022.

### **Shawnee County Board of Health**

**November 17, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

The Shawnee County Commission immediately reconvened as the Shawnee County Board of Health with only Commissioner Mays and Cook attending.

Teresa Fisher presented information on the Health Dept. accreditation process. The Shawnee County Health Department was fully accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board on Aug. 18, 2022. There are seven accredited health departments in Kansas.

Brittany Blattner and Craig Barnes presented information on the mosquito surveillance program. The program monitors the number of mosquitoes in areas to control West Nile Virus. The department has a dunk program and provides material which kills mosquitoes and larvae in standing bodies of water. The department also has a water dump day program. The department is considering expanding in 2023 to monitoring ticks.

Carrie Delfs and Dr. Erin Locke provided an overview of Monkeypox. There were two suspected cases in Shawnee County. The peak of the outbreak was in Aug. There were 80,000 cases world-wide with 30,000 cases in the U.S.

Dr. Dennis Cooley presented and update as the chair of the Public Health Technical Advisory Board. The meetings are open to the public. The body is preparing to address future issues related to RSV, flu and Covid-19. The next meeting is December 1.

Craig Barnes and Brett Martin presented an update to the Community Health Improvement Plan. The plan addresses community needs, stakeholders and engagement to address needs. The areas of focus are behavioral health, access to food, substance abuse and health equity. Health equity areas of focus will be infant mortality, sexually transmitted infections and obesity. The plan will be presented to the public at a meeting of Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods at the annual action summit Dec. 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Topeka Shawnee County Public library.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting  
November 28, 2022  
Observer: Susan Quinn**

In today's meeting all three Commissioners were present. There was a large consent agenda which easily passed along with the two voucher payments, correction orders, and three resolutions authorizing 2023 cereal malt beverage licenses to three retail stores.

The main discussion was held on solid waste today. Specifically, in question was the history of Shawnee County's recycling program and projected cost for continuing the recycling program. Bill Sutton led the discussion. In a nutshell, Shawnee County has been under a 10-year contract with Waste Management since 2013 for curbside recycling. We have shared in the cost of that recycling with Waste Management. Over the years, because of the contract terms, Waste Management has had to foot the bill as the estimated projections on the original contract did not actually happen. That contract will end on December 31, 2022.

Shawnee County Refuge is faced with a decision. Given the current makeup of our recycling and the current market for recycling, we will lose between \$16,000 to \$100,000 monthly for recycling. The cost of that will have to be passed on if we are to continue recycling. In the recent past, about 46% of the material Shawnee County Refuge customers place in their recycling bins gets rejected and thrown away in the garbage landfill. It is either glass, which does not belong in the recycling bin, or it is actually trash, which of course does not belong in the recycling bin. It was stated over and over about how education is key so that people understand what can be recycled and how it should best be recycled. For example, glass can be recycled but it cannot be placed into your recycle bin for curbside pickup. Instead, glass is to be recycled using the drop off locations within Shawnee County. There are not very many drop off locations. My family uses the one at Lowe's parking lot on the west side of Topeka.

One bright spot that I took away was that all our recycling is sold to domestic recyclers, meaning it does not leave the United States for recycling. Also, the plastics, metals, and glasses are all fetching a decent rate on the recycles market right now. Cardboard and mixed paper, however, has not had a great market recently. The Waste Management representative said that cardboard and paper markets are much more volatile than the non-fiber materials recycling. Non-fiber means plastics, glass, and metals.

Commissioner Cook said that he would like to hear from Shawnee County Refuge users. He would like to hear what we have to say about whether we value recycling and want to continue to recycle. Right now, as it stands, depending on the option that is implemented, Shawnee County Refuge customers could see an increase of up to \$11 monthly for recycling. Nothing has been yet decided. If you have any comments about what should happen with the program, take time to review [the segment that was shown on YouTube](#) and let your voice be heard by attending the next Shawnee County Commission meeting and giving a public comment. Alternatively, contact your commissioner via phone, email, or write them a letter. Let them know what you would like to do and how you would like it done. But do it soon because they must decide on a way forward very soon with the contract ending this month.

Parks and Recreation requested that the Board of Commissioners set a public hearing for December 19th to discuss alternatives for the Oakland Aquatic facility and the Shawnee South Community Park splash pad projects. These two projects will be discussed in a public hearing on December 19th. Be sure to attend if those water facilities are important to you and your family.

Lastly, the Commissioners set into motion the necessary steps to levy a 0.2% Gage Park Authority sales tax beginning January 1, 2023.



**Shawnee County Commission Meeting  
December 1, 2022  
Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All commissioners were present.

Of note on the consent agenda, Emergency Management reported that the Shawnee County Ambulance service, American Medical Response (AMR) was not complaint with the contract and will be fined due to response rates being below 80% on time and for long responses in the four different zones per the contract.

Public Works was approved to purchase two super duty pickups under state contract. Noxious Weed Department was approved to renew an agreement with Verizon Wireless for monitoring for targeted spraying of herbicides.

County Counselor requested and was approved to begin renovation of the Shawnee County Courthouse using ARPA funds which will begin next week. Court Administration was also approved to purchase courtroom technology and audio/visual equipment via state contract for the technology upgrades to go with the courthouse renovation. This will also use ARPA funds.

There were no public comments.

Administrative communications included Sat. is the last household hazardous waste Sat. opening this year. The next Sat. availability will be the first Sat. in Feb. The weed dept. announced the sprayer program is suspended until spring. The County Connections newsletter for Dec. is not posted. There will be no commission meeting on Dec. 26 or Jan. 2 due to county holidays. Commissioner Cook encouraged everyone to see Winter Wonderland and announced that the commission is accepting resumes until Dec. 8 for the Gage Park Authority Board created by the election in Nov.

There was a need for an executive session to consult with the attorney about contract negotiations with public works, discuss the interlocal agreement with Topeka regarding the sales tax and consult with the attorney to discuss contract matters with Stormont Vail Event Center.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting  
December 5, 2022  
Observer: Susan Quinn**

County Commissioners held a public hearing today for the approval of a tax exemption application for 10 years for Torgeson Electric Company. Torgeson plans to build a new facility where they planned to add eight jobs per year for five years for a total of 40 new jobs. These jobs will be required, at least at a proportional rate, for their tax exemption. The new building will be on the northeast corner of 14th Street and Saline. The tax

exemption would be in effect for the years 2024-2033. No one spoke during the public hearing and the commissioners approved the application.

Curt Niehaus from public works brought a contract for engineering services to design a road reconstruction project on Northeast 46th Street between Fielding and Rochester roads for a total cost of just under \$700,000. The contract is going to be funded from the 2017-2031 countywide sales tax program. Once designed and engineered, the project would take about 2 years to complete.

Becky Noice, Register of Deeds, asked for a reclassification of one of her positions to an office manager position. She also asked to transfer \$150,000 from the technology fund to the land records fund. Both of these were approved.

Betty Greiner asked for approval to purchase chairs and tables for the courthouse jury assembly room. They plan to purchase over 100 chairs and 20 tables for \$43,000. This was approved as well. The commissioners also approved the purchase of 11 new time clocks for hourly employees to use.

No public comments were made today and no executive session needed.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting  
December 8, 2022  
Observer: Elvera Johnson**

All Commissioners present

The meeting opened with a presentation regarding The County's campaign to support United Way. The main fund-raising event was a golf tournament, with 15 participating teams. There was also a raffle. County employees raised just over \$9,259. A check was presented to a United Way representative.

Bill Persinger from Valeo Behavioral Health Care gave an annual report. He highlighted the MAP (Mobile Access Partnership) program that provides services to unsheltered people in the community. He also talked about an expected boost to the program in 2023, when the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services and the state of Kansas will certify community mental health centers. He said they will be able to expand services. It will be like "mental health centers on steroids" he quipped.

Commissioners approved a cereal malt beverage license to a store at 550 SE Croco Road. They approved a bid for a wastewater treatment system for Sherwood Sewer District, funded by user fees. They approved a fund transfer for modifications to customer access and entry in the Planning Department office. They approved acceptance of the annual Emergency Management Performance Grant from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. They authorized a 3-month extension of a

contract with Alpha Media to recruit employee applications for the Health Department and Department of Corrections. They approved allocation of 6% of the Transient Guest Tax to 2 applicants. \$7000 will go to the Combat Air Museum and the rest will go to Stormont Vail Event Center.

Betty Greiner gave an update on revenues and expenses as of November 30. Revenues are above budgeted amount. Expenditures are under budgeted amount. She explained that most revenues have been received for the year, and there is another month of expenditures remaining. Thus, expenditures may not remain under budgeted amount. She also explained that one reason administrative expenditures have been below budget is the number of vacant positions. They do expect to be able to put some funds in reserve at the end of the year.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Mays announced that there will be no meeting December 12.

The Commission called an executive session to consult with an attorney regarding Gage Park Improvement Authority.

## **Shawnee County Commission Meeting**

**December 15, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All three commissioners were present.

The agenda consisted of end of year spending and appropriation changes, including several contract renewals.

The commission approved the contract renewal for 2023 with Dr. Vlad Dimitriu for professional medical services for patients of the Health Dept with active Tuberculosis or Tuberculosis infection. Also approved for the Health Dept was the contract with Dr. Erin Locke to serve as Health Officer and Medical Director for the Family Planning Program.

The commission approved a three- year extension of the contract with Boys and Girls Club Topeka for the lease of the Velma K. Paris Community Center. For Parks + Rec. Parks + Rec also was approved to proceed with a contract with Wildcat Landscape LLC for moving the sports fields in the parks.

The commission approved a proposal to extend the current recycling services contract until March 1 to allow time to implement proposed rate increases. Solid Waste requested a residential rate increase of \$2 per month for city trash pickup and \$3 per month for county trash pickup. Residents may opt out of recycling program Feb. 1, 2023. Recycling will implement a \$3 charge. For city residents it is charged through the water bill. With the proposed water rate increase, those who continue to recycle will pay an additional estimated \$14 per month.

Audit Finance department introduced requests from four departments for small item capital outlay. \$100,000 in spending was approved.

Facilities management requested and received approval to transfer funds for the West Patio project from the 2022 facilities management budget.

The Election Office received approval to use contingency funds for the unanticipated costs for mail ballot envelopes and MIFI service charges for the 2022 election cycle. The cost resulted from a last-minute change in language required by the legislature on the mail ballot. The Election Office also requested approval of a sole source contract for election software and a cooperative agreement with Douglas County for the development of a candidate software module.

Information Technology requested to transfer funds from the dept. budget to the Courthouse Renovation job ledger. The request was approved.

Court Administration received approval to transfer funds from the court administration budget to the courthouse renovations job ledger for a restroom between rooms 300 and 304. Also approved was a request to transfer funds from the court administration budget to the special job ledger due to the increased anticipated expenses of the retrial in Pottawatomie County of Chandler retrial.

Human Resources received approval to transfer funds to the special projects funds for a wellness budget and to update the Human Resources vestibule.

For the Commission, a request was approved to transfer funds from the departmental budget to the special project fund for the modification of a storage area into a multimedia room.

The appointments to the Gage Park Improvement Authority was moved to the last item for action following executive session.

There were no public comments. Administrative comments included check the holiday trash pick-up schedule. This week was the last JEDO meeting of the year.

An Executive Session was held to consult with an attorney regarding Gage Park Improvement Authority appointments. When the open meeting resumed, the commission appointed James Martin and Elizabeth Johnson as the BCC appointees to the Gage Park Improvement Authority.

## **Topeka City Council Meeting**

**November 15, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

Council member Naeger was late. All other council members, including the mayor, were present either in chambers or on zoom.

The council appointed Keith Finney and Nelda Henning to the Board of Building and Fire Appeals, Tim Carkhuff to the Board of Zoning Appeals, Doug Snook to the Board of Plumbing Appeals and John Nave to the Washburn University Board of Regents.

The council heard a presentation on the city winter operations and preparations.

The council approved the 2023 AFSCME agreement with Water Division employees. The council approved the final plat for Miller's Reserve Subdivision at 21<sup>st</sup> and Indian Hills Rd. Approval accepts the right of way and easements by the city. In addition, the city passed the ordinance annexing the land at Indian Hills Road and SW 21<sup>st</sup>. Additional zoning ordinances were approved at 21<sup>st</sup> and Indian Hills Road from multi-family dwelling to commercial.

The council held a public hearing regarding the issuance of Health Care Facilities revenue bonds for Brewster Place to finance health care and retirement facilities owned by the Congregational Home. There were no public comments. The council approved the issuance of the revenue bonds. There is no cost to the city.

The council approved the use of bond funds for housing in Hi-Crest NIA. Also approved were issuance of taxable general obligation temporary notes in Hi-Crest NIA for street repair.

The council approved the recommendations of the policy and finance committee to fund specific social service programs with ARPA funds.

The council approved the amendment to the Capital Improvement Program for 2023-2032 and the Capital Improvement Budget to parking facilities capital repairs. The city plans to continue ownership of the garages with monthly fees increasing to keep up with maintenance requirements. The council withdrew items to deal with the Uptowner Garage separately since it is included in the previous action. The council also approved increases to metered parking rates downtown beginning in Jan. 2023.

The council amended the Capital Improvement Plan and Budget to include the reconstruction of Highway 24 frontage roads in preparation for reconstruction of Highway 24 by KDOT.

The council approved an amendment to the Capital Improvement Plan and Budget to fund an economic impact study of a future possible KTA turnpike exchange on SE 29<sup>th</sup> St. and an alternative exchange at Elevation Parkway.

The council approves an amendment to the Capital Improvement Plan and Budget to repair the Municipal Building and TPAC HVAC systems.

The council approved December 13, 2022, for a public hearing on 2022 Budget Amendments.

Public comments included many thank you from the community about the management of the grant process for ARPA funds. One person commented about the need for a cross walk light or traffic light between 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> on villa West Parkway.

Council comments included the Equity Access Shelter has received 397 calls and 200 requested have been filled. The City 10 program will now include Spanish. The accidental destruction of the LEO memorial monument was noted but options for replacement are being discussed. The council commented on the higher voter turn- out. The Every Ice Rink is open. There have been lots of ribbon cuttings in the past few weeks. The state of the city/county included the NIAs this year. Small business Sat. is coming up. The Oakland community will be giving away small loaves of green tomato bread. Council member Valdivia Alcala commented on the maintenance problems with multi-family homes. Be cautious of fire danger due to how dry it is. Gingerbread Homes for the Holidays is open this weekend. District 9 council seat is open. Happy Thanksgiving.

No executive session was needed.

## **Topeka City Council Meeting**

**December 6, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All city council members were present in chambers.

The council approved the appointment of Sam Stallbaumer, Angela Sharp and Steve Mohan to the Board of Building and Fire Appeals, John Hunter to the Downtown Business Improvement District Advisory Board and Paul Miller to the Board of Plumbing Examiners.

Following approval by the Shawnee County Board of Commissioners, at the request of the developer, the Topeka City Council approved an ordinance to annex land at 39<sup>th</sup> and Croco Rd.

The council approved the committee recommended process and budget for future approval of the 2024 Social Service grants.

The council also approved the city attorney send a letter to the Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control to convene a hearing to revoke the drinking establishment license of 45<sup>th</sup> Street Bar and notify the city manager if the owner tries to renew the license. This action is a result of repeated violence and police calls to the establishment.

The council convened as a body to interview publicly the candidates for city council district 9. The first round of voting tied candidate Janelle Johnson and Michelle Hoferer with both receiving four votes. Michaela Saunders received one vote. The second round of voting broke the tie with Michelle Hoferer being selected. She will be sworn in December 13, 2022.

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

Announcements included comments by Council member Valdivia Alcala requesting documentation and data regarding the proposed water rate increase. Council member Emerson also announced he will not seek re-election. Several council members expressed concern that the Board of County Commissioners may eliminated the recycle program. The council is also seeking to fill two positions to serve on the newly created Gage Park Improvement Authority. Applications are due Dec. 9.

## **Topeka City Council Meeting**

**December 13, 2022**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

Council members Ortiz and Emerson were absent. All other council members were present either in chambers or on zoom.

Council member Hoferer, the new council member representing District 9 was sworn in.

The mayor introduced the new DEI director. He has not started his position but was in the audience.

The council appointed Dene' Mosier and Linda Shove-Morgan to the Topeka Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board. The council appointed Scott Brunner to the Topeka Housing Authority Advisory Board. Tamra Cortex and Keith Warta were appointed to the newly created Gage Park Improvement Authority.

The council held a public hearing and then approved an ordinance to align a private sanitary sewer line to facilitate new construction of an automobile repair business located at 1717 SW Wanamaker Rd. In two separate ordinances, the council approved the renewal of the business improvement district for the downtown business and the Topeka Tourism Business Improvement District service fees for 2023. No fee increases were made year over year.

The mayor and city manager introduced an ordinance to increase the number of appointees serving on the Civil Service commission from five to seven members. Council member Valdivia Alcala voted no.

The council approved several amendments to the 2022 operating budget. The amendments authorize the departments to spend up to the amount approved. The areas were IT, fleet fund, facilities and monies from the opioid settlement fund.

The only non-action item was discussion of the proposed utility rate increases. Many council members asked for more information and data prior to a vote next week. There was one public comment against the rate increase stating this is a continuation of nine years of rate increases.

There was no need for executive session.