

Shawnee County Commission Meeting
September 7, 2023
Observer: Paul Post

Commissioners present: Riphahn, Mayes and Cook.

Commissioners absent: None.

I. Proclamations/presentations: None.

II. Unfinished business: None.

III. Consent agenda: Consent agenda was **approved** as follows:

A. Consider approval of a request to authorize a payment of \$350 for the final expenses of Walter Lang — Coroner.

B. Acknowledge receipt of correspondence from Cox Communications regarding contract negotiations with programmers and broad casters-County Clerk.

C. Acknowledge receipt and approval of Board of County Commission meeting minutes for June 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13, 20, 27, August 3, 10, 17, and the budget hearing for August 21, 2023.-County Clerk.

D. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C276-2023, amendment to Contract C309-2021 with Century Business Technologies, to account for the transfer of copier C2664 from the Health Department to the Election Office at the new contract rate of \$1,560 per quarter. — Election's Office.

E. Consider approval of request to apply for the Federal Emergency Management Performance Grant program grant funds for fiscal year 2023 to provide the salary/benefits funding to employ the Planning Section Chief and Logistics Section Chief Positions-Emergency Management.

F. Consider approval of request to authorize payment of \$4,080 per agreement with the United States Geological Survey for Wakarusa Streamgage operating costs with funding from the Emergency Management 2023 budget. - Emergency Management.

G. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C278-2023, a renewal agreement with Thomson Reuters Westlaw for online legal research access. — County Counselor.

H. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C279-2023 with Rize Drone Services LLC covering noxious weed and bare ground treatments throughout the calendar year 2023 — Weed Dept.

IV. New business:

A.

1. Vouchers **approved**, \$3,590,599.38, including \$1,223,192 for payroll, \$935,000 for Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO), and \$521,516 for health insurance premiums.

2. Correction orders: Approved.

3. Consider approval of Resolution No. 2023-58 altering the boundaries of Menoken and Soldier Townships. Residential properties in a neighborhood that straddles both townships requested that the entire neighborhood be put in Menoken Township. Because it will affect voting precincts, the proposal will be effective after November 8, to avoid changes before the next election. **Approved.**

B. PUBLIC WORKS - Curt Niehaus

1. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C277-2023, an agreement with the City of Topeka which allows for a \$1,000,000 contribution by the City towards construction of Shawnee County Project S-701008.00 (Auburn Road, SW 29th to K-4 Highway). This is part of the proposed round-about project on 29th Street and Auburn Road. **Approved.**

2. Consider awarding a bid (RFQ 040-23) to Hutchinson Salt Co. for up to 6,500 tons of de-icing salt at a unit cost of \$52.17/ton. This material will be used during the winter of 2023/24 in support of snow and ice removal operations on County maintained roads as well as on Grove and Monmouth Township roads. This was a **decrease** from last year and obtained using the new online bidding portal. **Approved.**

C. HEALTH DEPARTMENT - Teresa Fisher

1. Approval to renew the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) / Breastfeeding Peer Counselor agreement, Contract C280-2023, for a total allocation of \$1,337,134 to provide WIC services in Shawnee, Osage and Wabaunsee Counties. The contract covers October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. **Approved.**

2. Approval to renew the agreement, Contract C281-2023, with Osage County for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services to be provided by the Shawnee County Health Department (SCHD) for a budgeted amount of \$15,225 paid by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The contract covers October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. **Approved.**

3. Approval to renew the agreement, Contract C282-2023, with Wabaunsee County for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services to be provided by the Shawnee County Health Department (SCHD) for a budget amount of \$7,627 paid by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The contract covers October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. **Approved.**

D. AUDIT FINANCE - Betty Greiner. 1. Consider approval of Resolution No. 2023-57 to establish procedures for the use and expenditure of Gage Park Sales Tax Funds. **Approved.**

E. COMMISSION

1. Review the preliminary 2024 Budget for adjustments and/or adoption of the 2024 Budget. The 2024 budget was adopted in the total amount of \$139,965,156, which was a decrease of \$2.7 million from 2023, resulting in a 1.26 mill decrease. The \$1.2 million girls' softball field renovation was deferred to a future date.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: A speaker urged the Commission to review consolidation possibilities and inquired about the "Citizens' Commission" prescribed under K.S.A. 19-2670, which is designed to look at governmental efficiencies and consolidation. The county counselor advised the Commission that he would review this statute and give the Commissioners a report.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS: None.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting
September 21, 2023
Observer: Paul Post**

Commissioners present: Riphon, Mayes and Cook.

Commissioners absent: None.

I. Proclamations/presentations: None.

II. Unfinished business: Board of Commissioners consideration, selection and approval of a selected design is requested to proceed with the Design-Build Contract C238-2023 that was approved on July 28, 2023. The three proposed designs are The Family Pool - pool design, The Blue Lagoon – hybrid design, and The Nautilus Aquatic Playground – splash park design. Deferred from August 31 and September 14. — Parks + Recreation. This is a proposed replacement pool for the Oakland community. The cost ceiling is \$4 million. The existing pool would be removed and replaced. Commissioner Riphon voiced concerned that the Oakland Pool is only a mile away from the Garfield Pool. Commissioner Cook noted that the distance between the two was closer to two miles and that the Kansas River divided the two neighborhoods. Commissioner Mayes also voiced concern about the cost. In the end, the Commission voted 3-0 to move ahead with the project, and to obtain final plans for the proposal.

III. Consent agenda: Consent agenda was **approved** as follows:

A. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C288-2023, a renewal agreement for 2024 with Delta Dental containing no increase to the current administrative rate of \$3.50. Human Resources.

B. Consider approval of a request to authorize a payment of \$350 for the final expenses of Mary Quick — Coroner.

C. Acknowledge receipt of correspondence from Sheriff Hill that he is renewing the software subscription with Grayshift LLC for GrayKey License and Artifact IQ Pro. Contract C289-2023 will be a three-year renewal at a cost of \$86,788.80, which includes a renewal discount of \$9,643.20. This is a sole source purchase and will be paid from 2023 budgeted funds.

D. Acknowledge that Sheriff Hill is sending a representative to Dallas, TX to attend Cellebrite Advanced Smartphone Analysis training. All expenses will be paid out of 2023 budgeted funds.

E. Consider approval of Resolution No. 2023-61 to rename the training rooms located at 2600 SW East Circle Drive as the Quinton Unruh Community Training Rooms. — Health Department

F. Consider approval of emergency vehicle permit for Sean Swords from Shawnee Heights Fire District—Emergency Management.

G. Consider approval of request to pay invoices from the Diversion Fund account for a total amount of \$5,332.34— District Attorney.

H. District Attorney - Michael Kagay requests approval for out of state training of an investigator in the total amount of \$1,092.09 — District Attorney.

I. Consider approval of Contract C290-2023 for the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) State, Territory and Tribal Nations, Representative Organizations for Next Generation (STTRONG) grant with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) for grant funding in the amount of \$71,403 for the grant period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025 — Health Department.

IV. New business:

- A. 1. Vouchers **approved**,
- 2. Correction orders: None.

B. APPRAISER - Steve Bauman

1. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C291-2023 in conjunction with Douglas County, Jefferson County, City of Topeka, and the City of Lawrence for the purchase of digital color orthophotography provided by the Surdex Corporation at a cost of \$19,385 (a 50% split with the City of Topeka) with funding from the Land Records Fund. Additional approval is requested for the funding through the Land Records Fund as approved by the Land Records Committee. **Approved.**

2. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C292-2023, a sole source with Keller, Craig & Associates for the performance of a 2024 Capitalization Rate Study to assist in the valuation of commercial and industrial properties at a cost of \$15,000 with funding from the Appraiser's Office 2023 budget. **Approved.**

C. PUBLIC WORKS - Curt Niehaus

1. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C293-2023 with KanEquip, Inc. of Wamego, KS for the 2024 purchase of a mower tractor and a pull-behind, flex-wing mower deck using Sourcewell, a government purchasing cooperative. Funding will come from the 2024 Capital Outlay Fund (\$100,000) and the Public Works Special Machinery Fund (\$38,130.84). Mr. Niehaus made it clear that the County is only responsible for mowing county roads, not township roads, except for Grove and Monmouth Townships, where the County has an agreement with those two to provide that service. **Approved.**

D. HEALTH DEPARTMENT- Teresa Fisher

1. Consider authorization and execution of Contract C294-2023 with Cox Media to provide a recruitment campaign for the Health Department for three months at a cost of \$20,000 from October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023. **Approved.**

E. COMMISSION

1. Consider cancelling the November 9th Commission Meeting. **Approved.**

F. AUDIT FINANCE - Betty Greiner

1. August 31, 2023 Financial Report showed revenue and expenses essentially on budget.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: Henry McClure, local realtor, urged the Commission to consider selling or leasing properties on the Topeka Avenue side of the Stormont Vail Events center for private development, such as restaurants.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS: None.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

September 28, 2023

Observer: Elvera Johnson

All 3 Commissioners present

The meeting began with a presentation by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas of the Pathways to a Healthy Kansas Implementation Grant for funding assistance to continue development of the Greenways and Trails Masterplan for Shawnee Counts Parks and Recreation.

In new business, Commissioners approved a request by Solid Waste to obtain quotations to order various pieces of equipment for 2024. This is funded by user fees. For Human Resources, they approved the Health Savings Account Funding for the 2024 employee benefits plan. For Parks and Recreation, they renewed the contract for continued use of the Cartegraph OMS software. This software is also used by Public Works, Solid Waste and Facilities Management, and the departments divide the cost. For Facilities Management, they approved the purchase of window coverings, as considerable solar heat and light has been plaguing them. For Public Works, they approved the funding for purchase of sand and calcium chloride for winter use on streets. For County Counselor, they approved a resolution to provide property tax relief for a couple whose house was destroyed by fire. For Court Administration, they acknowledged receipt of a grant from the Kansas Fights Addiction funds to be used solely on substance abuse treatment services for Veterans Treatment Court participants.

No public comment was offered.

In Administration Communications, Human Resources said that the Mammography Van will be on Quincy October 2 from 8-5. IT announced training for county employees. Employees who complete the training will be eligible for a gift card drawing.

An executive session was called to consult with an attorney regarding non-elected personnel.

No work session will be held on October 2

Topeka City Council Meeting

September 5, 2023

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All city council members were present, including the mayor, either in person or on zoom. Council member Emerson was late logging on.

The mayor read a proclamation recognizing National Recovery Month to send a message that recovery works when attempting to overcome substance abuse.

The council approved Mark Zillinger to the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library Board of Trustees.

The council heard a presentation by the Topeka Fire Departments at the request of the city manager by council members. The chief provided data about the fire department's responses to heat emergencies. Concern has been expressed by city council members about the reduction in ambulance service and reliance on the fire department as the first line of medical emergency response.

The council held a public hearing to exceed the revenue neutral rate for the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority. The proposed TMTA budget holds the mil levy the same since 2012. The council also held a public hearing to exceed the revenue neutral rate for the city. The proposed city budget reduces the mil levy by 1 mil. Three council members voted no due to objections to the process of setting a maximum mil levy for the purpose of the hearing.

The council held a public hearing regarding the 2024 Operating budget. There was one person who made comment about objecting to any funding or approval of Bird scooters due to the danger posed by those with mobility and allowing abandoned scooters to block sidewalk accessibility.

The council passed a resolution creating a property tax rebate program in 2024. The vision is the program would work much like the Homestead Tax. The council discussed the SAVE program is not working as intended. There was one no vote.

At the recommendation of the Policy and Finance Committee the council passed a resolution allowing grant funding to support the NOTO business improvement district redevelopment grant program.

The council also approved new funding of 2024 Community Investment program projects. The funds will go to restore requested improvements in the Valley Park NIA and North Topeka NIA neighborhoods in addition to mill and overlay at 6th and Oakley and 6th and MacVicar.

There was much discussion of establishing a homelessness fund. The council generally expressed it was too early in the budget approval process to take action. The agenda item died for lack of a motion.

During public comments one speaker was concerned about the state of the mobile home park they live in and the amount of rent.

Council announcements included congratulating SENT on the Net Zero house, discussion of water utility support, Highland Park HS homecoming week, Huff n Puff weekend upcoming, thanking water utility repair workers, congratulations to public works director Copley being named to the Bloomberg/Harvard innovation program and Ernesto De La Rosa being part of Welcoming America Committee.

Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting
October 6, 2023
Observer: Vicki Arnett

When five members of the advisory board arrived, a quorum was reached and the meeting started.

Justine Greve agreed to serve as co-chair.

The board heard a presentation from the city forestry dept. In 2023 Topeka maintained the designation as a Tree City USA by planting one tree. As in the past, new trees are planted on the state house grounds. The dept. is fully staffed. The dept. responded to 2298 requests for service this year so far. Last year they responded to 1422 requests for service. There have been 496 emergency requests for service. For the first time the city contracted out storm clean up in addition to city staff. The dept. will continue the contract due to the increase in emergencies. Shawnee County Parks and Rec is responsible for tree planting and care in the parks. The city does require street construction contractors and business development to landscape and replace trees destroyed due to the work. The dept. does not have any storage for any donated or purchased trees. The dept. encourages native trees and plants which can more easily survive the heat. The city has not had a tree inventory due to a lack of funding. The dept. estimates there are 350 trees on city owned property. The city can only recommend trees for private property or privately owned commercial property.

The meeting lasted 50 minutes and was adjourned due to the end of staff week. City staff is Sylvan Coles. He takes minutes and puts together the agenda for the board. His time is limited to these tasks.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Council Meeting
September 19, 2023
Observer: Dr. Glenda Overstreet Vaughn

The first meeting for the 2023-2024 school session was opened with introductions from representatives of the various school districts:

- Seaman school district
- Auburn-Washburn school district
- Shawnee Heights school district
- Silver Lake school district
- Topeka, 501 school district
- Shawnee County Commission
- Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority
- Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority
- Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, and
- Washburn University

The chair, Dr. Tiffany Johnson, introduced the guest speaker Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education, who provided very favorable statistics on the successful graduation rates of students, specifically noting that nearly 90% of children graduating and academic scores are up.

More students are going to tech schools than at any other time in our state. Great for the economy.

Five of 7 levels in language arts went down. Math achievement levels are up and the state has not seen this level of improvement since 2017. The trend appears to show young men are not going to college. It is predicted that in 4-6 years, females will dominate workforce and we will have less workers that are in uncredentialed careers. To address this, there is an initiative to offer free 1st Gen classes to students to show they can be successful to go on.

Emphasis is being placed on apprenticeships to teacher programs to get a teaching degree. With a bachelor's degree, one can get into the classroom immediately. However, students can access the program at various academic levels from high school through various college levels. Currently there are 35 in the inaugural program. The goal is to reach 150 next year.

It was shared that there is a support staffing challenge. High tech jobs are now being offered at \$25-30 per hour across the state and this is both a good and bad issue as it sets up a challenge for support positions offered at lower pay. Need support personnel to carry out instructional initiatives so this is a challenge of concern. Free tuition is being offered currently to go to Washburn University and free tuition to go to Kansas State University to help meet the need. Other institutions may soon join in.