

# League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County Observer Report

## SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: DECEMBER 1, 2025

Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

Chair Aaron Mayes	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Bill Riphan	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Kevin Cook	Present?	Yes

Please click on the link below for the agenda archive.

Commission Agenda Website: <https://www.snco.us/commission/agendas.asp>

Feature evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Did the meeting start on time?	X		
Reason for absent members?			N/A
Was the agenda available at the meeting?	X		
Were any non-agenda items discussed?		X	
Did it appear that any agenda items were discussed prior to the meeting?		X	
Were there any amendments to the agenda?		X	
Were members courteous to each other and the public?	X		
Were media representatives present?	X		
Did any member recuse?		X	
Was there an executive session? If so, for what reason and what length?	X		For attorney-client privileged discussions, concerning contract negotiations relating to renovation of the Maner Conference Center, for 20 minutes.
Was there a public comment period? If so who appeared and for what purpose?		X	No one signed up

**Discussion of Issues:**

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action taken:</b>	<b>Relevance to LWV Positions</b>	<b>Recommended Follow-up if any</b>
See below	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Remarks:**

1. There were five different requests by the Solid Waste Department for new truck purchases, as follows: a ½ ton Ford Pickup for \$36,000 from Laird Noller Ford; a Class 5 truck from Shawnee Mission Ford in the amount of \$184,763, which is to be used as a tire repair truck for use in the field for needed tire repairs occurring with disabled refuse trucks; two front loading trash trucks in the amount of \$572,937 from Truck Component Services; two rear loader trash trucks in the amount of \$422,196, from Truck Component Services; and two roll-off trucks (used to transport large trash and waste containers) in the amount of \$537,604 from Elliott Equipment Company. These prices included trade-in credits. The purchases were made from the Solid Waste Fund, which is funded by user fees and not taxpayer dollars. All but the front loader trucks were the result of three competitive bids, with the front loader bid being the only one received. Bill Sutton, Solid Waste Director, stated that the single bid purchase was reasonable based upon department research.
2. Other matters were considered by the Commission, which did not have particular relevance to any LWV of Topeka-Shawnee County concerns or issues. Commission meeting agendas are available online both before and after the meeting at the link shown above. Currently there does not appear to be any written minutes of the meeting available.

12-08-2025 BOCC

All 3 Commissioners Present

Elvera Johnson, observer

Following the routine Consent Agenda, Voucher and Correction orders approval, the Commission moved on to new business.

A Public Hearing was opened to consider a major Planned Unit Development change, presented by the Planning Department. The unit was first established in 2010 and was used by one business. A number of restrictions were in place, making further development of property difficult. The Planning Department recommended reconfiguring the property into 3 additional lots and replacing regional sewer service with an onsite wastewater system. No public comment was offered during the hearing. The hearing was closed and the recommended changes approved.

For facilities management, Commissioners approved the request to reject all bids for the Courthouse restroom updates and to start over. They also approved payment for emergency boiler pump repairs and update, which has been completed. Seventy % of this is funded by the Maner HVAC fund and the rest by 2025 contingency funds.

Court Administration was granted approval of a contract which provides increased cyber security.

Audit Finance asked for approval for several 2026 small item capital outlay payments. The definition of small outlay is less than \$50,000. Payments were approved to Parks & Rec, Emergency Management, Stormont Vail Event Center and Elections.

The Commission approved Aaron Mays to be the voting delegate to the annual Kansas Association of Counties Conference to begin on December 9. Rich Eckert will be the alternate. Because of this conference, the Thursday work session will be canceled.

No public comment or administrative communication was offered.

No Executive Session was called

**Report on Intergovernmental Cooperation Council Meeting held on Tuesday, November 25, 2025.**

ICC-Aviation Program

The meeting was opened by Chairman Curtis Snead.

After approval of minutes for the meeting held in October, Ray Seif was introduced to present on Aviation programs.

Attached are the PowerPoint slides supporting his presentation. I submitted a request to Tuesday Topics (TT) team to consider him for presenting at one of our TT programs.

The next meeting will be scheduled for January. At that time a transition of chairmanship will be initiated. Mayor elect Spencer Duncan will be the chair.

Dr. Glenda Overstreet Vaughn

11-24-2025 BOCC

All 3 Commissioners Present

Elvera Johnson, observer

Following the routine introductory business, Bond Counsel spoke about several issues. The first was a request for approval of an agreement between Topeka Housing Authority and Johnson-Betts Meadows, LP (in Nebraska) to issue taxable Revenue Bonds to build a 176-unit family housing development on the NE corner of SE 31<sup>st</sup> St and Fremont. A public hearing was opened; no comments were offered; the hearing was closed and the resolution was approved. He then spoke about a resolution to issue taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds to build a new structure at the Subaru dealership on S Kansas Ave; approved. The next issue was a resolution to issue Taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds to build structures at the intersection of I470 and S Kansas Ave, including a quick shop. Approved. His last request was to set a hearing date to discuss the creation of a Community Improvement District on the grounds of the Stormont Vail Events Center. The hearing will be on December 22.

For Public Works, Commissioners approved engineering services for a bridge replacement on NW 78<sup>th</sup> Street; adoption of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan that is compliant with the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program. The goal is 0 serious injuries and fatalities by 2055. Approved. They also discussed and approved some needed equipment.

Discussed and approved routine annual maintenance renewals for Information Technology.

Corrections presented need for installation of new HVAC systems at the Corrections Annex; discussed approval of Contracts with VitalCore Health Strategies for medical and mental health care services at the detention centers (a new provider) and the required annual inspection of smoke detection and alarm systems and tracking systems at the detention centers. Approved.

Sheriff's Office and Health Department had requests regarding vehicles and other equipment. Approved.

Health Department received approval for a contract with Dr. Vlad Dimitriu for medical and health care services for patients with active tuberculosis and also to serve as the back-up local Health Officer for the calendar year of 2026.

The County Counselor brought up the issue of establishing an official policy and procedures for granting tax exemptions and tax incentives for economic development purposes. He said the County charges for application and renewal are inadequate. He has researched this. He is proposing that the application charge should be \$4000 and the annual renewal charge \$1000. This should be considered and voted on at a later date.

No Public Comment.

An Executive Session was called to consult with an attorney regarding negotiating for lobbying services.

## **January 2026 Observer Reports**

### **Topeka City Council Meeting**

**December 9, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

All members of the council, including the mayor, were present in chambers or on zoom, except council member Valdivia Alcala.

The council made multiple board appointments and heard a presentation from Visit Topeka.

The meeting was routine with multiple renewals of tax increment financing districts, community improvement districts and end of the year budget revision, updates. Approval was provided to the new TIF and CID for South Topeka Blvd., I-470 and Kansas Ave. area due to blight.

Public comments included accumulation of trash at Lou Douglas owned properties, police shootings, violence concerns, fraudulent contracting and the condition of rental properties including council member Hiller.

There was no need for an executive session.

### **Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting**

**December 5, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

The board approved minutes from the past two meetings. They did have a quorum.

This was primarily a working meeting to prepare the application for a consultant to assist the board in achieving goals.

# League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County Observer Report

## Shawnee County Commission Meeting: December 15, 2025

Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

Chair Aaron Mayes	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Bill Riphan	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Kevin Cook	Present?	Yes

Please click on the link below for the agenda archive.

Commission Agenda Website: <https://www.snco.us/commission/agendas.asp>

Feature evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Did the meeting start on time?	X		
Reason for absent members?			N/A
Was the agenda available at the meeting?	X		
Were any non-agenda items discussed?		X	
Did it appear that any agenda items were discussed prior to the meeting?		X	
Were there any amendments to the agenda?		X	
Were members courteous to each other and the public?	X		
Were media representatives present?	X		
Did any member recuse?		X	
Was there an executive session? If so, for what reason and what length?		X	
Was there a public comment period? If so who appeared and for what purpose?	X		See below.

**Discussion of Issues:**

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action taken:</b>	<b>Relevance to LWV Positions</b>	<b>Recommended Follow-up if any</b>
See below	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Remarks:**

- Public comment: Justin Spiehs, a self-proclaimed anti-abortion activist, gave comment on his recent removal from the Topeka and Shawnee Public Library, where he was removed for making obscene gestures during a public meeting at the library. He said that he is also suing the County Commission, the County Department of Corrections, and the online publication "Kansas Reflector." A quick search under his name reveals that he has been involved in similar activities at other public gatherings.
- Consolidation of the former Planning Department was approved. The Planning Department will now be called the "Shawnee County Land Use & Development Department." Joni Thadani, director of the previously dubbed Planning Department, will continue to serve in her role after her appointment was approved during Monday's Shawnee County Commission meeting. Under the change, Environmental Health Services and the Noxious Weed Department will report to the Land Use & Development Department.
- Other matters were considered by the Commission, which did not have particular relevance to any LWV of Topeka-Shawnee County concerns or issues. Commission meeting agendas are available online both before and after the meeting at the link shown above. Currently there does not appear to be any written minutes of the meeting available.

