
OBSERVER REPORTS

SUBMITTED FEBRUARY 2026

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Thank you to this month's Observers: Vicki Arnett, Patti Bishop, and Elvera Johnson, and Paul Post. Coordinator: Meredith Willard

Seaman Schools Regular School Board Meeting

January 12, 2026

Observer: Patti Bishop

- Call to Order
 - Pledge of Allegiance
- Public Communication
 - Addressing the Board: The public comment portion of the board meeting will allow three minutes per speaker. Persons wishing to speak to the board must pre-register at the meeting with the board clerk. Per board policy speakers must meet one of the following criteria to address the board at a board meeting: district residents, district business owners, district employees, or parent/guardians of a student in the district. Persons not meeting the public comment criteria may submit comments via an online form. Electronic Public Comment Online Form: <https://forms.gle/oZ8WsRCT9NGzpHKY6> Public comment is the time for district patrons to address the board. Please do not intercede during board discussion of agenda items unless specifically asked by the Board or administration. Communications must not address students or personnel. If speakers have concerns in this area please make an appointment with the superintendent. Per board policy, the board asks groups with the same interest to appoint a spokesperson to deliver the group's message. Except to ask clarifying questions, board members shall not interact with speakers at the open forum. Speakers will be asked to limit their time to three minutes to allow for all participants time to address the board.
- Adoption of the Agenda
 - Adopt the agenda.
 - Adopt the agenda as presented.
- Learning without Limits
 - Employee/Student Recognition
 - School Board Recognition Month. We will recognize board members at halftime of the boys varsity basketball game on Friday, Jan 16 vs. Leavenworth,
- Superintendent Remarks
- President Remarks
- Disposition of Business by Consent
 - Dec 8 Minutes
 - [Board Workshop - Dec 08 2025 - Minutes - Html](#)
 - [Regular School Board Meeting - Dec 08 2025 - Minutes - Html](#)
 - [Board Workshop - Dec 08 2025 - Minutes - Html](#)
 - [Regular School Board Meeting - Dec 08 2025 - Minutes - Html](#)
 - Personnel Report and Recommendations
 - [January 2026 BOE .pdf](#)
 - Donations and Grants
 - [SEAF Grants](#)
 - Credit Card
-

- Financial Items and Claims
 - [Handwrites Dec 2025.pdf](#)[Check Register Jan 2026 BOE Mtg.pdf](#)
- 21 Credit Waiver Request
- Approval of Consent Agenda
 - Approve consent agenda as presented
- Discussion Items
 - Curriculum and Instruction Report (MN)
 - [7. January C&I report.pdf](#)
 - Special Services Report (DR)
 - [BOE Report January 2026.pdf](#)
 - Facility and Grounds Report (LB)
 - [Facilities Update JAN 2026.docx \(1\).pdf](#)
 - Program Evaluation: Financial Management (LM)
 - [Finance Management - Program Evaluation.pdf](#)
 - Elementary Device Refresh (JN & MN)
 - [Elementary Technology Survey Results.pdf](#)
 - [Elementary Seaman payments.pdf](#)
 - [Elementary Apple.pdf](#)
- December Policy Updates
 - Link to BOE Policy Update Notes
 - Overview This is an overview of the rationale for recommended revision, addition, or deletion from KASB for each policy update.
 - KM - Visitors to the School We recommend approval
 - JQI - Adult Students We recommend approval
 - JDDC - Bullying Form We recommend approval
 - JCAC - Interrogation and Investigations We recommend approval
 - JBCC - Enrollment of Nonresident Students We do NOT recommend approval.
 - IKDA - Religious Objections to Activities We recommend approval.
 - IKD - Religion in Curricular or School Sponsored Activities We recommend approval
 - IKCA Human Sexuality Education We recommend approval
 - IKB - Controversial Issues We recommend approval
 - IIBE - Use of Artificial Intelligence We do NOT recommend approval.
 - IHF - Graduation Requirements We recommend approval
 - BCBK - Executive Session We recommend approval
 - BG - Memberships We recommend approval
 - IKCA Human Sexuality Education Form We recommend approval
- 2026-2027 School Fees (MN)
 - [MELC Fees Draft.pdf](#)
 - [26-27 Fees.pdf](#)

- Board Policy Review: LED Family Nights
 - LED Family Night
 - Approve as presented
- NSBA Membership
 - National School Boards Association \$4,165
- Board Leadership Election Date
 - Approve the board election of president and vice president and set annual meeting dates and times at the regular board meeting in July.
 - On April 25, 2019 Sub. for S.B. 130 became the law in Kansas. The new law changes the date school boards elect their board president and vice-president and changes the date when the board sets the annual meeting dates and locations.
 -
 - The prior law required school boards to elect their president and vice president and set their annual meeting dates and times at the first board meeting in July.
 -
 - The new law now requires boards of education to decide when they are going to elect their board president and vice-president and set their meeting dates and times at the first meeting on or after the second Monday in January or select another date during the year at which to make these decisions.
- BOE Negotiations Team Appointment
- Executive Session
 - There may be action items after executive session.
- Adjournment

Seaman Schools Regular School Board Meeting

February 9, 2026

Observer: Patti Bishop

- Call to Order
 - Pledge of Allegiance
- Public Communication
 - Addressing the Board
 - The public comment portion of the board meeting will allow three minutes per speaker. Persons wishing to speak to the board must pre-register at the meeting with the board clerk. Per board policy speakers must meet one of the following criteria to address the board at a board meeting: district residents, district business owners, district employees, or parent/guardians of a student in the district. Persons not meeting the public comment criteria may submit comments via an online form.
 - Electronic Public Comment Online Form: <https://forms.gle/oZ8WsRCT9NGzpHKY6>
 - Public comment is the time for district patrons to address the board. Please do not intercede during board discussion of agenda items unless specifically asked by the Board or administration. Communications must not address students or personnel. If speakers have concerns in this area please make an appointment with the superintendent.
 - Per board policy, the board asks groups with the same interest to appoint a spokesperson to deliver the group's message. Except to ask clarifying questions, board members shall not interact with speakers at the open forum. Speakers will be asked to limit their time to three minutes to allow for all participants time to address the board.
 - Adoption of the Agenda
 - Adopt the agenda as presented
 - Learning without Limits
 - Employee/Student Recognition
 - Brad Jones introduce: Chris Goble, Kansas Society of Professional Engineers Award - Outstanding Teacher
 - Michael Stauffer: Thespians Region 3 Teacher of the Year
- Superintendent Remarks
- President Remarks
- Disposition of Business by Consent
 - Minutes
 - [Regular School Board Meeting - Jan 12 2026 - Minutes - Html](#)
 - Personnel Report and Recommendations
 - [February 2026 BOE .pdf](#)
 - Credit Card
 - Financial Items and Claims
 - [January 2026 Handwrites.pdf](#)
 - [Check Register Feb 2026 BOE Mtg.pdf](#)
 - Bond Payments
 - [Wire Bond Resolution 2.pdf](#)
 - [Wire Bond Resolution 1.pdf](#)

- Bond Payments
 - [Wire Bond Resolution 2.pdf](#)
 - [Wire Bond Resolution 1.pdf](#)
- Approval of Consent Agenda
 - Approve consent agenda as presented
- Discussion Items
 - Curriculum and Instruction Report (MN)
 - [8. February C&I report.pdf](#)
 - Special Services Report (DR)
 - [BOE Report February 2026.pdf](#)
 - Facility and Grounds Report (LB)
 - [Facilities Update FEB 2026.docx \(1\).pdf](#)
 - Program Evaluation: Technology (JM)
 - [Program Evaluation.pdf](#)
 - Instructional Collaboration Mornings Proposal
 - [Instructional Collaboration Mornings Proposal.pdf](#)
 - [Communication Plan - Instructional Collaboration Mornings.pdf](#)
- Action Items
 - Elementary Device Refresh (JM & MN)
 - [Elementary Seaman payments.pdf](#)
 - [2214190960 - Clone - 1450 iPad \(1\).pdf](#)
 - [Synetic - USD 345 Apple Deployment 2026.pdf](#)
 - [Diamond Assets Disposal.pdf](#)
 - Approve as presented
 - 2026-27 School Fees (MN)
 - [26-27 Fees.pdf](#)
 - Approve as presented.
 - Policy Updates (BW)
 - [KM Visitors to the School](#)
 - [JQI Adult Students](#)
 - [JCAC Interrogation and Investigations](#)
 - [IKDA Religious Objections to Activities](#)
 - [IKD Religion in Curricular or School Sponsored Activities](#)
 - [IKCA Human Sexuality and AIDS Education](#)
 - [IKB Controversial Issues](#)
 - [IHF Graduation Requirements](#)
 - [BCBK Executive Session](#)
 - [BG Memberships](#)
 - [JDDC Bullying Plan FORM - redlined \(1\)_1\).pdf](#)
 - Approve as Presented

- Executive Session
 - Negotiations
 - Motion to go into executive session to discuss negotiations pursuant to employer-employee negotiations under KOMA and the open meeting will resume in the board room at [fill in time].
 - Action. may be taken following executive session.
 - Personnel
 - Motion to go into executive session to discuss confidential employee information pursuant to the exception relating to personnel matters of non-elected personnel and the open meeting will resume in the board room at [fill in time].
 - Action. may be taken following executive session.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Council

February 17, 2026

Observer: Paul Post

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC) met on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 7:20 a.m. at the Vogel Room at the Washburn University Student Union. The ICC consists of representatives from the following local entities: Unified School Districts (Seaman, Auburn-Washburn, Shawnee Heights, Silver Lake, Topeka), City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority, Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, and Washburn University. Hosting of the meeting rotates annually among the members, with the host for 2026 being Mayor Spencer Duncan, representing the City. Meetings are monthly, on the third Tuesday. The stated purpose of the ICC is to promote cooperation between and share information among these entities.

While there is usually good attendance, it appears that some of the members do not attend on a regular basis. There is always a program, sometime followed by a few questions, and then the meeting is adjourned. Being appointed last fall to represent LWV of Topeka and Shawnee County, I was curious about the history of this entity, which has existed for more than thirty years. At one time it included other cities in the county, but this no longer appears to be the case. Apparently, the council is open to any Shawnee County entity that levies taxes. There does not appear to be a web site associated with this council.

Chris Courtwright, the speaker for February, was introduced by Treasurer Susan Duffy. Mr. Courtwright is currently a member of Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly's Council on Tax Reform, retired in July after 34 years as the Kansas Legislature's Principal Economist and member of the prestigious Consensus Revenue Estimating Group. The author of "Kansas Tax Facts" considered

the authoritative guide on Kansas state and local tax policy, he was keynote speaker at the 2013, 2016 and 2018 Kansas Economic Policy Conferences and has given presentations at the Federal Reserve Regional Economic Roundtable and the Journal of Policy History Conference. His topic was the history of property taxes in Kansas since the 1980s, when statewide tax valuations were last equalized, and how since the situation has changed where now a larger percentage of residential real estate supports property taxes compared with commercial and industrial taxes.

Topeka City Council Meeting

February 17, 2026

Observer: Vicki Arnett

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

New council member for district 8, Murray McGee, was sworn in.

The mayor issued a proclamation recognizing America in Bloom and the Bring Back the Blvd. group.

The council heard the annual report of the Topeka Land Bank.

Council passed an ordinance allowing for limited business in residences. It clarifies that home day care is an exception.

The agenda was mostly routine. The council discussed the proposed 2027 budget. The mayor mentioned as a possible solution a sales tax increase to off set the budget. He also discussed some of the legislation pending which would further impact local budgets, property taxes and mil levy. There were many public comments regarding the proposed 2027 budget, JEDO, Go Topeka and possible data centers.

There was no need for an executive session.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

February 19, 2026

Observer: Paul Post

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

Please click 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?		X	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 members 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:

Issue:	Action taken:	Relevance to LWV Positions	Recommended Follow-up if any
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Remarks:

Four different industrial revenue bonds were approved by the city. These bonds are issued by the county, but are not general obligations of the taxpayers, paid for over time by the developer. In this case, two of the four pertained to new housing developments in the city of Topeka, one being a 20 unit duplex project on SW Villa West Drive, and the other being a 176 unit apartment complex at SE 36 th Street and Bluemont Drive, south of Lake Shawnee.

Public comment: Justin Spiehs appeared to complain about a recent arrest following his removal from the library where a meeting room had been reserved by a local LGBTQ group. Spiehs interrupted the meeting and was asked to leave. When he did not, the police were called and he was arrested. He is now suing the county and the library for false arrest and imprisonment, and other claims.

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.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

February 26, 2026

Observer: Elvera Johnson

All 3 Commissioners Present

Half of the meeting was a report from Kellen Seitz about a five-year strategic plan for Stormont Vail Events Center. He acknowledged that they had financial shortfalls, in the past and are strategizing to remedy this. They have consulted with folks from the events industry and from Shawnee County community. Their five goals are to

- Plan for capital expenditures for seats that are in demand, especially premium seats
- Host events for large employer banquets in exhibition hall, possibly including a program
- Improving the efficiency of concession sales and catering services
- Enhancing marketing of facility events, both to the public and to event organizers
- Host more youth sporting events.

Following the consent agenda, voucher payments and correction orders, they moved on to Public Works. Commissioners approved a contract to replace 2 bridges on NW Valencia Road over the Silver Lake drainage ditch. KDOT will pay half of the cost. Commissioners also approved contracts with Bettis Asphalt, the only local provider, for asphalt and for the emulsified tack oil to be used in routine road maintenance.

The Solid Waste Department had 2 requests approved. The first was replacing the office manager, who is retiring after 45 years, with 2 two positions. Solid waste is funded by user fees. The second was the request to get quotes for the purchase of an Electric Motor Lift Truck at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. The one they have is 54 years old!

For Facilities Management, they approved the emergency repair of the HVAC system at the J.P. Lewis Health Department.

For Information Technology, they authorized the 3 rd and last payment on the backup and disaster recovery services.

The Commissioners approved Mark Rezac to the Third Judicial District Nominating Commission, nominated by Commissioner Riphahn. They approved Laura Lutz for the Third Judicial District Nominating Commission, nominated by Commissioner Mays. They approved Marc Galbraith for the Planning Commission, nominated by Commissioner Cook.

No Public Comment was offered.

In Administrative Communications, Emergency Preparedness said this is emergency preparedness month. They recommend an emergency kit. Ready.gov has a guide. March 4 is a statewide tornado drill.

The County Appraiser said that the notice regarding real estate value is being sent out this week. These may be appealed.

An Executive Session was called to discuss non-elected personnel.

Topeka City Council Meeting

March 3, 2026

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All council members, including the mayor, were present in chambers or on zoom. Council member Ortiz arrived after roll call and council member Valdivia Alcala continues on medical leave.

The council heard a presentation from the Topeka Airport Authority.

The council elected JEDO voting members and Topeka Planning Organization Board members after changing the ordinance section regarding the date for the start of appointments. In the future this appointment will be at the first meeting following the swearing in of newly elected council members.

The city manager announced the city has received a grant of 200,000 from KDHE to conduct an accessibility review and energy efficiency audit of city owned buildings.

There were numerous public comments regarding the need for the mayor to appoint a consultant to conduct an HR review, criticism of Go Topeka, gratitude for the reopening of Heartland Park, 2 questioning development awards, water meter scams, student data leaks, Hotel Topeka, AI in USD 501 and sexual material at the library.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

March 5, 2026

Observer: Paul Post

Chair Bill Riphan	Present?	No
Commissioner Aaron Mayes	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Kevin Cook	Present?	Yes

Please click 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?		X	Not stated, but learned later Commissioner Riphan was absent for a funeral.
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 members 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:

Issue:	Action taken:	Relevance to LWV Positions	Recommended Follow-up if any
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Remarks:

Public comment: Joseph Ledbetter, a Topeka attorney and frequent critic of local government, appeared before the commission to argue that the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority should not be constituted under a separate government entity with tax authority, but rather, should be controlled directly by the County Commission. He questioned why Topeka has two airports, neither of which host commercial passenger airlines.

CWC Electric and Plumbing was present by one of its owners, Joel Hogan, who presented the Commission with his offer to install sidewalk lighting at Gage Park in the area of the rose garden, at no cost to the county, and to maintain the lighting for its life span. He stated that his company believes in giving back to the community, and that it was their way to thank Topeka and Shawnee County for their business patronage. The offer was accepted by the commission with thanks to CWC.

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.

Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board

March 6, 2026

Observer: Vicki Arnett

The board had a quorum and was able to vote.

The board discussed the annual report structure which supports documenting the cost of doing nothing and the continual ask for a sustainability coordinator. Additional discussion took place regarding the zoo's washed ashore exhibit starting in May, the proposed solar ordinance, the city manager's EV project discussed at the Public Infrastructure Committee meeting. The league made the board aware of the KDHE grant to audit accessibility and energy use in city owned buildings.

At the April 3 program the board intends to ask deputy city manager Copley to speak to them about the EV review.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting

March 12, 2026

Observer: Elvera Johnson

All 3 commissioners were present.

The Commission began by rescheduling the discussion of the Shawnee County Solar Energy Conversion System Regulations (as recommended for approval by the Shawnee County Planning Commission February 9 2026) will be rescheduled for Monday, April 13 at 9:00 a.m. The Commission may take action at that time.

Approval of the consent agenda, voucher payments and correction orders, was followed by a presentation by Land Use & Development Department. There is land located in North Topeka that is zoned for commercial use but is being used for agriculture and residences. One public hearing has been held regarding the rezoning. Another public hearing was opened by the Commission. No comments were offered. Rezoning was approved.

Public Works said that the lightweight aggregate that has been used for road work is unavailable now and he would like to order Trap Rock instead. Approved after some discussion. It is unavailable locally and will be delivered from St. Louis.

For the Health Department, Commissioners approved application to the Kansas Department of Health for grants for Fiscal Year 2027.

For the Weed Department the Commission approved agreements with 15 townships for noxious weed control. One township chose to handle the weeds on their own. The Commission delayed for a week a decision on the chemicals to use. One vendor that was not chosen raised a question.

For Parks + Recreation, Commissioners talked about the plans for 2 cabins that are scheduled to be built at Lake Shawnee Campgrounds. Funds will be mostly covered by a state grant, revolving funds and user fees. Because cabins are widely popular, they expect the revenue from the cabins to pay for the investment in 5 years. The plans were approved 2-1. Commissioner Cook was concerned about the cost and voted no.

The Sheriff's Office has updated a Contract with Free State Security to provide courthouse security through 2029. Commissioners acknowledged the update.

The Commission acknowledged that Council member Marcus Miller nominated Annie Buckland as a representative on the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

No Public Comment was offered. Parks + Recreation announced that the train will be running next week. Playland is not ready to open yet.

Corrections announced that the new construction for mental health crisis services is getting a lot of attention from around the state and outside the state.

No Executive Session was called.