

## **Council Minutes – January 20, 2015**

COUNCIL CHAMBER, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, January 20, 2015. The Councilmembers of the City of Topeka met in regular session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Hiller, Brown, Everhart, De La Isla, Manspeaker, Schwartz, Schmidt and Harmon -8. Mayor Larry E. Wolgast presided -1. Absent: Councilmember Ortiz -1.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Councilmember Manspeaker asked for a moment of silent meditation.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by those present in the chamber.

A PRESENTATION of the 2004-2014 Capital Improvement Plan Completed Projects Overview was presented by Doug Whitacre, Public Works Director. He distributed a notebook outlining the completed and approved projects for the past 10 years (2004-2014) and commended the City departments involved in creating the detailed project book. He stated the projects are divided into seven categories that include Neighborhoods, Public Safety, Traffic, Streets, Quality of Life, Utilities, Facilities and Maps. He noted the past 10 years could be categorized as a time of transition and renewal which highlights millions of dollars in capital improvements both inside the city of Topeka and in some cases, outside the city in adjacent neighborhoods. He commented that an interactive map outlining the type and location of all projects would be available on the City's website in the near future.

Mayor Wolgast asked if coordinating utility projects with street improvement projects has been helpful.

Doug Whitacre stated the City is still working to improve the coordinated efforts; however, it has been very beneficial to date.

Jim Colson, City Manager, stated it is the City's objective to have the list of projects updated regularly and to offer an online interactive mapping tool displaying past and future projects for the public to view. He commended City staff for their work.

Councilmember Hiller commended City staff for the helpful information covering projects over the past 10 years and appreciated the infill sidewalk project report. She requested identifying the source of funding on each project; listing grant funding where applicable and to show the total cost of bonded projects including the debt service. She referenced City Hall project expenses and asked Council to think about this when considering placing City Hall on the National Register of Historic Places because the status would cover these expenses through tax credits. She referenced utility projects that work in conjunction with street projects and stated it would be helpful to list when projects are tied together.

Councilmember Brown thanked staff for providing the information and asked if the information would be posted on the City's website, as well as, the process the City uses to prioritize projects.

Doug Whitacre stated the information would be posted on the City's website and he would work with staff to post the City's priorities.

THE CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

MINUTES of the regular meeting of January 13, 2015, was presented.

Councilmember De La Isla moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember Schmidt carried unanimously. (8-0-0)

APPROVAL of the Economic and Community Development Committee's Social Services 2016 funding Priorities and initial 2016 Budget recommendations was presented.

Councilmember De La Isla gave the Economic and Community Development Committee report and stated the Committee voted 3-0 to approve the 2016 Social Services funding Priorities and initial 2016 Budget recommendations. She referenced the process timeline which includes an appeal process as requested by the Governing Body in 2014. She noted many social service agencies provided positive feedback on the process and are confident in the paperwork and scoring procedures. She stated the Committee recommends funding of contracted services in the amount of \$300,000 and \$470,000 for other categories identified in the funding priorities.

Councilmember Hiller stated the process was a good experience and reported the Kansas Children's Service League Juvenile Intake program was added to the recommendation. She clarified the program was previously funded through the Topeka Police Department budget; however, the program was transferred along with a total funding allocation of \$64,000.

Councilmember De La Isla moved to approve the Economic and Community Development Committee's Social Services 2016 funding Priorities, initial 2016 Budget recommendations and the Social Services Grant Calendar as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schmidt.

Councilmember Brown thanked the Economic and Community Development Committee for their work on the recommendations. He questioned the section "Applicant has achieved outputs and outcomes on prior grants" on the Youth & Social Services & Contracted Services Scoring Sheet. He asked if this would place new applicants at a disadvantage or was it the intent of the Committee to allow organizations to present prior grants even if the grants do not apply specifically to what they are applying for.

Councilmember De La Isla stated Councilmember Brown was correct and confirmed the intent of the Committee was to consider all prior grant information for new organizations in regards to the application process.

The motion to approve the Economic and Community Development Committee's Social Services 2016 funding Priorities, initial 2016 Budget recommendations and the Social Services Grant Calendar as presented carried unanimously. (8-0-0)

A Cereal Malt Beverage License application for Grover's located at 1217 SW Gage Boulevard was presented.

Councilmember Harmon moved to approve the cereal malt beverage license application as presented. The motion seconded by Councilmember De La Isla carried unanimously. Mayor Wolgast voted "yes." (9-0-0)

DISCUSSION of City of Topeka 2016 Budget Priorities was presented.

Jim Colson, City Manager, reported staff is working to start the budget process early to ensure all agree to the budget calendar and what is trying to be achieved for 2016. He stated the objective of the discussion is to outline what has been adopted and open discussion for 2016 Budget Priorities. He noted as they move through the budget process staff would establish a working document outlining priorities to be considered.

Nickie Lee, City of Topeka Budget Manager, reported the City is starting the process and conversations early this year with the objective to work towards the same goals. She distributed a handout and provided a brief overview of the 2015 Strategic Plan Organizational Priorities; 2015 Budget Accomplishments; 2016 Budget Priorities; 2016 Budget Issues and the tentative 2016 Budget Calendar.

Councilmember Hiller stated she is pleased discussions are starting earlier this year. She made the following suggestions:

- She referenced the term “2015 Strategic Plan” on page 1 of the handout. She stated she believes the term is misleading to the public because the plan is not yet complete; therefore, she would suggest they use the term “Setting 2015 Strategic Goals” instead.
- She referenced the 2016 Budget Priorities on page 2 of the handout, specifically “Establishing fiscal sustainability by building the General Fund balance.” She reported the current policy of the City is to maintain a 10% General Fund balance and it was her understanding the City has now surpassed 12%. She recommended revising the language to state, “Improving fiscal sustainability by reducing debt.” She recommended the Council consider improving the long-term fiscal sustainability of the City by reducing debt because too much money is being used to pay interest costs; sustain the cap or decrease it by using cash for capital improvements instead of borrowing money.
- She asked if the June 13, 2015 Budget Session could be changed to an earlier time or different date because she has a prior engagement.

Councilmember De La Isla commended staff for the format in which the information has been presented. She stated she believes it will help Governing Body members focus on what is needed to make the hard decisions, as well as, help citizens better understand what the City must consider when reviewing budget priorities.

Joseph Ledbetter suggested additional funds in the ending fund balance be returned to the taxpayers through reduced taxes. He asked the Council to consider continuing to invest in neighborhoods; construction of a turnpike entrance on SE California Avenue or SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street and review City union agreements extensively in the 2016 Budget Priorities. He noted he believes the Council should also address true economic development for the community; the need for improved transparency with the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) and more advance notice of JEDO meetings. He stated he believes there is a need for Global Position Systems (GPS) on all City vehicles starting with utility vehicles because he believes this could provide a cost savings, as well as, productivity should be talked about and enforced with all City employees.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CITY MANAGER, MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL;

Councilmember Hiller announced the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce would host a Sneak Peek event for 712 Innovations located at 712 S. Kansas Avenue on January 22, 2015, and those interested in attending could register by contacting the Chamber of Commerce at 785-234-2644. She encouraged everyone to attend a fundraiser on February 28, 2015, at the Topeka Performing Arts Center to help downtown merchants that were affected by a recent fire. She reported the Dillon House renovations at SW 9th Street and SW Harrison Street are almost complete; and the Topeka RoadRunners Hockey Team is ranked 1st in the Southern Division standings and tied for 1st place in the Tier II Junior A Ice Hockey in the North American Hockey League.

Councilmember Brown announced the City of Topeka Point In Time Count would take place between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on January 29, 2015. He reported volunteers are still needed and people could register online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/PITvolunteer2014](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PITvolunteer2014); or drop off donations at the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department located at 620 SE Madison Street. He stated those interested in more information could contact Corrie Wright, Chair of the Topeka Shawnee County Homeless Task Force at [cwright@topeka.org](mailto:cwright@topeka.org) or 785-368-3711; or Point-in-Time Team Leader Theresa Douthart at [tdouthart@breakthroughhouse.org](mailto:tdouthart@breakthroughhouse.org) or 785-232-6807.

Councilmember Everhart thanked the residents in Council District No. 4 and stated it has been an honor to serve as their representative; however, she would not seek reelection. She noted there have been many improvements made in east Topeka and encouraged anyone who is

interested in representing Council District No. 4 and wants to continue to see improvements to apply for candidacy at the City Clerk's Office by January 27, 2015.

Joseph Ledbetter appeared to speak under public comment.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

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Brenda Younger  
City Clerk