

Council Minutes – July 7, 2015

COUNCIL CHAMBER, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, July 7, 2015. The Councilmembers of the City of Topeka met in regular session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Hiller, Clear, Ortiz, Schumm, De La Isla, Jensen, Schwartz, Coen and Harmon -9. Mayor Larry E. Wolgast presided -1.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Councilmember Ortiz gave the invocation.

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

A PRESENTATION on the 2015 Kansas Legislative Session was presented by Whitney Damron, City of Topeka Lobbyist. He provided an update on the 2015 Kansas Legislative Session, the longest session in history concluding on June 26, 2015, resulting in a \$425 million shortfall in revenues for the proposed FY2016 State of Kansas budget. He reported Governor Sam Brownback suggested that consumption taxes were preferable to other forms of taxation and after more than six weeks of debate, consideration and rejection of various tax proposals, the Legislature came to an agreement on a tax plan. He provided a brief overview of the primary tax plan components and noted the Governor was tasked with making an additional \$50 million in budget cuts. He reported on June 26, 2015, the State of Kansas was ordered to immediately pay \$49.6 million to local school districts to restore funding cuts from the current year's budget. He discussed annexation, abandoned housing legislation, election law, public building commission, campaign and ethics and economic development, scrap metal legislation, municipal bail bonds, bikeways, interest rate increase for delinquent property tax bills and employment law. In closing, Mr. Damron reported the Legislative Coordinating Council, the House and Senate Leadership, will meet in July or later to consider and approve interim meetings and study topics.

Mayor Wolgast noted municipalities would now have more restrictions concerning property taxes and elections and asked what would be the most challenging issue for municipalities in 2016.

Whitney Damron stated municipalities would continue to face challenges of increasing tax burdens on a local level.

Councilmember Schwartz asked what the timeline would be in returning funds to school districts.

Whitney Damron stated he was unsure of the timeline; however, he believes a special session may be conducted to resolve the matter.

Councilmember Hiller asked if there were any other issues the Governing Body should address by August, 2015.

Whitney Damron stated he would be happy to make recommendations such as refocusing attention on annexation, property tax and development. He noted it would be helpful if there were stakeholders involved in the process and priorities developed within the next 60 days.

THE CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Crystal Irwin to the Topeka Human Relations Commission to fill an unexpired term ending February 28, 2016, was presented.

MINUTES of the regular meeting of June 16, 2015, was presented.

Councilmember Schwartz moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember De La Isla carried unanimously. (10-0-0)

ORDINANCE NO. 19957 introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, allowing and approving City expenditures for the period of May 2, 2015, through May 29, 2015, and enumerating said expenditures therein was presented.

Jim Colson, City Manager, reported approval would authorize City expenditures in the amount of \$13,289,100.27.

Councilmember Ortiz moved to adopt the ordinance. The motion seconded by Councilmember Coen carried unanimously. (10-0-0)

The ordinance was adopted on roll call vote as follows: Ayes: Hiller, Clear, Ortiz, Schumm, De La Isla, Jensen, Schwartz, Coen, Harmon and Mayor Wolgast -10.

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

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, gave a brief overview of the July 14, 2015, Council agenda.

Jim Colson, City Manager, announced 27 new police recruits have begun training in the Law Enforcement Academy; the Topeka Zoo's African painted dogs would be relocated to the Pueblo Zoo in Colorado on July 7, 2015, to allow the Zoo to begin Phase 1 of the \$3.3 million project to update the African section and construct Camp Cowabunga. He recognized Renaldo Davis, City 4 TV Producer, for his work in upgrading the City Council Chambers with new monitors and equipment.

Councilmember Schwartz announced Fiesta Mexicana would be held July 14-18, 2015, and Brew at the Zoo would be held July 11, 2015. She stated this week's "gem" of Topeka is the Topeka Blues Society which educates the public about blues music through performance, enhancing appreciation and understanding through interpretation, preservation and education.

Councilmember Clear announced a new center operated by The Boys and Girls Club of

Topeka for teens opened July 7, 2015, on SE 10th Street at the Juan “Poppy” Abbott Community Center; Fiesta Mexicana Parade is scheduled for July 11, 2015; and Coffee on Your Corner would be held July 8, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Billard Airport Café located at 3600 NE Sardou to discuss the Pedestrian Master Plan presented by Bill Fiander, Planning Director.

Mayor Wolgast announced the JEDO Board may schedule a meeting on July 15, 2015.

Megan Green and Jill Chapman appeared to speak under public comment.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Brenda Younger
City Clerk