



# CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL  
City Hall, 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 255  
Topeka, KS 66603-3914  
Tel: 785-368-3710  
Fax: 785-368-3958  
www.topeka.org

Date: July 7, 2015  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: City Council Chambers, 214 SE 8<sup>th</sup> St.

Committee Members present: Deputy Mayor Karen Hiller (Chair), Councilmembers Richard Harmon, Elaine Schwartz, Sandra Clear, Jeff Coen, Jonathan Schumm, Michelle De La Isla, Brendan Jensen, Sylvia Ortiz and Advisory Member Mayor Larry Wolgast.

Staff present: City Manager Jim Colson, Administrative & Financial Services Director Doug Gerber, Budget Manager Nickie Lee, Deputy City Attorney Mary Feighny, and department heads.

1. The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Karen Hiller, Chair.
2. Councilmember Jensen moved to approve the meeting minutes from June 23, 2015 and June 30, 2015; Councilmember Clear seconded the motion. Minutes approved 8-1. Councilmember Ortiz opposed.
3. Follow up from prior meetings and any new questions.

Fire Department staffing and past studies were discussed. The Fire Department's 2016 budget includes 245 FTE's, which is the same number budgeted over the past four to five years. There are currently fifteen vacancies; recruitment is in process.

Nickie Lee commented on the part-time position for the Council Office, as well as cell phone reimbursements and Council Office phone lines. Deputy Mayor Hiller would like a process to be put in place for the Council to be able to review and approve the Council budget prior to the Budget Committee meetings.

Sasha Stiles answered questions related to staffing and overtime in the Neighborhood Relations Department, and explained the changes to the organization and how that impacted their budget.

Police Department salaries were discussed. Councilmember Schumm disclosed that he previously worked for the Allen County Police Department as a civilian; he supports increased wages for Topeka Police Officers.

Councilmember Ortiz asked why the Fire Department's printing and advertising line item went from \$2,000 to \$8,000. Nickie Lee said she would get this information to the Council.

4. Possible changes to the proposed budget, on the following topics, were discussed.

1. Street prevention and maintenance; whether to add eight Equipment Operator FTE's
2. Street lights
3. Grant writer
4. Neighborhood Relations; whether to add two Property Maintenance FTE's
5. City Council training budget
6. Economic & Community Development unallocated funds to support Keep America Beautiful initiative
7. Allow the Governing Body to review top management personnel/position changes. Councilmember Schwartz asked how many management positions this change would affect. Doug Gerber will get this information to the Council.
8. Study for GPS in police cars

5. Recommend amended budget to Council

Councilmember Harmon made a motion to approve the budget as recommended by staff. Councilmember De La Isla seconded the motion.

Councilmember Schwartz made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to include a grant writer FTE for \$60,000. Councilmember Ortiz seconded the motion. Vote was 5 yes, with Councilmembers Hiller, De La Isla, Jensen and Harmon voting no. Motion passed.

Councilmember Schumm made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to add \$30,000 for street lights. Councilmember Schwartz seconded the motion. Vote was 9 yes. Motion passed.

Councilmember Ortiz made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to delete the 2 Property Maintenance Inspector positions. Councilmember Schwartz seconded the motion. Vote was 6 no, with Councilmembers Ortiz, Schwartz and Coen voting yes. Motion failed.

Councilmember Ortiz would like to know where in the budget the 15 Fire Department vacancies are. Nickie Lee stated that she will get this information to the Council.

Councilmember Jensen made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to add \$18,000 for City Council training. Councilmember De La Isla seconded the motion. Vote was 5 no, with Councilmembers Hiller, De La Isla, Jensen and Schwartz voting yes. Motion failed.

Councilmember Clear made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to remove 4 of the 8 additional Equipment Operators. Councilmember Ortiz seconded the motion. Vote was 7 no, with Councilmembers Clear and Schwartz voting yes. Motion failed.

Councilmember Coen made a motion to direct the City Manager to strike the establishment of arts funding of \$60,000. Councilmember Ortiz seconded the motion. Vote was 5 yes, with Councilmembers Hiller, Clear, De La Isla and Jensen voting no. Motion passed.

Councilmember Schumm made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to give \$30,000 to Arts Connect for the purpose of making grants. Councilmember De La Isla seconded the motion. Vote was 7 yes, with Councilmembers Ortiz and Coen voting no. Motion passed.

Councilmember Harmon made a motion to recommend to the full Council adoption of the budget as amended. Councilmember De La Isla seconded the motion. Councilmember Harmon withdrew his motion to allow Councilmember Schumm to make an additional amendment to the budget.

Councilmember Schumm made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to keep the Downtown Topeka, Inc. funding at \$150,000 instead of increasing it to \$300,000. Councilmember Ortiz seconded the motion.

Councilmember Ortiz asked Mary Feighny if she could respond to Councilmember Schumm's statement that there may be a possible conflict of interest with another Councilmember. Mary Feighny stated that there is no conflict of interest. Councilmember Ortiz disagreed. Councilmember Jensen stated that he previously received a grant for a building that he owns downtown and that is why this is being brought up as a possible conflict of interest. The grant funds that he had applied for were already allocated and have no connection to future grant funds such as those being discussed tonight. He is not requesting the 2016 budget funds for himself, but for others who might benefit. Mary Feighny stated that there is no legal conflict of interest, but if Councilmember Schumm is uncomfortable voting he could abstain to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Councilmember Jensen stated that he would abstain from voting to appease the Council.

The vote was 4 yes, 4 no, 1 abstained. Councilmembers Ortiz, Schumm, Coen and Harmon voted yes; Hiller, Clear, De La Isla and Schwartz voted no; Jensen abstained. Motion failed. The budget for Downtown Topeka, Inc. will remain at \$300,000.

Councilmember Ortiz made a motion to direct the City Manager to amend the budget to add \$50,000 for a youth employment program. Councilmember Schumm seconded the motion. Vote was 7 yes, with Councilmembers Coen and Harmon voting no. Motion passed.

Councilmember Harmon made a motion to recommend to the full Council adoption of the budget as amended. Councilmember De La Isla seconded the motion. Vote was 7 yes, with Councilmembers Schwartz and Coen voting no. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

The complete budget can be viewed at:  
[http://www.topeka.org/Administrative/city\\_budget.shtml](http://www.topeka.org/Administrative/city_budget.shtml)

The videos of this meeting can be found at:

Budget Committee Meeting Part 1  
<https://youtu.be/BIMdITkJ4hY>

Budget Committee Meeting Part 2  
<https://youtu.be/xsFfnUT-AJo>

Budget Committee Meeting Part 3  
<https://youtu.be/AldvhLaIORc>