

Special Governing Body Meeting Minutes – June 20, 2018

LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER, Topeka, Kansas, Wednesday, June 20, 2018. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in special session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Hiller, Clear, Emerson, Jensen, Coen and Lesser -6. Mayor De La Isla presided -1. Absent: Ortiz, Padilla and Mays -3.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Mayor De La Isla stated the Governing Body would continue discussion on the 2019 Operating Budget from the Governing Body meeting of June 19, 2018.

Nick Hawkins, Budget and Finance Manager, provided an overview of the Utility Department budget including the Water, Stormwater and Wastewater Divisions.

Councilmember Jensen asked if there were enough revenue funds to implement a computer system capable of storing credit card information that would allow customers to utilize an automatic payment system.

Brent Trout, City Manager, stated the City has been working to resolve the issue through the hiring of a new vendor to provide these types of services.

Mark Biswell, Information Technology Department Director, stated a new program would be implemented in December 2018 that would allow customers to pay with a credit card.

Councilmember Ortiz entered the room.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview of the Zoo Operating budget including the Administration, Education and Conservation, Animal Care, Animal Health and Guest Experience Divisions.

Councilmember Hiller questioned if the zoo maintenance worker position that was created last year has been eliminated.

Nick Hawkins stated the position was eliminated because the new horticulturist position would also perform the duties assigned to the maintenance worker position.

Councilmember Ortiz referenced the newly created zoo night security position and questioned if there has been an increase of security problems at the zoo after hours.

Brendan Wiley, Zoo Director, reported the security position was suggested as part of the accreditation inspection; however, there has been no history of routine security issues after hours. He stated he believes the addition of security cameras and two overnight private security guard checks has played a role in deterring criminal activity after hours.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview of the Supplement No. 1 - 2019 Budget Q&A Staff responses to questions received at the June 16, 2018, Proposed Budget Discussion.

Councilmember Hiller questioned revenue projections for Heartland Park.

Brent Trout, City Manager, reported there was not enough history to provide solid projections at this time; however, Mr. Payne continues to work to increase events.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview of the Other Funds including Cemeteries, General Fund Non-Departmental, Parks and Recreation (Special Alcohol Funds), Social Services Programs, Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC), Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) Fund, Topeka Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) Fund, Court Technology Fund, Special Alcohol Fund, Alcohol & Drug Assessment and Referral Fund, Law Enforcement Fund, Special Liability Fund, Transient Guest Tax (TGT) Fund, Countywide Half Cent Sales Tax, Retirement Reserve Fund, KP&F Equalization Fund, Neighborhood Revitalization Fund, Historic Preservation Fund, Community Improvement District (CID) Fund, Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Fund, Debt Service Fund, Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (TMTA) Fund, Parking Fund, Information Technology Fund, Fleet Fund, Facilities Fund, Water Fund and Stormwater Fund.

Councilmember Jensen questioned if operational efficiencies have been considered with the upgrades to the Municipal Building.

Jason Peek, Public Works Director, stated the upgrade should provide for new mechanical savings to help lower overall operations costs.

Councilmember Clear inquired on funding for TPAC. She stated she would oppose continued funding through taxpayer dollars and believes funding cuts would incentivize TPAC to raise more private funds.

Councilmember Hiller stated historically the City has approved funding for TPAC in the amount of \$300,000 annually. She expressed the importance of having three types of entertainment venues for the downtown area to be successful and reported the new management seems to be raising private funds and following the business plan as established. She noted there are many factors that need to be considered as they try to determine funding amounts for TPAC.

Mayor De La Isla spoke in support of TPAC. She stated she believes the venue plays a crucial role in the community and in the downtown area; however, the facility must function correctly including the private fundraising aspect. She expressed the importance of TPAC understanding what to do to be successful and thrive in the theater community.

Councilmember Jensen requested a full audit on the use of TPAC funds and asked if staff was comfortable with how funds are being expended.

Nickie Lee, Finance and Administrative Services Director, stated she would request the expenditure information from TPAC. She reported all requirements were met before TPAC was provided with additional funding in 2016 and 2017.

Councilmember Hiller requested staff research what other cities are doing in similar situations.

Mayor De La Isla stated they would need to consider a capital outlay campaign for the remodel of the TPAC building to support an enhanced program.

Councilmember Jensen suggested TPAC funding be set up in the form of matching funds.

Councilmember Clear stated she concurs with Councilmember Jensen and would support the allocation of matching funds for TPAC.

Councilmember Lesser stated that he agrees with the comments made regarding TPAC; however, it appears programming has improved over the last year. He expressed the importance of moving forward in a cautionary manner while fully understanding all of the factors that contribute to TPAC's situation. He noted the City would still have to maintain the building if TPAC closes.

Councilmember Ortiz questioned the \$19,000 in funding earmarked for Downtown Topeka, Inc., Maintenance and Special Events Programming and asked when the City stopped using inmate crews to assist with the cleanup of the downtown area.

Councilmember Hiller commented on the possibility of using the debris deposit collected by the City for special events to help supplement the cost incurred by DTI for cleanup of special events.

Councilmember Jensen questioned if the administrative court fee associated with fines could sunset, and if so, on what date.

Councilmember Hiller asked how much the City paid in interest costs associated with temporary bond notes in 2017.

Councilmember Emerson questioned the procedure used in determining spending authority for each department.

Nick Hawkins stated he would provide the requested information at the next budget discussion. He provided an overview of the Risk Fund, Worker's Compensation Fund, Health Fund, Risk Management Reserve Fund and Unemployment Fund.

Councilmember Ortiz questioned the status of the e-ticketing system for the Topeka Police Department.

Bill Cochran, Topeka Police Chief, reported the system continues to work well and they anticipate an increase of usage from 33% in 2018 to 45% in 2019.

Lori Dougherty-Bichsel, Municipal Court Judge, reported the court aspect of the system was functioning correctly.

Councilmember Hiller referenced discussions relating to parking officers possibly utilizing electronic handheld ticketing devices. She asked if parking citations would tie into the same system being used by the Topeka Police Department.

Jason Peek, Public Works Director, stated they have not yet begun to research this aspect of the parking enforcement process.

Brent Trout reported overall parking enforcement, including e-ticketing, will be analyzed as part of the services outlined in the Request For Proposal (RFP) the City was in the process of drafting for the parking division.

Nick Hawkins announced the next budget discussion would take place at the Governing Body meeting on July 3, 2018. He requested all amendments be submitted to the City Manager by June 28, 2018, to allow time for staff to evaluate how the amendments would impact the overall budget to be considered at the July 10, 2018, Governing Body meeting.

Mayor De La Isla noted she would not be present at the July 10, 2018, Governing Body meeting.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Brenda Younger
City Clerk