

Governing Body Minutes – January 13, 2020

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Topeka, Kansas, Monday, January 13, 2020. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in regular session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Hiller, Valdivia-Alcala, Ortiz, Emerson, Padilla, Naeger, Dobler, Duncan and Lesser -9. Mayor De La Isla presided -1.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Eion Toyne provided the invocation.

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

A SWEARING IN CEREMONY was conducted for Council-elect members Christina Valdivia-Alcala, District 2; Tony Emerson, District 4; Hannah Naeger, District 6; and Spencer Duncan, District 8. The oath of office was conducted by Lori Dougherty-Bichsel, Municipal Court Judge.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Walter Frederick to the Civil Service Commission to fill an unexpired term ending January 5, 2024, was presented. (*Council District No. 9*)

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the reappointment Robert Banks to the Topeka Housing Authority Advisory Board to fill an unexpired term ending December 31, 2023, was presented. (*Council District No. 9*)

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Melina Stewart to the Topeka Landmarks Commission for a term ending December 31, 2022, was presented. (*Council District No. 6*)

Councilmember Lesser moved to approve the appointments. The motion seconded by Councilmember Ortiz carried unanimously. Mayor does not vote. (9-0-0)

THE CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the regular meeting of January 7, 2020, was presented.

Councilmember Lesser moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember Ortiz carried unanimously. (10-0-0)

PUBLIC INPUT was received in preparation of the City's 2020-2021 Strategic Goals.

Brent Trout, City Manager, stated the Governing Body has scheduled a retreat on January 18, 2020, at which time the public input received, would be considered by the Governing Body in developing goals and priorities for 2020-2021.

Boyd Fetterolf spoke on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community. He asked the Governing Body to enact a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class for employment and housing in the city of Topeka.

Jeffrey Terrell requested the Governing Body consider life, health and safety, as critical driving factors when creating policies. He expressed concern with the critical need to reduce CO₂ emissions as well as addressing the declining climate as it affects all aspects of the community including housing, zoning, water, utilities and infrastructure.

Phoenix Nesmith requested the Governing Body as a part of their goals and priorities approve a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class for employment and housing in the city of Topeka. She expressed the importance of all citizens, including the LGBTQ+ community, feeling safe and protected.

Nicole Nesmith requested the Governing Body approve a nondiscrimination ordinance as part of their goals and priorities that includes gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class for employment and housing in the city of Topeka.. She expressed the importance of all citizens, including the LGBTQ+ community, feeling safe and welcome in the community.

Linda Ochs, Shawnee County Health Department Director, referenced the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan. She stated improving the health of the community will be accomplished by focusing on four strategic areas (1) Behavioral Health (2) Access to Food (3) Substance Use and (4) Health Equity. She reported each area has specific goals and objectives to measure progress over the next three years establishing framework for community organizations, municipalities, schools, residents and other stakeholders to work together towards improving the health of the Topeka/Shawnee County community. She asked the Governing Body to consider community health when developing their goals and priorities.

John Campos asked the Governing Body to allocate General funds to support youth programs, parks improvements, community center improvements as well as youth recreation activities. He expressed the importance of investing in neighborhood programs, and requested the grant program for neighborhood events and beautification projects introduced by former Councilmember Jensen be reinstated. He asked the Governing Body to take action to support a global capital city and align with county and state governments by allowing hemp production inside city limits.

Steve Schiffelbein spoke on behalf of Topeka JUMP and requested the Governing Body establish goals and priorities that improve quality of life. He expressed the importance of supporting at-risk students and increased mental health programs; increasing affordable housing for low income families; improved public transportation to major employers located in Shawnee County; and reducing gun violence through violence intervention programs. He invited the Governing body to attend the Nehemiah Action Assembly on April 27, 2020, from 7:00-8:30 p.m., location to be determined.

Mayor De La Isla opened the floor for additional comment. No one appeared.

PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following:

William Naeger, Topeka Human Relations Commission, reported the Commission continues to work on language for the proposed revisions to Topeka Municipal Code (TMC) Title 9 concerning adding gender identity and sexual orientation to the list of protected classes within the nondiscrimination ordinance. He thanked Governing Body members for working with the Commission and welcomed any additional input they may have on the subject matter.

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

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, provided an overview of the January 21, 2020, Governing Body agenda.

Mayor De La Isla welcomed new members of the Governing Body. She announced she would be absent on January 21, 2020, due to a previously scheduled speaking engagement at the Annual United States Mayor's Conference in Washington, D.C.

Councilmember Hiller thanked citizens for providing their input and welcomed new members of the Governing Body.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala stated she looks forward to working with Governing Body members and encouraged District 2 constituents to contact her as needed. She read a statement expressing her concerns with outsourcing the Social Services Grant Program process and distributed a letter serving as notice, that she will move to rescind the motion approved on December 17, 2019, by the Governing Body, allowing the City of Topeka to outsource the Social Service Grants Program to a third party vendor.

Councilmember Ortiz welcomed new members of the Governing Body and stated she looks forward to working with them.

Councilmember Emerson thanked constituents for allowing him to serve and welcomed the new members of the Governing Body.

Councilmember Padilla welcomed new members of the Governing Body and expressed the importance of working together as a unified Body.

Councilmember Naeger thanked citizens for allowing her to serve and stated she looks forward to working with the Governing Body to accomplish great things.

Councilmember Dobler welcomed the new members of the Governing Body and stated he looks forward to serving the community.

Councilmember Duncan thanked his wife and family for their support and citizens for allowing him to serve on the Governing Body.

Councilmember Lesser welcomed new members of the Governing Body and stated he looks forward to working with them.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

(SEAL)

Brenda Younger
City Clerk

Please note: The Governing Body meeting was held on Monday, January 13, 2020, instead of Tuesday, January 14, 2020, pursuant to TMC Code Section A2-22. Election and terms. (b) Terms of office. The Mayor shall be elected to a four (4) year term. The district Councilmembers shall be elected to staggered four (4) year terms. Terms of office that would have expired in April of 2017 shall expire on January 8, 2018. Terms of office that would have expired in April of 2019 shall expire on January 13, 2020. (C.O. 117 § 3, 2-9-16.)