

Governing Body Minutes – January 19, 2021

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, January 19, 2021. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in regular session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers participating remotely: Hiller, Valdivia-Alcala, Ortiz, Padilla, Naeger, Dobler, Duncan and Lesser - 8. Absent: Mayor De La Isla - 1. Deputy Mayor Emerson presided - 1.

Due to the increase of COVID-19 pandemic cases no in-person public comment was allowed. Zoom (virtual) meeting access was provided to those individuals signed up to speak to a specific item or general public comment. Public comment related to an item on the agenda, submitted in writing to the Office of the City Clerk, 215 SE 7th Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas, or via email at cclerk@topeka.org was included as an attachment to the minutes.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Pastor Johnathan Sublet, Fellowship Bible Church, provided the invocation.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited virtually by meeting participants.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Jennifer Goetz to the Topeka Human Relations Commission to fill a term ending December 31, 2022, was presented. (*Council District No. 6*)

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Nicholas Smith to the Topeka Human Relations Commission to fill an unexpired term ending February 11, 2022, was presented. (*Council District No. 1*)

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Jeremy Gibson to the Topeka Human Relations Commission to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2022, was presented. (*Council District No. 9*)

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the reappointment of Angela Sharp to the Board of Building and Fire Appeals for a term ending December 31, 2022, was presented. (*Council District No. 8*)

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala requested to remove Item 2C, the appointment of Carol Roberts to the Human Relations Commission from the consent agenda for separate consideration.

Upon hearing no objections, Deputy Mayor Emerson announced the item would be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the agenda as Action Item 4E.

Councilmember Ortiz moved to approve the appointments as amended. The motion seconded by Councilmember Naeger carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 20280 introduced by City Manager Brent Trout, allowing and approving City expenditures for the period October 31, 2020 through November 27, 2020, and enumerating said expenditures therein, was presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the regular meeting of January 12, 2021, was presented.

Councilmember Padilla moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember Lesser carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

ELECTION of a Deputy Mayor to serve a one-year term pursuant to Topeka Municipal Code Section A2-26(b), was presented.

Deputy Mayor Emerson reported in accordance with Governing Body Rule 4.1(b) Councilmembers who have served the longest period of time, and have not previously served as deputy mayor, will automatically be nominated; therefore, if accepted, Councilmember Padilla and Councilmember Lesser will be nominated to serve as Deputy Mayor.

Councilmember Lesser respectfully withdrew his nomination to serve as Deputy Mayor.

Deputy Mayor Emerson opened the floor for additional nominations.

Brent Trout, City Manager, announced it has been suggested the first vote be “rotated” during the election of Deputy Mayor and JEDO board members. He stated the Deputy Mayor vote would be called in District order of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9; and because the JEDO Board positions may require multiple “rounds” of voting, the roll call vote will begin with District 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 1, then so on from there, until all the voting has been completed.

Upon hearing no more nominations, Deputy Mayor announced nominations were closed.

After roll call vote, the City Clerk announced Councilmember Padilla received nine (9) affirmative votes and would serve as Deputy Mayor.

Deputy Mayor Padilla PRESIDED over the remainder of the Governing Body meeting.

ELECTION of two City Council voting representatives to serve a one-year term on the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) Board, was presented.

Deputy Mayor Padilla opened the floor for nominations.

Councilmember Dobler nominated Councilmember Lesser.

Councilmember Hiller asked who currently serves as the City’s representative for GoTopeka.

Councilmember Padilla stated he serves as the City’s GoTopeka representative.

Councilmember Ortiz nominated Councilmember Naeger.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala nominated Councilmember Duncan.

Councilmember Duncan respectfully withdrew his nomination.

Upon hearing no more nominations, Deputy Mayor Padilla announced nominations were closed and nominees include Councilmember Naeger and Councilmember Lesser.

After roll call vote, the City Clerk announced Councilmember Naeger and Councilmember Lesser received nine (9) affirmative votes each and would serve as the two voting representatives for the JEDO Board.

AMENDING Governing Body Rule 8.2(a) to add a new Council Committee to be entitled "Public Infrastructure" was presented.

Councilmember Duncan, Public Infrastructure Special Committee Chair, reported on December 21, 2020, the Committee voted to recommend approval to establish the "Public Infrastructure Committee" as a permanent standing committee of the City Council comprised of three members of the City Council.

Deputy Mayor Padilla spoke in support of the recommendation and fully supports establishing a permanent committee.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala expressed the importance of the Committee as it relates to improving the older neighborhoods and the 50/50 Sidewalk Repair Program. She noted the Public Infrastructure Committee meetings have been very informative and helpful.

Councilmember Duncan asked if there were any rules that would prevent the Deputy Mayor from serving on standing committees.

Lisa Robertson, City Attorney, stated there were no rules or regulations that would prohibit the Deputy Mayor from serving on standing committees.

Deputy Mayor Padilla stated he would be happy to continue serving on the Committee; however, he understands the importance of rotating committee service opportunities. He spoke in support of allowing Councilmembers Emerson, Dobler and Lesser to continue to serve on the Public Infrastructure Committee; and requested Governing Body members send him their committee preferences for assignment in February.

Councilmember Emerson moved to amend Governing Body Rule 8.2(a) to add a new Council Committee entitled "Public Infrastructure." The motion seconded by Councilmember Dobler carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

ORDINANCE NO. 20281 introduced by City Manager Brent Trout, pertaining to an amendment to the text and map of the Topeka Comprehensive Plan for the East Topeka North Neighborhood Plan, was presented. (CPA 20/01)

Brent Trout, City Manager, reported the ordinance was discussed at the January 12, 2021, Governing Body meeting and staff was recommending approval as presented.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala thanked Staff members and neighborhood volunteers for finding creative ways to gather public input during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated it was a great plan solidifying a long-range commitment by the City.

Councilmember Ortiz spoke in support of the plan and stated it was long overdue.

Councilmember Ortiz moved to adopt the ordinance. The motion seconded by Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala carried unanimously. (9-0-0)

The ordinance was adopted on roll call vote as follows: Ayes: Hiller, Valdivia-Alcala, Ortiz, Emerson, Padilla, Naeger, Dobler, Duncan and Lesser -9.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Carol Roberts to the Topeka Human Relations Commission to fill an unexpired term ending February 28, 2022, was presented. (Council District No. 7)

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala moved to defer the appointment until February 2, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ortiz.

Councilmember Hiller inquired on the reason for deferral.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala stated she would like clarification on some of the nominee's application answers and she plans to contact the nominee before voting on the item.

The motion to defer the appointment until February 2, 2021, carried unanimously on roll call voted. (9-0-0)

DISCUSSION for the purpose of reviewing the Capital Improvements Plan policy and the financial parameters of the Capital Improvement Plan for 2022-2031, was presented.

Stephen Wade, Budget and Performance Manager, reviewed the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) policy and stated the Governing Body will review CIP projects at the February 6, 2021, Special Meeting Workshop as well as opportunities for further input at future Governing Body meetings in anticipation of adopting the 2022-2031 CIP in early April.

Jessica Lamendola, Administrative and Financial Director, provided an overview of the current financial guidelines for the 2022-2031 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Councilmember Duncan thanked Staff for the breakdown of information so it will be easier to consider. He requested Staff summarize the timeline and overall approval process.

Stephan Wade announced the proposed CIP would be distributed on January 26, 2021, followed by the Special Meeting Workshop on February 6, 2021. He noted the required public hearing and approval by the Governing Body would happen after all discussions were complete.

Councilmember Duncan spoke in opposition of voting on the CIP as one total package. He expressed the importance of making sure Governing Body members receive all information requested prior to approval of the plan.

Jessica Lamendola stated there has been no directive from the Governing Body to date to consider and approve in separate sections as the plan was intended to be a comprehensive in nature. She noted that it would make sense to review items instrumentally; however, voting on

items separately would most likely have a trickle-down effect. She stated Staff would remain mindful to make sure all information was provided to the Governing Body as requested.

Brent Trout, City Manager, stated there would be several discussions providing the Governing Body the opportunity to approve “sub” packages and discuss different sections as they work towards final approval of the plan.

Councilmember Hiller requested Staff allow enough time for the Governing Body to fully understand the entire CIP process. She suggested more than three discussion sessions be held on the subject matter and requested departments present their applicable CIP projects and departmental programs.

Jessica Lamendola stated she hopes to receive feedback from the Governing Body at the February 6, 2021, Special Meeting Workshop on what items need more discussion or revisions. She stated she anticipates at least six meeting discussions will be conducted before final approval of the Governing Body would take place.

Councilmember Ortiz thanked Staff for providing an email address to send questions as they work through the budget and CIP.

Councilmember Padilla thanked Staff for their hard work and attention to detail regarding the consideration of the CIP.

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

Brent Trout, City Manager, announced the arrival of the AmeriCorps NCCC Team and stated the Team would be partnering with the City until April 15, 2021. He stated Jessica Lamendola, Administrative and Financial Services Director, would be serving as a member of the Women in Public Finance Board of Directors as well as she will begin her second year as a

member of the Government Finance Officers Association Committee on governmental debt management.

Councilmember Padilla congratulated Jessica Lamendola, Administrative and Financial Services Director for her service on the professional boards. He recognized the historic significance of January 18-22, 2021, and stated he has been impressed with the coverage of Martin Luther King Celebrations locally and nationally as well as the Inauguration of President Elect Joe Biden on January 20, 2021. He encouraged citizens to come together as one and support all.

Councilmember Naeger thanked her peers for allowing her to serve as a voting Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) Board member. She stated she concurs with the comments made by Deputy Mayor Padilla and she hopes positive spirits will be carried through the Inauguration of President Elect Joe Biden on January 20, 2021, locally and across the nation.

Councilmember Dobler thanked Councilmember Emerson for his service as Deputy Mayor and congratulated Councilmember Padilla on being elected as the new Deputy Mayor. He announced the retirement of Utilities Director Bob Sample in March 2021, and thanked him for his service and the amazing job he has done with the Water Pollution Control Department over the last 30 years.

Councilmember Duncan announced many government entities continue to monitor possible threats for Inauguration Day on January 20, 2021. He reported the Shawnee County COVID-19 vaccine survey does not enable a person to sign up for the vaccine, however, it will help identify where the vaccine was needed the most. He stated the State of Kansas has only received 1% of the vaccine being distributed across the nation; and he will report back on the process for those that do not have access to the internet in regards to taking the survey.

Councilmember Lesser congratulated Councilmember Padilla on being elected as Deputy Mayor. He offered his condolences to the Kent Hollins family for their loss and recognized Mr. Hollins for his generosity in donating two K-9 police dogs and the cost of training the dogs to the Topeka Police Department.

Brent Trout reported Mr. Hollins also donated 20 computers to the City of Topeka for the Topeka Way To Work Program.

Councilmember Hiller thanked her peers for their willingness to serve in several different capacities including as Deputy Mayor, JEDO Board members, Standing Committee members as well as Governing Body members. She commented on the vital importance of citizens continuing to use precautions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic as it remains an extremely critical public health situation. She hopes all will continue to work to help ease civil rights violations across the nation.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala stated she concurs with Councilmember Hiller and noted civil rights issues remain dire across the nation. She stated they must not forget these violations continue to take place through police brutality and other incidents. She requested that if Governing Body meetings continue virtually past March 2021, the public comment process needs to be addressed. She announced a Fire Commission meeting would be held on January 21, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom as well as aired on City4 and streamed live. She encouraged District 2 citizens to provide input on the matter. She announced Evergy will provide street lighting along NW Lyman Road. She mentioned the National COVID-19 Memorial Service held on January 19, 2021, that included 400 lights placed around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool to honor the over 400,000 COVID-19 related deaths across the nation. She suggested a

ceremony be conducted locally to recognize the loss of loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brent Trout stated he will distribute a media release to inform individuals that the City continues to allow public input at Governing Body meetings via Zoom meeting access as well as the submission of written comments.

Councilmember Ortiz congratulated Councilmember Padilla on being elected as the new Deputy Mayor and thanked Councilmember Emerson for serving as Deputy Mayor. She reminded citizens Topeka Public Schools USD 501 has transitioned to full virtual learning.

Councilmember Emerson stated it was an honor to serve as Deputy Mayor and thanked his peers for their assistance during his term. He encouraged citizens to donate blood and platelets to help save lives especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. He thanked City Manager Brent Trout and Planning and Development Director Bill Fiander for cleaning up properties along the South Topeka Boulevard Corridor. He commended Utilities Director Bob Sample and Public Works Director, Jaci Vogel, for their service to the City. He also recognized Kristi Erickson, City Traffic Engineer, for her thorough and consistent street project updates. He congratulated Councilmember Padilla on being elected as the new Deputy Mayor.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

(SEAL)

Brenda Younger
City Clerk