

## **Governing Body Minutes – Special Meeting – February 6, 2021**

City of Topeka, Kansas, Saturday, February 6, 2021. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in special session at 9:00 A.M., with the following Councilmembers participating remotely: Hiller, Valdivia-Alcala, Ortiz, Emerson, Dobler, Duncan and Lesser - 7. Absent: Councilmember Naeger and Mayor De La Isla - 2. Deputy Mayor Padilla 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 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas, or via email at [cclerk@topeka.org](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) was included as an attachment to the minutes.

Deputy Mayor Padilla provided opening comments and thanked Staff for providing detailed information for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Workshop.

Brent Trout, City Manager, stated the CIP process began in October 2020 with the intent to consider approval of the CIP by the Governing Body on April 6, 2021. He encouraged comments and questions as Staff moves through the presentation. He thanked Staff members for their work in preparing the CIP.

Jessica Lamendola, Administrative and Financial Services Director, reported the workshop serves as an introduction to how the City can address infrastructure needs while recognizing that overall needs outnumber the overall budget. She stated Staff has already met with several Governing Body members and appreciates the feedback they have provided. She welcomed additional input as they moved through the presentation.

Stephen Wade, Budget & Performance Manager, reported the CIP serves as the City's long-range plan for the maintenance and development of City assets and infrastructure; identifies

necessary present and future capital needs; estimated cost as well as an anticipated method of financing for each project.

### **Utility Projects**

Braxton Copley, Deputy Utilities Director, provided an overview of the proposed CIP Utility projects including the Waterline Replacement Program; Biogas and Solids Handling; North Topeka WWTP Nutrient Removal; Treatment Modifications Phase III and Shunga Creek Flood Mitigation.

Councilmember Dobler asked if the Shunga Creek Flood Mitigation project would encompass the additional studies performed on the area and extend to the west to cover the areas flooded in 2007.

Braxton Copley reported the scope of the project would expand from Sherwood Lake to the confluence of the Shunga Creek and Kansas River and include all potential projects that will provide mitigation to property owners along the Shunga Creek.

Councilmember Dobler expressed his appreciation and thanked Staff for addressing the issues.

Councilmember Emerson questioned if the timing of Shunga Creek Flood Mitigation project was realistic and if staff has considered moving up the design and property acquisition to the year 2022.

Braxton Copley stated the project timeline serves as a placeholder until they have an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers, hopefully in the third quarter of 2021. He noted there are some constraints as it relates to the City's debt service cap policy; however, they have the authority to issue temporary notes to begin project design and acquisition of easements.

Councilmember Ortiz thanked Staff for addressing the Shunga Creek flooding issue as it affects a large portion of the city along the creek spanning east and west. She questioned if they have researched if State funding assistance was available.

Braxton Copley reported the Request for Proposal (RFP) includes the requirement to identify potential funding sources that may include the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) FEMA pre-disaster hazard mitigation program. He noted Staff would have to identify areas to be included in the Shawnee County's flood mitigation plan.

Stephen Wade reported the Utility CIP Summary includes 38 total projects with a total 5-Year CIP cost of \$251,841,700 including \$10 million in Federal Funds and \$241.8 million in Revenue Bonds.

### **Public Safety Projects**

Bryan Wheelles, Interim Topeka Police Chief, provided an overview of the Public Safety Real Time Information Center (RTIC) Project, providing emergency responders and City decision makers the ability to capitalize on a variety of technologies to respond more efficiently, more deliberately, and with improved intelligence to first responder emergency calls for service, traffic flow as well as large-scale public events.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala inquired on the cost of the Gunshot Technology program, a software piece of the RTIC, and requested Governing Body members be apprised of data from other cities as the program progresses. She referenced an increase of gunshot activity in District No. 2, and asked if this type of technology would assist the Police Department with the reporting of crimes in certain areas of the city as it relates to the need for more police officers.

Councilmember Emerson stated it would be difficult to support the request at this time. He questioned the reliability of the software as reported by other cities as well as the high cost of the software program compared to hiring additional police officers.

Councilmember Padilla asked if the technology has the ability to detect gunshots from vehicles on the move across different areas; and if citizens would have the ability to register their Ring camera devices through the technology. He stated he believes the Gunshot Technology piece would serve as a good supplement and starting point to address the need for more police officers.

Councilmember Hiller stated she shares her colleagues concerns. She asked if there are plans for a citywide crime summit to help understand the entire RTIC system and its potential as well as any other anti-crime alternatives.

In response, Bryan Wheelles reported the following:

- The total cost of the software program would be \$320,000. The specific cost of the Real Time Gunshot Technology was unknown until they gather more data.
- The technology would immediately alert officers in the area of an incident by narrowing down the location based on gunshot accuracy detection.
- He would be happy to discuss the most recent statistics of the software as well as many other positive aspects of real time technology.
- Residents would have the ability to register their Ring cameras for real time response.
- The public education piece will be extremely important for the success of RTIC.

Tony Trower, Street Operations Manager, provided an overview of Heavy Equipment Replacement and Fleet Replacement Transportation Operations programs.

Craig Duke, Topeka Fire Chief, reported on the proposed Fire Apparatus Replacement Schedule.

Councilmember Emerson asked what type of criteria determines fleet replacements.

Councilmember Duncan asked if Staff anticipates recommendations from the Topeka Fire Special Commission to have an effect on the CIP.

Brent Trout reported there were no recommendations from the Commission at this time to be included in the CIP. He noted changes to fire station locations and services would require significant lead-time.

Stephen Wade reported the Public Safety CIP Summary includes seven projects with a total cost of \$22.3 million including \$8.5 million in PayGo (pay as you go funds) and \$13.9 million in General Obligation Bonds.

### **Street Projects**

Brian Faust, City Engineer, provided an overview of the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) system used to determine the value of city streets. He highlighted the following projects:

- NW Tyler from Lyman to Beverly
- NW Lyman from Tyler to Vail
- SE Adams from 37<sup>th</sup> to 45<sup>th</sup> Streets
- SW Gage from Emland to 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- SW Urish from 21<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> Street

City Engineer Faust continued to report on the Microsurfacing Program Projects (streets where the PCI range was between 55 and 85 and the work will be concentrated in specific geographic sections of the City each year). The Median Repair Program (review of medians at specific locations to determine if warranted or if removal and striping is more appropriate); as well as the Polk Quincy Viaduct Project (State and City will collaborate to improve safety and enhance access on I-70 through “IKE” – Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program)

Bill Fiander, Planning and Development Director, stated the City has been working with Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) to assist and determine the right-of-way package for the Polk Quincy Viaduct project in the spring of 2021. He noted they plan to conduct a public meeting in early March 2021. He reported once the right-of-way was determined and a design completed the City and State would enter into an agreement to determine how much of

the \$20 million the City will contribute and what will go to acquisition or specific portions of the overall project.

Councilmember Hiller expressed the importance of the preparation for the Polk Quincy Viaduct project and the significant lead-time needed. She stated it was her hope; the City would receive grants to help cover the City's portion of the \$20 million. She commented on the huge financial impact the project will have on neighborhoods, streets and landscaping as well as on the Dynamic Core and Riverfront redevelopment projects. She encouraged Staff to make sure they have a cost impact analysis ready to submit to KDOT when the project starts to move forward.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala referenced the Median Replacement Program. She asked how the type of replacement was determined and if citizens provide input on medians slated for changes. She requested a copy of the Median Replacement List for 2022-2023.

Brain Faust stated Staff works with the City's Traffic Engineer in determining the type of change and location. He noted the Governing Body would receive directive from the Public Infrastructure Committee regarding recommendations.

Councilmembers Ortiz and Hiller requested the entire Governing Body receive the list so they can provide input to the Public Infrastructure Committee prior to providing recommendations to Staff and to the overall Governing Body for approval.

Stephen Wade reported the Streets CIP Summary includes 39 projects with a total cost of \$126.5 million (not including the Polk-Quincy Viaduct Project) including \$71.6 million in Fix Our Streets Sales Tax; \$33.3 million in JEDO Sales Tax; \$4.4 million in Federal Funds; and \$18.6 million in General Obligation Bonds.

### **Traffic Projects**

Brian Faust, City Engineer, provided an overview of the Traffic Signal Replacement Program.

Stephen Wade reported the Traffic Signal Replacement Program CIP Summary includes three projects with a total cost of \$5.34 million financed with General Obligation Bonds.

### **Neighborhood Projects**

Bill Fiander, Planning and Development Director, provided an overview of Neighborhood Programs including Pedestrian Plan Infill (sidewalks) and SORT area.

Stephen Wade reported the Neighborhood Project Summary included two projects with a total cost of \$13.5 million including \$1.65 million in Federal Funds, \$11.1 million in General Obligation Bonds, and \$750,000 in Wastewater Funds.

### **Quality of Life Projects**

Brendan Wiley, Topeka Zoo Director, provided an overview of the status of Camp Cowabunga project.

Stephen Wade reported the Quality of Life Project Summary includes 44 projects with a total cost of \$36.9 million including \$11.1 in PayGo (pay as you go funds); \$3.8 million in JEDO Sales Tax; \$16.5 million in donations; and \$5.57 million in Information Technology Funds.

### **Facility Projects**

Hannah Uhlrig, Interim Public Works Director, reported the FIRM Program Plan was a consistent data driven long-range facilities repair and improvement planning approach across all City facilities based on system condition assessments and a priority focused question score. She noted priority focused questions will be varied between subprograms in support of the unique needs of fire stations.

Councilmember Duncan questioned why the Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC) was not being addressed as a priority as their list of needs continue to grow.

Hannah Uhlrig stated TPAC will be included in the FIRM Funding through the installation of a new basement heating system and Staff will continue to work internally with TPAC and build their list of priorities into the City's prioritization plan.

Brent Trout reminded Governing Body members the presentation only covered a portion of the projects listed in the overall CIP. He encouraged the Governing Body to review the entire CIP in detail and become familiar with project timelines. He reported in the year 2026, four or five major street projects will collide requiring \$19 million in General Obligation Bonds to finance the projects.

Stephen Wade reminded citizens and Governing Body members to email questions to [budget@topeka.org](mailto:budget@topeka.org)

Councilmember Duncan inquired on the status of the fleet vehicle leasing study.

Hannah Uhlrig reported staff plans to distribute a comprehensive memo to the Public Infrastructure Committee along with a financial implication summary next month, providing cost benefit and risks associated with the study.

Councilmember Hiller referenced the methane gas project and asked if Staff anticipates revenue ahead of expenses including debt service money at the end of the project.

Braxton Copley stated the expectation of the first full year of revenue was approximately \$1.69 million. He stated 90% of the funds will come from sale of tax credits and 10% will come from the sale of the gas. He stated there should be a payback period of 14 years; the estimates are reasonable but do not include operating costs. He will provide an update on the operating cost to the Finance Department for review and distribution to the Governing Body.



Councilmember Ortiz referenced California Avenue and the need for sidewalks from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. She requested Staff confirm if sidewalks are included in the CIP; and if not, find a way to install sidewalks for public safety purposes. She inquired about adding a median from 11<sup>th</sup> Street to I-470 on SE California Avenue.

Bill Fiander stated he recalls sidewalks being included in the Neighborhood Plan and was in the long-range CIP, but did not make it to the 5-year CIP scenario. Staff will need a new cost estimate for an improvement of the entire street not just the sidewalk. He stated the East Topeka South neighborhood was a corridor, and in order to connect pedestrians to the services; this would be something to include in the neighborhood's future Pedestrian plan.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala asked if Staff anticipates federal infrastructure funding assistance in 2021.

Brent Trout stated Staff has not received communication to confirm that there will be federal funds offered by the new administration. Staff will continue to monitor the situation through the transition period and beyond.

Jessica Lamendola reported the Government Finance Officers Debt Committee and routinely discusses with Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) leadership individuals in Washington, D.C. about the needs of local municipalities such as water, street and sidewalk infrastructure.

Councilmember Hiller asked for an explanation of the system evaluation of IT software.

Sherry Schoonover, Deputy Director of Information Technology, stated Staff evaluates the functionality required and if the system can be integrated and/or added to existing City system platforms with the goal to eliminate old software systems that are difficult to support and do support data driven programs.

Councilmember Emerson referenced the IT Budget and asked for clarification on the cost of the Emergency Generator Enclosure Project. He requested a list of the software and hardware utilized by the City. He referenced the GeoCortex project as it relates to 2022 capital repairs of parking facilities; and asked when the AS400 software merge would take place.

Mark Biswell, Director of Information Technology, stated the cost for the emergency generator enclosure project was \$60,000 annually.

Hannah Uhlrig stated the GeoCortex project allows the City to collect and combine asset data into one location, including work orders and inspections. She reported the program would be an add-on to the Cityworks software, and the initial \$400,000 allocation would mainly cover cost of hardware with only a portion for software cost in out years.

Braxton Copley stated he would provide an update to the Governing Body regarding the AS400 project.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala referenced \$200,000 outlined in the CIP for ongoing bridge maintenance and asked if this would include sweeping of bridges. She inquired on upgrades to the aging power system in east Topeka. She asked how often bridge inspections take place and if the Branner Bridge was on the replacement schedule due to its age.

Brian Faust confirmed \$200,000 has been set aside for bridge repairs; bridge inspections take place every two years; and he has not received any notification regarding replacement of the Branner Bridge.

Jessica Lamendola requested the Governing Body provide their feedback on what they would like to discuss over the next several weeks. She commented on the possibility of increased interest rates as it relates to bonding large projects and stated the Governing Body may

need to consider moving the funding of large projects forward in the CIP to take advantage of current market rates.

Councilmember Ortiz thanked Staff for providing the information in a timely manner and additional guidance on the CIP book.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

(SEAL)

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Brenda Younger  
City Clerk