

Governing Body Minutes – August 17, 2021

CYRUS K. HOLLIDAY BUILDING, 620 SE Madison Street, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, August 10, 2021. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in regular session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Hiller, Valdivia-Alcala, and Dobler- 3; and the following Councilmembers participating remotely: Councilmembers Ortiz, Emerson, Naeger, Duncan and Lesser -5. Deputy Mayor Padilla presided -1. Absent: Mayor De La Isla -1.

Public comment for the meeting was available via Zoom or in-person. Individuals were required to contact the City Clerk's Office at 785-368-3940 or via email at cclerk@topeka.org by no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 17, 2021, after which the City Clerk's Office provided the Zoom link information and protocols prior to the meeting start time. Written public comment was also considered to the extent it was personally submitted at the meeting or to the City Clerk's Office located at 215 SE 7th Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas, 66603 or via email at cclerk@topeka.org on or before August 17, 2021, for attachment to the meeting minutes.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Pastor Samuel Mitchell, Open Arms Ministries Church of God In Christ, provided the invocation.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by meeting participants.

CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 20309 introduced by City Manager Brent Trout, allowing and approving City expenditures for the period June 26, 2021 through July 30, 2021, and enumerating said expenditures therein, was presented.

RESOLUTION NO. 9250 introduced by Councilmember Karen Hiller, approving a special event known as VBP Vettes 2021 Corvette Show and Shine, was presented. (*Council District No. 1*)

MINUTES of the regular meeting of August 10, 2021, was presented.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 9251 determining the advisability of the making of certain internal improvements in the City of Topeka, Kansas; making certain findings with respect thereto; and authorizing and providing for the making of the improvements in accordance with such findings. (Sanitary Sewer Improvements/Horseshoe Bend Subdivision No. 5); and amending, restating and repealing Resolution No. 9158, was presented.

Brent Trout, City Manager, reported the developer is requesting to amend the project budget by increasing the cost by approximately \$60,000 for a total project budget of \$285,000.

Councilmember Duncan inquired on property owner notification as it relates to increased special assessments associated with parcel lots.

Mary Feighny, Interim City Attorney, stated the developer owns all of the parcel lots at this time and is requesting a project budget increase be approved. She reported once the improvements are complete the cost will be assessed to the thirty-one lots, and as the lots are sold, property owners are notified of the special assessment cost associated with their particular lot.

Councilmember Duncan expressed the importance of making certain property owners are notified when there is an increase to taxes being levied. He encouraged Staff to review the notification process to ensure property owners are aware of a change in fees.

Deputy Mayor Padilla stated he concurs with Councilmember Duncan and supports a thorough notification process for property owners.

Councilmember Dobler moved to approve the resolution. The motion seconded by Councilmember Naeger carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

RESOLUTION NO. 9252 introduced by City Manager Brent Trout authorizing and directing the issuance, sale and delivery of \$4,140,000 in the aggregate principal amount of General Obligation Temporary Renewal and Improvement Notes, Series 2021-A, providing for the levy and collection of an annual tax, if necessary, for the purpose of paying the principal of and interest on said notes as they become due; making certain covenants and agreements to provide for the payment and security thereof; and authorizing certain other documents and actions connected therewith, was presented.

Khalan Dwyer, Senior Vice President, Columbia Capital Management, LLC, stated the issuance of the notes provides temporary funding for certain projects. He stated four bids were received and the winning bid produced an interest cost of 0.20%.

Councilmember Hiller asked what projects would be financed with temporary notes.

Stephen Wade, Interim Administrative and Financial Services Director reported bids for the purchase of Temporary Notes, Series 2021-A of the City were received and Piper Sandler & Co., New York, New York, was the top bid offering an interest cost of 0.20%. He reported the funds will cover four Special Assessment projects, a Neighborhood Infrastructure Program and Facilities Improvement Repair Maintenance Program (FIRM) projects.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 20310 introduced by City Manager Brent Trout authorizing and providing for the issuance of \$20,990,000 aggregate principal amount of General Obligation [refunding and improvement] Bonds, Series 2021-C, of the City of Topeka, Kansas; providing for the levy and collection of an annual tax for the purpose of paying the principal of and interest on said bonds as they become due; authorizing certain other documents and actions in connection therewith; and making certain covenants with respect thereto, was presented.

Stephen Wade, Interim Director of Administrative and Financial Services, reported bids for the purchase of General Obligation Refunding and Improvement Bonds, Series 2021-C of the City were received The Baker Group LP, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, was the top bid offering an interest rate under 1.799%. He reported the City has an additional \$919,000 in refinance savings and the funds will cover Fire Department Fleet Replacement; the SW 10th Avenue Improvement Project from Fairlawn to Wanamaker; and the SW Gage Boulevard Improvement Project from SW 37th Street to SW 45th Street. He noted \$9,420,000 of the \$21 million bonded will be used to fund new projects.

Councilmember Padilla moved to adopt the ordinance. The motion seconded by Councilmember Naeger 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.

RESOLUTION NO. 9253 introduced by City Manager Brent Trout prescribing the form and details of and authorizing and directing the sale and delivery of \$20,990,000 aggregate principal amount of General Obligation [refunding and improvement] Bonds, Series 2021-C of the City of Topeka, Kansas, previously authorized by Ordinance No. 20310 of the issuer; making

certain covenants and agreements to provide for the payment and security thereof; and authorizing certain other documents and actions connected therewith, was presented.

Councilmember Hiller expressed her appreciation for Staff working to save the City millions of dollars and identify projects being financed for tracking purposes.

Councilmember Dobler moved to approve the resolution. The motion seconded by Councilmember Ortiz carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

ESTABLISHING a public hearing date of September 7, 2021, for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed City of Topeka 2022 Operating Budget; setting the maximum expenditure limits; and authorize the publication of the public hearing notice, was presented.

Brent Trout, City Manager, stated Staff has been working on the 2022 City of Topeka Operating Budget over the past several months and approval would schedule the date of the public hearing on September 7, 2021.

Councilmember Hiller moved to establish the City of Topeka 2022 Operating Budget public hearing date of September 7, 2021; setting the maximum expenditure limits; and authorize the publication of the public hearing notice. The motion seconded by Councilmember Ortiz carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

ORDINANCE NO. 20311 introduced by Councilmember Spencer Duncan, concerning professional service contracts over \$50,000, amending Topeka Municipal Code Section 3.30.010 and repealing original sections, was presented. *(The Policy and Finance Committee recommended approval by a vote of 3-0-0 on July 2, 2021)*

Teresa Miller spoke in support of the proposal and believes it supports transparency.

Joseph Ledbetter spoke in support of the proposed ordinance and thanked the Committee for considering and recommending the policy offering improved transparency and a checks and balances system that falls within the parameters of approval. However, he expressed concern with the fact it does not cover the approval of all contracts over \$50,000 and listed cities that do require approval of all contracts.

Councilmember Duncan, Committee Chair, reported it was a good policy and the majority of municipalities follow a similar process. He stated the process only covers consulting service contracts, which range from 5 to 13 contracts annually. He stated it is not the intent to interfere with the overall approval process but to allow input from the Governing Body to ask the necessary questions before the work is completed as the majority of these contracts lead to public policy.

Deputy Mayor Padilla asked how approval of the ordinance would improve transparency processes.

Councilmember Duncan stated the contracts will be included as part of the agenda package, which allows opportunity for the Governing Body and the public to provide input before the contracts are signed by the City Manager and services completed.

Councilmember Duncan moved to adopt the ordinance. The motion seconded by Deputy Mayor Padilla carried unanimously on roll call vote. (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.

APPROVAL of Governing Body Rules and Procedure amendments, was presented. *(The Policy and Finance Committee recommended approval by a vote of 3-0-0 on July 2, 2021)*

Councilmember Duncan moved to refer the amendments back to Policy and Finance

Committee to consider additional changes to be discussed in the committee setting specifically as it relates to the inclusion of the public input process for online meeting forums. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dobler.

Teresa Miller spoke in support of the amendments for the purpose of increased transparency.

The motion to refer the amendments back to the Policy and Finance Committee carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

APPROVAL of FY2022 Annual Consolidated Action Plan and Budget, was presented. (*Deferred from the meeting of August 10, 2021*)

Teresa Miller spoke in opposition of approving the Consolidated Action Plan when there are still incomplete neighborhood plans. She stated she believes neighborhood residents are confused on processes and management of neighborhoods. She expressed concern with the Governing Body being more involved in the operations of the City and asked the Governing Body to listen to citizens.

Lazone Grays thanked the Governing Body for deferring action and considering all public input. He reported the input he provided is nothing new, however, inequities remain and continue to rise with citizens of color and continue to get worse.

Brent Trout, City Manager, reported they provided many opportunities for citizens to provide input and the Consolidated Action Plan is based on the comments received. He stated the Stage of Resource Targeting (SORT) and Dreams Fund Program is in the works and will be presented to the Governing Body for discussion and recommendations at a future Governing Body meeting. He stated all decisions regarding allocation of funds would be approved by the Governing Body.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala stated she will not support approval based on the dialog at the August 10, 2021, Governing Body Meeting. She stated she has many questions especially as it relates to the Oakland community.

Councilmember Hiller stated she appreciates the exchange by all. She clarified the Dreams Fund Program would not replace the SORT program and part of the Dreams Fund Program supports improved engagement by Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) and the neighborhoods. She stated in the past the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding has concentrated on housing, however, she supports ideas from Lazonne Grays and other members of the public.

Councilmember Hiller moved to adopt the FY2022 Annual Consolidated Action Plan and Budget. The motion seconded by Councilmember Lesser carried unanimously on roll call vote. Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala voted “no.” (8-1-0)

Councilmember Duncan recognized the hard work Staff has put into the Plan and stated he will vote in support of the Plan and Budget because of the HUD deadline at the end of August. However, if the Governing Body does not receive all necessary information, such as public input in a timely manner, it makes it difficult for them to make informed decisions.

DISCUSSION of funding recommendations by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Council in the amount of \$590,000 for the 2022 Special Alcohol Fund was presented.

Don Chowder, Topeka/Shawnee County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Council Review Committee Chair, stated the City receives liquor tax collected by the State of Kansas and State statute requires that one-third of the proceeds be deposited in the City's special alcohol and drug program fund. He stated those funds can be used only for "the purchase, establishment, maintenance or expansion of services or programs whose principal purpose is alcoholism and

drug abuse prevention and education, alcohol and drug detoxification, intervention in alcohol and drug abuse or treatment of persons who are alcoholics or drug abusers or are in danger of becoming alcoholics or drug abusers." He stated the total grant amount being requested is approximately \$616,942 and the total grant funding available is \$590,000. The following 2022 grant amounts were recommended by the review team:

- Prevention and Resiliency Services PARS (Prevention Programs) \$172,342
- Prevention and Resiliency Services PARS (Evaluation and Intervention) \$57,171
- Valeo (Social Detox Program) \$295,629
- Third Judicial District (Drug Court Program) \$51,644
- Kansas Children Service League (Successful Connections Drug Endangered Child Program) \$13,214

Councilmember Ortiz thanked the Committee for the report and recognized the importance of all agencies. She inquired as to why the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) was not allocated the full amount of \$14,000 as requested.

Mr. Chowder stated based on scores he believes KCSL was penalized due to the lack of diversity.

Deputy Mayor Padilla referenced the importance of diversity and asked if the agencies have the tools to make improvements in this area.

Max Wilson, Topeka-Shawnee County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Council member, stated they encourage diversity, and penalties for this factor seem to be working as they are seeing slow and steady improvements. He noted this is a difficult area to address with agencies.

Mr. Chowder stated they now have a Washburn University faculty member serving on the Council with the hopes future students will offer a diverse membership in the future.

Councilmember Dobler thanked the Committee for their work as he understands recommendations are difficult.

Councilmember Duncan reported the \$590,000 in funding allocations is only one-third (1/3) of the City's projected amount they expect to receive in 2022 from the Liquor Enforcement Tax collection, the minimum required by State law. He stated he will support the recommendations if all agencies receive the same amount of funding allocated in 2021.

Councilmember Naeger stated she concurs with Councilmember Duncan and supports keeping the 2021 funding levels. She expressed her appreciation to the Committee for having to make the tough decisions.

Brent Trout stated Staff will review the budget and find a way to fund the difference between the 2021 and 2022 funding amounts.

Councilmember Hiller encouraged the Governing Body to respect the scoring of the standards established and allocate funding accordingly.

AN UPDATE from the Public Health and Safety Committee on the City of Topeka Property and Premises Report, was presented.

Councilmember Hiller referenced the Topeka Property and Premises Enforcement and Improvement 2021 Preliminary Recommendations document dated July 8, 2021, included in the Governing Body meeting agenda packet. She provided an overview of the work of the Committee to date as well as the recommendations.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala expressed her excitement in serving on the Committee and stated she believes a change in culture and a new approach to property maintenance could transpire from the much needed collaboration of the Committee, Staff and neighborhoods. She stated the Committee plans to bring about positive community engagement through public input sessions and asked her colleagues to support Committee efforts.

Councilmember Dobler expressed his appreciation to Councilmembers Hiller and Valdivia-Alcala for their hard work. He stated he has learned a great deal about the process of code enforcement and the code issues faced across the city.

Councilmember Naeger thanked the Committee for their work. She commented on the great response by Staff and is excited the issue is being reviewed and researched. She recommended a meeting be held at Washburn University which would be a good partnership to consider for these efforts.

Councilmember Hiller encouraged everyone to view the meeting video the week of September 13, 2021, and the Committee plans to focus on community input the third and fourth weeks in September. She stated the Cyrus K. Holliday Building First Floor Conference room has been reserved from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on September 22 and September 23, 2021 for additional meetings. She reported she would like to have the schedule completed by August 20, 2021, in order to distribute a master schedule as soon as possible.

Deputy Mayor Padilla requested the Hi-Crest neighborhood be added to the list of public input locations. He expressed his appreciation for taking a new look at code enforcement and using a block by block approach in addressing issues.

Councilmember Ortiz concurred with Deputy Mayor Padilla and requested to include Highland Park in the meeting locations. She asked Staff to expand on the process of courtesy inspections as it relates to voluntary inspections requested by property owners. She expressed her appreciation to the Committee for their work and stated that she believes educating the public will be key to making positive changes in the City's overall property maintenance process.

Brent Trout stated a courtesy inspection would have to be initiated by the property owner, however, at this time the City is working in a reactive status instead of proactive status due to lack of manpower.

AN UPDATE from the Public Health and Safety Committee on the Community-wide Broadband initiative, was presented.

Councilmember Hiller provided a brief overview of the initiative and highlighted the following information:

- Cox Communications has been actively involved with the conversations and AT&T periodically has submitted written comments.
- The biggest issue is affordability of internet service.
- The initial focus was accessibility of service to young children and students in school.
- USD 501 School District acquired grant money and in coordination with Cox Communications was able to offer inexpensive monthly services to 3,000 families.
- The Committee focused on hardware and functionality of computers and user education of internet services.
- The City received a \$250,000 three-year grant to fund two halftime positions; Digital Navigator (help with getting connected with broadband) and a Technical Navigator (who assists with the physical hardware of the computer).
- They are working on getting recycled and used equipment made available to citizens in the community with a goal of transitioning as many of the 3,000 families in USD 501 School District into the Federal Communications Commission Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund.
- The importance of providing internet service for senior citizens.
- The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and the pending infrastructure plan from the federal government are expected to have a substantial amount of money that will go towards digital literacy.

DISCUSSION regarding the 2022 City of Topeka Operating Budget, was presented.

Brent Trout, City Manager, announced Staff would provide a detailed presentation on the City's Inmate Program.

Monique Glaude, Community Engagement Division Director, provided an overview of the program history and changes; the proposed 2022 Inmate Crew Program and budget including a Property Maintenance Inmate Crew, a Community Engagement Highway Action Team B, and

two Community Engagement and Public Works Street Division Inmate Crews. She also highlighted several areas where clean up by inmate crews has been conducted; cost analysis of current inmate crews compared to alternate service providers; Shawnee County Department of Corrections and Topeka Correctional Facility resident pay allocations.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala confirmed inmates receive a salary as low as \$5 per day and inquired on the human rights component of the program.

Councilmember Ortiz thanked Public Works Director James Jackson for his efforts in making sure extensive amounts of trash are removed from the city.

Councilmember Naeger extended her appreciation to Staff for removing trash and contributing to improved water quality. She inquired about the intangible benefits for the inmates not being highlighted; and inquired on success rates of the inmates and if those are measured.

Councilmember Hiller referenced the \$10 per hour salary the City pays inmate crews for their services and suggested instead to consider privatizing blight removal services in the future.

Councilmember Duncan commented on his experience in working with the Kansas Department of Corrections and as a private detective. He reported the salary rate for prisoners is set by the State of Kansas not the City of Topeka; inmates that are a member of a work crew is considered a reward; and the dollars earned are not allocated back into the prison system but are used to pay for restitution, child support, and other financial obligations of the inmate.

James Jackson, Public Works Director, stated the program costs the City half the amount that it would cost the City if it were outsourced. He stated this program provides work and life skills to the inmates and may provide them an opportunity to collect savings. He stated the City will spend approximately \$90,000 for the disposal of trash in 2021.

Joseph Ledbetter referenced his email regarding ideas and suggestions on how to decrease City operational costs through the elimination of middle management. He continued to express his concerns with the City's Code Enforcement Division and noted he looks forward to the Committee's property and premises housing ideas as it relates to code compliance issues. He stressed the importance of lowering revenue bonding amounts because it adds to the overall expenditures of the City.

PUBLIC COMMENT was submitted via electronic mail by Clark W. Trammell, Joseph Ledbetter and Carol Marple. (*Attachment A*) and provided by the following individuals:

Teresa Miller referenced the former "Christmas in April" neighborhood program and stated she would like to see implementation of a similar program by the City of Topeka. She expressed the importance of having programs to assist the elderly and disabled citizens. She asked for clarification on the approval process of policies and programs as it relates to the authority of the Governing Body and the City Manager.

David Johnson distributed a handout. He highlighted his ideas of how to address affordable housing for the homeless and low-income residents as well as increasing poverty levels.

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

Brent Trout stated there is no Governing Body meeting until September 7, 2021. He referenced the COVID-19 Basic Needs Assistance Program in which the funds will be focused on assisting residents with mortgage payments and utilities. He stated those that would like additional information should contact Corrie Wright in the Housing Services Division at 785-368-4467. He encouraged citizens that are able to donate to the City of Topeka Water Share

Program to please do so. He announced Amanda Stanley would serve as the new City Attorney and will begin employment on August 23, 2021. He also announced the roll-out of a Citizen Satisfactory Survey.

Councilmember Ortiz reminded USD 501 students that they can ride free on the Topeka Metro by obtaining a Topeka Metro bus pass at their school's main office. She also announced on August 21, 2021, at 8:00 p.m. there will be a showing of the movie "Coco" at the Hummer Sports Park soccer field to raise donations for the Housing Trust Fund to be used only as matching funds. She thanked David Johnson for canvassing a large area in District 3 and expressed her appreciation for providing his input.

Councilmember Emerson stated he looks forward to a more normal 2021-2022 school year and hopes the COVID-19 Virus Delta variant can be controlled soon.

Councilmember Naeger encouraged citizens to get their COVID-19 vaccine and those interested could contact the Shawnee County Health Department at 785-251-5600 or at <https://www.snco.us/hd/>. She announced that August was National Water Quality Month and encouraged citizens to get educated on how they can contribute to the efforts by contacting the City at 785-368-3111 or the City's website at: <https://www.topeka.org/utilities>.

Councilmember Dobler and Councilmember Duncan thanked Staff for their work in completing the SW Urish Road improvements.

Councilmember Lesser encouraged citizens to remain diligent and take care of themselves as COVID-19 virus case numbers continue to increase.

Councilmember Hiller commended Staff for completing the SW Urish Road improvements three days early. She announced Get Down in T-Town special event being held August 20, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. located at SE 15th and Monroe Streets.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala announced on August 19, 2021, a City Utility meeting will be held in the Oakland neighborhood at 1020 NE Forest Avenue at 5:30 p.m., and in that same location, another meeting for the Strategic Leadership Academy will be held at 6:30 p.m. She stated on August 27, 2021, her and community activists will hold an Affordable Housing and Racial Equity Summit located at 1020 NE Forest Avenue from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. She referenced an article in a national news publication *The Intercept*, which was dated July 22, 2021 that discussed the October 31, 2020 shooting by Robert Sinner, which occurred in District 2.

Deputy Mayor Padilla encouraged citizens to continue to vaccinate and work to keep themselves and the community safe as COVID-19 virus cases begin to increase rapidly. He also encouraged residents to drive safe and be aware of school children and be diligent and help Topeka Police Department with enforcement.

Councilmember Ortiz moved to recess into executive session for a period of 45 minutes to discuss employer/employee negotiations relating to the Topeka Fire and Police Departments as authorized by K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(3). To aid in the discussion, the following individuals were present: Members of the Governing Body, City Manager, Brent Trout; Interim Administrative and Financial Services Director, Stephen Wade; Deputy City Attorney, Mary Feighny; Chief of Staff, Bill Cochran; Human Relations Director, Jacque Russell; Senior Assistant City Attorney, Mary Kuckelman; Fire Chief, Craig Duke and Interim Police Chief, Bryan Wheelles. It was announced that no action would be taken when the meeting resumed. The motion seconded by Councilmember Naeger carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

Councilmember Ortiz moved to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m. pursuant to Governing Body Rule 5.9. The motion seconded by Councilmember Naeger carried on roll call vote. Councilmember Emerson voted “no.” (8-1-0)

Following a 45-minute time period, the meeting reconvened into open session and Deputy Mayor Padilla announced no action was taken during the executive session.

Deputy Mayor Padilla moved to recess into executive session for 30 minutes to discuss employer/employee negotiations relating to the Fire Department, as authorized by K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(3). To aid in the discussion, the following individuals were present: Members of the Governing Body; City Manager, Brent Trout; Interim Administrative and Financial Services Director, Stephen Wade; Deputy City Attorney, Mary Feighny; Senior Assistant City Attorney, Mary Kuckelman; Human Resources Director, Jacque Russell and Fire Chief Craig Duke. The motion seconded by Councilmember Dobler carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

Following a 30-minute time period, the meeting reconvened into open session and Deputy Mayor Padilla announced no action was taken during the executive session.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

(SEAL)

Brenda Younger
City Clerk

Attachment A

Brenda Younger

From: cwillet@aol.com
Sent: Monday, August 16, 2021 7:35 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk; Karen A. Hiller; Sylvia Ortiz; Tony Emerson; Michelle De La Isla; Michael Padilla; Michael Lesser
Subject: Action Item F

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"ORDINANCE-PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTS OVER \$50,000-GOVERNING BODY APPROVAL"

As a business professional and political activist I support this item for approval, it has long been needed. In addition, my hope is this is just the first step in your process to review and adjust this aspect of authority and council oversight to where you include **ALL** contracts over \$50,000. I believe all contracts should be acknowledged through the council if only to list those under \$50,000 in the "Consent Agenda" or some agenda format section which will give the council the opportunity to give input to a contract if appropriate and to provide maximum transparency to the tax paying public...**just good process/business.**

Respectfully submitted,

Clark W. Trammell

Brenda Younger

From: Joseph Ledbetter <joe@josephledbetter.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 1:34 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council; Spencer Duncan; Neil Dobler; Michael Padilla; Michael Lesser; Sylvia Ortiz; Tony Emerson
Subject: Ordinance- Professional Services Contracts over \$50,000-Gov Body Approval

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I support this Action Item F. It is a good start to the oversight of our finances and fiduciary duties. Personally, I would like to see it on all contracts this size eventually. I am very concerned about the lack of input of the Council and the citizens under the status quo.

Thank you.

Joseph Ledbetter, JD, MPA

Brenda Younger

From: Yahoo Mail <hedgetree@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 2:40 PM
To: Spencer Duncan; Karen A. Hiller; Tony Emerson; Michael Lesser; Michael Padilla; Michelle De La Isla; Sylvia Ortiz; Hannah Naeger; Christina Valdivia-Alcala; Neil Dobler; Brenda Younger
Subject: Action Item F on tonight's agenda

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I attended the meeting that was held with Spencer Duncan, Tony Emerson and Hannah Naeger and listened to the discussion that was held about that the governing body approve any professional service contracts for over \$50,000. I very much believe the council should vote to approve this item. The job of the council as I see it, is to over see the running of the city government and this is apart of it. I also have never understood why we do not make better use of the talented people that are in the employ of the city? Why do we constantly seek to employ people or businesses outside of our community? There is no person better suited to know the needs of our community than someone who lives or has a business located here. Since I'm sending this email I will also say that I'm appalled at the continuing borrowing by the city and to not be able to see any noticeable results of where this money is being spent. Any business owner know you can't borrow your way to success. We are losing population because taxpayers simply can not afford to live here. It doesn't matter how many jobs we have available in this community if they are all being taken by people out of the community because of the high cost of living here. We have to get a handle on this wasteful spending and voting for Item F would be a small step.. Thank you for your time. Carol Marple

Brenda Younger

From: Joseph Ledbetter <joe@josephledbetter.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 3:38 PM
To: City Clerk; City Council; Neil Dobler; Tony Emerson; Michael Lesser; Sylvia Ortiz; Michelle De La Isla; Michael Padilla
Subject: City Council Budget discussion for the record tonight.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Governing Body/ Board :

We should be privatizing ANY mowing. Same with most of the forestry division-too slow to get alot done. I have seen them in my neighborhood waiting for hours for a supervisor to show up so 2 guys and a supervisor could grind up 2 stumps-probably a 1 man operation in the private sector that would take 30-40 minutes.

*I also believe we should start privatizing street repairs. Start with not hiring positions that quit or leave, and use that money to contract out repairs as a pilot. There is \$6.5 million in that item alone I am told. .

Lose middle management positions in Utilities, Public Works, and Planning and Development (very needed in that last department especially!). The goal is cutting 6-8 positions. The Manager should be able to pick those cuts. (I learned this at the KU-MPA program) so let him do it. I have already proposed two of them earlier.

Lose 3-4 public relations positions. I understand we have 6. Way Too many.

I also believe we should put Utilities back under Public Works. Utilities are not satisfactory on controlling costs, overtime, or meeting the Council goals of water pipe miles of replacement in my opinion. They need to immediately be under Public Works.

Also, I have been told we could privatize much of Planning and Development- That should be seriously looked at. Personnel costs are mushrooming.

Also, I would not allow a new position for IT but would take bids from the public in Topeka for their web management. We have many smart people in Topeka that are entrepreneurs and small business people. And IT seems to have A lot of FTE's. Possible cuts needed here.

** Also, I want the Council to decide where the COVID relief money of almost \$50 million is to be spent-NOT the Manager. Frankly I don't trust that procedure and neither do other folks I have talked to. The public can at least talk to our council and get consensus for good ideas/projects. I think we need housing initiatives for new housing, and I have some other ideas that will help this city.

***Also We must Stop NEW borrowing of more Revenue Bonds. Those are only to be used by Growing Cities. This city is not growing in population-down 5,000 in 2012-2019 years. I have not seen one new,original idea from Management, or the Planning and Development Dept./ Director on how to grow this city in the past 3 1/2 years.

Planning needs to stop trying to run the Street department and start working hard to grow our population and small businesses.

****Codes Enforcement needs fixed once and for all. No real progress in my opinion in 3 1/2 years. Hurting this city badly.Tax base and image.

Thank you.

Sincerely,for the Record!

Joseph Ledbetter JD,MPA,Citizen