

## **Governing Body Minutes – October 4, 2022**

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, October 4, 2022. 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, Emerson, Kell and Dobler -5; and Councilmembers Naeger and Lesser participated remotely -2. Mayor Padilla presided -1. Absent: Councilmembers Ortiz and Duncan -2.

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](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) by no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 4, 2022, 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](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) on or before October 4, 2022, for attachment to the meeting minutes.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order, Joseph Ledbetter provided the invocation.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by meeting participants.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Bernard Becker to the Civil Service Commission to fill an unexpired term ending October 4, 2026, was presented. (*Council District No. 7*)

ADVISORY COUNCIL APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Aricles “Wulf” James to the City of Topeka Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Council for a term ending October 4, 2024, was presented. (*Council District No. 6*)

Councilmember Duncan entered the room.

Councilmember Dobler moved to approve the appointments. The motion seconded by

Councilmember Emerson carried unanimously on roll call vote. The Mayor does not vote. (8-0-0)

A PRESENTATION on the Polk-Quincy Viaduct Activation Task Force and Survey Results was presented by Rhiannon Friedman, Downtown Topeka, Inc., President. She reported Kalea Pauole, City Senior Grants Program Administrator, provided her assistance in applying for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). A discretionary grant program, funded with \$1 billion over the next 5 years, to restore community connectivity before transportation infrastructure like the Polk-Quincy Viaduct was in place. She highlighted the four main components of the grant and noted, they would be seeking the planning portion of the grant funds as well as capital construction grant opportunities in the future. The grant components are as follows:

- (1) Equity, Environmental Justice and Community Engagement
- (2) Mobility and Community Connectivity
- (3) Community-Based Stewardship, Management and Partnerships
- (4) Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity – Resilient Communities.

Stephen Wade, City Manager, reported the grant amount the City has applied for could be up to \$800,000 and would require a 20% funding match by the City. He noted if the grant was secured, potential funding resources would be presented to the Governing Body for discussion.

Councilmember Kell questioned if there were plans for the area to accommodate large and small events.

Ms. Friedman stated they are open to ideas on how to use the space. She reported they have been working with Brian Armstrong, Kansas Department of Transportation, to help them better understand the actual amount of space that would be available for use.

Councilmember Duncan asked if the Governing Body needs to take official action to ensure future infrastructure development for the area under the Viaduct.

Brian Armstrong, Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), reported it would be a

good time to have these discussions because the design for sanitary and water line relocation and preliminary routing concepts are approximately 50% complete and slated to begin construction in April or May of 2023.

City Manager Wade stated the 50% plan review was completed on October 3, 2022.

Councilmember Dobler expressed his appreciation for the collaboration and partnership between the City and KDOT as it provides an opportunity to bring the city back together by connecting the space under the Viaduct. He recognized the many great ideas that have been discussed; however, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has final decision on utilization of the space.

Councilmember Hiller stated she served on the concept design team more than 10 years ago and referenced the planning team then and now, and noted they have always wanted the bridge to be beautiful and not just a fundamental bridge concept.

Mayor Padilla recognized the Task Force members present at the meeting. He spoke to the intentional efforts to reconnect all cultures of the community and the importance of having representation of the African American and Hispanic communities.

A PRESENTATION on the Topeka & Shawnee County (TSC) Get Digital program was provided by Scott Gowan, Topeka Public Schools Chief Information Officer. He recognized the members of the Task Force team and community partners present at the meeting.

Councilmember Hiller commended Councilmember Dobler for taking the lead on the program and expressed her excitement of the partnerships that have been developed. She stated she looks forward to what the future brings.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala expressed the importance of the efforts of the grass roots people that have been involved in the program, specifically Lazone Grays, who has offered a multitude of ideas and possibilities for underserved communities as well as the consistent vision

he brings forth as a volunteer.

Councilmember Dobler expressed his appreciation for the kind words and echoes the comments about Mr. Grays. He stated he has learned a great deal from Mr. Grays as well as Mr. Gowan and acknowledged the group as a whole and the outstanding efforts brought forth.

Mayor Padilla expressed his appreciation to Councilmember Dobler and all those involved in the program efforts.

CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 9359 introduced by City Manager Stephen Wade naming banks and savings institutions that are designated as depositories for all City of Topeka accounts and authorizing signatories and rescinding City of Topeka Resolution No. 9300, was presented.

RESOLUTION NO. 9360 introduced by City Manager Stephen Wade concerning the City of Topeka's participation in the State of Kansas Municipal Investment Pool and rescinding City of Topeka Resolution No. 9301, was presented.

MINUTES of the regular meeting of September 6, 2022; September 13, 2022; and September 20, 2022, were presented.

Councilmember Emerson left the meeting.

Councilmember Kell moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember Hiller carried unanimously on roll call vote. (8-0-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following individual:

Lazone Grays distributed a proposed draft of a Digital Equity & Inclusion Administrative Policy (Attachment A) for the City of Topeka and announced October 3-7, 2022 was Digital Inclusion Week. He thanked the Governing Body for their positive comments; however, his drive comes from being an advocate for neighborhoods that are in need of digital literacy; the fair

allocation of digital equity act funds; and building on what takes place today in the digital literacy world.

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

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, provided an overview of the October 11, 2022, Governing Body meeting agenda.

Stephen Wade, City Manager, announced the City of Topeka Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance Initiative Celebration on October 15, 2022 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Everygy Plaza. He also announced the 2022 Public Safety Truck or Treat event on October 31, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Everygy Plaza. He thanked Topeka Police officers and other local law enforcement agencies that responded to the incident where multiple shots were fired in downtown Topeka on September 29, 2022.

Councilmember Hiller thanked Schendel Lawn & Landscape for sponsoring the City of Topeka Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance Initiative Celebration on October 15, 2022, as well as the community partners contributing to event activities. She expressed her pride in the efforts of residents helping to change the culture by taking care of each other and creating a safer city. She commented on the events celebrating the many different cultures of the city. She announced the 2022 Arty Awards would be held on October 7, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Redbud Park in the NOTO Arts District.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala reported the following:

1. As a result of attending the October 3 2022, Historic North Topeka West Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) meeting, she would like to report that a small business owner located at 900 NW Clay continues to have problems with the overall security of their building including trespassing, dumpster fires, vandalism and destruction of bathroom facilities, all on-going issues throughout the Oakland area. She also reported at the same NIA meeting, several neighbors reported on-going extreme code issues that have existed for over 2 years in another area of the 900 Block of NW Clay. She stated

the neighborhood residents do not believe they are being heard or that the City is doing anything about the issues and she will be reaching out to the Chief of Police and Property Maintenance Division to seek a remedy to the problem.

2. In November 2021, she began dialog with Staff about the punitive measures of silent second mortgages the City has engaged in with low to moderate income property owners for some time. It was quickly recommended by Staff to end the program and forgive the second mortgages. She believes the practice of silent mortgages should be considered reprehensible. She referenced the lack of City of Topeka forms not offered in Spanish for these particular programs and stated she believes it is unacceptable.

Councilmember Ortiz joined the meeting remotely and announced October is Fire Prevention Month.

Councilmember Kell thanked the Topeka Police Department and all law enforcement agencies that assisted with the September 29, 2022, downtown Topeka shooting incident. He announced Chad Logan, Trevor Burdett and Josh Barr were the new owners of the Topeka Tropics Arena Football Team, and the first game of the season would be held on March 25, 2023.

Councilmember Naeger expressed her appreciation of the many celebrations of the different cultures of Topeka. She encouraged pet owners to take care of their pets and those who are able to donate to the Helping Hands Humane Society to do so online at [www.HHHStopeka.org](http://www.HHHStopeka.org) or call 785-233-7325.

Councilmember Lesser commended the Topeka Police Department and local law enforcement agencies for protecting the community and noted there have been several incidents lately that could have ended very badly for the community if not for law enforcement intervention. He thanked Police Chief Bryan Wheelles for his great leadership.

Mayor Padilla commended the Topeka Police Department and other law enforcement agencies for the professional, coordinated response that prevented a lot of people in the downtown area on September 29, 2022 from being harmed. He expressed the importance of supporting and understanding how hard these types of situations can be for the law enforcement community. He

thanked Police Chief Bryan Wheelles and the Shawnee County Sherriff's Department for their continued collaboration.

Councilmember Dobler moved to recess into executive session for a time period not to exceed 30 minutes for consultation with the city attorney to discuss attorney-client privileged matters regarding a contract as justified by K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(2). The open meeting would resume in the City Council Chambers. The following staff was requested to assist the Governing Body in its deliberations: City Manager Stephen Wade; City Attorney Amanda Stanley; Interim Finance Director Rachelle Mathews and any other individual the governing body deemed necessary. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ortiz.

Mayor Padilla asked all those in favor of recessing into executive session to indicate so verbally by saying "yea" and those opposing to indicate so verbally by saying "no." After the voice vote occurred, Mayor Padilla announced the motion carried unanimously on voice vote. (9-0-0)

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

Councilmember Dobler moved to recess into executive session for a time period not to exceed 15 minutes to discuss matters related an individual employee or employees, pursuant to KSA 75-4319(b)(1). The open meeting would resume in the City Council Chambers. The following staff was requested to assist the Governing Body in its deliberations: City Manager Stephen Wade and any other staff he deemed necessary. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Kell.

Mayor Padilla asked all those in favor of recessing into executive session to indicate so verbally by saying "yea" and those opposing to indicate so verbally by saying "no." After the voice

vote occurred, Mayor Padilla announced the motion carried on voice vote. Councilmember Ortiz voted “no.” (8-1-0)

Following a 15-minute time period, the meeting reconvened into open session and Mayor Padilla announced no action was taken during the executive session.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

(SEAL)

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Brenda Younger City Clerk



# City of Topeka

## *Digital Equity & Inclusion*

### Administrative Policy

#### **PURPOSE**

To ensure all residents and neighborhoods have the information technology capacity needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to other essential health and human services. To collaborate with education, health, community and business partners on intentional strategies and investments to create opportunities and to reduce and eliminate historical barriers to technology access and use. To connect digital equity to smart cities and to other equity & justice work.

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

Residents of underserved communities, or populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, to include 1) persons of color; persons with disabilities; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality; 2) persons who reside within a low-moderate income (LMI) area as determined by Census data that is compiled by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and 3) persons with income less than 80% of the Topeka area median income as currently determined by HUD.

#### **ACTIVITY**

The following acts are to be completed for the establishment of Digital Equity & Inclusion efforts that ensure that all individuals and communities, including historically underserved populations, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) that are affordable, accessible, and technologically sufficient.

1. Provide sufficient options for affordable and available Internet connectivity and digital education to maximize public access for historically underserved residents and communities.
2. Create and deliver educational opportunities for residents to gain technology skills necessary to be successful in employment, entrepreneurship and technology leadership,

lifelong learning, civic engagement, and use of other essential online health and human services .

3. Partner with government, health and community organizations, libraries, schools (PreK-12 and higher education), and business to build resources, maximize investments, and employ best practices in digital inclusion.
4. Implement “Lifeline broadband” programs aimed at reducing the price of commercial home broadband service for lower income consumers. Making home broadband more affordable in general, and creating or preserving very affordable options for low-income households.
5. Provide “Smart Community” initiatives, aimed at using networked technologies and data to transform city service delivery, transportation, economic development, governance and civic participation.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

This administrative policy shall become effective as of the date below, and will continue until changed by the Governing Body of the City of Topeka.

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Name and title of signature

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Date