

Governing Body Minutes - February 15, 2023

LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, February 15, 2023. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in special session at 1:00 P.M. with the following Councilmembers present: Councilmembers Hiller, Valdivia-Alcala, Naeger, Duncan, Dobler and Hoferer -6. Councilmembers Ortiz and Emerson participated remotely -2. Absent: Councilmember Kell -1. Mayor Padilla presided -1.

The special meeting could be viewed at <https://www.topeka.org/communications/live-stream/> or at <https://www.facebook.com/cityoftopeka/>.

Public Comment was not permitted at the special meeting (work session); however, the meeting was open to the public. 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 the date of the meeting for attachment to the meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION and POSSIBLE ACTION concerning the City's priority outcomes as determined by the Governing Body, was presented.

Stephen Wade, City Manager, reported Governing Body members met in small groups on January 24, 2023, for the purpose of outlining priorities for the City of Topeka, and this work session will serve as the second phase of the strategic planning process by determining the top 3 to 5 priorities of the Governing Body. He stated Staff would develop action plans for each priority to be considered and approved by the Governing Body to be used in preparation of upcoming operational budgets now and in the future. He introduced Patty Gentrup, Kansas University Public Management Center, to lead the work session discussion.

Patty Gentrup, Kansas University Public Management Center, provided an overview of the

process and stated the purpose of the work session was to identify "What kind of community the Governing Body wants to **build** or is working towards?" by defining 3 to 5 outcomes on how to achieve this and allocate the appropriate resources to do so. She recognized the desire by the Governing Body to ensure the process and the efforts of a strategic plan move forward with actionable steps.

City Manager Wade expressed the importance of keeping the number of top priorities manageable (3 to 5) to ensure progress and the execution of actionable steps to implement the priorities.

Patty Gentrup reported on March 9, 2023, Staff would conduct a workshop to develop indicators, strategies and performance measures for the priorities to be considered by the Governing Body on March 28, 2023.

Councilmember Hiller asked for clarification on the targeted scope of the priorities in terms of considering priorities through the lens of the "city" as a community or the "City of Topeka" as an organization.

City Manager Wade confirmed priorities should be geared towards the City of Topeka as a municipal government.

Each Governing Body member provided opening statements including why they ran for office and their hope for the community.

Patty Gentrup noted there were threads of commonalities expressed by each member of the Governing Body as it relates to growth and making sure they are taking care of all segments of the community through housing and businesses.

Adam Vaughn, Senior Financial Analyst, stated Staff looks forward to how the strategic planning process will impact the City's outcome based budgeting process. He provided an

overview of the significant community discussions that took place over the past two years. The outcome of the community engagement discussions were as follows:

Community Feedback:

- Community Appearance
- Partnerships
- Investing in Topeka's Young
- Continued Community Engagement
- Available Public Transportation
- Address Community Food Deserts

Momentum 2027 Top 4 Goals

(Partnering with the City of Topeka and other community partners to achieve each goal.)

- A Place to Live
- A Place to Prosper
- A Place to Learn
- A Place to Belong

Citywide Accomplishments

- Creation of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Office and hiring of the City's first Chief DEI Officer *(helping the City's workforce be more reflective of the community it serves)*
- Changing Our Culture of Property Maintenance Initiative *(helping the City change the culture and get the community more involved in how to make those changes)*
- Equity Access Shelter Program *(directs community members needing rental assistance to the City as a single point of contact)*
- Topeka-Shawnee County (TSG) Get Digital Coalition *(helping senior citizens get access to technology)*
- Impact Avenues *(seeks to reduce student homelessness in Topeka)*
- All-In Citywide Training *(train all City employees to build a culture of high performance)*
- Outcome Based Budgeting *(clarifies what services are being provided as a City that aligns with the Goals of the Governing Body and the City services desired by the community)*

Councilmember Naeger thanked Staff for highlighting the efforts of the City and the advances being made towards different areas of growth. She asked Staff to expand on the efforts of

- Greater Topeka Partnership Choose Topeka 2.0 Program (*creative approaches turning out solutions resulting a good Return On Investment; City as a resource and in partnership with citizens trusted resource*)
- Improved Marketing: (*social media platforms; Channel 4*)
- Transparency of Data and Information
- Collaboration between the City of Topeka and Shawnee County

Discussion continued on the following list of slower accomplishments that resulted from the January 24, 2023, Governing Body small group discussions.

Slower Accomplishments:

- Neighborhoods: *Housing, Low to Moderate Income Areas, Area Plans*
- Homelessness
- Safety: *Police Department Property Maintenance*
- Development: *East Side; Open for Business*
- Communication
- Staff Development

The following items were requested by Governing Body Members to be added to the list of slower accomplishments:

- Improve Development Services Process (*vital to develop a real growth plan for residential housing all across the city including the fringes of the city.*)
- Activate Housing Trust Fund
- Implement Sustainable Services & Environment (*City must lead by example in fleet services, emergency preparedness etc.*)
- Work to improve Police and Community Relationships (*specifically in the minority communities*)
- Increase Transportation Options (*people need transportation to jobs; grocery stores and medical services*)
- Implement DREAMS Concept (*as it relates to Low to Moderate Income Neighborhoods*)
- Implement Special Policing and Community Recommendations

Councilmember Kell joined the meeting virtually.

A group exercise was conducted by Governing Body members to brainstorm five broad outcomes they would like to see printed as a headline in the Topeka Capital Journal. Discussion

ensued on the following commonalities of the broad outcomes listed by each Governing Body member:

1. Growth (*economic development that results in an increase of population*)
2. Communication
3. Housing (*multi-family, code compliance, vacant properties*)
4. Municipal Operations: (*Solid Workforce, City Government Services/Programs; Infrastructure; Information Technology Road Map*)
5. Equitable: Geographic & Access (*Food Deserts, Housing Study, Living Wage, Evictions, Red-line Districts; Investment of underserved communities including sidewalk access, ADA ramps, and transportation options*)
6. Engaging Citizens (*Action plans followed by celebrating successes*)
7. Access to Quality Healthcare
8. Tax Reduction (*through property tax growth*)
9. Thriving Workforce (*living wage, development and training*)
10. Change In Mindset (*outflow of creativity - thinking outside the box leads to change; success & more solutions*)
11. Transportation
12. Community Appearance (*blight remediation, cleanup neighborhoods, property maintenance, streetscapes; zoning laws etc.*)

Councilmember Kell left the meeting.

After continued discussion, it was the consensus of the Governing Body to move forward with the following defined outcomes as top priorities for the City of Topeka:

1. HOUSING:

- a. Equitable Increase of Overall Housing Inventory.
- b. Evaluate Current Housing Stock.

2. GROWTH:

- a. Increase the number of people who live and work in Topeka.

3. COMMUNITY APPEARANCE:

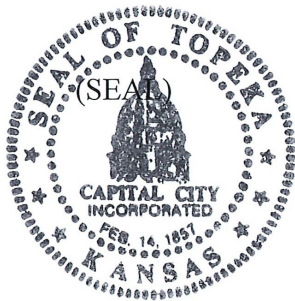
- a. Establish standard design and materials portfolio to ensure consistent, quality aesthetics and investment in all parts of the city.
- b. Apply code enforcement fairly to address blight and problem properties.

City Manager Wade reported Staff will spend the next 4 to 5 weeks developing a draft plan to distribute to the Governing Body prior to the March 28, 2023, special meeting (work session) with the intent to present a final version of the plan by the middle of April for consideration by the Governing Body.

Councilmember Hiller requested Staff receive all details of the work session and how the Governing Body determined the priorities.

Penny Gentrup reported a detailed summary of the work session would be provided to Governing Body members and Staff.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.



Brenda Younger
Brenda Younger City Clerk