

## **Governing Body Minutes – October 17, 2023**

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, October 17, 2023. 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, Emerson, Ortiz, Kell, Dobler, and Hoferer-6. Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala and Naeger participated remote -2. Mayor Padilla presided -1. Absent: Councilmember Duncan -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](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) by no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 17, 2023, 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 17, 2023, for attachment to the meeting minutes.

AFTER THE MEETING was called to order Shanae Calhoun, El-Shaddai Ministries Community Church, provided the invocation.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by meeting participants.

BOARD APPOINTMENT recommending the appointment of Chance Lucas to the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Board for an unexpired term ending October 17, 2027, was presented.

Councilmember Kell moved to approve the appointment. The motion seconded by Councilmember Hiller carried unanimously on roll call vote. Mayor does not vote.

(8-0-0)

A PRESENTATION on Fire Prevention Week highlighting “Close Before You Doze” was presented by Randy Phillips, Topeka Fire Chief.

Councilmember Ortiz thanked Chief Phillips for offering important safety information. She reminded citizens to take advantage of the City’s Smoke Alarm program.

A PRESENTATION on the Taskforce Against Domestic Violence was provided by Becca Spielman, YWCA Program Director Center for Safety & Empowerment. She recognized Taskforce members present at the meeting.

Councilmember Kell suggested they create a service map to determine where assistance is needed.

Mayor Padilla asked if they have a sense of how many children are involved in reported cases and their age, and if they are tracking the domestic violence trends in area school districts.

Program Director Spielman reported they do not track cases based on zip code; however, they could work with the Topeka Police Department to gather the information as well as school districts and other youth organizations. She stressed the importance of a school representative serving on the Taskforce. She thanked Mayor Padilla for the on-going support and noted, suggested information could be included in the next report.

CONSENT AGENDA was presented as follows:

APPROVAL of a Utilities Engineering Contract NO. 51645 between the City of Topeka and Bartlett and West, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$3,519,000 for engineering services, was presented.

APPROVAL of a Utilities Engineering Contract NO. 51644 between the City of Topeka and Alfred Benesch and Company, in an amount not to exceed \$165,100 for engineering services, was presented.

ORDINANCE NO. 20460 introduced by Interim City Manager Richard U. Nienstedt, concerning the Housing Trust Fund, amending City of Topeka Code Sections 2.105.010 and 2.105.070 and repealing original sections, was presented.

MINUTES of the regular meeting of October 10, 2023, was presented.

Councilmember Emerson moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion seconded by Councilmember Kell carried on roll call vote. Councilmember Dobler abstained. (8-0-1)

ORDINANCE introduced by Interim City Manager Richard U. Nienstedt relating to the vacation of a 20 foot wide public alley extending east-west and located between properties lying at 410 SW 6th Avenue and 523 SW Harrison Street in the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas, was presented. *(V23A/01) (Council District No. 1) (The Public Hearing was conducted on September 12, 2023. The ordinance was deferred from the meeting of September 19, 2023.)*

Dan Warner, Planning Division Director, reported Staff and the property owner continue to work with the affected utilities to come to some sort of resolution regarding the question if a utility easement will be required as part of the vacation. Since there has been no final resolution, Staff was requesting to defer the ordinance until November 21, 2023.

Councilmember Ortiz moved to defer the ordinance until November 21, 2023. The motion seconded by Councilmember Emerson carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

APPROVAL of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Contract No. 51648 between the City of Topeka and the Boys and Girls Club of Topeka regarding Strategies Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.) program Funding for 2024, was presented.

Richard U. Nienstedt, Interim City Manager, reported approval would implement the 2024 funding appropriated for the S.A.V.E Program in the amount of \$75,000 and address the

administration of the grant funds, including fund distribution and reports. He stated Lindsey Anderson, S.A.V.E. Program Project Manager, was present for questions.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala spoke in support of the MOU and the need for program services and reported, the 2023 homicide rate has surpassed the homicide rate from 2017. She referenced an email she received from the Topeka JUMP Organization, and requested the Topeka JUMP Organization attachments, the SAVE Program Summary and the Police & Community Special Committee February 24, 2022 meeting minutes be submitted into the official record to be attached to the minutes. (Attachment A)

Councilmember Kell referenced the quarterly program reports requirement that detail participation numbers, demographics and outcomes; however, he would like an update in six months.

Councilmember Emerson moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. The motion seconded by Councilmember Kell carried unanimously on roll call vote. (9-0-0)

RESOLUTION NO. 9478 introduced by Interim City Manager Richard U. Nienstedt regarding the purchase and management of the Hotel Topeka, was presented.

Richard U. Nienstedt, Interim City Manager, stated approval would authorize completion of the purchase of the Hotel Topeka, and create a single purpose entity owned by the City.

Amanda Stanley, City Attorney, spoke to the purpose of creating a single purpose entity owned by the City allowing the entity to take title and contract with a management company to operate the Hotel.

Councilmember Kell spoke in support of the resolution and expressed the importance of the City finding a developer or entity that will purchase and successfully operate the hotel.

Councilmember Dobler moved to approve the resolution. The motion seconded by Councilmember Emerson carried. Councilmembers Valdivia-Alcala and Ortiz voted “no.” (7-2-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following individuals:

Chris Deister referenced the homelessness in Topeka. He highlighted the categories he believes should be considered in order to deal with the issue including Unfortunate Unsheltered, Mentally Ill Unsheltered and Intransigent Unsheltered.

Henry McClure spoke to the delay of economic development due to the lack of ability by the City to expedite plans and permits as well as traffic studies. He asked the Governing Body to hire a City of Topeka Expeditor to handle plans and permits within the Planning & Development Division. He suggested the City of Topeka withdraw the \$5 million allocated to GO Topeka for economic development and instead, use that money to work with the Topeka Board of Realtors to boost economic development in neighborhoods.

Paul Lassley expressed concern with the continued problems of overgrown trees in the Caravan Community Mobile Home Park located near NW Highway 24. He thanked the Governing Body for all the good they are doing; however, there was still a desperate need for the City to approve laws that address overgrown trees that are a public safety hazard.

Antoinette McFalls, resident of the Caravan Community Mobile Home Park located near NW Highway 24, stated she deals with the same overgrown tree problems as Paul Lassley. She expressed the importance of holding landlords and property owners accountable for poor living conditions. She asked the Governing Body to pass the appropriate laws to address the public safety issue.

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

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, announced General Elections will be held on November 7, 2023 and pursuant to Resolution No. 9380, the November 7, 2023 Governing Body was cancelled. She also announced the next scheduled Governing Body meeting was November 14, 2023.

Richard U. Nienstedt, Interim City Manager, announced area Public Safety agencies will host a the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Trunk or Treat event on October 31, 2023 in downtown Topeka at Evergy Plaza from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Councilmember Ortiz reminded citizens to exercise their right to vote in November and to take advantage of the Topeka Fire Department Smoke Alarm program.

Councilmember Kell spoke to the importance of “acceptance” and the ability to see that others have a right to be their own unique persons. He urged residents to be mindful of the safety of children on Halloween and potential vandalism. He reminded everyone to exercise their right to vote in the November election.

Councilmember Naeger reminded citizens to exercise their right to vote in November, and more information about the candidates could be found online at <https://www.snco.us/election/>.

Councilmember Hoferer announced on October 25, 2023 at 5:30 p.m., the City of Topeka would host the first Polk Quincy Viaduct utility projects meeting at the Cyrus K. Holliday Building located 620 SE Madison Street, Topeka. She noted the project location was SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue from SW Polk Street to SW Taylor Street.

Councilmember Hiller stated she looks forward to the many upcoming Trunk or Treat events across the city for Halloween. She recognized Joe Mitchell, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, for provided the invocation at the National Democratic Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. She offered prayers of healing to the many families and citizens who have been

effected by recent violent crimes. She stated the City of Topeka follows state statute allowing open carry of a firearm. She asked the Governing Body to consider placing a ban on the open carry of a firearm in the city of Topeka.

Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala offered condolences to the family of Lawrence Perez-Belair, a 4-year old girl that was fatally shot on October 10, 2023. She spoke to the number of children's lives that have been lost in 2023, and stated she intends to do whatever was necessary to address the violence in the community. She referenced the annual Poverty Simulation on October 26, 2023, hosted by the Citizens Advisory Council and spoke to the importance of participation by local elected officials. She encouraged adults to keep children safe during Halloween.

Mayor Padilla spoke to the importance of the Poverty Simulation allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the impacts of economic exclusion, chronic lack of resources, and challenges to advocacy in low-income communities the poverty. He commended the City of Lawrence for participating in the Swap City initiative supporting ideas for improvements on a regional level. He recognized October 16-21, 2023 as "Week Without Violence" a global movement with YWCAs across the country and around the world to end violence against women and girls.

Interim City Manager Nienstedt announced Veterans Day on November 11, 2023, and reminded all citizens to recognize veterans and to thank them for their service to protect our freedoms.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

(SEAL)

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Brenda Younger City Clerk



The Topeka Initiative, entitled **Strategies Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)**, focuses on the coordination of law enforcement, social service agencies, and credible community members with the singular goal of reducing violence that destabilizes the health and well-being of our community, creates fear in our citizens, and claims the lives of many of our young people. Topeka/Shawnee County's key stakeholders have committed to build the community's capacity to prevent violence, use enforcement narrowly and strategically, help the most vulnerable people, and improve the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the community. The evidence-based model emphasizes:

- Focusing on groups who commit most homicides, shootings, and other acts of extreme violence.
- Strengthening community norms against offending,
- Communicating directly with high risk people to deter violence, and
- Offering extensive case management for those who want a way out of that lifestyle.

To best facilitate this effort, Topeka Center for Peace and Justice (TCPJ) serves as the lead agency for SAVE. Thanks to a two-year \$300,000 grant from the Topeka Community Foundation, TCPJ and SAVE Executive Advisory Council have contracted with National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) for a two-year committed consultant relationship to guide Topeka/Shawnee County through the problem analysis and implementation process. NNSC will guide SAVE with an emphasis on:

- Reducing violence and improving public safety,
- Minimizing arrest and incarceration,
- Strengthening communities, and
- Improving relationships between law enforcement and the Topeka/Shawnee County community it serves.
- Utilizing restorative justice principles and practices, engage youth involved in "low level" delinquent conduct, including status offenses, from escalating into more serious delinquent activity (gangs, violent offenses, substance abuse).

The shared goals and strong collaborative relationships that have emerged out of the TCPJ's Gun Violence Task Force are essential to SAVE's purpose. Recognizing that no single agency, strategy or group can resolve the multiple challenges of group-related crime and violence, we continue to forge partnerships and foster collaborative efforts throughout the city. A leadership team was established in June 2019 (becoming the SAVE Executive Advisory Council) comprised of:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Topeka Police Dept. Chief Bill Cochran & Lieutenant, Shane Hilton | • Shawnee Co Sheriff Brian Hill & Capt. Caleb Acree                    |
| • Shawnee Co District Attorney Mike Kagay                           | • Lindsey Anderson & Glenda DuBoise, Topeka Center for Peace & Justice |
| • Michael Padilla, Topeka City Council                              | • Pastor Ray Berry, JUMP   |
| • Teresa Taylor, Stormont Vail Health,                              | • Madison Sorsen, JUMP   |
| • Michelle Stubblefield, Momentum 2022                              | • Hannah Schumacher, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America       |
| • Washburn PD Chief, Chris Enos                                     |  |
| • Dept. of Corrections Director Brian Cole                          |  |





This leadership team strives to set forth the structure that establishes community norms against offending, communicating directly with high risk people to deter violence, and provide extensive case management. The SAVE Project Manager will be primarily responsible for nurturing and maintaining partnerships, coordinating independent agencies, working closely with law enforcement, the SAVE Case Manager, Street Team, and otherwise ensuring that the implementation goes smoothly by engaging in collaborative problem solving.

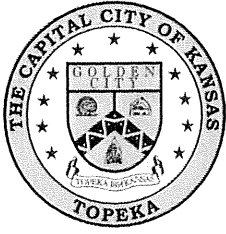
**Accomplishments to Date:**

- June 2019: Gun Violence Awareness Conference at Stormont Vail Health
- Secured funding for NNSC Consultation- \$300,000 from Topeka Community Foundation
- Project Manager Position Funding secured by Shawnee County DA's office
- Group Violence intervention University Training for SAVE Leadership Team and partners
- Conducted a Problem Analysis Group Audit and Incident Review
- Weekly Strategic Advising Calls with NNSC
- Weekly Incident Reviews with Law Enforcement and Partners
- Building capacity with Social Service Agencies in Shawnee County
- Public awareness and information regarding SAVE

**Next Steps:**

- Secure funding for Case Manager, who will be responsible for assisting group members in implementing and sustaining an exit strategy. Duties will include identifying immediate and long-term needs of the group member and their family, working with existing community agencies to promptly provide resources, and maintaining frequent contact with individuals to ensure that needs are met, ultimately allowing them exit from violent lifestyle. The Case Manager will work closely with the Program Manager and report to the SAVE Executive Advisory Council.
- Topeka partnership identifies and/or hires a Support and Outreach Coordinator to lead Topeka's SAVE initiative support and outreach component or "Street Team", responsible for building community trust in SAVE, or "street credit," and eliciting community involvement.
- NNSC conducts remote law enforcement training with key operational law enforcement officers, to cover shooting reviews, enforcement actions, and strategic coordination.
- NNSC conducts remote support and outreach training for Support and Outreach Coordinator as well as representatives from key local social service agencies and leads them in asset mapping.
- NNSC begins to identify opportunities for peer support calls and meetings, as well as attending remote nationwide calls and trainings facilitated by NNSC staff on a variety of Group Violence Intervention
- SAVE Executive Council continues reoccurring meetings to discussion implementation and operational calls.

**For additional information about the S.A.V.E Collaboration, please contact Lindsey Anderson, Program Director, Topeka Center for Peace and Justice @ [tcpjmediation@gmail.com](mailto:tcpjmediation@gmail.com) or 785-232-4388.**



# CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

## SPECIAL COMMITTEE: POLICE & COMMUNITY

CITY COUNCIL  
City Hall, 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 255  
Topeka, KS 66603-3914  
Tel: 785-368-3710  
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www.topeka.org

**Date:** February 24, 2022

**Time:** 3:30pm

**Location:** 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room; Holliday Bldg 620 SE Madison (*virtual attendance was available as well*)

**Committee members present:** Councilmembers Karen Hiller, Sylvia Ortiz (Chair), Mayor Michael Padilla

**City staff present:** Major Stephen Purney (TPD)

### 1) Call to Order

Chairwoman Ortiz called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. Committee members introduced themselves.

### 2) Approve minutes from January 28, 2022 meeting

Committee member Padilla made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Hiller seconded the motion. Motion approved 3:0.

### 3) SAVE Program [*This presentation can be found on the Committee's webpage*].

Shawnee County District Attorney Mike Kagay and Lindsey Anderson introduced the Strategies Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) program.

#### Highlights:

- SAVE focuses on the coordination of law enforcement, social service agencies, and credible community members.
- SAVE's singular goal is to reduce violence that destabilizes the health and well-being of our community.
- Shawnee County's key stakeholders have committed to building the community's capacity to prevent youth violence, use enforcement strategically, help the most vulnerable and at-risk youth individuals and their families with early intervention and preventative methods, and by improving the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the community.
- SAVE uses the framework of Group Violence Intervention Model from the National Network for Safe Communities. The Group Violence Intervention model emphasizes on:

- Focusing on the youth population that is the most at-risk for violence or violent offending,
- Strengthening community norms against offending,
- Communicating directly with high risk people to deter violence,
- Offering extensive case management for those who want a way out of that lifestyle.
- Key roles in SAVE include a project manager, service and outreach coordinator, law enforcement operational committee, support and outreach operational committee, and community moral voice operational committee.
- The structure of SAVE explained:
  - Law Enforcement
    - Reducing violence is top priority
    - Identifying youth who are the most at-risk for violence or violent offending
  - Social Service Provider
    - Gives a path away from risky behavior
    - New and positive relationships
  - Community Members
    - Credible moral voices from the community
    - Outlines identified participant's role in the community to make it safer
- Six accomplishments listed to include a two year grant, funding for hiring of project manager and service & outreach coordinator secured, building the strategies teams and community partners, establishing key partners for SAVE referrals, and beginning to deliver custom notifications with identified at-risk youth and connecting them and families to services.
- Next steps include:
  - Continuing to mobilize the community.
  - Delivering custom notifications by Service and Outreach Coordinator, Law Enforcement, and Community partners for identified SAVE participants.
  - Establish tracking measures and intake assessments.

- Maintaining strong interagency partnerships, putting mechanisms in place to track youth violence, and helping each partner routinize SAVE activities within their agencies.
- Communicate with the community and reinforce the shared mission of the strategy to reduce violence, strengthen communities and their relationships with law enforcement, and use enforcement in a strategic way.
- DA Kagay added a few comments following the presentation. Law enforcement is a key partner in the endeavor with the City of Topeka and the Topeka Police Department have been very supportive partners. Additionally, the City has been financially supportive with being able to create the Outreach Coordinator position, which is another necessary component. The goal is to find other types of approaches, creative approaches, to curbing gun violence in addition to the traditional methods. He stated that we all have the responsibility to do what we can improve the safety of our youth.

Questions/Comments:

- Committee member Hiller referenced a former program that was aimed more for adults, and asked how some of those concepts are being used at the youth level?

DA Kagay noted that looking at the data, most of the violence was occurring within the pre-teen, teen, and young adult populations rather than at the adult level. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for how to reach out to the different ages. The goal is to identify individuals who are at-risk, and then help to connect them with people who may be able to help influence and relate to them in a positive way to create a support system. This may be teachers, coaches, social workers, faith based leaders. This program is not just based with supporting the individual, but also providing wrap-around support for the whole family. Some of the youth are choosing the wrong path as a way to meet the needs of their family. Being able to identify the needs and create opportunities for supporting the needs of the family and youth individual will put them on a better path. The goal is to utilize any person of influence within the individual's life to help reach them and turn them around. Ms. Anderson noted that the program is not only focused on the individual, but also the entirety of their family unit. It is understood that sometimes there are struggles with jobs or transportation, and that decisions are made from a feeling of necessity. By finding out that need and being able to support and address it, there is a lower chance of the individual making the poor choices.

- Committee member Hiller referenced recent fighting that had been occurring at a local park and the concern from neighbors that it was no one's problem but everyone's problem. She inquired if this program would seek to include instances like this where fights were occurring outside of school?

Ms. Anderson stated she felt this example could be something that the program addressed. Figuring out how to identify and connect with those kids, and communicate with them may be a slight challenge, however it would be a great example of things the program could do.

- Committee member Hiller inquired about petty crime such as shoplifting, and if those stores were reaching out to seek help with stopping those crimes?

DA Kagay stated the program may expand to include some of those less violent offenses but currently it is targeted toward violent crime. This could be a program that could expand out, but currently the focus is seeing the end of the violent crime.

- Chairwoman Ortiz voiced appreciation for this program. She stated that we, as a community, needs to find a way to reach the troubled youth and find a way to help them feel included within our community. Until we all stand up and claim these kids as “our kids” things will not change.

- Chairwoman Ortiz inquired about the ages for the SAVE program.

DA Kagay stated the focus age is school age, mainly the middle and high school age. Part of that is due to the availability of the partnerships with the schools to help identify individuals. The other part is that violent crime the occurs with individuals over the age of 18, makes it too late for the SAVE program to intervene. SAVE is designed to intervene before a violent crime is committed.

- How are we identifying the individuals?

Currently, it is through referrals. Typically the school has initiated the referral, however if a parent called to state their child was struggling with these behaviors, the program would also respond to that situation. As the program becomes better known, referrals could even come from neighbors, coach, teacher, or anyone with a relationship with a youth.

- What about kids who are on probation?

Participation is not limited based on if a youth has already had a prior conviction. DA Kagay noted that in addition to age, the seriousness of the crime must also be taken into account. If an individual is on probation or are dealing with a lower-level misdemeanor or felony, then that is someone the program can still work with. However, once the line is crossed to violent felony conduct, or sexual offense, it is too late for the SAVE program to intervene.

- Is this currently for Shawnee County schools only? Yes.

- How does this affect kids with mental health/behavioral issues? Are they included in this program?

It would include them. Mental health is such a big piece of what drives insecurities.

- Committee member Padilla inquired about the Law Enforcement Operational Committee component, and asked who the members of the committee were? And how does it function within the agency? How does it interact with Ms. Anderson in the DA's office?

MAJ Purney answered that two TPD Lieutenants from the Criminal Investigations Bureau represent on the committee. They both deal with person crimes, special victims unit, as well as the juvenile pieces that they can interdict with at that level. Ms. Anderson added that the School Resource Officers, both Topeka Public School's SRO's and TPD's SRO's, were part of the committee as well. MAJ Purney stated that this information needed to be filtered down to the patrol officers, as they are front line to seeing these types of situations every day. Right now, we are working on a case by case basis, but there is room to expand.

- DA Kagay stated there had been a question about a phone number, at this time, there is not a designated number to call for the SAVE program, however he would hope to see that changed in the next few months. Chairwoman Ortiz suggested making magnets with contact information for the program, once established.
- Committee member Padilla rephrased his question about the Operational Committee, and stated that he would define that as a group that would assist with coordinating the information and putting together the operational piece that would communicate to both the TPD and the DA's office?

MAJ Purney noted he understood the idea, and would take the suggestion back to Chief Wheelles. Committee member Padilla wanted to ensure the Command Staff kept this communication piece alive so that the program could be successful. He understands that the department is supportive of the program but noted that in order for it to remain successful, continuous discussions needed to be had, and clear and defined roles needed to be understood.

- Committee member Padilla inquired as to who was involved with the Support and Outreach Committee, and how they contribute to the effort?

Ms. Anderson responded all of the social service agencies that are part of the SAVE program are on the committee. They are holding meetings with the Service and Outreach Coordinator, and herself. They are currently working to

gain a better understanding of the services that the agencies provide and how they do assessments. The goal is to also be able to remove any barriers that would cause delay in referrals receiving immediate service. As some of the cases progress, we can touch base again to seek additional agencies that could offer assistance.

- Committee member Padilla noted the mental health resources is a key piece. That being able to help fill that gap is important.
- Who comprises the Community Moral Voice Operational Committee, and what is their role?

Ms. Anderson responded that this could be anyone in the community. There have been faith-based leaders, people who had been incarcerated and are now rehabilitated back into the community who want to make a difference. The group is designed to be individuals who perhaps do not fit into the law enforcement or social service agency category, but want to be part of SAVE. When we have the interventions, these are the people who want to be that voice within the community who want to support those individuals and families to make the community safer.

- Do you find the parents/guardians are receptive to the program?

Ms. Anderson responded that so far, the families have been very receptive and supportive of the program. However, she noted that not all will likely be that way in the future. When that occurs, space will be provided to allow the family to make their own decision, but will also provide the information regarding the list of resources that are being offered to assist the family and their individual.

- It sounds like this program is pretty new. How many cases have you begun working on?

Yes, the program is about 30-60 days old. We have about 8 cases currently. Any school-aged child could be referred. Principals have discussed that violent behaviors are being shown by children of significantly younger ages, and so there has been consideration of including information for younger aged children.

- Committee member Hiller inquired if Moms Against Gun Violence were involved?

Yes. They are part of the community support group. They offer programming but also advocacy.

- Have you ended up picking up anyone from Strategic Leadership Academy or SPCP?

No. DA Kagay stated he has engaged some individuals who have been part of the Strategic Leadership Academy to become part of the group. This is why the program will continue to grow, because the need will continue to change.

- Chairwoman Ortiz noted the schools all have social workers now, and that they will be able to identify children who may not have stable home lives, or other types of potential problems where early intervention can be helpful and set them up with services.

- Can you tell us more about what the custom notification process looks like?

Ms. Anderson responded that the custom notification is the first point of contact that the Service and Outreach Coordinator and Ms. Anderson have with the individual and/or their family, and who else is needed at the table. This includes law enforcement as well as the person in the individual's life who can be the mentor.

- Committee member Padilla inquired about the category of Restorative Justice Programs, and asked if SAVE would be part of that?

DA Kagay responded that he felt SAVE would fall into a category of restorative justice, in that behaviors are addressed in a way to seek out the root cause and support changing that rather than simply punishing the behavior.

- Can you speak to the impacts the funding has on facilitating this program?

DA Kagay responded that the funding for the consulting piece came from the Topeka Community Foundation grant. They put up \$300,000 to get the program started. In order to implement the program, he needed to create the Project Manager position. From there, we had to have the assistance of law enforcement and the Service and Outreach Coordinator to work hand-in-hand with the Project Coordinator. The Service and Outreach Coordinator is an employee with PARS, and the portion of their funding for working with the SAVE program is provided by the City of Topeka. DA Kagay noted the program had come before the Governing Body in the beginning to present information on the SAVE program. DA Kagay noted that it truly is a partnership to make this program successful.

- Committee member Hiller referenced the summer mowing program that was suggested in the Changing the Culture of Property Maintenance input sessions, and that perhaps something like that could connect into the SAVE program. She also noted the youth boxing program.

- MAJ Purney thanked the DA for establishing the program. DA Kagay thanked Mayor Padilla for his support from the beginning.



**4) Discussion: Public Input Session planning** (video 1:06:30 minute mark)  
Chairwoman Ortiz noted there were a couple of items left. One was “defund the police” and the other was about scheduling public input sessions.

For input sessions, Chairwoman Ortiz suggested having a daytime session and an evening session to hear from constituents.

Chairwoman Ortiz noted that Committee member Hiller had suggested hearing from the Police Department about comments made by LT Jennifer Cross regarding the Mosaic Partnership program. LT Cross will present more about this at the next meeting.

Committee member Hiller stated she felt that many of the issues that were raised in the beginning had been covered. She suggested the committee create some preliminary conclusions to note whether these items were addressed and whether the subject needed to continue to be addressed or not, it may lead some of the public comments to then fine tune final recommendations.

Chairwoman Ortiz stated she would prefer to set recommendations prior to the public input meetings and add any additional recommendations following the input sessions, based on if the Committee felt they were needed. Committee member Hiller rephrased suggesting the recommendations be preliminary until the conclusion of the public input sessions, at which time they become finalized.

Committee member Padilla stated he felt ready for action. As the committee, he would like to have the committee set the recommendations and move to the Governing Body for action. The Governing Body could then chose to accept or deny the recommendations. He noted there would be time for public input when the item is brought to the Governing Body. Chairwoman Ortiz noted the public input at the Governing Body meeting, but had suggested setting an additional meeting(s) to receive public comment prior to the Governing Body meeting, and sought preference from the Committee.

Committee member Padilla stated he liked the idea of having a document with the recommendations listed, followed by holding a public input meeting where the public could speak to the recommendations, and after the listening session, the recommendation document would be presented to the Governing Body.

Chairwoman Ortiz stated she would like to have one more meeting in March. And to create the recommendation document in April and hold the public input session for a date in April, and then taking final recommendations to the Governing Body by May.

Chairwoman Ortiz scheduled a meeting for March, with direction to have the Committee send their list of recommendations to Liz Toyne, Council Assistant, by April 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee would have a final meeting in early April with the public input session also occurring in April.

**5) Other Items**

No additional items.

**6) Adjourn**

Chairwoman Ortiz adjourned the meeting at 5:02pm.

Meeting recording can be found at: <https://youtu.be/lstjqCLFkAfk>

**Brenda Younger**

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**Subject:**

RE: Letters from Stormont Vail & Topeka JUMP

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Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala,

Topeka JUMP leaders are unable to attend tomorrow night's Council Meeting to make public comment, as we have an important gathering of leadership to debrief our community-wide listening process. The Violence Reduction team asks that you review their comments in the attached letter, as well as the letter from Dr. Robert Kenagy from Stormont Vail. Both are in response to the increased violence in Topeka in 2023.

We look forward to meeting with you on Thursday to continue this conversation.



October 16, 2023

To the members of the Topeka City Council,

We are writing in response to the disheartening outbreak of violence our city has seen over these past couple of weeks. Throughout this past month our faith communities have hosted listening sessions with concerned members and time and time again we have heard that the people of our city and county are deeply concerned with the violence our neighbors and loved ones are facing.

We are heartbroken at the loss of life that has happened in Topeka. It makes sense that the Council is having a serious conversation about violence right now. So, to that we raise the question: Is the hearing on SAVE tomorrow about adding dollars to one more community program to which SAVE may be well deserving or is the hearing meant to directly address the crisis at hand? While mentorship is valuable, the crisis we face as demonstrated by these recent incidents is a problem among young adults and retaliation. This is a problem we have seen before. In 2019, hundreds of thousands of public and private dollars were spent to bring Group Violence Intervention to Topeka and instead of giving the evidence-based GVI model a chance to succeed a completely different program was implemented based on youth mentorship. GVI and other violence reduction programs have specific protocols in place to help intervene in the midst of violent situations like we find ourselves in here in Topeka. Therefore, we urge the Council to lead the community in choosing to do something different so that we may get different results. With your leadership, Council Members, we can pull stakeholders back together to choose and move forward on a violence reduction strategy that can quell retaliatory shootings and reduce violence.

It would be a disservice to everyone in our community if we did not use this crisis as a chance to act and start taking steps to bring a serious evidenced based violence intervention program to Topeka. The community was ready to do this back in 2017 after 30 homicides; it's the middle of October and now we are at 31 this year. JUMP and others are ready once again to do the work. Whether you choose to fund SAVE or not, we hope that you are willing to make a public commitment today to finding a violence reduction strategy that will bring us results within the next year - much like we had found with GVI. Attached is a letter from Dr. Rob Kenagy from Stormont Vail. After an incident earlier this year at the Hospital we talked to him and have engaged other staff around the importance of bringing a serious reduction strategy to Topeka. We need our elected officials on board and leading the charge to help protect this community. Our violence reduction committee and other stakeholders we have engaged would be glad to sit down and meet with you to discuss working together to bring a working violence reduction program to our city.

Sincerely,  
Violence Reduction Committee, Topeka JUMP



July 7, 2023

Dear Topeka City and Shawnee County Officials,

The violence that has erupted in our community during 2023 should be of great concern. All of us – from elected officials, businesses, healthcare providers, faith leaders, community organizations and others – are affected. The violence impacts the health, well-being, quality of life and economic vitality of our community and region.

As the leader of the region's largest non-profit healthcare organization, I have tremendous concern about the volatility and intensity of recent acts of violence, primarily gun violence, which have occurred. These acts of violence, no matter where they occur, have a lasting ripple effect across our community – and often involve our emergency and trauma medical teams who render aid to those patients. It has required our organization to go on "lockdown" while still caring for patients because of the violence and violent people who arrive in our parking lots and at our door.

This violence not only takes a toll on those directly involved – but also our medical care teams as they see this pattern of violence repeat itself with more and more victims, and on our patients and visitors who witness the aftermath of violence that arrives in our ambulance bay. There is a chilling effect on the positive aspects of our community when the violence escalates those who are close to victims or witness the violence; it brings fear to young children and others who feel their safety threatened as they go about their daily lives. Too often we see young lives tragically cut short or forever marred because of the acts of violence occurring within our neighborhoods.

While Topeka and Shawnee County are not alone in this escalation of troubling violence – we see it in the headlines from other cities – it is our responsibility to bring safety and calm back to our community. We collectively must come together to find solutions that work for our city, county and region. We support and encourage you as elected officials, to step forward and lead this discussion to facilitate solutions of which Stormont Vail Health pledges to be a part of, and to put the health and protection of our community members at the forefront.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Kenagy", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Rob Kenagy, MD  
President & CEO