

**Citizen Government Review Committee Minutes**  
**February 19, 2025**

Cyrus K. Holliday Building, First Floor Conference Room, Topeka, Kansas, February 19, 2025. Committee Chair Jim Kaup called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. with the following Committee Members present: Brian Broxterman, Connie Jacobson (Vice Chair), Tamara Martin, Jim Kaup (Chair) and Zachary Surritt (*alternate*) -5. Absent: Shampayne Lloyd -1.

Due to inclement weather conditions the February 19, 2025, Citizen Government Review Committee meeting was held VIRTUAL. The public was encouraged to view the meeting online at <https://www.topeka.org/communications/live-stream/> or at <https://www.facebook.com/cityoftopeka/>. Those that did not have access, were instructed 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 4:00 p.m. on February 19, 2025, in order to provide other options for attendance. Public comment for the meeting was available via Zoom. Individuals were instructed 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 the date of the meeting, after which the City Clerk's Office provided Zoom link information and protocols prior to the meeting. 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 the date of the meeting.

OVERVIEW of Committee Rules & Procedures. (*Deferred from the meeting of February 5, 2025.*)

Brandy Roy-Bachman, Assistant City Attorney, reported the proposed Rules & Procedures were a compilation of other established Council committees. She noted the proposed document could be adopted in their entirety or as amended.

Chair Kaup thanked Staff for providing the proposed Rules & Procedures. He requested to eliminate Rule Nos. 2, 6 and 10.

Connie Jacobson requested to eliminate Rule No. 12.

Chair Kaup concurred to eliminate Rule No. 12.

Brian Broxterman stated he agrees with eliminating Rule Nos. 2, 10 and 12; however, he believes they should keep Rule No. 6 and establish a 30-minute time limit instead of 15-minute time limit for speakers.

Connie Jacobson expressed concern with increasing the time and limiting the number of speakers per meeting. She suggested they determine time limits at each meeting on a case-by-case basis.

Zachary Surritt spoke in support of a 15 or 20-minute time limit and noted, if more time was needed the Committee could grant additional time on a case-by-case basis.

Connie Jacobson spoke in support of a 20-minute time limit.

Brian Broxterman spoke in support of a 20-minute time limit.

Connie Jacobson moved to amend the Committee Rules & Procedures as follows and approve the Committee Rules & Procedures as amended. The motion seconded by Brian Broxterman carried unanimously on voice vote. (5-0-0)

Approved amendments were as follows:

- Eliminate Rule No 2: ~~Cellular phones and other electronic devices with audible tones shall be disabled during committee meetings.~~
- Amend Rule No. 6: All presentations submitted before the Committee shall be no longer than ~~15~~ 20 minutes. Any extension of time is allowed by majority vote of the Committee.
- Eliminate Rule No. 10: ~~The Chair reserves the right to take such action as may be necessary to prevent disruptive behavior in the committee room or via Zoom during meetings.~~
- Eliminate Rule No. 12: ~~Adjournment is reserved for the Chair.~~

PUBLIC Input Procedure. (*Deferred from the meeting of February 5, 2025.*)

Chair Kaup asked if it was the desire of the Committee to try to gather public input or if they believe input will be received through the nature committee process.

Zachary Surritt asked City Staff if a standard City Communication Policy was in place that would help them promote public input. He suggested Staff also work with local media partners to promote public input if they are not already doing so.

Dan Garrett, City Communications Director, reported they have created an infographic and upon approval by the Committee it will be posted on the City's social media outlets as well as published in the City Manager's weekly report in a similar manner as other committees. He stated they would work with local media outlets to promote the review process and suggested a Committee member representative be selected to appear on the "Red Couch" and the Fox43 AM Show to promote the process.

Tamara Martin spoke to the benefit of conducting a public hearing.

Connie Jacobson stated the Committee discussed conducting two public hearings.

Zachary Surritt reported that KSNT has reached out to Councilmembers Hiller and Duncan for comment.

Chair Kaup volunteered to serve as the Committee representative for the local media outlets.

Connie Jacobson volunteered to serve as the Committee representative for the local media outlets.

SELECT Conferees for March Meetings.

Chair Kaup inquired on guest speakers for the March 5, 2025, Committee meeting.

Megan Brunson, Assistant City Clerk, confirmed that Mayor Padilla, City Manager Dr. Robert M. Perez and Interim DEI Director and Community Engagement Division Director Monique Glaude would appear as guest speakers at the March 5, 2025, Committee meeting.

Chair Kaup reported he has reached out to the League of Kansas Women Voters and requested a representative appear as a guest speaker at the March 26, 2025, Committee meeting.

Zachary Surritt stated he would reach out to the Greater Topeka Partnership to request a representative appear as a guest speaker at the March 26, 2025, Committee Meeting.

It was the consensus of the Committee to invite the League of Kansas Women Voters and the Greater Topeka Partnership as guest speakers for the March 26, 2025, Committee meeting.

Councilmember Karen Hiller, Council District No. 1, and Councilmember Spencer Duncan, Council District No. 8 appeared as GUEST SPEAKERS.

Shampayne Lloyd joined the meeting remotely.

Councilmember Hiller stated she has served on the Council since 2009 and was involved in the review of the Form of Government in 2014. She provided a brief overview of her personal and professional experiences as it relates to her community connections. She reported the hot topic in 2014 was the consideration of consolidating City and County governments and noted, some of the 2014 Report Recommendations were reviewed by the Policy & Finance Committee and addressed through the amendment of Governing Body Rules & Procedures as well as the City's charter ordinance. She encouraged the Committee to bring forth all concerns and recommendations to the Governing Body because it was her believe they would review the recommendations. She stated it was her opinion the current Form of Government was working with one exception related to communication between City Councilmembers and the Mayor. She stated by making the Mayor a voting member of the Governing Body there were unintended consequences that limits his ability to communicate with Councilmembers about the important issues due to the fear of violating communication regulations of the Kansas Open Meeting Act (KOMA). She stated she was not sure if there was a way to address this issue because she has not researched it thoroughly. She spoke to the culture that has been created within the City Council - that each member of the Council represents their District as well as the city at-large. Finally, she reported the City Council was not responsible for administrative duties; however, they have two full-time employees that serve as assistants to the City Council which has made it difficult at times to manage the logistics of the supervisor role.

Chair Kaup thanked Councilmember Hiller for her comments and stated he was happy to hear the Governing Body was pleased with how the current Form of Government was working.

Connie Jacobson asked for clarification on the concerns raised by Councilmember Hiller regarding KOMA communication conflicts.

Councilmember Duncan reported that he interprets the law as the City Council and the Mayor being their own separate entity, and all 10 members are considered the Governing Body as a whole. He stated it was his opinion the Mayor was allowed to communicate with all nine members of the Council; however, City Councilmembers are only allowed to communicate with no more than three Councilmembers on any subject matter.

Brandy Roy-Bachman reported the City of Topeka Legal Department would provide an opinion on how KOMA effects the roles of the City Council and the Mayor to the Committee.

Councilmember Duncan reported he has served for six years on the City Council. He expressed the importance of gathering input from citizens about the process and stated it was his hope, the Committee will bring forward what they believe needs to be addressed. He stated consolidation of City and County governments remains a hot topic; however, he does not support consolidation as a whole as it would be difficult to rectify certain aspects of government operations. For example, the City selects a Police Chief allowing them to implement policies on how they envision the safety of the city compared to the County electing a Sheriff which would limit their ability to have say in the processes. He does believe there are certain aspects that would make sense to consider consolidating such as the Planning Departments and efforts to address abandon and dilapidated housing issues. He stated he serves as the Director of Government Affairs for the League of Kansas Municipalities for all cities in the state of Kansas, and in that role it has become apparent that it was vital to have a city manager in place to oversee the operations of larger cities like Topeka. He mentioned the authority of the Mayor and suggested they increase the salary of the Mayor if they decide to return to a Strong Mayor Form of Government. He suggested they consider how they could improve the recommendation process as it relates to external citizen committees – as he believes many times there is no follow through by the Governing Body as it relates to the proposed recommendations. He reported he has received input from citizens to consider implementing some at-large district representatives.

Chair Kaup asked if there were examples of Councilmembers not representing the city at-large and only thinking about their district.

Councilmember Duncan spoke to the diversity of the City Council and reported in the past six years he has not experienced very many instances when a district member was not thinking about the city at-large.

Councilmember Hiller stated she concurs with Councilmember Duncan and noted, many of the hot topic issues such as dealing with the unsheltered population effects all districts.

Shampayne Lloyd questioned why the City of Topeka has employed so many city managers.

Councilmember Duncan stated typically a city manager remains employed for 5-7 years for a city of Topeka's size.

Councilmember Hiller spoke to her experiences in hiring city managers and noted, Topeka was a fairly large city that takes a small-town approach to downtown growth, parking and other issues.

Councilmember Duncan and Hiller encouraged the Committee to become familiar with the City's charter ordinance as it relates to the administrative authority of the Governing Body and the importance of building trust between the City Manager and Governing Body members.

Zachary Surritt spoke in support of the current City Manager and how he has handled recent policy issues. He asked if there have been any thoughts about changing the staggered 4-year election term cycle and the importance of educating the public on the process. He questioned if the salary of Councilmembers and the Mayor were considered fair.

Councilmember Hiller spoke in support of the current staggered 4-year election cycle and stated realistically they only get to work together as a Governing Body for 18 months during one election cycle.

Councilmember Duncan stated elections are expensive; however, he questions if they elect all nine Council representatives at the same time if there would be a larger voter turnout. In regard to salaries, it will always have an effect on potential candidates; however, the Governing Body was considered a "citizens" board that not only requires a significant time commitment but also costs to be an active representative of the community.

Committee members thanked Councilmembers Hiller and Duncan for providing their input.

SET Meeting Dates and Times for April and May.

Tamara Martin moved to meet on April 9, 2025, at the Cyrus K. Holliday Building First Floor Conference Room, 620 SE Madison Street, Topeka, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and on April 23, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. location to be determined. The motion seconded by Brian Broxterman carried unanimously on voice vote. (5-0-0)

Brian Broxterman moved to set the May Committee meeting dates at the April 9, 2025, Committee meeting. The motion seconded by Tamara Martin carried unanimously on voice vote. (5-0-0)

Brian Broxterman moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Tamara Martin carried unanimously on voice vote. (5-0-0)

No further business appearing, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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Brenda Younger, M.M.C.  
City Clerk