

**Citizen Government Review Committee Minutes
March 5, 2025**

Cyrus K. Holliday Building, First Floor Conference Room, Topeka, Kansas, March 5, 2025. Committee Chair Jim Kaup called the meeting to order at 11:00 A.M. with the following Committee Members present: Brian Broxterman, Connie Jacobson (Vice Chair), Jim Kaup (Chair), Shampayne Lloyd, Tamara Martin and Zachary Surritt (*alternate*) -6.

APPROVAL of the February 5, 2025, and February 19, 2025, meeting minutes:

Connie Jacobson moved to approve the February 5, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion seconded by Shampayne Lloyd carried unanimously on voice vote. (5-0-0)

Tamara Martin moved to approve the February 19, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion seconded by Shampayne Lloyd carried unanimously on voice vote. (5-0-0)

DISCUSSION OF CONFEREES for March 26, April 9 and April 23, 2025 Meetings:

Zachary Surritt announced Juliet Abdel, President of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce would appear on behalf of the Downtown Topeka, Inc, and GO Topeka as a Guest Speaker at the March 26, 2025, Committee meeting.

Connie Jacobson suggested Downtown Topeka, Inc., and GO Topeka submit written testimony to the Committee.

Committee Chair Kaup announced Mary Lou Davis, President of the Kansas League of Women Voters, would appear as a Guest Speaker at the March 26, 2025, Committee meeting. He requested each Committee member bring a preliminary list of recommendations to be considered by the Committee as they move forward with the process.

Brian Broxterman requested they reach out to current Councilmembers to provide input.

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, stated she would extend an invite to Councilmembers.

Committee Chair Kaup inquired on inviting former Councilmembers Lisa Stubbs, Doug Mays and Duane Pomeroy as they have a long history of civic obligations.

Councilmember Miller announced he would provide input at the April 9, 2025, Committee meeting.

Shampayne Lloyd suggested they invite former Mayor Joan Wagnon, Hispanic Community Leaders as well as community members from the Topeka LULAC Senior Center as well as the East Topeka Senior Center.

Chair Kaup suggested they invite a representative from Topeka Justice, Unity & Ministry Project (JUMP) to an upcoming Committee meeting and noted, they are an active community group advocating for affordable housing.

Shampayne Lloyd stated she would contact the Topeka LuLac Senior Center and East Topeka Senior Center and invite representatives to the April 9, 2025, Committee meeting.

Zachary Surritt expressed the importance of guest speakers understanding what information they were seeking.

Chair Kaup suggested a representative from Washburn University be invited to a future Committee meeting.

Brian Broxterman reported he would contact Washburn University. He suggested an invite be extended to the Topeka Police Chief, Topeka Fire Chief, all City department directors as well as the Assistant City Manager for the April 23, 2025, Committee meeting.

Connie Jacobson announced she would be appearing on the WIBW Red Couch on March 13, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. as well as Fox43 Live on March 20, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Robert M. Perez, City Manager; Monique Glaude, Director of Community Engagement and Interim DEI Officer and ADA Coordinator; and Mayor Michael Padilla appeared as GUEST SPEAKERS.

Dr. Robert M. Perez, City Manager, provided a brief overview of his professional experiences and formal education. He spoke to the City of Topeka 2025 Strategic Goals and Priorities as well as the expectations of the Governing Body. He stated he believes the current Form of Government was working well.

Committee Chair Kaup questioned the reporting mechanism for potholes and complaints to the City. He asked City Manager Perez what his thoughts were on conducting an annual satisfaction survey and if there are ways the City and County could be more cooperative and work together on certain issues such as the unsheltered population, affordable housing and mental health issues.

City Manager Perez stated the residents have the ability to report potholes through the SeeClickFix mobile application; call 785-368-3111 or email citymanager@topeka.org. He reported they are working to streamline the customer service processes as part of the City's 2025 priorities. He spoke in support of conducting a citizen survey in 2025; however, they must be mindful of the cost to conduct a survey. He reported in 2024, a joint City-County meeting was held to discuss homeless issues.

Shampayne Lloyd referenced the Housing Stabilization Collaborative (HSC) program created in Douglas County, Kansas, supporting community members in accessing and affording sustainable housing. She questioned if the City of Topeka would benefit from collaborating with Douglas County on this type of initiative.

Tamara Martin stated she concurs with Shampayne Lloyd and referenced the hiring freeze that has been put in place by the City of Topeka.

Zachary Surritt questioned if the roles of the City Councilmembers and Mayor as it relates to working with the City Manager are acceptable or does the process need to be approved upon.

Chair Kaup referenced the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and inquired on the thoughts of the Governing Body and City Manager.

City Manager Perez stated anytime there are opportunities to collaborate with other cities or counties it will result in a more successful outcome. In regard to the City's hiring freeze, all positions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine position approval or reclassification. He stated he believes the current Form of Government works well and lends to successful processes. He reported activation of the Affordable Housing Trust fund was a 2025 Goal of the City; however, they need to find a sustainable funding source to maintain the fund.

Monique Glaude, Director of Community Engagement, Interim DEI Officer and ADA Coordinator, provided an overview of Community Engagement Division Operations, Key Goals, Committees and Councils they support, the City's Ombudsman position and responsibilities; as well as how citizens and Committee members can get involved in the community.

Shampayne Lloyd asked how the Committee could assist with bridging the education gap between the community and Governing Body members.

Director Glaude reported the Community Engagement Division serves to bridge the education gap. She expressed the importance of building relationships and trust with grassroots organizations and community leaders. She stated it was vital they connect with Youth Leadership and remain intentional with their efforts so they can build a stronger more concerned community.

Connie Jacobson stated she concurs with Director Glaude and believes it was about educating people. She questioned how survey feedback was shared with the public.

Zachary Surritt asked Director Glaude if she believes City Staff members are spread thin as it relates to job duties and if there are efficiencies that could be realized with boards and committees. He stated he also believes education was key and asked Director Glaude in her role, if communication works well with Governing Body members.

Chair Kaup inquired on the public perception of Governing Body members not being receptive to recommendations made by boards and committees.

Shampayne Lloyd inquired on the perception of neighborhood residents and leaders as it relates to the Governing Body and reaching grassroots stakeholders. She asked Director Glaude if she has the tools to successfully perform her job.

Director Glaude reported in regard to surveys, they must determine who the audience would be and how to connect them to the initiative; and the Nextdoor mobile application was very successful in reaching the most people. She spoke to the positive impact a “Meet and Greet” would be to help everyone better understand the purpose of each board and committee which in turn may help realize possible efficiencies. She reported in her experience, Governing Body members have always been very receptive to recommendations made by boards and committees as well as very transparent and open in regard to communication with neighborhoods. She expressed her appreciation to neighborhood representatives; however, those representatives do not encompass a true representation of the community. She noted the grassroots stakeholders she was referencing includes college students, neighborhood residents ranging from the age of 21 to 40 and business owners.

Mayor Michael Padilla spoke in support of the Current Form of Government. He reported communication and collaboration work well between departments, the city manager and Governing Body members. He reported the duty of the Governing Body was to approve policy with no administrative authority.

Connie Jacobson spoke in support of the current Form of Government. She asked Mayor Padilla if he believes there was a need to reduce the number of council district representatives and replace with at-large representatives.

Shampayne Lloyd thanked Mayor Padilla for providing his perspective and noted, it was very helpful to understand the current Form of Government.

Zachary Surritt asked Mayor Padilla if he believes it would be advantageous to change the voting cycle by allowing all council districts to be elected at the same time and the mayor to be elected at a different time.

Mayor Padilla stated he believes if the number of council representatives were reduced they would have to make all representatives at-large members. He reported voter turnout has always been an issue; however, he was unsure if a change would make a difference.

Chair Kaup thanked the Mayor for his comments and service.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

Connie Jacobson announced the Committee received an email from Joseph Ledbetter providing input.

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, stated the email would be attached to the March 5, 2025, meeting minutes as Attachment A.

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

03-05-25

No further business appearing, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Brenda Younger, M.M.C.
City Clerk