



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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

Date: June 10, 2025

Time: 10:00am

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room, Cyrus K. Holliday Bldg. 620 SE Madison (*a virtual attendance option is available*)

Committee members Present: Spencer Duncan (chair), Marcus Miller, Michelle Hoferer

City Staff Present: City Manager Dr. Robert M. Perez, City Attorney Amanda Stanley, Assistant City Manager Avery Moore, Division Director Housing Services Carrie Higgins

1) Call to Order

Committee Chair Duncan called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

2) Approve May 14, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Committee member Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Committee member Hoferer seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

3) Action Item: Ordinance-Update Anti-discrimination policies

Committee Chair Duncan spoke to the May 6, 2025 Governing Body meeting vote which was unanimous to send back to the Policy & Finance Committee to make changes to the anti-discrimination policies. The goal is to make sure City ordinances are up to date with federal law and not be reactionary to the federal administration. He added the challenge is to find the balance between having integrity for the City and to ensure funds are not lost. He emphasized after listening and receiving input from Council members and community the proposed ordinance has been reviewed line by line to: (1) establish an up to date document with current laws and have compliance with the rulings (2) meet City values and objectives.

Committee member Miller spoke to the importance of the City values and continuing to have community support for everyone regardless of their race, sex, or religion.

Committee Chair Duncan continued to speak to the difference between affirmative action and equal opportunity. He added items with equal opportunity are being proposed to stay in the new version of the proposed ordinance.

City Attorney Stanley provided a high-level overview of memorandums that have been received from the Federal Government; including the Department of

Transportation, Attorney General's office providing their view of discrimination. She spoke to certifying for federal funds which involves ensuring compliance with various rules and regulations when applying for or receiving funding from the federal government, including when applying for grants. She continued to speak to cases from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and noted that branches of the executive branch are now saying affirmative action is gone and that you must certify that you do not have a program that favors one race over another such as affirmative action or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). She noted the DOJ is advocating citizens to use the False Claims Act to report cities; if found guilty you could be bared from receiving federal funds or receive severe penalties.

City Attorney Stanley continued to speak to the proposed ordinance language and the challenges with the new requirements being imposed on the City through federal grant terms tied to Executive Orders issued in 2025. She noted ensuring the City does not have legal implications through a DEI program or prioritize one particular group; while continuing to have equal opportunity for everyone. She reported the City does not have an office of DEI.

Committee Chair Duncan spoke to his support for the adjustments made to the ordinance versus the original version. He added the importance of the changes while keeping the integrity of the City.

Committee member Miller added his support for the new proposed ordinance with the new language. He thanked staff and Committee chair Duncan for their work. He added he wants the entire Governing Body thoughts concerning the adjustments to the language. He added the value of having public input.

Committee member Hoferer added her support and expressed her appreciation for the language consistencies, while also providing protection to the City.

City Attorney Stanley added the Planning and Development must sign for the next U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds by June 30, 2025. If it is not signed there will be no money remaining for Shelter Plus Care program.

Committee chair Duncan announced the Ordinance-Update Anti-discrimination policies will be on the June 17, 2025 Governing Body agenda as an action item. He thanked staff for their hard work and expressed his appreciation on the feedback from the community. He stated that all referenced documents will be included on the City of Topeka website in the Policy and Finance Committee agenda packet www.topeka.org/citycouncil/policy-finance-committee

MOTION: Committee chair Duncan made a motion to approve and move forward to the Governing Body for action. Committee member Miller seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

4) Public Comment

Danielle Twemlow provided her support for the changes to the proposed ordinance. She stated that the new version is more reflective of the City. She continued to

speak to changes within the Governing Body members and City administration and feels the language is specific to protect the values of the City.

Committee chair Duncan adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

The video of this meeting can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/i1GC_Ea8fXs

-