

Observer Reports for the January VOTER

SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: NOVEMBER 21, 2024

Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

Chair Kevin Cook	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Bill Riphan	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Aaron Mayes	Present?	Yes

Please click on the link below for the agenda archive.

Commission Agenda Website: <https://www.snco.us/commission/agendas.asp>

Feature evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Did the meeting start on time?	X		
Reason for absent members?	N/A		
Was the agenda available at the meeting?	X		
Were any non-agenda items discussed?		X	
Did it appear that any agenda items were discussed prior to the meeting?		X	
Were there any amendments to the agenda?		X	
Were members courteous to each other and the public?	X		
Were media representatives present?	X		
Did any member recuse?		X	
Was there an executive session? If so, for what reason and what length?		X	
Was there a public comment period? If so who appeared and for what purpose?		X	

Discussion of Issues:

Issue:	Action taken:	Relevance to LWV Positions	Recommended Follow-up if any
Resolution No. 2024-77 to establish procedures and rules during public comment section of meetings. See below for highlights.	Approved.	LWV of Topeka-Shawnee County is interested in good government and the ability of the public to address the commission on the issues.	None needed.

Remarks: Other matters were considered by the Commission, which did not have particular relevance to any LWV of Topeka-Shawnee County concerns or issues. Commission meeting agendas are available online both before and after the meeting at the link shown above. There currently does not appear to be any written minutes of the meeting available.

Note: There was no report for November 7, as the meeting was cancelled. Commissioners instead attended the State of The City/County luncheon that day.

Notes on public comment resolution:

1. Sign up in advance of the meeting is preferred but not required. Persons who have signed up will be allowed to speak first.
2. No one may substitute for the person signing up.
3. At the podium, a speaker must state their name, residential address, and, if applicable, organization they represent into the microphone.
4. Only one speaker at a time.
5. Speaker must stay behind the podium unless allowed by the chair.
6. Time limit is four minutes.
7. Debate with other members of the public is not allowed.
8. The following conduct, topics and types of comments are NOT permitted:
Matters unrelated to County business; political campaigning; commercial advertisements; threats; and/or any content inciting violence or promoting illegal activity.
9. The Chair may first provide a warning to any member of the public who is not in compliance with this Resolution. Any continued non-compliance may result in the revocation of the person's speaking privileges at the meeting.

SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: DECEMBER 5, 2024

Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

Chair Kevin Cook	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Bill Riphan	Present?	Yes
Commissioner Aaron Mayes	Present?	Yes

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Commission Agenda Website: <https://www.snco.us/commission/agendas.asp>

Feature evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Did the meeting start on time?	X		
Reason for absent members?	N/A		
Was the agenda available at the meeting?	X		
Were any non-agenda items discussed?		X	
Did it appear that any agenda items were discussed prior to the meeting?		X	
Were there any amendments to the agenda?		X	
Were members courteous to each other and the public?	X		
Were media representatives present?	X		
Did any member recuse?		X	
Was there an executive session? If so, for what reason and what length?		X	
Was there a public comment period? If so who appeared and for what purpose?		X	

SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: DECEMBER 5, 2024, CONT.

Discussion of Issues:

Issue:	Action taken:	Relevance to LWV Positions	Recommended Follow-up if any
None	N/A	N/A	N/a

Remarks: Other matters were considered by the Commission, which did not have particular relevance to any LWV of Topeka-Shawnee County concerns or issues. Commission meeting agendas are available online both before and after the meeting at the link shown above. There currently does not appear to be any written minutes of the meeting available.

Presentations:

1. A check was presented to Helping Hands Humane Society in the amount of \$6,705.50, representing donations made by Shawnee County employees in support of the shelter.
2. Treasurer Larry Mah reminded the public that real property taxes are due December 20. He explained that this was a statutory requirement as far as the date was concerned. Taxpayers may opt to pay one-half of their real property taxes, with the second half due May 10.

12-12-2024 Board Of County Commission

All 3 Commissioners present

Elvera Johnson, observer

A check for over \$3100 was presented to Project Topeka by representatives of County Employees who held fundraisers in recent weeks.

Following preliminaries, Commissioners heard a presentation by the Planning Department and opened a public hearing that lasted over 1 ½ hours. The focus of the discussion was a proposed development for duplexes, especially focusing on folks over 55. The Planning Department had rejected the request twice previously because of objections from people in the neighborhood who liked the open fields. The owner of the project made considerable changes to the plan in order to address the concerns. After many pro and con presentations, the Commission approved the request.

In a much shorter public hearing, Commissioners approved solid waste services to a development on Croco Road.

Commissioners approved the purchase of metal culverts and also design services for pavement replacement on SE Croco Road. They approved repairs for a ruptured water line and the cooling tower at the Adult Detention Center. They also approved additional health services provided by Armor Health.

Commissioners approved Courthouse elevator cab updates. They approved renewal and security updates for Information Technology.

They approved new playground equipment for Gage Park. They approved a new schedule of fees for use of facilities for tournaments or private parties. They approved a new golf course assistant superintendent position.

For the Health Department, they approved a contract for TB services. They approved renewal of the contract with Erin Locke, MD for Health Officer and Medical Director. They agreed to a contract for a new recruitment campaign to attract applicants for a nurse for the Family Partnership program. For Court Administration, they approved use of remaining funds for a Self Help Center in the Courthouse and for purchase of gallery bench seating.

Commissioners acknowledged annual payment to the 911 Coordinating Council.

Commission authorized execution of contract with Valeo Behavioral Health Care and a contract with TARC for certain social services.

They approved Commissioner Riphahn's appointment of Myron Leinwetter, D.O. to the Planning Commission. They authorized a contract for renewal of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for 3 years.

There was no public comment. The County Treasurer reminded us that real estate taxes are due.

No executive session was called.

Topeka City Council Meeting

November 19, 2024

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All council members, including the mayor, were present either in chambers or on-line. Council member Ortiz was late.

The council approved the appointment of Linda Shove-Morgan to the Topeka Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board, Kyle Mead to the Topeka Housing Authority Advisory

Board, Donna Rae Pearson to the Topeka Landmarks Commission and Samuel Sutton to the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority Board.

The council heard a presentation by the Jayhawk Theater. The Jayhawk is currently closed pending extensive renovation. The Jayhawk received a 6-million-dollar grant from the state. In the future, they will be looking to partner with the city and county to provide matching funds for additional state funds for renovation. Topeka is about 30 years behind sister cities in the development of their historic theater.

The council heard a presentation to update the 2024 preliminary finance report.

The council approved their 2025 legislative priorities as a resolution.

There were two members of the public who commented: One recommended Major Klump for police chief, the other comment pertained to state statute which requires the county to form a committee much like Topeka is forming a committee, to evaluate the form of county government. The mayor also spoke about the applications for the Topeka governance committee still being open for applications.

Topeka City Council Meeting

December 3, 2024

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All council members, including the mayor, were present either in chambers or on-line, except council member Valdivia Alcala.

Christine Steinkuehler, LWVTSC member, was reappointed to the Topeka Landmarks Commission.

At the recommendation of council member Duncan, Rhiannon Friedman, ShaMecha King Simms, James Reardon, Manny Herron and council member Duncan, were appointed to a one-year term to the board of the Topeka Land Bank Board of Trustees.

Council set a date of December 17, 2024 for a public hearing to amend the 2024 general operating budget.

Council members announced a special council meeting on December 6 at Hotel Topeka to discuss operating budget issues. This meeting will not be televised or recorded.

There was one public comment regarding equity in infrastructure spending monies.

There was not a need for an executive session.

Topeka City Council Meeting

December 10, 2024

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All city council members, including the mayor, were present either in chambers or on zoom.

The council heard a presentation by the Assistant City Attorney, Bridgett Markey, on the city managed misdemeanor domestic violence prosecution. The city received a grant to subsidize participants in diversion agreements to receive education and treatment in relationships regarding domestic violence. This is a Department of Justice grant. The providers are the YWCA Center for Safety and Empowerment and Family Peace Initiative.

The agenda was routine. Council members approved a number of resolutions which rebalanced the budget.

The council approved the Citizen Government Review Committee. No league members are on the committee.

There was one public comment and she spoke against taking out the parking meters and paying fees on an app.

There was a need for an executive session to discuss employer/employee relations related to one or more unions.