

## Observer Reports for April Voter

### **SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: MARCH 6, 2025**

Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

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

Please click on the link below for the agenda archive.

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

<b>Feature evaluated</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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		Yes, concerning a personnel matter involving a non-elected official.
Was there a public comment period? If so who appeared and for what purpose?		X	

**Discussion of Issues:**

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action taken:</b>	<b>Relevance to LWV Positions</b>	<b>Recommended Follow-up if any</b>
See below	N/A	N/A	N/a

**Remarks:**

1. There was considerable discussion with Curt Niehaus, head of the Public Works Department, about the planned closure of 46<sup>th</sup> Street between Highway 75 and Topeka Boulevard. 46<sup>th</sup> Street will not be completely closed, with the work to be done in segments. The main concern, although there were others, is that this closure and the closure of Topeka Boulevard over the downtown bridge, along with work that is presently being undertaken on Highway 24, will result in heavy traffic congestions on streets that are not designed for it and possibly in residential areas. The consensus was that the 46<sup>th</sup> Street work was necessary, and that delaying the project would only increase the cost.

2. 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. Currently there does not appear to be any written minutes of the meeting available.

Presentations: Emergency Management concerning Emergency Preparedness Week.

**Shawnee Board of County Commissioners-February 27, 2025**

**Elvera Johnson, observer**

All 3 Commissioners present

The meeting opened with routine approval of consent agenda, voucher payments and correction orders.

Public Works:

Approved a request to solicit construction bids for a bridge replacement on SW Jordan Road over a tributary to the Wakarusa River

Approved a request to solicit bids to widen the District 3 shop’s garage door opening to more easily drive large equipment into the garage

Approved a request to solicit bids for asphalt pavement milling and sweeping services.

Facilities Management: Approved a request to open and fill a new custodial position.

Health Department: Approved reclassification of a registered nurse for maternal and child health outreach as a bilingual Family Health Navigator. This position has been vacant for a while and they were happy to get it filled.

Audit Finance: Approved applications for the use of Transient Guest Taxes for Highway billboards, web advertising and other marketing efforts for the Combat Air Museum, Sunflower Soccer and Top City Marathon Events, with left over funds to go to Stormont Vail Events Center for promotions.

Information Technology: Approved a more efficient system to coordinate workflow and import services, to be used by different departments.

Stormont Vail Events Center:

Approved a waiver of the purchasing policy for several small concrete projects to complete renovation of Heritage Hall

Approved a request to replace the load in garage door in Landon Arena. It failed during the January snow storm. It was the original door.

Sheriff's Office: Acknowledged the purchase of up-fit equipment for the recently purchased Ford Police Interceptor Utility Vehicle.

The Commission acknowledged that Commissioner Mays is reappointing Jeanette Johnson to the Shawnee County Planning Commission.

March 17<sup>th</sup> Work Session cancelled due to conflicts.

Appraiser: Announced that letters will be sent soon with new appraisal information for real estate taxes. There will likely be a slight increase.

Treasurer : Commented on taxes.

No Executive session was called.

## **SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

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Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

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

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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		Termination of the Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs) issued in 2022 for the purchase of the multifamily complex at 3441 SW Burlingame Road (Windchase Apartments) to an out of state developer will be canceled due to the sale of the property to local investors, with the property returning to the tax rolls. Removed from consent agenda to regular agenda.
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:**

<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action taken:</b>	<b>Relevance to LWV Positions</b>	<b>Recommended Follow-up if any</b>
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Remarks:

1. 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. Currently there does not appear to be any written minutes of the meeting available.

Presentations: None.

## **Shawnee Board of County Commissioners-February 13, 2025**

### **Elvera Johnson, observer**

All three commissioners were present.

Unfinished business: County Counselor presented a resolution to establish the Shawnee County Property and Vehicle Insurance Committee. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and the Commission approved it.

Consent agenda, voucher payments and correction orders were approved.

#### Facilities Management:

Commissioners approved the request for proposal (RFP) for installation of new landscaping, irrigation and equipment screen for the Courthouse. The present equipment has not been functioning properly for a few years.

Approved another RFP to replace the water softener and water heater in the Maner Conference Center kitchen.

Approval was given for a 3<sup>rd</sup> RFP to replace the roof on the Courthouse.

Corrections: Commissioners approved the process of selecting the lowest responsive bid for inmate supply purchases for FY 2025.

Information Technology: Commissioners authorized the payment for year 2 of the 3-year contract for backup and disaster recovery services from ThinkGard, LLC.

Stormont Vail Events Center: Commissioners approved the purchase of new basketball goals and modular sports flooring as part of the Basketball Court Repair Project.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Administrative Communications: Mr. Seitz from the Events Center mentioned a number of recent events and several upcoming events.

No Executive Session was called.

## SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING: FEBRUARY 6, 2025

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Observer: Paul Post (pacmanpost@icloud.com)

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

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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	
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**Discussion of Issues:**

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

**Remarks:**

1. 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: None.

**Topeka City Council Meeting-February 18, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

Council member Banks was absent. Several council members were late due to weather.

The council deferred the presentation of the 2025 Strategic Goals and Priorities to March meeting.

The council passed several resolutions in order to authorize various street improvements. The council approved a resolution allowing and extending council members’ ability to attend on line and vote on line.

The council passed several resolutions which amend the policies supporting the Community Improvement District, Tax Increment Financing districts and Rural Housing Incentive District.

Public Comment:

One person provided public comment which provided information how these tax incentive programs could be used for community good such as supporting low- and moderate-income housing.

One public comment about code violation enforcement.

There was no need for executive session.

### **Topeka City Council Meeting-March 4, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

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

The council heard an update by their lobbyist on actions in the Kansas legislature.

They also heard a presentation on the 2025 Strategic Goals and Priorities. Plan includes eliminating DEI initiatives within the city staff.

The agenda was routine with the approval of additional road projects to begin this summer.

The council heard a presentation on the proposed 2025 DREAMS program funding of neighborhood initiatives.

The council also heard a request for an exception to operate a liquor store at 1700 Washburn Ave. Two council members opposed the request.

#### Public comment:

One person was in opposition to the request. No action was taken tonight.

Two people spoke to request the city drop the restraining order and future legal action against the attorney representing the family of the man shot by police recently. The city has taken this action due to the attorney releasing the video of the incident publicly.

The mayor has announced he will not seek re-election and tonight council member Doblér announced he will not seek re-election.

There was not need for an executive session.

### **Topeka City Council Meeting-March 11, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

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

The council appointed Pedro Concepcion to the NOTO Business Improvement District Advisory Board.



The council heard a presentation from the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority and their board regarding plans for future air service in Topeka.

The council heard a presentation on the history and consolidation agreement with the county regarding Parks and Recreation. Discussion of consolidation for this agreement began 15 years ago.

The agenda was mostly routine although discussion included identifying the need for a density use plan.

Public Comment:

The non-action item included one public comment. The council discussion was in preparation for voting on the proposed Reinvestment Housing Incentive District (RHID) regarding future development of 16 properties in the Lauren's Bay development. The **public comment** reminded council members of the need for low and moderate income housing and that this proposal/project provides tax incentives to develop housing at a price point in excess of the average/medium income of families in Topeka.

**Topeka City Government Review Commission-February 19, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

This meeting was the third meeting of this commission which is scheduled to complete their work in June. The meeting was entirely virtual.

The committee spent most of the time brainstorming and outlining their work.

They established basic norms and a meeting schedule for the months of March and April.

The committee held an open discussion with council members Hiller and Duncan about the effectiveness of the form of government. Both felt that there could be improvements but feel like the basic structure is effective.

***The committee discussed inviting the League of Women Voters of Topeka and Shawnee County.***

## **Topeka City Government Review Commission-March 5, 2025**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

This was the fourth meeting of this commission. There were six members present, including council member Miller. The meeting began with discussion of today's and future conferees.

The commission heard from Dr. Perez, city manager, Monique Glaude, community engagement coordinator and Mayor Padilla.

Dr. Perez discussed the strategic goals developed with council members and the public. He stated he did not think city/county consolidation was achievable at this time but thought there were definite areas of cooperation/collaboration. The method for meeting with the county commission is not readily apparent.

Monique Glaude discussed the numerous community engagement activities she is involved with. She also serves as a counsel ombudsperson.

Mayor Padilla provided some philosophical discussion of his thinking about what it means to be mayor of Topeka.

## **Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board-March 7, 2024**

**Observer: Vicki Arnett**

The board did not have a quorum present at 4:00 p.m.

The board heard presentations from Jonathan Sublet, Topeka SENT director and Michael Gibson, KSU Sustainability instructor, who discussed plans for net zero housing development in Shawnee County.