

Special Governing Body Meeting Minutes – June 19, 2019

LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER, Topeka, Kansas, Wednesday, June 19, 2019. The Governing Body members of the City of Topeka met in special session at 6:00 P.M., with the following Councilmembers present: Hiller, Clear, Ortiz, Emerson, Padilla, Jensen, Mays, Coen and Lesser -9. Mayor De La Isla presided -1.

DISCUSSION on the proposed 2020 Operating Budget was presented.

Brent Trout, City Manager, provided opening statements and encouraged the Governing Body to ask questions as they move through each section of the Budget.

Nick Hawkins, Administrative and Financial Services Deputy Director, provided an overview of the following General Fund budgets:

- City Council Office \$376,485
- Mayor's Office \$160,930
- Executive Department \$1.6 million
- Administrative and Financial Services Department \$2.5 million
- Human Resources Department \$1.5 million
- Information Technology Department \$4 million
- Legal Department \$2.55 million

Mayor De La Isla questioned if the City has begun to realize savings related to the City of Topeka Wellness Clinic.

Councilmember Emerson questioned the use of contingency funds in each department and how those funds could be used at the end of each year if available.

Brent Trout stated contingency funds are used to maintain the 20% ending fund balance and can only be used for certain items applicable to each department.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview of the Topeka Fire Department budget totaling \$28.7 million.

Councilmember Ortiz questioned the use of aerial trucks and other large apparatus as it

relates to the fleet services replacement program. She asked for a complete status report on Fire Department vehicles.

Brent Trout stated the fleet services replacement program would only apply to smaller vehicles not the large service vehicles.

Craig Duke, Topeka Fire Chief, stated the replacement program was based on the age and mileage of the vehicle and eliminates the need to use operational funds to replace vehicles.

Councilmember Emerson questioned the inconsistency of debt service funds listed in some departments.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview on the Topeka Police Department budget totaling \$40.9 million and distributed a handout outlining the Police Department allocation of reductions.

Councilmember Emerson asked staff to clarify why it appears the Police Department budget has increased and not decreased.

Bill Cochran, Topeka Police Chief, reported a 3rd shift has been implemented in three divisions as well as overtime will be reduced for community events, reducing overall costs in the long-term.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview of the Municipal Court Department budget totaling \$2.1 million; and the Department of Neighborhood Relations budget totaling \$8.2 million.

Councilmember Clear asked how much grant funding was received in 2019 by the Department of Neighborhood Relations; and what was considered the national average in regards to property code inspection processes from start to finish.

Councilmember Padilla questioned what consumes the most time in processing code cases and noted the City needs to consider providing inspectors the resources needed to efficiently perform their job duties.

Mayor De La Isla stated the complexity of code cases must be taken into account as well as personnel needs.

Sasha Haehn, Department of Neighborhood Relations Director, provided brief overview of property code statistics. She stated a geographical reduction of the area of each inspector would help tremendously; however, inspectors continue to do a great job of doing more with less – the same as other departments. She noted state laws relating to property continue to delay the processing of code cases significantly.

Councilmember Mays questioned if contracted services were utilized to clean-up properties.

Councilmember Hiller reported that inspectors work hard and provide excellent customer service no matter the volume of cases. She questioned how many inmate crews are being utilized and the productivity resulting in the use of the inmate crews.

Councilmember Lesser stated he concurs with Councilmember Hiller and commended code property inspectors for their hard work and prompt response to code violations. He questioned if the City has the ability to revise code for the purpose of addressing unsafe structures in a more efficient timeframe

Sasha Haehn stated the outlying clean-up of properties was the responsibility of the City contracted through inmate crews along with a two-man abatement crew. She stated she believes the City has the ability to manage dangerous structures; however, blighted properties are a very different problem.

Councilmember Hiller suggested staff submit any code revisions related to property maintenance to the Policy and Finance Committee for review.

Councilmember Jensen reminded the Governing Body if they revise the property maintenance code to accommodate the prosecution of more cases they will need to increase

resources in Municipal Court.

Councilmember Ortiz expressed the importance of educating citizens on property maintenance code requirements. She questioned if area sweeps could be conducted, and if property code inspectors could assist each other before they consider increasing personnel.

Sasha Haehn highlighted programs offering education and noted they always work with a property owner if they are actively working to improve their property.

Mayor De La Isla requested a work session be conducted on property code maintenance and its processes.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview on the Planning and Development Department budget totaling \$3.1 million.

Councilmember Emerson asked if non-profit companies and government buildings are required to pay for permits.

Bill Fiander, Planning and Development Director, reported non-profit companies and government entities are required to pay building permit fees.

Nick Hawkins provided an overview on the Zoo and Conservation Center Department budget totaling \$2.65 million as well as other funds included in the non-departmental General Fund.

Councilmember Jensen asked if there are plans to privatize the Zoo in 2020.

Nick Hawkins reported the budget was prepared under the assumption that Zoo operations would continue under the City; however, they do anticipate discussions to continue on the privatization of the Topeka Zoo.

Councilmember Hiller questioned the increase in funding of \$56,000 for Special Alcohol grants listed in the Social Services program proposed budget. She noted the two funds have always been separate and not intermingled.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

(SEAL)

Brenda Younger
City Clerk