



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: February 20, 2024

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room; Cyrus K. Holliday Building 620 SE Madison
(*virtual attendance option also available*)

Committee members present: Council members Sylvia Ortiz, David Banks, and Neil Dobler

City staff present: Interim City Manager Richard Nienstedt, Public Works Director Braxton Copley

Call to Order

Committee member Ortiz called the meeting to order at 11:03am. Committee members introduced themselves.

Election of 2024 Committee Chair

Committee member Dobler nominated Committee member Ortiz to serve as the Chair for 2024. Committee member Ortiz accepted the nomination. Committee unanimously approved nomination 3-0-0. Committee member Ortiz will serve as the 2024 Chair.

Amendment to Project Budget and Scope of TPAC/City Hall HVAC Project

Public Works Director Braxton Copley introduced this item. Good news shared included a decrease to the project budget by \$2.6M. The project budget that had been approved by the Governing Body was \$21.2M. Even with the reduction, the project will be able to have an increased scope to include the last two additional HVAC systems that were developed by the consultant. Those were not initially chosen because of the cost. Being able to add those two systems in will allow the City to get rid of all of the steam piping systems to create a much better product for City Hall and the Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC). Director Copley stated there had been numerous environmental remediation issues such as asbestos, copper and mold, that this increased scope will allow the City to address. The last two items will allow the City to replace the chilled water piping, which currently has an advanced level of corrosion and will need to be addressed. Staff has identified that there is currently some low-voltage wiring that is running through the plenum. Unfortunately, the low-voltage wiring is not rated to be in a plenum. Staff is looking at finding an alternate route, but some upgrades in terms of low-voltage wiring will be needed.

Committee member Dobler sought confirmation that highlights of this information provided was that Staff was able to reduce the budget from \$21M to \$18M, and it will add a number of items to the original scope without deleting anything from the original scope? Director Copley confirmed that to be correct.

MOTION: Committee member Dobler made a motion to approve the amendment. Committee member Banks seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

FIRM Program Update

Director Copley provided a memo and update to the Committee about the Facilities Improvements, Repair and Maintenance (FIRM) Program. He reminded the Committee that, during the adoption of the CIP, a motion was made to cash fund and remove the FIRM program from the CIP. As such, it does not have the same strictures that other CIP projects have. Staff also is not mandated to seek the Committee and Governing Body's approval for projects over \$250K for the FIRM projects.

FIRM Program Updates include:

- An emergency gas line replacement. Cost \$9,350.
- During re-roofing project of City Hall's Municipal Court, it was discovered that the current edition of the International Building Code stated there cannot be more than two layers of a roof membrane on a roof. Finding there were already two layers means the City is required to perform a complete removal. That has increased the project cost by a total of \$65K.
- Staff plans to move forward with a remodel of Fire Station #9. Cost will be \$868K.
- Second phase of TPAC's facia work. The first phase was budgeted at \$250K, the second phase is budgeted at \$240K.
- The last item is to replace the boilers at the Law Enforcement Center. These are past their useful life. This project is budgeted at \$400K.
- Other items are listed in the memo to be picked up under the 2024 FIRM Program. One such project is in the very early preliminary design process to address the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues on the east side of TPAC. There is no accessible path on the east side, so people have to follow a torturous path on the west side to get across to reach Municipal Court and the Governing Body Chambers.

Committee member Dobler asked Director Copley to speak more about the projects at City Hall and the Law Enforcement Center, and what the completion of these projects will do in regard to the life of the building. He also noted that there had been discussions, a few years ago, about possibly moving the LEC as it may be in conjunction with the Polk-Quincy Viaduct project. Director Copley stated City Hall and TPAC were historic buildings, and that there were some state historic tax

credits that the City will be eligible to receive. These would be leveraged to help fund the additional costs. He noted that, as part of the rehabilitation, the project is largely building envelope issues. The renovations should add another 50 to 75 years out of going in and doing all of the repairs to the façade. There were significant issues, in terms of the HVAC. Many of the pieces of equipment were original to the building, and were built into place. In order to remove those, contractors had to cut and chunk those up. A new mechanical system is typically estimated to have a 20-year useful lifespan. It will also be significantly more energy efficient and sets up TPAC and City Hall for many years of use without the deferred maintenance hanging over. Many times, it was not efficient to go in and repair an antiquated HVAC system, because it would oftentimes take a lot of additional time waiting for parts.

With both, the TPAC/City Hall and LEC projects, the goal is to be able to address some of the mechanical issues. Replacing the boilers with new, more energy efficient ones, puts the City in good shape of moving forward. There are some structural issues to deal with, in terms of parking lots, and roof deck patching.

Committee member Banks inquired about the improvements to Fire Station 9, specifically about the additional bay, and asked if it was adding a third bay, or increasing the height? Director Copley responded the project would add height to the bay. This will allow the newer and modern equipment, that is larger than the old engines, to fit.

Chairwoman Ortiz voiced opposition to adding an island in the kitchen of the fire house. She noted that such an item was added to Fire Station 3 during that remodel and it has been a waste of space that the Fire Fighters do not use. She felt it took away from space in the living quarters. Director Copley responded that concern would be noted, and added that Fire staff were also going to be included in the conversation to seek their input.

Chairwoman Ortiz inquired if the only projects scheduled for Fire Stations 4 and 6 were the window replacement? Or was that only part of a phase that would include other projects? Deputy Director Jason Tryon stated window replacement for all of the Fire Stations was on the initial plan. The first phase of the renovations plan was to address components that were not the interior “creature comforts” of the Fire Stations. When the window project was bid out, the costs for windows at Stations 4 & 6 were significantly different than the other stations due to the historical nature of the buildings. As such, staff split some of the Stations into one bid package, and Fire Stations 4 & 6 were removed and will be their own bid package in order to get the most efficient use of funds possible.

No action is required by the Committee.

Amendment to 2024 Street Contracted Preventative Maintenance Project; Streets Impacted by Polk-Quincy Viaduct Project

Director Copley stated Staff is seeking approval of an amendment to the existing Street Preventative Maintenance Program to add an additional \$1M to the program. He noted the Contracted Preventative Maintenance program has historically been funded at \$2M. This is the microsurfacing and crack sealing project. In the old days, pavement management was always done in a “worst first” order. That has transformed over the past 20 years and staff has identified that it is far less costly to keep the good streets in good condition, rather than to go in and do full-depth reconstruction. Public Works has been able to move the needle on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) significantly over the past six years. The overall PCI in 2016 was 54. As of the last inventory that was performed in 2022, that rating had improved by 13 points, to a 67. In addition to crack sealing and microsurfacing, the additional \$1M will go toward Ultra-thin Bonded Asphalt Surface (UBAS). The pilot project that was done in the summer of 2023 was on Kansas Avenue between 29th Street and 37th Street. [Director Copley showed before and after photos of this project]. The UBAS is 5/8” thick, so it is laid down with a paving machine, as opposed to microsurfacing that is only ¼” thick and is really an asphaltic binder with a bit of aggregate chip in it. He noted that in conversations with other towns who have used UBAS, they have had positive reviews in terms of it being able to withstand additional wear and tear on arterial streets.

Director Copley stated that, in advance of the Polk-Quincy Viaduct project, where I-70 will be closed at McVicar, there will be a tremendous amount of traffic that will be diverted down McVicar and entering into the city through 6th Street. Part of the program will cover the UBAS treatment of 6th Street from McVicar to Madison, as well as from Madison and Monroe from 6th Street to 10th Street. Staff is seeking approval of the Resolution so that the project can be completed this summer.

MOTION: Committee member Dobler made a motion to approve the amendment to the Resolution to include the addition of \$1M to the project. Committee member Banks seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

Amendment to 2024 CIP; Creation of Street Light Program and Pilot Solar Light Projects

Director Copley introduced an amendment to the CIB which would create a street light replacement program. It would be funded out of a city-wide half-cent sales tax. The ballot question allows for street lights to be paid for out of the city-wide half-cent sales tax. Staff has established a couple of pilot programs utilizing solar lighting. A benefit to this program is that the City does not have to pay for the electricity, and does not have to pay to run a conduit and wire to get to the lights. [Director Copley showed a demonstration video of the project that is out by the Walmart Distribution Center]. He noted that the solar street lights near the Walmart Distribution Center has been very well received and has worked wonderfully. The City had received complaints from Walmart’s General Manager about the lack of lighting. This is what led the City to look into this program. Fonroche is the manufacturer of these particular lights. Staff performed a tremendous amount of research, because 20 years ago, the City tried a solar light project that was a failure;

primarily because the batteries were not sufficiently large enough to illuminate the light all night long, and the technology from back then simply was not adequate. These lights from Fonroche has a proven track record in northern Europe. Staff knew if they could withstand those winters, they would be able to withstand Kansas winters. The pilot program performed admirable, even during the subarctic freeze, when there were multiple days without sunlight and -10 degrees.

Director Copley stated the intent of the program is to provide the City with a funding source. The City typically loses 10 to 12 light poles annually. There is also a challenge on the north side of 6th Street, where street lights have been broken into twice, and have had all of the copper wiring stripped out. That corridor is not currently illuminated in this area. Director Copley feels this would be a great place to place the solar lights, so there is no longer a need for copper to provide a target for thieves.

For these reasons, Director Copley requested support to allow the City to fund the use of city-wide half-cent sales tax in the amount of \$100K, annually, for a street light program.

Committee member Dobler inquired about the cost of a solar powered street light. Director Copley state that the ones at the Walmart Distribution Center are “commercial graded” and are just under \$10K.

MOTION: Committee member Dobler made a motion to approve the Resolution. Committee member Banks seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

2024 Alley & Sanitary Sewer Projects Exceeding \$250K

Director Copley introduced two Resolutions regarding alley and sanitary sewer projects exceeding \$250K.

The first project/Resolution is the 1800 block between SW Lincoln and SW Buchanan. It is a DREAMS 2 program. The cost of the alley is \$114K and the sewer is \$180K, with a total project cost of \$294K. Director Copley stated that one of the first things he factors in, when looking at an alley project, is what the condition and age of the sanitary sewer underneath. It is likely, in this part of town, that it is likely 100-year-old vitrified clay sewer pipe. Those would be replaced with new PVC sewers.

The second project/Resolution is the 1900 block between SW Lincoln and SW Buchanan. The total project cost is \$400K.

Chairwoman Ortiz inquired about the scope of the projects. Director Copley stated they would be full-depth reconstruction of the alley, in concrete. Once the sanitary sewer is replaced, reconstruction to include 7” reinforced concrete would then be laid back down.

MOTION: Committee member Dobler made a motion to approve both Resolutions as presented. Committee member Banks seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

2024 Pavement Management Program Projects Exceeding \$250K

Director Copley introduced three Resolutions, which all fell under the Pavement Management Program and were all to be Mill & Overlay, with full-depth patching as necessary.

The first project is on Menninger Road, from Green Hills Road to Rochester Road.

The second project is on NW Elm Row, from Spangles to Topeka Boulevard. This project will include some storm water work as well.

The third project is on SE Greenfield Court. This is a long cul-de-sac.

MOTION: Committee member Dobler made a motion to approve all three projects, as presented. Committee member Banks seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0-0.

Discussion: Fleet Garage [Video minute mark 24:39]

Director Copley noted the discussion today of the fleet garage was to further discussions and receive guidance from the Committee on next moves. Based on the overview that was provided to the Governing Body at the February 6, 2024 meeting, and the analysis of what staff has looked at over the past three years, Director Copley stated it would be staff's recommendation to move forward with an amendment to the CIP to provide funding for a light-duty fleet garage. The preliminary cost estimate, provided by the architect, is at \$5.5M. The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has approved \$2.4M, the City has an additional \$748K request out to them for compensation for the existing fleet garage, leaving the delta in the range of \$2.35M to \$3.1M. Director Copley has spoken to the Finance Department and have made a request for ending fund balance to be able to cash fund the Delta. That request will be on the March 5, 2024 Governing Body meeting agenda. The decision would be alternate of GO Bonds or cash-ending balance.

If the Committee approves the resolution, the Governing Body would then also be asked to approve it. This is the first step of a long journey. In Q1 of 2025, the existing fleet garage is being demolished. The City will need to find a temporary home to get us through for a year and a half, to allow time for a new garage to be constructed.

Following approval of today's resolution, the next step would be to put together an RFP. Staff would go out and select a design build consultant. That contract would come back to the Committee and Governing Body. And, because the project is over \$250K, it would require Governing Body approval before being put out to bid. So,

prior to actual construction, the Governing Body would have another opportunity to look at the scope of the project location. This is a first step in a long journey.

Chairwoman Ortiz inquired if we were still looking for a location? Director Copley confirmed and stated his recommendation would be to move the fleet garage to the Madison Street parking lot. The City already owns that land and it is tax exempt. It is centrally located to the Holliday Building, the Law Enforcement Center and City Hall. Staff has brought forward a total of 12 other possible locations, that were either bare dirt, or existing buildings, and most were removed from the list for various reasons. Some were located in the flood plain, some would be more expensive to rehabilitate than to build new.

Director Copley noted that, due to the uniqueness of the facility and understanding that not just any building can be converted without a tremendous amount of expense, he would prefer to have a consultant and design build team hired to make recommendations as to the best path forward to put before the Governing Body.

Committee member Dobler asked Director Copley to speak on the temporary situation for the next year and a half, and what he is currently envisioning. Director Copley discussed the following:

- The old Sears garage, located by Mainline Printing. City staff spoke with them previously, and they planned to tear the building down and cited other issues on that location.
- 19th Street and Topeka Boulevard has an old garage. While Director Copley would not want to remain there long-term, it could be a possibility. However, staff has reached out to the owner numerous times and have not received any response to date. There had also been rumors of substantial environmental issues due to flooding in a previous event, so it is unknown if that would even be a safe location.
- Staff has spoken to KDOT, and they have offered a couple of stalls at their facility on Gage Boulevard, but three stalls does not get the job done when the City is used to having 16 stalls and trying to keep a couple hundred police vehicles in service.
- There have been questions about whether or not the City should continue to be in the business of providing fleet services. It is staff's opinion that continuing with having an internal fleet service would ensure we are offering a better service for a lower cost, than if the City were to engage a third-party.

Committee member Dobler clarified that, even if the measure were to pass today, the City would still need to find a temporary space. A new garage could not be built or renovated and ready for service by the time the old garage comes down. Director Copley confirmed. He continued that, even if he were able to move forward with the design build contract at this moment, the process would still be a year and a half out, in terms of getting the garage designed, and getting it constructed.

Committee member Dobler stated he would be in support of this request today, in order to move it forward. He referenced to a comment made by another Council member at the February 6th meeting and agreed that, if the City is going to take a year and a half to be in a temporary space, to use the time to ensure the new facility will have everything we need and would anticipate needing in the future from a function standpoint. He also felt it may be worth the time, especially if hiring a consultant, to explore whether there would be an opportunity to build a consolidated fleet facility with other local entities, such as the MTAA, Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library, and others.

Chairwoman Ortiz noted she had spoken with Director Copley previously about an opportunity to put the fleet garage in East Topeka, at 6th and Deer Creek Trafficway, where the old Falley's Grocery Store was. She was not sure if that opportunity to purchase the area was still present, but felt some benefits of that location included:

- Close proximity to I-70
- It would clean up the area and send a good message to the residents that the City is concerned about East Topeka.
- Replacing dilapidated buildings with a new facility.
- May reduce crime in the area, as there would be more police activity in the area as they come and go from the garage.

Chairwoman Ortiz inquired about the current parking at the Madison location would be impacted if the garage were to be built there? Director Copley confirmed there would be an impact, in terms of where we usually temporarily park busses that are shuttling people to events at TPAC, but that staff was considering other potential solutions. There are other spaces in the City. Staff is also talking to the owners at the Madison Street Apartments, as many of the residents do not drive or utilize their parking lot.

[There was an inquiry from a member of the public to request the opportunity for public comment. Chairwoman Ortiz referenced Governing Body Rule 8.10, and denied the request.]

Committee member Banks asked Director Copley to speak further about why the Sears Building would not work for the City's needs. Public Works Deputy Director Jason Tryon met on-site with the owners of Mainline Printing and toured the facility. Deputy Director Tryon noted the City would be willing to explore and temporary facilities that would be suitable. In the meeting with Mainline Printing, the City was told that leasing the facility did not meet into their long-term plans. That was the last conversation that was had with Mainline Printing, and it was in the Summer of 2023. Other potential properties were researched. Deputy Director Tryon voiced an openness to meeting with Mainline Printing again, if their plans or timeline has changed and will be willing to entertain if that will be a cost-effective solution as a temporary location.

Interim City Manager Richard Nienstedt voiced support for the work that Director Copley and his staff have done to research and bring forward. He wanted to make clear to the public that this is a building that the City is going to take the time to build/renovate the new facility the correct way to meet today's standards, and hopefully also build it in a way to potentially accommodate for unknown future technology. The goal will be to have a building that will last at least two generations, maybe three.

Chairwoman Ortiz voiced support for keeping fleet services in-house. She feels it is very important for the City to maintain the ability to control the priority of service to vehicles based on use and needs. That ability to prioritize certain vehicles would not be possible with a third-party service.

MOTION: Committee member Dobler made a motion to approve the amending of the CIP/CIB to add \$5,575,000 for the fleet building. Committee member Banks seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

Other Items

Committee member Dobler would like to request additional information from Public Works about Topeka Boulevard, and to possibly have a more robust conversation about it at the next Committee meeting. Director Copley provided the following details about plans for 2024, as it relates to Topeka Boulevard:

- Currently in design process for a project on Topeka Blvd from 21st Street to 29th Street. This will go out to bid at the end of March, for the summer construction season. The project will involve full-depth reconstruction of 21st Street which will require a full closure. There will also be waterline that needs to be stick-built going west to east through that area.
- Topeka Blvd from south of 21st Street to 29th Street will be a mill & overlay, with full-depth patching and some additional curb and guttering. This project is also planned to take place in the 2024 construction season.
- Currently in the consultation process for Topeka Blvd from 15th Street to 21st Street which is a JEDO funded project. That will allow the City to complete some potentially full-depth reconstruction. There have been discussions at JEDO meetings and discussions with the Governing Body. The original project was scoped and budgeted in the CIP for full-depth reconstruction, however after discussions at JEDO and with the Governing Body, staff will instruct the consultant to present a few different options. Those will be presented to the Governing Body for additional guidance.

Director Copley stated the request may be for a mill and overlay, with limited full-depth patching. But he would come back with additional options to also include what a full reconstruction might look like, to include reconstruction of utilities as well as adding some Complete Streets items.

- Topeka Boulevard from 29th Street to 38th Street will occur in 2026 and 2027. It will be a mill & overlay project. The majority of the work will be completed in

2026, but the intersections at 37th Street and at 29th Street will need a full-depth reconstruction in concrete. Due to the turning movements and the large trucks that utilize those areas, there is a need for a superior surface. He does not feel it is realistic to complete both projects in one year, so the plan will be to one in 2026, and the other in 2027.

- Topeka Boulevard from 38th Street to 49th Street is scheduled for 2028. It will be largely a mill & overlay, with full-depth patching as needed.

Interim City Manager Nienstedt stated that pothole repairs have continued, and will still be continued to address them as quickly as possible.

Adjourn

Chairwoman Ortiz adjourned the meeting at 11:48am.

This meeting can be viewed online at:

<https://youtu.be/s9C0B2ps5Sg?si=0PRScEMFeljJSA4L>