



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC WORKS INFRASTRUCTURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Suite 255
Topeka, KS 66603-3914
Tel: 785-368-3710
Fax: 785-368-3958
www.topeka.org

Date: October 27, 2020

Time: 3:00pm

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room, Holliday Building, 620 Madison

Committee members present: Deputy Mayor Tony Emerson, Councilmembers Neil Dobler, and Michael Lesser

Councilmember Michael Padilla was absent.

City staff present: City Manager Brent Trout; Engineering Staff: Brian Faust (Engineer), Jehan Zeb; Public Works Staff: Jaci Vogel (Deputy Director), Hannah Uhrig (Deputy Director), Dan Hanover; Planning Staff: Bill Fiander (Director) Utilities Staff: Bob Sample (Director), Braxton Copley (Deputy Director); Finance Staff: Jessica Lamendola (Director), Stephen Wade, Rachelle Mathews; Legal Staff: Lisa Robertson (City Attorney), Mary Feighny (Deputy City Attorney)

Call to Order

Chairman Tony Emerson called the meeting to order at 3:00PM. Committee members and Staff introduced themselves.

Approve minutes from September 28, 2020 meeting

Chairman Dobler made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Lesser seconded the motion. Minutes approved 3:0.

Resolution - 2021 Citywide Sales Tax Projects

Brian Faust, City Engineer, provided an overview of the resolution that was presented to the committee members. If approved by the governing body, the resolution defines specific city-wide half-cent sales tax projects for 2021. The resolution contains two exhibits; exhibit A - lists projects with budget figures in excess of \$250,000 which are funded in part or whole with city-wide half-cent sales tax and exhibit B lists projects of less than \$250,000 which are funded in part or whole with city-wide half-cent sales tax and do not include budget figures. The projects that are listed in the resolution fall under the various programs and were not specifically defined within the adopted CIP. The resolution does contain three projects that were not discussed at the previous meetings; the first one is on line 121 of the resolution and it's for SW Westport drive from 17th to Wanamaker as that road is failing and in desperate need of reconstruction, the second one is line 162

and is for concrete and joint repair city-wide as needed, and line 165 is for asphalt patching on projects that are larger than can be handled by the City's operations division. The recommended course of action would be to forward the attached resolution to the Governing Body with a recommendation of approval.

With no additional questions, Mr. Faust read through all of the projects listed in the Resolution.

Chairman Dobler made a motion to approve the Resolution for recommendation to move to the Governing Body. Committee member Lesser seconded the motion. Resolution approved 3:0.

Alley Program

Mr. Faust, City Engineer, provided an update on the 2021 alley program. They use this funding to reconstruct alleys based on requests from constituents. The cost on each individual alley can vary depending upon conditions; examples of potential variables would be proximity of structures and the location of utilities. So the current funding covers between two and four blocks annually. Funding was increased in 2021 from \$250,000 to \$500,000. Mr. Faust read through the list of alley reconstruction projects for the year 2021 and the criteria for alley prioritization.

Committee member Emerson inquired if the repairs were for paved or gravel alleys. Mr. Faust stated that it was mainly gravel or milled alleys that they receive requests for, but will replace paved alleys that are failing.

Chairman Dobler asked about combining project plans to include Utility work that may be needed. Mr. Faust responded that they take into consideration if there is older utility infrastructure under the alley and when possible will have the utilities inspect the infrastructure.

Joe Ledbetter, public constituent, presented the idea of abandoning or removing some alleys.

Curb & Gutter Program

Mr. Faust discussed that the Curb & Gutter Program replaces curbs and gutters identified by citizens, replacement as a result of mill and overlay projects or reconstruction projects. The current funding level for 2021 is \$1.25 million per year. The city's road network does consist of roads with open ditches and roads with asphalt, stone, brick, metal, and concrete curbs. The vast majority of curb and gutter in Topeka is concrete and while concrete of all ages can fail, there was a timeframe when limestone aggregate was softer and absorbed more moisture. During freeze-thaw cycles that aggregate failed with the resulting failure in the concrete. Failures typically appear at joints in the concrete and propagate outward. This is known as D-cracking and can be seen on the photograph presented in the

packet. Previously, the city used to work on the oldest complaint first, which resulted in inefficiencies due to the contractor jumping around the city. Due to the large bid packets, contractors used projects as fill in work and could take into the following year to complete. In 2019, the city used heat maps to evaluate clustered reports and have contractors work in a specific area. In addition, in 2019 and 2020 the city used this funding to help pay for curb replacement in the mill and overlay areas. Mr. Faust provided the curb replacement selection criteria in further detail.

Committee member Emerson inquired which is more cost effective the smaller or current larger bid packages. Mr. Faust stated that due to target area projects the City is receiving a better price. The City is no longer doing the smaller bid packages. Mr. Ledbetter inquired how current larger bid packages differ from previous smaller bid packages and how the program is funded. Mr. Faust responded that by working in a concentrated area, staff can maintain better contacts on the contractor and are able to enforce tighter timeframes on the projects. Mr. Ledbetter inquired about the funding for the program. Mr. Faust answered that the program is funded through the City's Half-cent Sales Tax.

ADA Ramp Program

Mr. Faust provided a brief overview of the ADA Ramp program. This program provides for maintenance and installation of accessible ramps and curb cuts at intersections throughout the city in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The city currently has approximately 8,000 ramps across the city, with approximately 1,200 more locations needed. Construction costs vary on the surrounding conditions of the grade, the right-of-way availability, utilities, etc. The current funding level of \$300,000 per year does equate to between 100-150 ramps being replaced each year. The area worked is typically in the same general area as our infill sidewalk program. Staff does hold a small amount of funding back to address individual ramp requests across the city that come in each year. Examples were provided during the presentation of where ramps are needed.

Mr. Ledbetter inquired when this program started and how locations are decided. Mr. Faust responded that the program started back around 1990 and that as he mentioned previously the work is in the same area as the infill sidewalk program. He will also check on why the ramps were replaced under the Polk-Quincy viaduct.

50/50 Sidewalk Program

Mr. Faust explained that the sidewalk repair program in the CIP is commonly known as the 50/50 Sidewalk Program. Currently the city funds the sidewalk program that repairs existing deteriorated sidewalks at various locations throughout the city. The program provides matching funds to allow residential properties to repair sidewalks that are out of compliance with current codes. Current funding is \$100,000 per year. The current process with this is that engineering bids out just general sidewalk panel replacement at the beginning of each year. When a complaint comes in about a sidewalk, city staff reviews the sidewalk for broken sections or trip

hazards. The property owner is then notified of the issues and told about the 50/50 program. If they elect to participate in the program Engineering provides a detailed cost based on bid prices. Once the City receives payment for 50% of the cost, then their name is put on a list, and the contractor is notified once 5-7 names are on a list. Staff is proposing a different process for 2021, the city would respond to complaints as before and would notify the property owner. The property owner would be notified on the cost the City would cover but would only be reimbursed after the City has inspected the work and received a copy of the paid invoice. Pros and Cons for both processes were discussed.

Chairman Dobler inquired about the likelihood of the homeowner receiving the same bid quote for a sidewalk project that the City receives. Mr. Faust responded that the homeowner would probably receive a higher bid price. Staff has looked at either paying 50% of the amount the homeowner's contractor charges or 50% of what the current bid prices are. Chairman Dobler would like to find a way to find a compromise that would allow the city to pre-qualify contractors and provide a list of those contractors to the homeowner to choose from. In many of the areas that are needing sidewalks replaced, the homeowners do not have the financial means to pay the higher bid price that contractors will be charging them.

Committee member Lesser voiced concern on the higher cost to the homeowner. He also voiced concern of the current 30 day completion date and stated he felt small projects such as a piece of sidewalk would be a lower priority of contractors than larger-scaled jobs. He would like to suggest extending the timeframe to 60 days.

Committee Member Emerson echoed Committee Member Lesser concerns on how it is hard for homeowners to get a concrete contractor to come out for two panels of sidewalk. Wondered if the city could have a pre-approved contractor list and with pre-negotiated pricing. Mr. Faust will do some investigation on this and will see if they can negotiate prices that would be good for a quarter or a year.

Draft Agenda for November

Will bring back the 50/50 Sidewalk Program for additional discussion. Next meeting will occur on Tuesday, November 17th from 3:00-5:00pm.

Items from Staff

Mr. Faust informed the committee that the city did hold its 2022 - 2031 CIP internal kickoff meeting last week. Stephen Wade, Budget & Performance Manager, stated that they have a tentative scheduled set up depending on the needs and requirements of this committee for next year. The current plan is for projects to be turned back in in early December in order to allow for a conversation with the City Manager. They would like to schedule a meeting with the Governing Body around January 19th, 2021, to go over the overall finances. They would like to meet with this committee prior to that date. Feedback from these meetings will go back to the CIP committee with the workshops tentatively scheduled for early February.

Jessica Lamendola, Director of Administrative & Financial Services, stated Staff would like to bring the 2022-2031 CIP list to the committee prior to taking it to the Governing Body on January 19th. She noted the Governing Body discussion will be broader at the initial discussion to help explain the overall process. Committee Member Emerson responded that this committee is only looking at those CIP projects that already have budgets. Chairman Dobler noted the intent was for the committee to be formed to review and approve projects for the upcoming year rather than the entire list of the full timeframe. Ms. Lamendola requested additional feedback as she understood the committee would look at projects in the proposed 2022-2031 CIP. This would give the committee an opportunity to give feedback as to whether a project should be removed or reviewed further before proceeding to the Governing Body. Chairman Dobler feels part of the goal is to identify what makes the most sense for staff and the Governing Body. There is a lot of information that is presented each year. He would like to know which of the projects Staff would recommend need to have more attention paid to them. Ms. Lamendola indicated that the Finance staff would meet with Engineering staff prior to the January committee meeting to identify such projects that might need feedback from the committee. Finance will receive the project list in December. At that time, they will be able to identify anything that may fall outside of the normal program and can give the committee some advanced notice before January.

Mr. Ledbetter made a request that items being presented to the committee be made available on the City's website prior to the meeting to allow for the public to bring forward any questions they may have on an item. Mr. Faust and Council Assistant noted meeting materials could be posted to the Committee's webpage. Materials related to the agenda will be posted to the committee's webpage prior to the meetings.

Items from Committee

None.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 4:06pm.

Meeting video can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/10xN4ONmvcQ>