



CITY OF TOPEKA

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC WORKS INFRASTRUCTURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL
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Date: December 21, 2020

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: This meeting was entirely virtual via Zoom.

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

City staff present: Jehan Zeb, Stephen Wade, Robert Bidwell, Jaci Vogel, Hannah Uhlig, Mark Price, Mary Feighny, Jessica Lamendola, Brent Trout, Ian Forbes, Dan Hanover, Jason Tryon, Lisa Robertson, Braxton Copley

Call to Order

Chairman Dobler called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

Approve Minutes from October 27th and November 17th, 2020 meetings

Committee member Emerson made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee member Padilla seconded the motion. Motion passes 4:0.

Pipe Replacement Projects & Overview of other Utility Projects (0:02:45)

City Manager Brent Trout introduced the presentation, stating this was not initially in the scope of the committee's tasks, however felt it was appropriate to share the information.

Braxton Copley, Utilities Deputy Director, provided a presentation. *[The presentation will be available to view at <https://www.topeka.org/citycouncil/public-infrastructure/>]*

Committee member Emerson inquired the following:

- How many of the projects are for regulatory benefit and how many are for the department's benefit? - The majority of the projects are for regulatory reasons.
- Are there any grants or other financial incentives offered to offset some of the City's cost? - No, they are unfortunately unfunded mandates. One potential funding source are the State Revolving Loan Funds (SRLF), but due to the City's bond rating there is no benefit to taking an SRLF.
- Chairman Dobler noted the bio-gas project had potential for incentives. Mr. Copley agreed and estimates \$1.7 million annually from the sale of the gas and tax credits.

Update: Fleet Replacement Program (00:29:00)

Hannah Uhrig, Public Works Deputy Director, reviewed the updated Fleet Replacement program. Of note, there had been a request by the Chair to see examples of the City's fleet compared to the model referenced in the Mercury Report. Ms. Uhrig further described the information found from the real data versus the Mercury Recommended Replacement data.

Committee member Emerson inquired if the vast majority of the vehicles would share similar figures. Ms. Uhrig stated that PD (Police Department) tries to rotate and switch out patrol vehicles around the 3-year mark to extend the life of a vehicle. Not all vehicles will look like this as it is a random sample.

Chairman Dobler asked that this item be placed on future agendas and to provide a high-level summary of the program today.

Ms. Uhrig continued with the program review.

Chairman Dobler stated as he understood the recommendation to be, on which vehicles would be more cost-effective to lease and which to not.

Committee member Padilla inquired if the TPD SUV's were classified as trucks, or something else. Ms. Uhrig noted she could send information regarding the types of vehicles, as well as information on the Sedan's.

Committee member Emerson inquired if there are other departments that would need sedans versus trucks. Ms. Uhrig noted if there are more gas miles being put on the vehicle, it may be more cost-effective to purchase sedans. With regard to resale value, staff is looking at ways to modify some of the hybrid vehicles in a way that would reduce the permanent modifications to the vehicle. If the vehicle requires modifications, then it may not be advantageous to lease.

Action: Recommendation to adopt the change to the Governing Body Rules (00:50:30)

Chairman Dobler asked the committee members to provide input on whether the committee has added value, and if they would want to make it a permanent standing committee.

Committee member Emerson would like to make it into a standing committee and noted he felt this committee may touch more of the constituent's day-to-day lives than the other committees.

Committee member Padilla would also like to see this committee become a standing committee.

Committee member Lesser concurred with the other committee members.

Chairman Dobler stated he felt there was value with being able to have the types of discussions and presentations that have been had, and would like to create this to be a standing committee. He also recommended quarterly department presentations be made at these meetings rather than the current practice of presenting them at Governing Body meetings.

City Manager Trout stated he felt there was a great deal of benefit to create this as a standing committee. He noted guidance provided from the committee on the priority of programs and making decisions/recommendations.

Mary Feighny, Deputy City Attorney, stated that it would just be a motion to approve the amendment to the governing body rules, adding this committee as a permanent standing committee.

Chairman Dobler asked for a motion to direct this on to the governing body for approval.

Committee member Emerson made a motion, Committee member Padilla seconded the motion. Motion passes 4:0.

Items from Staff - Update: 50/50 Sidewalk Repair Program (00:56:55)

Robert Bidwell, Engineering, noted the topic of the 50/50 sidewalk repair program was brought up at an earlier meeting. Engineering and Legal have been working on the best approach to continue the 50/50 program. The approach that Staff has come up with is to bid the repairs portion out, and accept all of the bids from contractors. This would change from the current process which selects the low bid only. Applicants for the 50/50 program would be sent a list of the contractors with their bid prices, and the amount covered by the City. The City would cover the portion of the low-bid. The property owner would hire the contractor, the City would inspect the completed project. The contractor would invoice the City for their portion of the payment, and would be responsible for contacting the property owner for their portion of payment.

Chairman Dobler noted that past practice was for the City to bid the project out and a bill would be sent to the homeowner. Mr. Bidwell stated a number of jobs would be solicited in a single bid, and then would send the information to the homeowner. Under the proposed approach, the contractor will bill the City for the contracted portion, and would then bill the homeowner directly. Chairman Dobler felt this was an acceptable compromise.

Councilwoman Sylvia Ortiz inquired about what would happen if the homeowner doesn't pay their portion. Ms. Feighny stated that the resident will be driving the process. The resident will contract with the contractor, which the contractor will be responsible for obtaining the resident's portion.

Chairman Dobler inquired what the contact process will look like. Ms. Feighny stated the contract will state the City will contact with the contractor, but will make clear the contractor is then responsible for obtaining the homeowner's portion directly from them.

Committee member Lesser inquired how the contract will read about the quality of the product. Ms. Feighny replied that we are only providing a list of contractors with their bids and the amount the City will pay.

City Manager Trout stated the proposed process would allow for flexibility to allow the resident an opportunity for more choices than what is done in the current process.

Committee member Padilla inquired about the current status of the program and if there is a waiting list. He wanted to know how the program change would affect those individuals. Mr. Bidwell stated he was not sure of those answers, but would look into it.

Chairman Dobler would like to have sidewalks placed on the agenda. Not the 50-50 program, but sidewalks in general. He noted Councilwoman Valdivia-Alcalá had voiced some concerns of the Oakland neighborhood, and he would like to have her attend the meeting.

Items from Committee (01:09:30)

Councilwoman Ortiz brought forward some issues. One was in reference to 801 SE Wear. She asked if there was a drain tubing maintenance list, or if there was a process for keeping track of the tubing in the City. The second issue was in reference to Deer Creek and I-70. She appreciated the work that has been completed, but stated that the large trucks are already running over the median curb and that she thought that the median was going to be flat.

Mr. Copley responded that there is a concrete culverts are the responsibility of the property owner vs. the corrugated metal pipe is part of the City's storm water infrastructure. Staff will provide City Council an update on the 8th St. corrugated metal pipe. Ms. Vogel requested that the street damage be sent to her staff to review.

Councilwoman Ortiz inquired if there was a maintenance list. Bob Sample, Utilities Director, stated there was not currently a list. Councilwoman Ortiz asked if this subject could be placed on a future agenda for consideration. She stated there were a number of these pipes in the city, and that keeping a list would be helpful.

Draft Agenda for January meeting; set January meeting date (01:20:00)

Sidewalks, Fleet Replacement Continuation, Facilities (inventory, parking, replacement, overview) discussion, Ms. Uhrig agreed that they could provide an overview of facilities and items regarding the firm for 2021.

The next meeting will be Monday, January 25th, 2021 at 2:00pm. This meeting will be entirely virtual via Zoom.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 3:24pm.

Video of the meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/kxIfcaw4w14>