

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, December 14, 2023, with eight members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burns, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Hill, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Lopez, Commissioner Sixth District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District and Mayor Pro Tem; presiding. Townsend, Commissioner First District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO, were absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Bridgette Cobbins and Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrators; Wendy Green, Assistant Counsel; Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works, Dewayne Smith, Operations Manager/Interim Street Manager; Eric Nobert, Operations Superintendent/Interim Street Manager; and Monica Sparks, Interim Unified Government Clerk.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said before I call the meeting to order I want to announce that we do have individuals attending remotely as well as on-site. All participants joining by remote, we would ask that you silence your devices when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, make sure you announce yourself by name and title when you speak so the public knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is also current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General's Office. Please be sure you are speaking into the microphone to ensure that your comments are heard and the record of the meeting is accurate.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Davis, Bynum.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building regarding a winter weather update.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said this evening we will be hearing a presentation from our Public Works Department regarding a winter weather update. I'll recognize David Johnston, our County Administrator, for remarks and presentation by staff.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said I think as always people need to be reminded that the Public Works Department has the responsibility to keep a safe environment on our streets throughout the entire year, but really get special attention during the winter when sometimes travel is challenging due to snow and ice conditions. We have men and women in our department that respond and to try to keep this environment safe even in those conditions, so we're having an opportunity today to hear from Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of our Public Works Department, and his staff who actually do the work on what are the protocols, how you approach it, what do you do.

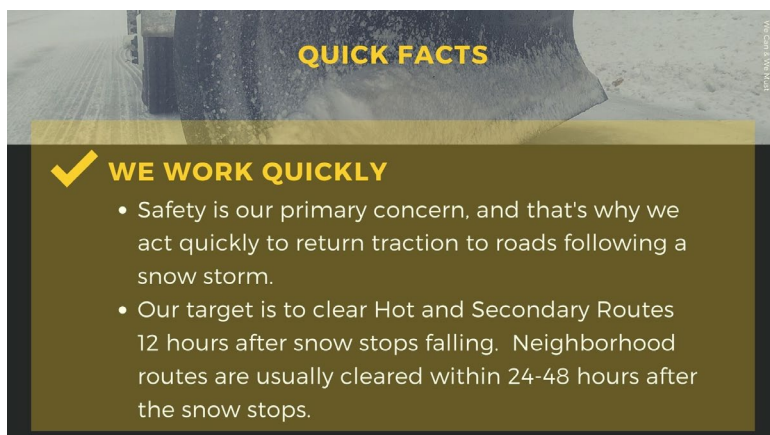
Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works, said thanks for setting that up David. We have done this annually normally in November for a few different reasons, though especially with new commissioners coming on line, we thought we'd wait until this evening to do that. Fortunately, we've only had one snow event, but as David said, we typically just cover to inform you how we operate during the winter weather so you're better able to help your constituents if they have any questions or concerns. As some of you know Vincent Billaci was our Streets Manager. He has moved to the Parks & Rec Department and in the meantime we have elected to use two Interim Managers. I have Dewayne Smith on my right and Eric Nobert, two chairs over, so they are leading the Street Division as we go through the interview process and they are managing things very well so far, so I'm going to hand the presentation over to them.

Dewayne Smith, Operation Supervisor/Acting Interim Streets Manager, and Eric Nobert, Operation Superintendent in the Street Division/Interim Streets Manager, introduced themselves.

Dewayne Smith, Operation Supervisor/Acting Interim Streets Manager, said thank you guys for the opportunity to be up here to speak and present today. Without further ado, we'll go ahead and get started.

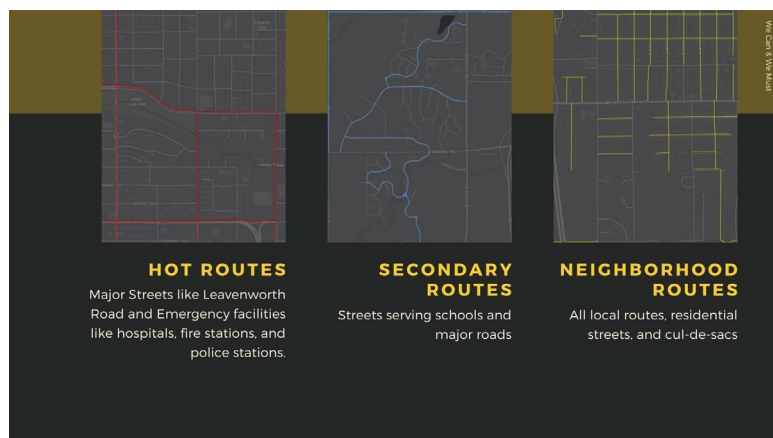


As you can see the website here, we encourage everyone to visit it. They want to find the information that we're going to present today and everything can be found on wycokck.org/snow. Without further ado we'll go ahead and get started.

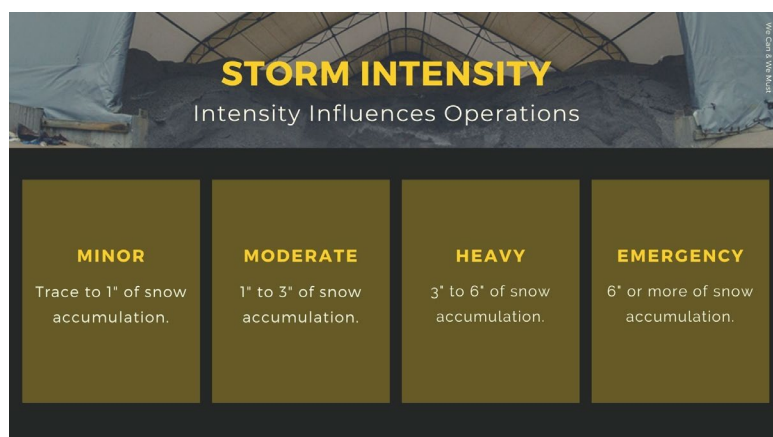


A couple of quick facts. We work quickly with safety being our primary concern. We want to make sure that we are able to respond quickly to restore traction to the roads in a storm event. Our

target is to clear our hot routes and secondaries within 12 hours after the last snow has fallen. After that we would jump into our neighborhood routes. These are usually cleared within 24 to 48 hours after a snow event—after the last snow has fallen.

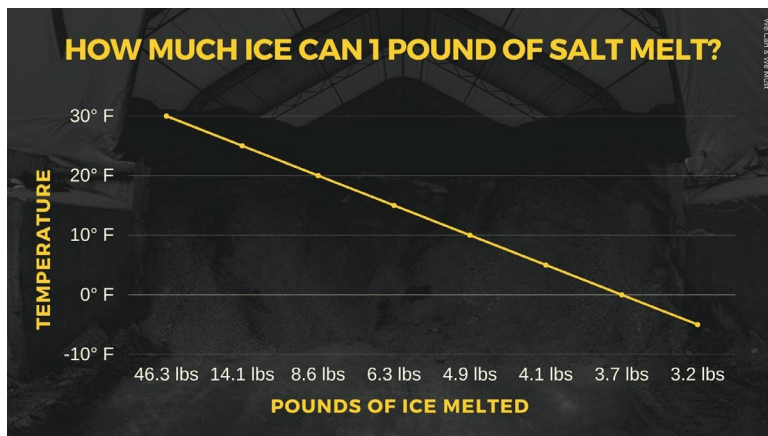


As you can see, broken down right here is a hot route, secondary, neighborhoods. This is the storm operation breakdown and I'll elaborate a little bit about that. Our hot routes are our main streets, Leavenworth Road, Parallel, State Avenue. You can typically find your hospitals, fire stations and police stations along these routes. Our secondaries being the connecting streets outside of and inside of the neighborhoods that feed onto our main roads. We also call those through streets as well. Finally, will be our neighborhoods where our local residents—those are residential streets and cul-de-sacs.



As you can see here—well, first I would like to inform everyone every storm is different. No storm is the same, so we react to each storm in a different way. This is a breakdown right here

how we choreograph our storms from minor, moderate, heavy and emergency situation. A minor could be a trace to one inch, so like elevated surfaces to a one inch of snow accumulation on the roadway. At that point we would monitor heavily and bring crews in as needed. A moderate snowstorm is going to be from one to three inches of snow accumulation on the roadway. At that point we will probably have crews in treating and possibly plowing our roads. A heavy situation will probably be between three to six inches of snow accumulation on the roadway. At that point we would definitely be plowing and focusing in on our hot routes and secondaries to make sure those are clean and clear. Emergency situations is definitely going to be unique. We don't have a lot of those. We did have one last year and we handled it accordingly. That'll be six inches or more of accumulation on the roadway. That's pretty much all hands-on deck and then we would in some cases for unique situations, we will reach out to our neighboring departments for assistance at that point.



As you can see, this graph here kind of breaks down the poundage of salt, how salt works. As you can see the graph starts at about 30 degrees Fahrenheit, one pound of salt will melt about 37 pounds of ice and, as you can see, salt becomes ineffective as the temperature drops.



This is very important to note that salt isn't always the answer. Even though a lot of people think that salt is not always the answer and roughly 15 degrees Fahrenheit or below, salt becomes ineffective. That's when we would rely on our sand to help us to be able to regain traction in certain instances. Keep in mind too, a fun fact that packed snow can actually provide some sort of traction, just a little tidbit there.

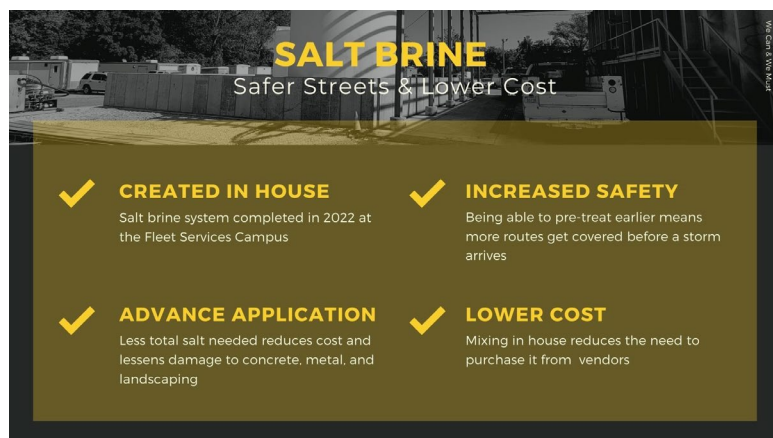
Another thing to understand is that by us understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the salt and how it helps us key in on wasted resources, with the snow being non-effective, we can definitely not put down as much as, you know, just wasted material and ultimately that saves tax dollars.

I'm going to turn this over to Eric.



Eric Nobert, Operation Superintendent in the Street Division/Interim Streets Manager, said Salt Brine, that's something new to our operations this year. We began construction and finished construction of our facility last year. It's simply a mix of salt water or salt and water.

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With our facility where you can create the salt brine inhouse, it lowers our cost overall with our salt brine. It can improve our safety on our road surfaces. We can get out in advance of a storm, pretreat, the treatment stays on the roads. I'm sure many of you seen KDOT doing it. We're going to kind of follow on that. The advanced application use—with the advanced application you use less salt and so it's a little cheaper to do and it reduces our damage to our concrete and metal infrastructure that we have around the city.

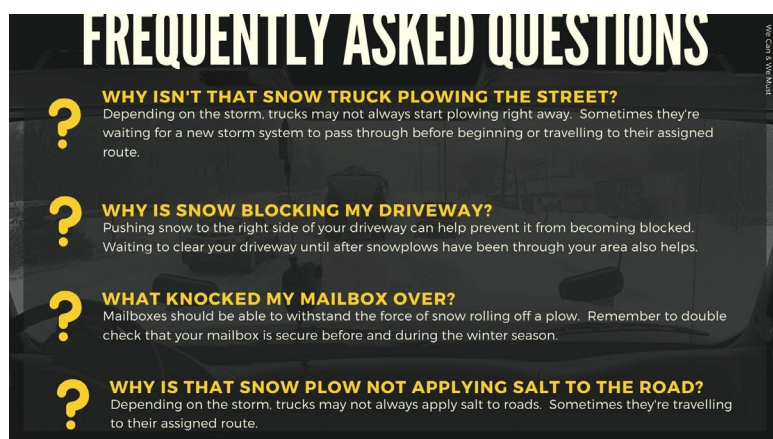


Here's a picture of a plow that we've used. We've collaborated with schools throughout the city over the last four years and this year it was Piper Middle School's turn. They painted a plow for us. It's a very nice looking plow for us. This truck is stationed in that area, so as it works, if there is school or the kids, your know, they're out in the yard playing, they can see that plow and be proud of the work they've done. They did a very good job.

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Speaking of collaboration, often we're asked how can the residents help with us combating a snow situation. These are some just simple reminders. We ask that people avoid driving during storms if they can, avoid parking on the street where that's feasible, that they double check and secure their mailboxes so the snow doesn't knock them over. We ask when shoveling your driveway, please shovel everything to the right and then we want to say don't play in large snow piles or sled in the street because you never know what might be coming down the road.



We have some frequently asked questions here and I'm going to have Dewayne help me answer these.

Dewayne, why isn't that snow truck plowing the street? **Mr. Smith** said depending on the snowstorm that truck could be waiting—we could be in the waiting process waiting for a storm to pass. That truck could be headed to go reload with material or that truck could be headed to another area just to tidy up another part of the city.

Eric, I'm going to ask you why is snow blocking my driveway? **Mr. Nobert** said the simple answer is that we push it there. It can be helped by shoveling your driveway to the right or delay shoveling your driveway until we've plowed the road. That'll help avoid those pushed in driveways.

Dwayne, what knocked my mailbox over? **Mr. Smith** said well, of course, you know that it's just the snow. People should be aware that every mailbox should, if it's installed property, should be able to withstand the force of a snow rolling off of a plow, so we definitely encourage our residents around the snow winter seasons to doublecheck their mailbox to make sure that they're secure and make sure that they're installed properly.

Lastly, Eric, why are they not applying salt to the roads? **Mr. Nobert** said similar to the first answer—the first question, if the weather does not allow us—the treatment to be effective, we may quit treating the roads at that time and simply concentrate on plowing. Also, the truck could just be moving back and forth between its routes to get reloaded with salt.

We appreciate the time for this presentation to everyone, all the commissioners and Mr. Johnston. We'd be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Commissioner Lopez said I just have a quick question. I know salt can be costly. What about a lot of places use calcium chloride? It's 93%--it seems to be more cost effective than salt. **Mr. Norbert** said typically it's more corrosive and it works at a colder temperature so it is effective at that rate. The slide Dewayne had with the graph, that graph would extend far colder, but it's far more corrosive and is in a liquid form, so it's a little harder for us to spread along all the streets. **Commissioner Lopez** said according to other cities like Shawnee or other places, they went to that because salt was more corrosive than the calcium chloride. **Mr. Norbert** said all the substances are corrosive. It's all on how much you put on the ground and that's kind of why we've transitioned to this brine system before a storm to try and help our infrastructure last a little longer.

Commissioner Bynum said I would ask that Deputy Administrator's Howze and Cobbins not listen, so just cover your ears, and I think for the benefit of our new commissioners, I'm going to forward all of my snow complaints to Commissioner Hill, Commissioner Burns, and Commissioner Lopez because I think that it would be really good for them and a really good way for them to sort of get indoctrinated into public service come snow season. So, I'm going to give

them all of my snow complaints just so you're aware. **Someone** said noted. **Someone** said thank you, but thank you.

Commissioner Davis said thank you all. This is a really great presentation. Just kind of two questions, what is—it's okay if you don't have an exact answer now. What is the estimated budget that we have for snow removal? **Mr. Fisher** said I don't know that offhand. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha. Well, that's fine, if you all can find that information later on. I'm just curious as to what the investment is and what we're making. The other question I had was, if I remember correctly, last time we either had a conversation or this was presented, I don't remember, there was kind of a process where certain roads were prioritized. For example, like you would do a cul-de-sac last or certain areas that weren't as dense would come a little bit later as kind of greatest impact, are we still doing that, like what's the strategy, because you can't plow all of them at the same time. We get complaints about some areas not being plowed at all, so what's the strategy like there's a large snowstorm comes, where should we expect to see plows on the street first in the community? **Mr. Smith** said as I explained earlier, that's why we break our operations up into hot routes which will be the main streets, we have secondaries which will be the through streets and our neighborhoods which would be our residential areas, cul-de-sacs. In a situation where somebody's actually out plowing, we want to make sure that we're going curb to curb. Cul-de-sacs may get hit last. That way—the idea is to be able to clean the streets and not as much in a person's property or driveway covering the driveway or mailbox as possible. We do try our best not to. It's not the case every time, but we definitely do try.

Like I said, our hot routes are going to be our primary streets first. They're going to get touched first because we have a lot of—those are our main—the busiest roads. They get the most volume, so our hospitals, our fire stations, police stations are typically found on a lot of those hot routes. We want to make sure if there's an emergency that the first responders can get around safely.

Commissioner Davis said thank you. I just wanted to reiterate that just for the public so this is kind of an order of prioritization that we are looking at. So, if you're waiting or you don't see it or what have you, it's probably because our staff is working on the hot routes first and then the other others. **Mr. Fisher** said that's generally best practice standard across the country.

Commissioner Burns said if there was a major storm coming or any type of storm, who do you deal with that forecast to give you an idea about how much is coming or not. I don't think we can always depend on the tv, it's always the end of the world. **Mr. Norbert** said we pay for the weather service Weather or Not and they keep us up-to-date. We get daily and half day breakdowns even when it's not inclement weather and then they're there for us all times, all 24 hours of the day if we need to make a phone call and ask if there's been a change in a forecast something else has come up. We do use the news. I mean we all watch the news and see the weather, but Weather or Not is who we typically rely on for that.

Mr. Smith said we also utilize other services as well, you know, Weather Underground, we use them as well as different resources so we can kind of make sure that we're as accurate as possible.

Commissioner Lopez said I notice that our trucks are—they have, I believe, wide pumps on them and have you guys ever considered those snowblower attachments that go on there. It seems they hit like by the time you get to your secondaries the snow is already packed pretty good and the snowblower attachments seem to get that hammered out better. **Mr. Norbert** said historically I can't answer that question if we have looked at snowblower attachments for the truck. I think during a large snowstorm 15 years ago or so they purchased the snowblower and it never ran. It was something they purchased and it was kind of a waste, so it was sold off and we bought some other equipment that was more effective.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said I would just like to say, gentlemen, that Morris south of the river, we have a tremendous amount of steep hills that our school buses traverse, no sidewalks and the roads drop-off pretty steep on each side. Your crew does a very good job of keeping those roads cleared over there. I'm appreciative of it just because I know how steep those hills are and what danger it puts those school buses in if they're not and I appreciate the fact that you're over there. I know it's probably not a hot route, but it's probably a secondary route, but they do really a good job over there and I just wanted to make sure that you pass that on to the crew that the Morris community is very appreciative of the fact that they're over there clearing the steep hills down for the school buses. **Mr. Smith** said thank you very much. We appreciate that. We also do—when we pre-treat our hills as well, we treat those as hot routes too, those can be dangerous.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said I will state that actually the roads are wider now thanks to the fact that Morris was resurfaced a majority of the community, so the roads are at least three to four feet wider which makes it a lot easier on the traffic flow over there where everybody's not trying to stay in the middle at the top of the hill and there's a little room to spread out. I do appreciate all the work that's been done over there this past year.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs asked Administrator Johnston, would you like to say any words before we close? **Administrator Johnston** said no, just know that when that department needs to respond because of a snow condition, they're going to be on top of it.

Mayor Pro Tem Burroughs said thank you for the presentation. If there's no more comments or questions, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adjourn. Roll call was taken and there were eight "Ayes," Burroughs, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Davis, Bynum.

MAYOR PRO TEM BURROUGHS ADJOURNED

THE MEETING AT 5:24 p.m.

Monica L. Sparks
Interim Unified Government Clerk

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December 14, 2023