

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

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, September 14, 2023, with eleven members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Davis, Commissioner Seventh District; Stites, Commissioner Eight District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO, presiding. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Bridgette Cobbins and Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrators; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; Monica Sparks, Deputy Unified Government Clerk; Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works; LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor to the Mayor; Chief Karl Oakman, Police Department. Sheriff Daniel Soptic, Interim Chief Dennis Rubin, Fire Department; and Irene Caudillo, Chief of Staff in Mayor's Office.

Mayor Garner 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 phone, should please mute your phones when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, make sure you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is participating knows exactly who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is also current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General's Office. I would also like to remind, especially here on the 5th floor, that you please be sure to speak loudly and clearly into the microphone to ensure that your comments are being captured by the Clerk for an accurate record of the meeting.

Mayor Garner called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Garner.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Municipal Office Building for presentations from Public Safety officials regarding retention and recruitment.

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 Garner said this evening will be a hearing presentation from our Public Safety Departments regarding recruitment and retention efforts and the challenges they face here in Wyandotte County. I'll recognize our County Administrator, David Johnston, to allow him to open up some remarks and looking forward to the meeting.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said during our budget processes the issue of how difficult it is to recruit for vacant positions in various departments have come up regularly. It was at the last Commission meeting where the Commission requested a presentation by the four largest departments on the challenges that they are experiencing to fill key vacancies to serve our citizens. So, we asked each department head and Sheriff Soptic to put together a presentation and make a presentation before the Commission to help enlighten them on the challenges that our departments are facing.

We have in order of the seating from Sheriff Soptic to our left down to Mr. Fisher at the far left is the order of the presentations and I think we would probably so you can get the whole landscape let each department make their presentation to the Commission and then ask your questions and they'll be here to answer them directly.

Staffing Update

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Sheriff Soptic said that meeting that Mr. Johnston is referring to, the Sheriff's Office was a big part of that discussion I guess I'll say. So, what my presentation does, it talks about retention and our efforts to recruit. It's also going to hit on a couple other issues. I went back and listened to that meeting three different times and wrote down the questions that the commissioners that had questions asked. My goal is, and I'm going to try and stay within a timeframe so I can pass it on to the Chief, but my intention is to answer, or at least provide information, that speaks to the questions that you had. With that said, I'm not going to exactly quote your questions, but I will try to get at least the content of the question that you asked.

Sheriff Authority/ Funding

- **19-811. Charge and custody of jail; liability for acts.** The sheriff shall have the charge and custody of the jail of his county, and all the prisoners in the same, and shall keep such jail himself, or by his deputy or jailer, for whose acts he and his sureties shall be liable.
- **19-812. Process, writs, precepts and orders; court attendance; fees.** The sheriff, in person or by his undersheriff or deputy, shall serve and execute, according to law, all process, writs, precepts and orders issued or made by lawful authority and to him directed, and shall attend upon the several courts of record held in his county, and shall receive such fees for his services as are allowed by law.
- **19-813. Preservation of peace.** It shall be the duty of the sheriff and undersheriffs and deputies to keep and preserve the peace in their respective counties, and to quiet and suppress all affrays, riots and unlawful assemblies and insurrections, for which purpose, and for the service of process in civil or criminal cases, and in apprehending or securing any person for felony or breach of the peace, they, and every coroner, may call to their aid such person or persons of their county as they may deem necessary.
- **19-805. Deputies and undersheriffs; duties; meetings and seminars; budget; limitation of personnel action.**
 - The sheriff shall submit a budget for the financing of the operation of the sheriff's office to the board of county commissioners for their approval.
 - (The county shall adequately fund the Sheriff's order to fulfill the responsibilities of the office)

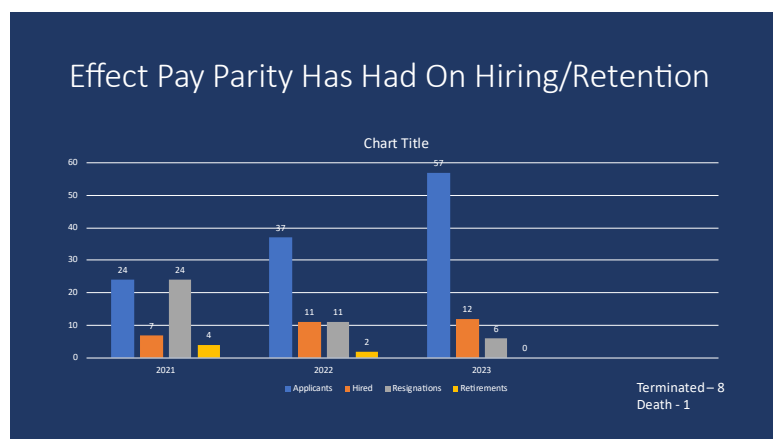
Commissioner Davis, one of the questions you asked was the statutory requirements for funding the Sheriff's Office and what you guys are obligated to do. These three statutes really are my playbook, my Bible, my whatever you want to call it. This is what lays out the foundation for me and what I do every single day, what I'm responsible to do when I took the oath, when I took this

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job. The first two are pretty clear, running the Detention Center. The second one is pretty clear, serving the courts and the third is pretty open and there's a lot of things that fall under that, but these are the three statutes that govern what I do every single day.

To your question of funding, 19-805 speaks to that. What it boils down to, and I'm not going to give you my legal response, what it boils down to is I have the duty by law to fulfill those statutes. I bring a budget to you guys that in turn funds those three statutes. I ask for you guys to approve it and once it's approved, it's given to me to disperse. Again, to fulfill those three statutes.

You know we can talk about properly funding and improperly funding and all those things. You mentioned in your question what do we need to do to keep us out of court and that's never been my intention, that's never been the direction that I've ever even talked about going. My goal has always been to work with this Commission and it will be to my very last day here. I think we can always get past that and it doesn't need to go that direction, but at the end of the day, sure, that is a remedy for me, but just so you know those three statutes is what guides me every single day.

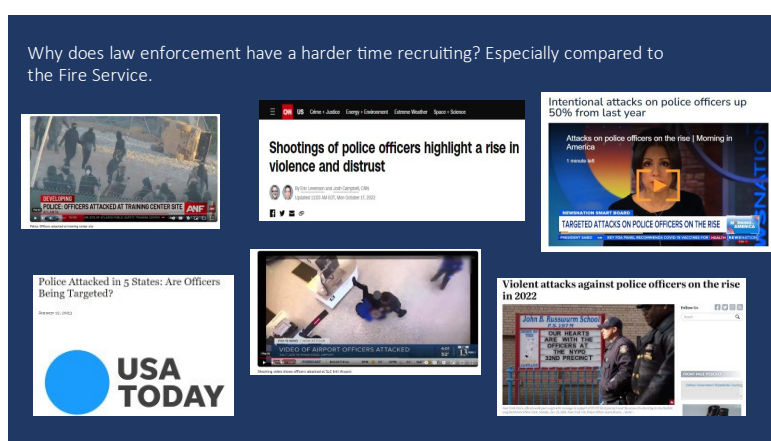


Commissioner Ramirez, you asked about has the pay helped with bringing in more candidates. The chart you have in front of you, 21 in blue was our number of applicants and you see that in '22 and '23. Also, up there in orange is the number of—and this is just deputies, numbers of deputies we've hired in '21, '22, and '23 and then ultimately the number of resignations there also. There's no doubt that has played a huge part and you look at that graph that goes up in the direction or the numbers we would hope that it would go up and the resignations, it goes the opposite way what we would like and then retirements, that's not anything we can control although I will say my goal since being here is to produce an environment where people not only want to come to

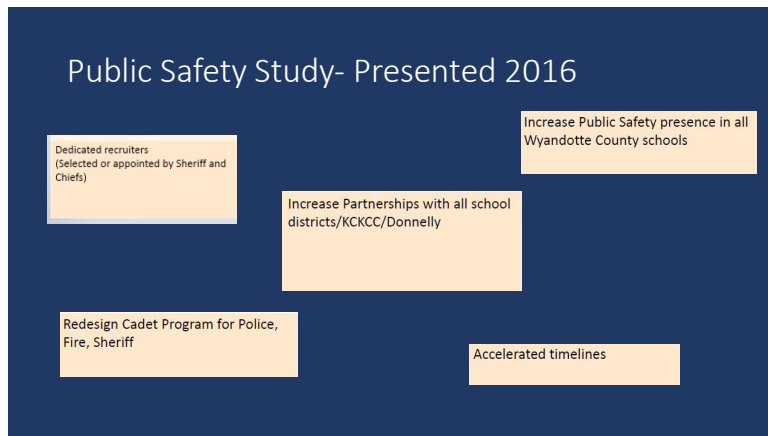
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work, but they want to stay and ultimately retire. So, you know, having retirements at the end of the day sure it hurts numbers, but it also means that we've provided a workplace that people want to come and stay. So, to your question, absolutely, it's played a huge part no doubt and it's just the beginning.

What I will say and I said this when I came to you guys and asked for the pay parity, it's not a magic bullet, it's not a fix all. It's nothing that's going to solve our country's law enforcement recruitment problems by any means, but putting us on a more even playing field at least internally was the goal and it has definitely done that.



Commissioner Johnson, you asked why the Fire Department was so successful in hiring and then Commissioner Stites has made some comments to this. So, this literally took me about two minutes to put these together. All I did was Google it and, you know, it's pretty clear, law enforcement is not an attractive job, law enforcement has been demonized and I've said that over and over again. I can't tell you how many speeches I've given at our Law Enforcement Memorial, at some graduations and I say it over and over again and it has—you know there's people and there's groups that try to use local governments really to weaponize and to further agenda's against law enforcement. That's not productive either. That doesn't help us at all either, but it's just not what it used to be in the sense of jobs that people are just lining up to take.



Mayor, you had mentioned or you actually talked about your time at the Police Department and when you were hired, correct me if I'm wrong, 1987 is that right, okay, all right. You talked about the hundred and hundreds of applicants that came in and really the lack or the ineffectiveness of hiring—you felt of hiring of minorities in our community. So, in 2016 this study was presented to the Commission. Back then Sheriff Ash was here. Now these were things and I just took out stuff that applied to the Sheriff's Office. It talks about dedicated recruiters, something we should do to increase our partnerships with the school districts, increase our presence in the schools, redesign our Cadet Program and accelerate timeline. What I can tell you as we sit here in 2023, these are all the things we've done. Some of them later than others, but they've all happened at this point and so everything that came up in this Public Safety Study back then has been done.

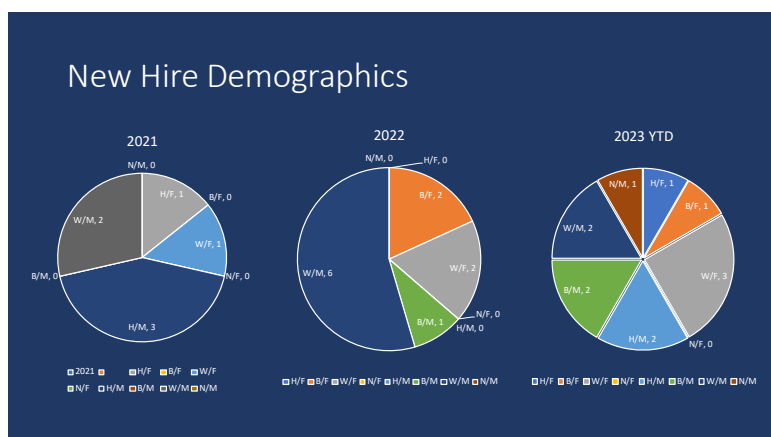


In that same conversation we talked about our hiring and are we really reaching out. What are we doing, are we going to every part of this community to try to hire. In 2022 we attended 49 hiring events. When I put this together we had attended 42 year-to-date with another 22 anticipated. Clearly our hiring events are on the rise and this is just a small, small sampling of the places we've

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been and I just ask you to take a look at that and tell me that we're not reaching out to every part of this community because we are.

The things I can't control is who applies, I cannot control their backgrounds, the things they've done that maybe make them ineligible. Those things I can't control, but I can tell you and this is a commitment that I've made since day one, there is no part of this county—and quite honestly, even outside the county if I have to, that I won't go to work on recruiting. The work that HR does with us, our recruiter, our HR liaison, there's no way we could do it without them. The work that they do every single day to go along with my people, you know, when I'm as short as I am, those bodies have to come from somewhere to recruit and what ends up happening is HR picks up that slack, if not to lead the charge to help to get out to some of these places particularly as we talk about our Cadet Program, which I will brief you on later.



On that same token the demographics of those that we've hired, so out of those same three years I would just, if nothing else, just look at the wheels and the representation by nothing but the colors that the PowerPoint picked. I don't know that I need to say a whole lot else to this slide other than as I get qualified applicants I don't care who they are, I don't care where they live, I don't care what their color is, I don't care. None of that matters. I look for content, I look for character and I look for people that are qualified and I hope that you could take just a quick brief look at this and that would put any of that fear or that concern to rest.



Finally, Commissioner Stites, during that meeting you mentioned residency and you mentioned my concerns with residency. Here's what I'll tell you. Residency is a problem, it's not the problem. I've showed you in other slides that this isn't a career that people are lining up for. With that said, I can't ignore the people that do tell me I won't work there or I can't work there because I can't or don't want to move there. This is just some snippets and I'll tell you this is all stuff you guys can go find. It's not super-secret, it's on our Facebook page. All I did was go through and pull out some comments. I went back, I don't know, six-eight months, a year, and just pulled random comments. This isn't stuff we put—I don't know any of these people. This is things that have come to us and I think it's really interesting and equally important, do we look at the average age of my new hires. I would ask you as you kind of bat around the residency discussion, what were you doing at 27, 30 and 32, probably raising a family most of you. I think that becomes problematic. I think it becomes—and not problematic in the sense that it's a bad thing, but I think it's something that has to be considered.

Part of that question, Commissioner Davis I believe, asked what is my legal ability or where do I stand when it comes to residency, what can I do, what I can't do. I will tell the Commission I am very confident, in fact, 100% confident that I do have the ability to challenge it and I think that legally I have that ability, but I will tell you I think there's a difference between can and should. I'm not here to tell you that's my intention. I'm not here to hold that over your head. Like I told you earlier in my presentation, my intention has always been to work with this Commission and I think on a daily basis there's probably things that I can do, but I always look at should I do them for the good of not only the community, but for good of my agency. I would much rather work with this Commission and find a way to work through this issue.

I'll tell you, I've told several of my staff members I was going to come in here tonight and do exactly what I tell them not to do and I tell them don't bring me a problem without a solution and that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to bring you the problem and I don't, I'll be very frank, I don't have that solution. I really don't, but what I can tell you is, I do believe that having employees that live here and work here, at the end of the day, probably does make for a better public employee. I can't argue with that and I won't argue with that, but we have to find a way to be competitive to incentivize people to want to be here and I truly believe if we incentivize and we change that narrative, I don't think you have to force people. I think they want to do it because they want to do it for whatever that reason is.

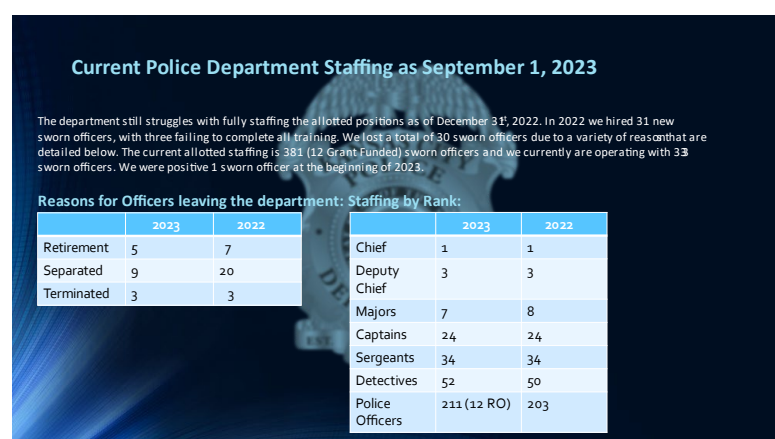
I will tell you since you had your last meeting I've had a resignation. He put in his two weeks, I asked the Undersheriff to do his exit interview, his reason was residency. So, again, I won't hide that from you. I won't cook the books, I'm just going to tell you what people tell me, but like I said early on, it's not the only stumbling block for us. It's just not. There are several stumbling blocks, but I think we need to be realistic as a government and as an entity, as an organization and lay our cards out and look at everybody else's cards and, you know, what makes us competitive, what separates us from other places, what do we do to incentivize and be somewhere that people want to come work and live.

Unfortunately, when you lay on—in law enforcement anyway, when you lay our cards down you end up with comparing money and residency. That's about what's left. I think our benefits are amazing. I think the things we offer our employees are amazing, I think we are very competitive in that sense. There's just a few things left that separates us. Take that for what you want, but that's a reality of where I sit. We do have people that come to our hiring events and this comes up. Do I have to move, well yeah you do, I don't want to and I can't. I've used this explanation with people before, and I almost brought her, but I didn't make her come, my daughter's 15, if I came to her tomorrow and said we're moving and I'm making you leave the school district that you've been in since day one, I would have a very, very upset 15 year old and the family dynamic would be turned on its head. So, I think we have to keep that in mind. We have to compare that to the average age of our new hires and figure out keeping that in mind, what do we do, how do we fix that. I mean I know all I've added to your problem and I get it. That was not my intention, but at the same time, there really was no way around it.

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Again, I'm here to work with you guys and that's been my intention since day one. I'll leave you with this and I think this is the dynamic we have to work through. For a lot of us Wyandotte County has always been home and for all of our lives. Some of us, you know, at least for most of our lives. We feel connected and we've raised families here and this is home. What do we do when our applicants have that exact same feeling and that exact same connection to home and it's not here. That's hard to overcome and I think that's what we have to figure out. Again, I wish I had the answer. If I did, I'd sell a book to you guys and make a whole lot of money. I don't, but that is truly the answer, that's the problem, that's what we come across and that's our hurdles when we try to recruit.

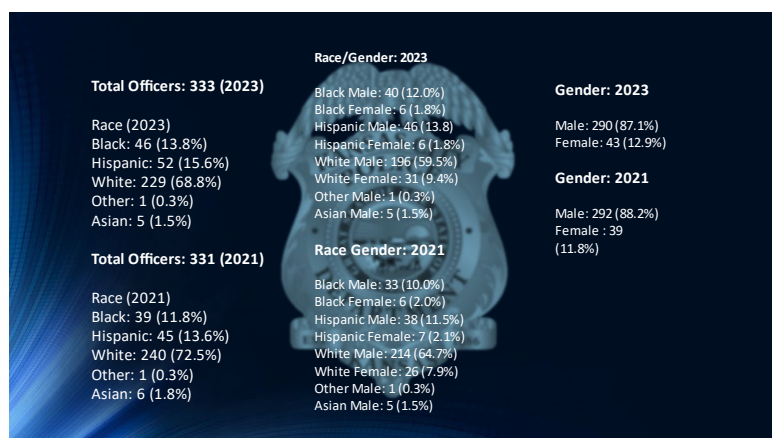
Like I said, my presentation was a little bit all over the place, but I wanted to address the questions that had come out of the last meeting and so I will stop there and you can move on.



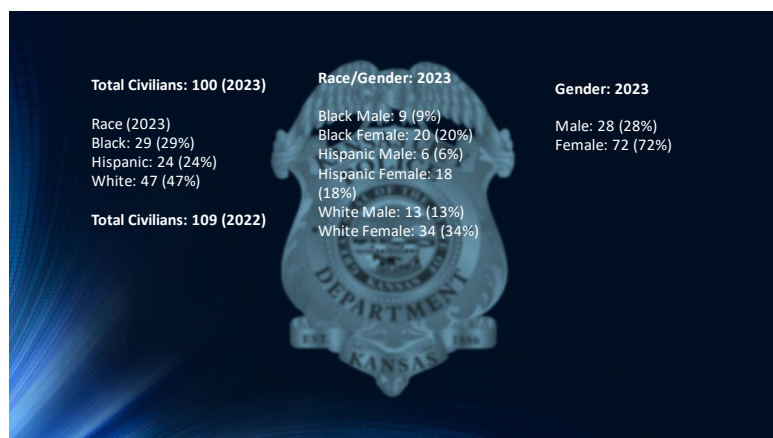
Chief Karl Oakman, Police Department, said I'll try to be brief and just hit a few points. As you can see this is as of September 1st, our total sworn is 333. As you can see when you compare 2023 to 2022 we're pretty optimistic right now about our losses compared to 2022. On the separated at 20 for 2022, most of the people left for various reasons and there was actually a couple of terminations in there, but they left pending termination. One thing, I'm a firm believer of sometimes there's addition by subtraction and then you can see our ranking 2023 compared to 2022. If you look at the police officers for 2023 the 211 and we have 12 recruit officers now that are in the academy. Then last year after—and I'll go to the next slide...



you'll see the number of recruits that we hired going back to 2021. In 2022 we hired 32 recruits and at the beginning of January of 2023 we were one officer ahead of what we started 2022 after hiring 32. Now, that may seem not the best, but compared to a lot of other Police Departments in the area in this day and age, that's considered a positive gain. If you look, we've hired 73 recruits since 2021 and if you look at the breakdown, and this goes to one of the questions that Sheriff Soptic answered, we had 42 minorities in those classes and 12 females, so the minority representation in those 73 recruits was 57.5% and the female representation was 16.4.



As you look at our total breakdown of the Police Department, sworn we're at—when you look at the minority of the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department, we're just over 30%. That is the highest minority representation of any Police Department in the state of Kansas, any Police Department in the Kansas City metro area, and any Police Department in the Midwest outside of St. Louis, MO and Chicago, Illinois. The next closest department in the metro is Kansas City, MO which is at about 12%.



This is just more. Now when you look at our civilians, currently we have 109. As you can see, the demographics and the breakdown of our non-sworn is similar to our sworn.



When you look at our attrition rates, as you can see in 2016, we lost one and what I mean by that, that's how many people resigned, how many people retired, how many people are terminated versus how many we hire or rehire.

When you look at 2021, in 2023—2021 and 2022 is where the struggle is with most Police Departments and that is a result of most of the civil unrest from 2020 and I would have to definitely agree with the Sheriff is that in law enforcement versus other professions right now is a very difficult profession because often the outside groups and KCK Police Department, unlike others, have really seen the brunt of it in the last two to three years. Something that I always do with the community is I make sure they understand the facts, what's really going on because I think being a resident that was born and raised in Kansas City, Kansas, I stress to the community we should not let outside people come into our community and tell us how bad of a community

this is when they have no idea. Just like those numbers I mentioned about the Police Department, this is one of the most diverse cities in America and I think that we have great things ahead of us and I make sure that I stress that.

As you can see, over those eight years we've lost 11 and when you look at all the hiring, that's a lot when you talk about the amount of people that we hire and the amount of people that have left. So, even going back to 2021 when you add up all those people have left and we've hired 74 and we were only up by one, that tells you how many people have left.



As far as our Dispatchers, which we often hear about dispatch, in 2021 we hired eight, we lost nine, so that's a net loss of one and, there again, 2022 we hired five, lost nine, net loss of four. Now, like I said, some of those were terminations, but it still affects our ability to give the most effective service to our community members and as you can see with Dispatch in three years, you're talking about a smaller number. We have a loss of seven versus going back to 2016. With sworn we had eleven and we're dealing with a lot more people, so you can see how that's very impactful for Dispatch.

Recruiting Challenges

- Police Perception
- Residency
- Health Care (deductibles and coinsurance)
- Working Shifts (8 hours vs. 10 hours)
- Lateral hiring process
- Facilities

Some of the recruiting challenges, I think number one as we talked about was police perception. I've been in this profession for 32 years and one of the most painful statements that I've ever heard came from my own son who is a police officer in Kansas City, MO and he told me just about six months ago, he said Dad, myself and my fellow officers, we are more concerned with getting charged in the line of duty than being shot and killed in the line of duty. They're more concerned about going to jail than being killed in the line of duty. That is something that we really need to understand and think about. That's the mindset of the people that we entrust to take care of this community.

When we talk about residency, I agree with the Sheriff. We have to look at it, but I also will tell you this, this is my belief as a Police Chief and this is my belief as Karl Oakman, resident of Wyandotte County. I believe that police officers should live in the community that they serve; however, we understand the recruitment challenges that we're faced with and that's one of the things that I think when you talk about the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department, we have a large percentage of officers who were born and raised in this community that work for this Police Department. As the Sheriff said, I don't have a magic answer, but I think that balance should always be there and then some other things that we hear compared to other Police Departments is health care.

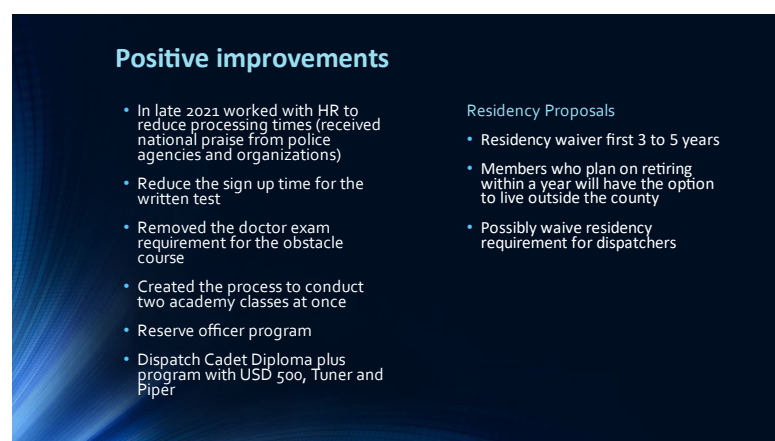
Unfortunately, there's a lot of other Police Departments in the metro that when they have health care, they have their portion that they pay, but they're not required to pay the large deductibles and the large co-insurance that we offer to our department members. When you look at places like Overland Park, Lenexa, even Kansas City, MO, you're talking about health insurance, and as the Sheriff mentioned, a lot of these people that we hire have families. They can't afford to have a child and have to pay 10% of that cost through co-insurance.

Just to give you an example, where I came from my son tore his ACL, cost \$60K. You know how much I paid, 30 bucks, \$30 and that's something that's hard to compete with when you're trying to recruit other individuals and they can just go to another Police Department because, yeah, you get the salary, but that's a big amount of money. You know if I had to pay 10%, that's \$6K I would had to pay out of my pocket.

Then working conditions, and this is something we're working on with staffing. We're one of the few departments that still works the basic five days, two days off, eight hours a day, that's a very antiquated shift and I mean that will be an overnight game changer for recruiting, but the catch-22 is, we have to get staff up to where we're able to put in the 10-hour plan, so that's something that we're very optimistic about.

The lateral hiring process, this is both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is we can get other officers from other departments, but at the same time they can get our trained officers to go to their department.

The last is facilities. This is something that we really need to look at and we've been working on it and really thank you to the support of the Commission that is really helping us with that to really compete against some of these other departments such as our patrol vehicles, our equipment and I just want to thank the commissioners for that.



Positive improvements

- In late 2021 worked with HR to reduce processing times (received national praise from police agencies and organizations)
- Reduce the sign up time for the written test
- Removed the doctor exam requirement for the obstacle course
- Created the process to conduct two academy classes at once
- Reserve officer program
- Dispatch Cadet Diploma plus program with USD 500, Tuner and Piper

Residency Proposals

- Residency waiver first 3 to 5 years
- Members who plan on retiring within a year will have the option to live outside the county
- Possibly waive residency requirement for dispatchers

The last thing is some of our positive improvements. I got here in June, 2021 and I looked at our process the first month I was here. The first thing I looked at was our recruiting process and we were doing some things that was a little antiquated and really made us where we was now, competitive, but I can tell you HR rolled up their sleeves and worked with us to get some things changed such as reduced our sign up time for the written test. It used to be you had to sign up 30

days before you could take the test. We got that changed to where you can sign up within a week.

We removed the doctor's exam requirement for the obstacle course. We were requiring applicants to go get an exam from their doctor to see if they were fit to run an obstacle course. Every other Police Department in America just made you sign a liability waiver, so that's what we put in place.

My academy staff was like oh no we could only do one class at a time and I said wrong answer. We figured out how to do two classes at the same time and it's working just fine and now we're looking at a Reserve Officer Program, which we will give you more details about that in the future as we get it rolled out.

Then, our Dispatch Cadet Diploma Plus Program with USD 500, Turner and Piper, so we're pretty excited about that after a year with District 500, I think we got it worked out, so that will be growing.

Here's a few suggestions as you look at residency. There's some things we can look at like as a residency waiver for the first three to five years because where that's important is oftentimes by the time you're at your third year, you're in a different pay bracket where you can pretty much afford to move, so that would be a good starting point. Then, the second thing, as some of you may know, when it comes to employees, you do something for one you have to do it for all. My solution to that is as we have members in their last year that have given a retirement date, that we allow them the option to live outside the county that year if they're going to retire. Now, if they don't retire, they have to move back in or they will retire. No choice there.

Then a possible residency waiver for dispatchers. I'm going to throw this out here. This is just me throwing out a vision. I think dispatch is a problem all over the metro. Those 911 taxes, the majority goes to MARC, Mid-America Research Council, and just before I left KCMO I was toying with the idea of looking at creating a regional dispatch center that's ran by MARC so you don't have the competition which is what we're having now from dispatchers jumping to agency to agency because MARC runs the dispatch infrastructure anyway. They get a majority of the 911 taxes, so I think that's the option to start exploring even if you did a CORE4 Dispatch Center. That's all I have and I'll turn it over to the Fire Chief.

Interim Chief Dennis Rubin, Fire Department, said thanks for letting us provide a perspective on the residency requirement as it impacts the Fire Department.

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KCKFD's Perspective on the Residency Requirement

- Fire Administration is in favor of extending the residency requirement to incorporate 25 miles from the center of Wyandotte County (78th Street & Orient Drive)
- Based on the interstate highway system, the reporting time back to work would likely be under 60 minutes for all
- In the past 20 years, there has only been one call back to duty – the Joplin, Missouri tornado disaster
- The Fire Chief should live within the boundaries of Wyandotte County



Fire Administration is in favor of extending out the ability to reside to about a 25-mile perimeter around the center. Much like my colleagues, I've worked in my business for quite a while, about 41 years, I've always lived in a community that I worked in personally, but I would tell you that I've modeled this on the District of Columbia that had a lot of problems in hiring, particularly, paramedics. The downside always is, of course, can you get your crews back, can you be able to handle the next tornado that comes through town or a major fire and we feel like with a highway system, if we were to maintain that 25 mile barrier or closer, about 60 minutes would be the response time. In the past 20 years, I did a poll, there's been one callback of off-duty members in 20 years and that was to the Joplin, MO tornado disaster that occurred several years back. As I mentioned, I believe strongly that the Fire Chief must live in the community.



The next slide will show you, of course, the current boundaries of Wyandotte County and the center point ends up being at 78th—oh, I thought I had it, but at any rate that is the center point and

moving out, as you can see, it isn't far off of any of the interstate highways to be able to report back to duty in an appropriate time.

This request aligns with the Center for Public Safety Management Report of June 2023

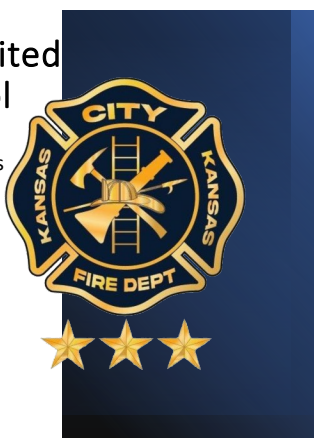
- "Policies that impact the department's ability to effectively recruit (i.e., residency requirement)"
[CPSM Final Report - page 6](#)
- "There is a residency requirement for staff, but Wyandotte County does not offer opportunity to residents which creates a recruitment problem"
[CPSM Final Report - page 45](#)
- "Other policies like the living requirement were not addressed; the living requirement is imposing a burden on recruitment efforts"
[CPSM Final Report - page 46](#)



I think you're going to find a couple of interesting notes from our recent study that was prepared by the International City Managers Association through the group called Center for Public Safety Management. I pulled out three of their excerpts and there's probably a total of five and either directly or indirectly it points out that if the catchment area was expanded, we would be able to attract more paramedics as you're going to see in another slide...

Direct Impacts due to limited Paramedic Candidate Pool

- Staffing level stands at **negative** 45 Paramedics
- The 45 Paramedic positions are being filled by Emergency Medical Technicians
- This causes increased Overtime expenditures
- Forces Overtime on the Paramedic staff



we really are up to speed in terms of numbers of firefighters. We do have some issues and we're working on them very diligently to diversify our organization. In fact, I would daresay we're way behind the power curve, but we're working hard to resolve that. Even though our positions are filled, we're negative 45 paramedics. The goal of the organization is to have all of our ambulances operate as paramedic ambulances 24 hours a day, seven days a week and at least one paramedic

on every fire truck. We do that for several reasons. Today at about 11:30 we had a three car wreck at an intersection, not terribly far from here, and it generated five patients. As you might be able to tell with that number of patients, one paramedic would not be able to provide the appropriate care in the appropriate time. By having to fill those paramedic positions currently, we do that often with overtime. The overtime sometimes becomes a forced march when we don't have enough bare minimum paramedics to be able to provide the care on the ambulance.

Direct Impacts due to limited Paramedic Candidate Pool

- Forced Overtime leads to poor morale
- Research indicates that extended work hours is associated with "Paramedic Burnout"
- Expanded catchment area could alleviate this concern



The forced overtime then, of course, leads to very poor morale and as research has provided over and over again that when a person is forced to work extended hours in such a pressure-packed arena for such a long time, a 24-hour window, it does become a burnout problem.

Benefit for our City

- Larger catchment area for potential employees, in particular certified Paramedics candidates will improve KCKFD's Recruitment efforts
- The savings of hiring one certified Paramedic versus training one Paramedic inhouse is about \$81,000
- The cost saving would be \$3.7 million dollars if Paramedics were recruited versus trained inhouse
- The time to train a Paramedic is a minimum of 22 months



Expanding the catchment area, we believe, could alleviate some of the concerns. The larger catchment area in particular when we look at paramedics, if we were able to move outside of the current one, we believe we would be able to recruit people who are already certified. The problem

of certifying our own, at least 45 members have been identified that will start the paramedic school, two and three at a time, and it'll cost this community about \$81K to have that person trained. The reason why that cost is so high, we have to pay for the firefighters time that's going through paramedic school while another person backfills that position.

KCKFD Benefits

- Hiring qualified Paramedics will lower one of our major overtime drivers
- Couple the cost savings with a zero timeline to become a paramedic will benefit our community
- KCKFD is committed to being a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization regardless the geographical catchment area



So, hiring qualified paramedics, which we believe would allow us to do that by expanding the area, would save approximately \$3.7M of today's money and, of course, it would continue to expand over a period of time. Again, that would be providing the training—I'm sorry, providing the certified rather than the in-house training. It also takes a minimum of 22 months to go through the paramedic curriculum.

The other issue that's facing us is simply time and, quite frankly, some of the folks that we asked were actually direct or mandate to go to paramedic school are not very excited about it. Hiring qualified paramedics would lower one of the major overtime drivers that we're confronted with and I think everyone on the Commission would agree it seems to be well out of control and we're going to try to put some controls in place as time allows.

A couple of savings, of course, with being able to narrow the timeline, we feel like it's a pretty strong benefit. We're committed to having a diverse equitable and inclusive organization regardless of the geographical catchment area. We have just recently put in position a senior member that will take care of DEI along with recruitment, along with community involvement and I would daresay after just a few weeks some impacts being seen.

KCKFD Retention

- The retention rate is relatively high for members
- Paramedic separation is typically retirement or involuntary
- Of the Paramedics who voluntarily separated from KCKFD, they did so to relocate outside of the catchment area
- The twelve Paramedics that left the organization in good standing, represents nearly \$1,000,000 of loss



The retention rate for our members is relatively high. In fact, it's probably more likely that folks would involuntarily leave as compared to other means, but we have had over the past several years 12 paramedics leave and I believe in the exit discussion is that part of the reason was to be able to live in an area where they could afford appropriate housing. That would represent about a million dollars in loss to our community.

Recruitment Expansion Using a 25 mile Catchment

- There are approximately 610 certified Paramedics in the Kansas portion of the proposed catchment area
- There are approximately 1,200 Paramedics in the Missouri portion of the proposed catchment area
- The proposed catchment area adds over **1,800** certified Paramedics to our recruitment pool



There's approximately 610 paramedics that are in the catchment area currently and, of course, that's simply our community. There's approximately 1,200 certified paramedics that's in the Missouri portion of the catchment zone and adding those together the Kansas side of the expanded area coupled with the ability to pick up Missouri paramedics, we would end up with an additional currently 1,200 certified paramedic pools.

Program Funding Recommendation

- This appears to be the appropriate time to implement a **commuter fee** for **all workers in KCK/WYCO** that live outside of the city/county
- Suggesting that we use a similar commuter fee as applied in Kansas City, Missouri of 1%, but only applied to nonresidents working in **KCK/WYCO**
- Revenue generated by this fee would offset public safety services and other commuter related expenses such as public works



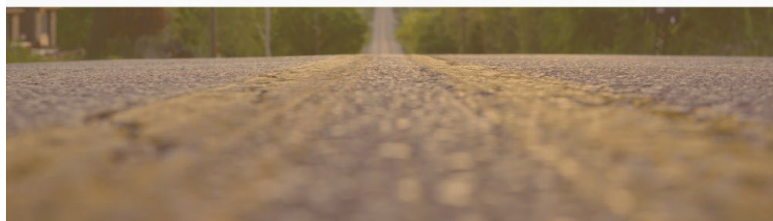
Now, with that said, it always goes with a funding issue, so our recommendation for your consideration to improve the ability to allow this to occur would be able to provide a commuter fee. Many communities do that. It's been debated often in Washington, DC although I don't believe that it started, but I believe someday it will and just outside of their communities, they have done that and I also know that KCMO, I believe, has it in place.

With that, all people who would come from outside would represent—we would hope or would recommend rather, a one percent commuter tax or commuter fee to be able to take care of Public Safety as well as Public Works.

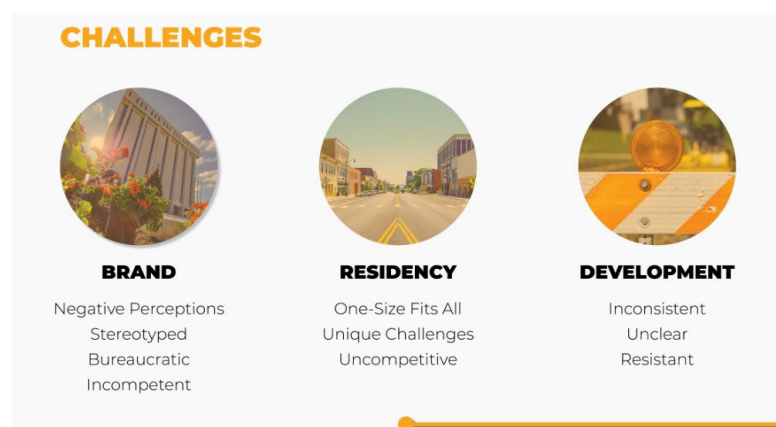
So, with that said, I'm going to pass the baton, if you will, to Mr. Fisher to talk about Public Works.

Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works, said thank you for allowing us to speak tonight on this topic. Hopefully, I'll do half as well as my colleagues have. I joined the team as Public Works Director seven years ago this month and I've served as a Public Works Director for almost 20 years in the metro in two other cities. Over the last seven years I've heard many comments, many out of frustration for how the UG operates or outcomes of one kind or another and that includes elected officials and staff in the community. How the UG operates and produces outcomes is largely influenced by policies and so, of course, we're here tonight to highlight recruiting and recruitment and retention challenges and particularly the residency policy.

There are three challenges from the Public Works perspective
The UG Brand, Residency Requirements & Career Development



I'll speak to residency, but I first want to point out two other very important components. One of them is the organization's brand and when I talk about brands, simply how people feel about the UG, so whether they're doing business with the UG and that experience for prospective candidates and how they feel about the UG, based on what they hear and what they read and they see, so we have a brand and I will say it is the largest challenge that we have.



If the UG wishes to recruit top talent, we're going to have to improve the brand, especially to the outside world, especially if there's going to be a residency requirement going forward, especially for certain job types.

Public Works also believes it can improve recruitment and retention with a robust career development program in some areas. We have to have our A-game everywhere when it comes to recruiting from our website to how they interface with Workday, job titles, job descriptions, videos attached to those which we can do now and I know we're working on that. It's going to be real

exciting. We have to catch prospective candidates attention, it has to be very clear and intuitive and so we've got to be on our A-game with that.

Residency, as my colleagues have pointed out, is problematic. It's a challenge. It's difficult for people outside the organization to understand that challenge. The concept of a residency requirement, especially to the public, sounds great and it feels right, but unless a person knows about these challenges with recruiting and retaining employees and that it takes an inordinate amount of time to fill those vacancies. It takes a lot of resources and energy to do that and a lot of time. It's hard to understand those challenges and the impacts to the organization and the services that we're expected to provide to the community.

An example in Public Works would be, about four years ago we lost Lideana Laboy, our Traffic Engineer to another opportunity. We still have not filled that position with a certified experienced Traffic Engineer. Now, we have filled the position with an Engineer we have had for some time, a very bright, capable person, but essentially he's on a career development plan to develop into a Traffic Engineer because we couldn't recruit a Traffic Engineer even after we substantially increased the compensation to match the market three years ago.

So, that's a challenge and with those types of professions all across the UG, some of those had to hit certain milestones before they're sort of accredited or licensed. That takes time, it takes experience. As one of my colleagues pointed out, when they hit those milestones that time that it's taken to get there, they're now ingrained in their community wherever they're living. They may have a family, they may have kids that are in the schools and they're just not likely to move. They're not going to uproot their family. That doesn't mean though that they won't give the same passionate approach to another community they don't live in. They're professionals, they've chosen that profession and as long as it's an appealing opportunity and they don't have to move, they'd be interested.

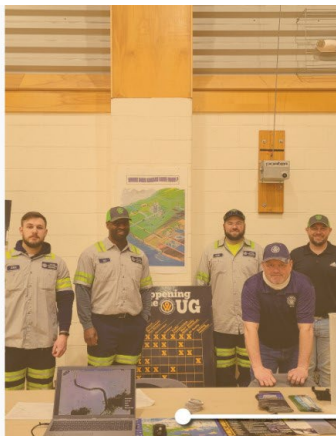
Now, the UG has a lot of different job types. We have four departments here and even within those teams there's a lot of different job types. Each of those professions include people that have different values and interests, both professionally and personally, and residency works for some, but not for all.

In my case I've served three different communities and I've been required to live in each of those cities within the city limits. The UG is the only one that requires all. It is not uncommon

for local government to require certain positions to live within the city limits including City Managers, Public Works Directors, and Chiefs, so there's something to think about.

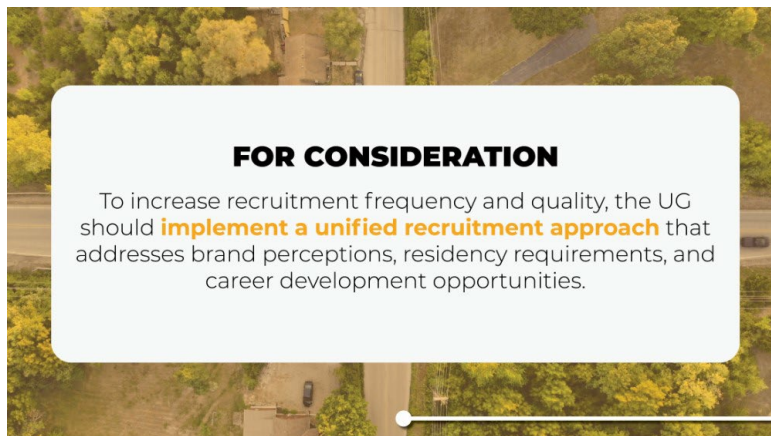
RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

- **Recruitment Team** formed in 2020
- **Engineering Career Development Plan** established
 - Career development plans for other groups not adopted
- Professional development provided via **Public Works Roundtable** events since 2019



Public Works, as some of you know, have been very intentional about building culture and leadership at all levels. Pipeline for leadership, access to opportunity for all that wanted. We've been diligently working on that, intentionally working on that, and we need to continue to do that as an organization. Some examples of what we've done, Recruitment Team we've developed. The department initiated in 2020 led by Diana Jimenez, done a great job, that team is real excited, more recently working with HR. It's very exciting stuff, going to the high schools and we got to continue to do that. I know our other departments are doing that as well.

We also, four or five years ago, developed an Engineering Career Development Plan for the Engineering Division for Engineer Project Managers that's been very successful and has been a model for the department to incorporate that in other areas. It has not yet been adopted in other areas, but we're hopeful that it will in the near future. The important point is it sort of sets a new tone for our training and development in Public Works and then, most excitingly, as most of you know we've had our leadership roundtables we've been doing about three years now. We were doing about twice a year, now we're doing it every three months to greater frequency and accelerate the growth in Public Works.



FOR CONSIDERATION

To increase recruitment frequency and quality, the UG should **implement a unified recruitment approach** that addresses brand perceptions, residency requirements, and career development opportunities.

I'll wrap it up just by saying that reinforcing that I believe brand is number one and it always will be. Culture, leadership always will be the first most important thing. Residency is something we need to discuss. I would suggest it does need to be changed and then as importantly, we need to be intentional about developing employees.

Then, I'll say about residency, it does reduce the effectiveness of the UG, the competitiveness of the UG, and it limits the diversity of perspectives in the team. I would agree with the Chief that a 25 mile radius would be effective and appropriate and improve our ability to recruit, but also alternatively it could just be something similar that's about response time.

I'll leave you with a few questions. As the UG, or more importantly, the community realized satisfactory outcomes as a result of residency over the years, is the organization performing at the level the community deserves or wants, and is it more important that the UG bring value to the community or that employees live in the community. I thank you for your time.

Mayor Garner said thank you Sheriff, Chief, Fire Chief and Director of Public Works. I appreciate all that you have presented today and some of the good work that you produce as well as some of the challenges, I think it's all good information that you all produce. I'm going to open it up for questions from our commissioners.

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you all for everything you do for the community, especially in our Public Safety for all that you do to serve and protect our community. I thank you for that. I'm going to kind of go down the row of presentations of questions. Thank you, Sheriff, for answering the question about the pay parity because that was something that came last minute to us last year during the budget and that was something you were very passionate about and thank

you for advocating for your department and your staff and what they need and want. I'm happy that it is helping and I'm hoping that trend continues to go the way that it needs to go. I really do thank you for coming back and answering that question. I appreciate that.

For Chief Oakman, just as I said at the beginning, thank you for all that you've done as you become Chief and all that our police officers—and I know that we, as the Commission, are working with you and Chief Rubin and Sheriff Soptic for, as you mentioned, those facility upgrades and what needs to be done. Our Public Safety, they need to have the best facilities to make sure they are able to perform the duties that they've sworn to do, so I do thank you for all that you've done and I really appreciate all the statistics of the breakdown, the demographics of the recruits that have come in and just currently of the department and it does show we have a pretty diverse department and I appreciate you for bringing that forward.

It's all culminating to the discussion of residency. For Chief Rubin, thank you for presenting a proposal and coming forward with it. Several question I have, what percentage is your department staffed at now? **Chief Rubin** said, Commissioner, at this point we have no vacancies. **Commissioner Ramirez** said you have no vacancies at the moment within the Fire Department. **Chief Rubin** said yes sir.

Commissioner Ramirez said when it comes to the topic of—I guess one other question I have when it pertains to we finally, with the help of our new Administrator and the Mayor, we were able to finally bring forward a contract or they were able—you, everyone was able to bring forward a contract that brought the union and all firefighters back into contract with us. Since your time with the department and the new contract, how has morale gone up? **Chief Rubin** said I think it's been effective. We've made a lot of changes to put much of the control back in the hands of the membership where it belongs. I believe that we had centralized it to such a degree that very few decisions were made outside of the Battalions or fire stations, so I think that has helped quite a bit.

I know there was a lot of discussion around communications, both by this Commission, as well as by the study that was completed by the Centers for Public Safety Management. I believe we've opened up the lines of communication in many, many ways to include conducting a meeting involving all fire stations every morning at 8:30. I would urge any of the Commission members interested to join us and see what that's about. Of course, we publish weekly staff minutes with the help of our Communications Division or Department. Within the UG we publish a monthly

video. As an example, I make myself immediately available to any concerns and questions that go on in the department. I think the morale has improved. I think what the Commission has done has been incredible.

I know we've got some serious work to do with both fire stations as well as fire apparatus. We made a tremendous investment a few weeks ago and we cannot thank this Commission and County Administrator enough for allowing us to get apparatus where our apparatus had begun to truly fail, so thank you for that.

Commissioner Ramirez said going back to the very last slide where it talks about the commuter fee and you referenced it to KCMO, KCMO has an earnings tax, so proposing community—what expenses would we be incurring by extending the residency? **Chief Rubin** said I would submit to you that folks who come into town that do not live here, that do not pay taxes, that do not stop in this community to buy gasoline or groceries ends up with, so to speak, a free ride. The road surfaces, the use of our Police Department, the response of our Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, EMS, I don't have statistics in front of me, but I would daresay perhaps as much as 30 to 40% of our emergency medical care is provided to folks outside of our community and I say that with a reasonable degree of certainty because of the interstate system. There's probably not a day that we don't do five or six, sometimes ten, maybe even 20 calls on the interstate for either automobiles on fire or collisions. The other day we had a motorcycle wreck involved and I think the most expensive part of any Fire Department is the delivery of that Emergency Medical Services so that would be the offsets that I was speaking to.

Again, I think if it could be done in a way that would incorporate anyone who comes to work here that doesn't live in this city, hence a fee, rather than a tax, it wouldn't be a burden on the citizens of this great city and county. It would simply make sense to me.

Commissioner Ramirez said I agree with you, but the only hesitation I have and, unfortunately, we don't have a great relationship with our legislature, more like they really don't—they like to preempt us on a lot of what we can and cannot do. I'm afraid that if we pass something like that, that will open the door for AG Kobach to come in and try to take it away. That has happened already with Safe and Welcoming. When we passed Safe and Welcoming, the state took it right back out of our hands. They passed a law and said we couldn't do that. It would be great for us to be the first community in the state to do something like that, but it opens the door for the Attorney General to come in and for the legislature to say, nope, you're not going to do that and

they pass a law and say we can't do that. It's came out in the news over in Missouri, their legislature is going to review the earnings tax for KCMO and St. Louis, so it may stay and it may not. That's my only concern. Let's say in the future we pass it and the state and the Attorney General come in and say no, you can't do that, then we did all of that kind of for nothing and that's my concern. That's my only concern with the commuter fee, but overall I agree with what you said about it and the reasoning for it. I do agree with that.

Now, to get to the overarching issue of residency. I know several commissioners have stated based off of our community survey—at least I don't know one of you will correct me if I'm wrong, over 60% of our residents support residency. That's a survey that we do regularly and that's what most of us, not even—I'm not going to say most of us, all of us on this dais rely on when we try to do a policy, when we try to come up with ways—what needs to be done, we rely on the community survey. Number one thing that's on the community survey is always infrastructure, but also, we added the question of residency. Over 60% of residents said they want the residency requirement to stay and at the moment I'm keen to listen to those over 60% of residents who want to keep it. I know over across the river, KCMO lifted their residency for their Police Department and I've had communication from an official over there and they said it really hasn't done much. It really hasn't done anything. First they had, I think, it was a 25 mile radius, but they closed out Kansas. It was just on the Missouri side, did nothing, nothing really happened, so they opened it up to the Kansas side and still nothing has happened and so if we have a test case right across the river saying that they lifted the residency, but nothing—there was no rush, there was nothing. They said yes, they may have gotten a few, a bit more than they usually did, but it wasn't what they had expected.

That is why I say at this time I cannot support lifting the residency and it's again—this is a conversation that I believe is going to give—we're going to continue to have and I would like also honestly to see if we as staff and Commission could redo that survey, but more specifically just the residency requirement to get more updated data on it so that we can see if those numbers are still the same, if they've lowered, or if they've increased. So, I think that would be a good idea for us as a Commission to do that survey, but specifically just that question.

Again, I thank you for everything that you do here. Jeff, your department, always amazing. We always love hearing your quarterly reports to standing committee and so I thank you for what you and your department do. We truly appreciate it.

Commissioner Johnson said thank you Mayor for inviting this conversation to the Sheriff, Chief, Chief and to Executive Director. I appreciate the information that you have provided to us. I do like the idea of a commuter fee if it's possible. The majority of my banking—well, all of my banking career I worked in Missouri for over 20 some years, so I do understand that and it's something that I knew was coming out and that was just the cost of doing business because I've lived in Wyandotte County all my life, so I certainly would be open to that conversation.

The thing that—if I pull back kind of from a 30,000 foot level and we look at overall in the state of Kansas that Wyandotte County has one of the highest levels of wages that are paid out in the state of Kansas and yet we have one of the lowest median household income levels in the state of Kansas, that lets me know that persons are coming into Wyandotte County that don't live in Wyandotte County to work, but very little of those dollars remain in Wyandotte County in terms of sales tax, property tax, etc.

So, when we talk about lifting the residency requirement, I feel myself held in tension because first of all I think that we ought to try to recruit as many persons as we can from Wyandotte County to get these high-paying jobs and if we take that same approach, and Sheriff, I'm glad you mentioned all the areas that you've already gone to, that you're looking at and hoping to look at more, but it invites to me a thought that if we tried to take the residency requirement away, we're going to continue to see the situation, a person's coming into Wyandotte County working for Wyandotte County spending very little money in Wyandotte County, paying no property taxes in Wyandotte County and it's not—I mean if you ask me, my personal opinion, I want to keep the residency requirement. I mean I want as many kids that are going through elementary school all the way on up matriculating to be able to have the jobs that are available here. I don't know that's going to be the way we need to go in the future, but the flip side of it is that we run the risk of having persons coming in doing the same things that are happening at KU for instance, down in Fairfax, and just elsewhere in the community and spending very little bit of that money in our community. I put that out there for feedback from both my—from all my colleagues as well as from you all if you have any thoughts with regard to that.

Commissioner Kane said I try not to say anything. First of all, Police and Sheriff's across the United States jobs are hard to fill because how dangerous they are, so Wyandotte County isn't the only one having trouble hiring people. You know the union that I work for, Laborer's 1290, we

have asked our retirees to come back to the workforce because we have so much work. There's a school teacher shortage, there's a school bus shortage and these are some of the highest paid jobs in the community. You know KCMO they lifted theirs and I talked to one of the elected body over there and, Chief, you know it didn't work the way they wanted it to. The take-home vehicles, that's something you have to consider. There's a lot of take-home vehicles and who's driving these cars and they're going to be somewhere else other than here, more mileage, more tires, more gas and these are things we have to think about.

You kind of left off Bonner on one of the projects they were talking about. You left off Bishop Ward High School on a couple of the folks that you were talking about, you left off Piper High School, the couple of places that you haven't talked to. You guys' job is hard and there is no doubt about it, but today the Fire Department goes out to Piper and takes an old fire truck that's 30 some odd years old and if you watch TV tonight when you go home, you're going to see the excitement of the kids that saw that fire truck and if Piper can do it, the rest of the school districts can do it. We can go get these kids. There's a—there used to be (inaudible)—I don't know if it's there anymore, but when my son was there it said what do you want to be when you're a senior and grow up, he said a fireman. We need to get these kids freshman year, maybe even in junior high and say, hey, we've got these high-paying jobs here in Wyandotte County because it's hard for me when somebody's making \$120K a year to say you don't have to stay. We know it's hard, but it would be hard for me to lift it. That's all I'm saying. I'm not trying to be difficult with any of you.

One of you said something I didn't like and I'll call you about it, but it's not easy. None of these jobs are easy and three of them are damn sure dangerous, so I'm off my soapbox Mayor.

Chief Soptic said I don't know if you're referring to my list, but those were just examples. Those were not everywhere we've been, but I will say this, and I was going to leave my Cadet update for the 7:00 meeting. We've been to every single high school and the Cadet Program that job is open. We've had two applicants so far. We've been to every single one and I do agree with that. I think regardless of what happens, you can't stop recruiting from here. This has to be number one, but I want to make it very, very clear and I won't speak for the Chief, but I'll speak for the Sheriff's Office, we go everywhere in this community and every single school because you're right, that should be number one priority.

Chief Oakman said same here and I didn't put them on my PowerPoint because we would have been in here all day. We go to about three or four recruiting events a week. Our recruiter is often on Saturday and Sunday of every week at events. I agree with you Commissioner Kane, that was one of my big things, that's why I started two youth academies which one is for Piper, one is northeast and one is south and this year we had 45 kids, ages 12 to 15. I think the best thing for recruiting is recruit from your own community first. I always use the example of, no offense, but KU and K-State. K-State became good at football and outpaced KU because KU continued in the late 80's—KU continued to get the worst players from California, Texas and so on and then they turned around and expect the best players for Kansas to be available. What Bill Snyder did was he focused on the best players in Kansas first, then he went and found those outside of the state and the rest is history. You see how Kansas State turned their team around and that's what I do with KCKPD. **Commissioner Kane** said you were doing good until that analysis.

Commissioner Davis said I will be brief. I will say Rock Chalk. We don't really do that over here. I would just say for the community because I had folks kind of calling me and I'm a little concerned about this conversation. We are not considering any legislation tonight on our residency requirement. We are merely having a discussion about it. It's a very lively discussion. It's a discussion that I've learned a lot from, but we are not voting on anything tonight and so please, please folks really just trying to deter some calls tomorrow, but this is merely a discussion. It is not something that we are voting on.

Commissioner Stites said I'll approach it just a little bit differently. I want to talk quickly about the survey. I'm not sure—I wasn't here when that survey was completed, but I would be willing to bet that of the 60% that said they'd like to have the residency requirement remain in place, that they didn't know the financial impact of saying that. There should be a follow-up question that says do you know it's going to make it hard for our departments to recruit, do you know it's going to cost you a lot of money in overtime, so there should be some follow-up questions. It can't just be taken with that do you like residency, so I'd like to look at that and actually I'd like to have a copy of that report.

I think we should strive for our community to be where people do want to come and live, not want to leave. I worked under residency requirement on the Police Department. My son is

fourth generation Wyandotte County law enforcement and, Chief, southwest Wyandotte County might be a place you might want to do a little recruiting because two of them came out of there, myself and my son.

I think we ought to focus on how we make this community where people want to come, not leave. I think we're spinning it the wrong direction, that we're afraid that people are just going to mass exit us, I don't believe that's the case. We've got four highly qualified Chief's, Sheriff, and department heads that are coming forward and saying we have a problem. Not one of them said, and I was glad to hear it, this is the answer, this is going to fix it all. All they're saying is this could potentially help us and I respect that because you're not saying—you're not hanging your hat on it saying this is going to fix it. You're saying this is a tool that will help us.

I'm all for looking at additional ways that we can help you guys be fully staffed and if that means a modified residency requirement, I think that we can have that discussion. We talked about take-home cars. Maybe if you live outside of Wyandotte County, you don't have a take-home car. That's an easy fix, so you make that decision. If you want to move outside of Wyandotte County, guess what, your take-home car stays here. So, there's things that we can look at that we don't have to just be all or nothing and I'm hopeful that we will have further discussion on this.

Commissioner Burroughs said, gentlemen, thank you for your presentation. More importantly, thank you for what you and your colleagues, staff, all Public Safety including our Director of Public Works, thank you for what you do under the most trying of times. Many of us respect and appreciate everything that you do.

Mayor Garner said thank you all again. I've always said it, that to have a great Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas you have to have a safe Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas and the great work of our Public Safety officials has proven that as well as our Public Works and what they're trying to do with the resources that they have. I look at the numbers from the departments and I can tell you that—and the Chief did talk about it, but just working in partnership with the Sheriff's Department just on the criminal justice side, we're at I believe a nine year low in violent crime, Chief, is that correct and I believe just—I'd want to speak out of turn, but I know at least a month ago our great investigators here under the leadership of Karl Oakman and his executive team, they put us at a 100% solvability rate for homicides. That's unheard of anywhere in the

United States and that says a lot about even with their limited resources and even with the challenges they face, they have not stopped doing everything they can to make sure Wyandotte County is a safe place for all of us to live. So, these criminal justice officials need to be commended for that great work that they've done in spite of the challenges that they have.

Our Fire Department, when I look at those numbers when you have no vacancies, that says a lot about the type of department that is being run under your leadership Chief and you should be commended for that, that we've got the contract for the great men and women of the Fire Department that they have been begging for, for far too long. Even under those challenges we're still at a point where you don't have any vacancies and those people stayed here because they love this community and they wanted to provide those great services.

I know Public Works does a great job when you talk about all the infrastructure needs. Just at that groundbreaking we just had to get some of those folks a new facility that was approved by this Commission, well deserved for those people, because we need to make sure that they have all the resources available to them within a reasonable budget that this Commission could afford to make sure that they can provide the best level of quality services to the residents of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas. Our residents deserve it especially when you talk about taxes and fees and the other things that a lot of our residents have concerns about.

Thank you all. Thank you so much for what you do day in and day out for the great citizens of Wyandotte County. What you've done has not gone unnoticed and as long as I'm Mayor will never be overlooked because I wore that uniform well and I know what it means to sacrifice day in and day out and put service above yourself, so thank you.

This was just for information only and that takes us to adjournment and I will entertain a motion.

Commissioner Davis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adjourn.

Mayor Garner said before I ask for roll call, the Clerk is letting us know we're going to need at least 10 minutes for them to get up and running for our full Commission meeting. We will reconvene for our full Commission meeting at exactly 7:15. Clerk, roll call please. Roll call was taken and there were ten "Ayes," Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley.

**MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 7:10 p.m.**

Monica L. Sparks
Deputy Unified Government Clerk

dt

September 14, 2023