

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

SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, November 30, 2023, with nine members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO; presiding. Townsend, Commissioner First District; and McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; were absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; and Monica Sparks, Interim Unified Government Clerk.

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 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 to speak into the microphone to ensure that your comments are heard and the record of the meeting is accurate.

Mayor Garner called the meeting to order.

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

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, November 30, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building to host the state delegation to discuss the State Legislative Agenda.

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 tonight is a Special Session and I would like to welcome all our members from our State Delegation of Wyandotte County, our Representatives, who are here to join us this evening. Hopefully, we have a good robust discussion about things most important to our residents of Wyandotte County as well as items of concern and consideration and recommendations from the Unified Government Commission and staff.

We're very pleased again to have our delegation join us and this is a real important discussion and so I'm excited to get this off. We know a lot happens in Topeka and those decisions that happen in Topeka have a huge impact on Wyandotte County and we're very appreciative of our delegation being here to make sure that the things that we know they're going to be working on diligently on behalf of the great people that call Wyandotte County home.

We will have the full input necessary for them to make informed decisions and really advocate in a way that aligns with needs of Wyandotte County. We're joined also by our Lobbyist Paul Davis, but before I turn it over to Paul Davis I'd like to recognize our County Administrator David Johnston and ask him to open up the meeting.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said as we embark toward another legislative session at the State level, we do appreciate the opportunity to talk to our elected officials of our state delegation to talk about what we see are our priorities so you hear from us, issues that you see that you will be facing during the upcoming session and know that we're here to help you out.

Thank you again for participating in our discussion this evening and I'll now turn it over to our lobbyist.

Paul Davis said what I think might be helpful before we begin is just to have the members of the legislative delegation introduce themselves. I know that you probably know most of them, but we are on camera here and for folks who are tuning in just want to know who's here. **Representative Pam Curtis** said I serve the 32nd District which is basically downtown Kansas City, Kansas and

the surrounding area out to I-635. **Representative Lynn Melton** said I represent District 36 which is out west to 7 Highway. **Representative Mike Thompson** said I represent from Bonner Springs going east to Edwardsville, Muncie, Turner, clear to 635. **Senator Pat Pettey** said 6th District and I'll just say it's almost half of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County. **Senator Jeff Pittman** said District 5. I cover the western part of Wyandotte County extending up from the Legends and basically encompassing Wyandotte Lake and west. **Representative Valdenia Winn** said 34th District. It is a neat little slice down the middle of the city from 2nd to potentially about 75th, State to Georgia, and I'm also honored to serve as the Assistant Minority Leader. **House Representative Melissa Oropeza** said I represent District 37 which includes Armourdale, one street in Argentine, a portion of Turner and then all the way out State Avenue to about 94th Street.

Mr. Davis said Representative Ruiz wanted me to let you know that he's sorry he could not be here. He is attending a conference right now and I spoke with Senator Haley last night and he is also at a conference right now and is unable to attend. He did want me to convey his strong opinions about the vacant property registry which I'm sure members of the delegation are well aware of, but I told him I would mention that. I also want to acknowledge Mark Corrison is here with the Northern Flyer Alliance and, hopefully, you all have the handouts that he has passed out. They have a major issue that they're going to be coming to the legislature with and just make sure that if you haven't had an opportunity to talk with Mark, you definitely should.

Just a couple of comments and then I'm going to turn it over to Alan. You know this coming session is going to be probably dominated by discussions about taxes. Lots of legislative sessions are, but I think this one will be more significant because of the very good fiscal situation that the state is in affording the opportunity for the legislature to enact tax cuts and also look at some spending enhancements in certain areas which they've been able to do over the past couple of years.

Last year there was a major issue with the Single Tax Rate Bill that passed both the House and the Senate and was ultimately vetoed by the Governor and an effort to override that veto failed by just one vote. That bill will undoubtedly be back. There are also a variety of other tax proposals that I'm sure the Governor will be announcing in her State-of-the-State Address.

There's been a lot of discussion as the delegation is well aware of about property taxes and, obviously, Wyandotte countians are very tuned into that issue and the legislature is going to be

debating a variety of proposals about property tax relief in one way, shape or form and I know that the members of the delegation will probably talk about that here in just a little bit.

The Governor has been making a very strong push on Medicaid Expansion. If you haven't seen, she has literally been all over the state campaigning for Medicaid Expansion. The Republican legislative leadership has indicated that is a nonstarter, I think, with them, but the Governor is going to keep pushing that discussion and I'm sure members of the legislature who are interested in that will be as well.

The Medicaid contracts are currently being rebid. There was some legislation last year that dealt with that issue and there could possibly be some legislation this year. The bidding process is currently undergoing and I think the Department of Health & Environment is looking to make an award sometime in March.

There's certainly a number of issues regarding education that are going to be debated. The Governor's main push is for a full funding of Special Education. That certainly is an issue that helps just about every school district out there, but those efforts in the past have been tied to proposals for vouchers or school choice type programs that the Governor has been opposed to and whether those issues are going to be linked again or will be separated, we'll have to see.

With that said, you know there's a whole lot of other issues that I know members of the delegation probably want to talk about and I don't want to take up too much time about that, but we really, I know, relish the opportunity to have this dialogue so that we can get the delegations input as the Commission adopts an agenda at the next meeting and I would just invite members of the delegation to—you've had an opportunity to review the draft agenda that we put together which really is a product of departments throughout the UG and Alan's going to talk about that in just a second here. We want to have the best product that we possibly can and we've been trying to make that a little shorter and hope and try to prioritize those things. Senator Pittman gave a thumbs up there, but we really appreciate the opportunity to get your input here this evening. So, with that, I will turn things over to Alan.

Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator, said just a reminder for the Commission, the legislative agenda will come back for adoption on December 7th so any adjustments or updates made after this evening will come back for adoption. As Paul noted, the delegation has requested that there be a tighter agenda, if you will, so you'll see on the lefthand side on page one there are

items that are identified potentially as priorities. We want to make sure that the Commission is in alignment with priorities most of which have carried over from last year, but as we go through this if you want to make your own notations in terms of what you think are or are not priorities, we can get that information back and so that when we come back December 7th we can also help to provide the delegation with that information about what those priorities are.

As with last year, there are also a number of other items that are more kind of the workings of government type of items that do remain in the legislative agenda and so we didn't want to lose those while also surfacing those items that are higher priority. Most of the items, as you'll see in here with a handful of exceptions, are ones that carried over from the 2023 agenda so there's not a whole lot of new content in here, but we'll kind of run through these as we go. They are identified sort of left to right as the title, the description and what general category they are, whether it's a legislative item or an appropriation related item, whether it was included in that 2023 UG legislative agenda, and then what related departments would be within the UG would be related to that item. That's kind of the structure of it. Any questions on that before we jump right in? Okay.

NAME:

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	PRIORITY	Title	Description	Category	Legislation or Appropriation	Included in 2023 UG Leg Agenda	UG Department	Notes
1	Priority	Medicaid Expansion	The Unified Government supports expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program which will improve access to care for those most vulnerable in Wyandotte County. It is estimated that expansion would provide insurance for 7,466 currently uninsured Wyandotte County residents who would become eligible for KanCare with expansion. It would bring \$64,237,464 in new annual healthcare spending to Wyandotte County and create hundreds of new healthcare jobs.	Public Health & Human Services	Legislation	Yes	Area Agency on Aging, Health Department	
2	Priority	Protect State Infrastructure Funding	The Unified Government is strongly supportive of state funding for a broad range of infrastructure need. Federal infrastructure dollars sent to the state should be shared with local governments to support revitalization of infrastructure that is critical to economic growth and quality of life.	Economic and Community Development	Appropriation	Yes	Public Works	
3	Priority	Allow Flexibility for Revenue Sources	Cities should be authorized to approve revenue sources which best suit the individual community in order to maintain appropriate levels of funding for the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. This includes local earnings/income taxes, development impact fees to pay for infrastructure, E-Commerce delivery fees to address wear and tear on roads, and other local taxes and fees. Sales tax exemptions should only be applicable to the state portion of sales taxes.	Tax and Finance	Legislation	Yes	Finance	
4	Priority	Expanded Childcare and Universal Pre-K	High quality childcare and Pre-Kindergarten should be extended to all children in Kansas. The State should develop and fund a plan to address the urgent need for childcare services in all communities, including in Wyandotte County. The need for childcare is a top concern for businesses.	Economic and Community Development	Appropriation	Yes	Economic Development	
5	Priority	Equalize Motor Vehicle Taxes	The Unified Government supports changes in the tax formula used to assess motor vehicles to equalize motor vehicle taxes from county to county.	Tax and Finance	Legislation	Yes	Treasury	
6	Priority	Pay Prevailing Wage	The Unified Government supports paying prevailing wage on public works projects and economic development projects where tax incentives are given. The Unified Government strongly urges the Kansas Legislature to repeal the law banning the use of prevailing wage on public works and economic development projects.	Economic and Community Development	Legislation	Yes	Economic Development	
7	Priority	Increased Funding for Mental Health and Psychiatric beds	The Unified Government supports full state funding for mental health services, including additional bed space for psychiatric patients. This will reduce the number of people with behavioral or substance abuse issues who are inappropriately incarcerated in county jails or who end up unhoused. This includes expanded State of Kansas mental health facilities that are backlogged.	Public Safety	Appropriation	Yes	Sheriff, Community Corrections	
8	Priority	Clean Slate Automated Expungement	The Unified Government supports the automated expungement of qualifying criminal records from public view. In Kansas, current expungement of a record requires a petition filed through the court and payment of fees.	Public Safety	Legislation	Yes	Community Corrections	
9	Priority	Funding for World Cup preparations	Provide funding to support preparations for the World Cup in 2026.	Economic and Community Development	Appropriation	No	Economic Development	
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Item number one, this was the top priority last year which was Medicaid Expansion as Paul talked about. I'll also mention that there may be an additional resolution specific to Medicaid Expansion, in support of Medicaid Expansion that could be on the Mayor's Agenda on December 7th as well as part of this broader effort to identify and (inaudible) support for that so that you may see that on December 7th as well, but that's again number one in the legislative agenda from last year and any discussion on that item.

Mr. Howze said the second one, Protect State Infrastructure Funding. Again, this was in last year's legislative agenda and relates to the needs for infrastructure. Representative Curtis will be speaking to that at the 7:00 meeting. There's no shortage of infrastructure needs that have been identified through the work of the infrastructure subcommittee that Commissioner Ramirez and others have worked on, so that state funding is an important part of that continued effort to meet those infrastructure needs.

Mr. Howze said number three here, Allows Flexibility for Revenue Sources. This was another one that was in last year's agenda and perhaps takes even more salience with conversations around LAVTR and there are other ones around protecting the ability of local governments to manage their own revenues and not have those revenue sources cutoff in ways that inhibit the ability of local government to meet the needs of the residents.

Commissioner Ramirez said for the law for flexibility of revenue sources, are we coupling that—because I know on the very back of this it's LAVTR funding. Are we coupling that—are we kind of putting that in there as well as a possibility for that? **Mr. Davis** said yeah, I think that certainly could fall into this category and given, I think, the attention on LAVTR may be something that you want to address separately. I think it's really—you know members of the delegation may have some feelings about that, but I think that certainly could fall within that point here. **Commissioner Ramirez** said I think it definitely could fall within that and also my opinion for my district, I think it could be on its own a priority because it's a tool that's there that we don't—we can't use. It's a mechanism that us—local governments have that we're not given the ability to use because the state refuses to fund it, so I think that's along with allowing other revenue sources, but also I think LAVTR should be of its own as it is already, but more of a priority on the list.

Senator Pittman said on this funding thing, it's a very important thing I think for Wyandotte government and I absolutely approve—not approve, that's not my role, but I support. What happened in the legislature the last couple years on occasion we have threatened to take away certain funding sources, maybe it's the sales tax on food gone down from the state level and abolish the ability for the government to do that or another of other things where we limit the amount of funding. So, I think this one's definitely distinct from the LAVTR, where for the public the LAVTR is an existing fund that's been there since like the 60s or 30s. I don't remember how long it's been there, but we haven't been funding that for a good 20 years. I know I'm personally very supportive of making sure that we return that money to the city and the Unified Government as well as to all of our counties. I don't know where the whole delegation stands on that. We don't have to take a poll on each of these, but I know I'm very supportive of that and would like to see us do that. There is an effort to eliminate that actually as well from certain people in leadership in the legislature so that's something that we should all keep an eye on and we might need to have the Unified Government join forces with some of the other counties and local units of government to make statements and things around the LAVTR in particular, so just wanted to make that note to you.

Commissioner Davis said thank you so much Senator for your support. I know for us we've had really, really tough budget sessions just dealing with our limited amount of revenue and when we found out that at least on the books what has been passed and what is state statute, are these particular funds, but that they're not being funded and that they could help us balance the budget and pass property tax relief to citizens. That is something that it's not just a Wyandotte County thing, it is now becoming a statewide effort. I will also throw, along with LAVTR, the Special Highway Fund as well as any other funds that are on the books that the state is not funding or has not funded within that priority number three. I think all of those can just be lumped in together, but thank you all for your efforts on this and if you all need any help or testimony, I'd be more than happy to do so.

Mayor Garner said I'd like to add to that as well. Just looking at the reality of patriotism in our state government, I've read some of the concerns of at least the Republican super majority delegation that the concern was that looking at this legislation that a lot of the funds, I don't know how true it is, but there's a perception that the monies that municipalities were given were used for things other than tax relief and some may have taken that and slush funded. So, even though

the intent was tax relief, the concern that I've heard from some is that they're reluctant to reopen that conversation with that because of that dynamic that some municipalities may have. Now, I don't know how true that is, but when you talk about working across the aisle, just maybe one thing that you all could consider is maybe legislation to be brought forward that really mandates municipalities to use the vast majority, 80-90% of those funds, specifically just for tax relief. That might be something that our Republican delegate partners and friends might say, you know what, that's reasonable and we can maybe move that needle forward with that type of conversation because I know there is a movement against even entertaining the conversation of that legislation from the super majority due to that concern that municipalities may use it for things that wasn't the intent of that legislation.

Mr. Howze said we'll keep moving. The next one is Expanded Childcare and Universal Pre-K. This was carried forward from last year and as it suggests the need for high quality childcare as an economic development need as well as Pre-K for supporting all children in Kansas.

Mr. Howze said next we have Equalize Motor Vehicle Taxes. This one was a new one last year and carried forward and basically it's that the tax formula varies by county for property cars. As an example, if you own a Ford F150 in Wyandotte County, you're going to pay a different tax on that than you would if you own that in Shawnee County or Butler County. So, equalizing that tax across all counties as an issue of fairness.

Commissioner Ramirez said I'm going out on a limb and also with this we could also add equalize the property tax formula as well for valuations. We've seen here, especially in Wyandotte County, valuations have skyrocketed and not only just in Wyandotte County, but across the state of seeing how we can fix it and equalize it and make it more fair. You know we only control part of that discussion and that's the rate which we have not changed a rate, but valuations keep going up and I know it's normal, it's natural for property to value and to go up, but how can we make it more fair, make it more equitable, slow that down so that with economic times property tax goes—the valuations go up as well in step with economic times.

Senator Pittman said on that point of the valuations, I seen it across all of northeast Kansas, and it's a good thing because our economy is growing, our area is growing, love that, but the downside of that is, of course, our property valuations are going up. Now, we got to remember

that the evaluation and the assessment formulas are in our state constitution so when the legislature has to make a change to an assessment, it has to typically go into State Constitution, which we would have to have a super—or a majority of both the House and the Senate, super majority basically and say hey, we want to have a constitutional amendment that changes either the assessment value or what's on the table right now is some kind of cap year-over-year, increases of like 4%. That's what was passed out of the Senate last year, so those are some of the options that are being considered. To tamping down the aggressive assessment values, I want to put a shoutout to our assessors out there who do a good job. It's not their fault that they're assessing at the property values that they have to. They're doing what they're told to do and they're supposed to do what they do and if they don't, it's kind of they would be—it wouldn't be honest government, but it's an unfortunate situation where in the system is churning up our property taxes. I think we're all looking at that right now. I know a lot of the folks in this room have been in active discussions with our different House and Senate members, so thanks for that comment.

Commissioner Markley said I just want to make a comment on this sort of concept of capping the valuation. My one concern with that is when, I'm going to use the past example because it's the easiest, we sort of peaked before we fell in 2008 and 2009 and that peak is what allowed us to survive the fall. So, if we are now going to cutoff the top of the peak, unless we're also going to put something on the bottom end that says we're not going to drop it more than 4% either, we're now not going to be able to survive the fall. So, at some point this real estate market is going to crash the same way it did then, we're up here, so that allowed that balance. If we only let ourselves get to here, but we still let the bottom fall out, how do we survive. If we want to make it to the middle, so we stay in the middle, I think that's fine, but we need to put a bottom on it as well as a top if we want to be able to survive the crashes that come after those peaks.

Commissioner Davis said I'll add to that I think, and I don't know if this has been a part of the conversation, but what I hear the most when it comes to property tax concerns is particularly those that are on a fixed income, which are typically our seniors and those that are on some sort of disability. They are wage challenged because that's really what we're talking about, so a kind of meet in the middle, and I don't know what the discussion is or what the appetite is amongst your colleagues, but something for seniors could be that meet in the middle with an inclusion of those that are on a fixed income. I know other states have done something similar to that effect. It doesn't necessarily solve every problem, but it gets at those that are particularly wage challenged

who may not be able to go out and get a job or an education or training to make more money to pay those expenses.

Senator Pittman said I would just say this. I want to make sure everybody who's listening knows that there are some safe senior programs that will freeze property tax payments for seniors in particular that are on fixed income, so we want to make sure people go out and take advantage of that program. It's when the value, when the property tax goes up, the state comes in and pays the extra to keep it effectively frozen, so it's a nice program that we need to make sure a lot of the folks that you're talking about know about. Regarding the drop, you know farmers right now have a very smooth up and a smooth down. It's eight years of evaluations and it's projected over eight more years and I absolutely agree that we need to make sure that state governments when there are disasters like a tornado or a super recession that we need to have some mechanism to re-evaluate where we're at with county incomes. I think that has to be part of the discussion as we—if we look at capping, so I really appreciate that. There's a lot of different caveats that come along with that. You know, all types of things that may be an improvement in a house, if it's more than \$5,000 should get rid of the cap or things like that, so we appreciate that.

Mr. Howze said next we have Pay Prevailing Wage. This was carried forward from last year as well which is prevailing wage on Public Work projects and Economic Development projects where tax incentives are given.

Representative Curtis said we do have a bill that will do exactly what this says. It is House Bill 2348. A lot of the members actually on the House side of our delegation, I think, have co-sponsored that and it would return local control for the purpose of paying prevailing wage. Our effort this year is going to be to try to get a hearing. That's the first step. Let's try to get a hearing on the bill so that we can start the discussion. We have a lot of new members that we simply do need to bring up to speed on what this is and that it really is a local control issue. So, anyway, just want to let you know there is a bill currently sitting there that is alive and we'll do the best we can to try to move it forward.

Commissioner Kane said really this only hurt four communities, Wyandotte County, Lawrence, Topeka, and Wichita and it was a mean intention. Those of us that live in these areas that struggle, we're making struggle more and if you look at the projects that were built with prevailing wage, what happens is, like the guys that work for us, they work right here local and

what they've been doing is they've been bringing contractors from Minnesota and Texas up which puts our folks on the road. Pam and this whole group has done a really good job with doing that and we will be up there again. We just said—a couple of you said this a second ago, when we're up there or when they're up there talking about that, it would be nice if one of the commissioners or some of us commissioners would go up and testify with them because they need our help to get it done. We sure appreciate what you guys have done on that.

Mr. Howze said next up we've got Increased Funding for Mental Health and Psychiatric Beds. This is trying to meet the need for increased mental health funding and beds. I know the state has added some beds over the last couple of years and we see the need very clearly and acutely in Wyandotte County and so that's where this request comes from. It's also carried forward from last year.

Mr. Howze said we've Clean Slate Automated Expungement carried forward from last year and this is one that Representative Curtis has been working very hard on.

Representative Curtis said I'll give just a quick update. The bill died last year. We have successfully been able to get it through the House Judiciary Committee easily unanimously, but have not been able to get Leadership to move it above the line and move it forward. Part of the barrier is perhaps on the Senate side just in whether or not they would move it forward if the House were to pass it. So, in lieu of not being able to get the Automated Expungement Bill, which we know it would help so many of our citizens to remove that barrier for employment, housing, and education. Last year, since that was my first year on Appropriations last year, so I was very frustrated because I couldn't get that bill moved forward for several years now. So, instead I offered in Appropriations to add \$200K to the judicial branch budget so that they could contract the Kansas Legal Services and do additional expungement fairs statewide, so the \$200K has allowed them to do quite a few more, 10+ more expungement fairs. I will have the results of those efforts this past summer and, hopefully, be able to request an additional amount next year so that we could continue—since we can't get Clean Slate, another way to help the same population by continuing to add money to do more expungement fairs. So, that's my plan.

Commissioner Ramirez said in essence are we kind of putting the breaks on Clean Slate at the moment and trying to go this wraparound, you could say. **Representative Curtis** said yes.

I think that since I have been trying it for four years, it's time for somebody else to maybe pick up the torch and try it. I think there is an effort. There are still some Coalition members that are around and so I fully expect to see a Clean Slate Bill introduced perhaps by another member of the legislature. **Commissioner Ramirez** said I know Representative Curtis mentioned about the Senate. What is—do you know Leadership's opposition to the Clean Slate or if they have any opposition to the Clean Slate Bill, President (inaudible) or any of the leadership.

Senator Pittman said I would say the Judiciary Chair had a lot on our plate and it wasn't one of her interests and Senate President isn't necessarily all onboard with automated expungements as far as I could tell. You know if we approach this as a Workforce Development in a time when we have high need, I think that's a very positive message that the Commerce Committee and maybe some others will start listening up that this is an untapped workforce that unfortunately gets penalized by having this on their record and this is a way to help those returning citizens who paid their dues to come back in and work with a Clean Slate. If we approach it like that, I think we're going to have a better chance.

Mr. Howze said next we've got Funding for World Cup Preparations. This is a new one for this year, so 2026 is coming rapidly. There was money included last year towards the end, but recognizing that there are significant potential costs for local government in hosting and preparing for that, we want to make sure that is put forward to the delegation.

NAME:

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	PRIORITY	Title	Description	Category	Legislation or Appropriation	Included in 2023 UG Leg Agenda	UG Department	Notes
1								
11	Priority	Funding for unhoused	Provide state funding for permanent supportive housing, supportive housing for youth that age out of foster care, and emergency shelter. Increase state funding for services for unhoused such as health and housing navigators and social workers. Support the development of a statewide plan to address homelessness - both the amelioration of suffering and the expansion of housing.	Public Health & Human Services	Appropriation	No	Health Department	
12		Protect STAR Bonds	STAR Bonds have proven to be one of the most effective economic development and job creation tools in the State of Kansas. The Unified Government encourages the Kansas Legislature to continue a workable STAR Bond policy with maximum flexibility and without unnecessary restrictions.	Economic and Community Development	Legislation	Yes	Economic Development	Issue #2 in 2023
13		Quindaro Ruins	Support efforts to restore Quindaro Ruins and create a destination attraction that reflects the prominent role of Quindaro Ruins and the Missouri and Kansas rivers in our nation's history	Economic and Community Development	Appropriation	No	Economic Development	
14		Increased State Community College Funding	The Unified Government supports a funding formula for Community Colleges that gives full funding without increasing or placing an undue burden on local property taxes. A public education and Community College system which helps create a well-educated and trained workforce is crucial.	Economic and Community Development	Appropriation	Yes	Finance	
15		Study Committee on Creation of a Riverfront Authority	Legislation authorizing a Study Committee to explore creation of a Kansas City, Kansas Riverfront Authority to develop the Kansas riverfront into a premier attraction.	Economic and Community Development	Legislation	Yes	Economic Development	
16		Alternate Construction Delivery	The Unified Government supports further threshold reductions in State law that will allow local governments to use design build and construction manager at risk techniques for public construction projects at an even greater level. These techniques have saved Wyandotte County taxpayers millions of dollars and expedite schedules on several major public construction projects but are difficult to use under current State laws.	Local Government Operations	Legislation	Yes	Public Works	
17		Felony Assault on Public Transit Employees	Increase penalty from misdemeanor to felony for assaulting public transit driver/ operator. The past few years have seen increases in assaults on public transit operators. Increasing the penalty would provide additional protections for these critical public servants.	Local Government Operations	Legislation	Yes	Transit	
18		Medical Cannabis	The Unified Government support the legalization of medical cannabis. Medical marijuana should be subject to existing state and local sales tax and cities should be able to levy their own excise fees and receive a portion of any state funds to offset the impact of medical marijuana. Also, cities should have the ability to opt-in to allowing dispensaries in their city. Kansas should only allow the cultivation and processing of medical marijuana and THC in licensed facilities and should not allow residential grow operations of any sort.	Public Health & Human Services	Legislation	Yes	Finance	

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Mr. Howze said the next page here, we've got Funding for Unhoused. This is also a new one and this is around the category of funding for permanent support of housing and housing for youth that age out of foster care and emergency shelter. Currently emergency shelter funds are being borne at the local level. The state has some activities trying to address the unhoused, but it's kind of in pieces and parts in different places, so we see that there's a larger role for the state to play in helping to coordinate and fund efforts to address this issue across the state and include in Wyandotte.

Representative Melton said I'm just wondering, is there any current—like a committee or anybody studying any kind of ideas of how to approach the unhoused. **Mr. Davis** said, Representative Melton, there is. I attended the Interim Committee that was put together on that issue last week and they've only met once, but there were no firm policy proposals that came out of that, but I think there has been some very positive discussions at least.

Senator Pettey said I do know, and Paul's probably more aware of it, I do know that there's going to be an ask from Sedgwick County considered concerning this very issue when it comes to homelessness. What's included in here about youth, that age out of foster care, that is actually—I think that's promising what may come about with funding for that particular category of youth

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because that's been addressed on several different groups. That's looked at not as a partisan, a very bipartisan issue, so I would say to the League, certainly stay in tune with what's happening with Sedgwick because I do know that they're going to be asking for a substantial amount of money for this very thing.

Mr. Howze said next we have Protect STAR Bonds. This is a carryover from last year's agenda and as it suggests it's protecting STAR Bonds as an economic development tool.

Mr. Howze said next, we've got Quindaro Ruins. This is a new item and this is supporting efforts to restore Quindaro Ruins as a destination attraction.

Mayor Garner said our Administrator is going to take the lead for the Unified Government to really take a deep dive into this issue and work with Greg Kindle at WYEDC and some community stakeholders to, hopefully, at some point work with you all to get a robust proposal to our Commission that, hopefully, not just the state of Kansas and Wyandotte County to be proud of, but something worldwide that we can be proud of. I have been asked by several individuals, you know, if I had my magic wand, what would I want. Well, I would just love to see a billion dollar STAR Bond project that would link the Quindaro Ruins to the Rock Island Bridge and as to anchoring economic development tourist destinations and everything in between that, redevelop and totally transform everything from the northeast to downtown to Armourdale in a way unlike no one seen probably in this country and I think it can be done. When you look at a lot of bipartisan support right now there's a window of opportunity that's there. At the Federal level, both Republicans and Democrats are waiting on Wyandotte County as well as delegates across the water in Missouri, particularly Emanuel Cleaver. I talk to him constantly and every time I see him he's asked me what is Wyandotte County doing with Quindaro. He used it as a gold mine of opportunity that he doesn't want to see slip away.

I know that Representative LaTurner as well as Davids are all onboard. I've had conversations with the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor as well as private individuals that like to invest in seeing something really unique and historic as far as what can be done in relation to really taking a hard look at Quindaro Ruins and what that could provide to the state of Kansas. So, just sharing that vision with you and letting you know that a lot of folks are already there and onboard and that the Unified Government is working to develop a plan of action under the

leadership of our new Administrator. So, for those that may be watching, all I can say is stay tuned because there's so much interest out there, not just here locally, but nationally. I've gone to DC and I was shocked at how many people actually knew about the Quindaro Ruins and asked me if there was any movement on that.

So, for this delegation, I just wanted to share that with you and really just reiterate the support, hopefully, that can be cultivated through your leadership throughout the halls of the state legislature to really support an initiative that we all see Wyandotte County as being the gateway to Kansas if you come across the Lewis & Clark Viaduct that really could transform things east of 635 in a way that I think would be monumental when you talk about revitalization of an area that has been disinvested for so long.

Senator Pettey said I think it would be paramount to this effort since there are new dollars that have come to the UG dealing with the Quindaro Ruins to help keep us informed as to how those dollars are being used in the next year here. Before it's always been looking for dollars. Now that there are some dollars there, definitely it's just in some ways maybe seed money, but at least there is, so it certainly will help me and I suspect the rest of the delegation to be kept informed as to how that's being used.

Mr. Johnston said I appreciate those comments Senator. I think we were very appreciative of receiving funds that directly talked about Quindaro Ruins. One of those things that we will be doing is a master plan. What we've heard from the state and federal delegation, federal offices, the Governor's Office, is what would this investment be. You need to show us something and so we've got that message loud and clear and that's what you'll see us working on over the next year, so we can maybe sit around this table next year and say to you here's the master plan, here's the vision of Quindaro Ruins and we've been talking with our federal and now our state delegation again. So, thank you for that encouragement.

Mayor Garner said I don't want to get lost. To me it is significant that the Quindaro Ruins is the catalyst, but I think for Wyandotte County it's so much more than that because when you talk about the potential to redevelop our entire riverfront like other communities have done, wrapping arounds from the Ruins to the Rock Island Bridge and then all the ancillary development that can happen in between those two tourist destinations, I think it could be monumental for Wyandotte County and provide the added tax base resources, tourism, entertainment, and all those amenities that a lot of our residents have said that they wanted and put Wyandotte County on a

map that would be unique here in the Heartland in a way that other cities wouldn't have especially when you talk about the abolitionists, the American Indians, and freed African-American slaves that really brought slaves over.

I know talking to Congressman Cleaver, some have asked me what's his interest. His interest is he'd like to see a bi-state initiative and that's maybe something that the Kansas delegation could talk about with the Missouri partners across the water because he mentioned it to me that the slaves had to come from somewhere and they had to come from Missouri seeking freedom and there's artifacts and there's points of interest there that could really broaden a centralized bi-state historic destination, not just for the nation, but for the world to come and learn about those individuals that really were seeking freedom.

Mr. Howze said along that line, I'm going to jump to number 15, Study Committee on Creation of a Riverfront Authority. It's kind of in that same vein which is, what could that look like and so this one is carried forward from last year as well.

Mr. Howze said moving back up one, this is Increased State Community College Funding. Again, carried forward from last year and this is a recognition that the community college is almost entirely funded at the local level and that has a significant property tax burden for residents here, almost on par with our K through 12 education funding stream, but it's serving people in a greater region, so having a more equitable—more state funding would relieve that property tax burden and make that a more fair investment.

Mr. Howze said Alternative Construction Delivery. This is carried forward from last year as well and this is around reducing the thresholds to allow for that design build construction manager at-risk technique.

Commissioner Ramirez said this one is important. I'm sure we have other projects, but the number one project I can think of where we used this is the Turner Diagonal. That was a huge project. I believe it was design build and it was built quicker than had been expected. It was way ahead of schedule than what was going to be built so it works and so if we can find ways to make the statutes and make the law work better with us to be able to do the projects that we need, I think it would be very beneficial for Wyandotte County.

Mr. Howze said next we've got Felony Assault on Public Transit Employees. This is also carried forward from last year and this would increase the penalty to provide more protection for Transit Operators.

Representative Curtis said I can give a quick update on that. I tried to offer an amendment last year that would have added that protection for bus drivers, but it failed. I had several legislators come up to me afterwards and they were very interested in trying to do that this coming session. Last session we had several other categories that also wanted to have that protection, so in our research we did find that in Missouri they actually have adopted language that is more like a catchall language, so that it catches a lot of those critical positions where you do see assaults on employees like we passed last year, the protection for those in medical settings. So, definitely, I know firsthand from being at the KCATA what our bus drivers have to endure a lot of times and so having the protection in place would be good. I think this year we'll be looking at what Missouri did with that catchall language and see if we can't introduce some legislation that then would address that.

Senator Pittman said I'll add I'm fully supportive of our transit folks. I've had similar requests from teachers who are going through some hard times in schools. I'm a little hesitant to introduce felonies just for the reasons we talked about. I mean stiffening some of our penalties out there, maybe even having it as a repeat, but sometimes we ratchet up our felony laws pretty quickly in the state because we want to be tough on crime and get elected out there and then it never goes back down. So, we have a lot of felony situations and I get hesitant when we start throwing the word felony around and we have to be very careful of that when we say felony assault on it. Is it just because when assault is not a very large bar and it's just because of the position we start creating protected classes, we just have to be conscious of the impact of introducing this and some of the unanticipated consequences that can happen from these.

Representative Curtis said Mayor and Senator Pittman, I think it was misdemeanor for the healthcare, the protection. It wasn't felony.

Senator Pettey said it didn't get to the level felony—**Representative Curtis** said I think that same concern has been expressed kind of universally about increasing it to the felony level. So, yes, the conversation that we have had around the transit drivers has been more to add the protection as misdemeanors, not as felony.

Commissioner Ramirez said we may not have the data tonight, but if we can get the data from KCATA. Are those transit drivers and operators that work, when they're assaulted are they—are the assaults from—yes, riders, but do any of the riders have mental health issues, they're going through a mental health episode at the time. That would be my only stop to that is they're already going through a mental health episode and we're wanting to slap them with a felony assault and then that just furthers the cycle of recidivism with our mental health population. That's my only reservation on this is if a majority of them are due to mental health episodes, then I don't think slapping a felony assault is going to like—yes, you know, I support our public transit operators and operators, but I don't see how it's going to reduce the amount of assaults that are currently happening.

Commissioner Bynum said I would support some measure that maybe doesn't reach the felony level, but to Commissioner Ramirez point, you know, probably 9.5 out of 10 engaged in that behavior has a mental health issue, but criminal behavior is criminal behavior, so people need to be held accountable for their behavior especially if it's criminal behavior and I think if something like this were on the books, it's another tool in the toolbox for not only UG Transit, but KCATA Transit operators are dealing with. Just my opinion.

Mr. Howze said the next one is Medical Cannabis.

Mayor Garner said before we go to that. It's kind of left—did this Commission want to keep that as a legislative priority. I kind of got mixed—**Mr. Howze** said we could also adjust the language. **Mayor Garner** said we can. I was just trying to get a consensus.

Commissioner Ramirez said I agree with Commissioner Bynum of some shape or form. I don't think felony assault should be the top, just something, I don't know where that could go.

Mr. Howze said the next one is everyone's favorite topic. We got Medical Cannabis. This was included in the agenda from last year. The Commission had discussion around that and this is where they landed in terms of medical cannabis, so is there any discussion on that?

Mayor Garner said I did have one. I believe I've talked to our entire delegation about it. It's legal in Colorado, Missouri and I believe in some form in Oklahoma and north of us in Nebraska as well, so we're sandwiched between states where it's legal. People can literally walk

across the street, depending where you are in Wyandotte County, and go to a dispensary and legally possess, smoke marijuana and some may not know fully, and I'm not saying ignorance of the law and all that, I mean the reality is that society when you look at some of the states that have legalized marijuana, society it's becoming more and more an acceptable venue or recreational form of just like alcohol when you—especially when you look at prohibition, alcohol was outlawed and then became acceptable. I think the social values of our country are shifting based on this new generation and it's become an acceptable form of usage for personal use. I say that to say I understand in the state of Kansas that it is still illegal. The one issue that I've mentioned that I really would hope that our Wyandotte County delegation would really push something forward is, after three convictions it's a felony and that could have serious implications on individuals that are found to be in possession.

Now, it depends on where you go. I mean there's some counties where the DA may not file and there's some that may take a harder line on individuals found to be in possession of marijuana and I think to just make it more uniform, especially because Wyandotte County is in such close proximity to an area where it is legalized. I can tell you I've been to a lot of parks, I've been to a lot of social events and it's hard for me to find an event anymore where you don't know who's smoking it, but you know somebody has smoked it. Go to your grocery store, your Walmart, go to any type of big major venue, it's like the great smoke out. I'm just being—that's the reality. You know people are smoking and they're doing it.

So, when you talk about having a felony on your record and what that does to a lot of things, everything from employment to getting services that you would be afforded otherwise, I think that is a huge drawback for our Kansas residents. So, at least removing the felony part of it and taking it down to maybe a high level misdemeanor I think, hopefully, our super majority friends could see as a compromise because I know that some do struggle with legalizing marijuana, but at least have the conversation about maybe removing that harsh penalty of a felony.

Commissioner Davis said I think this is my second or third time, I'm for full recreational use. I know that I may not be in the majority here, but the economic impact is just undeniable. It's just undeniable. The educational impact of it, I mean right now I'm just thinking of millennials and Gen Z where I'm seeing friends of mine that are getting their education here and then going to Missouri to start businesses that are within the marijuana industry of some sort. So, I know that is probably further along and probably far more progressive, but there is a lot of impact in full

recreational use. We regulate alcohol, we regulate cigarettes, we regulate other things, it can be regulated the same way as well as completely alleviate the criminal justice conversation. I just wanted to be on record for that.

Commissioner Ramirez said I support what Commissioner Davis said, but we all know our state. We've got to take it step by step. We may not get the full thing we want, but let's get some forward or some halfway there and I think the medical marijuana is where—or cannabis is that first step where we can get. I support what the Mayor mentioned about the three strikes law and that is something that he and I have talked about in length before, talking about this and talking about what we can do at the local level and so I would support changing the three strikes law in some way where it's not so detrimental to—it's not so detrimental because we know here in Wyandotte County that it's our minority are the ones who are going to feel—who feel it the most. So, if we can reduce that in any way I think that would be really good and beneficial for the minority and the minority youth in our community.

Commissioner Kane said I've got to agree with Commissioner Davis, let's go for all of it. You know we are losing so much money—hey, this is kind of odd because—and I'd imagine some of you have smoked pot in this room, but here's the deal. Both my parents died a very long slow death and it would have been nice to give them some gummies to ease the pain. I was up there this year when the Highway Patrol got up and that guy was full of shit. All he kept talking about was what he saw in life and a couple of you guys are former police officers, you get in your box and this is the way you think. Sometimes you have to step outside your box to say you know what, this is good for the people and even though it's good for the people, it's beneficial for the state.

Mr. Davis said I might just add for members of the Commission and the public that's tuning in, the lack of progress on this issue is not because this delegation and others have not been trying very hard. This is an issue that if you would put it to a vote on the floor, both the House and the Senate, it would pass and there's no doubt about it. There's just a leadership impediment that is preventing that from happening. I just want folks to know that the legislature has spent a lot of time on this issue and there's been interim studies, been a lot of discussion and I think they've fine-tuned a lot of these proposals, but until a certain legislative leader decides he's going to change his position on this, that's the impediment right there.

Mayor Garner said before you start, in the interest of time, we do have a second half of this. We need to engage with our delegation, so if we can just run through these and then I just encourage our commissioners and our delegation to have these kind of conversations after unless it's something really important.

NAME:

2024 Leg Agenda - Final DRAFT

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	PRIORITY	Title	Description	Category	Legislation or Appropriation	Included in 2023 UG Leg Agenda	UG Department	Notes
1		Funding for Tuberculosis Outbreak Management	Wyandotte County has been a hotspot for tuberculosis cases in the past few years. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment provides some funding for TB management, but not enough to cover the costs of the testing and treatment regime needed to manage outbreaks. Additional direct funding for local health departments who are monitoring for TB would improve overall response and reduce public health risks associated with tuberculosis outbreaks. Additionally the creation of an "outbreak fund" within KDHE would allow the agency to provide surge support to communities during an active outbreak.	Public Health & Human Services	Appropriation	No	Health	
19		Expand Treatment and Harm Reduction Approaches for Substance Abuse	1) The UG supports expanded state funding for substance abuse in-patient and out-patient treatment facilities in Wyandotte County. 2) Redefine what constitutes drug paraphernalia under State Law. Kansas puts needles and syringes in the category of drug paraphernalia under state law, making their possession illegal, and prohibiting any sort of syringe exchange programs that are an evidence-based approach to decrease the spread of deadly infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. Current law allows for charges for possession of items related to marijuana use. 3) Remove from State Law that a 3rd charge for possession of marijuana is a felony. 4) Good Samaritan Overdose Laws protect individuals who act in good faith and call for help for a drug-related overdose, should they be found to be in possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia. Analysis from May of 2021 shows that Kansas is one of only 3 states that does not have a Good Samaritan Overdose Law.	Public Health & Human Services	Legislation	Yes	Health Department	
20		Support for Services for At-risk Youth	1) Foster Care Support After Age 18 - provide State financial support to youth who age out of the foster care system at age 18. Additional financial support improves the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to being a productive resident and reduces risk of people who age out of foster care ending up in the criminal justice system. 2) Expand Child-in-Need-of-Care Support Services to provide cognitive behavioral counseling and enhanced support for youth to prevent future incarceration or violence.	Public Health & Human Services	Legislation	Yes	Health, Human Services / Community Corrections	
21		Allow Expedited Partner Therapy	Allow for Expedited Partner Therapy in the case of sexually transmitted infections. EPT is the clinical practice of treating sex partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia and gonorrhea by providing prescriptions or medications to the patient to take to their partner without a health care provider first examining the partner. Kansas is one of only four states which do not explicitly allow EPT.	Public Health & Human Services	Legislation	Yes	Health Department	
22		Protect Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Approximately 13% of people in Wyandotte County (over 21,000 people) experience food insecurity. Research demonstrates that greater access to SNAP results in reducing hunger and poverty, and improving dietary intake, academic performance, mental health, economic self-sufficiency, and local job growth. There is no evidence showing that implementation of work and training requirements on SNAP creates significant increases in employment. The UG opposes making it more difficult for Wyandotte County residents to access SNAP.	Public Health & Human Services	Legislation	No	Health Department	
23		Extreme Risk Protection Order	Legislation that allows law enforcement to seize firearms from a person who possesses an immediate danger of injury to self or others, while also providing due process protections to ensure fairness. Such legislation would reduce risks for suicidal individuals as well as reduce incidents of domestic violence, and has been enacted in 19 states.	Public Safety	Legislation	Yes	Health Department	
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Mr. Howze said the next one is Tuberculosis Outbreak Management. This is a new one and this came about because we have had tuberculosis outbreaks and the challenge is that the state provides a little bit of funding for that, but not a lot of funding and not enough to cover the management of that particularly when we start talking about testing lots of people in an outbreak situation or multiple rounds of medicine that is required to manage those outbreaks. This is seeking—it's an appropriation item seeking the additional funds to support local public health in managing tuberculosis outbreaks.

Mr. Howze said the next one is Expand Treatment and Harm Reduction Approaches for Substance Abuse. This is carried forward from last year with the caveat that Fentanyl test strips were legalized in the last session so that has come out of this, otherwise it is carried forward from last

year which is seeking additional funding for substance abuse treatment. We don't have any inpatient substance abuse treatment beds in Wyandotte County right now and there is a significant lag in terms of people that are seeking treatment that are not able to access it that may be sitting in the county jail and in other places. So, there's also a human element and then there's significant cost element to this.

Mr. Howze said Support for Services for At-Risk Youth. This actually has the foster care support after age 18 in it as well and expanding the child in need of care support services for at-risk youth. This is part Public Health and also part Public Safety.

Mr. Howze said Allow Expedited Partner Therapy. This is one that's carried forward that you all seen before which is to allow partners who are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases to automatically get those prescription treatments without necessarily having to go through the full diagnosis regimen.

Mr. Howze said the next one is Protects Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This is recognition that there are over 20,000 people in Wyandotte County that receive SNAP benefits and so any efforts to make that harder to access and can have a direct detrimental impact to ability of residents to access those SNAP benefits and the food that they provide.

Mr. Howze said the next one is Extreme Risk Protection Order. This is one—kind of the red flag law that would under certain circumstances allow for firearms to be removed from a person who poses a danger to themselves or others.

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2024 Leg Agenda - Final DRAFT

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	PRIORITY	Title	Description	Category	Legislation or Appropriation	Included in 2023 UG Leg Agenda	UG Department	Notes
1		Offender Re-integration	The Unified Government supports full funding for community corrections programs and grants that provide support for individuals to successfully re-integrate into the community. These include programs for behavioral-health initiatives that reduce community risk and offender recidivism.	Public Safety	Appropriation	Yes	Sheriff, Community Corrections	
25		LAVTR funding	State funding for Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction (LAVTR) program to provide additional revenue to local governments and reduce pressure on property taxes.	Tax and Finance	Appropriation	No	Finance	
26		Local Share of Sports Betting Revenue	UG supports the State providing a share of sports betting revenues to local government.	Tax and Finance	Legislation	Yes	Finance	Issue #7 in 2023
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Mr. Howze said next we've got Offender Reintegration, again, pulled forward from last year. This is full funding for Community Corrections Programs that provide support to allow people to successfully reintegrate into the community. We have heard from our Community Corrections Department just in the last month or two about the success they've had in reducing recidivism so that we know that it can be done and this is seeking that full funding to support those efforts.

Mr. Howze said next LAVTR Funding. This is a new item as we talked about earlier. This is the funding specifically around LAVTR to support—to provide additional funding to local government.

Mr. Howze said last, the Local Share of Sports Betting Revenue. This was carried forward from last year. This was a priority issue last year. Paul, I don't know if you want to speak to this one.

Mr. Davis said I think that many of you may be aware that when the Sports Wagering Law was passed there was no local component as there is for regular gaming funds. There was also a fund that was set up to potentially lure professional sports teams to Kansas. This fund does not have a great deal of money in it and probably is unlikely to be utilized, but if the legislature reviews

that there may be an opportunity to review the local share as well. As many of you know the Pandora's box of gaming legislation doesn't like to be opened in Topeka and so I think the reason we kind of downgraded this from the priority that it was last year is that there doesn't seem to be much appetite to revisit gaming.

Senator Pettey said I would hope that as you're looking to finalize your recommendations that you would look at putting the LAVTR funding under the priority list instead of where it's at. I actually have visited with the Health Department, the Wyandotte County Health Department, in the last month. Number 22 Allow Expedited Partner Therapy. As my colleagues may note we're one of only four states which do not allow expedited partner therapy. With the Health Department, as they spoke to me, it's really a number one issue from a health perspective in our community, so I would really encourage all of us to think about that seriously.

We had an informational hearing in Senate Public Health & Welfare at least three years ago. I'm not going to say that I swayed my chair, but I certainly am going to work to help educate legislators and I would encourage you to learn more about it because it really can have an impact on the health of our families in Wyandotte County.

Mr. Davis said if I could make just one comment about the Expedited Partner Therapy issue, just so you all are aware, tomorrow morning I'm going to be on another call with folks from the Health Department here and Health Department's all across the state that have organized themselves really and our Health Department here has had a pretty big role in that. Representative Eplee, as you may recall, has kind of been the champion on the House side of this. This bill has passed the House before and I think he is looking for some indications that there is some appetite in the Senate, particularly the Public Health Committee. So, I know that may or may not exist, but I appreciate your efforts and certainly appreciate the weight that you carry on that committee, which is not easy.

Senator Pittman said I would encourage the Commission to think about education and supporting your Local Education Boards. This county has taken the lead in terms of making sure we have fair and equitable funding and that's constantly that formula that's been put in place has been attacked in terms of attacking the at-risk funding and these other things in terms of taking that

away. This funding really does benefit—funding mechanisms really do benefit our citizens here in Wyandotte County, so I'd encourage you to say we want to keep the funding formula clean as is and this type of thing. It's really good for us here locally.

The second thing is that we have a couple of passionate people about the Central Bridge as well as Highway 5 up to Leavenworth. Might be more specific instead of that number three, Protect State Infrastructure Funding, to maybe specify which infrastructure roads we might want to focus on when we attract funds from the state—with matching funds from the Unified Government and maybe just call those out each year so that we know what we should be pushing for and really pushing with the Department of Transportation and Administration.

My third point and final point would be just something around—we have a nice array, very specific health outcome initiatives from the Public Health Department. One of the disturbing trends that was brought to my attention last year was the health outcomes of this particular county are some of the worst in the state and I love that we have very specific initiatives to address that, but I would encourage the Unified Government to maybe even make a statement that says, hey, we need to have the states, just in general, have the states focus on helping us come up with better—you know raise our ranking in the state from the bottom county up to one of the top, at least in the middle. One position would even be better, so something along those lines because the health of our individuals affects our workforce, affects our education, it affects our families and quality of life and all those things.

Representative Oropeza said I just want to echo what Senator Pittman said. Since this was my first session I did reach out to KHI in Topeka and we have been on a decline in the health area with all their—we're 104 out of 105 and the only reason we're not 105 is because one county didn't submit their information and their data, so we probably would have been 105. We've been on a decline for the last five years as a county as a whole from the state's perspective.

Mayor Garner said thank you all so much. It's a great discussion. I'd like to personally thank, on behalf of the Unified Government, our Wyandotte County legislative delegation for coming here, spending your time with us, hearing our concerns and issues. The partnership we have is strong and I believe these types of conversations just help that partnership and our shared vision

gets even stronger as we try to get the resources that we know are needed here in Wyandotte County, so thank you for your support.

You know that you have our support and if there's no other business, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

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

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED

THE MEETING AT 6:16 p.m.

Monica L. Sparks
Interim Unified Government Clerk

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November 30, 2023