

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

REGULAR SESSION
December 7, 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Regular Session Thursday, December 7, 2023, with ten members present via Zoom and on-site: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large District One; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Mayor Garner; presiding. Commissioner Townsend, First District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: Angela Lawson, Acting Chief Counsel; Jeffrey Conway, Assistant Counsel; Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator; Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator, Wesley McKain, Health Department Manager, Dr. Elisha Caldwell, Health Department Director; LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor to the Mayor; Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer; and Monica Sparks, Deputy UG Clerk.

Monica Sparks, Deputy UG Clerk; and Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Garner said before I call the meeting to order, I want to announce that some commissioners, staff, and the public are attending remotely via Zoom, by phone, or on-site. All participants joining by phone should mute their phones when not speaking to avoid background noise.

During the meeting, please make sure that you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is observing knows who is speaking. Please be sure to speak directly into the microphone when speaking so the public can hear your comments and there's an accurate recording of the meeting for the minutes. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General's Office.

Mayor Garner called the meeting to order.

December 7, 2023

Roll call: Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Garner.

Mayor Garner said invocation tonight will be by Sister Theresa Vanguard, Our Lady Saint Rose, Catholic Church followed immediately by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Garner said I know we all prayed and you don't have to get up, just rest easy in your seats and let's take a moment. Commissioner Harold Johnson, Pastor of the Faith Deliverance Church, has filled in graciously when he didn't have to, to give prayer over this body, over this building, over everybody in it as well as every resident in Wyandotte County during his term as a commissioner and this will be his last meeting, and we do think it is befitting. Thank you, Commissioner Kane, for making that recommendation. So, Commissioner, if you would lead us into your last prayer with us. Commissioner Johnson gave a prayer.

Mayor Garner said Clerk, are there revisions to the agenda tonight? **Monica Sparks, Deputy UG Clerk**, said yes, Mayor, we do. An updated agenda has been issued. There are three items being added under the Mayor's Agenda. There will also be a change in the order of these items. Item number two regarding the Quindaro Ruins will be heard first. Those are all the changes we have tonight.

VI. MAYOR'S AGENDA

Item No. 2 – 212945...RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE: QUINDARO RUINS PROJECT

Synopsis: Adopt an ordinance and resolution rescinding the previous Memoranda of Understanding between the UG and the Western University Assoc of the AME Church and creating a new advisory committee to coordinate planning for historical attractions and tourism development in eastern Wyandotte County, submitted by Jeff Conway, Assistant Counsel.

Mayor Garner said that takes us to the first item, which was item number two but is the first item on the agenda. It is an adoption of an ordinance and approval of a resolution rescinding the previous memorandum set up by my predecessor, which is an understanding between the Unified Government and Western Universities Association of the AME Church and creating a new

advisory committee to coordinate planning for historical attractions and tourism development that really could impact positively all of eastern Wyandotte County in a way probably unlike we've never seen before. I'll ask our Legal Counsel to make some remarks.

Jeff Conway, Assistant Counsel, said I've worked on several versions of this document and I'd like to just say that I can explain some of the mechanics of how it fits together and several pieces. As far as the policy, I won't have any comment on that. That's something that you all can have a hand in, but I can explain some of the pieces here. It is a resolution that rescinds the previous MOU's that were entered into by the UG and the AME Church in that area. Then it goes on to create in the code a new committee that is—has the oversight over and the scope has kind of been broader as with each version and so now this current version, this new committee would not only look at Quindaro but also the Riverfront and Strawberry Hill, Russian Hill, Armourdale, Northeast, downtown, etc, so the focus is quite a bit on to eastern Wyandotte County. Much of the mechanics of the committee was borrowed from similar committees in the code and different places so you're going to see some of that same language as far as vacancies and open records and how to do the meetings and things of that sort. That's very similar to many other committees. The composition of it in this version is 14 members. It would be 10 appointed by the Commissioners, one by the Mayor, so there's the 11 that you're very familiar with. One member is appointed by the County Administrator, one member is appointed by the executive level of the AME Church, and one member is appointed by the Wyandotte County Economic Development Council, WYEDC, and because there's 14 members, that member would not be a voting member because of the structure.

There's an interesting twist as far as where the Chair and the Vice Chair come from so the Chair comes from the Commissioner in whose district that those Quindaro Unified Government Land Holdings lie so they get kind of an added interest in it of course because it's cited there the Quindaro. The Vice Chair is the At-Large Commissioner where those Land Holdings lie and then the rest of it is determined by the committee itself, how that's put together.

I'm kind of glossing over some of the items. We had some thought that went into how to establish the purpose and duties of the Commission and there's been quite a bit of thought and rewriting of that, so it basically goes to the eastern side of the county. Then there's some language about tying that together, recognizing the historic impact and all that type of thing and then the third piece in this is a 2652C is also talking about how to fold in the Quindaro Ruins part. And so

it's not necessarily usurping anything, it's just basically saying it's an overall plan, we're going to try to put some strategic thought into this and one of those pieces is the Quindaro piece which could be a critical piece of the Riverfront, it could be a driver of Economic Development, redevelopment in the eastern side of the county.

Then I did find one, as it happens as a drafter, I did find one place where I think I could improve a cross reference, so if I had a little bit of latitude, if you chose to go forward with this, I could put a phrase in there to clarify that it's the Unified Government Land Holdings here and after referred to as Unified Government Land Holdings. I just insert that in there in the C. That's not a substantive changes but I think it helps to tie it together just a little bit better. That may be kind of how the pieces fit together and I'd be willing to answer any questions you might have.

Mayor Garner said just to kind of summarize I've worked with the Administrator. As you know I've been working with some of our Commissioners, Commissioner Townsend, Commissioner Johnson, I've spoke to some of the Commissioners briefly about this item. I've worked extensively going to DC, talking to our Congressional Delegation, Senator Moran, Senator Marshall, President. Full support of supporting something positive coming from Quindaro and I've talked to Congressman LaTurner and Congressman Sharice Davids, full support from them on something positive coming from or doing something with Quindaro. I talked to Congressman Cleaver on the Missouri side, and every time he sees me, he has pressured me, Mayor, you have to push something forward to the best of your ability to move a project or a group forward that can get something done with the Quindaro Ruins. It's not just a jewel for Wyandotte County; it's actually a jewel for the whole United States as well as the world. When you talk about slaves coming from slavery in through Missouri to the free state of Kansas in a way that's somewhat unique than in other areas because you have abolitionists who are Caucasian, you have American Indians of the Wyandotte Tribe and then you have freed slaves that all welcomed those seeking freedom here, Gateway to the West, in the free state of Kansas.

What was laid out from Legal in some of the conversations just taking the feedback that I've gotten, my conversations with the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor, they have the full support as well. The one common denominator was, is that they wanted the Unified Government to lead this in a way to where they could support, fund and really get the full weight at the national, the state, and local level behind this to really do something profound. Talking to residents we also saw this as an opportunity to do something and invest in east of 635. When you look at the obvious

iconic tourism jewel spots that we have here in Wyandotte County, be it the Quindaro Ruins, Kaw Point and now coming online here shortly the Rock Island Bridge that gives us an opportunity to not only look at Quindaro, but take Quindaro and also redevelop our Riverfront from Quindaro on the Missouri to the Kansas River past Kaw, to the Rock Island Bridge and then you've heard those areas. When you talk about the areas in between all that the northeast, the downtown, the Hills, as well as Armourdale, those connecting areas of our town all east of 635. If I had my wish, and one of the things that I would ask if this is approved tonight, this task force, which will ultimately be led, not by me, but will be overseen by our Administrator, if you read what's in here and WYEDC, who we've contracted with the Wyandotte County Economic Development Corporation in concert with this board, is if I had my wish and my ask is I'd like to see something on the level of what you've seen out in Village West but even more a STAR BOND project potentially of upwards of \$1.5 billion dollars to totally transform the area east of 635 and make it a tourism mecca that hopefully would be second to none, not just in the Metro, but across the states unlike what other cities have done in Oklahoma City, Houston, in Louisville, take your pick.

Even Detroit has done a lot with their Riverfront as well and it's really been successful. So, the opportunity is there to really do something profound that could really bring the types of investments, goods, services, resources, infrastructures, we have bridges that are out. If this is done right and the right proposal is brought before the Commission, hopefully it can address a lot of the issues that we're dealing with in the older area of our town while also bringing in housing, amenities, the infrastructure again like I said. As well as bringing people to Wyandotte County that would want to see and learn about Quindaro, would want to see how that ties into Kaw as well as enjoy the Rock Island Bridge and have a Riverfront that's redeveloped with walking with trails and things of that nature to really tie and make about—make a vibrant connect to our greater neighbor to the east, which is Kansas City, Missouri, which is also doing things in the bottoms and along their Riverfront as well. So, this is great opportunity and I hope the Commission will consider this opportunity as such.

At this time I'm going to open up for public comment. You'll be given up to three minutes. Anybody wishing to speak, please come to the podium at this time and you can make your comments known.

Mike Laddin, Vice President of the Rock Island Bridge also known as Flying Truss LLC., said we're redeveloping the historic Rock Island Bridge into an outdoor recreation, entertainment, dining and public facility, as well as a public crossing. When we first started this project a long time ago, before we even approached the Commission, a lot of our friends told us that we were crazy. That's not the case. Earlier today, there's some iron workers out there welding steel to finish the central truss that we're expanding. So, it's not impossible. If you want big things to happen, you have to think big and we are sitting five minutes away from one of the most beautiful, geological and natural resources we have, and we're not utilizing it, and that's the Kansas Riverfront. Now the Missouri River is nice, I like it, you can admire it but it moves really swiftly and it's difficult to make it into a recreational waterway that's suitable for children and families to canoe on. The Kansas River is a non-navigable waterway, it's not channelized, and it runs about a third of the speed of the Missouri. We've done canoes and kayaks, and we've had festivals, and we've had literally thousands of people show up for these.

I can think of nothing more that would be not just a jewel for Kansas City, Kansas but would be a jewel for the entire city and this region would be an active waterfront in eastern Wyandotte County. It goes without saying that the repercussions of that are positive all the way through from development into a largely undeveloped area and tax revenues flowing into an area that needs investment in infrastructure and also investment to encourage other businesses to stay. So, if we want to dream big, we have to think big and we have to act big and Flying Truss, The Rock Island Bridge is in full support of Mayor Garner's proposal and let's keep this moving forward. We have momentum, there's no need to stop now.

Reverend Terry Bradshaw Jr., Senior Pastor of Empowerment Temple, said I have come to ask that we all become one tonight and be on the right side of history. Quindaro has been treated like the stepchild that is not wanted for years. And the history and the legacy that Quindaro has of our ancestors who fought for a better tomorrow for us to receive the American dream today, we cannot let their stories die. The blood that was shed, the sacrifices that were made, we got to make good on the many sacrifices they made years ago. So, it's time for us to treat Quindaro like the treasure that it is, it's time for us to treat it like the lady and not ignore what is so desperately needed in that area. Also, the northeast side of town, period, needs TLC. We've seen things happen across Wyandotte County that are wonderful but many of the citizens who are on the northeast

side of town, like their voices are not heard. As a Pastor in that area, I left the comfort of a very nice home in Johnson County and I moved on 26th Street. I wanted to feel what they feel and can I tell you, I cried almost every day seeing the struggles of those citizens over there and their voice is not being heard. Calling the Police and then taking them 45 to an hour and sometimes not even coming at all because of the neighborhood I was in. I'm asking each commissioner, black, white, Jew, and Gentile, let's be one tonight. Let's put aside our differences and let's make this right and let's support the Mayor in this great vision because it's not just about the Mayor, it's about doing what's right, doing what's ethical. Every person in here some of you commissioners, I seen you, you support Dr. King...**Ms. Sparks** said one minute remaining... **Mr. Bradshaw** said but don't support his ideologies and miss an opportunity to help his dream come true by passing something like this. We can do it, we are with you, we're praying for you, God bless America, but God bless Quindaro too.

Reverend Stacy Evans, Chairperson of the Western University Association of the AME Church, & Chairperson for the Quindaro Ruins Townsite project, said everything that you've said is stuff that we've been saying for years that this is an international drop that could change the whole course of Wyandotte County. Never disagree with any of that and love the idea that the city is into it now. I think no one ever really tried to contact Western University or myself. When you first came to town, we met once and that was it and then I was called to a meeting just before the last Special Session and the video that was shown was laced with falsities, so not laced with, based on and laced with. And so you know we're talking about being one and doing the right thing.

We're not against this project, we would love to see everything you said, we've been talking about kayaking over to Missouri and all sorts of venues and things that go on there, so we're not against that. I think though that is we're going to—I met with some of the commissioners, it was a great meeting, met with the County Administrator and it was a great meeting and the things that I felt when we were having those meetings. Tonight, it feels a little different and so we're just talking about the right thing and we're talking about doing the right thing not only by the community, but by regardless of what anyone says the AME Church has really done wonderful work there for ever since 1881. With the Western University when they received the property to start the first and only Black college in Wyandotte County in the State of Kansas, and then we continue to care for it. We're the ones that clean it up and pay whatever fines

or whatnot needs to be done. **Ms. Sparks** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Evans** said so I—just if we’re going to do it right and be fair to everybody, I think that we should work together, and I have—would like for the commissioners to consider to not dissolve this current MOU and that we can continue to work forward together and everything that you said. We are not against all of this wonderful progress.

Karen Arnold Burger, Executive Board of Trustees for Freedoms Frontier National Heritage Area, said I just wanted to say that I’m here as a representative of Freedoms Frontier to say that we’re in support of anything that can be done to move this project forward or the development of Quindaro forward as a historic site. I made a few notes here, not only is Western University a critical and the history of Western University a critical part of the history of Quindaro. There was a recent documentary, I’m so glad, that traces the roots of gospel music to Western University. There’s the Vernon School, the colored school that is in terrible disrepair that is part of the history of this area that houses the Underground Railroad Museum. There’s the John Brown statue, the first ever statue commissioned a full body statue of John Brown in the country that was paid for by the people of Quindaro. There’s the Steam Ferry that went across the Missouri River, Quindaro to Parkville, there’s the old Quindaro Cemetery that contains the remains of not only Wyandotte Tribe Members, but original settlers of Quindaro.

You cannot learn about the history of this area, which of course one of the primary interests of Freedoms Frontier and not know that this is just an amazing property that if the history isn’t brought to life so that other generations can see it, we’re going to lose it. There’s been a lot of talk for years. I think there are well-meaning people on all sides of this who want to see this to move this forward, but nothing has moved forward and it’s time to do something to make that happen. Whatever you all chose to do and I just want you to know that on behalf of Freedoms Frontier we are fully committed to try to do what we can to help navigate the Federal system to do whatever we can because we view it as a key part of Freedom’s Frontier which is what the Heritage area was established to—the word—excuse me but to honor, so thank you very much.

Nikia Hope, Vice President for Concern Citizens for Old Quindaro, said I just wanted to say that we are in support of the resolution and the plans that the Mayor has going forward with Old Quindaro. My family has been in the area for the most part since its inception. One of the first

families to seek freedom there and be welcomed in by the Wyandotte people and I have lived there my whole life, my father has, my grandfather, my grandmother and we are in full support of the area getting what it deserves. We stand, and I stand here tonight, for the families who have been there and who have never left and what they deserve and the community that they deserve to be a part of. So, we are in full support. As she mentioned the area has so much to offer. We sponsor the Old Quindaro Museum and even though it's closed we've spoken with families, we've toured family reunions, 25-30 people family reunions that come in from out-of-town and they're searching the area and people want to come and people want to be a part. People want to see the statue; people want to walk down to the river, and they want to see what's left. We give tours of the cemetery. My daughter walks to the cemetery because her ancestors are buried there. So, we are in full support of moving the project forward and getting the area and the people who live there what they deserve.

Louise Lian, Second Chief of the Wyandotte Nation of Kansas, said we have been in this area since 1843, have been active and are still a thriving tribe. We're a very close knit with the Quindaro community. Quindaro was created on land of the Wyandotte's and Nancy Quindaro Brown Three happens to be my cousin so it's very near and dear. It's a very sacred place to not only the Wyandotte's but all the people that came after. It was an area that created an opportunity for a unique set of circumstances with the people seeking freedom, the abolitionists and the Native Americans and you don't find that, I don't believe any other place in this country. So, I stand here on behalf of my nation and offer the full support moving forward of the resolutions and the plans that are proposed. We would like an opportunity to be able to be part of that in any way that we can and to help out. It is a sense of pride not just for this area, but a way to open the eyes of this country, not just what is here in this town that so deserves recognition but opportunities to be able to thrive on the east side of 635 and that's what my people would have wanted and that's what we want today.

Mayor Garner said is there anyone else that would like to speak in favor?

Mark Meisenheimer said I, along with my film partner Jerry Smith, recently finished a documentary on the Quindaro Ruins after three years of production. When we discovered the site

as a part of a search of all the prominent Underground Railroad sites in the area, we soon figured that the connection between the 19th century history and the contemporary issues of the day that have long plagued the Quindaro Ruins would land on an audience with great interest. The film's completion allowed us to share the story at film festivals around the country, including the Film Tenth Film Festival in Washington D.C. We meticulously crafted the film with the intention of raising awareness about the historical significance of these ruins and inspiring a collective effort to preserve and restore them. Our goal was to ignite a sense of responsibility and urgency. Central to this narrative was the invaluable input from local stakeholders including the AME Church, which holds a unique perspective on the matter given their long history in Quindaro and the fact that they own much of the land in which the ruins are situated. When we initially approached the leadership of the church, expressing our sincere intent to include their perspective on our documentary, we were told we were not serious filmmakers, and that our idea for the documentary was a recycled one.

Only if we promised monetary compensation would the church leadership consider being part of our efforts request we heard from no one else. Regrettably, despite extending multiple invitations for their involvement, the church declined to participate, displaying an unexpected and active hostility towards our project. When we unknowingly approached allies of the church, these allies attempt to strong arm their way into an interview with a prominent official as a third party. When we requested permission to videotape a summer cleanup effort at the ruins, we were aggressively told we were not welcome to the event, which was open to the public. Despite what appeared to be the church's objection to our project, we persevered but along the way, we asked those willing to sit and talk with us about the Quindaro Ruins if they had similar experiences when dealing with church leadership. **Ms. Sparks** said one minute remaining.

Mr. Meisenheimer said the answer was a resounding yes again and again even from longtime church members. While we understand there are greater societal forces at work for a long time that have put the community of Quindaro in the ruins disinvested, disenfranchised and marginalized as a whole in the greater community of Kansas City, it is our opinion that the church's approach in recent years has been to stand in the way of progress. Again and again the perception and the community that we heard was at the church's motivation lie in making money, not in the preservation of the rich history. It is our opinion that until the church leadership is willing to approach this community and this government with greater humility, the current Memorandum of

Understanding is a toothless document and should be dissolved. The Unified Government should push forward on it's own, working with all levels of government to preserve and promote the Quindaro Ruins area but still leaving the door open for all parties and possibility. After all, the Unified Government and the church may own the land, which constitutes the Quindaro Ruins but the history belongs to the community.

Mayor Garner said it's not a debate; you've had your opportunities. So, is there anyone else?

Marvin S. Robinson II said I've invited independent volunteer research with the project for over three decades starting with the Kansas City The Call newspaper. I was not paid by them and I didn't have no money to pay them and they promised if the work was any good that they would see about getting it published and it went on from '87 to '92 weekly. We've had so many trials and errors and I was actually afraid to come to the meeting tonight because in 2018 when former Congressman Yoder said he had finally gotten the legislation introduced in Congress for a hearing, I told them that I would try to get on the phone and the email and get people who could go there because I didn't have the resources.

Anyway, that all worked out. 435 members of the United States House Representatives voted for that piece of legislation and it failed because the federal budget closed down and when the next year started Mr. Yoder was in return, and Congresswoman Sharice Davids picked up the ball. We had any one of a number of hearings with the Kansas State Historic Society, we had so many hearings, I don't know how many we had, so many hearings with the Unified Government. I just couldn't imagine that we would lose the opportunity tonight to go forward. Governor Kelly very graciously allocated a million dollars and she didn't have to do that. She could have put it in any one of a number of different projects. We have a lady who's 104, another person who's 97-98 years old and they're worthy of being there for the National Historic Landmark designation, even Mr. Owens, I saw him today at a memorial service. He's 90.

We're losing the generational links and even though some of the Commission members won't be returning, it would be remiss and beneath the mark to not say thank you for voting the way that you have to help with the project over the different seasons. Even getting the National Historic Landmark consultant through the Kansas State Historic, that was \$20,000. **Ms. Sparks** said one minute remaining. **Mr. Robinson** said and 37 in-kind contribution. Okay, we having a

moment to waste, time never stands still, it constantly ticks and that moment is now and you have the opportunity to go forward with helping us to use the site to improve race, class and culture relationships and if that's not good enough with job creation, then the US Army Corp of Engineers has a Veteran's Archaeological Project and I'm biased because I'm a vet, I'm not able to go do the dig but they don't charge. They hire veterans in those areas, it becomes a win-win for the future and I cannot thank each and every one of you enough for your time tonight and your conscious consideration.

Mayor Garner said is there anyone else that would like to speak? Clerk, do we have anyone online who would like to speak? **Ms. Sparks** said no hands are raised. **Mayor Garner** said Commissioners, any questions?

Commissioner Bynum said my questions are technical. The MOU that we would rescind, we might need Mr. Conway because my questions are largely technical. I support the resolution; we're rescinding an MOU that I believe created a nonprofit 501c3 organization, is that correct? **Mr. Conway** said right, that revised MOU encouraged the parties to form a nonprofit and that nonprofit was formed and filed with the state. **Commissioner Bynum** said and does exist? **Mr. Conway** said it does exist. **Commissioner Bynum** said is it a 501c3 with the IRS? **Mr. Conway** said I believe they did finalize that paper. **Commissioner Bynum** said so the question I had as we've talked about this is do we have the authority as a Unified Government to legally dissolve that 501c3 Corporation or do we have the relationship to at least ask them to dissolve and I don't know that it precludes us from rescinding the MOU, but I'm just saying there's a 501c3 organization that exists and I don't know if we have the power and authority to dissolve it. So, I think that's just out there.

We're going to call this Economic Redevelopment Advisory Committee. I personally, just looking at the way it's organized, I might move C excuse me, under Section 2-652 purpose and duties. I might move C to B and B to C because I think the overarching goal is the Quindaro Ruins and I think the tying together areas of significant interest go along with that, but are not the main purpose in the way that I read what we're doing, so I would just flip those two sections.

Question under the current Section B, the last sentence of that says develop a nonprofit entity that can receive monetary and in-kind donations. Is it our intention then that this Economic

Redevelopment Advisory Committee would then become a nonprofit 501c3 organization and this group would become its Board of Directors. **Mr. Conway** said I have to be honest, I'm not sure what the proponents were getting at with that language, but I think the idea was that if there was an effort in the future to move towards a historical park, a piece of the Federal Department of Interior that maybe there need to be a mechanism to accept donations and funnel them to the right place. I think that was the intent, and I don't think it was to you to replace the existing Foundation, it was just a mechanism, a conduit I think is the idea but I'm not sure.

Commissioner Bynum said you know I support the resolution. I just feel like there are some technicalities that I want to make sure we can—even if we don't hammer them out tonight, if we could agree collectively to make sure we're all clear on what they mean, then I think that's fine. But again, my suggestion would be—you know we're providing an advisory support to our Administrator and we're coordinating Economic Redevelopment strategies for eastern Wyandotte County and we're inclusive of the northeast, Quindaro, downtown, historic neighborhoods, Armourdale, Strawberry Hill and Russian Hill, but I think the goal is the Ruins. I think the goal is the Quindaro town site and I think we should be highlighting that and maybe putting it first, not that the other is less important, but—does that make sense Mayor? I'm just asking technical questions but—that's it, that's all I have.

Mayor Garner said I'll let the Administrator hit on some of the—if there's funding or there's any revenue streams that need to come—ultimately the Administrator and the Unified Government is going to be taking the charge, this is merely an Advisory Board to the Administrator and to WYEDC to get this Commission a proposal for redevelopment project that could transform that area. And so any type of the receivership of all that in fiduciary ultimately would be the Unified Government, not this board.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said I guess I just want to interject a few things and answer some of that question that the Mayor proffered. First of all, in my short time here nine months, I don't think there has been an issue that has floated to the surface in such a strong way in a nine-month period as the role that reexamining and honoring the role that the Quindaro Ruins plays. We had the judge use the word honor, the people who made that a special place and also saying that it needs to be used as an education opportunity to remind people today and into the

future of the sacrifices and the unique environment that was created as was mentioned by her and another person that didn't exist anywhere else in the Underground Railroad where three distinct groups actually lived in harmony, which should be a message for today. That's in our backyard, it's amazing and so we have this MOU and I think what frustrates people throughout the community is it's been in the forefront for many years and I think what they're frustrated about is there's a lot of energy, a lot of talk, a lot of action has been taken by many different people, but they want that sense of place to visit and it hasn't been developed to a point that I think would peak further strong interest into taking it further by the National Park Service, whatever. But it's the foundation is there, and they're frustrated by—it needs definition.

So, in the talk internally we've had this MOU and this agreement with the AME Church and the UG and that's one part of the story. What other discussions have happened inside the UG is just again, in two years' time there's been a reexamination and investment in the Riverfront and when we have a successful development with the IR or the Rock Island Bridge, which is to be opening I believe sometime in spring or summer this year, is that right? **Mr. Conway** said yes sir. **Mr. Johnston** said it's created a one terminus of an arc that the Mayor was mentioning from Rock Island all the way to Kaw Point and then come up river in the Missouri to Quindaro, so there was this idea we wanted to have a focus on this. The Mayor talked about he'd love to see a \$1.5 billion STAR BOND issue to lead to the redevelopments, great idea, but then how do we also make sure that there's attention to the Ruins. So that service so the discussion was recently, I think this week is that we wanted to have a group that looked at the wider vision but also look at the Quindaro relationship and the internal discussion was we just need one group to look at the whole thing. There are still challenges to that, that need to be done and examined, but that I think was the process that was led internally that has this document before you 11 people to discuss, examine, provide guidance on.

When we've talked with you, we've talked with internal folks within the UG and in a recent conversation with the board that manages their property, the AME property, is that we have a time limit. We have a bipartisan order that never existed before at both the State and Federal level that have promised funding to get this concrete thing off the ground and work to define it and respect the work that has been done over the years to be able—they've been saying show us what you want, what buildings need to be there, what's the historic preservation strategy that needs to be incorporated here to be able to tell the story and preserve that story. There was I think, initially

respect that Quindaro was so special we need to strengthen the relationship with the existing MOU, but also how do we incorporate that as another terminus of this arc from Quindaro, Kaw Point, to the Rock Island Bridge. And so that discussion happened internally that led to a refocus on the wider committee for the wider east side of our community where Quindaro is part of that. Some of the questions I think that Commissioner Bynum has presented is just some other legal questions that need further interest. Is this reality that the property is owned by not the UG I mean you can't make people do things on their property that they don't want to do. And, therefore, I'm encouraged by I think some of the one language in there that it's the County Administrators continued responsibility to make sure that the relationship between the UG and the AME Church still is a priority, but again, there is that fact that they don't own the—we don't own the property we can't make people do things on their property that they don't want to do and we need to make sure that, that legal question needs to be addressed and a more wider model that you have before you is usable so I'm just being honest with you, with that.

I want to celebrate with all of us that we got this political bipartisan stars aligned for funding that time is fleeting in politics, and therefore we need to focus on this opportunity, but the Governor has told us, the Congressmen and women have told us, you need to define the product. The products not defined and so we're in a time of fleeting and therefore the question before the 11 of you that are up here to discuss and to provide guidance, do you like this approach, do you support that approach, if you do, support that approach. If you do, vote for it, if you don't, don't vote for it, but we need to make sure that we don't lose this opportunity. I guess that's—we have work to do if this is the way we're going to go, but that's the history that I see is that there were two initial approaches, discussion internally went we need to go one approach and that's what's before you for your consideration.

Commissioner Ramirez said I support what we're trying to do, I do. I just—going back to what the Administrator just said, we have some legal questions that we have to work through and before today, as I remember voting on, the original MOU and the revised MOU a year or two later, it would have been nice if we were given a copy of it as well within our packet to review alongside this ordinance. You know, Mr. Mayor, you always say you want us to be informed to make an informed decision and I feel I'm not informed enough tonight to make a decision. I support this 100% but then—and it's—it didn't go through our regular process, it didn't go through the

committee process but we could have had a robust decision with community stakeholders, staff give a presentation, AME give a presentation, the community give a presentation, give everybody the time of day to be able to say their peace. But we weren't given that, and I know it's going to be said on the community that what I'm saying is I don't care, that I don't which is false. **Mayor Garner** said let's be respectful of the commissioner—point of order. I'm going to call for some order. Let's be respectful of the commissioner. **Commissioner Ramirez** said I said I support this. I just don't support the way it came about and I don't feel well informed enough but I will go whatever how the Commission pleases, but we have a process, let's follow that process, and I will say it right now so the community can hear whatever is said is will be said is false. I do care about this community I do care about each and every one of you. I wouldn't be in this seat if I didn't care. I do care, I love this community, this community raised me. I don't want to go anywhere, I don't want to live elsewhere, I don't want to leave, this is my home, it's always been my home, always will be my home. So, I just want it to be known that I do support this but it seems that there's some big issues that need to be fleshed out and I would prefer that they be fleshed out first before we take this step. But again, I will go as the Commission pleases.

Commissioner Stites said so when the appointments of the 14, you guys said that there would be I think it was Mr. Conway that it would be each one of us would appoint someone to be on that board and then there would be the three others that would come up to 14, correct? So, my question on that would it be—would those appointments from each commissioner, as you well know I'm a commissioner from out west, would our appointment have to come from a resident of our district or could it be—okay you're answering already, is that a no? So as long as they're a Wyandotte County resident, is that correct? **Mr. Conway** said that's right, I mean, the Mayor has had some floated ideas in the past about trying to tie them down to the specific district of residence but that's not in this one yet. We can add it, if you'd like. **Commissioner Stites** said no I'm fine with it being just—**Mr. Conway** said the only restriction was it—the hope is that some of these folks would represent the fields of Economics, Economic Development, Finances, Historic Preservation, etc.

Commissioner Stites said well I'm going to say this, and it might not be what this Commission or some of the commissioners want to hear or not, but I'm tired of talking about it, let's do something. I happen to have the district that has the most economic development going on, District 7, The Legends, out west. We have heard and heard and heard about Quindaro Ruins

and operating and getting the waterfront the Riverfront up and running. Yeah, there's legal questions, yep, guess what, we have a legal team that can answer those legal questions. So, I think that what we have heard, and we don't need to kick this can down the road any further, we need to make this motion—I mean I support this, and let's see where this takes us. We're never going—I said this at I think the last commission meeting or maybe it was an ED&F meeting, we're never going to make a snowman until we start rolling the first snowball. So, with that being said, I am wanting to make the motion that we adopt the resolution, the ordinance/resolution that rescinds the previous memorandum and creates a new Advisory Committee.

Action: Commissioner Stites made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs, to adopt the resolution, the ordinance/resolution that rescinds the previous memorandum and creates a new Advisory Committee.

Mayor Garner asked is there any further discussion?

Commissioner Davis said let me start off by saying this, I absolutely want there to be movement on Quindaro and I'm absolutely in support of that. I think there is this notion that somehow this passes and then immediately we're going to start to see construction and that plan's going to happen. All this does is really establish a board. So just we're not talking about money, we are not talking about a project, we're talking not talking about a grant. We're talking about a board and an Advisory Board at that and so I just want folks to understand what exactly we are discussing.

I do want to ask Mr. Conway just a few questions. Mr. Conway, kind of according to your recollection and you just tell me if this is correct or not, the AME Church owns the majority of the land in the Quindaro Ruins, is that accurate, according to what you know, your knowledge. **Mr. Conway** said there's been some dispute as to what exactly is the—where the Ruins are or aren't and whatever so that's part of it but of that triangular area that we kind of commonly look at it's like 85%. **Commissioner Davis** said about 85% and so that 85% that is unowned by the UG, is that what your—**Mr. Conway** said you're owned by the church. **Commissioner Davis** said owned by the church. **Mr. Conway** said okay, Western University. **Commissioner Davis** said so the church owns 85% of the Ruins and this composition of this Advisory Board is again what we are discussing. The church gets one member out of the 14. That is correct? Am I reading that okay?

So, I just want folks to understand kind of what is currently before us. Mr. Conway, there is no just—I just want to make sure I’m reading this right, there is no mandate for a master plan, there’s no mandate for grant writing or grant application, there’s no mandate for hiring a Executive Director or Project Manager, there’s none of those things that would kind of create a museum or create trails. Is any of that in this current ordinance or resolution that we’re considering? **Mr. Conway** said it is not Commissioner, but they would put together—there’s going to be monthly meetings, and they could put together their recommendations and proposals it would filter through and then there’d be recommendations back to the Board of Commissioners. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha, that’s very, very helpful. I would have liked to have seen more explicit language; Mr. Murray are you going to come up and add something? So, I’ll just say this I would have liked to seen some language that was very more specific about Quindaro and giving some very specific action items because who’s to say that all of the focus goes to Kaw Point or all the focus goes to other areas east of 635, and not necessarily Quindaro. I’m in support of moving this forward if that is what the majority of folks want, let’s go ahead and let’s do that. However, I do want us to be clear on what we are discussing, but I want to hear what you have to say Mr. Murray.

LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor to the Mayor, said I did want to address the issue with regard to land, the title of land ownership, etc. and of course the—and I know as Mr. Conway indicated there’s some confusion about what area makes up the Quindaro Ruins and I think there’s been too much reliance on the map that was included as a part of the non-binding MOU and that map was drafted by the representatives of the AME Church citing what land they would like to address, what Unified Government land they would like to own, and it shows their land. I think I pointed out in the past that that map was problematic because it also included the old Quindaro Cemetery, which was granted to the Unified Government years ago by virtue of the Abandoned Cemeteries Act, and to give that back to an AME affiliate creates a problem, but I just wanted to point out that when you look at the Ruins as a whole, the Unified Government owns about as much land as the AME Church and when you look at the existing historically designated property and we do have experts here and I’m sure Mr. Robinson has addressed this many times before.

But the designated property is on the Unified Governments land because at the time and the AME Church could have received equal designations they didn’t want, and so I just wanted to

point out that when you talk about 85% land ownership, for example, one of the most noted structures in the area, The Blakey House, is outside of that boundary that this 85% notion considers and you have to consider the totality of the property that has historical significance and that's one of the concerns that came about with regard to the non-binding MOU. Not so much the concern about the AME Church or anything like that, but the fact that the non-binding MOU creates expectations from that entity that the Unified Government will give to that entity its property.

Commissioner Johnson said I've been kind of overwhelmed by the amount of information that's been shared just within the past 20-48 hours about this item and as I've said to all parties, I just want to see something moving please. It seems to me just as I'm listening to the dialogue tonight that there seems to be some discrepancy as to who owns the greatest portion of property and I don't know that it's that difficult. Maybe I'm over simplifying my thinking that it's that difficult to find out who owns what. I mean it's a public record is it not? So, why are we debating as to I mean—we can pull public record and I would think within pretty short order to determine who owns what and the challenge, first of all, let me just say this I don't think the Commission's ready to vote on this tonight that's just my opinion, but if in fact, the AME Church, Western University does own more property than the UG, let's just use that as a scenario, then it might not be as equitable to just allow them to have just one voice on a panel. Having said that, If the exact opposite is the case, then I can understand with them with you know them just having just one voice, but I think for me at least it's just to really get down to the brass task of it, who owns how many, whatever, how many—it's not that hard, it's only so many parcels that are there, it's all public record. We can go and look up and sees who owns what. Matter of fact, I do believe a lot of that's on the website, am I wrong?

Somebody needs to correct me if I'm wrong. So, having heard all of the different perspectives for decades we have sat on, and sat on, and sat on the Quindaro Ruins and this treasure needs to speak. This treasure needs to speak, I'm about what I'm hearing my colleagues say, we just need to make a determination about what's the best way to move forward going from this point forward. And it's not about feelings or emotions, it's just about what the raw data tells us and so that's just my perspective on this. I want to be able to vote tonight, maybe I will. But right now, I just don't feel like we really—this is not the spirit in which we want to move forward in the sense

of being divisive. Now I just pray that all elements that would divide us be rooted out and I don't want to mix politics and religion but unfortunately this is my last night here.

So what I'm going to say is that we need to figure out a way for us all to move forward as one community and maybe we need to lean into Commissioner Bynum, she's the great reconciler on the Commission and she can give us a sense of how we can all get something out of this and that we can move forward as a community as one as one community.

Mayor Garner said I have to weigh in, I'd be remiss. It is past time for us to take the Quindaro Ruins out of Ruins. I moved here in 1985, and I've heard about the Quindaro Ruins. Nothing, nothing of substance has happened. Before I got here and since I've been here throughout my adult life I've heard a lot of talk; I've heard a lot of people with great ideas and great comments and I know there's concern about who has the land and all these things. If you really look at what is before you Commission, what is before you is to get rid of the old MOU and create a new board under the leadership of your County Administrator and who we contract with, the Wyandotte Economic Development Corporation, to talk about the issues that you're talking about tonight. To vet it out, who owns the land, who's going to bring in the money. Obviously, the Unified Government and WYEDC, who's going to create the contracts. The recommendations are going to come from this panel to you, the Commission, from a recommendation from your Administrator. You all will be able to make those decisions. It's creating a new board that can hopefully move something forward. That's it because what we've seen in the past, and I'm not knocking anybody, I'm not here to criticize anybody, but this is business and the business of this community of trying to move something forward has not been done. And you can't keep doing the same things we've heard before and expect a different result. A lot of people have worked hard, not just me, there's a lot of people watching at the Federal level and I've been told time and time again, Mayor, we want to help Wyandotte County, we want to support Quindaro, but you have to give us an entity that we can believe in and we can trust which is you, the Commission, the Unified Government. This is a broader vision that uses the Quindaro Ruins as a catalyst to tie into the Kaw and the Rock Island Bridge.

Again, that hopefully a recommendation can come from this board through our Administrator to this body of commissioners that hopefully can transform the eastern portion of our city for decades to come and when we have so many people outside saying Wyandotte County get your act together. I'm saying I'm doing everything I can as your Mayor. This board just says

we're going to just get rid of this old MOU that was set up under a different Administration and we've looked at what has been done. You tell me, go there now and tell me what progress has been made. I don't see any and it's not to divide, it's not to criticize, but when you're talking about getting the business done for the people of this community. Again, let's do something to get it done and let's try something different under the leadership of an Administrator who brings Economic Development and expertise. Working with a body that each one of you will have an opportunity to put on this board that hopefully can bring something that can make not just Wyandotte County proud, but bring about a resurgent Kansas City, Kansas and show us to be a beacon of success that probably folks will want to come here and ask how we did it. Just like with Village West, it can be done on the eastern portion of the city.

I would hate for this opportunity to pass us by. Commissioner Davis is right, nothing is going to happen overnight, it sets up a board, but it's a board that hopefully through the leadership of our Administrator can bring something of value forward to this body, working with our community that can transform the eastern portion of our city with Quindaro being that backbone as well as the Rock Island Bridge and the Kaw and a Riverfront that has been left undeveloped and is right for development. That can bring in tourism and tax dollars if you just share that vision, so all this does is scratch the old non-binding MOU and creates a new entity that gives more control from our Administrator to push the narrative forward of something that this Commission can consider at a later date.

Commissioner Ramirez said the first is more of a request to you and the Administrator, your respective offices. If you can look at the documents and everything that we have and present us a memo of who owns what, who's in control of what parcels of the land, so never mind, as Commissioner McKiernan said. The other request I have was I know Commissioner Bynum had during her comments asked if in Section 2-652 is B and C could be switched to provide more importance to the Quindaro Ruins not saying that everything else isn't, but what we're discussing tonight is the Quindaro Ruins and that be of a priority. I know Commissioner Stites you made that motion and Commissioner Burroughs seconded. I would like to make sure that, that change that Commissioner Bynum mentioned is seen and in what we vote on.

Commissioner Kane said I've been here 18 years and one of the very first things we worked on was the Quindaro Ruins and the gazebo was built then. The goal back then was to get interest in the Quindaro Ruins. As it was said before, we've never had the Democrats and the Republicans agree very much in the State of Kansas. They've agreed to go ahead as long as we come up with a plan and the plan is now, that we have sat on this for a while, it's went nowhere. We have to make some modifications to get it to go but my God I don't know why we're beating this dead horse, call for the question.

Mayor Garner said alright, a call for question. We have a motion and a second, I will ask Commissioner Stites, there was a request Commissioner Stites on your motion.

Commissioner Stites said so with the call for the question, I can't make an additional comment, is that correct? **Mayor Garner** said you have to vote on calling the question if you want them. **Commissioner Stites** said alright, I'll zip. **Mayor Garner** said according to the counsel you can modify your motion as long as the second is seconded. **Commissioner Stites** said I just want to make sure that with my change in the motion that I'm saying it right. I have my original motion.

Action: **Commissioner Stites** said I'm making an amendment to that item and I want to make sure Commissioner Bynum, C to B, and B to C. **Commissioner Bynum** said Section 2-652. **Commissioner Stites** said and Section 2-652. That's my motion, my original motion with that amendment to approve.

Action: **RESOLUTION NO. R-80-23/ORDINANCE NO. 0-161-23**, "A resolution and ordinance rescinding any non-binding Memoranda of Understanding with Western University Association of the A.M.E. Church, Inc. (Quindaro Ruins Project) and creating a new Advisory Committee to coordinate planning for the development of historical attractions and tourism potential for eastern Wyandotte County." **Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs, to adopt the resolution and approve the ordinance.**

Mayor Garner said we have a motion and a second. There's been a call to this question. Clerk, roll call.

Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Item No.1 – 212938...RESOLUTION: SUPPORT OF MEDICAID EXPANSION

Synopsis: Approval of a resolution in Support of Medicaid Expansion, submitted by Irene Caudillo, Chief of Staff, Office of Mayor. **Mayor Garner** said during this body's recent special session with our legislative partner we discussed this initiative and need of this body to provide our support and all my Chief of Staff, Irene Caudillo, really worked hard on this with me and the rest of our team to get this before you tonight and Irene, a lot of you know her from El Centro. This has been one of her signature items even before she came to the Unified Government as my Chief of Staff, and she made this one of her top priorities when she came on board and I'll let her speak to it.

Irene Caudillo, Chief of Staff, Office of Mayor, said it's actually in partnership with the community and as a response to the campaign from the Alliance for Healthy Kansas that it is a pleasure actually to introduce this resolution supporting Medicaid Expansion. The Alliance for Healthy Kansas is a Statewide Coalition of more than 130 partners including business leaders, doctors, hospitals, Social Service, Safety Net, Faith Communities, Chamber of Commerce, Advocates for health care and of course, the consumer. This fall actually the Alliance took on a campaign and it is to work with local governments to list KanCare, which is what we call in Kansas, the Medicaid program and also its expansion as a policy priority and issue resolution in support of the expansion. So, tonight, what I know as you, as a Commission, have already prioritized Medicaid Expansion on your Legislative Agenda for many years and then you'll also be discussing your Legislative Agenda with this on it as well later this evening. And I don't forget as well, that advocacy for Medicaid Expansion has also been a strategy for our community and Health Department within the Community Health Improvement Plan, which is better known as our CHIP. So, what can I say that you don't already know. Kansas has a health coverage problem. Many Kansas, including residents here in our community, fall into a coverage gap and do not have

access of affordable health care and insurance. So, what we know about Kansas is that we have the strictest requirements in this country to qualify for KanCare, making people vulnerable to high medical debt and leaving them with untreated physical and behavioral health issues.

Yet, we are all aware that Medicaid is a primary source, an important source for health coverage of low-income Americans and the decision by Kansas not to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act has had many implications to hospitals and clinics financial health. So the results of not expanding have led to rural hospital closures, but if our community sees any health care facility close, this will lead to reduced access to care, a loss of highly skilled jobs, and detrimental impacts to our economy. I also know that you're aware that Kansas is one of only 10 states that have not expanded Medicaid. Every state that borders Kansas has expanded the Medicaid program. Kansas is giving up the opportunity to bring tax dollars actually back into our state and Medicaid Expansion is an opportunity to close the coverage gap, strengthen our health care system and bring desperately needed federal dollars into the Kansas economy. So, I invite April Holman, Executive Director of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, to briefly share her thoughts as to the importance of course of this campaign and how you can be a part of joining it tonight.

April Holman, Executive Director of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, said Irene has done such a wonderful job of sharing some of the basics about expansion and the need for it. I just want to add to that a little bit about why. This is an important policy to local government even though the decision to expand eligibility for KanCare actually lies with the legislature. So, some of the reasons that this is in particular important with local governments is that it has been proven in other states that have already expanded eligibility for their Medicaid programs that it reduces crime and fewer individuals moving through the criminal justice system, which means lower cost in police departments and jails. It has increased access to behavioral health and substance use disorder services. It has resulted in healthier residents, which also means a healthier workforce. It has increased economic development; it has also increased tax revenues at the local level because of an increased economic activity related to millions of federal dollars coming into the community each year. There have been estimates that have done specific to Wyandotte County and those indicate that as many as 7,466 uninsured residents would become eligible can KanCare through expansion, 2,486 new jobs would be created in Wyandotte County and over \$64 million in new

annual health care spending will occur here in this county. We are asking for local governments to adopt resolutions or make an affirmative statement of support for expansion. I'm so grateful that you are considering this and I'm happy to answer any well—I also want to thank the advocates who are here with me in the audience and our advocates throughout Wyandotte County and then offer to stand for any questions you might have.

Commissioner Burroughs said Mayor, no questions. April, it's always a pleasure, so welcome to Wyandotte County. I will just say my colleagues this is an important issue not only to our community but statewide and my previous profession, I voted every time for Medicaid Expansion. It's long overdue, it's desperately needed, and I would ask my colleagues to please join me as we move forward to support this initiative. I'll make that a motion.

Action: **RESOLUTION NO. R-77-23**, “A resolution supporting ACA Medicaid Expansion.” **Commissioner Burroughs made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Markley, to adopt the resolution.**

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you April for the work you do at the state. I know it's not hard—it's not easy to work with our legislature and try to get something as commonsense as Medicaid Expansion. To Chief of Staff Caudillo, thank you for your local leadership on this in bringing this forward. I know this is something that has been near and dear to El Centro when you work there, and it would be monumental for Wyandotte County if Medicaid Expansion passed. Now we're 104 out of 105 most unhealthy county in the entire state. If we can have that ability to have federal dollars flow into our community, increase the coverage, health care coverage of our community, we can come out from 104 and be near the middle and move towards the top. We have a lot to go but it would help us get out from the bottom and so I thank everyone and all the advocates and all local community organizations, not just in Wyandotte County, but across the state for the hard work they do and I'm hoping, and it's a big hope, that either this session or the next session we can work with legislative leadership to get this passed and so that not only Wyandotte County but all of Kansans can enjoy the fruit of what Medicaid Expansion can bring.

Commissioner Davis said I'll make this quick, this is a no-brainer, we need to have done this yesterday. Can I get one of those green buttons, those look really cool. That's really all I wanted to know.

Mayor Garner said there is a motion to second on the floor. I just want to say thank you again to my Chief of Staff, Ms. Caudillo. She did awesome work on this. When she brought that to me I had to say go forth and do great things because just for the record I totally support the expansion of Medicare as well in Kansas and hopefully we can support our delegation in whatever way we can to make that a reality, not just for Wyandotte County but also throughout the great state of Kansas so there's a motion and a second. Clerk, roll call.

Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Burroughs, Ramirez, Johnson, McKiernan, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Ms. Caudillo said thank you. Real quickly though, we appreciate your support and past support. I will say that we had a diverse group of written testimony that came in, so I want to please at least get that into the record and we can save some time with others coming up so, thank you.

Item No. 3 – 212946...ORDINANCE: RELATING TO MEETING TIMES OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Synopsis: Adopt an ordinance amending Appendix C, Section 202 of the 2008 Code of Ordinances related to meeting times of standing committee meetings, submitted by Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Legal Counsel.

Mayor Garner said that takes us to our next item, which is an ordinance relating to meeting times of Standing Committees and I'll ask Legal to make some remarks and give some clarity.

Angela Lawson, Acting Chief Counsel, said yes, this is the first of two ordinances related to Standing Committees. This first one item number three, changes the times of the Standing Committees. So, it takes in one of the changes have already happened because right now. Economic Development is first, but this proposed ordinance would be that on the Monday

preceding the first Full Commission the order of the Standing Committees would be first Economic Development and then the second Public Works. And then on the Monday preceding the second Full Commission it would be Neighborhood and Community Development and Administrative and Human Services. That is the change, although it is quite a bit of red lining in it is to change it to that order is the proposed ordinance.

Mayor Garner said any comments or questions from the Commission?

Commissioner Ramirez said I'm going to make mine very short and sweet and to the point. This never went through Committee. This is changing our Rules of Procedure and getting close to Charter, so we should not be voting on this unless it's gone through our legislative process that we have laid out in our rules of Procedure. So, I make a motion that we send this to Committee.

Action: **Commissioner Ramirez made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kane, to send this to committee.**

Mayor Garner said there's a motion and a second. To answer your question Commission, it is the Mayor's purview to get things through Standing Committee as part of the legislative process that you mentioned or to send it to the Full Commission. That's just the reality of our Rules of Procedures, but there is a motion to send it to Full Commission, I mean to Standing Committee if that's where you would like it to go, but the changes do not have to occur. That was a change I'm going to be making. Committee appointments, this was brought before you to hopefully make those assignments easier and align better for the Commission but if there's issue with it which I've overheard one commissioner say, we can keep things as they are. I have no problem with that because it really doesn't impact me as it would impact on the At-Large Commissioners and the incoming commissioners and their acting on these obligated committees that they'll be on.

Commissioner Kane said we're going to continue with what we're doing. The Standing Committee stay the same, we'll go from there, is that what you're saying? **Mayor Garner** said if you choose, but there's a motion I don't—**Commissioner Kane** said I'll resend my motion if that's

what you're saying. That it's going to stay the way it is where Public Safety is one, Administrator on the same night. **Mayor Garner** said that's fine, we don't have to change the—it doesn't impact me, that was trying to make things more convenient for the Commissioners-at-Large and some of the Commission, but if you're opposed to it, it doesn't. I have no objection at all. I was trying to create a facility, but I know you second and I know there's a motion, so it's up to you all.

Commissioner Bynum said just to clarify the conversation, there's a motion on the floor to send this item to a Standing Committee, but, I personally think that we should vote on the motion to be done with it one way or another and if there's another way to go about it, that's fine, but I also, Mayor, would ask for some clarity around what you are purposing helps the At-Large Commissioners because I don't understand yet. **Mayor Garner** said I would entertain let me—Commissioner, if you withdraw your motion.

Action: **Commissioner Ramirez** said I withdraw my motion. **Commissioner Kane** said I withdraw my second.

Action: **Mayor Garner** made a motion to rescind this until further discussion.

Mayor Garner said I've got a motion and seconded by Commissioner Burroughs. Clerk, roll call.

Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Item No. 4 – 212947...ORDINANCE: RELATING TO COMMENCEMENT OF SERVICE ON STANDING COMMITTEES

Synopsis: Adopt an ordinance amending Appendix C, Section 205 of the 2008 Code of Ordinances related to the appointment to standing committees, submitted by Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Legal Counsel.

Angela Lawson, Acting Chief Legal Counsel, said this is another proposed ordinance amendment related to Standing Committees. The way the ordinance is currently worded, Service

on Standing Committees occurs the second Monday in January. With the new commissioners that would take away December, so this would change—the proposal is to change it to one sworn in following the November election, the service would begin. The second proposed change is currently the Neighborhood and Community Development Committee is required to include at least one voting member from each of the other three standing committees and it takes away that requirement. I don't have any historical knowledge of why that was included in the first place or the rationale but it's my understanding that it is difficult to schedule those committee assignments with this provision.

Mayor Garner said any discussion from commissioners?

Commissioner Ramirez said just a couple questions because I know ED&F has another committee meeting coming up soon. Is AHS done for the year? We are not done for the—oh okay. To me, I think this is a no-brainer because then we wouldn't be able to have new Commission Members serve on the committees until January when we still have business to do. So, I would agree with this and move to approve.

Action: **ORDINANCE NO. 0-157-23**, “An ordinance relating to the commencement of service on Standing Committee and membership of the Neighborhood and Community Development Committee; amending Section 205 of the UG of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas Code of Ordinances.” **Commissioner Ramirez made a motion to approve the ordinance.**

Mayor Garner said any further discussion? I need a second.

Commissioner Bynum said I don't have a second. I just want makes sure that I'm understanding the action of this item. Counsel, if you could walk me through this one more time.

Ms. Lawson said currently Section 205, Section A, states that appointment to the Commission Standing Committee shall be as follows; service on Standing Committee shall begin on the second Monday in January. So after Monday when you have new members, their service would begin in

January, however we still have December meetings. The change would allow service to begin once they are sworn in following a November election. The second change is to H of this, removing H so it sort of moves I and J to bump up to H and I, but removes the requirement for Neighborhood and Community Development Committee. Currently that committee has to include a member of each of the other three Standing Committees so it removes that provision or that requirement.

Commissioner Bynum said this is just clean up. It's kind of housekeeping work. **Mayor Garner** said yes and then that's another item that I discussed I believe with—believe we intended to speak with you. We got caught up but I know we talked to Commissioner Burroughs and we talked to Administration and we talked to Legal and just the recommendation was to clean that up. It's really hard for myself and my Chief of Staff to try and meet that expectation in a way that's convenient for the Commission to meet those schedules with all those different nuances and so it just the recommendation from Legal is just to make that cleaner. That was what was brought forward and so that's what before you today. There's a motion, I need a second.

Action: **Commissioner Burroughs seconded the motion.** Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Garner said that takes us to our Consent Agenda. Does any member of the Commission, Administrator or anyone in the audience wish to set aside any item on our Regular Consent Agenda.

Action: **Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve all as submitted.** Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Stites, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley.

Item No. 1 - MINUTES

Synopsis: Minutes from the Executive Session meeting of October 26, 2023.

Action: Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve as submitted. Roll call was taken and there were nine “Ayes,” Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Item No. 2 - WEEKLY BUSINESS...

Synopsis: Weekly business materials dated November 9, 2023.

Action: Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve as submitted. Roll call was taken and there were nine “Ayes,” Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

STANDING COMMITTEES’ AGENDA

Item No. 1 – 212872...ORDINANCE: AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS (ECOVYST CATALYST TECHNOLOGIES, LLC PROJECT)

Synopsis: An ordinance authorizing the issuance of Taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds (Ecovyst Catalyst Technologies, LLC Project), Series 2023B in a principal amount not to exceed \$633,537 for the purpose of providing funds to pay the cost of acquiring, improving, constructing, installing, and equipping of an industrial facility located at 1700 Kansas Avenue, submitted by Jeff Conway, Assistant Counsel, and Debbie Jonscher, interim Chief Financial Officer.

This item was heard by the Economic Development & Finance Standing Committee, chaired by Commissioner Burroughs on Monday, December 4, 2023, and approved to be fast-tracked to this meeting.

Commissioner Burroughs said colleagues, Ecovyst has been a great partner in our community. They continue to expand their business footprint in our community. As I’ve stated the first-class operation, I would encourage you to be supportive of the principal amount not to exceed the \$633,537.00, that’s a motion Mr. Chairman.

Action: **ORDINANCE NO. 0-158-23**, “An ordinance authorizing the issuance of Taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds (Ecovyst Catalyst Technologies, LLC Project), Series

2023B in a principal amount not to exceed \$633,537 for the purpose of providing funds to pay the cost of acquiring, improving, constructing, installing, and equipping of an industrial facility including land, buildings, structures, improvements, and fixtures; authorizing the Unified Government to enter into certain documents and the taking of other actions in connection with the issuance of said bonds.” **Commissioner Burroughs made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve the Ordinance.**

Mayor Garner said any discussion? Clerk, roll call.

Roll call was taken and there were nine “Ayes,” Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Item No. 2 – 212837...RESOLUTUION: SALE OF TEMPORRY NOTES AND BONDS

Synopsis: A Resolution authorizing the sale of Municipal General Obligation Temporary notes and General Obligation Bonds, submitted by Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer.

This item was heard by the Economic Development & Finance Standing Committee, chaired by Commissioner Burroughs on Monday, December 4, 2023, and approved to be fast-tracked to this meeting.

Commissioner Burroughs said I believe we have staff here that might want to make a few—communicate probably a lot clearer than I can in reference to just what this request is about.

Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer, said this is a sale authorizing—the resolution authorizing the offering for sale of General Obligation Temporary Notes and Bonds. This is our annual sale that we do. We initially asked for this to be fast-tracked because we are working toward preparation to get this for the sale that’s in February. We have credit rating calls in January so we’re hoping to get this approved. The sale resolution should list all the projects that could potentially be included in the Bond and Note issue that’s included in February, so we’re asking for

approval of the resolution to move forward with the sale. **Mayor Garner** said any discussion from Commissioners?

Roll call was taken and there were nine “Ayes,” Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Item No. 3 – 212876...RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE: TOBACCO RETAIL LICENSE

Synopsis: Adoption of a resolution and ordinance approving a local Tobacco Retail license, and amending an existing section, and adding new sections to the Code of Ordinances, submitted by Wesley McKain, Policy and Development Manager, Public Health Department.

This item was heard by the Administration & Human Services Standing Committee, Chaired by Commissioner Markley on Monday, November 27, 2023, and approved to move forward to this body with a vote of 4 to 1. I’ll ask Commissioner Markley for some comments.

Commissioner Markley said this item actually came before our Standing Committee twice and I recognize that also many of you have spoken individually to staff or to other representatives about this item. So, staff I think is prepared to present if you would like to hear it. If we don’t want to hear it, I think it’s been through the ringer several times now. More than happy to just have someone move forward and I’m happy to make that motion.

Action: **RESOLUTION NO. R-79-23/ORDINANCE NO. O-159-23**, “An ordinance and Resolution No. R-79-23 relating to the tobacco retail license ordinance.”
Commissioner Markley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Burroughs made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve the Ordinance.

Commissioner Kane said my fellow Commissioners, August 16th, one of the folks is sitting out in the audience called me and harassed me about that I’d be the only commissioner in State of Kansas that would vote against this particular smoking deal. I got quite frustrated. In fact; I sent her a text message back, I said we will not continue to have this conversation, leave me alone. In

the 18 years I've been here I've never been harassed like that, and in fact, there's only a handful of municipalities that are doing this. I was told there was multiple municipalities that are doing this. You know, my mother died of smoke related cancer, but in my mind, if you can serve your country, you ought to be able to smoke a cigarette, drink a beer and do whatever you want. And for somebody to come up to a seasoned commissioner and say I know who you are, I know how you act, and I know how you're going to vote. That was frustrating, it bothers me to this day, I will not support this type of thing anytime, anywhere, any place.

Commissioner Stites said I just have a few questions, and it was after I had the conversation with Ms. Ranker. Initially I was thinking you know what I understand this, I get where you're going, but then as I had others reaching out to me that said—talked about the additional cost to our small businesses that this is going to be and matter of fact even just tonight, I asked Ms. Ranker what that cost was and it was relayed that it was in somewhere—it could be somewhere between a \$100 and \$1,500, there's that range that is just an additional cost to our business operators that are selling these products. Now, here's where I kind of—as former law enforcement, I will say, we have agencies that are doing this right now. ATF, ABC, we're already paying taxes to have these agencies do these things. So, I'm not sure why it is that we're going to ask to put an yet another tax burden or fee on top of our small businesses to operate in Wyandotte County. I too will not be supporting this.

Commissioner Burroughs said I do have a couple of questions if I may. How many violations have we had in our municipality in the last couple of years, do we know. Is there a record of how many sales, illegal sales have occurred in our community? Evidently, then the next question I would have is, having served in the State Legislature, I do know we had a Tobacco Settlement Agreement with the major manufacturers of tobacco products and they—part of the settlement was to ensure that monies came to local communities to do just exactly what this ordinance is wanting to do, but it didn't do the fines on the local businesses to the extent and the licenses extent that they did. And so, I don't—while I understand, and I want to be clear, I petitioned this Commission at one time for the Clean Air Act but yet, here I am, I had almost this identical conversation that Mr. Kane had with the individual and when I was told it would be a \$600 licensure no matter if you sold one pack of cigarettes or you put a plethora of tobacco products in the business, it's really

an unfair cliff for many of our small businesses and while I do understand the goodness that can come from this and the concern that we have healthwise, I would just state that I think this is just not ripe at this particular time without some additional information. If you can't come forward with documentation stating how many violations we've had and we're going to go out and start raising the \$600 per person, which I believe with the smoking establishment we're talking about \$150,000 a year and that'll hire a person to go in and do that, but yet, we should already have somebody doing that now. So, I'm just kind of curious as to why we need a piece of policy, when it should be policy already. So, that's my comment body. If Wes wants to answer, please Wes, it's only fair that you should have an opportunity.

Wesley McKain, Public Health Department, said we at one point did ask the State for the number of violations on that and we were not able to get it from them. I'm not sure if that information is publicly available or not. My colleague from the American Heart Association didn't think that it was and then the amount of money that—the license fee is \$600 per retailer like you mentioned. That's set at an amount that would be able to fund one person at the Health Department that would do the compliance checks at these retailers. The amount would raise—I think we estimated at 155 retailers in our community about \$80,000 or \$85,000 which would be enough to fund a person with benefits. To your point, I think you mentioned the point which at the Public Health Department we do have, which there is an immense public health benefit to this. We have a big teen vaping and adolescent smoking problem in our community, and we know that there are places that are selling to these youth. Notwithstanding your good points, for our case the benefit outweighs the burden on the tobacco retailers for us.

Commissioner Burroughs said I appreciate the concern that the Health Department has in reference to our community. As I stated, you're talking to the Legislator, the petition, this body years ago on behalf of the Heart Association to do away with indoor smoking, and we were successful with that, and we've seen a rise in health. But we also have a major settlement that the State sent money back to communities to do just this and I don't know if it's public information or not, but is this something we should have been doing and we're not. And if we haven't been doing it then shame on us, but if we're having a problem with vaping then let's go after those retailers and send a message to those. As I think I heard my other two colleagues, this is a pretty

broad statement for many of our small businesses in Wyandotte County. The additional \$600 licensing, I don't know what a small business license in and of itself costs, but a \$600 cost to have a product on your shelf, whether it's a small display or it's a humidor that it takes up two or three rooms. It's the same price and we don't have a tiered system, the penalties if we're going to have something and you give somebody one violation and you come back and they do it again, pull the license. I mean that's just how I look at it. I'm looking at four or five offenses here, this is just a way for us to continue to raise money through allowing sales to go on and just wait and wait and do it. I understand the entrapment part and having a young person go in or somebody underage trying to buy it, this is, in my opinion, this is just probably a little too early and maybe a little too broad, but thanks for your advocacy.

Mayor Garner said any further discussion? Clerk, roll call.

Roll call was taken and there were six "Ayes," McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Markley, Davis, Bynum and three "Nos," Burroughs, Kane, Stites.

Item No. 4 – 212855...ORDINANCE: COMMUNITY BENEFITS FUND

Synopsis: An ordinance creating a new Community Benefits Fund from moneys received as fees paid by developers who are receiving economic development incentives, submitted by Jeff Conway, Assistant Counsel.

This item was heard by the Economic Development & Finance Standing Committee, chaired by Commissioner Burroughs on Monday, December 4, 2023, and approved to be fast-tracked to this meeting.

Mayor Garner said I would also ask to note this is—when I came into office I set up seven initially task force and one of those was chaired by Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Johnson has worked hard from day one that he accepted that and I can say that I'm happy to see that through his work this is one of those resolutions that I personally believe will be very beneficial to Wyandotte County to address some of the concerns that I've heard since I've been Mayor. So I just want to say personally, thank you to Commissioner Johnson. Commissioner Johnson also

worked with Commissioner Davis. Commissioner Davis did a lot of the leg work per se. If Commissioner Johnson was an attorney, Commissioner Davis would be his paralegal, and so that the two of them work together in concert to get what's before you today. And again, I think this is long overdue. It's something that's necessary. I'm glad to see this has gotten to this point. Thank you again to Commissioners Davis and Johnson.

Commissioner Burroughs said there was much discussion. This has been well received by the Commission I mean by our Economic Development Committee. We vetted this piece of policy and I do want to commend the fact that we have now set up something that can be utilized throughout the community and I commend the commissioners that gave their time and talents. Thank you for working through the committee process. I would make a motion move for approval.

Action: **ORDINANCE: NO. O-160-23**, “An ordinance to provide for a new section in the Municipal code to create a Community Benefit Fund to be funded from fees received from development projects that have received Economic Development incentives.” **Commissioner Burroughs made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adopt the Ordinance.**

Commissioner Davis said well I mean Commissioner Johnson, you want to go first? And by the way, I'd be the partner not no paralegal here but go for it.

Commissioner Johnson said Johnson and Davis LLC. We got a motion and a second, I'm ready to vote.

Roll call was taken and there were nine “Ayes,” Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Mayor Garner said thank you again Commissioner Johnson and Davis for your hard work. Administrator's Agenda item.

X. ADMINISTRATOR'S AGENDA

December 7, 2023

Mayor Garner said I'll ask our County Administrator, Mr. Johnston, to make the remarks.

Item No. 1 – 212939...ADOPTION: 2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Synopsis: Adoption of the 2024 State Legislative programs, submitted by Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator.

Mr. Johnston, County Administrator, said as with most communities and counties about this time of year they present a priority list that would be used to talk with our State Legislative delegation during their legislative session which commences in January. This was reviewed with our state delegation last week and we received some very good advice from them at that meeting. Again, it's a communication. They need to know what our area, our communities' priorities are and if it's aligned with their priorities, they'll be strong advocates. But they also can use these to open doors to their partners in their chambers when relative bills get before them that mirror that we're looking for. So, it's an important document that is revisited every year and we'll have Alan Howze present and you'll hear from our lobbyist Paul Davis as well.

Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator, said as you see in your packet, the updated agenda. The Legislative Agenda reflects the discussion that was held last week. It added a few items that Senator Pittman I believe had suggested were on there and also identified the priorities as the commissioners identified. We did not seek to sort of rank order, those priorities or just want to identify which ones were the priorities, so that could be communicated to the delegation.

Paul Davis, Unified Government Lobbyist, said just a couple of things I might add, I know for those of you who've been on the Commission, you look at these and you see a lot of the same issues that are coming back year after year because no action is being taken in Topeka but I want to point out that occasionally there is progress here and there. There are five items actually that were on last year's agenda, they're not on this year's agenda because they were actually passed into law in Topeka. So, progress does happen occasionally there. The other thing I just wanted to mention, I received a phone call from Senator Pittman yesterday and he just wanted to state his appreciation. As you know, he is the delegation chair, and to state his appreciation for the

discussion that we were able to have last week. He thought that was just very, very beneficial and the delegation really enjoyed being able to provide input into that so with that said I think Mr. Howze and I are happy to entertain any questions if anybody has any.

Commissioner Davis said I'm glad to see LAVTR is in my opinion, rightfully called out both, twice because again, we need that funding. With that I'll move to approve.

Action: **Commissioner Davis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs, to approve.**

Mayor Garner said I have a motion and a second, any further discussion? Seeing none, Clerk roll call.

Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

Mayor Garner said that was the last item but before adjourn, we have three commissioners, this is their last commission meeting with us tonight. We've got two that served 12 years, Commissioner McKiernan and Commissioner Markley, and Commissioner Johnson has served eight years respectively on this Commission, making hard decision, getting the work of the people done and trying to do so in a way that they felt reflect the interest and the needs of all those that love and call Wyandotte County home. So, I just want to thank them for their service on behalf of all those people that love and call Wyandotte County home as well as all our stakeholders, as well as all the individuals that they touch near and far that aren't part of Wyandotte County but were impacted by their decisions. At this time, I'd like to open it up for any commissioners that would like to make some remarks for the record.

Commissioner Kane said when Brian and I went to the same High School although, we never had the same class—I don't know because he was top of his class, I was bottom of mine. But, Sister Vickie talked about the footprint of life and I think when you guys look at what you did, you know, Harold, we never had a banker here before so Harold would get all upset and look over his eyes

like what's going on and I laughed because I thought, I'm gonna hang out with this guy for a little bit. It was encouraging to have somebody new from a different world come into our world and guide us.

And then we have our academian, Dr. McKiernan, who I've known since kindergarten, and believe me, he's been smart his whole life and I've been the way I am my whole life. But it is so cool for him and I to grow up in the same neighborhood, go to the same grade school, go to the same High School, and eventually as we get older in life, we decide that we're going to go out and we're going to serve the community and that's pretty cool. Then we got what's your name? We have a lawyer who I had to adjust some of my language sometimes when she first got here and then later on it didn't matter. It is so nice to have someone because we're all—I'm the high-strung guy on the committee, right, and then to have somebody that's levelheaded over here going to reel me back down to earth, which I appreciated, but I'm going to miss our luncheons and by the way, I think we still need to do. Her son was born shortly before my grandbaby was born, so we talked about that quite a bit. I have a story about that, but we can't tell that on TV, but you know—and Angela, you said this earlier, this is the tightest the Commission has ever been. We've learned more from the younguns and from the older ones and the new folks that came from a different area, so I appreciate what you guys did, the community appreciates what you guys did, and then you can always look back and you're driving down the road and said I was involved on that. So, thank you for what you did.

Commissioner Ramirez said Angela, Brian, Harold, thank you for the service in the years you did to the UG and Unified Government to Wyandotte County and KCK. You know, the cliché saying is you leave it better than you found it. I believe you have done that, each and every one of you in your respective districts but also just all around our community and our government. As I said during in committee, all of the questions, all of the statements, sometimes even rants, that the three of you may have done, I've learned to be a better commissioner from each and every one of them. So, thank you for your service, it's going to be very different to be sitting up here without the three of you guys.

Commissioner Bynum said I do just want to say thank you to the three commissioners, each have your own personality, style, qualities, strengths that you've brought to the job and it's been

amazing to work with each and every one of you and like Commissioner Ramirez, I've learned so much from working with you and being around you and one of the things I appreciate about this entire Commission is that we do all think about things in a different way and I've always appreciated the other questions and comments that come from the commissioners because they are often times things that I had not thought about and it's really appreciated. Sometimes I think that that's overlooked in general, yet it's bringing us strength to the group as a whole when we have that variety of opinions and you've certainly made the work that we've done here stronger, and I mean appreciated. Commissioner Markley kind of pointing out something about each of the commissioners at their reception so I don't need to do that, but I have greatly benefited from being able to spend time with each of you and I just want folks to understand the countless, countless hours that elected folks give in their time and sacrifice away from their families when you take on doing this job. We do it because we really enjoy it but it comes at a price, and so, enjoy your time with your families and specifically have a very Merry Christmas and thank you for everything.

Commissioner Davis said I didn't get to have as much time getting to know the other three of you as everyone else, but I would say we've gotten pretty close. These have been pretty interesting times and losing a lawyer, a Doctor, and a Pastor all at the same time, it's really tough for any institution or any board because those are various experiences and professional acumen. I mean it is truly in a way kind of a brain drain that we are slowly going to come to realize and so I just want to say thank you for your investment in our community, thank you for your investment in your particular districts, thank you in particular Commissioner Johnson, with everything that you have going on to still show up, whether virtually, or in person. There are untold sacrifices that you have made, that your family has made on behalf of you and so publicly you deserve to be celebrated and acknowledged as do the rest of you because there are so many other things you can be doing than sitting up here until 1:00 a.m. So, thank you for your investment in our community and thank you for your professional contribution to this board.

Commissioner Stites said there was a lawyer, a Doctor, and a banker walked into a Commission Chamber. It just sounded like the start of a good joke. I just echo what everybody said here, I've probably known Brian the longest. I was his community policing officer, the best community policing officer that he said he ever had. Well, I think that's what he said. I don't really know for

sure but you know you all will be missed for sure and I think that just bringing that levelness, bouncing ideas across and what you think and it brings value and I hope that the commissioners that are coming in will do equally as well. They got some big shoes to fill so thank you guys for your service.

Mayor Garner said if the commissioners could go down and join our Administrator real quick. If you're able, only if you're able. Not Commissioner Markley, not the Pastor, the lawyer, or the Doctor. I'm sorry. Yeah, if the Doctor did you could stay. Yeah, but okay, the other committee if you can go down. Everybody, yeah everybody else go down. Alright, if we would at this moment while you all are going down I'm going to allow Commissioner Markley to give some closing remarks to the community.

Commissioner Markley said I have to go first again? Well, I had my words for all of you commissioners. I'll just say one of the greatest things about being an elected official is all the amazing people you meet, community members, business leaders, our team members here at the Unified Government and people throughout the metropolitan area that we just wouldn't otherwise have been exposed to. So that has been an amazing journey, especially for someone who was fairly young when she came onto the Commission and didn't have a lot of contacts to have that level of depth of communications with people out in the community has been so amazing. I'm not going anywhere, so I look forward to being a good neighbor and just a good resident to continue to be a friend and an advocate from the outside. It has truly been a pleasure and I was saying earlier Hal Walker when he was sitting up here, we used to joke back and forth because I would say something about a period of time and he would say, Oh, that's just a drop in the bucket and I would say, well, how the younger you are the bigger a drop it is. This has been more than a fourth of my life spent up here and it has been a growing experience because I did come on as a fairly young person, so I grew up here, among all of you, learning amazing things and it has been a pleasure. I look forward to seeing you from the other side.

Commissioner McKiernan said alright so this will just echo what I said earlier was—goodness—as all of you know, as all of we know this is a learning experience. I don't think any of us, at least I will say I was not prepared for how expensive and how complicated running a city is. It is much

more expensive, it is much more complicated, everything is interconnected, and the law of unintended consequences comes into play with almost every decision and every move we make. The thing that has impressed me the most is that while we get face time, and I see I'm on the television back there, there are employees within this organization who don't get face time, who do the heavy lifting, who actually make our trains run on time, who plow the snow, who fix our streets, and it is for them that we are truly in debt. It is for them that I have worked so hard because I know that my work for them, our work for them will ultimately benefit everybody in every neighborhood. So, I want to thank all of the staff who put in so much effort to making the Unified Government a great organization, not only to work in but to provide services for the community. I am confident that there is greater, greater work to be done and we will hit new heights with all of you and your new colleagues.

Commissioner Johnson said it's getting close to closing time so—but I'm watching Carolyn Wyatt. I know you didn't know I was going to say anything about you tonight, but her face reminds me of is the community that helps to inform my understanding about the various issues. Ms. Wyatt is more boisterous than a lot of them, a lot more things to say, but the thing of the matter is if I didn't hear those voices, my decisions might be a little bit different and so when I look at her I think about all of the different neighborhoods that are involved in District 4 and all of those persons that come to me in their own way to inform my understanding so again, to you Ms. Wyatt, I want to appreciate you for being one of those persons and I want to again appreciate all of you all that is on the Commission. Mayor and County Administrator, we couldn't do this job without you. My first time on the Commission, I talked about the little narrative that had a turtle sitting on top of the fence and the caption underneath said obviously, he did not get here by himself. So, because of the fact that I'm sitting on this dais means that there were a lot of persons that helped get me to this point and I'm eternally thankful for that so thank you all for the many years we have shared together. It's been some trying times, some happy times, and I as I told somebody, it's just been like the weather in Kansas City. If you don't like the weather, just wait, it's going to change and that's what it has been. We've had good times, we've had bad times, happy times, sad times but all of that has come to make what this wonderful experience has been over the course of these years so thank you.

December 7, 2023

Mayor Garner said Commissioner, the Doctor, and the attorney if you all could go down and please hug and congratulate your fellow commissioners and the Administrator has something special for you. Then if you're able Pastor, if not, they will bring yours up to you. Thank you again commissioners and thank you again to this community for being patient with us.

XIV. ADJOURN

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

**MAYOR GARNER
ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 9:25 P.M.
DECEMBER 7, 2023**

Monica L. Sparks
Deputy Unified Government Clerk

JG

December 7, 2023