



Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas

Administration and Human Services Meeting

Commission Chambers

701 N. 7th Street Trafficway, Kansas City, KS 66101

Chair Christian Ramirez

Commissioner, District 1, Jermaine Howard - Commissioner At-Large, District 2, Andrew Kump

Commissioner, District 4, Evelyn Hill - Commissioner, District 6, Phil Lopez

MINUTES

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

5:35 PM – 9:00 PM

Attendance:

Committee Members Present:

- Commissioner Ramirez (Chair)
- Commissioner Lopez
- Commissioner Hill
- Commissioner Howard
- Commissioner Kump
- Commissioner Stites (observing)
- Mayor Watson (observing)
- Commissioner Pacheco (observing)

Committee Members Absent:

- None

Staff Present:

- Monica L. Sparks (Unified Government Clerk)
- J. Renee Ramirez (Director of Human Resources)
- Shakeva Christian (Deputy Director of Human Resources)
- SueZanne Bishop (Senior Counsel, Unified Government Legal Department)
- Rodney Lucas (Assistant County Administrator)

Call to Order:

Commissioner Ramirez called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Revisions to Agenda: (Discussion Begins: 25:46)

The Clerk reported there was an agenda update issued: removing Item No. 4.1 on the agenda.

Approval of Previous Minutes: (Discussion Begins: 26:03)

Commissioner Kump moved to approve the minutes from the January 27, October 27, and November 17, 2025, meetings. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

- Ayes: Lopez, Hill, Howard, Kump, Ramirez
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Committee Agenda:**Item No. 4.2 - DISCUSSION: COMMITTEE WORKING PLAN (Discussion Begins: 26:40)**

Commissioner Ramirez presented a discussion item for creating a committee working plan for the year. This initiative aims to detail policy issues to address and guide policy creation, while serving as a tool for the full commission during policy review.

Key Points:

- Goal: Create a committee working plan for the year
- Identify key policy issues the AHS committee will address
- Help guide policy creation and structure the committee's work
- Serve as a tool for the full commission during policy review and discussions
- This ties into the previously adopted Local Priorities Plan, which:
 - A. Functions like a local version of a legislative agenda
 - B. Requires items to be categorized as:
 - a. Administration (staff can handle)
 - b. Legislative (ordinances/resolutions by commissioners)
 - c. Budgetary (combo of admin and legislative)

- Requires that items be completed within one year – focused on “low-hanging fruit” fixes

The Chairman opened the public hearing. No comments were received. The Chairman closed the public hearing.

This item was for information only, and no action was required.

Item No. 4.3 - RESOLUTIONS: AMENDING HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE (Discussion Begins: 41:13)

J. Renee Ramirez, Director of Human Resources, presented a comprehensive analysis of the residency requirement policy for UG employees.

Key Points:

- The committee reviewed whether and how to change the UG employee residency requirement in the HR Guide (currently: employees must move into Wyandotte County within 12 months of hire).
- Key Facts HR Presented
 - A. Current Flexibility
 - a. Baseline rule: 12 month in county move in.
 - b. County Administrator already can:
 - 1. Extend some classifications to 24 months (e.g., sheriff’s deputies, police dispatchers, some health staff).
 - 2. Approve individual extensions and exceptions to residency.
- Turnover & Vacancies
 - A. UG’s 2025 turnover (~12.25%) is below the national average (~13.5%).
 - B. Nationally and locally, top drivers of turnover are:
 - a. Burnout/work overload
 - b. Pay/compensation
 - c. Culture and schedules
 - d. Better offers elsewhere
- Residency is not usually a primary driver.
 - A. Internal vacancy comparisons
 - B. Sheriff’s Office: high vacancies despite 24-month residency and bonuses.
 - C. Fire Department: low vacancies despite strict 12-month residency.

- D. KCKPD: challenges tied to pay levels, 8-hour shifts vs. 10-hour shifts elsewhere, and 18-month probation vs. 12-month move in deadline.
- Surveys & Community View
 - A. 2022 community survey: opinion on dropping residency is split, no clear majority:
 - a. 33% opposed, 30% strongly support, 20% somewhat support, 17% neutral.
 - B. 2025 online mayoral survey: methodologically weak (no controls), so not decision grade.
- External research shows strict residency rules don't measurably improve crime or complaints, can hurt morale, and that pay, flexibility, engagement, and local-investment incentives work better for recruitment, retention, and community trust than mandating where employees live
- Policy Options Outlined
 - A. Keep Current Policy (12 Month In County)
 - a. Clean up language to align with Workday.
 - b. Standardize proof of residency.
 - c. Continue 24-month extensions on a case-by-case exceptions.
 - B. 30 Mile Radius Model
 - a. Allow employees to live within 30 miles of City Hall (all directions).
 - b. Possible variants:
 - 1. 12 months to move into the 30-mile radius.
 - 2. 24 months to move into the 30-mile radius.
 - c. County Administrator could still require key leadership roles (Mayor, CAO, directors, public safety command) to live inside Wyandotte County.
 - C. 15 Mile Radius from County Lines
 - a. Allow residence within 15 miles outside the county boundary in all directions.
- Legal Constraint (Missouri Issue)
 - A. Legal counsel advised:
 - a. It would likely be unconstitutional to say "you can live within X miles in Kansas but not in Missouri" if residency is otherwise lifted (Privileges and Immunities Clause).
 - b. Pure in county residency requirements (like current rule) are generally upheld.
- Risks & Considerations HR Flagged
 - A. Morale: Change could be seen as either supportive or unfair depending on rollout.
 - B. Complexity ("Swiss cheese"): Multiple carve outs (different rules by rank/department) risk:

- a. Perceptions of inequity.
- b. Promotion problems (people needing time to move to qualify for higher positions).
- C. Related Policies: If residency is eased, UG may need to revisit:
 - a. Take home vehicle policy.
 - b. Sign on/retention bonuses currently tied to residency barriers.
- D. HR's bottom line: Residency is one factor, but compensation, schedules, culture, and engagement are equally or more important for recruitment/retention.

The Chairman opened the public hearing. Comments were received.

Written Comments Received, Read by UG Clerk:

- **Kevin Sanderson (Comment Begins 1:12:59)**
- **Elizabeth Pfiegier (Comment Begins 1:14:03)**
- **Dion Whitten (Comment Begins 1:14:50)**
- **Christina Van Cleave (Comment Begins 1:17:36)**
- **Gina Brosnick (Comment Begins 1:18:22)**
- **Crystal Duran (Comment Begins 1:20:02)**
- **Charlotte Square (Comment Begins 1:21:04)**

Public Comments:

- **Kylie Byron (Comment Begins 1:22:13)**
- **Eva Garcia Meza (Comment Begins 1:23:45)**
- **Daniel Hashman (Comment Begins 1:27:09)**
- **Corey Hall (Comment Begins 1:29:57)**
- **Pamela Penn Hicks (Comment Begins 1:33:43)**
- **Lydia Black (Comment Begins 1:35:55)**
- **Karen Daniels (Comment Begins 1:38:24)**
- **Fanny Hill (Comment Begins 1:39:43)**
- **Holland Aikens (Comment Begins 1:42:34)**
- **Joe Casey (Comment Begins 1:45:16)**
- **Timothy Fithian (Comment Begins 1:48:19)**
- **Dr. Brenda Scruggs Androssi (Comment Begins 1:50:43)**
- **Lisa Walker Yeager (Comment Begins 1:55:22)**

- **Nathaniel Faulkner (Comment Begins 1:57:17)**
- **Stuart Littlefield (Comment Begins 1:59:29)**
- **Quentin Johnson (Comment Begins 2:02:06)**
- **Laura Lado (Comment Begins 2:04:03)**
- **Jesse Martinelli (Comment Begins 2:06:47)**
- **Josh Slutsky (Comment Begins 2:08:55)**
- **Shannon Simpson (Comment Begins 2:10:19)**
- **Paulette Hall (Comment Begins 2:13:47)**
- **Marie Monahan (Comment Begins 2:16:35)**

The Chairman closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Ramirez made a motion to move the item forward without recommendation to the March 5 full Board of Commissioners meeting February 19, 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Commissioner Ramirez amend his motion to move the item forward without recommendation to the March 5, 2026, full Board of Commissioners meeting, with commissioners able to submit additional data questions to HR department by February 6 deadline. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez with the same understanding regarding the language change.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

- Ayes: Lopez, Hill, Howard, Kump, Ramirez
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Adjournment: (Discussion Begins: 3:48:54)

Commissioner Kump moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hill.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

- Ayes: Lopez, Hill, Howard, Kump, Ramirez
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

ML