



Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas

Economic Development & Finance Meeting

5th Floor Conference Room

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

Commissioner Tom Burroughs, Chair

*Commissioner Gayle Townsend – Commissioner Chuck Stites – Commissioner Bill Burns –
Commissioner Phil Lopez – Stevie Wakes, BPU Board Member*

MINUTES

Monday, January 13, 2025

5:02 PM-6:53 PM

Attendance:

Committee Members Present:

- Commissioner Burroughs (Chair)
- Commissioner Burns
- Commissioner Stites
- Commissioner Lopez
- Commissioner Townsend
- Mr. Wakes (BPU Board)

Committee Members Absent:

- None

Staff Present:

- Brittnie MacDonald (Clerk)
- Angel Ferrara (Parks and Recreation Director)
- Vince Belacci (Parks Manager)
- Chelsea Chism (Economic Development Director)
- Dr. Shelley Kneuvean (Chief Financial Officer)

Call to Order:

Commissioner Burroughs called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Revisions to Agenda: (Discussion Begins 4:38)

No revisions to the agenda were reported by the Clerk. Chairman Burroughs noted that items 4.7 and 4.8 were previously addressed at the full commission meeting and were removed from the agenda.

Approval of Previous Minutes: (Discussion Begins 5:00)

BPU Board Member Wakes moved to approve the minutes from the March 4, 2024, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burns.

Vote: Motion carried 6-0

- Ayes: Wakes, Lopez, Burns, Stites, Townsend, Burroughs
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Committee Agenda:**Item 4.1 - RESOLUTION: AMENDING 2024 PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET (Discussion Begins 5:35)**

The 2024 Parks and Recreation Department budget amendment was presented by Angel Ferrara, Parks and Recreation Director, and Vince Belacci, Parks Manager.

Key Points

- Request to use \$184,179 from 2024 reserve funds for repairs at Wyandotte County Lake due to a severe windstorm on May 19.
- Damages included: marina roof (\$101,000) and dock cabling/anchors (\$82,179).
- After repairs, \$15,821 would remain in reserves, representing 23% of the budget.
- Temporary repairs (tarping) have been in place but are not sustainable; full repairs are necessary to prevent further damage (like leaks and mold).

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

Commissioner Townsend moved to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stites.

Vote: Motion carried 6-0

- Ayes: Wakes, Lopez, Burns, Stites, Townsend, Burroughs
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Item 4.2 - ORDINANCE: APPROVING EXECUTION OF SECOND AMENDED & RESTATED STAR BOND PROJECT PLAN AND AMENDED & RESTATED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (AMERICAN ROYAL) (Discussion Begins 24:42)

The Ordinance approving execution of the second amended and restated Star Bond project plan for the American Royal project was presented by Chelsee Chism, Economic Development Director.

Key Points

- The project's scale has significantly increased from the original 2016/2017 agreement, now totaling up to \$450 million (including potential festival grounds), or \$375 million without them.
- The new facility, a 1 million square foot Food and Agriculture Education Center, expected to attract over 2 million visitors across 20 years, with over \$525 million annual economic impact and at least \$220 million in private investment.
- Star bond request increased to \$155 million (from \$80 million in 2017). Community Improvement District (CID) funding estimated at \$30 million, and an origination fee of \$15 million will be paid by the developer for relief on BPU payments.
- The project includes a private placement bond structure initially (lower risk for the Unified Government), with the potential for public bond issuance and refinancing in several years after facility completion and demonstrated sales.
- The "Plaza at the Speedway" TIF sales tax increment (about \$45 million over 20 years; \$25 million present value) is pledged to support project bonds. The inclusion and commitment of this previously anticipated local tax revenue was a major point of commission concern.
- The American Royal aims for nonprofit/tax-exempt status for relevant property, but this is subject to Board of Tax Appeals (BOTA) approval.
- Local benefit provisions include maintaining the American Royal headquarters on-site, community/civic engagement, ticket/event access for the Unified Government and Wyandotte County Fair, and partnership with the Agricultural Hall of Fame.

The Chairman opened the public hearing. Comments were received from the following:

- **LaVert Murray, Chief Economic Development Advisor to the Mayor's Office (Comments Begin: 1:34:37)**

The Chairman closed the public hearing

Commissioner Burns moved to approve the ordinance. The motion failed due to a lack of a second.

Item 4.3 - RESOLUTION: SETTING PUBLIC HEARING AND GIVING NOTICE OF CREATING A COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (AMERICAN ROYAL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT) (Discussion Begins 1:44:44)

No action was taken by the Committee.

Item 4.4 - RESOLUTION: AMENDING PREVIOUS RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO ISSUE INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS (AMERICAN ROYAL PROJECT) (Discussion Begins 1:44:50)

The resolution amending a previous resolution of intent to issue industrial revenue bonds for the American Royal Project was presented by Chelsea Chism (Economic Development Director).

Key Points

- The resolution extends the existing authorization for issuing up to \$250 million in IRBs for the American Royal project.
- The main purpose of the IRBs is to provide a sales tax exemption on construction materials, furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) for the ongoing project.
- The existing resolution was set to expire at the end of January 2025; the extension continues the benefit through December 31, 2025.
- Including FF&E in the IRB request was noted as unusual by one commissioner but confirmed as consistent with other Kansas-side projects by legal and financial staff.
- Extending the IRB intent ensures the American Royal project maintains sales tax exemption eligibility for ongoing and future construction purchases.

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

Commissioner Burns moved to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Vote: Motion carried 6-0

- Ayes: Wakes, Lopez, Burns, Stites, Townsend, Burroughs
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Item 4.5 - RESOLUTION: SETTING PUBLIC HEARING AND GIVING NOTICE OF CREATING A COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BUC-EE'S FAMILY TRAVEL CENTER COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT) (Discussion Begins 1:46:59)

The resolution setting a public hearing creating a community improvement district for the BUC-EE's Family Travel Center project was presented by Chelsea Chism (Economic Development Director).

Key Points

- The CID is part of the Buc-ee's 74,000-square-foot travel center project, with 120 gas pumps and electric vehicle charging stations, located south of the speedway.
- The total project budget is \$95 million.
- Incentives include:
 - A. TIF (Tax Increment Financing) up to \$3.3 million for 15 years
 - B. CID: 1% additional sales tax, up to \$10 million for a maximum of 20 years
 - C. IRBs for a sales tax exemption on construction materials (no property tax abatement)
- The incentives are pay-as-you-go and capped at 20% of project costs; the actual public/private ratio is closer to 15% public, 85% private.

Commissioner Stites moved to adopt the resolution scheduling the hearing for the February 27, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Vote: Motion carried 6-0

- Ayes: Wakes, Lopez, Burns, Stites, Townsend, Burroughs
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Item No. 4.6 - RESOLUTION: PROVIDING PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE ADVISABILITY OF CREATING A REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (BUC-EE'S PROJECT) (Discussion Begins 1:53:16)

The resolution setting a public hearing creating a redevelopment district for the Buc-EE's Family Travel Center project was presented by Chelsea Chism (Economic Development Director).

Key Points

- The resolution establishes the redevelopment (TIF) district for Buc-ee's Travel Center project, a 74,000-square-foot facility south of the speedway.
- The TIF incentive is up to \$3.3 million over 15 years, supporting public infrastructure investment such as road repositioning and a roundabout.

- TIF and CID incentives are both pay-as-you-go and capped at 20% of the total \$95 million project cost; actual public/private ratio is about 15% public, 85% private.
- No property tax abatement is included; IRBs (industrial revenue bonds) are limited to sales tax exemption.
- The process for establishing the TIF district is statutory, requiring a public hearing set for March 6, 2025, and will proceed to full commission on February 27, 2025, per the developer's scheduling request.

Commissioner Stites moved to adopt the resolution scheduling the hearing for the February 27, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Vote: Motion carried 6-0

- Ayes: Wakes, Lopez, Burns, Stites, Townsend, Burroughs
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Adjournment: (Discussion Begins 1:53:49)

BPU Board Member Wakes moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Vote: Motion carried 6-0

- Ayes: Wakes, Lopez, Burns, Stites, Townsend, Burroughs
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 PM.

MLS