

Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas



Board of Commissioners

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

Mayor Christal E. Watson

*Commissioner At-Large Dist. 1 Melissa Bynum – Commissioner At-Large Dist. 2 Andrew Kump –
Commissioner Dist. 1 Jermaine Howard – Commissioner Dist. 2 Bill Burns –
Commissioner Dist. 3 Christian Ramirez – Commissioner Dist. 4 Evelyn Hill –
Commissioner Dist. 5 Carlos Pacheco – Commissioner Dist. 6 Phil Lopez –
Commissioner Dist. 7 Chuck Stites – Commissioner Dist. 8 Andrew Davis*

MINUTES

Thursday, March 19, 2026

5:35 PM – 8:00 PM

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

- Mayor CEO Christal E. Watson
- Commissioner Melissa Bynum
- Commissioner Jermaine Howard
- Commissioner Bill Burns
- Commissioner Evelyn Hill
- Commissioner Carlos Pacheco
- Commissioner Phil Lopez
- Commissioner Chuck Stites
- Commissioner Andrew Davis
- Commissioner Christian Ramirez
- Commissioner Andrew Kump

Commissioners Absent:

- None

Staff Present:

- David Johnston (County Administrator)
- Monica L. Sparks (Unified Government Clerk)
- Wendy Green (Deputy Chief Legal Counsel)
- J. Renee Ramirez (Director of Human Resources)
- Shakeva Christian (Deputy Director of Human Resources)
- Mike Grimm (Research and Budget Manager)
- Reginald Lindsey (Budget Director)
- Ashley Lucero (HR Analyst, Human Resources)
- Chris Cooley (Mapping)

Call to Order:

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. The invocation was led by Chaplain Therese Bangert from Our Lady Saint Rose (initially misidentified as Oak Grove Christian Church), followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Revisions to Agenda: (Discussion Begins 4:53)

The Clerk reported there was an agenda update issued. The Land Bank agenda would be heard first, followed by all other items as listed, with the Standing Committee agenda heard last.

Public Announcements: (Discussion Begins 5:55)

Mayor Watson made an announcement:

Turner Elementary School Student Council:

Commissioner Lopez's sponsorship of Turner Elementary School student council for a mock commission meeting at City Hall. The students voted on a project to improve recess with a Gaga ball pit. Commissioner Lopez subsequently secured funding through the Deffenbaugh Family Foundation.

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

(MOVED PER AGENDA UPDATE)

Commissioner Ramirez made a motion to adjourn and reconvene as the Land Bank Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis. (Discussion Begins 11:50)

Vote: Motion carries 10/0

- Ayes: Pacheco, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Howard, Burns, Hill, Ramirez, Kump
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Land Bank Board of Trustees' Consent Agenda (Discussion Begins 12:22)

Item No. 1 - RESOLUTION APPOINTING MICHAEL SUTTON AS LAND BANK CO-MANAGER

Item No. 2 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WYANDOTTE COUNTY LAND BANK TO HOLD SPECIFIED PROPERTIES FOR REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATION

Item No. 3 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WYANDOTTE COUNTY LAND BANK TO HOLD SPECIFIED PROPERTIES FOR THE KSU LEAD STUDY

Item No. 4 - LAND BANK OPTIONS

Item No. 5 - LAND BANK PROPERTY TRANSFERS

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve all items as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez.

Vote: Motion carries 10/0

- Ayes: Pacheco, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Howard, Burns, Hill, Ramirez, Kump
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Commissioner Kump made a motion to adjourn as the Land Bank Board of Trustees and reconvene as the Board of Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez. (Discussion Begins 12:51)

Vote: Motion carries 10/0

- Ayes: Pacheco, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Howard, Burns, Hill, Ramirez, Kump
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Mayor's Agenda: (Discussion Begins 13:18)

Item No. 1 – RESOLUTION: SISTER CITY WITH CITY OF BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

Mayor explained that the Argentina soccer team will use Sporting KC's Compass Minerals facility as their base camp during the World Cup. The Mayor has met with leaders from Buenos Aires and noted the local Buenos Aires restaurant that features Argentinian food.

Commissioner Bynum made a motion to approve the adoption of the resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez.

Vote: Motion carries 10/0

- Ayes: Stites, Bynum, Kump, Howard, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Pacheco, Lopez, Davis
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Consent Agenda: (Discussion Begins 14:36)

Item No. 1 – APPOINTMENT: BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Item No. 2 – MINUTES

Item No. 3 – WEEKLY BUSINESS

Commissioner Kump made a motion to approve all items on the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ramirez.

Vote: Motion carries 10/0

- Ayes: Stites, Bynum, Kump, Howard, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Pacheco, Lopez, Davis
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

Administrator's Agenda: (Discussion Begins 15:20)

Item No. 1 – ORDINANCE: BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES WATER AND ELECTRIC LINES CENTRAL AVENUE TO STATE LINE PROJECT

Deputy Chief Legal Counsel Wendy Green introduced the item, deferring to outside counsel Tim Orrick. Tim Orrick, Outside Counsel, explained that the BPU plans to extend a 12-inch water main and two six-inch electric conduits from the area of Seventh and Central across the river, ending on State Line. Negotiation is ongoing, and the BPU requests approval of an ordinance to allow the filing of an eminent domain action if necessary.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to hold this item over for 30 days for questions to be answered and for BPU board review. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stites.

Vote: Motion carries 9/1

- Ayes: Stites, Bynum, Kump, Howard, Ramirez, Hill, Pacheco, Lopez, Davis
- Nays: Burns
- Absent: None

Standing Committee's Agenda (MOVED PER AGENDA UPDATE): (Discussion Begins 34:45)

Item No. 1 – RESOLUTION: AMENDING HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE

The Mayor explained that this item addresses residency requirements for UG employees, with several hearings held at the standing committee level generating significant public input.

County Administrator David Johnson introduced J. Renee Ramirez, Director of the Human Resources department, to do the presentation.

Key Points:

Renee Ramirez, Director of Human Resources, presented comprehensive data on the residency requirement, noting it was established before unification in 1997.

- The presentation covered:
 - A. Current Policy: Requires employees to reside in Wyandotte County or relocate within 12 months of hire
 - B. Scope: Approximately 2,045 employees subject to the requirement, with a total salary of over \$159 million
 - C. Workforce Data: 48% of Wyandotte County residents work within the county, 52% commute outside; 39% of jobs in Wyandotte County are filled by county residents
- Applicant Volume Trends: Since implementing Workday system in 2023:
 - A. 2023: 3,564 applicants
 - B. 2024: 3,777 applicants
 - C. 2025: 4,513 applicants
- Average Days to Fill Positions:
 - A. Fire Department: 84 days (2024)
 - B. Police Department: 171 days
 - C. Sheriff's Office: 91 days
 - D. Civilian positions: 61 days (down from 166 days in 2022)
- Exit Interview Data: Of 93 completed exit interviews over three years, 28 employees (30%) cited residency requirement as a reason for leaving.

- Legal Authority: District Attorney has statutory authority exempting from UG personnel policies. Currently, 11 DA employees live outside Wyandotte County.

Shakiva Christian, Deputy Director of HR, discussed labor market impacts, noting vacancy rates of 7.1% currently and overtime costs of approximately \$274,000 recently, down from \$7 million last year and \$10 million previously.

- Cost per hire:
 - A. Civilians: \$1,200
 - B. Police/Sheriff: \$13,500
 - C. Fire: \$14,600
- Benchmarking Results: Local school districts (Piper and Turner) have no residency requirements except for superintendents, with vacancy rate under 1% and 5%, respectively. BPU maintains a residency requirement with 29% vacancy rate for lineman positions.
- Employee Survey Results: Of 1,173 responses (54% response rate):
 - A. 97% live in Wyandotte County
 - B. 93% believe the residency requirement is not necessary
 - C. 91% want residency requirement removed
 - D. 41% believe it should not apply to any employees
- Community Survey Results: ETC Institute survey of 1,200 residents showed 60% support for residency policy, 40% opposed.

Mike Grimm, Research Manager, presented migration trends showing a net domestic migration loss of 2,000 persons annually (1% of the population).

- Economic impact analysis showed potential revenue loss of \$2,613 per household if employees relocated outside the county.

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to lift residency requirements for all employees to live within a 15-mile radius of the county border, except executive director level and above (range 19 and above on non-union pay scale), police chief and deputies, and fire chief and deputies. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stites.

Commissioner Lopez amended his motion to lift residency for all employees with no mile radius and all remaining language remains. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stites.

Vote: Motion carries 6/5

- Ayes: Stites, Bynum, Hill, Pacheco, Lopez, Watson
- Nays: Davis, Kump, Howard, Burns, Ramirez
- Absent: None

12. Adjournment: (Discussion Begins 3:05:00)

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

Vote: Motion carries 10/0

- Ayes: Stites, Bynum, Kump, Howard, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Pacheco, Lopez, Davis
- Nays: None
- Absent: None

MAYOR WATSON

ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 8:00 P.M.

March 19, 2026

Monica L. Sparks, CMC

Unified Government Clerk

ML