

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

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, May 14, 2026

4:30 PM – 5:49 PM

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

- Mayor Christal E. Watson
- Commissioner Bynum
- Commissioner Kump
- Commissioner Howard
- Commissioner Burns
- Commissioner Hill
- Commissioner Pacheco
- Commissioner Lopez
- Commissioner Davis

Commissioners Absent:

- Commissioner Ramirez
- Commissioner Stites

Staff Present:

- Monica L. Sparks (Unified Government Clerk)
- David Johnston (County Administrator)
- Angela Lawson (Interim Chief Legal Counsel)
- Reginald Lindsey (Budget Director)
- Michael Peterson (Deputy Budget Director)
- Mike Grimm (Research Manager)
- Andrian Alemifar (Senior Budget Analyst)
- Alan Howze (Assistant County Administrator)
- Wendy Green (Deputy Chief Legal Counsel)

Call to Order:

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM.

Notice and Consent to Meeting: (Discussion begins: 00:01:20)

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, is scheduled to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. for a budget workshop in the fifth-floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building, 701 N. 7th Street, Kansas City, Kansas.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

**Item No. 3.2 - PRESENTATION: COMMUNITY SURVEY AND DOTTE TALK
FEEDBACK RESULTS (Discussion begins: 00:02:17)**

County Administrator David Johnston introduced the evening's presentation, explaining this is part of the annual budget process where the Unified Government reviews citizen feedback collected through two methods: a community survey and DotteTalk sessions.:

Community Survey Presentation by Ryan Murray, ETC Institute (Discussion begins: 00:03:32)

Ryan Murray, ETC Institute, began presenting the community survey results. Murray noted ETC Institute has been working with Wyandotte County for at least 15 years and is based in Olathe, Kansas.

Survey Methodology:

- Address-based sampling ensuring equal opportunity for all households
- Random selection by commission districts
- Goal of 1,200 completed surveys achieved
- Approximately 5,000 surveys mailed with 20% response rate
- Survey split into two versions: Kansas City, Kansas services and Wyandotte County services
- Margin of error: 2.7% at 95% confidence level

Key Survey Results:

Resident Priorities:

- Streets, potholes, and bridge repair ranked as top priorities
- Trash dumping and neighborhood appearance identified as major concerns
- Basic infrastructure needs dominated responses

Satisfaction Improvements:

- 31 of 34 comparable areas showed increased satisfaction from 2025 to 2026
- Cleanliness and overall appearance of Wyandotte County increased 25 percentage points
- Maintenance of major city streets improved 11 percentage points
- Quality of city/county services increased 6 percentage points

Areas Needing Improvement:

- Maintenance of city streets identified as largest opportunity for improvement
- Property maintenance and code enforcement highlighted
- Illegal dumping: 51% of respondents witnessed it, with 94% calling it a major problem

Sales Tax Support:

- Mixed support: 39% supportive, 27% neutral, 34% not supportive
- Among supporters, homelessness and affordable housing ranked as top funding priority

Public Safety:

- Fire and ambulance emergency response received highest satisfaction ratings
- Police visibility and community engagement identified as areas for improvement

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION (Discussion begins: 00:22:31)

Commissioner Pacheco requested district breakdown of survey data.

- Ryan Murray confirmed district data would be available the following day.

Mayor asked about survey distribution and whether expanding to 10% of residential population would be beneficial.

- Murray responded that current sample size provides reliable data with 2.7% margin of error, similar to what they use for San Antonio with over one million residents.

Mayor noted absence of transportation and healthcare questions in survey.

- Mike Grimm clarified transportation questions were included in the city survey.
- Mayor suggested exploring healthcare questions for future surveys.

Mayor asked about sharing survey results with third-party contractors and educational entities.

- Budget Director confirmed results are posted online but not actively shared with contractors or school districts.

Mayor inquired about departmental goal setting based on survey results.

- David Johnston explained that some strategic goals have been tied to survey results through the SOAR initiative but acknowledged the process could be more structured.

Commissioner Bynum provided context that department heads do review and use survey results, particularly for budget justification and service improvements.

Commissioner Kump asked about the three areas that showed decreased satisfaction.

- Murray clarified these were youth programs, adult programs, and program costs - all parks and recreation related.

Commissioner Lopez defended Public Works department's performance, noting visible improvements in mowing and sewer maintenance.

- Murray clarified the slide showed priority rankings, where decreased ratings actually indicated positive progress as fewer residents felt these were high-priority needs.

Commissioner Davis discussed the priorities plan passed last year and upcoming agenda item to address survey results systematically. Commissioner Davis also asked about sales tax question presentation methodology.

- Murray explained the context provided was neutral, explaining sales taxes support services and require voter approval for specific purposes.

Commissioner Davis inquired about language access for non-English speakers.

- Murray confirmed surveys were available in Spanish online and by phone, with translation services available for other languages.

Commissioner Burns noted correlation between survey response rates and voter turnout in districts.

Commissioner Hill asked about departmental responsibility for homelessness and affordable housing services.

- Administrator Johnston acknowledged these issues haven't been designated to specific departments due to limited allocated resources but noted they're becoming commission priorities.

Commissioner Pacheco highlighted disconnect between what residents would support additional taxes for (homelessness) versus what would improve satisfaction (infrastructure).

DotteTalk Results Presentation by Adrian Alemifar (Discussion begins: 01:01:29)

Senior Budget Analyst Adrian Alemifar presented DotteTalk results from the April 28th session at Kansas City, Kansas Tech Center, which had over 40 residents participate.

Format:

- Department tabling session for direct resident-staff interaction
- Round table discussions on five budget-related topics

Key DotteTalk Findings:

Commission Priority Rankings:

- Infrastructure improvement ranked as number one priority
- Results echoed community survey findings

Budget Additions/Removals:

- Residents suggested more additions than removals
- Removal suggestions: fleet/take-home vehicles, overtime costs
- Addition suggestions: street infrastructure, parks and recreation, transit, animal control, additional swimming pool

Tax vs. Service Trade-offs:

- Mixed responses on reducing taxes versus maintaining services
- Support expressed for 1% earnings tax (if legally possible)
- Interest in land value tax on out-of-town landlords

Service Satisfaction:

- Satisfied: police and fire response, trash services, parks and recreation, BPU, health department, customer service, public transportation
- Dissatisfied: land bank plot maintenance, illegal dumping, lack of sidewalks, beautification issues

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION (Discussion begins: 01:05:54)

Commissioner Davis asked about demographic data collection from DotteTalk participants.

- Staff confirmed demographic data was collected but not immediately available.

Commissioner Kump inquired about earnings tax feasibility.

- Legal counsel confirmed earnings tax requires state legislative authorization.

Commissioner Bynum asked about home rule applicability to earnings tax.

- Deputy Chief Counsel Wendy Green explained home rule applies when state statutes don't impact all jurisdictions equally, which doesn't apply to earnings tax restrictions.

Commissioner Davis asked about land value tax on out-of-state owners.

- Wendy Green confirmed this would not be legally permissible under current statutes requiring uniform property valuation.
- Ms. Alemifar referenced Detroit and Washington DC land value tax models for future research.

Commissioner Lopez provided detailed explanation of property tax distribution, clarifying that only 40% of property tax bills go to the Unified Government, with 60% going to other taxing entities including schools, library, college, and special districts.

Commissioner Davis suggested exploring collaborative approaches with other taxing jurisdictions for property tax relief programs rather than pointing to other entities for tax increases.

Adjournment (Discussion Begins: 01:16:37)

Commissioner Kump made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Vote: Motion carries 8/0

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

MAYOR WATSON ADJOURNED

THE MEETING AT 5:49 P.M.

Monica L. Sparks, CMC
Unified Government Clerk

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