



Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas

Administration and Human Services Meeting

5th Floor Conference Room

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

Monday, July 13, 2026

6:26 PM – 10:16 PM

Attendance:

Committee Members Present:

- Commissioner Ramirez (Chair)
- Commissioner Lopez
- Commissioner Hill
- Commissioner Howard
- Commissioner Kump

Committee Members Absent:

- None

Staff Present:

- Maiyee Lor (Unified Government Deputy Clerk)
- Casey Meyer (Assistant County Administrator)
- Wendy Green (Deputy Chief Counsel)
- Wesley McKain (Manager in Health Department)
- Karah Barnes (Substance Misuse Coordinator)
- Terrie Garrison (Interim Director of the Health Department)
- Ashley Lause (Health Department WIC Manager)
- Susie Nelson (Director Register of Deeds)
- Jeff Conway (Senior Counsel)

- Lesley Strohschein (Deputy Chief Financial Officer)
- Uzoamaka Amachree (Program Coordinator in the Health Department)
- Dr. Shelley Kneuvean (Chief Financial Officer)
- Debbie Jonscher (Deputy Director of Finance)
- Lupe Valdovino (Grants Financial Administrator)

Call to Order: (Discussion Begins: 1:19:41)

Commissioner Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:26 PM.

Revisions to Agenda: (Discussion Begins: 1:20:02)

Commissioner Ramirez announced revisions to the order of agenda items. The reordered agenda was as follows:

1. Item 4.2 — FY 2025 Comprehensive Opioid Stimulant and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) Grant (Department of Justice)
2. Item 4.3 — Maternal Produce Prescription Program Grant (HRSA/Maternal and Child Health Bureau)
3. Item 4.4 — Kansas Vice Addiction Fund Grant / Peer Support Recovery Specialists
4. Item 4.6 — Register of Deeds Presentation (Informational)
5. Item 4.7 — Presentation on Dangers of Vaping and Tobacco Use (Informational)
6. Item 4.8 — DMV/Treasury Department Assessment Presentation (Informational)
7. Item 4.5 — Amendment to Grant Application and Acceptance Policy
8. Item 4.1 — Wyandotte County Library Board Charter Resolution

Approval of Previous Minutes: (Discussion Begins: 1:21:07)

Commissioner Kump moved to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2026, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hill.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

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

Committee Agenda:

Item No. 4.1 - CHARTER RESOLUTION: TO ABOLISH THE EXISTING WYANDOTTE COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD, RECREATE A NEW WYANDOTTE COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD, AND REPEALS CHARTER RESOLUTION NO. CR-01-99 (Discussion Begins: 4:02:42)

Jeff Conway, Senior Counsel, provided a detailed historical and legal overview of the Wyandotte County Library Board:

- The current library board was constituted in 1999 under Charter Resolution CR 01-99.
- The board is county-wide but in practice primarily governs the PET District (Piper, Edwardsville, Turner), as the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Library (KCKPL) is governed by the USD 500 school board, and the Bonner Springs Library is a pre-existing municipal library.
- The existing 11-member board includes representatives from Edwardsville (2), Piper (2), Turner (2), Bonner (1), and the USD 500/KCK area (4), all appointed by the Board of Commissioners.
- The library board is unique among county-appointed boards in that the mill levy it sets is binding on the Board of Commissioners — commissioners cannot reduce or change it. This is governed by state statute and supported by an Attorney General opinion.
- Edwardsville's Home Rule Action: Under home rule authority, the City of Edwardsville passed an ordinance creating its own municipal library as a city department, to be housed in the new Edwardsville city municipal building. Edwardsville's city administrator calculated that the city was paying approximately \$600,000 per year to the library board but could operate its own library for approximately \$250,000 once established. The anticipated opening is 2027.
- \$800,000 Payment: Edwardsville requested an upfront payment of \$1.2 million from the library board to establish collections, shelving, and startup costs. The board agreed to pay \$800,000, calculated in part based on what Turner received in prior years (adjusted for inflation).
- Agreement for 2026: In exchange for the \$800,000, Edwardsville agreed to remain within the PET taxing district for the 2026 budget year to avoid a gap in taxation or double taxation for residents.
- House Bill 2769 (effective July 1, 2026): New state legislation requires that all members of appointed governing boards in Kansas either be residents of the relevant district or serve as non-voting members if non-residents. As of July 1, 2026 — and as of the meeting date of July 13, 2026 — the existing 11-member board has 6 voting members and 5 non-voting members, as the board has not yet been reconstituted.
- November 1 effective date: The charter resolution is structured to take effect November 1 to align with the taxation calendar, at which point Edwardsville would be formally removed from the district and the board reconfigured as a PT District (Piper and Turner only).

Joe Caiharr, Chair of the Library Board, confirmed the board approved recommending an 11-member PT board but acknowledged significant discussion had occurred about whether 5, 7, or 11 members

would be appropriate. He noted the difficulty of overlaying Commission district boundaries onto the Piper and Turner school district boundaries.

Mill Levy and Financial Data, presented by Joe Caiharr:

- Current mill levy: 4.959 mills
- 2026 taxes levied (per Reginald Lindsey's projections):
 - A. Piper area: \$1.8 million
 - B. Turner area: \$1.3 million
 - C. Edwardsville: \$591,000
- 2026 library board reserves (ending fund balance): approximately \$1.8 million
- 2026 expenditures (including \$800,000 to Edwardsville): approximately \$4.8 million
- Turner Library allocation in 2026 budget: \$553,000

The Chairman opened the public hearing. The following comments were received:

- **Eva Garcia Meza (Kansas City, Kansas) (Comments begin at 4:55:08)**
- **Korri Hall (Kansas City, Kansas) (Comments begin at 4:56:55)**
- **Karen Schibi (Kansas City, Kansas) (Comments begin at 5:00:19)**

The Chairman closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Kump made a motion to approve as Option A the resolution as submitted and also put forward an Option B, which would be the resolution as submitted with the change that the board would be constituted by the members chosen by the commissioners whose districts overlay the school districts affected, which would be the Piper School District and the Turner School District, as well as the mayor. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hill.

Vote: Motion failed 3-2

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

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to move this item forward with no recommendation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kump.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1

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

Item No. 4.2 - RESOLUTION: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANT TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT'S PEER SUPPORT RECOVERY PROGRAM (2026 – 2029)
(Discussion Begins: 1:21:36)

Wesley McKain, Manager in Health Department, introduced the item, noting the Health Department has held this grant for three years. The grant funds the department's peer support and substance misuse program, having replaced prior ARPA and CDC funding. Karah Barnes, Substance Misuse Coordinator, presented the details of the grant reapplication, which was submitted on May 11th prior to Commission approval but with county administrator approval.

Key program components funded by this grant include:

- Karah Barnes, Substance Misuse Coordinator, and two Peer Support Specialists, all funded 100% through the grant.
- An embedded licensed clinical addiction counselor within the drug court program, fully funded through a subaward from Wyandot Behavioral Health.
- Transportation support for clients via the Uber Health program, assisting with legal appointments, job interviews, and work transportation.
- Peer support services including resource connection, transportation and housing supports, mentoring, and convening recovery groups.
- Referrals from Wyandotte County Drug Court, Veterans Court, Behavioral Health Court, CIT officers, the Kansas City, Kansas, Fire Department's community paramedic, KU Mental and Behavioral Health, and community recovery living programs including Oxford House and Shalom House.
- Weekly outreach with Crosslines Outreach serving unhoused individuals in Wyandotte County.
- Distribution of Narcan (naloxone) through vending machines at Crosslines, Willa Gill, Frank Williams, and all four library branches, as well as health fairs and community events. (Narcan is purchased using Opioid Settlement Funds; staff to distribute is funded through this grant.)
- Distribution of fentanyl test strips.

- Harm reduction kits containing Narcan, fentanyl test strips, peer support resource materials, hygiene items, first aid items, gun locks, condoms, hydration packets (summer), and gloves/hand warmers (winter).

Evaluation Outcomes (KU Med):

- Drug court clients complete and graduate the program 36% faster since peer support specialists were embedded.
- Reduction in wait time for assessment and referral from three months to two weeks for drug and behavioral health courts since the addition of the addictions counselor.

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

Commissioner Kump made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hill.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

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

Item No. 4.3 – RESOLUTION: HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA) – 26 – 103 – GRANT OPPORTUNITY (Discussion Begins: 1:36:36)

Terrie Garrison, Interim Director of the Health Department, explained that this grant opportunity was published on June 17th with a submission deadline of July 17th — a one-month turnaround for a large federal grant — which necessitated the fast-track request to the July 16, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting. The grant is a four-year award of up to \$500,000 per year.

Ashley Lause outlined the planned program:

- A dietitian-led nutrition voucher program for pregnant women and their family members to receive vouchers for fruits and vegetables specifically.
- Hiring of a community health worker to assist families in navigating the program and redeeming vouchers.
- Leveraging existing WIC vendor relationships with grocery stores for voucher redemption.
- Nutrition education focused on pregnancy, gestational diabetes, and hypertension prevention, as well as postpartum support.

- Cooking classes to help participants learn to use and store fresh produce received through the program.

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

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to approve the resolution with a fast-track to the July 16, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Howard.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

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

Item No. 4.4 – RESOLUTION: KANSAS FIGHTS ADDICTION (KFA) PEER SUPPORT RECOVERY GRANT (Discussion Begins: 1:41:02)

Wesley McKain, Manager in Health Department, explained that this grant is designed to expand the peer support program approved under Item 4.2. The grant does not technically require a match; however, because the grant limits benefit charges to 25% of salary, the Health Department identified approximately \$50,000 per year in general funds to cover the remaining benefits for the two new positions. Terrie Garrison confirmed these funds were identified within the current amended budget and would be addressed in the FY 2027 and FY 2028 budget cycles. The existing two peer support specialists — Keather and Tino — have full caseloads. The grant would fund two additional full-time peer support specialists, bringing the total to four. The two priority populations identified for the new hires are:

1. Youth and young adults — noting that younger individuals can be harder to connect with using existing peer support staff due to generational differences in communication and drug use environments.
2. Spanish-speaking residents — to provide multilingual, multicultural peer support services.

These priorities were informed in part by a youth fatality review indicating increased overdoses and overdose deaths, particularly among Latino males aged 15–24.

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

Commissioner Kump made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lopez.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

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

Item No. 4.5 - RESOLUTION: GRANT APPLICATION AND POLICY (Discussion Begins: 3:59:39)

Lesley Strohschein, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, explained that the current Grant Application and Acceptance Policy has been in place since 2019. When Dr. Kneuvean joined in 2024, she found the policy was not being consistently enforced and undertook a rewrite that preserved the existing content. The version before the committee incorporated additional revisions from the Mayor's Office, focusing on two major changes:

1. Dollar threshold adjustments for the approval levels required before grant applications are submitted.
2. Language clarifying the mayor's authority to fast track grant applications when short turnaround windows do not allow for the standard committee/Commission approval process prior to application.

The item was previously presented to the full Commission and was sent back to this committee for further discussion.

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

Commissioner Kump made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Howard.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

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

Item No. 4.6 – PRESENTATION: UPDATE FROM REGISTER OF DEEDS (Discussion Begins: 1:50:22)

Susie Nelson, Register of Deeds, provided an overview of her office's functions, accomplishments, and goals.

Key points:

Office Function and Location:

- The Register of Deeds is the custodian for real estate records for Wyandotte County, responsible for recording and preserving those records.
- Located on the first floor of the courthouse; open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (no lunch closure); recording stops daily at 4:30 p.m.

Recording Methods:

- Walk-in (document recorded on the spot if compliant)
- Mail
- E-recording via Memorandum of Understanding

Key Programs:

- Property Fraud Alert (Free Program): Residents sign up using their name. When a document is recorded under their name, they are notified by email or text with the document number.
 - A. In 2024, 1,677 residents signed up and 480 received alerts.
 - B. In 2025, 2,305 residents signed up (an increase of 628 from 2024) and 268 alerts were sent.
- Notary Fraud Alert (Free, Recently Implemented): Similar to Property Fraud Alert but specific to notaries; approximately 10 notaries had signed up as of the meeting date.
- Laredo Subscription: A search engine used primarily by title companies; accessed via monthly subscription so companies do not need to visit in person.

Volume Statistics:

- 2024: Over 20,000 documents recorded; 16,000+ e-records (81%); approximately 4,000 paper/walk-in/mail.
- 2025: Over 21,000 documents recorded (approximately 1,400 more than 2024); 82% e-recorded; 18% paper/walk-in/mail.

Data Migration:

- In 2024, the office completed a data migration of records from 1955–1974 (19 years), totaling 981 books, approximately 412,000 documents, and approximately 800,000 images, into the Laredo search engine. This was completed by an outside vendor.
- Currently, the office is conducting in-house indexing of previously migrated data to save money. Approximately 130,000 documents have been indexed to date.

Staffing:

- Seven-person team: Susie Nelson (Register of Deeds), Maggie Orendac (Deputy Register of Deeds), Sandra Ayala (Administrative Support Supervisor), Brandi Lynch (Program Specialist), Juanita Soto (Administrative Support Specialist), Karen Shipman (Administrative Support

Specialist), and Sandra Lopez (Administrative Support Assistant). Cross-training is nearly complete.

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. 4.7 – PRESENTATION: YOUTH ANTI-VAPING INITIATIVE (Discussion Begins: 2:02:55)

Uzo Amachree, Program Coordinator in the Health Department, introduced herself and the two student presenters, noting she has worked in tobacco prevention for approximately four years.

Program Background:

- Ms. Amachree's position is grant-funded through the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Grant from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), applied for annually.
- She partners with nonprofits and the Kansas City, Kansas, Public School District (USD 500) to form student-led anti-tobacco clubs called Resist Chapters. There are currently three official chapters and one in development in partnership with the University of Kansas ThrYve Program.
- The office facilitated a field trip to the State Capitol in Topeka two years ago to meet with House of Representatives members on tobacco issues.
- A Tobacco Retail License Program was established following a previously passed resolution/ordinance and is now tracking retailer compliance with Tobacco 21 law. A new program coordinator has been hired for this initiative.
- Ms. Amachree promotes the Kansas Quitline through community events and media including billboards, Spotify, and YouTube, with growing engagement within Wyandotte County.
- She facilitates the Tobacco Free Wyandotte County Coalition, a multidisciplinary coalition that includes public health professionals, school administrators (including the principal from Sumner Academy), the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, and at least one interested commissioner.

Student-Led Initiatives (Erica Contreras and Dante Harris):

- Programming events at F. L. Schlagle promoting anti-tobacco messaging, including a "Dodge Addiction" event and a school grounds cleanup day.
- Met with USD 500 district leaders to advocate for adding an education and support component to the student code of conduct for tobacco/vaping violations, rather than relying solely on discipline. They recommended increasing consequences for repeated offenses while emphasizing education for first-time violations.

- F.L. Schlagle partnered with the Village Initiative Tobacco Treatment Support Classes, which meets with students caught vaping every Friday to discuss the health effects.
- Shared online resources including the Kansas Tobacco Quitline, the HELP me app, and KanQuit, accessible via phone, computer, or other devices.

Data Presented:

- In 2021, more than 1 in 10 (14.4%) of Kansas high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.
- In 2022, 18.7% of Wyandotte County youth surveyed had tried vaping at least once; 14.51% said it was very easy to obtain a vape in Wyandotte County.
- Students personally attested to observing two to six students vaping in school bathrooms at any given time, not including lunch or class periods.

Factors Contributing to Youth Vaping:

- Retailers failing to check IDs — some retailers only verbally ask age without verifying. The Tobacco Retail License compliance check program aims to address this.
- Metal detectors not strong enough to detect certain vape products; students hide vapes in undergarments or with Apple Watches to bypass detection systems.
- Vape trafficking via apps such as Telegram, where adults use students as intermediaries to sell products illegally to peers. This has been reported in multiple school districts and discussed with the District Attorney.
- Reduced perception of harm — many students believe vaping will not negatively impact them the way cigarettes would.
- Peer pressure and family/relative enabling — students waiting outside gas stations for adults of legal age to purchase products for them.

Impact on Schools:

- Bathrooms locked or heavily monitored, with only one bathroom open during class periods, causing loss of educational time for both students who need to use facilities and students in class.
- Students caught vaping receive in-school suspension (ISS), losing classroom instructional time.
- Teachers required to monitor restrooms during lunch, passing periods, and class time, reducing social and academic engagement.
- Nicotine reduces learning ability and concentration; short-term memory impacts; shortness of breath affects student athletes; negative social consequences with coaches and educators; family tension when vaping is discovered.
- Secondhand vape exposure in bathrooms affects non-vaping students and staff.

Recent Developments:

- The FDA recently authorized two fruit-flavored vapes (mango and blueberry) — though marketed to adults 21 and over, Ms. Amachree noted that flavors particularly attract younger users.
- Introduction of the Elf Bar (a smartphone-like vape device) and Zyn Pouches (nicotine products taken orally, resembling gum), which can bypass metal detectors entirely.

Call to Action:

- Funding and accessibility for Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products and tobacco treatment recovery services at the Health Department.
- Support for tobacco reduction and access policy campaigns, including a potential Tobacco Retailer Density Resolution/Ordinance.
- Contributions to public awareness campaigns, op-eds, and community forums.
- Invitations to join the Tobacco Free Wyandotte County Coalition.
- Attendance and support at anti-tobacco events hosted in Wyandotte County, including the upcoming "Dodge Day Addiction" event in fall.
- Advocacy for better vape detection systems at school entrances and vape alarms installed in school bathrooms.

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. 4.8 – PRESENTATION: DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES (DMV) ASSESSMENT REVIEW (Discussion Begins: 2:51:59)

Dr. Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer, presented an overview of a DMV operational assessment conducted with outside consultants, covering program goals, volume of services, staffing, funding, recent improvements, pain points, and recommendations.

DMV Functions:

- Vehicle titles, registrations, renewals, plate issuances, collection of fees and sales taxes on new vehicles, personal property tax collection, distribution of taxes to all taxing districts, and handicap placard issuances.
- Operations are heavily regulated by the Kansas Department of Revenue, Division of Vehicles. County Treasurers act as agents for the state and are statutorily required to administer the DMV.
- The state provides the IT systems that counties must use.

Volume (January 2024 – June 2025, 18-month study period):

- 170,000 registrations
- 72,376 new titles
- 144,000 miscellaneous services
- Approximately 386,000–387,000 total transactions in 18 months
- Approximately 258,000 transactions per year, or approximately 21,000 per month

Locations:

- Courthouse (9 windows)
- Annex (8 windows)
- Bonner Springs City Hall — pilot opened fall 2025 (1 window; staffed with 2 people; open 2 days/week for renewals only; approximately 621 people per month)

Service Channels:

- In-person (required for most transactions by state law)
- Online renewals (only certain renewals allowed by state)
- Pre-scheduled appointments
- Walk-in with virtual queue ("call-ahead seating")
- Mail and Dropbox

Staffing:

- 26 employees county-wide: 2 supervisors, leads, specialists, and assistants.

Funding:

- Annual operating cost: approximately \$2.2 million.
- Annual revenue retained locally: approximately \$1 million (primarily a \$5 fee per new registration/renewal plus minor other fees).
- Annual general fund subsidy: approximately \$1.1–\$1.4 million (property/real estate taxes funding the difference).
- The state retains approximately \$7.6 million per year from DMV transactions.

Recent Improvements:

- Addition of Bonner Springs pilot location.
- Separation of property tax window at the Annex from DMV traffic.
- Improved training and onboarding for new hires.

- No window closures during lunch hours.
- Website revamp; 311 chatbot.
- New PCI-compliant point-of-sale credit card machines.

Other Points:

- Approximately 10 walk-aways per day due to capacity constraints.
- Current queuing system commingles all transaction types (quick renewals and complex multi-vehicle titles in the same line).
- Approximately 31% no-show rate for scheduled appointments, wasting available time slots.
- High staff turnover due to the nature of front-line public-facing work.
- State IT system provides no support after 4:30 p.m. or on weekends, preventing extended or Saturday hours.
- Physical space at existing locations was not designed for DMV operations.
- Only Johnson County has been permitted by the state to use self-service kiosks.

The Chairman opened the public hearing. The following comments were received:

- **Eva Garcia Meza (Kansas City, Kansas) (Comments begin at 3:38:03)**

The Chairman closed the public hearing.

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

Adjournment: (Discussion Begins: 5:07:47)

Commissioner Kump made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Howard.

Vote: Motion carried 5-0

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 PM.

BJS