



Unified Government Clerk's Office

Bridgette D. Cobbins

Unified Government Clerk

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NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION

To the Members of the Governing Body of the
Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas:

You are hereby notified that I have called a Special Session of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be held Thursday, November 5, 2020, at 5:00 pm for an overview of the proposed Legislative Program followed by Winter Weather Report by Public Works.

Due to COVID-19 the public will be able to observe or listen to the meeting live on YouTube or UGTV; or through ZOOM by:

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Nov 5, 2020 05:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Special Session: Legislative Program (UG) & Public Works Winter Weather Report

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87345615652?pwd=UGU3Y0FDUGtsOWhiNVVpZDRUVVwdz09>

Passcode: 003775

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +13462487799,,87345615652# or +12532158782,,87345615652#

Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or 877 853 5257 (Toll Free) or 888 475 4499 (Toll Free)

Webinar ID: 873 4561 5652

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdMeJUr1Jr>

Dated this 2nd day of November 2020

ATTESTED

Bridgette D. Cobbins

Bridgette D. Cobbins

Unified Government Clerk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Alvey".

David Alvey

Mayor/CEO

CONSENT TO MEETING

We, the undersigned, being all the members of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, hereby accept 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.

Dated this 2nd day of November 2020

2021



Unified Government Legislative Program

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas
701 North 7th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

About This Legislative Program

This Legislative Program is based on the principle that Federal, State and Local Governments are all partners in the effort to make Kansas and its communities great places for people to live, work and play.

The Home Rule Amendment of the Kansas Constitution is the foundation of local government, the bedrock of our belief in independence and the benchmark of the right to determine our own destiny. The Unified Government urges the Kansas Legislature to defend and protect the Home Rule Rights and authority guaranteed in the Kansas Constitution to citizens and their local governments.

The Kansas Legislature should resist efforts to dictate policies and impose laws on cities, counties and schools because locally elected city, county and school leaders are best equipped to address issues and problems in their own communities. Local control allows citizens, working with the local officials they've elected, to decide what laws work best for their children and families.

The Kansas Legislature should renew a partnership and cooperative spirit with city, county and school leaders to address the issue of increasing property taxes caused by the shifting of costs from state government to local governments and schools. The Kansas Legislature should not continue solving its budget shortfalls by taking revenues belonging to or legally obligated to city and county governments and should reject placing more of the burden for funding education on local taxpayers.

Lobbyist's Pledge

I pledge to be ethical, honest and sincere in my dealings with legislators, staff and citizens.

I will vigorously represent the interests of the Unified Government and its citizens, but my lobbying efforts will be guided by a standard of civility and professionalism.

I will always try to remember every viewpoint deserves a fair hearing and even in the heat of debate, will be reminded that we are all working for the same goal of making Kansas and our communities better places for the citizens we represent.

Mike Taylor
Public Relations Director
Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City

2021 Priority Issues

Youth Fatality Review Board

The Unified Government sees community benefit in establishing a Youth Fatality Review Board to better find and establish techniques to reduce the number of youth deaths in the community. The Unified Government calls for changes in State law which allows counties to access their own data on child and youth deaths so that public health interventions can be discussed. By doing so, child and youth violence and fatality can be approached more appropriately as a predictable and therefore preventable event in Wyandotte County.

Alternate Construction Delivery

The Unified Government supports changes in State law which allow local governments to use design build and construction manager at risk techniques for public construction projects. These techniques have saved Wyandotte County taxpayers millions of dollars on several major public construction projects, but are difficult to use under current State laws.

Property Taxation

All property taxing authorities, including cities, counties, school districts, community colleges, State of Kansas, and special districts, should be equally transparent and have to abide by the same limitations and requirements.

Property Tax Appraisals

The Unified Government favors procedural changes to the tax appeals process that are balanced and sensible for both the taxpayer and local governments. State law should require the Board of Tax Appeals to adhere to the same rules, guidelines and accepted practices County Appraisers are required to follow. County governments should be allowed to appeal property tax decisions to District Court, the same as the taxpayer is allowed.

Medicaid Expansion

The Unified Government supports the expansion of Kansas Medicaid program which will improve access to care for those most vulnerable in Wyandotte County. It is estimated that expansion would provide insurance for 10,131 uninsured Wyandotte County residents, bring \$67.8-million in new annual healthcare spending to Wyandotte County and create hundreds of new healthcare jobs.

Eminent Domain

The Unified Government supports the use of eminent domain for economic development projects which eliminate blight and allow revitalization and rebirth in urban areas.

Public Right-of-Way

Cities must maintain their ability to regulate the public right-of-way and recover reasonable compensation for use of the right-of-way. Kansas policy should not be dictated by overreaching federal mandates. The Unified Government opposes efforts to codify in State law Federal directives limiting the power of cities.

Internet Sales Tax Collections

In order to ensure a fair playing field between Main Street businesses and online businesses, sales tax should be levied on digital goods transactions including print, audio, video, software, games and streaming services that provide those digital goods.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing

The Unified Government supports removing restrictions on Health Departments and their ability to conduct contact tracing for COVID-19. Health departments must be allowed to collect appropriate information, identify contacts of positive COVID-19 cases, and work with employers to appropriately trace and stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Tax and Finance

Motor Vehicle Taxes

The Unified Government supports changes in the tax formula used to assess motor vehicles to equalize motor vehicle taxes from county to county.

Budget Timeline

The Unified Government supports legislation to allow the adoption of local government budgets by November 30, but keep the August 25 deadline for certification of the amount of ad valorem tax revenue needed.

Property Tax Lid Election Process

The Unified Government supports repeal of the tax lid. If repeal does not occur, the Unified Government supports additional exemptions to make the law more workable and replacing the current election process with a protest petition. The current election procedures do not coordinate with local government budget timelines and are unworkable. The costs of holding an election are excessive and unnecessary.

Protecting Local Government Revenues

The Kansas Legislature should not solve its budget shortfalls by taking revenues belonging to or legally obligated to city and county governments and should reject placing more of the burden for funding vital services on local taxpayers.

Property Appraisal and Valuation

The Unified Government supports a fair and expedient appeals process for county classification and valuation disputes. This includes policies which encourage timely payment by taxpayers. The Unified Government supports property appraisals based on fair market value and opposes caps on property valuations as inequitable and unconstitutional.

Tax/Spending Mandates

The Unified Government opposes any state-imposed limits on the taxing and spending authority of cities. Local spending and taxing decisions are best left to locally elected officials and the citizens they serve. The Unified Government supports repeal of the unnecessary and unworkable property lid.

KPERS

Changes to the KPERS system should not reduce benefits promised to public employees nor impact the ability of a city/county to hire and retain qualified public employees while keeping costs reasonable for local governments.

City-County Highway Funds

The Special City-County Highway Fund is essential to maintaining local roads and should be fully funded and not diverted for other purposes. Such funding includes fees from out-of-state commercial vehicles which are now being diverted to the State General Fund contrary to state law. The Legislature should also maintain funding for the Connecting Link program.

Unfunded Mandates

The Kansas Legislature should oppose reducing the State budget by shifting work to local governments without adequate funding to pay for those increased duties. The Legislature should also not impose mandated functions, activities, or regulations on local governments without providing financial resources to meet the costs of carrying out those mandates.

Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund

The Unified Government urges the Legislature to restore its commitment to reducing city and county property taxes by following state law and honoring previously made commitments. This should include reinstating the Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction (LAVTR) program and use of casino gaming revenues to reduce property

taxes. This partnership is a far better way to influence property tax rates than artificial and arbitrary controls such as caps on assessed valuations or tax and spending lids on local governments.

Community and Economic Development

Prevailing Wage

The Unified Government supports paying prevailing wage on public works projects and economic development projects where tax incentives are given. The Unified Government strongly urges the Kansas Legislature to repeal the law banning the use of prevailing wage on public works and economic development projects.

Food Sales Tax

The Unified Government supports the lowering of the State portion of the sales tax on groceries.

Abandoned Housing

The Unified Government supports legislation which streamlines and expedites the process for local governments, neighborhood organizations and private businesses to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance and foreclosed properties to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners.

Rental Inspections and Vacant Structure Registries

The Unified Government supports giving cities the authority to require inspections of rental housing for the safety of tenants and to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners. The Unified Government supports the ability of cities to establish and operate registries for vacant structures.

Public Education

Quality schools are the foundation for the future economic success of Kansas. A public education and Community College system which helps create a well-educated and trained workforce is crucial to successful communities. The Unified Government supports a funding formula for Community Colleges that gives full funding without increasing or placing an undue burden on local property taxes.

Immigration

The Unified Government opposes State immigration enforcement measures because they place unreasonable and expensive burdens on local government.

Tourism

Wyandotte County offers destination attractions which draw millions of visitors a year to Kansas. The Unified Government urges the State of Kansas to enact a comprehensive tourism plan and increase funding of tourism promotion and marketing.

Public Transit

The Unified Government supports increased state funding of public transit. The Unified Government also supports regional partnerships to improve and expand public transit options for Kansas City area residents. The Kansas Legislature should help, not hinder, efforts to fund regional public transit in the metropolitan Kansas City area.

STAR Bonds and Economic Development

STAR Bonds have proven to be one of the most effective economic development and job creation tools in the State of Kansas. The Unified Government encourages the Kansas Legislature to continue a workable STAR Bond policy with maximum flexibility and without unnecessary restrictions. The Unified Government encourages the Kansas Legislature to work with local governments in developing innovative economic development tools.

Public Safety

Police Reform

The Unified Government supports the work of local police departments to make communities safer. Any State proposals for police reform should be focused on providing resources for local law enforcement and encouraging good police practices with decisions left to local elected officials.

Municipal Courts

The Unified Government supports local control of municipal courts and the judicial authority of municipal court judges to determine the best procedures for operating the court. Municipal courts must not be limited or restricted in bonding decisions. All fines and fees collected by the court should be retained by the local government, except for restitution payable to another party and state assessments under current state law. Municipalities should be allowed to set appropriate fees and fines.

Law Enforcement Discretion

Local government must have discretion in establishing law enforcement vehicle pursuit policies and the ability of law enforcement officers to use discretion in determining when to make an arrest.

Medical Charges

The Unified Government believes the first person responsible for the payment of medical costs should be the individuals in custody. The entity charging the crime should be responsible in the event those costs cannot be recovered from the person charged with the crime. The UG supports the pooling of resources between all State and Local law enforcement agencies.

Asset Forfeiture

The Unified Government and KCK Police Department support the use of asset forfeiture as an important component in reducing the financial gains from criminal acts while providing civil due process. All assets forfeited, or the proceeds of the from the sale of assets, should remain with the local government that seizes the property.

Emergency 911 Services

Cities and counties should maintain local control of the 911 system and the 911 tax should continue to include both wireline and wireless communications. The Unified Government supports legislation providing flexibility for local governments to utilize these funds to provide emergency services.

Juvenile Justice

The Unified Government supports changes in the way the system deals with juvenile offenders, however, the financial responsibility and burden for these changes cannot be passed down to local units of government.

Community Corrections

The Unified Government supports full funding for community-corrections programs and grants, including programs for behavioral-health initiatives. Community corrections programs for adults reduce community risk and offender recidivism, which decreases taxpayer expense.

Mental Health and Jails

The Unified Government supports full state funding for community mental health services and policies that promote treatment over incarceration of the mentally ill in county jails. The Unified Government also supports State funding when the State used County facilities.

Local Control and Police Powers

The Unified Government opposes all legislation which restricts the regulatory authority of cities to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Local Government Operations

Protecting Home Rule and Local Control

The Unified Government supports the ability of local elected officials to make decisions for their communities, particularly local tax and revenue decisions, as called for by the Home Rule Amendment of the Kansas Constitution approved by voters in 1960. The Unified Government urges the Kansas Legislature to respect the philosophy of local control and honor the Home Rule Amendment of the Kansas Constitution.

Municipal Utilities

The Unified Government supports the ability of cities to operate municipal electric, water, sewer, storm water, solid waste, telecommunications and broadband services. We further support the ability of cities to set and control the rates of municipal utilities. The Unified Government supports continued local control over power supply decisions.

Public Property and Rights-of-Way

Local government and the citizens they represent should be allowed to control and manage public lands and right-of-way as they see fit. This includes collecting franchise fees and other revenues from private companies and individuals which use public lands for personal benefit or profit.

City Elections

City elections should remain non-partisan and separate from state and national elections. The filing location for city elections should return to the City Clerk's Office.

Legislative Advocacy

The Unified Government supports current law allowing the use of state and local tax dollars to provide information and advocate on behalf of our community and its citizens.

Alternative Revenue Sources

Locally elected officials and the citizens they represent should be allowed authority to structure and implement taxes and revenues which best suit the individual community without prohibitions and restrictions imposed by the Kansas Legislature. This includes local earnings/income taxes, development excise taxes, and other local taxes and fees now prohibited by state law.

Unfunded Mandates

The Unified Government believes the State Legislature should not impose mandated functions, activities, or regulations on local governments without providing financial resources to meet the costs of carrying out those mandates.

Publications and Notices

The undeniable right of the public to be informed about the actions of its government should not be compromised. At the same time, government officials have a responsibility to ensure the tax money required to keep citizens informed through legal notices and publications is spent in an effective and efficient way.

Open Meetings and Open Records

The Unified Government believes openness in government is essential to building public confidence. Open meetings and records laws should balance the public's right to know with the necessity of protecting private individuals and the ability of public agencies to conduct the essential business of the public. All levels of government should be subject to the same open meetings and open records requirements.

Public Health and Environment

Local Health Department Funding

The Unified Government supports increasing funding for local public health to protect the health of Wyandotte County residents. The State of Kansas ranks near the bottom nationally for state support for local public health; a 2017 study conducted by Trust for America's Health, ranks Kansas 44th for state support to public health. State aid to local health departments has remained unchanged since 1995.

Mental Health and Jails

The Unified Government supports allocating additional resources for behavioral health programs. Funds should be allocated for community mental health centers and additional bed space for psychiatric patients to reduce the number of people with behavioral or substance abuse issues who are inappropriately incarcerated in county jails.

T21 Policy

The Unified Government supports raising the age of legal access for the sale of tobacco products to persons 21 years of age and older across the State of Kansas. While all cities in Wyandotte County now have T21 ordinances, the passing of a statewide T21 law would allow for greater coordination and strengthening of enforcement.

Expedited Partner Therapy

The Unified Government supports legislation explicitly allowing and providing guidelines for Expedited Partner Therapy in the case of sexually transmitted infections. EPT is the clinical practice of treating sex partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia by providing prescriptions or medications to the patient to take to their partner without a health care provider first examining the partner. Kansas is one of only six states which do not explicitly allow EPT.

Serving Senior Populations and Area Agency on Aging Issues

The Unified Government supports legislation to provide improved support for aging populations in local communities, including full funding of Home and Community Based Services for the Frail Elderly waiver; funding Access to Core Services; and legislation to allow unused prescription drugs from nursing homes, hospice and other health care agencies to be distributed for use by medically indigent seniors.

University of Kansas Medical Center and Hospital

The Unified Government recognizes the unique and vital role played by the University of Kansas Medical Center and University of Kansas Hospital and strongly supports efforts to create and promote the region as a nationally recognized center for life sciences, cancer research and treatment. The Unified Government supports actions and efforts which will increase the presence and impact of both institutions in Wyandotte County.

Energy Efficiency

The Unified Government supports energy efficiency and the development of a statewide energy policy which enables local governments to act individually or in cooperation with others to address energy efficiency. Funding for the Efficiency Kansas program which assists homeowners in improving their homes should be restored.

Energy and Environmental Mandates

The Unified Government opposes federal and state mandates which regulate the operations of municipal electric, water, solid waste, storm water, telecommunications and broadband utility services which do not come with adequate funding to address the mandate.

Stormwater Management

The Unified Government endorses regional and cooperative solutions to stormwater quality and quantity challenges and encourages the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency to work with cities and provide technical support in the implementation of reasonable regulations related to stormwater management.