

**PUBLIC WORKS AND SAFETY
STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES
Monday, September 27, 2021**

The meeting of the Public Works and Safety Standing Committee was held on Monday, September 27, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., via Zoom or on-site. The following members were present: Commissioner Bynum, Chairman; Commissioners McKiernan (substituting for Commissioner Markley), Ramirez, Kane, and Philbrook. Commissioner Markley was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: Alan Howze, Melissa Sieben, and Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrators; Misty Brown, Chief Counsel; Patrick Waters, Deputy Chief Counsel; James Bain, Assistant Counsel; Casey Meyer and Susan Alig, Senior Attorneys; Kathleen VonAchen, Chief Financial Officer; Kris Finger, Water Pollution Control/Engineering; Don Ash, Sheriff; Kelly Herron, Assistant Police Chief; Carol Godsil, Deputy UG Clerk; and Alley Porter, Commission Liaison.

Chairman Bynum said before I call our meeting to order, I want to announce that due to COVID-19, some committee members, staff and public are attending remotely as well as some on site. All participants should mute speakers when not speaking to avoid background noise.

During our meeting, make sure you announce yourself by name and title when you speak so the public knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and it's also current guidance from our Kansas Attorney General.

The public is allowed to participate by Zoom or submit comments by email prior to the meeting and those comments are included in our record of the meeting. The public may also indicate their intent to provide remote public comment by contacting our Clerk's Office by 5 p.m., the Thursday prior the meeting. The public will also have an opportunity to provide brief comments, either by phone or Zoom from the lobby of our municipal office building.

Chairman Bynum called the meeting to order. Thank you to Commissioner Brian McKiernan for joining us this evening as Commissioner Markley is absent. Roll call was taken, and all members were present as shown above.

Chairman Bynum said, we do not have any revisions to our agenda tonight, and we also do not have any minutes to approve, so that does take us to our Committee Agenda. I will pause briefly, there is some background noise. I cannot identify where it is from, so I would just ask all to mute unless you are speaking, please.

Committee Agenda:

Item No. 1 – 211030...RESOLUTION: BISHOP WARD HIGH SCHOOL – SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Synopsis: A resolution approving an agreement with Bishop Ward High School for the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department to provide a School Resource Officer (SRO), submitted by Casey Meyer, Senior Attorney.

Casey Meyer, Senior Attorney, said, this agreement is identical to the two other SRO agreements, which were approved by full commission earlier this month. It's an agreement which provides the provision of one school resource officer to Bishop Ward High School from the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department. The term is for ten years, and we have a graduated reimbursement schedule. Included in the agreement which would include a \$30,000 reimbursement back to the Unified Government for school year 2021 through 2022. The next year from 2022 through 2023 is \$33,000. The next year from 2023 to 2024 is \$36,000, and then for the school years 2024 through the term of the agreement will be based off of the officer's base salary plus the cost of living increases which will be equal to the FOP for memorandum of understanding. So, that is identical to both the other SRO agreements between Piper and Turner.

Chairman Bynum asked, are there questions from the committee?

Commissioner Kane said, some of the brightest minds graduated from that school.

Action: **Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve as submitted.**

Chairman Bynum asked, Madam Clerk, were there any comments from the public? **Carol Godsil, Deputy UG Clerk**, said, no comments were received.

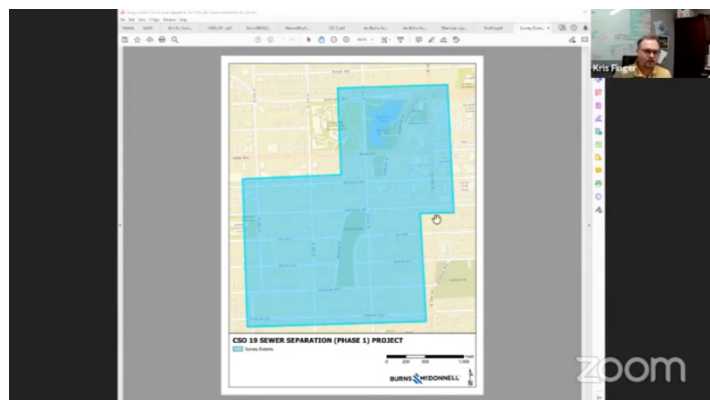
Chairman Bynum asked, and is there anyone online that you can see that wants to make a comment? **Ms. Godsil** said, there are no hands raised.

Roll call was taken and there were six “Ayes,” Groneman, Philbrook, Kane, Ramirez, McKiernan, Bynum.

Item No. 2 – 211029...RESOLUTION: CSO 19 SEWER SEPARATION (PHASE 1) CMIP – 6130

Synopsis: A resolution declaring CSO 19 Sewer Separation (Phase 1), CMIP 6130, to be a necessary and valid improvement project, and authorizing a survey of land for said project, submitted by James Bain, Assistant Counsel.

James Bain, Assistant Counsel, said, this resolution is the first step in the property acquisition process for Public Works projects. When the commission deems the project necessary, we can get survey and find out what property needs to be acquired and begin that process. This project is sewer separation south of Big Eleven Lake, also Big Eleven Lake enhancements, including some stormwater storage. Kris Finger, from Water Pollution Control, I think has a map to share and explain more about the project.



Kris Finger, Water Pollution Control Project Engineer, said, so this is the basic outline of the area that we’re looking to do this initial project in. As James mentioned, we’re looking to do sewer separation as a base project for our consent decree to test out some methods that we’re looking to

try for this in future projects. This will include using Big Eleven Lake for some stormwater detention during peak flow events. When we receive rain, we'll bypass some of the stormwater flow to Big Eleven Lake instead of sending it directly into the sewer first. Ultimately, it'll slowly discharge back into the system after the rain is complete. Are there any questions for me?

Chairman Bynum asked, are there questions for Mr. Finger?

Commissioner Philbrook said, so, Mr. Finger, at the risk of sounding ignorant—which is not a problem for me, I can do that—explain to the public why you want to separate this out; what the problem is.

Mr. Finger said, this area around Big Eleven Lake is part of our combined sewer service area, so both stormwater and sanitary sewer have to share the same pipe during storm events. When this happens, our pipes get overwhelmed with the amount of flow coming into them from the rainfall, thus causing us to have discharges potentially. It's different places around the combined sewer system into ponds, creeks, things of that nature. This, ultimately, will look to capture some of that stormwater upstream of those discharges, preventing them before sending it back into the system to get down to the treatment plant to be treated.

Commissioner Philbrook asked, so did I hear you say that that water would be diverted to Big Eleven Lake?

Mr. Finger said, the stormwater, yes. We'll be installing a separate storm sewer system that would get the water to Big Eleven for storage before getting discharged from Big Eleven into the combined sewer system.

Commissioner Philbrook asked, so, with more water going into there, will it help keep the lake in better condition so it doesn't get the build-up of the anaerobic bacteria that makes everything turn green and all that jazz.

Mr. Finger said, it should help turn that over. We will be evaluating that as part of the design process to ensure everything stays living throughout that turnover of the water and environment of that pond during wet weather events.

Commissioner Philbrook asked, so if there's fish in there, they might be happier? **Mr. Finger** said, yes. Yes, they'll be much happier.

Commissioner Philbrook said, okay. I just wanted some clarification for the public. Thank you so much.

Commissioner McKiernan said, Mr. Finger, on the resolution, it says that it is found and determined necessary that certain lands be condemned for public use, providing the land necessary for the improvements that you've described. Give me an idea about the lands that could potentially be condemned for public use and the eminent domain procedure used.

Mr. Finger said, well, James will back me up here, but that's just the basic language, I believe, that's in all of our resolutions of survey. I don't think, at this point, we're looking to go outside of public right-of-way or land that we own for any nature of doing these improvements at this time. There's no planned improvements outside of anything we own. It's just part of the general verbiage that's put into that resolution.

Commissioner McKiernan said, but if there were eventually determined that land outside of the public right-of-way needed to be obtained for the purpose of the combined sewer separation, this resolution would preauthorize eminent domain. Is that correct?

Mr. Bain said, if we needed to file court action, we would have to come back before the commission again. This authorizes the survey, so we know what we're getting into. Once we do our own appraisals of property, we make offers to purchase property from residents or businesses, and once all those efforts fail is when we come back to the commission and ask for permission to file a court action.

Mr. Finger said, and, James, if I'm not correct, correct me, that's through an ordinance, I believe, is that correct, that gives us the right to do that combination proceeding?

Mr. Bain said, well, state statute outlines the number of days and the coming back to the commission twice prior to filing that court action, yes.

Mr. Finger said, so you're authorizing us just mostly to get out there and survey and try to plan the project out. You will have another chance to review anything if we were to have to go to combination, basically.

Commissioner McKiernan said, you just clarified two very important things for me. First of all, that we're authorizing the survey that is the basis for the later improvements, and that at the moment, all of the planned separation improvements are directed to the existing public right-of-way. Is that correct? **Mr. Finger** said, or publicly owned lands, yes.

Commissioner McKiernan said, fair enough. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Ramirez said, my comments will be very, very brief because and thank you, Commissioner McKiernan, for your questions. I had the exact same thoughts and wanted to make sure that the community out there knew because, you know, eminent domain can be a big dirty word of what we do. So, I just wanted to make sure that the community knew that it wasn't—we're not coming for your property unless it's the last thing that's needed. We will do our job within the boundaries of our public land and public right-of-ways. So, thank you, Commissioner McKiernan, for those. I had the exact same questions and thoughts.

Chairman Bynum said, a comment for either James Bain or Mr. Finger. I noticed the packet contemplates the permanent closure of the road, Waterway, directly east of the lake. Do we need to have more conversation about that right at the moment or is that a final decision? I do understand it, but I think that's another thing of interest.

Mr. Finger said, so, if I could address that real fast. We do plan on having some public meetings as part of our outreach through the design process. So, we'll be getting public input. If the public input and design mesh and it works out that we take that, then we will utilize that space, but otherwise, our design will go in some other direction.

Chairman Bynum asked, other questions or comments from anyone? Any comments from the public? **Carol Godsfil, Deputy UG Clerk**, said, no comments were received.

Chairman Bynum asked, and do you see anyone present that would like to speak? **Ms. Godsfil** said, there are no hands up in the attendees list.

Action: Commissioner Ramirez made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Philbrook, to approve as submitted. Roll call was taken and there were six “Ayes,” Groneman, Philbrook, Kane, Ramirez, McKiernan, Bynum.

Item No. 3 – 211027...UPDATE: CORDICO WELLNESS APPLICATION

Synopsis: Update on CORDICO, a wellness application that Public Safety has implemented, submitted by Don Ash, Sheriff; Michael Callahan, Fire Chief; and Karl Oakman, Chief of Police. For information only.

Chairman Bynum said, I do not see Fire represented. **Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator**, said, Madam Chair, I just spoke with Chief Callahan. There was a mix-up in their schedule. So, they may not be joining us this evening.

Don Ash, Sheriff, said, this has been an initiative that we’ve been interested in for a long time, and it is finally coming to fruition. We have all of the appropriate contracts and everything in place, and we’ve gotten our people, trained our point lead people, and we have been busy about educating our entire workforce about the app. The CORDICO wellness app is really state-of-the-art technology that puts the ability to have resources literally in the palm of your hand with your smartphone.

The app is available to all current employees, sworn and civilian, in the Sheriff’s Office, and also to their spouses, significant others, their family members, as well as all of our retirees, some of who still deal with some post traumatic stress issues from time to time. So, at the present time, we rolled it out maybe about three weeks ago now or so. It took us a couple of weeks to get around to every shift and every unit and section in the agency to educate and inform people and then assist them in downloading the app. We have, as of this afternoon, there have been 81 downloads and they have been accessed almost 400 times. So, obviously, people are accessing the app multiple times.

The feedback has been very positive. Feedback coming to our leadership team that’s worked on this, as well as our—we drew in all of our peer support team members to get them edified and educated so that they, then, would be able to help us enlist and help people download the app.

Comments have been very positive. The only criticism, if you will, or suggestion—it really wasn't a criticism, really—the suggestion that a couple of folks noted that there was not much about financial literacy on the app. So, I think that's a good thing that people are asking about that and wanting that because certainly people's personal finances contribute to just some of your day in and day out stress so, we have worked to correct that issue. We've created a folder on the Sheriff's Office Y Drive where all of our employees have access to that and they can access other resources.

So, we are going to—I am going to author a letter. We are going to put together a letter that we're going to mail out to each employee's home address so it can make the information—it's kind of like your kids in school. You're not sure the information from the teacher gets home to you as a parent, so we've got the same issue, we think, with some of our employees. We want to make sure that information is getting home to significant others and children and so forth. So, we're going to do that. We're going to follow up with some other internal email announcements and making the app available with simple links so people can get to it and download it. So far, for no further in than we are, we think we're tracking along, in really good shape, and people are reporting to our peer support team and our leadership team that they have found the resources to be great and very helpful.

Kelly Herron, Assistant Police Chief, said, just to touch with Sheriff Ash. I think there's been good collaboration between us, the Sheriff's Department, and Fire Department. They've all been talking about the rollout with all three of us and it's pretty consistent with what the Sheriff talked about with the rollout. I know it was important for us, I think, when we were talking about the rollout to educate family, the officers' families.

Along the same lines, we're sending out letters to all the officers' homes so that the families can read what it's about, the education piece, so that we educate that, hey, this isn't just for work, it's also for at home, and the letter will include download instructions. Chief Oakman has also emailed the department as a whole in support of the app and about officers' mental health. We've hit roll calls and posters and materials to get this item out.

So, a lot of it's just a repeat of what the Sheriff's talked about. We're doing the same thing, and I'm pretty sure if Fire was here, they would be saying the same thing because the three organizations have worked close together in this rollout. So, I don't really have anything else to add other than what the Sheriff talked about and then those bullet points.

Chairman Bynum asked, questions from our committee members? It sounds like a wonderful program.

Commissioner Philbrook said, I have a real quick question. So, this app is strictly for our law enforcement and our fire. Is that correct?

Assistant Chief Herron said, families of law enforcement, they can use it.

Commissioner Philbrook said, okay because I was thinking maybe—I'm in a high stress job, maybe I could use some help.

Commissioner Kane said, it's a long time coming. We appreciate what you guys do day in and day out, every day, all day; all night, for that matter. It is something that was much needed and I'm glad we got it going. Thank you very much.

Chairman Bynum said, that is an appreciated comment. This is not a voting item.

Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator, said, just to follow up on Commissioner Philbrook's question and for those listening. There is an Employee Assistance Program that is available through the UG health benefits that is available to all employees regardless of which area of the UG they work in and that is specifically designed to provide confidential and support for people who are under stress or for any number of different reasons. That's something that is available to all employees.

As you heard tonight, CORDICO is really geared toward the specific needs of law enforcement and public safety and the specific stresses that they're under, but we do recognize particularly in the age of the last 18 months with COVID, the significant stress that this has placed on employees across the organization and want to make sure that folks who are listening know that support is there through the Employee Assistance Program for all employees.

Commissioner Philbrook said, so, access to that is—we get on which website, or which part to access that? We go to the Wellness Clinic? Where do we go?

Renee Ramirez, Director of Human Resources, said, as part of the Employee Assistance Program, it is with New Directions Behavioral Health. I do want to clarify, it is through—we have cards, we have posters all over the UG. We do have a special code that employees would have to use to access certain benefits through there.

I do want to make one point of clarification with the Employee Assistance Program. That program is available to all employees and those members that are in their household. So, they don't actually have to be on our health plan to be able to access the benefits of the Employee Assistance Program. Each employee has up to eight sessions that they—per cause—that they can contact the Employee Assistance Program. I do want to make sure it is very clear that any employee who is contacting the Employee Assistance Program on a voluntary basis, it is confidential. They do not report back to the Unified Government that the employee has contacted the EAP.

Chairman Bynum said, that is also very helpful information, and it's always a good time to remind our employees that help is available.

Adjourn:

Chairman Bynum adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

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