

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in a Special Meeting, Thursday, February 2, 2023, with eleven members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District via online; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO, presiding. The following officials were also in attendance: Cheryl Harrison-Lee, Interim County Administrator; Alan Howze and Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator's; Misty Brown, Chief Legal Counsel; Jeff Conway, Assistant Counsel; Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk; Monica Sparks, Deputy Unified Government Clerk; Dr. Mildred Edwards, Chief of Staff in Mayor's Office; Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works; LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor in Mayor's Office; and Alley Porter, Commission Liaison.

Mayor Garner said before I call this meeting to order, I want to announce that some commissioners, staff and public are attending remotely via Zoom, by phone, or on-site. All participants joining by phone should mute their phones when not speaking to avoid any background noise. During the meeting, please make sure that you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is observing knows who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General Office.

MAYOR GARNER called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum, Garner.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format in the Commission Chambers, lobby level, of the Municipal Office Building on Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. regarding Unified Government Rules and Procedures.

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.

COMMISSIONERS' AGENDA

Item No. 1 – 212253...DISCUSSION: PROPOSED CHANGES TO RULES AND PROCEDURES

Synopsis: A discussion of proposed changes to the Unified Government Commission Rules and Procedures, submitted by Commissioners Ramirez, Markley, Davis, Johnson, and Stites.

Mayor Garner said this evening we have one item on the agenda. The item is under the Commissioner's Agenda and is discussion of a proposed change to the Unified Government Commission's Rules and Procedures. I'll open the floor to the Commission for discussion.

Commissioner Markley said before us, in the packet, are red lines of the Rules and Procedures we've been discussing since December and then, additionally, in light of changes to the standing committees during the past week or as of last Friday, some additional changes for consideration related to standing committee formatting and the changes allowed in the membership of those groups. They are in the packet. You can pull them up on your screen certainly and I am available for any questions as are Commissioner Davis and Commission Ramirez.

Commissioner Bynum said I just wanted to state to the full commission that the item voted on last week to send back to standing committee for review and recommendation should be brought to Administration & Human Services on February 13th. That was the direction the Commission gave at the meeting last week and I believe that full agenda should be published tomorrow. I just

wanted to let the Commission know that item should be taken up as an agenda item at Administration & Human Services on the 13th.

Commissioner Davis said can we put the language on the screen just so the public and those that are watching are aware? Thank you all so much. I want to ask Chief Counsel just to provide some guidance here. Section 205 in this proposal does strike out H and H states that the Neighborhood & Community Development Committee shall include at least one voting member from each of the other three standing committees. It is my understanding, Chief Counsel, that is in the Charter and, therefore, we would have to let that stand. Could you just provide some counsel on that?

Misty Brown, Chief Counsel, said yes, Commissioner, that's true. When I received these red lines yesterday, I took a look at them. I did note that H is in the Charter and that would not be something that could be amended in this way. That would require a Charter amendment if one was going to specify those differences to Neighborhood & Community Development.

Commissioner Davis said awesome. I would be perfectly fine with leaving that—or taking away that strikeout and leaving that language in there for resolution for staff to bring back to us for the 7:00 commission meeting, but those are my comments.

Commissioner Bynum said 205-h is not the one that's showing on the screen right now. Section 205-h, that you're referencing, right Commissioner, states currently the Neighborhood & Community Development Standing Committee shall include at least one voting member from each of the other three standing committees and so you are saying—does that language also exist in the Charter somewhere? **Commissioner Davis** was inaudible. **Commissioner Bynum** said okay and, therefore, you wouldn't recommend this change. You would send that to the Charter Review Committee or wherever you think we agree it should go. So, meanwhile, because it creates a dilemma for us the way it stands, I had offered to the Mayor to solve the current problem that we have by serving on Public Works & Safety, Administration & Human Services, which meet on the same night as well as also becoming a member of Neighborhood & Community Development that meets on a different night. That would put us in compliance with 205-h just for the record.

Mayor Garner said in that regard I'm going to have Dr. Edwards come to the podium. I believe there was some questions that may have arisen out of how my office moved to get to the point of

reassigning individuals, commissioners, to standing committees this year and that really arose out of—and the Dr. did a good job of recognizing that actually we were operating out of compliance with our ordinance. So, that action was taken and recommended to me to take a corrective action and I'll let Dr. Edwards speak to that.

Dr. Mildred Edwards, Chief of Staff in Mayor's Office, said we did take a look at the ordinance to make certain that we were following the placement and the appointments to the standing committees as designated. So, given that, and realizing that we weren't in compliance with regard to Item H, the Mayor then made the decision to take a look at reassigning those committees to make sure that we can bring them into order. We had conversations with both of our at-large commissioners to talk about the positives and negatives of doing that and as Commissioner Bynum has noted, she did recommend that she take the bulk of the responsibility rather than shifting all of the commissioners to having more meetings per month, that she be the representative that fulfills all of those.

We proposed a recommendation to you all that would impact everyone equally and I guess tonight we're here to discuss that or what else would you need me to report on? How we arrived at that and now that we are there we know that needs to be addressed. The Mayor has spoken with me and is willing to let this be an item that is taken up by the Chairs, not only the Chairs of the committees that are designated by the ordinance, being the at-large commissioners, but their appointees who were not addressed in this decision-making. So, thinking about the four of them getting together and working with the remainder of the Board to make recommendations through the Administration Committee, that is the recommendation.

Mayor Garner said that came about in speaking with Commissioner Burroughs and Commissioner Bynum. Part of that was that we spoke to Chief Counsel about the actual Chairs that had been appointed by the standing—the actual at-large commissioners who are the actual Chairs. Our concern was, and the concern with Legal Counsel, is that we may have erred in not involving both Commissioner Markley and Commissioner McKiernan in that discussion. Our belief was that because the policy was not being followed and that we were operating out of compliance, that our only obligation was to talk to the actual Chairs of the standing committee.

In speaking with Legal, that question was raised and so in speaking with Ms. Bynum and Mr. Burroughs, the commissioners, we agreed to allow them to bring us in compliance with ordinance by talking to the full commission and allowing the full commission to choose who they would like to serve on the standing committees in a way that would bring the standing committees into full compliance with the current ordinance as it is written. So, that was my concession to the Commission. Commissioner Bynum agreed to take that on and take that item and that action and so that's how we arrived at this point and I would sign off on that and bless it, as I'm supposed to do as the Mayor, once the Commission arrived at who they decided they would like to have on the various four standing committees.

Commissioner Davis said the point of—or at least it was my intention in working with the other commissioners to call this meeting is to give staff direction to come back to full commission at 7:00 with legislation that we could adopt tonight. Ms. Harrison-Lee, what direction would you need and how would you like to go about getting consensus from the governing body so that you can direct staff to put something before us. Then, I do have a question about the Administrator's Agenda as well, but I want to first give you that question.

Cheryl Harrison-Lee, Interim County Administrator, said as Counsel has indicated, we have the red line that was provided yesterday with the agenda so I would want to know of the items you have here which items you'd like us to look at and prepare for you for 7:00 p.m. **Commissioner Davis** said should we do a straw vote or what would be helpful just so we can get things going? **Ms. Harrison-Lee** said let me make sure I understand what you have. With the items you have here that are red line, with the exception of item H, which I understand from Counsel needs a Charter amendment, is the proposal to have this prepared—**Commissioner Davis** said for 7:00 p.m. **Ms. Harrison-Lee** said so, yeah, I would say much like we've done with the budget presentations, when you've directed staff, kind of a straw—**Commissioner Davis** said just a straw poll, so should we—**Ms. Harrison-Lee** said so I understand what the will of the governing body is. **Commissioner Davis** said okay, would you like to just—should we do that now or what would we—okay, all of us that are in favor can raise our hands if we want this to go to full commission or...

Ms. Brown said my understanding, from what I'm hearing, is that you're going to ask for a straw poll to direct the changes to the Rules and Procedure be brought forward tonight. I have previously opined that, yes, the Rules and Procedures can be suspended and various—you know these are the Rules and Procedure for the Commission, they can be suspended and actions can be taken. I've also previously opined and recommended that changes to the Rules and Procedures be done in a way to allow a meaningful review and drafting by the Legal Department. So, if directed to do this tonight, I will do it, but I am going to say, on the record, what my previous recommendation was.

Commissioner Markley said can I first—I just want to clarify what Dr. Edwards and what the Mayor brought forward tonight because we're all sort of in standing committee limbo right now and what I think I'm hearing is that the standing committee Chairs, all four of us, are supposed to sit down and come up with a plan. I guess my question is, where does that put us? I think on Monday there's a standing committee that I might have been assigned to, but maybe now I'm not. I guess what I'm hoping is that we're all going to stay on our same standing committees until that recommendation comes forward.

Mayor Garner said that is correct and apologies that information gets out to you in a timely manner, but yes, there's nothing that has changed at this point until the Chairs, all four of you, get together and you make a determination on how best to assign individual commissioners to the standing committees at your choosing. The only ask that I have in helping me with that is to make sure that we are in compliance with the current ordinance that we were out of compliance with for the entirety of 2022, as Dr. Edwards has stated, in moving forward and then I will sign off on that and codify that to make it official.

Commissioner Markley said then in light of that, because we had an immediate problem we were trying to deal with that has been alleviated and in light of Commissioner Bynum letting us know that the rule that we were discussing previously from December is going on the Administration & Human Services Standing Committee agenda. In light of Ms. Brown's comments, I guess I'm thinking perhaps we just send this whole package to that standing committee since there's a timeliness issue to deal with the standing committee item tonight. That gives staff time to review and we'll put it all through the same process at one time through that standing committee agenda item. That would be my recommendation.

Commissioner Townsend asked, is that a motion? **Commissioner Markley** said we can't make a motion here.

Ms. Brown said I would just like to add one other piece and that is this is something that we have talked about I think up here and privately as well. Mayor, when I say privately, I want to be very clear for KOMA purposes, me, the Mayor, and the Administrator, that there are numerous provisions in our Rules and Procedures that are conflicting, confusing and need review. It's been 25 years since they've been looked at and my assurances that I received is that this is going to be a process that's going to be looked at. I would formally encourage a complete review of our Rules and Procedures to ensure that these conflicts and confusing points are addressed. I just wanted to note that and I think that's it.

Mayor Garner said I believe that Commissioner Burroughs has taken up that task with a task force that is comprised of him Chairing it and numerous commissioners to look at the charter ordinances and all its resolutions to make sure they reflect the values of our community today and that they are in alliance without—or as many conflicts that we begin to identify and so Commissioner Burroughs has expressed here, and to me personally, that he is doing that in a very thoughtful and intentional manner. That work continues to be ongoing with several of the commissioners that are with us here tonight.

Commissioner Davis said let me ask this question. Chief Counsel, currently under our Rules and Procedures the Mayor has the ultimate authority over the agenda meaning he can basically—this is true for both the Commission and for standing committees, if the Mayor changes his mind and says I don't want any changes to the Rules and Procedures, I will not put it on the agenda for AHS, what does that mean for the resolution that was passed on January 26th? **Ms. Brown** asked, what resolution? Could you—I'm sorry, I'm drawing a blank. **Commissioner Davis** said yeah, the resolution that we all voted—the motion that we all made to direct conversations about the Rules and Procedures to Administration & Human Services. If the Mayor changes his mind and just says I don't want to do that, what does that do to that resolution? **Ms. Brown** said because this matter was in front of the Commission on the 26th and because the Commission as a whole voted to send this item back to Administration & Human Services, that matter must go to Administration

& Human Services and be discussed. After that, there is a question that, yes, the Mayor does control the agenda at the full commission meeting and without a suspension to a rule of procedure at that time, it could be blocked from coming forward. It could come forward and it could also be vetoed.

Commissioner Davis said okay, so I want my colleagues again to think about what we are doing. If we try to go through that process, number one going through the charter review process, there's been a whole year to get one item before us that just hasn't happened, but do we want to try, with a search for a County Administrator happening as well, do we want to try and go through that process as well in addition to reviewing our Rules and Procedures or should we, as I proposed earlier, direct staff to draw up this language formalizing in a resolution and vote on it tonight so we have some assurance going forward that this will not happen again?

I would plead with my colleagues to take this language and let's formalize it tonight so that we can get some leverage here. Right now, all we have is the word and words have been broken multiple times in the dais. Mayor, Mayor—**Mayor Garner** said if we could call order. **Commissioner Davis** said so, as I'm saying, I plead with my colleagues, let's not—there's a possibility that the Mayor changes his mind which means nothing progresses forward.

Mayor Garner said let me speak to that. If we could just control our signs. It's okay if you put them on the seats. That's at the request of our Chief Counsel.

For those of you that don't know me, I've worked on the Housing Authority Board, the Community College Board, the Ad-Hoc Group Against Crime, 32 years as a Police Officer rising through the ranks to Deputy Chief, so I was an employee here at the Unified Government. I was also appointed by the Governor of Kansas as a community organizer, KAAAC Commissioner. I've had a lot of interactions with people in this community. My resume, my background speaks for itself.

Let me speak frankly about the insinuation that I won't keep my word. That is a challenge to my integrity. If I say I'm going to do something, I do it. Just like I have promised many of the people in this community that voted for me that said they wanted change and I've kept my word. I have not backed down and that's where I'm at. I've kept my word, so if I say it, I mean it. I said what I said and I mean it and that's a commitment, not to you Commissioner Davis, but to this

entire Commission, to the staff, and to this community. My word has always been bond and that's why people trust me.

I just want to make it clear, Commissioner Davis, to you tonight in front of everybody for the record, there's a lot of rhetoric that has been going on and I would like to say for the record, if you read what was put out that Dr. Edwards talked about, there was an option there for you to contact me, my office, to call if there were any questions or concerns from any commissioners. I did get a response from Commissioner Johnson who had some concerns and last year when we were making these standing committee assignments several commissioners asked for changes and for preference on certain standing committees, including you Commissioner Davis, and I honored that.

As the Mayor/CEO of this town, I cannot ignore the fact that we have got, and I can't say this enough and I've said it all year, I started out this campaign with an olive branch to every commissioner, to staff, and to this community; this has never been about me, it will never be about me, I'm not here for me because I don't have to be here. I'm here for the people. I'm here because I care about this community and I want better. I'm sure this is all of you and it hurts me to hear these types of things going on that continues to create a cloud over our community with misinformation, sometimes lies, not just about me, but several of us. So, Commissioner Davis, you could have called and gotten clarity and, yes, I did set your Commission committee assignments to the side because I expected, and that was my fault, I assumed you would call just like you did last year and say, Mayor, I'd like to know what's going on with the community assignments.

But, what you've proved to me and what you've proven to me for most of the year is that you do not want to work or meet with me and so that proved that once again and instead of calling me and being a professional and showing some level of professional maturity, what I got was a media blitz that caused a chaotic cloud to continue over this county. That was unnecessary, it was uncalled for and accusations were thrown at me that are totally not true that do not reflect the person I've been, who I am, or who I ever will be. I have always been somebody that is a collaborator and I say that respectfully to you because throughout the year I've offered you plenty of opportunities to meet with me. You have chosen not to.

I've heard that you felt like your constituents, 20,000 of them, didn't have a voice. Well, some of those constituents voted for me too and if you're not working with me, you're depriving

those constituents that we both have of leadership that is failing to work together in a way that can get the job of the people done.

Throughout the year, you've admittedly scrutinized me. I don't know why. That's between you and God. **Someone** said point of order. **Mayor Garner** said, Commissioner, I'm running this meeting. Commissioner, I'm going to ask for order from everyone. Please be respectful. So, I say that respectfully, is that from day one I have done nothing to you but show you love, offer you help, assistance, in every way possible. So, what I did was to try and get you back to the table to say let's talk and let's find out how we can work together because people have told me, Mayor, go above and beyond again because enough is enough.

This is African American History Month. You've got two black men that are giving the perception to a majority of minority community that we can't work together and that is not true. We can, we must. I don't care who gets the win in this. It doesn't matter to me because if we succeed, this community succeeds. We have to work together. Please hold your applause. We have to work together for the good of Wyandotte County.

So, we've met before and we've gotten nowhere and so I say to you again, those standing committee assignments were not deprived of you. You are not going to be kept off any standing committees. That's not the goal and the intention. The goal and intention was to say, hey, what do I do to get Commissioner Davis back to the table so we can have a conversation, so we can have a real conversation, not about throwing shade or hate or scrutinizing each other openly, but how do we have a conversation to do the things that this community wants us to do. Lower their taxes, work on BPU, find affordable housing, economic development, do things for the disenfranchised, look at diversity and racism within this organization, women and minority businesses, infrastructure, youth programs, homelessness, poverty, food deserts; those are the things they want us to work on. I have not met one resident that has said their top priority was for anybody in this Unified Government to find a way to curtail the powers of the Mayor unlike has never happened before.

So, my challenge, again to you and I dare you, please come to the table, and any of you, we've sent out invitations again. I've sent them all out through the (inaudible). Please work with me. We have to do this. Whatever differences we have, we have to put them aside. Our success is going to be the success of this community and they want us to work together. I don't know any other way that I can say that.

I have the utmost respect for you, I know you're capable, I know we can get a lot done together and I challenge you to come to the table and work with me on the things that matter. Are we going to agree on everything, no, I don't expect us to. I know you care, I care, let's show this community that we care enough to put whatever differences that we may have—I don't have any, because I've been asking you to meet with me. But if there are differences there, let's work them out as men, as professionals, as elected leaders of this town and let's put the work and the needs of this community above ourselves. I'm willing to do it and if I wronged you in any way, please let me know so we can have that discussion and move forward in a way that's positive and so there's no more shade, there's no more undermining, there's no more obstructing, there's no more accusations or any insinuations in those things. I don't do that to you.

From the first day I met you I was impressed with you. For those who don't know, he started on my campaign and I supported you and I stood by you and I wanted you to be successful. That desire for you has not changed. I want you to be successful because your success is going to be the all of our success. I don't want any more confusion, any more divisiveness because it is unhealthy to getting the work done for the people of Wyandotte County and they've told me, Mayor, you all have got to do better and this community deserves better than what they've been seeing and I don't want Wyandotte County to become the mockery of the metro because we cannot get along and work for the common good of this community. So, I say that respectfully.

I know that Commissioner Markley has mentioned about moving some things forward. I share in that along with Commissioner Bynum and Commissioner Burroughs who also agreed, please make sure that Commissioner Davis is assigned a committee of his choosing and then, Commissioner Davis, I challenge you to work with me in those standing committees and in this full commission and outside these walls on behalf of the people so we can get good things done. Wyandotte County has so much potential to be great. Let's make that happen.

Commissioner Townsend said I made the motion to have this issue sent to the standing committee, so I believe when I made the motion and it was approved by my colleagues, I did so with the understanding that the Mayor would bring it back. I had that same confidence. Let me also say that working with all of us, we will have different opinions about things so it is not working against the Mayor if each of us has a different opinion. We all were sworn to uphold the Constitution. No one person has all right or all wrong, so in working together there will be

differences in the vote. I just hope people realize that. So I would endorse, if we can't make a motion, to send this back, have the AHS committee look at it. I'm glad Commissioner Davis will be put on committees of his choosing and to move on in that way. So, I ask Counsel, Mayor, what's the best way to move on with this?

Mayor Garner said, Commissioner, we will take a straw poll. I believe we have a few other commissioners who want to make comments. In the interest of time, I'm going to allow for that. I would like to say that I do agree with you and I'd like for the public to know, none of us are perfect. All of us are human. We make mistakes, we do, hopefully we learn from those and we get better. Failure is how you learn and that's how you get better. I believe that when one of us falls or when one of us don't make mistakes, it's our opportunity and not just your elected leaders, but even you, the community, tell us if we're wrong, tell us if we're not measuring up. The open mic is an opportunity for that. That's how I get better. I've told people before that if I'm not measuring up, please let me know. You're not going to hurt my feelings. I want to get better in the services in the community and if my fellow elected officials are falling short, I'm not going to step on them while they're down. I want to help pull them up as well because to get things done for this community, we have to get it right and failure is not an option with what we're looking at here in Wyandotte County as far as our fiscal situation.

We've got too many other issues on the table than to be worrying about minor matters that don't really reflect the interests of anybody, the hard-working people in Wyandotte County, what they really want done. They don't care about this infighting and who likes who, they just want us to get the work done for this community and that's what I want. So, I just ask all of us, I can get better, I'm a young new Mayor finishing my first year. Have I made mistakes, of course. That's life. Is it intentional, no my heart is pure. I care about people. I care about this community. I'm not here to hurt anyone. Do I need anything, no. I'm not here for any personal gain. I'm not trying to move up. I'm not looking for higher office or book deals. I retired. God blessed me to be able to do that.

I'm here because I just want to make a difference because people ask me to do and be that difference and I'm willing to work with all of you and this is a new year for all of us. Let's work to do better and let's start working on the things that really matter for Wyandotte County and I can tell you over the course of three days before Christmas and since then, we've really been working and miring ourselves down in things that really are irrelevant in the big scope of things

that matter to every day hard-working people. It's stressful for our employees. I've talked to several of them, they're caught in the middle, our community is dissatisfied, we all look like shady politicians that can't get along and we are a mockery from here to Topeka and I've heard it. Let's do better, please.

Commissioner Ramirez said I have a request and hopefully it's not a big request. The complete review of Commission Rules should be followed—should go under the jurisdiction of the Administration & Human Services committee. The document you gave us of committees and their jurisdiction completely states Commission Rules. It's not under the jurisdiction of the Charter Committee. The Charter Committee and the Commission Rules are completely different documents and with all due respect, I believe it will do more good under Administration & Human Services than the Charter Committee. So, I ask Commissioner Bynum, as the Chair of AHS that the full review of Commission Rules become under your jurisdiction of that committee as it clearly states of the document that the Mayor gave to us.

Commissioner Davis said oh boy, okay. Mayor, I think that one of the things that you have done, and this is why I still believe we need some assurance as commissioners is because there have been times that you've broken your word. When LaVert Murray brought the developers before us and we all spoke about Willie Lanier and made it—and by the way it's Black History Month. Willie Lanier, many of you do not know, is the son of a former Kansas City Chiefs player. He is—Mayor, are you going to—I'm going to wait for you to be the presiding officer and get decorum. **Mayor Garner** said, Commissioner, if you would please. **Commissioner Davis** said no, it's the gallery. **Mayor Garner** said, Commissioner, please let's—it's called emotional intelligence. Let's utilize that. **Commissioner Davis** said emotional intelligence—it's a point of order. It's the gallery that is speaking and they're not authorized to do so. Can I speak, can I get a ruling?

Mayor Garner said, Commissioner, we will take a two minute recess for everybody to cool their heels and come back. Before we come back, I'm going to ask the crowd again whether you like any comments of anybody, and this is going into the full commission meeting, please be respectful of people's viewpoints whether you like it or not. Be respectful. **Commissioner Davis** said and I would like my time when we come back. That's all I'm asking for. **Mayor Garner**

said, Commissioner, I've never taken time from you. All I ask is, let me do my job. I don't need you to tell me how to do it, okay? We'll take two minutes.

(Two minute recess)

Mayor Garner said thank you, thank you so much. I think we needed a little timeout. I know there are a lot of emotions here. Again, I'm going to ask you, please respectfully, if you can just maintain your composure, allow people to speak so they can get their remarks out, keep your comments to a minimum. There's a time and a place for that. I just ask that we be respectful of one another. We all are neighbors, we all know each other, we all live here and we all have the same goals and objectives which is, we all want a better Wyandotte County. Commissioner Davis, you can continue.

Commissioner Davis said I think there's been some—well, there's been a lot of misconceptions about me and my issues with Mayor Garner. Mayor Garner, my issues with you have not been personal, they have been policy-based. You stopped a black developer from developing in downtown Kansas City, Kansas. That's what happened. That is a fact. If you do not know who Willie Lanier, Jr. is or what happened to his project or how it could have been a catalytic project for development in downtown Kansas City, Kansas, it's Black History Month, let's talk about how black people have been mistreated. Are you going to—I mean—**Mayor Garner** asked, are you done? **Commissioner Davis** said no, I'm just seeing if you wanted to make sure that there's decorum. **Mayor Garner** said yes, please...

Commissioner Davis said the other issue has been, yes Mayor Garner, I did work on your campaign. I left because of the very disagreements that we're having right now. You have ruled with an iron fist. You have tried to run City Hall like the Police Department. We do not work for you. I do not work for you. I want to work with you. There are things that you have proposed that I agree with. We talk about the sales tax. I agree there should be some option there. We can talk about other issues when it comes to development. I agree, but the way in which this has happened has not been fair.

I am glad that I'm getting my assignments back. I'm glad that we have your word and I will absolutely hold you to it. However, I would like to see better and I would like to see it consistently.

I will yield on my request for us to vote on these changes for the Rules and Procedures tonight. I understand I don't have the votes. I don't have the support from my colleagues and I'll follow their guidance and their wisdom in working this through the standing committee of Administration & Human Services. But this should have never been personal. It shouldn't and the fact that it was, you know, it's under your leadership Mayor Garner, is a blackeye for Wyandotte County and that's unfortunate.

Mayor Garner said well, you had a lot there Commissioner. It's not personal for me and, again, I've never said anything bad about you and I challenge you to look on any of my social medias or anybody in this community, and you know who they are, that have tried to get me and you to sit down, so that is totally not true. There's nothing personal. I have no personal—I'm going to say it again, I want you to be successful. I love you as a brother. I've said that privately and I'm saying it openly and I'm telling you now we have to work together. You don't know me, so don't speak to my career as a police officer because I had the nomenclature of being called officer friendly by many people in the community. People trusted me and if I was anything less than that, I would not be Mayor today.

I'm going to ask—you made another statement about black developers. I would agree with you on Mr. Lanier, but if I did, we would both be wrong, so I'm going to ask LaVert Murray to bring clarity to that for the public and, hopefully, this misconception about what occurred can finally be put to rest in your mind.

LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor in Mayor's Office, said Mr. Lanier had a project before this committee some time ago and, in fact, as I tracked this development—and let me say for the public that, yes, I am LaVert Murray, currently Chief Economic Development Advisor to Mayor Garner. Before I came back after my retirement I was—and before I retired I was the Director of Development, Director of Economic Development, for close to 40 years and you will see my handprint on many major developments throughout this community including General Motors, including the Hilton Garden Inn, including the Reardon Convention Center. I

must say that because I've heard that there have been some members of the Commission telling others that I have a personal grudge against Mr. Lanier and that certainly is not even close to the truth and that I have something personal in support of the convention center, the Reardon Convention Center. I will tell you, those that don't know me, during my past nearly 40 years, yes, I managed the construction of the convention center; yes, I managed the construction of the Hilton Garden Inn and the BPU Office Building. Yes, I secured the grants for those developments. Yes, I secured the grants for the parking structure behind the convention center and the BPU, but I have no personal or emotional attachments. If you give me something better, I wouldn't have a problem tearing it down and building that something better and that's how I am on all projects.

I will tell you that as I pursue development deals throughout our community, and that's always been the case for me, I think developers deserve an opportunity to better their proposals and typically when I work, a deal a developer might get two opportunities for an extension of their contracts to do what they have committed to do.

I never had a situation where there are four extensions to a project. That was the case for the Indian Springs Scavuzzo Project. I recommended we end the nonsense, if you will, and we did that on Scavuzzo. When I learned of four extensions for the Reardon Project, it had nothing to do with Mr. Lanier. I've known Mr. Lanier a great number of years, I like him, I think we get along, but it's business and I could not recommend to you to provide extension number five for a project that's taken years to develop and I've still not seen the financing commitments for the project, but that's beside the point. My recommendation was, it's not time to do extension number five. That project was not withdrawn by the Mayor or anyone else. That project had a drop-dead date that expired on December 31st. When that project reached December 31, its contract was null and void and that is what happened to the Lanier Project for the Reardon Center.

I have personally spoken with Mr. Lanier and Mr. Lanier has come back with a proposal that will allow the Unified Government to keep its only convention center in our community and also build what he proposes in an apartment building attached to the convention center as opposed to tearing it down. When that project was taken before the standing committee last month or so, Mr. Lanier presented a third project, if you will, on the UMB Bank site. I was surprised that he didn't mention the alternative of attaching his building to the convention center and I know maybe some of you have seen the plans for that. I know when I learned of it, I took it to Commissioner McKiernan. Why, because it's in his district and Mr. McKiernan viewed that and I thought when

he came before the standing committee that would be presented. It wasn't, but I want you to know that the Mayor has said to Mr. Lanier, I have said to Mr. Lanier, we want to work with you but we need a convention center too and there was an option to accommodate Mr. Lanier and also have a first-rate convention center.

I just wanted to point out that no one killed that project. It had a drop-dead date of December 31 and it didn't meet the requirements by that date. Mr. Lanier will tell you that, but we are still communicating with him and we're trying to bring that project forward.

Mayor Garner said I can say just for the record, I have spoken to Mr. Lanier and he wants to accommodate a redevelopment project at the Reardon Center and beyond. I've talked to our Administrator on several occasions. For the record, nobody is trying to keep an African American developer out of Wyandotte County, me of all people, right, would try and do that. We want a good quality project. People have said they want a first-class convention center to get some of the residual flow over from Kansas City, Missouri. I support Mr. Lanier in his efforts, I support his new proposal that he brought back, I encourage staff to work with him because he is the only developer that we know of that is willing to do something in that area. I don't care who it is, if they are shovel-ready and they can bring the types of good services and resources that Wyandotte County deserves, my thing is, let's make it happen and I've given staff that option.

I'll go a step further, back in, I believe it was August, Mr. Murray brought developers to this dais as well. Over half of them were minorities that had historically been shut out from this Unified Government. They couldn't even get a seat at the table and to this day, for whatever reason, because that meeting turned very chaotic, in which it shouldn't have, and you can go back and roll the tape and decide for yourself who caused the chaos. Some of those developers said they will never come back to Wyandotte County again. Shameful. None of them needed money. They had the financing, they were ready to go and they were ready to do the things that Mr. Murray and myself asked them to do and that was develop east of 635 in the disenfranchised, disinvested areas in the most poorest zip codes anywhere that you can find in the state of Kansas from areas where people have been begging for development, redline areas, and these people have historically not had a seat at the table. We offered them to at least bring forth their vision and they still haven't had that opportunity. We got to do better.

Commissioner Johnson said I think I would say relative to Mr. Lanier, I just ask that to all parties that are involved, let's get us something to the Commission that we can vote on, up or down. I know we have procedures in place to go through standing committees, they have timelines and they've gone over some timelines with some amendments, but I'm saying, whatever it takes. This has drug on for far too long. Just get something to the Commission that we can vote on, up or down, up or down, that's my only request.

Relative to the document that is before us tonight, I think Commissioner Bynum mentioned that we could come to her committee, the Administration & Human Services Standing Committee. It looks to me that the next meeting would be on the 13th of this month. Is that correct? (Inaudible). **Commissioner Johnson** said so I ask that—my ask would be that if we can get that through standing committee, can it be fast-tracked to the full commission meeting on the 16th? That is my request. If we can get through that document, can it be fast-tracked and get some assurance that it can be fast-tracked to the full commission meeting because it appears to me the next full commission meeting won't be until March the 9th. At least that's what my calendar shows. That the request that I would have that if we get it approved in standing committee, can it be moved—fast-tracked to the full commission meeting.

Mayor Garner said just to clarify, I have worked with our Administrator and she is actively working, her and staff, with Mr. Lanier and they are trying to get something before this body and they have made that commitment to continue working with him.

Commissioner Bynum said I seek two things, to clarify what Commissioner Markley had brought forward earlier, returning this or sending this to what I'm hearing is Administration & Human Services for work and proposed action that would come as a fast-tracked item to the next full commission meeting. I want to make sure that I'm hearing what you heard for one thing and what the Commission seems to be having consensus around and then just secondarily, the technical pieces of getting all of this onto a February 13 agenda, which we just had agenda review for this morning and we were proposing to have an agenda ready to publish tomorrow. So, I'll look to Administrator and Chief Counsel and you Mayor for the direction on that, but I think that's what I'm seeing consensus around here tonight.

Mayor Garner said I will make a commitment that, you know, I want to work with you all as well on the standing committee to make sure that we—you know the language is something that we all can live with that, and that yes, if we can get the work done, we'll do everything we can. That's a pledge and a commitment from me. I'll make sure that I give clear direction to the Administrator to fast-track as soon as you all get the language completed and you vote to move it forward. I have no reason to obstruct, withhold, hold it back, stop it. I want you all to review it, get it to this full body and you vote on it so we can move to the things that are really more important than that, so yes, you have my commitment.

Commissioner Ramirez said I thank our Administrator for working with all parties to bring something forward and this will be the last thing I say on it until it comes before us. Again, we wouldn't have these issues if we had a fully staffed Economic Development Department and with all due respect, Mr. Murray is an advisor to the Mayor's Office, not to the Commission Office. He does not recommend to us, that is staff. He's a staff of the Mayor's Office, not of the Commission, so that as department—Economic Development Director's duty is to be our advisor on economic development projects.

Mayor Garner said that is true, Mr. Murray is an advisor out of my office. I ask that you please respect his years of experience and his knowledge and the connections that he has in this community. He does not advise to this Commission, he advises to me. He does help citizens, bridge them to staff to try and get them the help that they sometimes otherwise can't get in a very timely manner and that's his role. He's a bridge, he's a great source of information and a lot of people in this community come to him looking for knowledge and looking to how best to move things forward through the Unified Government especially this time, as you mentioned Commissioner Ramirez, where we do have staffing shortage.

Commissioner Davis said I'll just say very, very quickly, when Mr. Lanier came before us for Economic Development and Finance, the overwhelming response and direction to staff was get the original project to the standing committee so that we, as Commissioner Johnson had referenced, can finally put this to bed. I would hope that is what we do. Myself, Commissioner Townsend, Commissioner Stites—Commissioner Burroughs didn't say much, I would assume so,

but I know for a fact Commissioner McKiernan and even BPU member Senator Haley, we all agreed, at least no one said anything other than agreeing, that Mr. Lanier's original project is the desire of at least half of us sitting up here close to it. So, that would be my comment on that, that we wouldn't just get a project, but the specific project that we gave staff guidance on.

Mayor Garner said I want to remind you, you do have a Mayor, I do have a role, I do have a voice, I do represent the majority of the people in this town that voted for me throughout county-wide and part of my job duty is to project the vision, leadership, direction, financial security of this town. You can look it up yourself to include economic development and so I need to be at the table. The original plan you talked about is a plan that happened before I became Mayor. Because I do compromise, we embrace that plan, but we also embrace, not because I want it, but because we went out and actually talked to people in this community, which are the stakeholders, that said we want a first-class convention center to coincide with the Lanier Project. So, Mr. Lanier brought forth a compromise. It really brought past project and future vision together that could be even a bigger project and so that's just something that you need to think about and that is the power of collaboration, communication and meeting each other halfway to get things done for Wyandotte County that, hopefully, can at least meet the regional by expectations that everyone has when it comes to these types of projects.

There was a request on the floor to give direction. I guess we did talk about a straw poll. For those that coincide with Commissioner Markley's, Commissioner Bynum, I believe Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Ramirez—if I'm wrong; I guess a show of hands in support and I believe our Administrator will have clear direction on how to move in that regard. Okay, I think we have a majority there.

So, with that direction moving forward, we do have to move into our commission meeting. Thank you all. I'm going to entertain a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Markley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to adjourn.

Mayor Garner said I will say that prior to the vote, our commissioners need about 10 minutes to take a break, so we will start sharp, and I do mean sharp, at exactly 7:15.

Roll call was taken and there were ten “Ayes,” Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Bynum.

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 7:06 p.m.

Brett Deichler
Unified Government Clerk

dt

February 2, 2023