

Sedgwick County

525 North Main Street 3rd Floor
Wichita, KS 67203



*Sedgwick County...
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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

9:00 AM

BOCC Meeting Room

Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners

Pursuant to Resolution #007-2016, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on January 20, 2016, members of the public are allowed to address the County Commission for a period of time limited to not more than five minutes or such time limits as may become necessary.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of Sedgwick County, should contact the office of Crissy Magee, Sedgwick County ADA Coordinator, 510 N. Main, Suite 306, Wichita, Kansas 67203. Phone: 316-660-7056, TDD: Kansas Relay at 711 or 800-766-3777

Email: Crissy.Magee@sedgwick.gov, as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event. Please include the name, location, date and time of the service or program, your contact information and the type of aid, service, or policy modification needed.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Board of the County Commissioners of Sedgwick County, Kansas, was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on March 23, 2016 in the County Commission Meeting Room in the Courthouse in Wichita, Kansas, by Chairman James M. Howell, with the following present: Chair Pro-Tem Commissioner Richard Ranzau; Commissioner David Unruh; Commissioner Tim Norton; Commissioner Karl Peterjohn; Mr. Ron Holt, Acting County Manager; Mr. Eric Yost, County Counselor; Mr. David Spears, Director, Bureau of Public Works; Mrs. Linda Kizzire, Treasurer; Mr. Tom Stolz, Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department; Mr. Marty Hughes, Accounting; Ms. Marilyn Cook, Director, COMCARE; Mr. Chris Chronis, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Jon VonAchen, Assistant County Counselor; Ms. Kate Flavin, Communications; and Ms. Erika Hills, Deputy County Clerk.

Guests:

*Mr. Mike King, Secretary, Kansas Department of Transportation
Ms. Shelley Bradbury, South Central Kansas Economic Development District
Ms. Sybil Strum, 326 North Walnut Street, Wichita
Mr. Charles Peaster, 9453 North 153rd Street West, Bentley
Mr. John Todd, 1559 North Payne, Wichita
Mr. Jason Van Sickle, 151 North Rock Island, Suite 1C, Wichita*

INVOCATION: Pastor Rick Cline, RiverWalk Church of Christ

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

The Clerk Reported, after calling roll, that all Commissioners were present.

Chairman Howell said, "I want to take this opportunity to insert this good news into the agenda this morning. With that, Linda Kizzire, please tell us what is going on in your world."

Ms. Linda Kizzire, Treasurer, greeted the Commissioners and said, "Yesterday we launched our virtual wait line, our QLess system without any problems of I know that's wonderful news. It is very easy to use. I invited Randy Bargdill to be our driver on the system while we talk through it.

"It's very easy, you just go to the county website, go to 'Treasurer', click 'Get in Line at the Tag Office Reserve Your Spot'; click on the location you would like to go to."

Chairman Howell said, "Let me just say that this is the first time that I've seen this, so this is exciting for me. Even though we've invested a the lot of discussion, about six months' worth of work, maybe even eight months' worth of work to get to this point."

Ms. Kizzire said, "It actually asks you what you want to get in line for. We have an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) station, there are no people in line, so we are ready for you. If you have a title, it will be a six-minute wait. We have two people in line. If you are doing a renewal, we listed several other items on the website so that

it's not just for renewals, it's for all types of different things, like a personalized plate, if you buy a personalized tag you go to that line and it's about 21 minutes at Murdock.

"So just go ahead and select any one. Then it will send a text message saying how long it is going to take you. It says, thanks, your estimated wait time is now 22 minutes. We will let you know when you need to reach the front. And there's also commands that you can do for status update, you can send an 'S' it will send you a text back. If you need more time, you can press 'M' and it will move you further back in the line. Say you are at a doctor's appointment, you are running a little bit later than you planned. You get your text, you can hit 'M' and it will move you further back in the line. And then it will send you a status update a little later. If you decide that you don't want to go to the tag office today, you can hit 'L' which will allow you to leave the queue.

"It is very simple. Very user-friendly. We are thrilled to have it. Again, we are just very thankful. I thank all of you for approving that at the Board of Bids and Contracts. And if you don't have a cell phone or a personal computer, no worries, stop in the Tag Office, we have a kiosk, just enter a little bit of information, we will give you are right there in the queue."

Chairman Howell said, "So in that case, they could actually leave and come back."

Ms. Kizzire said, "They can leave and come back, yes."

Chairman Howell said, "So I guess the intent is really we don't want people to have to stay in the office necessarily while they are in line. They can get in line at the workplace or at home, then show up, basically close to the right time, or they can actually get in line virtually, and then they can do other things, know when to come back."

Ms. Kizzire said, "Yes, and they will get status updates on their phone. As long as your cell phone takes texts it works fine for you. We also have big monitors in the office that show the last four digits of the phone numbers so that that way when the announcement goes over and it goes now serving 5123. Then you know, at station 6. You get up, you go to station 6. The clerks there will take care of you right there."

Chairman Howell said, "Wonderful. Thank you so much. This is an exciting day for Sedgwick County. Commissioner Unruh has comments."

Commissioner Unruh thanked the Chairman and said, "Madam Treasurer, while we are celebrating the initiation of this new innovation, perhaps you would give us an update on the new facility."

Ms. Kizzire said, "The new facility, moving right along, we are very thankful for that. I know that three of you have been over there. I know that Dave and Jim and Karl have toured it. Richard told me the other day in the hall, he drives by it, but I am going to get him in there eventually. Tim and I will get over there soon, I'm sure. The Manager has been there, and he's impressed I think so far with the work.

"We don't have a tentative closing date yet, but I'm looking forward to it. I'm sure it will be after the elephant exhibit opens. Because of timing and things like that for furniture and other things. It's exciting and I'm looking forward to moving."

Commissioner Unruh said, "Very good. Well, since we are talking about things having to do with the tag office, many of our citizens excited about basketball season and their favorite school. I want to remind folks that you have..."

Ms. Kizzire said, "Wait a minute. Are they in this tournament?"

Commissioner Unruh said, "I was afraid my K-State team didn't make it this year, but Commissioner Norton has a tag from WSU (Wichita State University)."

Commissioner Norton said, "This does not allow you to drive angry. It only lets you support a team that plays angry. This is the Wichita State [University] tag you can also get."

Commissioner Unruh said, "Our Director of Public Works, David Spears, one of our big KU (University of Kansas) fans, he's got a copy of the KU tag. They are still playing."

Mr. David Spears, Director, Public Works, greeted the Commissioners and said, "Thanks for saving the best for last."

Ms. Kizzire said, "No problem, David. Those are available, as are many other university plates, at the tag office. Thank you very much for you three volunteering to hold those plates up. I appreciate that."

Commissioner Unruh said, "Now, these are not free, there is a fee for it. \$50 annual fee, \$40 plate fee, and \$5.50 county fees. They are not free. In my budget, they are not exactly cheap, but nice if you would like to have one. That's all I have."

Chairman Howell said, "I do not see any other comments. I just want to say the tag office, again, just to let everyone know, this has been an almost two decade process to get to this point, so I keep hearing the numbers 17 years. And this is exciting. We are only a couple months away from this actually opening. We'll have a fantastic new central office. Thank you for all you have done planning that, and making this come to reality for our county. Thank you, thank you."

Ms. Kizzire said, "Thanks to all you guys for approving the purchase of the building. Thank you very much."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you. Madam Clerk, next item, please."

NEW BUSINESS

A [16-0073](#)

PRESENTATION FROM THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Presented by: Mike King, Secretary of Transportation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive and file.

Chairman Howell said, "I would like to welcome our State Department of Transportation Secretary, Mike King. He traveled here to give us some good information this morning. Thank you for being here, sir."

VISUAL PRESENTATION

Mr. Mike King, Secretary, Kansas Department of Transportation, greeted the Commissioners and said, "I have just a short presentation, as I travel around the state I realize that I had not been here in quite a while, like ever. I'm glad to be here to tell you a little bit about what's going on in the state, how we partner with you and

how we do great things together.

"The basic rule of government, it's interesting for me as this is my first tenure into politics, I'm from Hesston originally, just 40 miles to north of here, and four years ago, actually five years ago got the opportunity now to do this job. Fully realizing the difference between what happens at the federal level, what happens at the state level and the local level, and everyone has their individual roles and responsibilities. I think a primary function of the federal government is infrastructure and transportation.

"About one-third of our revenue, third of our budget comes from the federal government. That's about \$400 million for us here in Kansas. And the state. We also have motor fuel taxes, where as a part of our revenue stream, and then also a sales tax portion comes to us. At the local level, I think it's our responsibility to help fund infrastructure at the local level, and one-third of the Kansas Gas Tax goes directly to cities and counties. That amounts to about \$147 million per year. So, again, I think an inherent role of the federal government, and really appreciative of the support we get there.

"Transportation is multi-modal. All of the icons up there represent an important part of the economy. An important part of what we deliver at the state level. With the exception of, I know Commissioner Norton is wondering about the boat and the ship there. I do have responsibility for water ways, even though we really don't have any waterways in Kansas, but that is part of the job description.

"Transit is one that I want to highlight a little here. I came into this role as a road and bridge advocate. And have begun realizing how important transit is for many of our citizens, whether it be my mother going from the nursing home on the little run, to Walmart, or to the doctor's office. That's an important part about what we play, we provide funds for those rides, those opportunities. We also help with the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) here in Wichita to help the transit here.

"Let's get into a little bit more of the details here. The bar chart on the left represents an indication of the miles of roadway that each of the individual localities is responsible for. By definition, we have about 140,000 miles of roadway in the State of Kansas and that's about fourth most in the nation. Now, what is a little confusing sometimes is I live on a sand road in rural Harvey County and that's part of the 140,000 miles. When we square up every mile, north, south, and every mile east, west, we have a road that's how you get to such a high number.

"At the state level, we only have 7.3 percent of that 140,000 miles. So we have about 10,000 miles that we are responsible for. So cities, counties and townships, responsible for, you know, as you see there, the counties and the municipality breakdown. The turnpike at 236 miles is a very low percentage of that. Then, if you look at the traffic volume, and I think that kind of speaks for itself where most of the traffic and the roads are at, we are responsible for half the traffic on those 10,000 miles. Then look at the turnpike there, about five percent.

"We did a little study on the turnpike, and also in my role, I am responsible for the turnpike, as well now, and I think that's a great thing. A way to have kind of a single overarching view of total transportation for the State of Kansas. Sixty-one percent, that's 61 percent of all Kansans live within 20 miles of the turnpike. So from an economic engine point of view, that's why we wanted to make sure that it was talking with us at the DOT (Department of Transportation) and making sure that at the local level we are as big a partner as can be possible.

"I put this slide in here, I wanted to show, and sometimes people view KDOT (Kansas

Department of Transportation) or the state transportation as the state funding source for many other agencies. So I wanted to put this slide in. \$900 million is what we consider in our lock box. That's constitutionally protected. That's at the minimum what we can receive to do our job. We do receive, in addition to this \$900 million, and this is made up of motor fuel taxes, both at the state level, and at the federal level. In addition to this, we receive about \$500 million of sales tax. That's 16 percent of all sales tax dollars comes to the DOT in our state and many other states, and not just this governor and not just this legislature, but for the last 30 years, governors, legislators have used this as a way to fund other important parts of government.

"When people see Bank of KDOT, whatever you want to call it, that's in addition to this \$900 million. We still have a healthy amount we work with as our base. Then in addition, that's where you see the big expansion and modernization projects happen at. It allows us to do the maintenance we need to maintain our 10,000 miles. Also keep our operations going. Again, I just wanted to highlight that.

"Then, again, as sweeps, transfers, whatever people want to call them, that has never affected, nor will it affect the third of the gas tax that goes to the cities and counties, called the Special City-County Highway Fund. As far as our revenue stream from the federal government, or from our state motor fuel tax, we get 24 cents per gallon at the state level. So what that is, and that has not increased since about the [19]90s. And on the federal level, we get 18 cents per gallon of gas. That has not increased since the [19]90s as well. It doesn't matter what the price of a gallon of gas is, when it was at \$4.00, we are still getting the 24 and 18 cents, or at \$1.90 now, we are still getting that 24 and 18 cents. Just wanted to make that clear to you. We also have a couple of other small, driver's license, special permits, registration fees that make that up.

"This shows you, this is the Kansas Motor Fuel Tax, shows the third of it in the red bar there. Hey, Commissioner Unruh, we put your KU colors on here. Oh, no, I'm sorry. Yeah, you are the K-State guy. Sorry about that little dig there. So, yeah, we use KU colors. That shows a third of the total of the amount goes directly to the Special City-County Highway Fund.

"Something that's really important to South Central Kansas, especially the Wichita, Sedgwick County area, is the airports and the aviation. We do have a Director of Aviation, we have a new one now, hopefully you will get a chance to meet him shortly, if you have not already; Merrill Atwater. He was here actually at the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower [National Airport] opening, the grand opening of the new terminal here. We are responsible for 138 public use airports. I say if you have a control tower at your airport, that's not our responsibility, but if you don't have one, then it usually generally falls under our guidelines. What we are trying to do is to be able to make sure that rural Kansas has aviation experience, and so we check to make sure that a wind tower or things aren't getting in the way of the approach or the takeoff, landing areas. It is also our goal that 90 percent of all Kansans live within a 30-minute drive to an airport where an air ambulance service can assist you if needed. That's a fixed wing, twin-engine aircraft. We are just under 90 percent, so we almost hit our goal. Each of these airports being able to provide that service for Kansans.

"We will also be hiring a Director of UAS, Unmanned Aerial Systems. Sometimes people call them drones. We think it will play an important role in the economy in the coming years. This is a great area for us to be manufacturing and engineering these vehicles, I can't call them drones. So we are really excited about that. I'm hoping to have an area of the state that's designated where different businesses and companies can come in and experiment with their aircraft, like the Amazons of the world, as they look at home deliveries with these. We want to be on the cutting-edge.

We want to be a leader in the nation in this industry. So really appreciative of Senator Moran, and his backing on this. He is on a very important committee to be able to help with some federal legislation, which is where it really needs to happen at.

"A lot of things that we work with are also focused on how we tie communities together. To get our 10,000 miles of road, we have a state highway about every 30 miles north, south and every 30 miles, east-west. Not all of those have the same amount of volume of traffic on them. What we did, over the past year, we looked at what we called our freight corridors of significance. We had people from all over the state, about one-third government people, about two-thirds citizens, industry folks, to be able to help us. If we would draw a map, if we would start identifying what would be significant corridors, this is what we came up with. We kind of eliminated the interstates and the turnpike systems. That's why that's in dashed red. That's fairly obvious to us how important those are. So then we looked at the reds as being the more primary and the blues as being what we call secondary primary. And for me, if you look at this Highway 54/400 going east-west out of Wichita, Sedgwick County, this is a very important corridor for us. My friends to the north on Highway 50, that would go from Newton, Hutchinson, tie into Kinsley a little further west, it is not identified on this one.

"We are not going to be able to four-lane divide every highway in the state. So what we wanted to do, we wanted to put something on the wall, so we could start the discussion, is this really what we want, and is this the correct direction? Then we go ahead and start funding this. The Highway 54/400 corridor is a very important corridor for us. We had a couple projects planned, the goal, the long-term goal is to get from El Paso, Texas, to Wichita, Sedgwick County, divided four-lane through the three states that it goes through. That's what we are working on.

"We also have a committee that we are just standing up, called the Kansas Freight Advisory Council, which is going to meet twice a year, and it's going to continue to look at areas like this. But we are also looking at when we have a lot of oversized loads coming through our state generating, how does that look, and how do we address those issues. So if anyone either on the Commissioner from the audience would be interested in that, that's something that we are going to start, and we will want to get a lot of public input on that.

"I am going to talk a little bit about what I focus on, what some of my thought process is, how we decide to help invest that billion dollars a year in infrastructure. It is the economy. You know, we really have our system where we want it at, where it's going to be at. How do we leverage, how do we leverage this 10,000 miles, not for our benefit as government, but for the benefit of the private business, or the citizens of Kansas, or the tourists that go through the state.

"I am a member of the Governor's growth team. It's Departments of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, Department of Transportation, and Department of Revenue. The four of us meet on a regular basis to, number one, keep existing business, two, grow existing business, and three, attract new business to the state. There's going to be some announcements coming out either tomorrow or Friday that you will see where we work together as the state to help increase jobs. Hopefully local government participation. I think this is really key on the \$1 billion dollars that we invest, how does it benefit you. How does it benefit Sedgwick County? Even to the point of looking at designs of intersections, of designs of freeways, does it allow you an opportunity to get more property tax value after we have left this behind? So I think that's an important part of what we do. Really want to work with the private sector on growing both jobs and revenue streams for local partners.

"(Inaudible) Kansas, we have a fund within the DOT, we have \$10 million per year that goes directly to economic development. It has to be used for infrastructure, but it can be used for roads, bridges, rail, transit, any of those type of things, to be able, again, that last part of getting that business to expand, that last part of getting a business to come to the state, these are at Dairy Farmers of America, \$200 million investment in Garden City. We are going to have, what is it, 100 to 150 semis a day getting onto a state highway, so what we did, we extended, we added a turn lane, and we extended the acceleration, deceleration lanes. From a safety point of view, this was very important to them. Acme Foundry in southeast Kansas, again, we are able to give them more acceleration, deceleration lanes. Most private business wants to make sure everyone is safe. As we have an increase in our semi use, we wanted to make sure we are taking account of that as well.

"Defining economic growth. This is one thing that I struggle with a little bit on return on investment (ROI). How do I get an ROI on a state highway that maybe only has 250 to 300 vehicles a day on it, but that corridor might be where we put our heavy loads at, or that corridor where we have school buses and school children, and we are connecting some of our rural spots. So we can't always look at just the return on investment. Some things we do for congestion relief, that's what you are seeing on the Kellogg areas here. And then there's some things that we really do look at, and this is a great place, we are going to get a return on investment from a business, private business point of view. I can make the numbers work there.

"Measurements, accountability, those are all things that we continue to work on. We want to make sure we do the best that we can investing your dollars, your tax dollars, and my tax dollars on that. So with that, I just wanted to thank you for all you do to help us. I hope that we are a help to you. If we're not, that's why I'm here, to be able to hear that firsthand and to make sure we are a partner at the table. With that, I would be glad to stand for some questions."

Chairman Howell said, "Secretary King, thank you for the presentation. I have a couple questions, but I will hold mine for just a moment. I think the Commissioners have questions and comments. I will recognize Commissioner Norton first."

Commissioner Norton said, "Thank you for being here, Secretary. At the national level, they kind of kick the can down the road a little bit on their transportation plan. They kind of reauthorize, but we know that that bucket is not filling up like it used to, which means what comes down to the state and the local level could be diminished if there's not some kind of an increase in motor fuels taxes, or they've even talked about vehicle miles traveled, a whole new system of revenue. Talk about that just a little bit. Because it does end up affecting the Wichita area, metro planning organization, local counties, other folks."

Secretary King said, "The Federal Gas Tax has not been increased for, again, it was the early 1990s was the last time. We feel like that would be a good place to increase. It's kind of that, if you use it, you know, you are paying for it, type of approach. Congress did pass what's called the Fast Act, here six months ago. That did provide some additional funding for us. A little bit extra, but we are thankful for all that it did provide. A little tricky math on how they helped fund that five-year program, but they were able to do it.

"Long-term on that, we have kicked the can down the road. We are starting to see the interstate system that was basically built in the 1960s and 1970s, start to see some of that end of life type approach. I have it say, I have been really proud about the DOT. We ranked number one in the nation on the interstate system, and we're top ten on our roads and bridges. I know there was some news in the paper here recently about

how, we're the sixth worst in the nation. Again, that's counting all of the sand roads, gravel roads, bridges and roads that are going to that formula, that's really not apples to apples on that."

Chairman Howell said, "Let me ask what the numbers were again. Sixth in nation on bridges?"

Secretary King said, "We are number one in the nation on our interstates system quality and top ten on our roads and bridges. Our worst ranking is we are 33rd in the nation, and that's on fatalities per mile driven. Since that report came out, and this is the reason foundation, which we think is a good look at all 50 states, comparing more apples to apples, since that report came out, we had our two best years on the lowest number of fatalities. 2013 and 2015 were our best two years since 1947. Last year we lost 355 lives on our roads; not just ours, but all the local roads as well. 355 too many. But we are going in the right direction."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you so much for those answers. Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn thanked the Chairman and said, "Thank you, Mr. Secretary for coming here today. Your presentation you mentioned township roads. Were those rolled in with the county roads in the slide that you had, because they weren't separated. Townships weren't separated out. I was thinking that's one of the largest, if not the largest volume of road miles in Kansas, even though there is a few counties, relative minority that do not have townships."

Secretary King said, "Those would be rolled into the county number, yes."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "Thank you. Can you talk for a minute a little bit, you mentioned the possibility of increased semi use, and that goes back to not only semi use, but semi use nationally, and how we compare with increases in traffic volume, compared to the other 49 states and also since we have a turnpike, a number of other states with turnpikes, I was interested in terms of semi use on the turnpike and turnpike revenues overall and how they are doing."

Secretary King said, "On the turnpikes specifically, that total revenue is about \$110 million per year. Of at that, about one-third of that is semi use. For the last 36 months, we've seen an increase of travel on the turnpike of about seven percent. It's been fantastic. We have an 11 percent increase in February, but this February was a lot warmer than last February, so that's kind of an anomaly there. So, you know, we are seeing that, as the price of fuel is down. We are seeing more travel there on that."

"The turnpike is self-funded, it receives no state dollars, no federal dollars, nor will it ever, nor can it. If it would receive any federal dollars, then it would have to be designed to current interstate standards, and it is not at that point yet. We are working hard on that. Some of our exit ramps and entrance ramps are the old 1950s design, and we are working very hard to get that there."

"As far as how we compare to other states, we are similar with what I will call this Central United States as far as growth goes with semi traffic. We are up a percent or two with Iowa, Nebraska, Oklahoma, those. That's roughly where we are at on that."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "I can't let you get away without mentioning KTAG and KTAG use and interoperability with other systems."

Secretary King said, "We are really thrilled that our electronic use, which is KTAG, is

up to about 56 percent now. So we still have 43 percent of the people stopping and getting a ticket, then at the other end, putting their quarters and dollars in. That's a very inefficient way for us to deliver our product. One that we are working on.

We now have interoperability, which is just sharing information with PIKEPASS, or the Oklahoma turnpike, so you can have your KTAG and be in Oklahoma, go through the fast lane, it will electronically read, it will show up on your Kansas bill. By the end of the year or first quarter 2017, will be interoperable with the five separate Texas turnpikes, which is a large part of the traffic that comes through as well. There is a lot of Dallas to Kansas City traffic. We'll have that interest operable. Colorado we are working with, working with Illinois. Kind of the difference between DVD (digital versatile disk) and VHS (video home system). We all have different back office software that we're working on to be able to use, but we would highly encourage you to get an electronic form of payment.

"For us, it is a safety issue. Where you have accidents at is where you have different vehicles going different speeds. So we are asking you to stop on an interstate system, get a ticket, and then stop again to pay. That's where we have accidents happen at. So for me, it is a safety issue. We just announced a \$1.2 billion turnpike program for the next ten years. We are going to be going what's called open road tolling. In some of our larger plazas, you are going to be able to drive through the regular lane, and if you want to pay, then you will go off to the right, stop and pay there. We are going to try to get you through at interstate speeds. With that, we need longer approaches, you know, acceleration, deceleration.

"A bill that we have before the legislators today is that we want the ability to be able to take a photo of your license plate, and if you happen to get into the fast lane, and you are not on electronic user, we want the ability to have a stick or a little bit of a hammer to ask you to pay if you choose not to pay."

Chairman Howell said, "On that issue, isn't there going to be some type of administrative fee to do that? Sometimes these tolls, you know, a dollar or so. I hate to see a lot of infrastructure and overhead to collect one dollar."

Secretary King said, "We've worked with the Treasurer's Association on that to kind of come up with, if it's less than this amount, we don't want anyone to put a hold on a registration for a couple of dollar point of view. We don't think it's going to be that many people. Again, we are going to handle it. These are only those habitual offenders that we are going to have to ask for a stick to be able to go get them."

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioner Norton."

Commissioner Norton said, "I briefly talked about vehicle miles traveled."

Secretary King said, "You could only ask me one question at a time. I can only remember one thing."

Commissioner Norton said, "I knew that, that's why I came back. But that's a really important thing that's going to happen in the next five, ten years. As cars become more fuel efficient, as we have hybrid cars, electric cars, collecting revenue on motor vehicle fuels, when you plug your car in your garage with electricity becomes a whole different thing. Where is that going now nationally? I know Oregon has played around with it, a couple other states have."

Secretary King said, "Oregon is leading the nation on that. And what they have done, you can voluntarily enter into the vehicle miles traveled system. You get a rebate on

your state gas tax. What that is, you allow them to put a tracking device on your vehicle, and then it will tell you how many miles that you have traveled, and, again, kind of that usage thing. Where it has the capability to go is if you're on a township road, you can pay, let's say a penny per mile. If you are on a county road, you could pay two cents per mile. On an interstate, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., rush hour traffic, you will pay a higher fee than you do if you go there at night. Lot of privacy issues with that. Again, a total volunteer program. They are working out the bugs in it, from the software point of view. It has been highly successful so far. Those people who only travel a couple thousand miles per year are going to be the winners in this deal.

"I think it's worth noting from DOT's perspective, we have always seen an increase in our revenue stream from the motor fuel tax, but now as vehicles are so efficient, we are seeing that the flat to just very slightly increasing. We probably have some legislation next year, or for sure the following year on hybrids, or other vehicles. If you are a natural gas user, or a compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas, we have a way to tax that. Electric, we don't have anything now."

Chairman Howell said, "I'm going to present a piece of data you may or may not even have. I did ask for some information from your office regarding the projects in this community. Just to let the Commissioners know and the audience as well, what this report says, now, all these projects are not approved necessarily. Many of them are, some of them are in the early stages, but just to point out that in the next five years, what's on this document now, what is potentially planned is just under \$400 million in Sedgwick County over the next five years. Most of that is inside the City of Wichita. I've asked our public works director to put this on our map. I have that map in our office now, but there is a tremendous amount of spending by the Kansas Department of Transportation inside the City of Wichita and also in Sedgwick County, averaging about \$80 million per year.

"Some of these projects are huge. We know we have the project that's a federal, state and local project, Kellogg and I-235, or the local match to that project, Sedgwick County is doing that. Kellogg at I-235. That's just under a \$104 million project. And that's the first of four potential phases to that project. Other projects, Kellogg and Greenwich Road; that's a \$135 million project that's approved. On top of that, KTA has another \$30 million planned, bridge replacements primarily here in Sedgwick County. So a tremendous amount of spending by the State of Kansas in terms of local investment and infrastructure.

"This leads me to another thought. I don't know if you can anecdotally answer this or not, but how much of the money that's being spent, in terms of replacement of infrastructure or maintenance, versus new construction. Any way to anecdotally answer that question?"

Secretary King said, "The only way I think I could accurately answer that is this ten-year highway program that we are in now, about \$7.8 billion, we have about \$1.8 billion of that for modernization and expansion. And we have \$4 billion for preservation. We want to make sure we maintain what we have. We have an outstanding system, and we are not going to let that system fall into disrepair. And then as legislators, taxpayers give us additional money, or if we get additional money from the federals, then we will be able to do more expansion and modernization projects."

Chairman Howell said, "Good answer. This is maybe a strange question, but I read a couple days ago there was an article regarding the Kansas Contractors Association talking about how the cuts to KDOT have impacted their ability to be fully employed

and find projects to work on. Whereas here in Sedgwick County, just one of our recent bid board items we had on our recent agenda, we had a sole bid, even though we solicited, I don't know, 15 or so different companies to do that work. Only one responded, because frankly, in Wichita, we are very busy. Do you see that this type of construction is happening, like in Sedgwick County happened elsewhere, does that story have any merit to indicate the contractors, are they correct on the things they are saying? Because that's the difference between what's happening in Sedgwick County, and the article. I am trying to put the two together somehow and I don't know how to do that."

Secretary King said, "You are really putting me on spot here, aren't you? Some of the data they used led you to be misinformed. What we have looked at, we looked at the labor codes for specifically highway and street construction. That has been level over the last 15 years. So it doesn't matter, quite frankly, if we spend, you know, if we are in the middle of the program or the end of the program, or towards the beginning of the program. We have about the same number of jobs. What we are seeing, we are seeing a consolidation in industry. Where you have, well, here in Sedgwick County, you have had a number of old line companies have merged together and formed one unit. We had 16 projects last year that the contractors moved over into this calendar year, because they weren't able to get to all of them. Most of the contractors have help wanted signs out there, so there is a little bit of a disconnect."

Chairman Howell said, "The way I look at this, I think politics sometimes people trying to find ways to spin data in their own direction. I want to know from your perspective, has spending for KDOT, has it trended upwards over the last, over your time at the KDOT, and is the spending actually trended upwards or has there been some cuts. I think when you said all the projects we want to do are actually fully funded, doing the things we need to do. Those things are happening. So, yes, if you had millions more dollars you would find ways to spend those dollars. Things that need to be done are being done. You made a very nice comment that really, despite the fact that there's been sweeps, or borrowing from the bank of KDOT; all those terms we use, that the projects that need to be done are still being done. I guess I would like to know from your perspective, is spending actually trended upward, are we actually investing more in infrastructure, or are we seeing a decline in how much more spending on this type of stuff?"

Secretary King said, "The spending is what we had anticipated with the program. We take a long-term approach. We take a five-year approach. One year we might be a little up, one year we might be a little down. That's planned due to our cash flow. But, yeah, up until this point, we have been able to do everything that we have anticipated we wanted to do."

"If you look at what \$30 a barrel oil does for you, it stretches our dollar out there quite a bit. We are able to buy more product than what we anticipated. So we are buying cheaper. As an owner, we are buying right now, we are the largest purchaser of asphalt in the State of Kansas. And we are buying that substantially cheaper than what we had in the past. We are also borrowing money much cheaper than what we had anticipated to do. But there's always need, and you know in every department you have, there's always need, it's just measuring the need up with what we are willing to pay as taxpayers."

Chairman Howell said, "In terms of debt, KDOT is one of the ways the state says borrow money and then there are bonds. I think the last I saw, \$4.5 billion of debt."

Secretary King said, "We have a little over \$2 billion worth of debt. I did go out and borrow \$400 million, the end of last year, more than what I had anticipated, but I got it

at a yield rate of 2.412 percent. I remember those numbers. Which is an incredible low rate. Since then rates have gone up, I think that was a prudent decision. T-Works was set up with about the anticipated borrowing, \$1.7 billion. With this \$400 million, we are sitting at \$1.2 billion, and I don't anticipate borrowing for the next coming years, so I think we will come in well under what we anticipated borrowing."

Chairman Howell said, "This is again one of those things that has not been well understood by many people, it has not been well reported in the news. I feel like I am in the know on some stuff. I am actually not really knowledgeable exactly what you just said, because that's really very good news in my opinion. Our debt is much lower than I thought. That's really good news, in my opinion."

Secretary King said, "It is a little frustrating when T-Works was set up, this \$7.8 billion, was set up, approved by legislators with over \$1 billion of transfer set up in it. It was always planned there would be transfers. Now there's been more transfers than that \$1 billion, so no question about that. But it was always set up with transfers in mind."

Chairman Howell said, "Well, that makes a lot of sense. I think you have answered all of my questions. I don't see any other lights on here. I want to say thank you so much for taking the time to come to Wichita and share with us. I think everything you said today, my takeaway, it is all good news. I am happy our state is doing such a good job on state highway infrastructure and investment the way we are. I am really proud of you and I appreciate your service to our state. Thank you for being here."

Secretary King said, "Thank you. You have great staff, and we have enjoyed working with them. And we can't do this without our local partners. So thank you for allowing us to be your partner."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to receive and file.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion and the vote was called.

VOTE

*Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye*

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you again, Mr. Secretary. Madam Clerk, next item, please."

B [16-150](#)

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE, PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL, INC., 2012 EDITION.

Presented By: Thomas Stolz, Director, Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department.

Recommend Action: Approve the resolution and authorize the

Chairman to sign.

Mr. Tom Stoltz, Director, Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department, greeted the Commissioners and said, "As you recall at last week's Commission meeting we discussed the adoption of the new commercial building code for Wichita/Sedgwick County jurisdiction. The Commission had questions concerning four sections of the proposed amendments. After further discussion with all Commissioners, three of the amendments have been modified since last week. The changes are as follow.

"Section 27 in the resolution has been changed to reflect that 26,000 square feet of building space may be allowed before fire suppression is required in aircraft storage hangars in county jurisdiction. This modification reflects the current amendment allowed under incumbent code in the City of Wichita jurisdiction.

"Section 32, has been changed to reflect an allowed occupancy of 300 persons in Assembly 2 buildings before requiring a sprinkler system. Similarly, this modification reflects the current amendment allowed under incumbent code in the City of Wichita jurisdiction.

"Regarding section 39, that entire amendment was deleted. After last week's meeting, the County Fire Marshal agreed that code could be followed as written concerning standpipe requirement. Thus we have code equity between the City and County concerning standpipe requirements.

"And finally, section 69 the which is the new section 68 in this week's resolution, this amendment will remain as is, and will be allowed in both City and County jurisdictions as it gives commercial building owners a structures over three stories tall a choice of fire and smoke protection concerning elevator operations.

"At this point, staff would recommend adoption of the 2012 International Building Code, with the accompanying resolutions of amendments. I would be glad to answer questions or clarify issues at this time."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Director Stoltz for that presentation. I will recognize Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "I want to thank you for your efforts and your patience in dealing with this, putting it off a week. I appreciate everything that you and your staff have done."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to adopt the resolution and authorize the Chairman to sign.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

Chairman Howell said, "Before going forward, I would ask the public, is there anybody here who would like to speak to this agenda item? Okay. Seeing none, motion and second. I don't see any further comments. I guess we are ready to vote. Madam Clerk, call the vote."

VOTE

Commissioner Unruh Aye

Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Director Stoltz for being here for the presentation. Next item, please."

C [16-157](#)

PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED TO CLOSEOUT THE SEDGWICK COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (NSP). Presented by: Marty Hughes, Accounting Department and Shelley Bradbury, South Central Kansas Economic Development District (SCKEDD) .

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive summary overview of the NSP program. Open public hearing, accept comments, close public hearing.

VISUAL PRESENTATION

Mr. Marty Hughes, Accounting, greeted the Commissioners and said, "In March of 2009, Sedgwick County received a United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce to operate a Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). The grant period concluded in September 2015. During the six years the county operated the program, South Central Kansas Economic Development District (SCKEDD) provided grant administration as they had experience and expertise administering similar grants for other cities and counties.

"Now that program has concluded, the grantor requires that the county conducts a public hearing to formally close out the grant. Before you open the public hearing, I would like to introduce Shelley Bradbury with South Central Kansas Economic Development District who administered the grant for Sedgwick County, and represents some of the accomplishments achieved through the program. Here's Shelley to present that information."

Ms. Shelley Bradbury, South Central Kansas Economic Development District, greeted the Commissioners and said, "I am going to give you the results and our achievements that we enjoyed on this grant the origin of the neighborhood stabilization grant comes from the Federal Housing and Recovery Act of 2008. From this, Kansas was awarded almost \$21 million in NSP funds. Therefore, then they awarded Sedgwick County over \$4.5 million in 2009. Sedgwick County applied for this grant, and received that in 2009. Then they applied for and received an additional \$1 million in grant funds in 2011. That results in a total of over \$5.5 million, in NSP funds.

"This grant was administered as Marty said, by the organization I represent, South Central Kansas Economic Development District. We were appointed the approved grant administrator for this grant in South Central Kansas, and we did administer this grant for other counties also.

"The award was awarded and accepted by the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners in March of 2009. We commenced with the activities in the grant on April 15th, 2009, and we completed activities in October of 2013. The goal of this grant was economic recovery. It was very tough time in our nation, in our locale, and

to help revive our neighborhoods and to benefit the housing market, that was the object of this grant. So the NSP funding provided funds to address vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed residential properties. So residential was the focus of this.

"A total of 31 properties were redeveloped. 15 new homes were built, and 16 homes were rehabilitated. These 31 homes were sold to LMI (Low to Moderate Income) buyers. These buyers were assisted with second soft mortgages to assist in down payments. So there were three uses of the funds, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and then the financing.

"There were four organizations that assisted Sedgwick County in accomplishing these goals. Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services, Power Community Development Corporation, Corporation, Wichita Habitat for Humanity and Community Housing Services. These four organizations were responsible for identifying properties, developing the properties through construction or rehabilitation, and assisting in identifying appropriate buyers. The 31 properties that were developed includes 23 in Wichita, three in Oaklawn, one in Clearwater, one in Bel Aire, and three in Bentley.

"So who benefits? Well, all citizens benefit. First of all, and especially the 31 home buyers; 19 of those were in the LMI category at under 120 percent of medium income, 12 of those were at or below 50 percent of the area median income. The county benefits; we have 31 homes that are producing higher tax revenues, and our communities benefit, because we do have improved housing stock, and improved neighborhoods.

"I'm just providing some examples here. This is an example of a lot where a home has been demolished, and then a new home built and this is at 1108 North Wabash. This is an example of rehabilitation. This is a before picture, 2125 North Minneapolis in Wichita. And then after rehabilitation. Another example of rehabilitation, 531 North Estelle in Wichita. And after. At 1547 North Estelle is another example of a vacant lot, where a structure has been demolished, and then a new home constructed. And then the same, a vacant lot previously that had a structure at 5120 Meadow View in Oaklawn and the new construction.

"That concludes my report. I will mention that this grant is in good standing with the Kansas Department of Commerce; there are no outstanding issues or questions. We are ready to proceed with close out. I welcome any questions."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Shelley, for being here and for the presentation and also thank you to Marty Hughes for his part of the presentation. I want to make sure that I understand this correctly, this was started in 2009, there are have been two times that money was awarded to this grant; one for was \$4.63 million and the second was for about \$1 million and they renovated or rebuilt about 31 homes, total. Is all of that correct?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "That is correct."

Chairman Howell said, "Those homes were eventually sold to homeowners who qualified because of their income level?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "Yes, that is correct."

Chairman Howell said, "I am just curious if I am doing this right, if I divide that out, that's about \$182,000 per home. Does that sound right?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "Yes."

Chairman Howell said, "So the government spent \$182,000 for 31 homes on average?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "Of that \$5.5 million, of course there was administration fees, developer fees, so you would want to take a portion out of that. I think I figured out it was about \$145,000 per home."

Chairman Howell said, "So if that's taxpayer spending to create these homes, the homeowners that purchased these homes, where does the money go? They spend money to buy the homes, does it go back into the program?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "That's what funded that, for example, that \$1 million additional award. So when the homes were sold, they were sold at a discount, part of the grant requirements, where they were not to exceed 95 percent of the value. The homes were sold. The homes were owned by Sedgwick County during the construction process. When they were sold at closing, Sedgwick County was issued a check for the sales proceeds. And then Marty would then submit that back to the Department of Commerce. So that was rolled back into the program, and then disbursed again."

Chairman Howell said, "Curiously, so I'm looking at the community as a whole. Probably a lot of people in the community that would be at that income level or below. How were these people selected to be able to purchase these homes amongst all their peers that may also be qualified?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "The four organizations that I mentioned, they had an application process, they have people, their clients that qualified, we also had some real estate agents involved, and they would advertise, and list homes, so it was open to all citizens, but they did have to qualify."

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioners, I am going to recognize another Commissioner in just a minute, but I want to just say, if it's acceptable to the Commissioners, we are going to need to conduct a public hearing, to officially close out the programs required by the grant award conditions. So we will be doing that in just a moment, if that's acceptable to you all. But before we get to that, Commissioner Ranzau has a comment."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "I have a few questions. Was this money part of the stimulus money?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "It was."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "It was. What price were these homes sold for?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "It varied. I could research that, but, you mean the percentage?"

Commissioner Ranzau said, "No, what price. If it cost \$180,000 per house, did we sell it for \$180,000?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "No, no."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Do you know what the average, I mean, the pictures I saw did not look like \$180,000."

Ms. Bradbury said, "I would say the typical discount was around 25 percent. But none of them really truly cost \$180,000."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "They did cost that much, because you need to include the administrative cost. It is taxpayer money, you are spending that amount."

Ms. Bradbury said, "The mortgage, okay. I will say the mortgage, you know, what they needed to purchase, what we valued that home on. It was about a 25 percent discount."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "But you base that upon, what, \$145,000 you put into it? You didn't include the fees in."

Ms. Bradbury said, "There was a down payment assistance on that, also."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Beyond this money?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "No, not beyond that. That was..."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Part of the money was to help give..."

Ms. Bradbury said, "Right."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "So when I say cost, I am saying cost to the taxpayer."

Ms. Bradbury said, "Right. Okay."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "So that's how we get it. Okay, thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioners, if it's acceptable, I would like to go ahead and officially open the public hearing to accept public comments on the closure of this grant. Do we need to vote on that? Or just declare it opening the hearing. We are going to go ahead and open the hearing for public comment. If there's anybody here that would like to speak regarding the closing of this grant, we would like to hear from you now. Come to the microphone, please state your name and address."

Ms. Sybil Strum, 326 North Walnut Street, greeted the Commissioners and said, "She states as follows. Anybody that's low income could get this. Well, that's not always true. For example, if you are low income and you want to get your house fixed up, you are put on a waiting list. And the waiting lists are usually long. Like, for example, when I first purchased my house, I asked Mennonite Housing to help me. They claimed that they weren't in my district, but down the street, 300 North Walnut, they were down there fixing up a house that a teenager had destroyed."

"Now, I would like to know why she keeps saying anybody can get it, that's low income, and she needs to specifically tell that there are many people on the waiting list, trying to get this help. This is a good organization, don't get me wrong, that they are fixing up houses. But some of the low-income people are having lots of hard times getting help, for example in my case a long time ago, they told me I had to go to a certain place, fill out an application, and then they told me, you know, I got my son to go online, because, you know how some young people are. They kept considerably telling me, you are not qualified. And I just want to let you all know about that. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you for your comments. Anybody else from the public that would like to speak during the public hearing? Commissioner Ranzau has some

comments.”

Commissioner Ranzau said, “Yeah. I would like to speak as a taxpayer on behalf of my taxpayers. I think this program is an example of the inefficiency of government, and the inefficiency of the stimulus package. I know there were good intentions, but when you spend \$180,000 of taxpayer money per house, that's a lot. Could have had a lot more houses renovated or built than this. And this is an example of why government needs to stay out of things it shouldn't be involved in. We would have been better off, this was clearly not well managed and I am disappointed in the results of this. That's all I have to say. Thank you.”

Chairman Howell said, “Anybody else from the community that would like to speak during public hearing? I see another person. Please state your name and address.”

Mr. Charlie Peaster, 9453 North 135th Street West, greeted the Commissioners and said, “And I just learned something today. Out of the 31, three of these houses were done in Bentley, and Bentley is having a problem with, number one, they opened up a housing project there, and then the City of Bentley went in and spent a \$1 million doing streets and curbs and utilities for a builder that eventually pulled out. And Bentley is looking at now, if they haven't already done it, taking those properties and putting them in what they call a bank, and it is going to take them off the tax rolls.

“Now, I don't live in \$180,000 house. And I didn't get \$180,000 house built, and I have yet to hear what these people pay in the way of a mortgage on a house that cost anywhere near that amount of money, number one. Are they talking about new houses in the district up there, or are they talking about old houses that were redone? I can't in my mind see any of the houses refurbished, that they spent anywhere near this kind of money on. What do I think about this program? I'm like Commissioner Ranzau. It's a sham. \$5.3 million, for 31 properties? How do I sign up? Thank you.”

Chairman Howell said, “Thank you for your comments. Anybody else would like to speak on this hearing? Thank you, please state your name and address.”

Mr. John Todd, 1559 North Payne, greeted the Commissioners and said, “I have been spending some time studying the existing program that's been done by the City of Wichita, and I believe, I didn't come prepared to speak today. Those houses were built by the Mennonite housing. Typically they are \$120,000 houses, so they don't match up with the \$180,000 per unit. I might point out in that was it 31 houses? Several of them were rehabilitation. Those were probably only \$35,000 to \$40,000 houses. This is a tremendous amount of money spent. I wonder what the overhead has to be, it's something else.

“The Chouteau houses typically houses designed to be built on infill lots. Most of them were built on new development, north of area six in the northeast part of Wichita. The \$125,000 houses, typically sell for \$92,500. Each. That's a shortfall of \$27,500 that's made up by the taxpayer. I suspect out of this program. \$92,500 for people that meet the low income guidelines there is an additional 20 percent of that which is \$18,500, in money that's available for down payment, and so if you add those two together, plus \$2,500 for closing costs, every single house built under the Chouteau Program, a different program than what we are talking about, cost the taxpayer, federal taxpayers over \$50,000. I think this is certainly it is an indication of the inefficiency, and the problem I have with this, and not only the taxpayers picking up the tab on this, over \$50,000 per house. Of course, on the rehab, we are looking at houses probably worth \$30,000 to \$35,000. The numbers just blow apart.

“The problem, you build it, what happens, basically, on these Chouteau houses,

\$125,000 house with \$27,500 and \$18,500 cash assistance, again, that's in the range of \$50,000 per house. The buyers wind up with \$74,000 loan. They get in for a total of \$1,000, so they have no skin in the game. I am told a lot of these houses go back, because unless you have skin in the game, you have nothing in it, so it's easy to walk away if something happenings, you can't make the payments. What's problem with selling a \$125,000 house for \$74,000?

"What happens if you happen to be, I have a picture of the house in northeast Wichita that's actually right across the street from one of these houses. This house shows pride of ownership, and I have chatted with some of the folks in northeast Wichita, it was bought over 30 years ago. People had a down payment, they made principle and interest payments for 30 years, they own the house free and clear. It shows pride of ownership. It's worth in the range of \$75,000. Now they are starting to believe they have done everything, they played by the rules buying their own home, and they can sell their \$75,000 house for \$75,000, if directly across the street from them someone can buy one for \$74,000 purchase price?

"It messes with the market terribly. Citizens who play by the rules basically wind up on the short side of the stick. I am be glad to answer questions. If we have any."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Todd. Anybody else from the committee that would like to speak during this public hearing? Anybody else like to speak on this public hearing? All right. Seeing none, I am going to close the public hearing."

"I do have one more question myself. The public hearing is now closed, but I am curious, I notice that the word SCKEDD is on the slide here, and I do see that this is, are you employed by South Central Kansas Economic Development District?"

Ms. Bradbury said, "Yes."

Chairman Howell said, "Okay. So they are the ones that received this grant, and they are managing this -- they are the one that managed this for the last..."

Ms. Bradbury said, "They were hired as administrators. Sedgwick County received the grants."

Chairman Howell said, "Sedgwick County received the grant, but SCKEDD managed it for the last seven years, 2009 to present. This is managed by SCKEDD."

Ms. Bradbury said, "Correct."

Chairman Howell said, "This 31 homes is in totality of what happened over the last seven years."

Ms. Bradbury said, "Correct."

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioner Peterjohn. Further comments?"

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "I just want to thank the public for coming out and speak on this program this morning. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Well, thank you, appreciate you being here today. Thank you for the presentation, and I don't see there's actually any vote required on this agenda item. With that understanding, let's move to the next item. Madam Clerk, let's go to the next item, please."

D [16-17](#)

SPECIAL COMCARE PRESENTATION.

Presented by: Marilyn Cook, Director, COMCARE.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Take action as deemed appropriate by the Commission.

Ms. Marilyn Cook, Executive Director, COMCARE, greeted the Commissioners and said, "I would ask that we delay this presentation a little bit this morning. I am doing this in collaboration with a private citizen, Mr. Jason Van Sickle, he is the President of The Old Town Association, and he had a board meeting, a monthly board meeting this morning at 9:00 a.m., and thought he would get here by 10:30 a.m. So he should be here shortly. If we could delay it just a little bit and go on to the next item, I would appreciate it."

MOTION

Chairman Howell moved defer Item D until later in the meeting.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion and the vote was called.

VOTE

*Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye*

Chairman Howell said, "Madam Clerk, next item, please."

E [16-163](#)

CONSIDERATION OF GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$115,249 FROM KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES (KDADS) FOR COMCARE'S PATH HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM (PATH).

Presented by: Marilyn Cook, LMCSW, Executive Director, COMCARE.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorize to apply and accept the grant award and authorize the Chairman, or his designee, to sign all the necessary documents when they become available.

Ms. Cook said, "The acronym for PATH, stands for Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, and COMCARE has been receiving funds from the state for nearly 19 years for this program.

"The application here is for \$115,249 grant, which essentially covers the salaries and the benefits of 2.4 FTE (Full Time Employee) staff who are working in the Center City Homeless Program. The two full-time staff are outreach workers whose job it is to locate and engage literally homeless individuals in our community, and literally homeless individuals are those that are defined as living in shelters, in parks, in cars, and on the street. The .4 staff member tracks data and helps with the administration of the program.

"Staff working on this grant anticipates outreach to 300 individuals this next grant period. The current grant period that we are in right now, these very experienced staff has been working, one of whom working for well over 20 years for us, has outreached 284 individuals. As a result of that, 214 individuals are 75 percent of them, that they outreach to, are enrolled this year in COMCARE services. The expectation, that outcome expectation by KDADS (Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services) was 58 percent. We exceeded that expectation. COMCARE will have a match of \$39,141 worth of expenditures for this grant. And that match entails part of a supervisor's salary and fringe benefits that aren't otherwise covered and some flex funds to help with expenses involved in getting I.D.'s for individuals who have been homeless for a while.

"We purchase sunscreen for them, sometimes blankets, we do everything we can to engage them and bring them into services. The program has done well and we have high hopes for this continuing. We are recommending that you authorize us to apply and accept the grant award and authorize the Chairman or his designee to sign all the necessary documents when they become available."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to take the recommended action.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

Chairman Howell said, "I have a couple questions. I notice this grant is from KDADS. Are these homeless necessarily considered disabled or elderly, necessarily? I'm curious as to why that particular department is funding this, versus some other department. This has been this way for a long time."

Ms. Cook said, "Our engagement in this population is to try and engage individuals who are homeless and have some mental illness or behavioral health problem, whether it is a mental illness or substance use disorder. So we outreach to them. We outreach to as many as we find. If we see there is a mental illness or substance abuse disorder there, we try to engage them in services that would help them function better. That's why the state is involved."

Chairman Howell said, "Can you tell me about the amount of this grant we are applying for this grant, is this amount changed over the years?"

Ms. Cook said, "It's been pretty steady over the years. We got a little additional money last year because outcomes were so good, state had a little more money, and they gave us some additional money. But normally, it's about the same."

Chairman Howell said, "Can you talk about the number of homeless in our community. We have an intentional count that happens every year. How has that changed? Are we seeing any trend changes in the number of homeless in our community?"

Ms. Cook said, "The number varies. The point in time count that this community does every end of January, that number is for the one that was just in January this year, for 2016, the numbers are not in yet. However, final numbers, a point in time count of 2014 showed 631 individuals who were homeless, and then last year, that number was reduced a little, from 631 to 561. So there's a small decrease in that."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you. I have no further questions. Seeing no further comments, motion and second, Madam Clerk, call the vote."

VOTE

Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye

Chairman Howell said, "I see that he is here now. I would like to go back to Item D of the agenda please. Thanks, Marilyn Cook."

D 16 17 SPECIAL COMCARE PRESENTATION.

Ms. Cook said, "Ready to proceed?"

Chairman Howell said, "Yes."

Ms. Cook said, "Thank you. Every year the National Council for Behavioral Healthcare develops a theme for Mental Health Awareness Month. My favorite one was introduced several years ago, Mental Health Matters Every Day. And we know that's true, as good mental health is clearly necessary for overall health and well-being.

"One in four individuals in our community and in our country struggle with mental illness. Some seek care, and some don't. And the reason they don't is because they lack the resources to seek that care, or because they don't even know where to turn for help. Some lack knowledge about how effective treatment is, especially when it is started early for individuals that start experiencing symptoms, and some don't seek care because of the shame that they experience in having the disorder.

"Community mental health centers are the safety net for mental health in Kansas and again throughout the country. We treat not only mental illnesses, but we routinely connect individuals we serve to a wide array of resources that help them lead more productive lives. We serve people of all ages, and economic groups. We serve individuals with chronic and enduring problems, and those experiencing an immediate crisis. We serve people with addictions, with anxiety, with depression, with delusions and hallucinations, and those that have everyday relationship struggles. We interact with public safety systems, legal systems, the school system, the aging system, hospital systems, developmental disability system, the child welfare system, addictions system, community corrections system and with physical health providers and we do this quietly, and we do it 365 days a year.

"Investing in mental health is important, because it affects workplace productivity, it affects economic stability of individuals and families, and it strongly influences relationships and family functioning. My throat is killing me. I'm doing the same thing as Commissioner Peterjohn. Excuse me. COMCARE has been fortunate to have a man in our community whose friend experienced a local system of care and came to us and said, I want to help, what can I do? His name is Jason Van Sickle, a local businessman and a local developer in Wichita, and he has offered to develop and pilot our public/private partnership with us. Jason made a presentation about this partnership on Monday in the Board of County Commissioners staff meeting, and by Monday afternoon, our Medical Director got an email from the Chief Resident of KU School of Medicine's first year psychiatry residency program asking what first year medical students could do to help in some kind of volunteer capacity. Yesterday I got an email from a vice President of the local insurance company that said I live in this

community, too. Let me know what I can do to help. So this tells me that there are potentially many Jason Van Sickles in our community who want to reach out and help. And at this point, I would like to call Mr. Jason Van Sickle to talk to you about the pilot partnership that we are introducing."

Mr. Jason Van Sickle, 151 North Rock Island, Wichita, greeted the Commissioners and said, "My background is that I got involved with COMCARE a little over a year ago. I had a dear friend who had the unfortunate experience of having to put her brother into rehab. Not only did she have to put her brother in rehab, she had to put her brother's wife into rehab, simultaneously. This is a family with small children. This was a very traumatic experience to have to have two families come together and figure out how to get these young adults the help that they needed, but the first hurdle was just trying to figure out how to get them to detox. Most people may not know, but to get into rehab, you must first go through a detoxification program and they found out at that time that there were no beds, there were no programs available for someone who was ready to stand up and say 'I've got a problem and I need help.'

"When I read in the newspaper about a year ago that COMCARE was creating a Community Crisis Center, one of the things it was going to do was create a place people could go when they were ready to seek help and better themselves. I decided I wanted to see if there was anything I could do to help.

"As a real estate person, I wanted to offer my services, because at the time they were in the site selection process and they were trying to figure out where they could go, how to make the numbers work and how they could bring all of the pieces together. I said, as a person of the private business community and someone with a little bit of real estate experience, let me know if I can be helpful. I was brought in, shown the facilities and plan, and all of amazing things COMCARE does, and I was blown away by how broad reaching COMCARE is with the important services it provides to our community. As I joined the board for the Community Crisis Center and that center found a home, discussions began with the Commission about how COMCARE could possibly look at its future going into a future with reduced state and federal funding and going into a future where every tax dollar has to be looked at carefully and how it's spent, because that's a very important responsibility. I began to talk to Marilyn and her staff about the possibility of following the national trend where public private partnerships are created. And that is the direction that the COMCARE staff decided to go in reaction to or in response to the Commission and the desire to see and make sure that COMCARE was financially viable going into the future.

"This really is the result of a year or more worth of work. I'd like to take a moment to thank the council, because last year, under the guidance of our previous Commissioner, who was head of the Commission at the time, Commissioner Ranzau, who is actually my representative, downtown as a business owner, resident and property owner downtown. The Commission brought up this idea of exploring options. And so COMCARE created an internal plan. It created an internal plan of starting a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that would bring in the private sector to partner with the public side. So what I mean by that is private business representatives and community leaders coming together on a Board of Directors of a nonprofit organization to partner on that Board of Directors with other members who would be from all of the various social service agencies that COMCARE impacts, which is every agency that the county is involved in, and have that group work together to look at COMCARE, see where efficiencies could be created, figure out a plan for the future, and working with the present chair of the Commission and you as Commissioners, we have presented a plan where we would create that 501(c)(3) and move forward.

"As we do that now, I think one of the most important things in moving forward is

accountability and actionability. And so since we spoke on Monday, I have also received a number of calls from people saying how can we help? We had no idea the impact COMCARE has, if this is going to be a public-private partnership, we'd like to get involved, and there are also some questions about what are you going to do? What's the timeline? How are you moving forward?

"I think one of the most important things is this is a fundamental shift, a fundamental long-term shift for COMCARE in a positive way, but it also needs to be an immediate shift that has tangible results. And so as we move forward in the next 30 to 60 days, the goal is going to be to form a Board of Directors for this new nonprofit to get the legal structure in place and to begin putting a very detailed plan together for the items that can be done. On the broad scale, what we're going to be targeting is how to do more with less taxpayer dollars. That is our motto at this point, how to provide and maintain at the very minimum the level services that COMCARE has come to provide its partners and the other county agencies and this City of Wichita and the County, Sedgwick County. We will also be improving and increase those without any increased burden on the taxpayers and hopefully to see that burden on taxpayers decrease. That is the goal.

"The way that we will do that is through several key initiatives. Number one, bringing in that outside private sector expertise to shine a spotlight on everything. Nothing is holy. We need to look at everything and how it's done and make sure it's being done the right way and see if there are new efficiencies that can be created and ways that it did be done better. Also, through the advice and oversight of private sector business professionals who have ways in the private sector of doing things that might not have been thought about like that in the public sector. We're also going to look at reducing costs and increasing services by implementing a volunteer program so we can get more people directly involved without additional costs to COMCARE. We also want to make sure people in the community understand the incredible impact that COMCARE has had on the community for the last 50 years under the leadership of the Commission, and because of that 50-year history of the Commission being able to make sure the taxpayer dollars are spent the right way through COMCARE, I think it's very important that the Commission maintain control over all of these various pieces.

"This nonprofit will be created stand-alone nonprofit organization, but I see it as under the direct oversight of the County Commission. And the other thing that we will do is we will look at raising additional funds that weren't available to COMCARE as a purely public institution. So we'll look at grant opportunities that may be available to nonprofits that aren't available to public organizations. We will look at private fundraising, because COMCARE touches so many lives directly or indirectly, whether it's substance abuse treatment, whether it's mental health issues, whether it's suicide prevention, and so we believe there's a lot of people who will get very passionate about COMCARE and wanting to be personally involved or possibly contribute financially to help COMCARE, and we want to get out there and get that involvement for the organization.

"Again, I've really enjoyed working with this Commission. This Commission has shown me how a government organization can work together as a unified body to figure out how to do things well and do things even better, and I personally pledge to you that in the weeks and months ahead, I will be accountable to you as well as COMCARE will be accountable to you in making it clear the steps we're going to take and how we're going to create actionable items that can be put into place and acted upon, not only for the long-term, but in the weeks and the months ahead.

"Thank you very much for your support of this plan, and we look forward to moving

toward.”

Chairman Howell said, “Thank you. I have some comments and questions. I’m just curious, under the RFP (Request for Proposal), and this is a question really for Director Cook or yourself. Under the RFP that was proposed, I think one of the thoughts that was some level of services, not necessarily wholesale change, but parts of what we deliver in terms of services could be potentially shifted from what we do currently to new partners in the community that would deliver those services by contract on our behalf.

“I’m curious. This public-private partnership of a community partner, if somebody has an interest in delivering services would approach this Board of Directors, is this something you anticipate would be acceptable if someone out there could provide better services for less costs, is this something you would be do the same thing if the RFP had stated it in some of its goals, something still on the table, so to speak?”

Ms. Cook said, “Well, I don’t remember that component of the RFP personally, and I read it again very recently, but COMCARE already has a number of community partners that work in partnership with us to deliver services. While the outside business expertise that our local business community can bring to this is going to be critical to us to look at how we’re doing everything. It’s just a part of the service delivery. They will also be helping fund raise and helping promote our services. So we would not be closed to that. We already have a number of community partners.”

“It’s interesting to me, again, I think we want to be very careful with any changes to COMCARE. I know our District Attorney is here today and our Sheriff has expressed strong concerns that any changes to this system of service delivery that works very, very well right now, those changes are concerning. We want to make sure we don’t lose anything we have currently, and if with make any changes, it’s for good reasons. We have hopefully improvement in services and not reductions in services. We want to be very careful. Having said that, the RFP was received by the community and I think people were concerned about where this was leading and they were concerned that we are going to lose some of what we have. There has been a lot of concern expressed by people all over the community in that regard.

“This proposal has received a much warmer welcome. I’m trying to understand the difference, because again, you’re talking about goals of saving money, level services, potentially increases in services, but you stated on the front end of that, acknowledging reduced state and federal funding trying to maintain level services, and the fact that we’ve got reductions in revenue to sustain that system overall. So I guess it’s interesting to me that changes are ahead, whether we go down this path or down an RFP path. We’re questioning how we are delivering services now and changes will have to happen at some point. The reality is there’s less funding today than there was years ago. That’s something that will continue to happen potentially and we need to be ready to engage those challenges and find better ways to deliver services with potentially less revenue to do that. So changes are ahead, regardless whether it be through the RFP or through this public-private partnership. It’s interesting to me that the RFP has kind of a cold reception, yet this one seems to have a very warm reception. Can you explain the difference between the two?”

Mr. Van Sickle said, “I think the way I’ve seen it is that there has been a misunderstanding. This proposal is a result of that conversation about the RFP and in initiation of that process. I think that the initiation of that process was a good thing, it made everybody reevaluate and rethink. I think the misconception was that somehow the Commission was going to get rid of COMCARE or sell it off or do some wholesale dismissal of the organization, and I never saw that as the goal of the Commission. I

saw the potential RFP as a desire to just simply see if things could be done better, if there could be an outside component brought in that could bring in some more efficiencies and do some things better, and what happened was, the first group to step to the table before the RFP was officially released and to address the request for an RFP was COMCARE, and COMCARE created a proposal. So I would like to say personally that I see this as a process that was successful.

"It was the Commission saying, how can we do things better, and we'd like to see proposals, and it was COMCARE presenting a proposal, and the Commission saying, you know what, we will give this internal proposal a shot first before we go outside and bring in outside people to look at what could be done.

"To your question earlier, I really do think we should be open to anything. As a business owner, if somebody comes to me and says, I can do something you're doing internally, but because of the economy's inefficiencies, I can do it better, and I would welcome them to bring in their outside consulting service or organization. That's why I think it's important we have internal stakeholders, like our partners in the other county organizations, and business owners that have that perspective to say, as long as it won't diminish the quality of what COMCARE provides, as long as it won't take away the ability for the Commission to say how taxpayer dollars are spent, if somebody comes with a proposal to do things better and increase efficiency or decrease costs while maintaining the quality of service that COMCARE provides, then I think we should look at every option. So that's even another layer as to how this proposal is actually embracing the whole philosophy of that RFP proposal that went out there. I see this as a very important process that was gone through and a very good initial answer to why that process was put in place."

Chairman Howell said, "I'll make one further comment. By the way, what you just said just a minute ago is almost verbatim what I've been saying for the last 16 months on this issue. This idea of we're going to destroy a great organization that does a lot of great things in the community because we're cheap or something, I think that accusation is unfounded. We are trying to provide better services and maintain what we have, and that's been my opinion, the goal of this RFP in the first place. In fact, I think government, especially considering the largeness of COMCARE in terms of number of employees and the amount of dollars being spent and how many people are customers of our services of we deliver, this is a huge part of Sedgwick County government, and so we need to constantly question, governments need to question themselves, are we delivering the best we can? Is this the best deal for the taxpayer? Are we doing a good job? Are we being effective and official? Those are questions we've got to be asking ourselves, and that's what the RFP was, just a question, are we doing the best we can. Had we not asked for the RFP, we wouldn't be having this conversation today. Right? So, we got a lot of criticism for that, but let's be clear, we are doing something potentially really good, and I think right now we've got a lot of emotional buy-in from the community in a different way today than we had on the RFP itself, and I see we have support from the District Attorney and Sheriff's office, unlike what we had received from the RFP itself.

"I think, again, overall, we were criticized but at the end of the day, we're potentially going to have something that was even better than we had before. This is going to be a positive regardless of whatever happens at this point forward. I think there will be good things for Sedgwick County. I'll stop talking for just a moment. Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "I just want to say thanks to Jason and Marilyn for keeping an open mind and coming here today and offering this proposal. The sentiment with Chairman Howell, we started doing a lot of things last

year that we took a lot of heat for. We've challenged a lot of things in a lot of areas, because I think we have to. We have this new economy. And there's been a lot of fear mongering going on with respect to a lot of things that we've done. And I'm not just talking about COMCARE, but I think now over the next, days, weeks, months, years, you'll see the benefit to the community and taxpayers as a result of us challenging what we're doing, why we're doing it, the status quo, so to speak, and try to find a way to provide services that are efficient, effective and accountable. I'm proud of the Commission's courage that we exhibited last year and we'll continue to as far as what needs doing despite all the fear mongering going on. In the end, we know we'll end up in a good place.

"Again, I like options. I like proposals. I think we need to look at all options for everything that we do out there. And that's what we're looking at, and I appreciate you coming here I think it's appropriate to at least receive and file, I believe, Mr. Chairman."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to receive and file the report.

Commissioner Unruh seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion and the vote was called.

VOTE

*Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye*

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioner Norton."

Commissioner Norton said, "I'm glad we're moving ahead with the thought process. You know, innovation sometimes is hard and change is hard and kind of revisiting where you're at and what you've done for so many years is hard. I think part of the conversation and the consternation when instantly we had some conversations about privatization, which just says getting rid of it and giving it to the private sector, and I think we've come up with a hybrid now where the private sector can open up the belly of the beast, kind of look at what's being done, analyze it with their thought processes, put it through the string of what government can do and what our other organizations and partners need from us. I welcome that. There's nothing wrong with that.

"I think we started at that level of let's jettison it off. It's very expensive. The private sector automatically can do it better than anybody else. I don't know that we know that. We have some mandates not only internally in our heart but from the state in running the health organizations locally. There was legislation that moved that out of a state organization to a community based organization, and I take that charge very seriously. I don't want to lose too much control of that, because we've worked hard. We got great staff that have put in yeoman's work to understand the system and the difficulties that we have in our community, which is different than every other community.

"We're a more mature community because we have a lot of veterans and homeless,

because we are a different kind of community. We have different things to deal with. We've been successful. We've been innovative and we've been flexible. When it came time to have conversations about a mental health plot with the Sheriff, we took that challenge on and worked with COMCARE and the criminal justice system and made that happen. So it's not like we're against new programs and thinking differently about this. As I have sat on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and talked to District Attorney Bennett and Sheriff Easter and other folks in the criminal justice system, I think they believe that we have a great system here that works well with what they have to do, and when we talk about jail populations, incarceration, what that means to our community, I don't think we want to go too far afield from our partner and not make sure that we consider that, because it is too critical for our community.

"Truthfully, I often say that every citizen has physical health and they have mental health. We hope that their mental health is just as good as their physical health. We know one in four, I think you stated, have some kind of mental health deficiency or difficulty. And I think it's our charge to understand how we help that in society, because it has an economic and financial drain on our economy. It hurts families, and our social fabric. I take that charge very seriously. So for me, I look forward to what comes out of this, but the conversation started out with completely jettisoning off COMCARE and privatizing, and now it's this conversation, so I can be supportive of it, and I already have been. But I want to caution us that even though I know private industry does things very, very well, there's some parts of what government does that only a government public structure can take care of.

"We have some mandates that we have to live with, and we need to take care of. And we owe it to our population as elected officials to understand how it takes our community and hurts it, and if we don't deal with it in a positive manner with a system, which is the other thing. I don't want to fragment the system that we've worked so diligently to have in our community where mental health providers that are in the private sector deliver a lot of our services already, but there is a portion of the population that have no payor sources, that are underserved, that will going to be in the system that won't be particularly embraced by private companies that meet a profit margin, because there's no payer source. They're the underserved, the homeless, the indigent and folks that have no insurance or payer source, and we have an obligation to still take care of that because of mental health reform.

"Having said all of that, I am supportive, but I want to just throw out a cautionary tale that we don't want to move too fast. We want to be sure there is good analysis. I heard early on we'll do this in six months or a year. I think this is a three or five year process. There will be some good things that come early and we can adopt. There will be some other things that are more long-term. I mean, we didn't just jump into a mental health pod overnight. We looked at some national organizations, some other places that were doing it, tried to make sure we knew what our resources were and how we could integrate that into our community, and it's been pretty successful so far. So we want to be sure that we take caution, we make the right decisions and we don't go helter-skelter into this too quickly. Thank you, Mr. Chair."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Commissioner, for those comments. Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Thank you. For the record, I just want to clarify the history behind the whole RFP process for our folks here to make sure everything is very clear. The discussion with respect to possibly privatizing parts of government, whether it be COMCARE, Aging, Health Department is something that I've brought up for several years now. So this is not a new discussion at all, it did not happen all of a

sudden. In fact, I think the idea to consider privatizing COMCARE actually came from COMCARE a few years ago, if I'm not mistaken. We didn't go down that road. That's fine. But I continue to ask the question and try and push the Commission into that direction to at least ask the question for a variety of departments, not just COMCARE, because in a lot of counties some of these entities are, in fact, privatized with respect to Aging and Mental Health. This has been ongoing for a long time. I think it's long overdue.

"This last year, we had a change at the Commission, and so we were able to actually begin this dialogue. We're not going to all of a sudden jettison off COMCARE or anything else. That's where we asked for an RFP process to consider all options, whole or part or whatever, because we didn't know what was out there. We at least need to ask the question. That was the disappointing thing in my first four years here. I actually remember being told in a staff meeting I shouldn't even ask the question. I continued to ask the question and last year we had enough Commissioner say okay, let's ask the question. I just want to be clear that this has been an ongoing discussion, and there's nothing going to happen all of a sudden without careful thought into this, but I am very appreciative that we're heading in the right direction on this issue and many others. Thank you, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Howell said, "Let me just ask one question for clarity. This is a very unique proposal. Is there anything else in the state or broader area that you can say is similar to what we're talking about here?"

Ms. Cook said, "Mr. Chairman, almost every other mental health center has some kind of fundraising and foundation component to it. We've all witnessed how the funding, state funding, has diminished for the services we're offering. And most of the mental health centers are 501(c)(3) organizations. So while they have fundraising, some of them hired private firms to do that. Some of them have staff people on their staff who take that responsibility. One of the mental health centers, The Children's Mental Health Center in Topeka, does a gala every year. Everybody has their own kind of slant on this, but since only two of us are public entities and government-run entities, I don't know anybody else that is doing this, and we are excited about it."

Chairman Howell said, "So for clarity, we're one of two counties in the State of Kansas that are government providers and we're creating a sister organization, which is this public-private partnership we're talking about today. We have a government organization that delivers services working with this sister organization creating this proposal today? Someone said this was very unique, maybe the only one like this. I wanted to just explain that to the community to help everyone understand exactly what's being discussed here. This is a very unique proposal."

Ms. Cook said, "I will say Johnson County, which is the other government employed mental health center, does have a small organization that they've had for a while called Friends of Johnson County. I don't believe it's very active in what they're doing, and I don't know if it goes beyond fundraising. We did talk to that community health center, and they said it's been kind of dormant for a while. They also see the need to step up and have more involvement from local citizens and businesses that this is pretty unique for us."

"I will say we have gotten donations in the past from completed suicides, from memorials, but I think in general people don't really actually realized that they can provide some funding and financial help to a government organization."

Chairman Howell said, "Certainly, by being able to engage volunteer programs and get the community involved that way, plus fundraising and grant opportunities, this is

going to create a lot of new, I think, opportunities for the system overall on how we deliver services, and I think in that regard I'm very supportive of this idea.

"Let me just say, I think that myself at least, I can't speak for my colleagues here. I'd like to see some details worked out on paper and have that presented to us formally so we can simply vote to pull the trigger on this and say that we're actually going in this direction. But right now, with all the discussion we've had so far and concept, it sounds really interesting to me. I think this is probably the right direction to go, but since we don't really have anything written down, by the way, I guess there was a four-page document Monday that some people received. I haven't received that yet that I'm aware of. Again, I think the details of this need to be worked out. Definitions need to be put on paper.

"We need to have that formally presented to us in a future meeting, have us vote to pull a trigger that this is the direction we're headed. I think that needs to happen still. Although I think you're seeing some support amongst some Commissioners and there appears to be consensus here that this is the way we should go, I think we need to have more of a formal presentation and actually have a vote to make this our clear direction. Until that happens, I think my opinion is that the RFP is still a document that's out there. It doesn't mean we're going to do that or not do that. My opinion is this is going to be suspended or on hold until we have, I guess, more understanding of exactly what's being presented, what's being proposed by this partnership. So personally, I would like to see the RFP just sit on the table for a little while and let this definition be created and then presented to us for a vote for us to actually formally go in that direction.

"Although I think this is where we're headed, I think that still needs to happen. That's my contention. I would ask you to, I guess, develop as much as you possibly can, get that all on paper, and let's have that presented to us in a future meeting if that's okay."

Ms. Cook said, "Chairman, Howell, we did give you the four page document when we briefed everybody, but it is a concept paper, as you're suggesting, not details. Those details will come when we identify the board members, identify the articles of incorporation that would need to happen for a 501(c)(3), develop bylaws and development strategies on how we are going to accomplish the things that the 501(c)(3) would need to do."

Chairman Howell said, "For example, you talked about or I think Jason talked about the Commission will continue to maintain control. I think the makeup of the board and number of members and how that's done and who sits on that board, whether these are county employees or community partners, I think those are really important details. So those are the kinds of things I would like to see figured out. Somebody needs to make a proposal, get that on paper. Let's understand that fully before we, I guess, limit our options in any way."

Mr. Van Sickle said, "Yeah. I think that what we had discussed when we met with each of you individually and then as a group is that to move forward with this initiative, it needed the support of the council, and we got a vote of confidence today. We've been told that we have your support to move forward. I would really envision moving forward now that everybody is on the same page and see this as a good direction to be heading at this point in time, that it's agreed upon, that this is a direction to go, but that every step of the process along the way it's reevaluated.

"That's just what needs to happen. We need to, now that the community knows that the Commission is behind this plan and wants to see where it can go, that we can

form a board that has the confidence that they're volunteering to be or on the board of an actual organization, and not one that just may occur and that that board can create a plan in the months and weeks ahead so we can start creating actionable items, to be acted upon, and then we can come to the Commission as we go through each of those steps, so that the Commission stay informed so it make sure it's the direction they want to go.

"I appreciate the Commission saying the possibility of the proposal is being put aside, that we're going to try this, see where it goes, that we've done a vote now saying that you want to see where it can go, and so the next steps will be to reach out to individuals and say, this is going to be an organization we are creating with the support of the County Commission and now we need to define the detailed items that this organization is going to be doing going forward, and then be held accountable to that month after month, as often as you would like me or others to come back and report to you on what's happening and make sure in public forums or private forums that it's going down the track that's meeting each of your individual desires for what needs to be accomplished. That's the direction that I think we're heading at that point."

Chairman Howell said, "Again, I'm very hopeful for good things in the future, but for example, let's take it a step further. If the RFP had happened, I would expect a lot of accountability, a lot of performance measures and a lot of ability on the part of the Commission to change directions if we had to. I'm going to hold the same standards to this organization. I think we need to know there is a lot of accountability, performance measures and we can exchange directions if we need to. That needs to be clear. I have a lot of confidence in you and Director Cook, and I think this is going to be a great thing and I am very hopeful. That's why these things need defined on paper. I just wanted to share that. Commissioner Unruh."

Commissioner Unruh thanked the Chairman and said, "Jason, your explanation of next steps in what we're headed for on the assumption that you have the consent of the Commission is necessary for you to start forming a board and moving forward. So the way that you just described this is the way I understand we are moving forward, knowing full well that you'll keep us apprised of what you're doing. If we start putting too many steps in there, you're going to have a very difficult time attracting folks to a board of directors. From my perspective, what you described to us is what we are consenting to. That's all I have."

Chairman Howell said, "I just to make sure we're clear, what I'm expecting in the future is to have some definition. And when that's understood to the greatest extent until you hit some barrier. I know at some point you have to make the application for the 501(c)(3), and I don't know if the board of directors have to be defined before that. There are things to do between now and then. I guess you could say that we are limiting other options and we are moving in this direction. We need to get those things defined as much as possible and make that presentation back to the Board of County Commissioners. Let's officially pull the trigger on this thing and go that direction, but let's get that definition, as much as possible so we know exactly what we're dealing with and we understand the terms, we understand the accountability, we understand the performance measures, we understand the board of directors, we understand our ability to control what happens, whatever level that is. So those things all need defined."

"You talked about the bylaws and the articles of incorporation. A lot of things need defined. I think you need to do those things. As some point we need to understand that, have it presented to us and make a vote that that's what we're going to go do."

Mr. Van Sickle said, "I like that. I like the idea that what we can do as we move forward is that there's not going to be a scheduled vote at any point in the future to say, well, now we're going to choose whether to really move forward or not. I would prefer to have the statement that the Commission says we're moving forward but the Commission has veto power to stop that movement at any point in time if it's not meeting the needs and desires."

"As we get moving along and file the 501(c)(3), the Commission views that and agrees to move forward and file it. As we move forward and put a plan of action for the months and the year ahead, the Commission reviews that and agrees and decides whether to approve or not to approve that. At any point during the time, if it doesn't look like this is a direction that's going to yield the results that the Commission wants, of course, the Commission has the right and responsibility to go look at other options at this time. And so I would prefer this be that we have been told we're ready to move forward so we can tell very important potential board members that we are moving forward but that we need to work hard, because if we don't accomplish the things that we pledge we could accomplish and we don't do that along with the County Commission that at any time the Commission has other options that it could invoke."

Chairman Howell said, "I don't see any other comments, and I just want to say thank you to the both of you for the presentation, and I'm looking forward to good things in our future. Thank you so much for being here and making all the comments, answering all the questions today."

Mr. Van Sickle said, "Thank you."

Ms. Cook said, "Thank you."

The Board of County Commissioners recessed from 11:09 a.m. until 11:14 a.m.

F [15-0475](#)

CONSIDER RESOLUTION ADOPTING REVISED DEBT POLICY.
Presented by: Chris Chronis, Chief Financial Officer.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt the Resolution and authorize the Chairman to sign or deny the Resolution, as deemed appropriate.

Mr. Chris Chronis, Chief Financial Officer, greeted the Commissioners and said, "The county debt policy was adopted in 2009, and it sets forth comprehensive guidelines for the financing of capital expenditures. It also states explicit objectives for county debt financing. Those objectives are that the county obtain financing only when necessary, that the process for identifying the timing and amount of debt or other financing be as efficient as possible, that the most favorable interest rate and other related costs be obtained in the transaction, and finally, that when appropriate, future financial flexibility be maintained."

"The debt policy goes on to say explicitly that debt shall be used only to purchase capital assets that cannot be acquired from other available current revenues or fund balances and that it goes on to say that debt under no circumstances can be used to pay for operating expenditures. Among those comprehensive guidelines that I mentioned are provisions that address essentially every aspect of capital planning, debt issuance and debt administration. Perhaps the most important of those guidelines are those which set a ceiling on the amount of debt that the county will have outstanding or can have outstanding at any point in time."

"The debt ceiling is established by a series of ratios, per capita debt, per capita direct overlapping and underlying debt, which essentially means all municipal debt, all tax-backed debt issued within Sedgwick County regardless of which government issues the debt, direct debt, the county debt, as a percentage of the full market value of property in Sedgwick County, which is backing that debt, and the direct and overlapping and underlying debt, again all debt as a percentage of the estimated full market value. And there is a fifth measure, the debt burden, and the percentage of debt service, county principle and interest payments, as a percentage of the total county budget for general government, general fund and debt service fund.

"Those five measures are commonly used by investment analysts and credit raters to evaluate the creditworthiness of issuers, and so we have used those measures to establish the debt ceiling for Sedgwick County. We have established targets for each of those measures that say the maximum amount of debt that can be issued, and we have said in the policy that we will never exceed more than three of those five targets.

"With the change in the Commission over the past several years, it's become apparent that the Commission as a body has a clear interest in linking the debt burden ratio to county expenditures more tightly than it has been in the existing policy. And so what you have before you is an amendment to the debt policy which changes that single ratio in our debt policy.

"Currently, we have an established ceiling on the debt burden of 20 percent. That is currently the amount of outstanding debt that we have cannot require us to make interest and principle payments on debt in an amount greater than 20 percent of the county's general fund and debt service fund budgets. Our actual performance to date, as of today, is at about 9.6 percent. So we are well under that threshold. The amendment that's before you reduces that ratio, that maximum target, from 20 percent to nine percent effective immediately, and it further reduces it to eight percent beginning in 2019, on January the first of 2019. And at that point, it reduces the ratio to eight percent. Now, that will have the effect of further limiting the amount of additional debt that the county has the authority to issue under its self-imposed policy.

"As I said currently, the amount of debt that we have outstanding requires a debt service burden of 9.6 percent of budget. The new policy, should you adopt it, will reduce that threshold to nine percent. Effectively, that means that until we pay off some of our existing debt and get the debt burden below nine percent, we won't be under the policy authorized to issue any new debt. That, as a financial matter, that is a nonissue, because, in fact, we have no plans to issue debt in our capital improvement program that you've adopted or in the financial forecast, the longer term financial forecast that you have seen that we produce here in the financial division.

"The county's current outstanding debt will drop below the nine percent ratio next year, in 2017. And so if you adopt this policy, you would have a debt margin, an ability to issue additional debt, additional new debt, in the amount of \$7.6 million in 2017, or \$37.7 million in 2018, or in 2019 when the margin ratio goes down to eight percent, would you have the ability to issue \$63.6 million of new debt. Now, with each of those numbers, I used the phrase or between them, and that's because that's not cumulative. You can't issue \$7.6 million of debt in 2017 and \$37 million in 2018. If you issue debt in 2017, that reduces the amount that you have remaining available in 2018 or 2019.

"Bottom line is that, based on our current adopted capital improvement program and our current financial forecast, I think that I'm very comfortable with these ratios as you

are proposing them. They will not have an adverse impact on the county's ability to do projects that are currently planned.

The action that's before you is to adopt the resolution and authorize the Chairman To sign it or to deny the resolution as you deem appropriate, and I would suggest that at this time it would be appropriate to take whichever of those two actions you do deem appropriate. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to try and answer them."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Chronis, for the presentation. I have a couple of quick questions. Does this limit our ability to refinance any current debt?"

Mr. Chronis said, "It would have our, well, the short answer is no."

Chairman Howell said, "Can you remind me, how much debt have we taken on, made decisions to accept new debt since January 2015? Can you think back over the last year and three months, have we authorized any new debt during that period of time?"

Mr. Chronis said, "I don't believe so."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Yes, we did. \$4 million of road in 2015 and we did the 271 building."

Mr. Chronis said, "I apologize. Yes, that's correct."

Chairman Howell said, "Those decisions that were made essentially the previous year to do that, I think. We actually had to do the work. Those decisions were decisions made by a previous Commission. Commissioner Ranzau, comments."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "Earlier today I said that soon we'll start seeing the fruits of some of our actions that we've taken in the past, and this item and the next one are two of those things that I'm very happy that we have on our agenda. These were things that I hoped to get on the on the agenda before the end of last year, but we've continued to work these issues and analyze them.

"I've made it no secret that it's been my goal to reduce the county's use of debt, because I believe spending interest unnecessarily is a waste of taxpayer dollars and could be better spent on other things or returned to them in the form of a tax reduction. I've also stated my position in the past that we have borrowed money sometimes unnecessarily, particularly with roads and bridges. I'll say again that because we borrowed \$4 million per year on roads and bridges, we're spending about \$5.6 million on principle and interest, and we were only getting \$2.4 million worth of roads and bridges. So there are many things that bring us to the point that we can do this, one of which is now we're paying cash for roads and bridges. That's in our five-year plan. We're starting to save money for the capital improvement projects, which is good. What this policy does, it causes us so think about when we borrow money, when we pay cash and makes us plan ahead and makes sure it's really necessary.

"I believe this is the right step in the right direction. I believe over time if we continue to ratchet this down, if we so desire, I think it will be possible. Personally I'd like to get us down to the range of zero to five percent, but with that being said, I'm very happy with this policy today, I think we are sending a message to our constituents and tax payers in that we're very prudent in the decisions we make.

"Sometimes you need to borrow money, and when that's necessary, we'll do that. But sometimes it's not, and we're not going to borrow money just because we can. I think

decisions we made last year and today will continue to help improve our financial outlook as we move forward."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved adopt the resolution and authorize the Chairman to sign.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

Chairman Howell said, "We have a motion and a second. Commissioner Norton."

Commissioner Norton said, "Well, I'm probably not going to support this. I think it's too dramatic of a movement. You know, several years ago we talked about maybe moving it down to about 15 percent, maybe 12 percent, and I think I could have been a little warmer to that, but I think we've taken it too far, and if we keep moving that way, we're going to hamstring ourselves with the fluidity we might need in the future. So I'm not going to be supportive today.

"I think there's a number that I could support, but taking it to nine percent is too dramatic. We've shown over the years, just by the number of what our debt load is that we can safely monitor ourselves and stay away from spending 20 percent every year. Obviously we've stayed under 10 percent. So I like the idea that we have a little more flexibility and fluidity in our ability if we need to. Chris Chronis and his staff have kept us on an even keel with our ability to have debt usage, and I honor that, because they've done a great job over the years, making sure they gave us wise and thoughtful counsel on how to use debt. So I probably will not be supportive of this number today."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you for those comments, Commissioner. Commissioner Unruh."

Commissioner Unruh thanked the Chairman and said, "I'd like to start by saying I think that during my years as a Commissioner our Chief Financial Officer and our Deputy Financial Officer and our Budget Director have done a great job in making debt financing recommendations to us, which is, I think, according to policy, your primary responsibility for debt financing, comes from that. I think that whatever we do here should not be construed as any sort of criticism of the way that this county has been managed. It appears to me that a AAA, strong fund balances, a respected financial organization implies that we've been doing the right thing for a long time. I guess after that statement I have a couple of questions. Our financial situation right now is healthy? Mr. Chronis, that's a question."

Mr. Chronis said, "Yes."

Commissioner Unruh said, "So this is not being generated by any sort of crisis or any sort of need to change anything we're doing, because we are operating with good financial recommendations."

Mr. Chronis said, "I certainly like to think so, yes. It's accurate, I think, to say that the policy, any policy, is a statement of intent by the governing body, and as a statement of intent, I don't consider any change of the policy to be an explicit criticism of staff. It merely represents a change in the expressed intent of the governing body.

Commissioner Unruh said, "I'm glad you understand it that way. What is a typical debt service ratio that large governments have?"

Mr. Chronis said, "Well, what I know is that there is no typical number. First, different kinds of government, different governments with different demographics have different patterns of debt issuance. The City of Wichita, for example, has much more debt outstanding than Sedgwick County does, and their debt burden ratio is much higher than Sedgwick County's, but that's a function of the kind of services that the City of Wichita is responsible for providing. And their debt burden is not uncommon for cities of their size with their responsibilities."

"Sedgwick County's debt burden is somewhat below average for counties are similar in size and scope of responsibilities to Sedgwick County. All of our ratios, the maximums that we have set in the policy, had been set with an eye on what the investment community considered to be conservative ratios. That is, we didn't reach for the stars, if you will, to set the highest possible threshold we thought we could get away with. Rather, we've set our debt ratios intentionally conservatively, and that is one of the factors that has earned us the AAA credit ratings that you cited earlier."

Commissioner Unruh said, "Our current limit is considered a conservative number?"

Mr. Chronis said, "I would say so, yes. Yes."

Commissioner Unruh said, "What is the history, in the last ten years or so, what have we averaged as our percentage of debt service?"

Mr. Chronis said, "Working from memory, because I haven't looked at it in past years recently, my recollection is that it has been as high as 12 or 13 percent over, say, the past 10 years. Certainly over the past five years, it has been trending downwards, to the level that it's at now."

Commissioner Unruh said, "The fact that we have a 20 percent ratio now, we've never really gotten very close to that?"

Mr. Chronis said, "No, sir."

Commissioner Unruh said, "It is a function of the Commissioners?"

Mr. Chronis said, "That's correct."

Commissioner Unruh said, "So whatever it is, we continue to drive down that percentage or that benchmark just by our normal actions?"

Mr. Chronis said, "Yes."

Commissioner Unruh said, "By our actions on each opportunity we have. And if we change this, it's clear since we're changing it, the next Commission could change it again and go back to 20 or 15 or 12 or they could do whatever they wanted, so this just reflects the attitude of this particular Commission; is that accurate?"

Mr. Chronis said, "Yes."

Commissioner Unruh said, "That's because we can change it next year?"

Mr. Chronis said, "Yes."

Commissioner Unruh said, "For me, in my experience, making business decisions in my life, it seems like more options and more flexibility is better than fewer options and

less flexibility. Since we have been very judicious in our use of debt during my time here and this particular ratio, for example, has been well below our maximum, I don't see how this is a real issue other than a declaration the perspective of this Commission, because we've never even gotten close to our limit. But having said that, I guess I just want to say that I like more flexibility and more options to fulfill my duties in making policy decisions for this county than fewer options. I think that's all my comments, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Howell said, "Just to let the public know, I'll be asking for your comments in just a moment, but before I do, Commissioner Ranzau has something he wants to clarify."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "I just want to say, now our actual policy right now is 20 percent, and it goes down to nine percent and then eight percent, and that does sound like it's somewhat dramatic, but the reality is over the last several years, it's hovered around ten percent. Right now we're at 9.67 percent. So this is a very modest, from a practical standpoint, this is a very modest reduction. As our CFO said, we could borrow up to \$7.6 million next year, \$37.7 million the year after or \$63 million in 2019, up to that over that period of time."

"I think that gives us more than enough flexibility for what we need to do, so as I said, this is a conservative decrease. It's very modest. I think it could be more, but we're being very cautious, and I think it's a prudent step. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Just for clarity, the \$63.3 million in 2019, that's with an eight percent debt ratio. If it were nine percent, do you have any idea? It would be a lot more than that. I'm sorry to put you on the spot. It occurred to me this is a significant increase year over year and that's including the fact that we're driving that ratio down to eight percent. To me, it's an important point to understand. Again, that's why I think there's reasons as to why we've got to trim it one percent in that year, just makes sense to me."

Mr. Chronis said, "At nine percent, the margin would be \$94.2 million."

Chairman Howell said, "It seems like a tremendous amount of authority. I'm not sure what our history is of borrowing money, but that seems like that would be an extraordinary amount of money to borrow, to be able to borrow that much."

"Before I'd like to recognize the public and ask if any members of the public would like to speak to this, and if so, please come the microphone, give us your name and address. We'd like to hear from you."

Mr. Todd said, "First of all, I want to compliment you for setting lower benchmarks on debt. I spent 30 years as an entrepreneur with my own business. I found in my business as well as in my personal life that I consistently performed better fiscally, financially, when I was free of debt."

"Actually paying cash is good. If you're exercising fiscal responsibility and prudence with the tax dollars, I highly recommend you pass this resolution today. Thank you, you're moving in the right direction."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Todd. Any other member of the public like to speak on this agenda item? Give us your name and address on the record."

Mr. Peaster said, "First of all, I'd like to thank my wife, because when I was working, she worked on, number one when we first got married, we wanted to fly to California."

We didn't have any credit cards. Guess what? You can't rent a car without a credit card, unless you put down a big deposit. So over the years, she worked on our credit rating. Right now, our credit rating is to the extent that we can borrow money for a year and pay no interest, because the credit card companies that we do business with want our business, and they're willing to loan us money for a period of time with no interest attached to it. The problem with that is, though, if you're going to borrow a certain amount, you better be able to pay it off within a 12-month period.

"If you don't need 20 percent, why do you have it? Why don't you set it down to where it is? If nine percent is what it's going to do and then go to eight percent, that's great. It gives you a better credit rating to begin with. It gives you less apt to borrow money for something that you don't need to borrow money for. So if you don't want to lower it, I have a problem with a couple of you that are up for reelection. And one of you just said you're not going to vote for this. I hope your constituents take that into consideration when they go to vote for you if you intend to run for the Commission again. Thank you. Have a good day."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you. Other members of the public? Please come and give us your name and address, please."

Ms. Strum said, "I'm a homeowner. I've never borrowed money. I've always decided I need to earn it myself. I constantly do not know why certain people get visa cards, credit cards or anything, but they can add up on payments.

"I'm a mother, single mother. I have seven kids; six are out in the job force right now, proving that they can do it, but now they're one of these people that have credit cards debts. And I laugh about that. I say, what has mom told you? Don't do it.

"I think nine percent is okay, but like I said several times, businesses need to know to get on your own two feet. If you have a business, you can support it yourself. Stop asking taxpayers to pay for it. Taxpayers cannot do it. We are not the local bank. Taxpayers are now out there in the workforce trying to support their families and pay their bills, and I'm noticing each and every one of these Commission meetings, the city, the county, they always want businesses to not have to pay for their responsibility. I just think nine percent is pretty good, but let's just let these businesses know.

"I noticed that our property tax is going up. I just got informed that by a certain person, and I feel that's not right, because there are people that are unemployed, low income, senior citizens like me, I'm 57, my birthday is March 25th and I'm going to be 58.

"I just want you all to learn that the taxpayers are not the bank. And when they do borrow it to businesses, some of them have decided not to pay it back, and they've left. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "You might like our next agenda item. We're going to be talking about our mill levy in Sedgwick County, the next item on the agenda. Commissioner Peterjohn. I just want to remind everyone, this is kind of a long meeting. I would like to expedite this as much as possible. Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "Well, I was going to comment about I appreciate staff providing us with options on issues. Of course, we've got the policy decision to make. I would point out the county mill levy, the county portion of the mill levy, obviously the county treasurer collects taxes from every taxing entity from the state on down. But the county mill levy hasn't increased in quite a while, and in fact, mill levy today, since

I was elected in 2008, is well below where it was at that time.

"Having said that, I realize that I'm drifting into the next item, but I wanted to point out that for the listeners and people watching this out there, when we're talking about debt policy, this may seem arcane, but think of it like a mortgage on your house. We're talking about how much would we be willing to go into debt and how much would the private sector have to pick up the tab to be able to pay for that debt and for what degree can it create uncertainty in a sense that the future Commission can go ahead and say, well, if we left the policy at 20 percent and even though we're at less than ten percent now, they can obviously change it, but they're going to have to make a proactive effort to do so. I plan to be supportive of this this morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "My final comment before we vote, again, I think we all have a personal debt policy. I think it's a good thing for people to do. I listen to Dave Ramsey often. He's on our local radio station. He talks about 15 year mortgages rather than 30 year mortgages. He talks about a debt ratio based on your stable income, having three to six months of expenditures saved up before you go into debt. That's a good policy thing, not to go into debt for things that depreciate. Things like cars, those should be paid for by cash. Those are all good ideas for people in the private sector. It just makes sense to me.

"This is good policy. Again, it gives us plenty of authority. I believe more than we'll even need. Again, other Commissioners, if they think this is the wrong policy, they can always go back and change it, but I think this is good to set our goals high, and I think that this is the thing we ought to do today, so I'm going to be very supportive of this. We have a motion and a second, I believe. Any other comments from Commissioners? Seeing none, Madam Clerk, please call the vote."

VOTE

Commissioner Unruh No
Commissioner Norton No
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye

Chairman Howell said, "Madam Clerk, next item, please."

G [15-0770](#)

RESOLUTION SETTING TARGET MILL LEVY.

Presented by: Chris Chronis, Chief Financial Officer.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve or disapprove the resolution, as desired.

Mr. Chronis said, "Commissioners, this action is in essence a statement of intent of the Commission regarding the level of property taxes that staff is to use in planning the budgets for future years. The resolution says that for consideration of future budgets, we should establish a target property tax rate or target mill levy, if you will, of 29.359 mills for budget years 2017 through 2022, and a lower rate of 28.758 mills, starting in budget year 2023, and moving on forward from there.

"The County, as you know, prepares a long-term financial forecast, a five-year financial forecast, which among other things, attempts to estimate what level of taxation the County will impose in order to pay its costs. In the current five-year

financial forecast, which extends through 2021, the tax rate that we have assumed is 29.359 mills, and so the actions of staff to date and the financial forecast for the future for the county is a reflection of the statement of intent that would be made with the adoption of this resolution. I will note that the financial forecast is done in part to estimate future outcomes of county financial operations based on the adopted policies, our current activities and projected plans. If that estimated outcome is undesirable, then the point of doing a five-year financial forecast is that we have plenty of time to take corrective actions to avoid that adverse outcome. The financial forecast that we have delivered to you previously does show some deficits in the future years.

"That is not at all uncommon. Typically our financial forecasts do show those deficits and what we do in the meantime before those years arrive, is take actions to change that reality, to either reduce expenditures as needed or to provide alternative sources of funding. And I don't have any concerns at all with the statement of intent that is embedded in this resolution before you, because as I said, it is what we are doing right now.

"If there are any questions, I'd be happy to try and answer them. If there are no questions, then I would recommend that you either approve or disapprove the resolution as you deem appropriate."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Chronis. Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "Once again, I want to say, Chris, thanks for all your work on this issue. I know we've been analyzing this for a long time, as well as the debt thing, particularly the debt for several months. This is a game changer. This is transformation. This is the result of a lot of hard work that we did last year and we're continuing to do. Many municipalities allow their mill levy to go up incrementally over time and still say they never voted for a mill levy increase. We had some discussion and debate during the budget process last year.

"This resolution does two things. First of all, it makes a commitment to the tax payers that we will control the rate of the mill levy and we'll have a target that they know they have certainty. It's not just for the individual tax people, but for businesses in our community as well. They can have some mill levy certainty at the very least. We can't control the appraisal process, but we can control the mill levy. Also, I think it's important to note that beginning in 2023, the target mill levy will be 28.658. That's a mill levy decrease of .6 mill. So this Commission right now is making a commitment to reduce the mill levy at that time.

"I think this is a very conservative approach. I think we could probably reduce it that much or more a little bit sooner, but we want to be very prudent and cautious to insure we can make the commitment and keep it. But this is a result of doing things like controlling our spending, controlling our debt, so we're not spending money on interest. Instead, programs and return it to the taxpayers. I think this is a fantastic resolution. It shows the tremendous work that we're doing here as a Commission and all the staff that's working hard. We can do this. We can make these commitments and still provide or core services in an excellent manner, and I'm confident of that and I'm very proud to be able to support this resolution today and make this commitment to the taxpayers.

"I think we're providing to the taxpayers, the vast majority of the taxpayers, what they want. So we are providing government that is efficient, effective and accountable, and I think that's a good thing."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to adopt the resolution and authorize the Chairman to sign.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

Chairman Howell said, "We have a motion and a second. I would like to recognize the public once again. Would anybody from the public want to speak to the Commissioners on this agenda item?"

Mr. Todd said, "I think ending mill levy creep is an excellent idea. It provides transparency, and it leads to taxpayer certainty, and I urge you to support this resolution today. It's in the interest of the taxpayers. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Todd. I do like the term you used called mill levy creep. Again, I think through no intentional action by the governing board, what happens is when the County Clerk calculates the budgets every year and calculates the mill levy, usually there is some small incremental change. Last year, incremental change, if I calculated this right, was .024 mills. We intended to be 25.359. But we actually were 29.383. So there was an incremental change last year of .024 mills. If we don't take this into account, this type of small incremental change happens that ends up with a tax increase over time.

"What this resolution is doing is resetting us back to 25.359 every single year. I know last year there was criticism in the community about the significance of the tax cut. They thought it was not important. But the reality is if we don't have due diligence to not let that incremental increase happen, then what you have over a period of time is a significant increase. I think it's important that we have this policy in place. I'm going to be very supportive. If there are other members of the public that would still like to address us, come on up."

Ms. Strum said, "I also say let's end this mill levy, because it has been expensive, and it will help taxpayers immensely. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you. Commissioner Peterjohn, you're next."

Commissioner Peterjohn thanked the Chairman and said, "I would point out that one of the frustrations I've had as an elected officials in the county is, when we do our budgets, we don't get the opportunity to set the mill levy. I think we should. I think state law needs to be changed to give us that authority, and I think it is incumbent upon every elected official who is able to raise public revenue in the form of property taxes, that they need to speak out specifically, set a specific amount and then live with it. I think Sedgwick County has been prepared. We could have easily done this if state law allowed us to do so. I'm hoping state law would change to do so.

"I think this is a step in the right direction in terms of certainty. People notice that there is a reduction, but it is way out, and it's relatively modest. We're talking less than a mill. But this is what happens when folks, whether it's a 15 year or 30 year mortgage, gets paid off, they have a celebration sometimes. Burn the mortgage. All of the sudden, they've got a raise in a sense that they no longer have to make a payment, whether it's a mortgage on a home, mortgage on an automobile or any other debt that they have.

"One of the frustrations I had when I became a Commissioner was they said one Commission can't tie the hands of a future Commission. But when you borrow

money, you create long-term obligations, and there's a lot of obligations that Sedgwick County has that were in place when I joined this Commission and I believe will still continue to be in place after I'm gone from this bench.

"Anywhere we can reduce the uncertainty I think is a step in the right direction. Supportive today. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Just real quick, I wanted to explain where the target mill levy for this reduction came from. The target mill levy in 2013 will be 28.758. I believe it was in 2005, the Board of County Commissioners increased the mill levy about 2.5 mills without voter approval, and it was the largest increase in the history of the Commission."

"I think as a result of that, three Commissioners lost their jobs. But since that time, the Commission has made effort to gradually eliminate that increase. This will ultimately repeal that completely and go back to the 2005 levels before that mill levy increase was instituted without voter approval and the Board approval for tax increase to include mill levy increases is something that I and this Commission support, and so that's where that number came from. Thank you, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner Unruh."

Commissioner Unruh thanked the Chairman and said, "Just as a way of clarification, I was on that Commission that voted to increase that 2.5 mill levy after much debate among the Commissioners. It was to support the addition of a new addition to our Sedgwick County Adult Detention Facility. It was before we changed directions and started to invest in alternatives to incarceration. A second component of that was to establish the National Center for Aviation Training, which is a great asset in our community, and we continued to bear the debt service for that facility."

"So in light of the fact that we've given back up to this point 80 percent of that mill levy increase and we're still paying for that debt service and spending a substantial amount each year for alternatives to incarceration, which was a much better move, there's no doubt."

"In light of the comments, I just want to make sure the folks know why we did it. 80 percent is given back, and we are still carrying expenses for a good move in public safety in terms of alternatives and a great asset in our community for helping our citizens train for good jobs, and that's all I have, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn thanked the Chairman and said, "For the record, I was in this room when that mill levy increase occurred, although I was not a Commissioner at the time, and it was in 2006, not in 2005. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Seeing no other comments from Commissioners, Madam Clerk, please call the vote."

VOTE

*Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye*

Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Chronis. Madam Clerk, next item, please."

CONSENT

- H [16-166](#) Grant of an Access and Water Line Easement on Flood Control Right of Way to Serve Silver Springs 2nd Addition.
- I [16-176](#) One (1) Right of Way Easement and One (1) Temporary Construction Easement for Sedgwick County Project 644-7-1080; Bridge project on 103rd St. South between 295th St. West & 311th St. West. CIP# B-487. District 3.
- J [16-175](#) Agreement with Eagles Realm, LLC for the Great Plains Renaissance Festival and the Wichita Highlands Games and Festival.
- K [16-0138](#) Resolution Authorizing Sale of Unredeemed Real Estate After Tax Sale.
- L [16-161](#) Amendment to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Facility Upgrades to 501 E. 53rd St. Park City.
- M [16-154](#) A Resolution to correct the appointment term for Douglas Kutilek to the Sedgwick County Board of Zoning Appeals.
- N [16-155](#) A Resolution to correct the appointment term for Julia Craft to the Sheriff's Civil Service Board.
- O [16-170](#) General Bill Check Register for March 16, 2016 - March 22, 2016.

Mr. Mike Scholes, County Manager, greeted the Commissioners and said, "I recommend approval of Consent Agenda Items, Hotel through Oscar."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to adopt the Consent Agenda with the exception of Item L.

Commissioner Unruh seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion and the vote was called.

VOTE

Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye

Chairman Howell said, "Madam Clerk, I think we're on Item L now. Let's go ahead and talk about Item L specifically."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Mr. Chairman, this is an amendment to the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) for the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) station in my district. I have asked staff to prepare a chart. The original plan was to replace it, but now we're going to rehab it, and I just wanted to have staff present that and show how much money we're saving the taxpayers in this particular item."

Chairman Howell said, "Mr. Chronis."

Mr. Chronis said, "Commissioners, the project that was originally proposed by staff in building the CIP a year ago was to replace the existing facility, which is located on 53rd street, I believe it is, in Park City, to replace that with a new facility. The reasons for that are that the existing facility was originally constructed many years as a fire station, and it has simultaneously housed an EMS post. Several years ago, the fire station moved out of that facility to their new headquarters building located on 77th Street North, and so that left only EMS operating out of the existing building. It is an old building.

"It is in need of a number of repairs, and so the staff at the time of the original proposal was that the best course of action would be to replace that old building that was not in good shape and larger than needed, with a building more suitable for its current use and perhaps in a better location. The estimated cost of that was \$1,453,000, and at the time the staff proposal was to finance that cost where the issuance of bonds, and the estimate is that those bonds sold in the same manner as the county traditionally sells bonds, would have imposed an interest cost over 20 years of \$579,000 or \$580,000 for a total project cost over the 20-year period of a little over \$2 million.

"During the review of the CIP proposals by the Commission, it was suggested that instead of spending that much money on that facility, it would be much more efficient and cost effective to rehab the existing facility, and so what was put in the CIP, what was adopted by the Commission, was a project to renovate or rehab the existing facility at an estimated cost of \$210,800. In developing the detailed project plans for the renovation, there has been some additional repair work that has been identified as essential at the building, and that repair work is estimated, that additional work is estimated to cost \$191,000.

"The action that's before you today is a CIP amendment to increase the project budget from what was adopted at \$210,800 to a total of \$410,884. You will see from this slide that even with that increase in the cost of the adopted project, the total outlay for this facility, in order to have an EMS post in the northern part of the county, the total outlay with this change will be a little under \$411,000 as compared to the original staff project proposal that had a total cost, including interest, of a little over \$2 million, and so comparing the two, you can see how much less the county will be spending by adopting this action that is before you today."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Chronis. Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "Thank you, Chris, for taking the time to present that. I just wanted to point out this example of the county trying to save taxpayer dollars. We're saving \$1.6 million over the life of this project. In fact, the repair costs of \$410,000, even with this amendment, was less than the amount we were going to spend on interest. That's why I don't like borrowing money if you don't have to.

"Not only do we not have to borrow money, we don't have to spend as much, and I think this is a prudent step in the right direction. I think some other entities are using it now, Emergency Management a little bit, and some other stuff. So there's another example of how, if you analyze your budget and make a few changes, you can save some money and the things we did today as far as controlling our debt policy and controlling our mill levy and returning some of that money back is a result of many, many things. This is just one example of the source of things we're using to that make happen."

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to adopt Item L.

Commissioner Peterjohn seconded the motion.

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "I'd like to point out the fact that this is an excellent example to follow up on our earlier discussion about the mill levy and the debt. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "I don't see any other comments, but I would just like to say that I think the taxpayers appreciate it when we find innovative solutions to just tearing down buildings and replacing buildings. I think we have too many buildings that are sitting vacant in the community. They see these buildings as paid for by taxpayers and serving no real purpose in the community. It becomes in a sense a taxpayer funded form of blight, if you will. I'd much rather see a building repaired and used. I think it just speaks well of the governing body that looks for innovative solutions. This is going to be a nice building. It's going to meet its needs. It's going to be functional. It won't be as nice as a brand new building."

"Nice new buildings are great, but I think that we owe it to the taxpayers to be frugal and to, I guess, wear things out and use them as long as possible. As long as it continues to meet the need, and this one certainly will, I think this is a better option for us. I appreciate the thoughtful proposal to do it this way rather than the previous proposal. With that, I see no other comments. Please call the vote."

VOTE

*Commissioner Unruh Aye
Commissioner Norton Aye
Commissioner Peterjohn Aye
Commissioner Ranzau Aye
Chairman Howell Aye*

Chairman Howell said, "Madam Clerk, next item, please."

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Mr. Jon Von Achen, Assistant County Counselor, greeted the Commissioners and said, "We're marching towards adjournment. Plans are as I understand it that the legislature would like to get out early this week. They are scheduled to get out Friday, but I think they're going to try and get done tomorrow. But they are in the process of doing several items that affect the county. Last night, being principal among them, was Senate substitute for House Bill 2088 which contained the contents of Senate Bill

316. There was a long arduous debate, several last night, and I do say last night, and I do want to thank my wife and kids for their patience last night as I was tracking this on Twitter.

"The result of last night's debate, and they got done and voted on this about 7:30 p.m., was that there was a floor amendment added regarding public safety costs, and that it was narrowed a little bit, not to include remodeling or reconstruction but to include law enforcement, fire and EMS. That item will be exempted.

"Additionally, on the income side, the exemptions for taxing things like TIF (Tax Increment Finance) districts and where the taxes were going to fund the district and then eventually those things expire and would cause a raise in revenues, those items were stricken last night as additional revenue is not to be counted. So those really don't affect Sedgwick County much. They do effect some of the cities who have those districts. So I expect, since this really didn't get to the House floor, on the House side, it did get a committee hearing. The House will likely nonconcur and they will go into conference, where we will see a slightly different version that goes to the Governor, but I do expect that it will substantially look as it did this morning when it was published."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you for that. Just so I understand the public safety amendment that was made, you talked about new construction or reconstruction. Is that issue of construction, reconstruction or whatever that was, was that just for public safety facilities or is that for every facility?"

Mr. Von Achen said, "And to delineate, there was some discussion about new construction in another part of the statute, and that it was in the part that talks about increased property tax revenues, which is the section above that. That does include construction for new structures, improvements, remodeling, renovation, new structure, and existing improvements on real property. It doesn't include ordinary maintenance and repair. That's different than the law enforcement component.

"The amendment to include public safety and then there was an additional amendment to narrow that to not include construction or remodeling of buildings, and the amendment included any increased property tax for those services go directly to services. So I think the example I talked to finance about this morning was for the Sheriff for the Road Deputies. That's a direct law enforcement cost, any increased cost there could be exempted."

Chairman Howell said, "So again, I think I understand the bill now and appreciate your explanation. I would like everyone to know, including the viewers, could be on [www.youtube.com] at this point. I'm not sure we're broadcasting anymore.

"The current version of this bill includes the amendments we drafted as Sedgwick County government. We offered them in Topeka when we testified on the bill, but moving the dates is now part of this House Bill 2088 as well as the implementation date being the mid-point of January of 2017. Those are things we advocated for in our amendment, and I personally asked support from the legislators and lobbyists that we would include the reconstruction and remodeling costs.

"I would like to show support for our friends across the street, and I offered my personal comments on that. That was adopted. I think the bill overall has all the components I would like to see. There is a lot of exemptions still in here, so I'm not sure how constraining this is on any government at this point. I would like to see how much this constrains government, I'm not sure it does at all at this point, but nevertheless, anybody else have comments on House Bill 2088? Do you have any

other bills that you'd like to highlight?"

Mr. Von Achen said, "I would. There is House substitute for Senate Bill 280, which includes the provisions of House Bill 2714, which dealt with the appraisal process and the Appraiser's Office and the Board of Tax Appeals. And 2719 dealt with some of the smaller taxes districts. Those items got shoved into the House substitute for Senate Bill 280, which will be debated on the floor sometime later today. I checked literally right before I came up. They haven't gotten into the meat of the business today on that on the House floor."

"There were some amendments made on the floor yesterday that I think helped both the taxpayers and the appraisers. One of the principle things is there was a concern that if an appeal was filed that not only would the taxpayer pay a filing fee, which is normal, but that the county would have to as well. That's been stricken. In the original version of the bill, had a taxpayer prevailed during the appeal process, then it would have caused the property to be re appraised for the next two years after. And that has changed, and it does allow the appraisers some flexibility in the process to go back and review the reasons why the property was reduced initially and now the bill contains if there's more than a five percent increase in the valuation, that appraiser has to go back and look at it or get a fee appraisal for purposes of valuing the property, and I think that actually helps both the appraiser and the taxpayer."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you for that one. Is there any other bills that you'd like to highlight?"

Mr. Von Achen said, "There are two. Apparently House Bill 2587 regarding sanctuary municipalities is not going to go forward. There were some concerns about the cost of litigation for the cities and counties that would potentially be affected by this, and so it's going to be shelved for the time being, but it may reappear sometime next year."

"And then Senate substitute for Senate Bill 65 deals with several concealed carry items. It has not hit the floor yet, but it may end up on the floor today. It wasn't scheduled. I don't necessarily think the calendar is correct that they're going to get it on the floor today or tomorrow in order to get out early. That contains the provisions of Senate Bill 421, which is the adequate security measure bypass. It also contains provisions regarding the counties and cities ability to limit concealed carry among employees. It contains the provisions regarding being able to have limited adequate security measures, which would not necessarily affect Sedgwick County, but would affect some of the cities and smaller counties where they have problems securing the entirety of the building. There's also one other provision in there that would make it easier and quicker for military personnel to get a concealed carry permit. Those are all contained within that bill."

"It's the time of session when you try to get everything through and stuff as much as they can into one bill so that they can get it passed and either to the Governor or to conference and then to the Governor."

Chairman Howell said, "This is not on the calendar right now?"

Mr. Von Achen said, "It is not on the calendar today, but at calendar at this point is very fluid. The 2088 issue was not on the calendar initially yesterday morning and showed up late on the Senate calendar yesterday."

Chairman Howell said, "If I remember correctly 2088 had a several hour debate yesterday, three, four, five hour debate, I believe?"

Mr. Von Achen said, "Yes, it did. There were several amendments. Some passed. Some didn't. There was a fair amount of discussion over a long period of time. The final vote ended up being 24 to 16. So with all that consternation there was still some concern among some of the Senators that voted no."

Chairman Howell said, "We also had a very long debate in the house yesterday on Common Core, and I think that ultimately failed. I think Senate Bill 65 would be a long debate. I don't know how likely that is to come up knowing it is likely to be a fairly long debate. I guess right now I see I'm a little concerned about the speaker allowing a long debate on the gun bill. I'm not sure that will happen."

Mr. Von Achen said, "Well, as I look at it, because it contains several components, it lends itself for a long debate. There are several bills that were stuffed into that one bill, and so you've got several hurdles in order to go forward and the possibility of multiple amendments being introduced. I still believe that there are components of that bill that make sense and that regardless of who is in charge of the floor debate that they will get through. I can't say that all of the components I just mentioned are going to make it through, but I do suspect that the issue regarding the limited adequate security measures to be allowed and for some local control to happen there, and I still firmly believe that the contents of Senate Bill 421, which is the Adequate Security Measure Bypass, I believe there is an interest in that, too. Some of the other items, I'm not so sure regarding the employee restrictions or the military personnel concealed carry permit issue, whether those things are going to be in the final version."

Chairman Howell said, "I think I understand all of those bills that you just mentioned. Is there anything else that you'd like to bring us?"

Mr. Von Achen said, "I don't have anything else that I highlighted or that is finally getting to action at this point. Again, like I said, they're scheduled for adjournment this Friday, probably going to actually try to get out on Thursday, and then there will be a recess, which I will be very thankful for, until April 27th, when the veto session is scheduled to start."

Chairman Howell said, "Very good. Commissioners, do you have any other questions or comments over Legislative Issues? I don't see any comments. Madam Clerk, next item, please."

OTHER

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioners, do you have any comments for 'Other'? Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "I just wanted to send our condolences to the people and families the terrorist attack in Europe and speak a little bit to the editorial that's in today's paper, which called for more vigilance and action, saying that I absolutely agree."

"It's very heartening to hear The [Wichita] Eagle maybe changing its tune a little bit. It's tune a little bit. A few weeks ago, Commissioner Peterjohn called upon this community to be prepared, to be vigilant, and he was criticized and called a racist, but I think maybe people are figure out this is a very difficult issue that deserves an honest conversation and that people who are concerned about security here in America have reason to be concerned if you just look at what's going on in Europe."

"The [Wichita] Eagle quoted Secretary of State Kerry who said the enemy has an entire world view that is based upon eliminating those who do not subscribe to its perverse ideology, and I agree with that, as well. In order to address this enemy, we have to have that honest and open debate, and we do need to be vigilant here as well and all over the world. That's all I have to say today. Thank you.

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you. Commissioner Ranzau. Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn thanked the Chairman and said, "I'm going to try and give just a very brief overview of several activities that I think are important, in terms of what I've been involved in. It was mentioned earlier I was one of the Commissioners that got to tour the new Tag Office, and I think this is a very important change coming our way. The fact that Ron Estes was County Treasurer when I came onboard in 2009 and he had been pushing for years to get a facility that had adequate parking both for his employees and the public, adequate space within the building, which the facility on Murdock lacked, and the fact that we're moving forward on this I think is a big plus, and I urge all my colleagues, and I urge the public to keep their eyes open to this opening, because it's going to be a big improvement along with the QLess system.

"I also mentioned that within the last week I was part of a group with several other Commissioners, and if they want to speak about it, they can, who went to the Quad Counties Meeting, four counties. Reno County hosted at this quarterly meeting, and we met at the Hutchinson Correctional Facility. Since I became Commissioner, I've had the opportunity to tour not only jails, prisons, and other detention correctional facilities, but we also got a meal at the prison. I think it's important for the public out there to realize that keeping this community safe is a priority, at least for this Commissioner, and I'm going to continue to push in that direction.

"I would also add that I had the opportunity with another Commissioner and with the Sheriff to participate in a meeting, with two groups, concerning refugees coming into the community and this was before the horrible events of yesterday, but we are continuing to bring in folks. The largest contingent is from, they say, the Democratic Republic of Congo, which I think the capital is Kinshasa. The other countries that we're getting refugees in from include Somalia, Syria, and Iraq. So there is some consultation ongoing. I commend Sheriff Easter because his participation in the meeting, I think, was helpful because we were able to find out this is kind of a regional event in the sense it's not just Sedgwick County or the City of Wichita, although a lot of these people, refugees, are being resettled here.

"I mention it because Boston Marathon bombers, the Tsarnaev Brothers, The Washington Post initially reported they were refugees and then retracted it and said, we goofed. Actually what happened, their parents came into the country, brought them in as boys. Because they were in the country already, they were asylum seekers, which is kind of what happens when you have refugees outside the country. Asylum seeker is somebody who gets here and says, hey, I want to be helped. I mention this because, obviously, one of the two Boston bombers of that horrible atrocity was killed by law enforcement, but the second one became an American citizen before he committed his heinous acts.

"I say that because, Mr. Chairman, March 23rd is an important day in American history. I'm going to go in inverse order here. March 23rd, 1965, America's first two man space flight began as Gemini 3 lifted off from Cape Canaveral with the late Gus Grisham and John Young aboard.

"March 23rd, 1857, a lot of folks may have seen elevators named Otis. Actually that's Elijah Otis who installed the first passenger elevator in New York City, which allowed for multi-story buildings to be built.

"March 23rd, 1806, the Lewis and Clark Expedition departed the Pacific Coast and began the return journey east. That was quite an adventure.

"In my opinion, the most important event that occurred on March 23rd occurred in Richmond, Virginia, where in a packed St. John's church they were having a discussion at the Second Virginia Convention, and I think the words are as important today, especially in light of the atrocities with the Islamic Jihadists, their attack on western civilization yesterday, and I think we're at just as big a risk here because of the events in the last year in Chattanooga, San Bernardino, as what happened yesterday in Brussels. But I'd like to quote briefly from this famous American speech; 'Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope until our enemies have bound our hand and foot?' This speaker who was the Governor of the state or colony at that time went on to say, 'There is no retreat but in submission and slavery!' He concluded his remarks by saying; 'What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!'. Of course, that's Patrick Henry on March 23rd 1775.

"So March 23rd is an important day in American history. I appreciate being able to get this onto the record, thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you for those eloquent remarks, and I appreciate the education on this day in history. I'd like to add one item that you missed.

"I'd like to just point out that thanks to the federal government on this date in 2010, they instituted the Affordable Care Act, and so we have much more affordable and more access to health care than we've ever had before. I am being sarcastic, of course. That was this day in history, as well.

"I do have just one other comment, that is that we do have an evening meeting coming up April 18th, a Monday night, in the City of Derby. It will be at the welcome center, which is at 611 North Mulberry Road. It's in suite 200. Again, this will be starting at 6:00 p.m. we'll have a meet and greet to meet people in the community. If you want to come out and talk to Commissioners face to face and ask questions or simply talk about whatever they'd like, that's fine, and at 6:30 p.m., we'll have our meeting April 18th. That will be broadcast from a recording on Wednesday morning on the 20th of April.

"So I just want to continue to remind the public of this opportunity. With that, Manager Scholes is there anything else to come before the Commission today? With that, we are adjourned."

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

*BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS*

*JAMES M. HOWELL, Chairman
Fifth District*

*RICHARD RANZAU, Chair Pro Tem
Fourth District*

*DAVID M. UNRUH, Commissioner
First District*

*TIM R. NORTON, Commissioner
Second District*

*KARL PETERJOHN, Commissioner
Third District*

ATTEST:

Kelly B. Arnold, County Clerk

APPROVED:
