

Sedgwick County

525 North Main Street 3rd Floor
Wichita, KS 67203



*Sedgwick County...
working for you*

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 27, 2016

9:00 AM

SPECIAL MEETING

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

The Special Meeting of the Board of the County Commissioners of Sedgwick County, Kansas, was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on July 27, 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. Michael Scholes, Manager; Mr. Eric Yost, County Counselor; Mr. David Spears, Bureau of Public Works; Ms. Kate Flavin, Public Information Officer; Ms. Laura Billups, Deputy County Clerk.

Guests:

Mr. Paul Lavender, 12938 Southwest 57th St, Wichita

INVOCATION: Rev. Dr. Brent Johnston, First Presbyterian Church.

FLAG SALUTE

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

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

Roll Call

PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW BUSINESS

A [16-466](#) PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE 2017 SEDGWICK COUNTY BUDGET.

Presented by: Mike Scholes, County Manager.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Open the public hearing, receive public comment, and close the public hearing.

Mr. Michael Scholes, Manager, greeted the Commissioners and said, "This is the first of two public meetings, public hearings that you will conduct on the 2017 Sedgwick County Budget. The second one next Thursday, August 4th at 6:00 p.m. in the evening. We will be in this room. And again, both of these hearings are regarding the Sedgwick County 2017 recommended budget.

"The 2017 recommended budget for Sedgwick County as presented on Wednesday, July 13th, totaled \$406,091,994, which includes property tax levy of \$133,201,437. This property tax levy is equivalent to an estimated property tax rate expressed in mills of approximately 29.359 mills.

"On Wednesday, July 20th, the Board of County Commissioners authorized publication of maximum budget of \$406,091,994, which includes a property tax levy

of \$133,201,437. With that, Commissioners, I recommend that you open the public hearing."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Mr. Manager. With that, I will at this time open the public hearing for the, regarding the 2017 Sedgwick County Budget. And I do have a sign-in sheet. So far I've got at least one speaker so far. I would like to call up Paul Lavender."

Mr. Paul Lavender, 12938 Southwest 57th Street, Wichita, greeted the Commissioners and said, "First I want to say thank you for allowing me to be here and to be part of this dialogue. It is a privilege I don't take for granted. I'm Paul Lavender, I was born and raised in Wichita. I've spent the past six years away from home now and I've just returned about two weeks ago. I was living in Sydney, Australia for four years, I was in Abu Dhabi for a year, and I was in San Francisco for a year with my wife.

"And a couple months ago, we had the opportunity to sit down together and really discuss what are our priorities and what are our goals for the coming years. And with that in mind, we decided to return home and to start a family. This is home, it's a choice that we've made and this is where we want to be. Before I frame in my debate, or my questions, I just wanted you to know where I am coming from.

"I am very socially minded. I am a millennial, and I am a Libertarian, and unfortunately I didn't have a chance to be part of the budget discussions last year, but I do understand that there was a large amount of public opposition to some of the cuts that took place, particularly among cuts affecting quality of life, public health, and the partnership with the city.

"As I look at the budget this year, there's one thing that certainly stands out, and for me, again, my priority is quality of life, as a young person, looking to start a family, just moving back into the city. And the concern of mine is the deficit spending in the budget. From what I understand, this year alone we've already burned into cash reserves by \$2 million.

"Next year, that's projected to be \$4 million. The year after that \$6 million. All told, in the next five years, we are projected to burn through one-third of our cash reserves. To me, this is extremely concerning, especially in a time where we have relatively economic well-being. So my question to the commission is twofold.

"The first question is: what other options do we have as opposed to a deficit spending policy? And the second is I would like to understand the process that went in to approving such an aggressive plan. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Alright. Thank you, Mr. Lavender, for your comments. And I do have at least one comment or question. Commissioner Ranzau."

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "I will address some of the questions. Thank you for coming here today. And if you want to set up a time to talk more, we can go into a lot of detail."

Mr. Lavender said, "I would love to."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "First it is important to understand that we do not have an operational deficit, which means we have enough money to pay for our daily operations. We are using our excess reserves to pay for some CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) projects. We have a large amount of reserves, actually larger

than what we need. So we've saved up taxpayer money beyond what we actually need, even for a rainy day fund.

"So we're taking a planned approach to use some of that. It's like you have a lot of money in your savings account that you don't need, now you are going to use it for, I guess I wouldn't say you don't need, but you have excess money in your savings account, now you can use it to pay cash for something.

"It gets kind of complicated, but some of the money in our reserves are allocated only for certain things. For example, there's some money in EMS (Emergency Medical Service) fund that can only be used for EMS. And our staff says we have quite a bit of excess reserves in EMS, far more than what we need. Therefore, we can afford to spend cash for our new EMS stations. If we didn't have that money, we would have to borrow money, and that's fine, you borrow money when you need to.

"But if you have excess money, you don't need to, then you can use that excess reserve to do that. In a planned approach, okay? We are doing a similar thing with some roads and bridges. We have excess money, and reserves for roads and bridges, we are taking about \$900,000 out of that. So in order to use those funds, you have to make it show up as a deficit spending. But that deficit, unlike the federal government, when you talk about deficit spending, they are having to borrow money to pay for that excess spending. We already have the money, and it actually saves us from borrowing money unnecessarily. Okay?

"Now, we have projected deficits in out years, that always happens. But we will reduce those, we will not operate on an operational deficit. We will reach a point that we'll use some of our cash reserves, but then we'll reach a point that we will either have to borrow money, or save up for them in the future. So I see this as a very calculated, smart way to do it when you have some excess reserves. There is a lot of misleading information out there.

"I will give you an example, roads and bridges, you know, we will borrow money when necessary. But in the past, we had routine maintenance but we borrowed money for every single year. We would borrow \$4 million a year, but we were paying \$5.6 to \$5.8 in principal and interest. Think about that. You're paying more in cash and principal interest than what you're borrowing for road and bridge projects, plus, we were taking \$1.6 million, and still are out of that to pay for the bond and interest, so you are actually getting a net of \$2.4 million worth of roads and bridges. Do you follow what I'm saying?"

Mr. Lavender said, "I do."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "So we're paying \$5.6 million a year in principal and interest and getting \$2.4 million worth of projects. That's because of habitual borrowing for routine things that should not have been done. You have to borrow for things that are appropriate. Okay? I think it was earlier this year or late last year, we did borrow money for the 271 building, and a few other things, that made sense. So I hope that, I'm glad you came and noticed that there's deficit spending, but it is planned, and anticipated and appropriate. No one is more than a fiscal hawk than myself, and concerned about the federal government. But it is important to understand that there is a difference in the deficits that the federal government has and that we are doing this because we have excess cash on hand that we can afford to use and we don't have to borrow the money. Thank you."

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

Commissioner Norton thanked the Chairman and said, "Well, I take a little bit different viewpoint than Commissioner Ranzau. Yes, I understand the difference in the kind of deficit spending we have and the federal government, but our financing policies have been very sound for many, many years, and I have not been in favor of spending down our cash reserves at the level we have to offset some of what you would call deficit spending. We've worked real hard, at least in the time I've been here to build up the cash reserves to be able to have that ability to do projects and do capital projects over a long-term, and still have some cash reserves.

"The other thing I am very proud of, is that our finance staff has got us to the point of where we have three triple-A credit ratings. That is important when you do go out to finance and borrow money and bond and, you know, we just learned today the state had another downgrade. They continue to go the wrong way with their credit ratings. Before long, they're not going to have a double A rating, they'll be in a single A. That's going to raise the price of money when they do go to market.

"So, over the years I am proud of Chris Chronis and his staff, that have worked so hard to be sure that we maintain that. If you look around the country, around 30,000 municipalities and county governments and other jurisdictions, there are very few that have three triple-A credit ratings. So, I think it's critically important if you dramatically change your financing policies, if you use up your cash, if you get on the edge of not being able to do things that will affect your credit rating eventually, and I just don't see that as prudent management, when we've got a system that works pretty darn hard.

"The good thing is that if you bond, or finance over a long term, particularly for a lot of projects, bigger projects and roads and bridges, generations pay for the roads and bridge that's going to be used, not just the people that saved up the cash, that helped us save up the cash at the point we wanted to do it.

"The other part of it is if we get too low in cash reserves, you start eliminating programs and projects and other things you want to do as you run out of cash, and you want to do some things. Now, the state has robbed KDOT (Kansas Department of Transportation). They've robbed the Children's Initiative Fund. They've robbed KPERS (Kansas Public Employee Retirement System), they've done some other innovative kinds of things to keep the government running, but before long, not only will they not have cash reserves, they won't have any money to build roads and bridges. The Children's [Initiative] Fund will, and the tobacco money will run out, and they are going to do some things to fill KPERS back up, which may be borrow money to fill a hole and use that money bled off. So I certainly don't want to go in the direction our state is gone with the kind of funding mechanisms they use to run government, and I think we could be on that path if we don't watch what we're doing. Thank you."

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

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "I appreciate you coming out this morning as a person who has traveled across the blue mountains, has swum on Bondi Beach and even been out as far west in Dubbo in New South Wales, I appreciate you coming in and visiting with us a little bit, and that is a preface.

"I wanted to respond, because you raised a number of interesting points. Because every year, when we've gone through this exercise, we've had a long-term forecast that in the out years has some concerns. So we work to address them in the current year, so the out year concerns aren't as bad, but I think there is a strong consensus on this Commission, it is my opinion, if anybody up here wants to disagree with me they are free to do so, but keeping our triple-A credit rating I think is a priority for

certainly myself, and I think everyone in county government and on the elected side here.

"I'd like to point out the fact that when you say we have a deficit of sorts, we are paying cash for the Law Enforcement Training Center as opposed to taking out a 20-year loan and borrowing. For a little over \$2.5 million, I'm thinking \$2.6 [million] or \$2.7 [million], somewhere in that range. If I'm way off base, Lindsey, please shake your head. But I think I am reasonable in that regard. But that's about half of what we did for a special one-time appropriation last year for the Elephant Barn and exhibit at the [Sedgwick County] Zoo, over \$5 million.

"So I look at the, what we're doing this year, as a prudent use of funds, especially in light of what Commissioner Ranzau mentioned earlier with the dedicated EMS money that can only be used in that single area, and drawing it down to build new facilities, because frankly we are having an increase, we have got a slight increase in population in this county, but we've got a larger increase in EMS call volume.

"I would point out the fact that we've also, you know there have been other spending that the county has made for at one time for capital projects, and shortly, later this year, and Commissioner Norton didn't mention it, but I will plug the CAC (Child Advocacy Center) center. We funded \$1 million of a much larger project, but that was a one-time appropriation that the county did to be able to help keep the children and public safe in this community, and work in that direction.

"So there are some one-time costs here, but I think financially, this is a budget that is moving in the right direction at a number of different levels, with the caveat that if the tax base, in terms of the taxable assessed valuation in the county doesn't grow, it's going to be a challenge. There's no ifs, ands or buts about it, it is going to be tough. We've been fortunate this year, the numbers came in a little bit higher than what we had initially been told or led to believe we were looking at. In fact, on a percentage basis it was a good deal higher.

"So I am glad that you're in here talking, and expressing some concern, and raising some questions, because there does need to be more public interest and public discussion when we've got a budget, if you include our Fire District [No. 1], which is a separate legal entity, but combined, we have a little over \$400 million in our regular County Budget, and when you add the Fire District and the County's Regular budget together, it's right around \$425 million, and for a community that's got a population of a little bit over half a million total in Sedgwick County, that's a big responsibility, and I appreciate you coming down and participating in our hearing this morning. I would be happy to join you, if you want to meet with Commissioner Ranzau, if my schedule allows I will try to sit in on it too. Thank you for coming and speaking with us."

Mr. Lavender said, "Thank you, Commissioner."

Chairman Howell said, "There's other comments. Commissioner Unruh."

Commissioner Unruh thanked the Chairman and said, "Paul, thanks for coming up here today. I want to say at the get go, it is really an extreme compliment, I guess, to our community that you are willing to come back here and raise your family. It's been a concern, and an effort by many in the community that we need to be the type of community that attracts and keeps millennials in our community. I mean, you are the future, and you guys have the brains, and the creativity that we need to have an attractive community. So first of all, thank you very much, that you made that decision.

"I also want to share that I am in agreement with the concern of deficit spending and have expressed this to a Manager, and our Chief Financial Officer and to my colleagues that I really do not favor the deficit spending. It was stated last year in a budget presentation that this new approach to financing county budget was transformational in nature, and we are continuing down that path, and that we are not using all the financial tools that are available to us.

"Legitimate, reasonable, conservative approach to debt financing I think is legitimate, and the right thing to do for government, and we have decided as a commission that we're not doing that. And I think one of the things it said, is there another way? Well, there is another way. But we've decided as a commission not to go that way. It has impacted some of our services. I mean, we've had some very painful cuts last year. This year we have been able to avoid that, and so I'm pleased about that part of it. It is going to impact a little bit our road programs in the future.

"I think our Director of Public Works has said he is going to have to change the way that he's doing his programs from what we have been doing. So this is not without consequence to do this. I think that, my personal opinion if I had all the authority to say anything I would, that we don't need to do deficit spending, we can legitimately bond capital projects that are 20, 30, 50-year projects, like the Law Enforcement Training Center, or like the new Tag Office we have had which is a great benefit to the community. Even the preparation of the 271 building, the remodel expenses of that could have been included in our financing structure.

"So there are things we can do that would preserve our fund balance for real crises of management in the future, I think would be more appropriate, and we wouldn't be having to impose such tight restrictions on some of our agencies, even these services for citizens in the community through are health and public service type agencies that we have that we had to restrict last year. So we are making this work, but we have put restrictions on, and we are spending down this year, as you mentioned, \$4.5 million worth of our cash reserves.

"So under the circumstances that we, and restrictions we put on ourselves, I would say that this is a good budget in that we haven't had to impose further cuts, other than probably some changes in our Public Works and our road and bridge projects, and we were not funding routine maintenance in our Public Works. Those projects that we were doing are bridge projects, and repairs and upgrades that a bridge is a 50-year asset, it's not an annual recurring project. So I am babbling on here. I guess I'm saying that I'm agreeing very much with your concern about deficit spending, but probably above all I want to say thank you for making the choice to reside in our county. That's all I have."

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

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "Paul, coming recently back to the City of Wichita, I am sure you are aware this is election time. So politics are influencing some of the rhetoric you are hearing here and in the media, and so I want to clarify and point out a few things. First of all, we've made some decisions this commission that you as a libertarian might actually appreciate. We have worked to get the government out of your life.

"We actually rejected a grant from the federal government that wanted us to create dietary guidelines for our community and tell you what to eat or drink. We didn't really think that was important for our community, we can let you decide that for your self. We, too, care about quality of life here. In fact we were criticized last year in the budget inappropriately so I would argue that last year's budget, changes were

necessary, and prudent, and significantly increase our financial outlook, while at the same time preserving our quality of life. The quality of life in this community has not decreased a single bit as a result of last year's budget.

"It's actually given, it has improved our financial outlook, and over time, it helps us control the tax rate which is good for our community. One in particular you heard a lot about was the [Sedgwick County] Zoo. There was a lot of criticism about that. The Zoo, actually we have got numbers recently. It's flourishing. We are on pace for record revenues and record attendance. Nothing bad has happened as a result of our budget decisions last year.

"We've done things like the Tag Office and the Law Enforcement Training Center. These are issues that have languished for decades in this community. Decades. We finally got them done with cash. Those are quality of life issues as well. I'll point out a few things. I'm kind of disappointed in some of the comments from my colleagues, and surprised. This is my sixth year. The idea to about using some of our cash reserves is an idea that came to me from a variety of people, one of them was Commissioner Norton, talking about excess reserves, he would like to spend some of those things.

"Maybe it's an idea of what you spend the projects on that's offensive, I am not so sure. But I listened to a lot of people, to include my fellow commissioners, and they put the bugs in my ear, I think about this as we move forward. It is interesting to note, you talked about last year's budget of a couple million deficit. It is important to point out that my colleagues voted to spend \$5.3 million in deficit spending for out of our reserves for an elephant barn. That's why we had a deficit last year.

"Now, I am a little confused as to why it's appropriate to spend \$5.3 million of reserves on an elephant barn, but not appropriate to spend reserves for EMS stations, or roads and bridges, particularly since we have some funds that are dedicated to those things only. I think there's a little politicking going on here, okay?

"Now let's be clear. We are not on pace, and we are not going to use up all our reserves so we can't deal with emergency situations. That absolutely is not going to happen. We've made some calculated and planned decisions to use some reserves in a fiscally responsible manner. In addition to this the 271 building was brought up, and in fact here's another misstatement. Somebody said here that we made a decision as a commission to not bond anything. That is factually incorrect. I said this many times, we will bond when necessary, and in fact it was last fall we bonded the 271 building.

"Now, in an effort to be fiscally responsible, we took a look at the 271 building. You may not know this, but the original plan was to spend \$15 million on this project, and we were going to have a bond and interest payment of \$1.3 million. Now, the majority of this commission challenged that plan and said, we can do that in a more cost-effective manner. So through a variety of ways, we reduced the cost and we spent some cash on some stuff, and so we bonded, I think it was a little around \$5 million. So our bond payment is now \$300,000, a little more. So we saved \$1 million in bond and interest payments on a yearly basis, which means we have more money now for everything else.

"Simply because we challenged status quo on the decision how to do this. So these are very sound and logical, well thought out financial decisions that are sometimes complicated and difficult to explain in 30 seconds and so it can quite easily be twisted and distorted for political gain. Which is unfortunate but that's politics, that's how it happens. I do appreciate you coming here today, and asking these questions. And

you and anyone else who wants to give us a call, or me a call and come in and sit down, I would be happy to explain it to you. I think we are headed in the right direction. We're making some good decisions, and see us in a few years, I guarantee you, we won't be out of reserves.

"So that's the long-term plan. That's the vision that we have. I think we are doing tremendous things here in Sedgwick County. Thank you for moving back here, and I think it is the perfect place to live. Thank you, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Commissioner. We do have, believe it or not, more comments. I appreciate you standing for questions and comments. I will let you speak back at us when we get done, if that's okay. All right? Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn thanked the Chairman and said, "Let me ask a couple questions, if I may, and I agree with my colleagues in terms of welcome back. Your English hasn't deteriorated by being in New South Wales. Let me ask you, how long were you gone from the Sedgwick County area and when did you get back?"

Mr. Lavender said, "So I've been back just about a week now."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "How long were you out of the country?"

Mr. Lavender said, "For the majority of six years. I was back for a stint in 2014."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "So you left in 2010. Were you here when we had the grand opening for the downtown arena?"

Mr. Lavender said, "I can't remember if I was here for that day, but I do remember it."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "Okay. The reason I mentioned it, it's one of the largest projects was the Intrust Bank Arena. Have you ever gone to any events there?"

Mr. Lavender said, "I have, yes."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "Sedgwick County did not borrow for that event, for that venue, and it is over \$200 million, the total cost around \$210 [million], \$215 [million]. But it was zero interest, zero underwriting cost, basically a pay-as-you-go project, the county used dedicated sales tax for that project, and so taxpayers have not had to pay a penny in interest or underwriting costs in terms of doing that, and that's part of the challenge on the elected end, in terms of when does it make sense to borrow, as Commissioner Ranzau outlined.

"We did do that with the 271 building. But in a project that's much, much larger, the Intrust Bank Arena, there were no borrowing costs involved. Since you mentioned you had been out of the country a while, I didn't know your connection, in terms of what events you might have missed while you were gone, especially if you've only been back for about a week. I imagine you are kind of looking at things and saying, boy, this hasn't changed. But, that's new and different over here. Beyond getting by the welcome back, I think it's important as part of this discussion, in terms of making sense sometimes it makes sense to pay cash sometimes it makes sense to borrow. That's the challenge we have, and we've done some of both. But I would be remiss with the largest county project in this century, the Intrust Bank Arena, that was paid for with cash. Thank you, Mr. Chairman."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Commissioner. You mentioned I think three things. Quality of life, public health, and partnership with the city. My colleagues have already talked about the quality of life issues, the fact that the Zoo has record level attendance, record level revenue this year; in fact, I was out there last night the parking lot was completely filled. You couldn't find a parking place last night if you tried. It was enormous crowds at the Zoo.

"And partly, I think that's in part because the Sedgwick County invested in the elephant barn when we did, and there's a lot of excitement in the community. So, again, Sedgwick County has invested, if you will, in the quality of life issues. They did make two of those decisions in 2014, right before I showed up, so \$6.3 million of deficit spending was decided by the County Commission in 2014, right before I came to this position, and that was intentional draw down of the cash reserves. And again that was for important stuff. It was for the Zoo, as well as the Child Advocacy Center.

"In terms of the Health Department, I want to talk about this because you raised another issue I think somebody needs to speak to this. That is, I asked from the county because we just finished six months' worth of recordkeeping for our Health Department for 2016. Last year we were criticized because we took three immunization programs and put them into one. So far this year, compared to last year, this year we had 7,115 immunizations. Last year, same time period, we had 6,267. So we have increase in immunizations since last year. Health screenings performed, we went from 1,004 last year, 1,060 this year, another increase.

"And bear in mind, we were criticized last year for eliminating what we call the screenings program that had an average of just a couple of screenings per day, and we've actually increased. In fact, the voucher program that's paid for by the state of Kansas, last year we had an average of two per day. This year we have an average of three per day, and we have been criticized for that program. A number of other things that I could read here.

"In every category, either it's been level or we've had increases, with the exception of the WIC program, went from \$48,168 services provided to \$42,000, but that's a national trend, has nothing to do with us not funding WIC. Again, another one of these false narratives that continues to happen in the community is we cut our WIC program. What we did was we returned surplus, excess money that we had no way to spend, we returned it back to the state so they can decide other ways to use that money, it's up to them. But we accepted enough money to run our WIC program in its entirety. There was no cut to the WIC program. No reduction in services, no reduction in benefits to anyone. This reduction, \$48,000 down to \$42,000, a natural trend happening across the nation, it has nothing to do with us cutting the Health Department.

"Healthy Babies program. We were criticized for cutting that. Went from 1,027 clients and women and babies served to 1,143. Another increase. Sexually transmitted disease investigation went from 406 to 444. Another increase. Every one of these demographics is increases in these services. So the idea that we've cut health services and somehow we've disserved the community is again another false narrative. It is not true. We have a great Health Department, doing a tremendous amount of work.

"I appreciate Adrienne Byrne-Lutz, our Director of the Health Department, because she is a trooper. She accepted the challenges we gave to her, and she's turned it into lemonade. She's a fantastic lady. She's done a great job with the Health Department. They are providing new services.

"Quality of life things, the Exploration Place is doing great. They didn't have any to lay anybody off as a result of anything we did here in our budget. They are managing their challenges, they're doing a great job. The zoo is doing a great job. Health Department is doing a great job."

"I think we've worked very well with the city to partner with the city, as Commissioner Ranzau pointed out, we had a couple of really significant issues that have been at least 17 year, or 20-year issues we've solved this last year. One of those was the Law Enforcement Training Center, and that is a tremendous partnership with the city of Wichita. We operated out of a substandard elementary school for 30 years, and no one thought that was a good plan, and we solved it this year. We saved up money over the years, we added a little bit to that in this current budget to fill out the amount we're short, but we have the cash and I'm thinking about my personal private budget. If you have the cash to do something that's important, why would you choose to use a credit card or mortgage? If you have the cash? Because it just turns it into paying interest and to essentially waste your dollars."

"I think this is a smart budget, we are making smart decisions, solving problems, and it was very thoughtful, again you are right, we did receive a lot of criticism this year. By the way, so far you are the only speaker that signed up to speak today. And I will see if anybody else wants to speak but the reality is the county has done a good job. I don't think there will be nearly the criticism this year, but we'll see if anybody wants to raise those issues. But you actually raised issues from last year's budget cycle."

"The good news is we can look back now and see what happened. I think the reality is, a lot of great things have happened. We solved our budget issues last year, and did it in a thoughtful way. Nothing bad happened as a result. That's the way I would look at this. So Paul, you have done a great job standing there and taking a lot from us. Appreciate your patience. We've said an awful lot. Is there anything you want to add? I will give you as much time you want to comment to anything we've said."

Mr. Lavender said, "I just really appreciate your time. I feel like I've taken up enough time from the room. I would love to take you both up on your offer to spend more time privately and dissect it, if that's on the table."

Commissioner Ranzau said, "Absolutely. You can give us a call, or just stop out front the ladies there will set up a time for you to come in."

Mr. Lavender said, "Thank you."

Commissioner Peterjohn said, "We can validate your parking."

Mr. Lavender said, "Perfect."

Chairman Howell said, "Mr. Lavender, thank you for your comments this morning. And that is the end of my sign-up list. But I'll ask the audience, is there anybody else that's here who wants to speak to the budget hearing this morning? Alright. Last call. I am going to go ahead now and close the budget hearing for Fiscal [Year] 2017 budget. We will do this again Thursday next week. Commissioner Ranzau."

MOTION

*Commissioner Ranzau made a motion 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, "Commissioner Norton."

Commissioner Norton thanked the Chairman and said, "I would just urge the public to know that we'll have another public meeting and a public hearing, it will be in the evening, where possibly a different group can make it, and weigh in. I am a little concerned that we only had one.

"You know, over the years, even in really good budget years, we've had many people. I hope that there hasn't been a thought process that maybe coming to the meeting they're not heard, or that some of the actions we took last year after a lot of people weighed in, felt like you know we needed to change our ideas about things. I would urge the public to come out if they've got issues, if they've got thoughts, if they have looked at the budget, to still come out and give us feedback.

"I think that's why we have public hearings, to hear from the public. I know we do that on an individual basis out in our districts through emails and those things, but I would encourage people to show up and face-to-face give us much like Paul did today, their ideas about county government and how we should run a budget."

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioner Norton, thank you for those comments. We have been stressing the budget hearing opportunities every way we possibly can. It's on our website. We've talked about it at previous meetings for quite a while now, trying to make sure people are aware. We have done everything we can to get the message out, so it is interesting we only had one so far today, but not for lack of trying on our part. Maybe it is just my takeaway, perhaps they are happy with the budget. I don't know. So we'll see. I have a comment. Commissioner Peterjohn."

Commissioner Peterjohn thanked the Chairman and said, "Well, I would like to make two points. One, segue way off of what Commissioner Norton said. We've got an evening meeting coming up, and as a Commissioner who is strongly supported having an evening meeting for the budget, I am delighted that we are going to continue this policy of doing that, and I would be remiss if I didn't point out that, you know we've had some excellent attendance and public input when we've had our evening meetings.

"We had one down in Derby in the first quarter in Commissioner Howell's district earlier this year, one in Park City. At Park City Hall, in Commissioner Ranzau's district. I can't remember if it was late spring or early summer, but it was sometime in June. We have one in my district out west. I'm looking forward to having another evening meeting, because I think it draws and attracts public input, and is a factor in our ongoing discussions, and what we are trying to accomplish here. I think the evening meetings are positive in terms of it's certainly easier for folks working 7:00 [a.m.] to 4:00 [p.m.], 8:00 [a.m.] to 5:00 [p.m.] or whatever schedule they are on during the day to be able to come and attend our meeting.

"I think having this evening meeting Thursday a week from tomorrow, let me be more specific first Thursday in August, is going to be a positive on August 4th at 6:00 p.m., here at the courthouse. But I also wanted to kind of give a promotion for the upcoming evening meeting we'll have in September, out in my district in the western

part of the county. Thank you."

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

Commissioner Ranzau thanked the Chairman and said, "I would like more people to show up too if they can. That's why we have the one in the evening. I do want to make another correction. Last year we did have a lot of feedback from the citizens, and we did listen and it did make a difference."

"If you recall, the final budget we approved on 3-2 vote actually had more spending than the Manager's recommended budget as a result of that public input in a variety of areas. So it did have an impact. We all didn't get everything we wanted. Personally I voted for spending on things I didn't think was necessary, but in an effort to compromise and listen to the people we actually did increase the spending in that last budget and like I said three of us voted for that as a result of that input and two did not. But that is how it happens sometimes, and so certainly we listened to everybody and it does make a difference. Thank you."

Chairman Howell said, "Thank you, Commissioner Ranzau. In fact, I'm thinking back about the additions to the budget. There was additions to things a number of people really cared about. Project Access comes to mind. We did that last year. We also added money to I believe, Exploration Place a little bit. I need to go back and get a list of those things."

"We actually added a little bit of money back in the Health Department. There is a number of things we changed as a result, I think, of the public hearing last year. I would agree with Commissioner Ranzau on that. Seeing no other comments, questions, Madam Clerk, next item, Please."

Received and Filed

CONSENT

B [16-476](#)

Hire a Corporate Communications Manager above the grade minimum, with vacation.

MOTION

Commissioner Ranzau moved to approve the consent agenda.

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*

The Board of County Commissioners recessed into Fire District Number 1 from 10:01 a.m. and returned at 10:04 a.m.

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

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Chairman Howell said, "Alright. This being a special meeting, I don't know that we have legislative issues today. Of course the election is going on and I expect there to be a lot of things to talk about once we get through this one and the one in November. Talking to potentially new representatives and senators trying to move our legislative platform forward, But that's a discussion for another day. So we will do that later on. Madam Clerk, next item, please."

OTHER

Chairman Howell said, "Commissioners, do you have any comments for 'other' today? All right. Seeing none, I don't believe we have need for executive session. We have no executive session planned today. So Commissioners before we adjourn, anything else before we adjourn? Commissioner Norton."

Commissioner Norton thanked the Chairman and said, "Just to let people know that Commissioner Unruh and I were at the Crime Commission Roast of our Sheriff last night. It was an enjoyable evening, and they honored him for his public service, but they also got a few jabs in. But it was a great evening for the Crime Commission. I was glad to be there to support our Sheriff, and the Crime Commission, but it was more of a fun event than it was anything else. But a fundraiser also."

Chairman Howell said, "Very good. Thank you for those comments, Commissioner Norton. Anything else? Alright. Mr. Manager, anything else before we adjourn?"

Mr. Scholes said, "That's it."

Chairman Howell said, "So we, the next meeting we'll have on public budget hearing will be next Thursday, a week from tomorrow, at 6:00 p.m. here in this room. I encourage the public to come on out. We would love to hear from you. We are adjourned. Thank you very much."

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before the Board, the Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.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:
