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|  | **District 1 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting**  **Minutes**  Monday, July 17, 2023 | 5:30 p.m.  *Bel Aire City Hall, 7651 E. Central Park Ave., Bel Aire, KS* |

**Board Members in Attendance:** Daniel Bateman, Judah Craig, Joseph Dozier, Diane Gjerstad, Steven Burt, Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann, Kathy Herzog

**County Representatives:** Commissioner Pete Meitzner, Lindsay Poe Rousseau Chief Financial Officer

1. **Call to Order**
   1. Chair Judah Craig called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
   1. A motion was made by Daniel Bateman to approve the minutes. Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann seconded this motion. **The CAB approved the motion with a vote of 4-0.**
3. **Public Agenda**
   1. No Public Comments
4. **New Business**
   1. We welcomed our new member, Kathy Herzog.
      * 1. Kathy Herzog introduced herself
        2. Other CAB members introduced themselves
   2. Lindsay Poe Rousseau began the 2024 budget presentation.
      * 1. Final version of the budget will be available in November
        2. This is a one year spending budget
        3. Our financial forecast has improved, this impacts the decision making process
        4. County Manager creates the budget team
        5. Highest priority for the Commission is to fix our staffing
        6. There is no mill levy increase
        7. We are back to normal pre-pandemic
        8. Compensation is main focus
        9. The assessed value growth is 9%
      1. Steven Burt asked, does that Exploration project cost $7 million and they are asking for all of it?
         1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, that was a third of the cost.
      2. Steven Burt asked, so it’s a $20-21 million dollar project, so what does $2 million get you?
         1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, it helps as a match for grant funding.
         2. Pete Meitzner responded, there is some pending foundation grants and it this lets them know what to do.
         3. Steven Burt responded, it’s strategic.
      3. Judah Craig asked, do you think it would drive more activity as a whole, as you said on fair weather days that could theoretically cannibalize the already existing places?
         1. Daniel Bateman responded, no. I think it would be one more place to go. It makes one place less busy and it will spread out. There will be a net gain for maybe those out of towners who don’t like zoos.
         2. Pete Meitzner responded, the whole master plan for Exploration Place will be an agenda item.
      4. Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann asked, is there anything on the water or the river?
         1. Daniel Bateman responded, that amphitheater is right up against the water. So where the old putt putt golf area was is going to be filled up with seating. The other side, where the playground is, there are two big mounds of dirt, this where they will put in the giant attraction.
      5. Pete Meitzner commented, it’s so important to have 911, ambulance, sheriff that you may never use but we have to have these.
         1. Daniel Bateman responded, right, they have to be a part of our community.
      6. Steven Burt asked, so every attraction or event that we have at these places is a valuable contribution to our community, what is that for Exploration Place that is above and beyond this expense?
         1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, so we do have some ROI type data. What we are looking for and asked for is what does this speak to that ROI, what does this specific project do to increase that? I don’t have that report with me but I think it should be a part of the Master Plan for the Exploration Place. We have to make the dollars make sense.
      7. Diane Gjerstad asked, is it my understanding the Extension Office has not had its cuts from 5 years ago restored?
         1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, they have not for around 10-11 years. They did have one change about 3 years ago. The Extension Office operates as a County facility and back in the day, we used to be able to collect the rental income to try and help them a little. We did say you keep all of the rental income now. No one has seen an increase not even the Zoo. We are doing a capital contribution to TKAAM over 5 years but that is the only increase that many have seen in while.
      8. Diane Gjerstad asked, so the 3% general wage increase does that apply to the employees at the Extension Office?
         1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, no because they are not county employees. For example, we pay the Extension and the Exploration Place a sum and they spend it how they want. The Zoo is different because we pay for the people and then we give them half of the capital improvement maintenance budget and that’s what they get. They all have different agreements which can make it hard to have these conversations.
      9. Steven Burt asked, what would be helpful to hear from us on the Exploration Place?
         1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, from my perspective, do you think we are on the right track, or maybe not closing the door, keeping it at $2 million for now, helping with that additional ROI data and any circumstances that you would cap it at. If you think we are going bonkers and Exploration deserves more or less, if you can help me get this argument together because that’s where we struggle.
      10. Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann asked, so it’s the matching funds?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, yes. This is the grant.
      11. Judah Craig asked, when is the public feedback? Have you received much public commentary?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, no, but I think after this Wednesday’s conversation we will. I just don’t know that the channel has really been there for folks to hear that and to give their feedback but I can guarantee there will be comments.
          2. Judah Craig responded, it seems like a lot of the information is delayed until after the decision is made and then people like to chime in.
          3. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, well that’s the thing, we haven’t closed the door yet until we can publish more data and make our case. We are paying the $2 million out of this budget.
      12. Judah Craig asked, didn’t we see some of the Exploration Place, not key announcements but how it’s performing?
          1. Sarah Harper responded, there was an update on the yearly progress. It was an annual update.
      13. Tex Dozier asked, on your point on ROI, on the annual update or grant application, does anyone know if they have done that math on the direct dollar investment as well as the indirect to the river downtown economic impact or when these invests are made? Those numbers are important and convincing when going to the public especially to a public that is very concerned about essential services and public safety and everyone has staffing issues. They are going to want to prioritize money going to sheriff or the jail over something like the Exploration Place.
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, I think you’re right on that. They have not done those ROI analyses but I know they are working on it because we asked for it. My understanding is they are going to reach out to the economists at WSU and then hopefully that is something they present to the Commission later and try to make the case as to why it should be tax payers funds rather than us fundraising for those dollars. It’s on their radar but they just don’t have it yet.
      14. Steven Burt asked, I have a concern about ComCare and how much money we are spending on ComCare, what is that buying us? And I see we have ComCare on our agenda for next month’s meeting, why is that?
          1. Judah Craig responded, in regards to the meeting with mental health in the youth that was specifically requested by Natalie just because of how it affected her high school studies.
      15. Steven Burt asked, what is our RIO with ComCare?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, I don’t know we measure the safety net programs with RIO. We have a struggle with coordinating resources with homelessness right now. Our county and commissioners are taking more of an active role and trying to prioritize these conversations.
          2. Pete Meitzner responded, there has been a fundamental shift financially with ComCare, not just specific items. They’ve got the blocking and tackling down.
      16. Kathy Herzog asked, now that they are in a better financial position, they can focus more on appropriate service provision?
          1. Pete Meitzner responded, well what would happen is someone would come in for services and ComCare could bill for X, fee for service. Now they can come in and say you need to talk to this person and this person but now they have visited three departments. It went from everybody is getting charged to just one being charged for the pay per person for everything that is done.
          2. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, because they are part of the county they suffered with the same no pay raise and they got so far behind. We implemented new ComCare plans like Grow Your Own program. But it does help because there is a pipeline shortage and we are all competing for the same people. We have money to hire people, we don’t have bodies to hire. There is constant struggle to keep parody with the other departments so that’s why we have brought them onto their own pay plan.
      17. Pete Meitzner comments, 1 mill levy is worth $6.4 million dollars.
      18. Diane Gjerstad asked, on the average $100,000 house how much does that equate too?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, now it’s not $100,000 home. The 2023 medium value of a home in Sedgwick County is $167,000. Then our assessment rate is 11.5% so depending on whether you are home or a business you are going to pay a different rate on your property. On homes you are going to pay the 11.5% of your value and our mill levy rate is 29.37. This is just in the county.
      19. Diane Gjerstad asked, so if you lower it to a quarter of a million?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, that person would save $4.80 annually or 40 cents per month.
      20. Diane Gjerstad asked, didn’t the Appraiser say they capped appraisals at 10%?
          1. Pete Meitzner responded, Correct.
          2. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, we are lower than the ratio, the 10%.
      21. Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann asked, so you are giving a statement because they are wanting to reduce the sales tax?
          1. Pete Meitzner responded, sales tax is part of it as well.
          2. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, so we are talking about that 4% cap on growth from year to year. He is trying to say if we can lower it ourselves, the state can back off. Local control.
      22. Judah Craig asked, how has the forecasting been? Has it been pretty accurate with the exception of the Covid year?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, with the exception of the Covid year, yes. We have consistently exceed our performance efforts. We’ve had a lot of help both from the people in our offices but lot of it is from the data analytics that the Center for Economic Development Business Research puts out, we are able to talk with them whenever and we have some assistance from WSU, we rely on the academics all the time too. We try to be as precise as possible on the revenue and expenditure side but we tend to be more accurate on the revenue side and that is because people tend to not spend as much as we expect.
          2. Pete Meitzner responded, the County been consistency bonding Triple A plus Monray whenever we need to bond something. The bonding philosophy is different than the City and the bonding ratings have been outstanding for that.
      23. Judah Craig asked, but the staffing is level right?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, it may change.
          2. Dr. Stephanie Kuhlmann responded, they are able to hire and backfill but not sure if they are getting ahead.
          3. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, yes the issue is we aren’t getting ahead. In the Sheriff retention we are getting ahead because we did that giant raise. But again, if we don’t keep moving that minimum that becomes the concern. That why we have those 2% investments. So, that and COMCARE are the only 2 parts that we are starting to get back but we were so bad that we still aren’t back to where we were pre-pandemic. That is why we continue to make staffing a priority.
      24. Daniel Bateman asked, what’s the county sales tax?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, the county’s sales tax is 1%. It is like that with all cities. It half goes to offsetting property taxes and the general fund and the other half goes to roads and bridges.
          2. Pete Meitzner responded, we do not have an extra sales tax. It gives us room for big projects.
          3. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, yes, our 1% generates $110 million across the county.
          4. Daniel Bateman responded, the fact that that small portion goes to county government because what kind of damage could you do to this budget with another half percent.
          5. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, for the 1% is $110 million, Sedgwick County $38 million of that. $19 million went to Sedgwick County Roads and Bridges and $19 million went to the general fund.
      25. Daniel Bateman asked, what’s the city sales tax rate?
          1. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, the City of Wichita has the same as we do. But I know Park City and Derby have an addition to that 1%.
          2. Pete Meitzner responded, there are a few other cities have an additional half percent added that is just for them.
      26. Diane Gjerstad asked, is there any discussion on a building for County Commission?
          1. Pete Meitzner responded, yes, it should be an agenda item. There is an evaluation going on and there are two or three buildings being looked at.
          2. Lindsay Poe Rousseau responded, the Commission authorized four options and there is work being done on the Murfin building. There was a purchase agreement that was just signed so we can do our due diligence. It’s up to the Commission on whether they want to spend tax dollars on a lease or tax dollars on principal interest for a facility.
      27. Potential future topics of discussion: Exploration Place’s Master Plan, Admin Building, State Legislative for November and United Way December 7th event where all CABs are invited.
      28. November 20 is still good with everyone regardless of the Thanksgiving Holiday.
      29. WAMPO Survey handout
5. **Adjournment**
   1. The District 1 Citizen’s Advisory Board adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

*The next Citizens Advisory Board Meeting will be* ***Monday, August 21, 2023, 5:30 p.m.***  *at Bel Aire City Hall, 7651 E. Central Park Ave., Bel Aire, KS*