



District 3 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

September 11, 2023 | 7 p.m.
Goddard District Conference Center
315 S. Main, Goddard

Board Members in Attendance: Sharon Ailslieger, Joe Brown, Peter Cook, Carl Losey, Kevin McWhorter, Michael Mitchell, Stephanie Wise, David Wright

County Representatives: Commissioner David Dennis, Assistant County Manager Tania Cole

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Call to Order – Chair Kevin McWhorter
 - i. Chair Kevin McWhorter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- b. Introduction of new member Peter Cook
- c. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Chair Kevin McWhorter
 - i. Joe Brown motioned to approve meeting minutes from July 24, 2023, and Carl Losey seconded. **The D3 CAB approved the meeting minutes with a vote of 8-0.**

2. PUBLIC AGENDA

- a. The public agenda allows members of the public to address the District 3 Citizens Advisory Board.
 - i. None

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Legislative Process – Tania Cole
 - i. Tania Cole introduced herself to the board and gave a brief history of her time with Sedgwick County
 1. Sedgwick County has 3 legislative platforms; State, Joint State & Federal
 - ii. Two types of asks - Funding or Policy Changes
 - iii. Timeline: September – December to build and finalize the platform.
 1. Department heads and elected officials are asked what they want to see on the platform going into 2024. Commissioners then review the suggestions and give input. The platform is then discussed publicly in staff meetings until voted on at a BoCC meeting to finalize.
 - iv. Sedgwick County has a Lobbyist to help communicate with State policymakers and keep track of upcoming bills.
 - v. Legislative Session runs from January to May.
 - vi. Platform Handout types
 1. Business Cards – Top priorities with QR code to full platform
 2. Palm Card – Condensed version
 3. Full Page – Full Platform
 - vii. State Platform
 1. South Central Delegation is the main group of State Legislators that represents Sedgwick County. Lobbyists help make sure the South Central Delegation has our platform
 2. Kevin McWhorter asked, since Sedgwick County has a lobbyist, do other cities and groups have lobbyists?
 - a. Tania Cole answered, yes.

- b. Kevin McWhorter followed up, do they have the same lobbyist or different?
 - c. Commissioner Dennis answered that the Chamber has the same lobbyist as us, but others have their own. Tania Cole mentioned some have lobbyists on their staff.
 - 3. The Lobbyist sends a weekly report to Sedgwick County regarding upcoming bills. Sedgwick County can “weigh in” by providing testimony on the bills.
 - a. Testimony is written but has to be able to provide in person as well. In 2022, Sedgwick County provided testimony on 9 bills. Testimony could be from all Commissioners or just 1.
- viii. Joint Legislative Platform
 - 1. Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita, The Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Wichita Partnership (GWP) and the Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) are partners on the Joint platform. One of the major wins for our area is the WSU Tech and KU Biomedical Campus.
 - 2. Kevin McWhorter asked why is KSU not involved. He was also curious if they were asked and how it came about to not include our 3rd main university.
 - a. Tania Cole did not know, but likely because WSU and KU have the Medical Schools.
 - b. Commissioner Dennis added that this is something happening in Wichita; KU Medical School is here and doesn’t believe KSU has a strong medical education.
- ix. Federal Legislative Platform
 - 1. The process for creation starts around January and contains mainly funding appropriations asks.
 - 2. Commissioner Dennis shared that the first few projects we’re working on no matter what, but were hoping for special funding. Did not get the funding.
 - 3. Commissioner Dennis added we are working with other organizations on transportation projects. NW Bypass is still a priority for WAMPO & transportation coalition/policy – board. New Secretary of Transportation and will get a visit from him soon. Fits in with the Federal Agenda.
- x. Review of Platform
 - 1. Have started the process for 2024’s platform.
 - 2. Commissioner Dennis stated we couldn’t do this without our lobbyists. But sometimes Commissioners need to be involved or on-site.
 - 3. Coming up
 - a. Over the years, the Legislature removed the opportunity for local governments to collect dollars to support operations outside of property taxes. They are working on a constitutional amendment that won’t allow property tax to rise past 4% per year
 - b. Tania Cole stated it has already passed the Senate and now needs to pass the House. If that happens, then goes to a local vote.
 - c. Joe Brown asked if this is that bad, why is it not on the platform?
 - i. Commissioner Dennis replied that the handouts were from last year. The 2024 platform is still being developed.
 - d. Joe Brown stated the locals are upset about taxes and electric increases.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis shared he believes there’s a lot of work to do this year. The legislature doesn’t understand the local process.
 - e. Joe Brown asked if a workshop for regional legislators to educate them on current needs could be held.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis answered that the Legislators are listening to the KS Policy Institute which is currently doing a policy tour.
 - f. Sharon Ailslieger gave her perspective as an older American.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis responded that the Legislature can reduce your taxes through the Local Ad Velorum Tax Reduction (LAVTR)

and County City Revenue Sharing (CCRS) funds. Part of the money from those funds is supposed to come back to the local government. The State is sitting on a \$4 billion surplus right now and hasn't sent money back in 20 years.

- g. Sharon Aillsieger mentioned that Missouri has a tax cap for citizens over 65.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis stated he would not support that as it creates an imbalance in property values and shifts the burden to non-seniors.
 - ii. Commissioner Dennis explained the appraisal process.
 - h. Joe Brown made a statement regarding tax abatements.
 - i. Stephanie Wise asked what has been the average percent increase in property taxes every year.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis replied that this past year it was about 9%. Sedgwick County builds its budget off of a 4% increase. The appraiser said it would be about 4.5%. Sedgwick County lowered its mill levy because of the increase. There are 125 taxing entities in Sedgwick County alone.
 - j. Stephanie Wise commented, wonder if the slush fund the legislature thinks we can't handle can explain why we don't get it back.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis responded many legislators do not know what the LAVTR and CCRS are.
 - k. Stephanie Wise asked, if they cap property tax at 4% is that only residential?
 - i. Commissioner Dennis and Tania Cole both replied they had not heard it as being only residential but that it would be all property tax.
 - l. David Wright asked what is the motivation behind the cap.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis replied they think we're wasteful.
 - m. David Wright asked if LAVTR & CCRS have been in statute for 20 years.
 - i. Commissioner Dennis responded, yes. Approximately \$35 billion was supposed to come back to cities and counties over the last 20 years.
 - n. Commissioner Dennis stated we are going to finish the legislative process in December. Stated that members can send ideas for the platform.
 - o. Sharon Aillsieger commented that some of these problems will be with us forever, but no reason we can't try to make it better. But many push the problem off to others.
- 4. Joe Brown made suggestions for the platform including Broadband and Electric Rates.
 - 5. Commissioner Dennis stated that behavioral health is the #1 issue.
 - 6. Kevin McWhorter asked if Sedgwick County has used the same lobbyist for a long period and how you review their performance.
 - a. Tania Cole answered Watkins Public Strategies has been hired by Sedgwick County for 2-3 years. We review their performance based on conversations and our access to the legislature. They also do a public report annually on the platform (wins/losses).
 - b. Commissioner Dennis added they do a lot of behind-the-scenes work such as setting up events and connections.
- b. Discussion of future meeting agenda items
 - i. Nicole Gibbs went over scheduled events for future 2023 meetings.
 - ii. Commissioner Dennis suggested Exploration Place for a tour opportunity and mentioned their upcoming Drone Show

4. BOARD AGENDA

- a. Commissioner Dennis gave updates on County current events:
 - i. Sedgwick County passed the 2024 budget and reduced the mill levy to 29 mills.
 - ii. Sedgwick County is now a Purple Heart County.
 - iii. Emergency Communications (911) was recently remodeled.
 - iv. Attended FD1 Training
 - v. Pay raises for employees were part of the budget, including a new pay scale for FD1
 - vi. Starting in January, there will be a non-stop to flight to DC with American Airlines (AA). Looking at other locations: Charlotte, LA, more to Phoenix & Las Vegas. AA did not ask for subsidies.
 - vii. Solar Moratorium for commercial solar construction.
 - viii. Veteran's Day Parade will take place on Nov. 11.
 - ix. Air Force Ball/Anniversary.

5. ADJOURNMENT

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

*The next Citizens Advisory Board Meeting will be **Monday, October 2, 2023, 7 p.m.**, at Goddard School Conference Center, 315 S. Main, Goddard, KS.*