

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

January 29, 2025

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Wichita, Kansas, January 29, 2025

Wednesday, 09:00 AM

The City Council met in regular session with Lily Wu, JV Johnston, Brandon Johnson, Becky Tuttle, Mike Hoheisel, Dalton Glasscock, and Maggie Ballard.

Also in attendance: Ryan Baty, Sedgwick County Chairman, Pete Meitzner, Sedgwick County Commissioner, Jeff Blubaugh, Sedgwick County Commissioner, Stephanie Wise, Sedgwick County Commissioner, Jim Howell, Sedgwick County Commissioner, Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, Tim Stolz, County Manager, Justin Waggoner, County Counselor.

Staff Members Present: Robert Layton, City Manager, Jennifer Magana, Director of Law, and Shinita Rice, Deputy City Clerk.

I) City/County Business

1.) [Affordable Housing: Escaping the Housing Trap](#)

Attachment: [General Escaping_the_Housing_Trap.pdf](#)

Gentry Thiesen stated well, good morning, everybody. Wichita City Council, Sedgwick County Commission and staff, thank you for making the time for this important conversation to take place. My name is Gentry Thiesen. A lot of familiar faces. It is good to see you all again. And I serve as the Government Affairs Director representing the Realtors of South Central Kansas. Today, we have a unique opportunity to focus on a topic that has significant implications for our community's future, housing. I want to take a moment to thank City Council and County Commission for their ongoing work to address housing issues in Wichita, particularly in light of the quick and effective actions taken place to address homelessness in the last year. Your commitment to the shelter project was impressive. And while we recognize that there's still work to be done, that kind of agility and collaboration is exactly what we need to continue making progress in our community. However, as many of us know, housing goes beyond homelessness. Our community's housing challenges, whether in terms of affordability, supply or the overall structure of our development, are deeply interwoven with our economy, quality of life and long-term sustainability. And that's why we're here today. RSCK has brought Chuck Marohn, the founder and president of Strong Towns, because his work provides a critical perspective on how we can approaching housing and development in a way that builds long-term resilience financially, socially and structurally. His ideas are rooted in the notion that we need to rethink the way that we approach growth. Chuck's book, "Escaping the Housing Trap" lays out how communities across the country have

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wrestled with similar issues and how they've found creative ways to overcome them. The lessons from those cities offer us a valuable road map. The ultimate goal of today's session is to engage in a forward-looking constructive conversation about how we can all work together to create a stronger and more resilient housing system here in Wichita. Chuck's insights will offer a fresh perspective on how we can approaching housing and development in a way that ensures long-term sustainability. His ideas are designed to provoke thought, challenge assumptions and inspire creative solutions that reflect the unique needs of our community. Chuck is not here to tell us what to do, as great as that might be, but rather to help us understand the broader trends shaping housing across the nation and explore ways that we might apply those lessons to our own situation. The goal is to inspire common purpose and collective action. Not just from our government, but also from the private sector, nonprofits and others who have a stake in our community's future. We'll also make time for Q&A toward the end of Chuck's presentation. So I encourage you to ask questions, share your thoughts and engage in this conversation. This is a collective effort, and one where the expertise in this room can help shape the next chapter of Wichita's housing story. Without further delay, please join me in welcoming Chuck.

Chuck Marohn reviewed the item.

Mayor Wu stated well thank you very much, Chuck, for that presentation. We really appreciate it because, just last week we presented our joint legislative agenda, which was a collaboration between the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County, the Chamber of Commerce, REAP, Wichita State University and the Greater Wichita Partnership, and one of the three key items that we advocated our state legislators on is housing. So this is very, timely exactly to have this conversation. And I'm very appreciative of the ideas and how a local government can play a role in encouraging more housing to be built in our community. So I will open it up to our council members and commissioners to ask questions or to have that dialogue.

Commissioner Blubaugh stated thank you. I'm just curious. The localized finance, how do we get around some of the obstacles with underwriting and some of the other issues that we have with financing? And some of the barriers to entry, especially for first-time buyers?

Chuck Marohn stated yeah. No. I appreciate that. Again, we're talking largely about homes that cannot, or things that cannot be or are really difficult to finance in the current marketplace. So I'm not saying those things don't apply, but they apply in a different way. Let me give you an example. In Muskegon, Michigan, they have started to use tax increment financing for starter homes. So their conditions are the house has to be 900 square foot or less. It has to be an in-fill house. So it's got to be an existing neighborhood with existing sewer and water, no expansions. It's got to be in, like, one of their historic neighborhoods. And if you will do that, if you will build that house, they will make your down payment.

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So what they do is they say, you know how tax increment financing works? The vacant lot is worth this much. When the house is built, the taxes on it go up to this. That difference is the increment. What they do is the city goes out, borrows the money for the down payment. They repay that loan then with that increment of taxes. When the loan is paid off, then the taxes start accruing to the city. If you depart the house early before it's paid off, you're responsible for the make-up. So there's a little bit of a claw-back feature. It's not designed for flippers or developers or people. It's to design for people who are going to live in it. But the City then doesn't have to get involved in the underwriting and all that. That's, like, still gonna go through the normal banking system, but they can be the difference maker and lowering that entry-level cost of that house. Does that make sense? Yeah. Generally, I'm going to say this. Generally, when we use tax increment financing again, if we look at those transactions closely, we are asked as local governments to lose money. We are asked to in a sense subsidize a development by losing money. When we look at it in housing, and we're very targeted on these entry-level products, we put ourselves in a situation where we're not actually losing money, and we're getting the types of housing that our community desperately needs. I'll also make one other comment about the security of it because the city does go out or the government does go out and take out a loan. So there is, like, risk at play. But when we do that, if you think of a primary mortgage and a secondary mortgage, if there's a default on the home, the primary mortgage gets made whole first and then the secondary mortgage gets whatever's left over. If we do these transactions, we become the front of the line. So we are made whole first. Then the primary mortgage. Then the secondary mortgage. So our leverage in this situation becomes the most secure leverage that there is. We do have risk, and I'm not gonna say we don't, but it's very, very small in comparisons to everybody else.

Commissioner Blubaugh stated explain to me how you get a lender to - to be a junior mortgage carrier.

Chuck Marohn stated you don't, they don't get an an option to. I mean, right? Okay. I'll give you the special assessment process, which is another thing that cities have used to do this. If you go out and do a road project and you assess it, the primary loan becomes the junior immediately. Like, they don't have any say in that. That's how.

Commissioner Blubaugh stated does it - does it require...

Chuck Marohn stated does that make sense?

Commissioner Blubaugh stated yeah.

Vice Mayor Johnston stated I'm sorry. Does it require mortgage insurance for the lender, for the buyer?

Chuck Marohn stated to do, like, the one that Ms. (Keegan) did?

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Vice Mayor Johnston stated right.

Chuck Marohn stated no. It wouldn't, I mean, you're operating as a city. You, or as a county. I'm sorry. You're the city, right?

Vice Mayor Johnston stated yes.

Chuck Marohn stated as a city you're the controlling legal authority. If you go through the right process and put that on, it essentially attaches to the property and you - you wouldn't need mortgage insurance for that. If you make a 20% down payment for the property owner, generally they also would not need mortgage insurance at that point either because their loan would be an 80% loan on the house.

Vice Mayor Johnston stated yeah. But if I'm the lender, I would probably want it though.

Chuck Marohn stated possibly.

Vice Mayor Johnston stated if I'm - if I take second position.

Chuck Marohn stated but you, okay. Again, I'm kind of, I think what you're saying. Think of as special assessment. The bank is still considered the primary position even though there's that assessment that gets paid first. And it's a semantics thing. And I get it. But I taking it from a different angle and I'm making it. I'm taking it from an angle that the bankers don't normally take it from. Does that make sense?

Vice Mayor Johnston stated yeah.

Chuck Marohn stated so they might want insurance, but that's not been the case that I know of in Muskegon where they've been doing the TIF stuff for quite a while. Yeah. The banks are generally happy to have the down payment in cash because they're used to less skin in the game up front. And plus, when you have an 80/20 loan, you can sell that 80/20 loan, that is a securitizable - so you can offload that really easily. Yeah.

Council Member Johnson stated I just wanted to know if you could give us two or three comparable cities that started this conversation about number two on there, getting' some of those incremental developers together? Did they also get banks together in that same space or is that a separate conversation? Just some folks we could reach out to - to talk through that? Because I've been in a room with some developers and there's always pushback on building below 250,000. It's always we need the 300 and above and it needs to be in the, um, greenfields. And that's always a frustration because in these lower-

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income neighborhoods you don't have that. You might have some empty lots, but the backyard cottages almost at 80 years. The backyard cottages could be a benefit, but I'm just looking for who we could reach out to maybe have those conversations and see how they started that were successful.

Chuck Marohn stated so it's a great question. Let me answer that question second, but let me draw a distinction first. This would not be a convening of developers or builders. It's gonna be a convening of, I'm just going to use a colloquial of weirdos. I did last night in the room - and I do this every time I do the housing book talk. I asked a question, "How many of you have looked at a house near you that's rundown in disrepair or a vacant lot or something and said I wish someone would do something about that, and I think that person could be me?" And the number of hands that go up is incredible. Those are the people that we're talking about bringing together. They're people who are not doing building today. They're not doing development today. They're not doing this kind of work, but they would. They just have a gap in there. They lack the confidence that they can do it. To be a developer, to be a builder, is to really be a renaissance person. You kind of have to know a little bit about, like, a whole bunch of stuff. You've got to know about how to write a subcontract. You've got to know about how to talk to banks, how to get a permit, how to inspect plumbing. There's a whole range of things. And so, you're talking about non professional developers and builders. So if you get professional developers and builders together, they will say can't build a product for less than 250,000. If you want it less, you've got subsidize it because we can't do it. That's because they are responding to the capital flow in the marketplace and they're building those securitizable products. We're talking about weirdos who are gonna build crazy stuff and they're gonna do it for profit margins that are questionable because part of their payback is going to be personal satisfaction. And that sounds crazy even saying it. Let it. South Bend, Indiana, is the best example of this. In the book, we've got a whole chapter that goes through and talks about South Bend and a couple of other cities and I'm - I wanna say, like, Duncanville, outside of Dallas is one. South Bend is, like, the premier example of this. In South Bend, this was back in Mayor Pete days. So we can all have opinions on Transportation Security Buttigieg, who's now just Pete Buttigieg again, but I knew Mayor Buttigieg and he was awesome. And one of the things he did is he went out and said, "This is the kind of housing we need." Who are the people who are trying to do this, and started getting them together. And really, it was just, like, convening them at City Hall. Like, let's get some pizza and some pop and you come in and just talk to each other for two hours. Ultimately, they worked up to the point where there was enough people. There was, like, 40 people out and they were helping each other and figuring this stuff out, where they started to do things like bring bankers in and bring insurance agents in and bring other outside connections in so that they could kind of see this energy and figure out, like, how do we work with it. But that was 18 months into the process. The first beginning of it was just getting these, I'm going to say, weirdos. These kind of non-traditional people who were interested in doing this kind of building together and then helping them build their own competency. I'll give you one other resource. There's a group called, the Incremental Development Alliance. You can find them online. They're an organization that we are very friendly with. They train incremental developers to do this kind of work. If you get a hold of them, they may be able to tell you people on their roster that are living in your city right now that they're connected to doing this kind of work. If not, they certainly have online training. They also have network groups. They also come to a community and do training. You

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want to have a little bit of stuff going on first to make really good use of that. But that's a - that's another resource that can help you.

Council Member Johnson stated that's good. With the Mayor Pete example, so was that led by him and government starting those conversations out in the community of this is what we need? And then was there - like, we have our places for people plan that kind of addresses a lot of what you're talkin' about. Did policy change on the front end, or did policy change on the back end as the community conversations were happening?

Chuck Marohn stated that's a really good question. In South Bend here's what I'd like to do. I'd like to get you a copy of the book so you could read this because I feel like we this it's actually a beautiful story. In South Bend, there were a group of people who were doing this work. When Mayor Pete came in, there was a lot of staff turnover. He instituted at the the senior director level and that group went out and connected with the other group that was very, very small at the time, three, four people. And they kind of together started, okay, how do we grow this and they worked on it together. So there was, like, a bit of spark going on or a small fire going on and they fanned it and got it going beyond that. Does that make sense?

Council Member Johnson stated yeah.

Chairman Baty stated Chuck, thank you for the presentation on this. This is fascinating. There was a couple of - you talked about TIF being one of the tools in the tool belt. I'd be curious of what we currently have in existence today that's in our tool belt that could be accessed now. And there's two things that come to mind. One for existing structures. Our land bank. And we've invited our treasurer and she's got some resources here, I think. I think we should be advised and be educated about what our land bank is and if it is properly being used and if there's opportunity to tap into this. The second is actually a program that we went through last year at the county, the RHID program, where we actually had to develop some policy around RHID. Brent Shelton is here as well from the county and - and if we can give each of these individuals just a couple of minutes to share about what those are, I think it'd be helpful for us to ask questions. RHID, particularly from the county angle, we wanted to limit this to in-fill projects only and not some suburban sprawl, and this is an investment tool that we have in the belt. So, our treasurer is here, Brandi Bailey. Maybe you could help us on the land bank and invite up whoever you'd like.

Brandi Bailey, County Treasurer, stated good morning.

I'm Brandi Bailey. I'm the county treasurer. And I've also invited Chris McElgunn. He is with Klenda Austerman and he is our tax foreclosure attorney. And he is essentially my resident expert on land

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banks. So I've brought him up here to help answer any of those legal questions or statutory things that are out there. So, do you have any specific questions that I can get started?

Mayor Wu stated can you start off with giving an overview for the folks that may not understand what our current land bank situation is like?

Brandi Bailey, County Treasurer, stated so currently, we have several cities within Sedgwick County and I've went through and gotten a list, and I show eight, including City of Wichita, cities that have a land bank that they do use today. Several of these cities, and off the top of my head, I've got five of them that have come to a tax foreclosure sale and have gotten their properties to help fund a land bank.

Chairman Baty stated Chris, if you can just give us a 30-second what's a land bank?

Chris McElgunn stated yeah. Well, a land bank is a good it is generally a good idea. I think the execution is that one of the challenges for those that have land banks is they're looking for the tax foreclosure process providing the inventory of potential properties. And that's not a good match-up because, the way the system works is that the tax foreclosure process does not provide what I would call, inventory of potential homes or properties that fit the type of challenges that at least, in the City of Wichita. But what happens is that Cheney is a good example is that there was developer gone under and there were a bunch of vacant lots. They came and bid at the tax sale and what happens is under Kansas law, they can bid up to the amount of the taxes that are due and owing, but they cannot bid over. So they're not competing with private bidders. And also, that allows there to be at least for the owner of the property a way to potentially, recoup some equity. If the city is the successful bidder, or the municipality is the successful bidder, and then what happens is they get - they get a credit back against the purchase price for their special assessments, whatever might be the - the tax dollars that would go to, for instance, (Cheney). And that way then, Cheney was financing their purchase by using their special assessment, their special taxes that were a burden on the property as a credit. So then at the end of the day what happens is that the property has been put i the land bank. At that point in time, it become - can become tax-exempt, and that's the big value. The - those, subdivisions that school districts are - or those that get a piece of that pie of the ad valorem property taxes, their interests, are preserved because those ad valorem property taxes are paid. And basically, in this case, (Cheney), used its special assessments. And since this was a development that went under, of course, there are all those special taxes for paving, gutter, sewer, those type of things that made up those special assessments. So they were able to use that as a tool. And that the way that we've seen it work. Where the breakdown comes in is there's an idea of say, hey, can we go out ahead of time and identify certain parcels that are in tax foreclosure process and get some type of preferential arrangement? On a chalkboard, that sounds good, but it doesn't fit the process. It doesn't fit the structure that we now have. And it misconceives the type of properties that are usually available because the goal of tax foreclosure is not to sell the properties. The goal of tax foreclosure is they get the

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owners to come in and pay the taxes that are delinquent. And so at the end of the day, there are very, very few properties that are sold. And of those, they're typically not the type of properties that would be valuable to - to a land bank because, there's a reason why they're in tax foreclosure. A lot of vacant lots are a lot of what I call, ribbon strips. There are properties that, are valuable only to the adjacent landowner. But the - and so there are very few that get sold. The rest of them people have come in and fully paid all the taxes. So, we have enjoyed the benefit of full payment of those taxes and there's not a for sale of the properties. That's the real goal of tax foreclosure. And I can tell you, in any given year we can run the numbers, but the amount of tax collection from those that come in and pay the taxes to avoid sale of the property is three to four times what is ultimately even collected at the sale level. The other goal is to get these properties that are ultimately sold in the hands of someone that potentially would pay taxes in the future. That's kind of how the system works.

Council Member Hoheisel stated thank you for that, um, kind of brief breakdown of it. It's a really complicated process. I believe Troy Anderson, our Assistant City Manager, had a little bit of experience, I believe, in Omaha dealing with some of these. I've also talked to members of our - our land bank. One of the issues that they say that we're facing is that we don't carry the debt over during auctions. Um, that's part of the - the issue as far as them actually getting properties. So I was wondering is that somethin' that we can look at? Because, again, that - this is just wanna hear from the land bank. I think they've sold maybe three or four properties in the couple of years that I've been on the council. I haven't seen too much action.

Council Member Johnson stepped away briefly.

Chris McElgunn stated I don't quite understand your question.

Council Member Hoheisel stated Well, if we have a property that goes up for auction, we essentially clear the debt. Is that...

Chris McElgunn stated my understanding from the recent, recent meeting that we've had is that the problem is with your, as I understand it and - and I don't profess to have much of a knowledge base. But as the way Jeff Van Zandt and others who were at the meeting explained - explained to us is there was a problem in the strings attached to the block ramp. And one of the problems is is that if a - if a home is blighted to the - to the point where you have to scrape it, basically take it down to the dirt. I can look at a title - at - at a tax roll and tell you without knowing anything about the property that's one word the, that's happened. There's been a demolition. Because why? There's between \$7000 to \$13,000 special tax lien on that. It's my understand - and that would for - that would be wiped out in a tax reclaimer. So if I was wanting that lot and I was a bidder because you don't have - there - once it goes to sale, there's no requirement that you actually get any specific amount. It goes highest bidder, cash in hand. I may buy that lot for \$5,000, right? The rest of that tax lien, including the special assessment, gets forgiven,

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because again, the goal is, hey, let's get it into the hands of somebody that will pay the taxes in the future. As I understand, one of the funding sources is that can't be done in that the land bank has to pay that special assessment. And so it's a requirement of certain funding sources that have nothing to do with the tax foreclosure process. Because if you're a private bidder, you wouldn't have to do that. You wouldn't have to do that. Now, I know it's probably more complicated than that that's, but that's one of the things that I understand from our meetings in the in the past was one of the challenges. You just couldn't basically do that. Or there was an issue in that regard that basically would stymie the availability of appropriate properties for your land bank.

Council Member Glasscock stepped away briefly.

Council Member Hoheisel stated Okay. And then when it goes up for auction like that and the tax debt and the assessments and whatnot, that's all wiped away our local governments are not made whole for that as well, correct? Because we've been, you know - we've gone out there and mowed the grass, secured this property. We have outstanding tax debt. So that's all wiped out as well and we are not made whole from wiping off the debt and putting it up for starting at a dollar.

Chuck Marohn stated Yeah. Nobody is made whole on those few parcels that are ultimately sold, if they sell for less than the taxes. So there's two categories. And that's always the case or you would never be able to sell the property. If you had a minimum bid equal to the full tax burden on the property, you would never sell that property in tax foreclosure. And then basically, you have a asset that continues to have an increased burden of delinquent taxes in the future as opposed to at some point in time there is a white flag on a certain number of parcels that you're just never going to be able to be made whole. And at that point in time, it's, like, okay. You kind of cut your losses, so to speak and hopefully, the person that guys that then will pay all taxes in the future. And so you're at least recouping those, but there are always those limited number of parcels that are part of the auction. After we've taken care of all the problems with the vast majority of the parcels that are in the tax foreclosure process, there's always that small number where it goes to sale, and we don't recoup enough money to make everybody whole. And oftentimes, we recoup some money where it may be at 30%, at maybe 10%, and maybe some at least portion, of the tax laws. But you're never ever going to avoid that. You're never gonna to avoid that. Unless the legislature makes a decision and with the support of its constituents that we are willing to put that requirement. You got to get 100% of the taxes as your minimum bid. They'll never sell. And so we're just carrying a portfolio of delinquent taxes that grow, grow, grow, grow, and you'll never be able to collect anything on those parcels.

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Council Member Hoheisel stated okay. Is Troy, I'm sorry. You're back here. Not to put you on the spot, is that similar to what you guys did in Omaha? Did you carry the debt - all of the debt over? Or did you guys forgive?

Troy Anderson, Assistant City Manager, stated so that's where going down that path other states across the nation when properties go to tax sale, they can only be sold the minimum starting value for that tax sale is the back taxes owed. So as was described, what happens is eventually a community builds an inventory of properties that go to tax sale and are not sold because the property is not worth the back taxes owed, which then creates the land bank. That's how land banks came into existence. So early on, one of the first land banks that was ever created, the legislature of that state created the land bank to have the authority to cancel those back taxes owed. But it was very strategic in the context of giving one group, a land bank, the authority to cancel those back taxes. Working with the treasurer of the county on the tax sales so that from a strategic acquisition plan beginning to acquire properties that had back taxes owed that couldn't be sold at tax sale. A land bank could then acquire a number of properties within close proximity to each other, acquire them, cancel the back taxes owed, and then subsequently sell that property at less than what the back taxes were owed. And now, you get those properties back in the hands of sort of responsible property owners and those land banks can then put development requirements associated with it. So it's just not speculative planned acquisition. Right? Those land banks acquire those properties and then they can convey those to property owners developers with certain development requirements. If those development requirements are not commenced or satisfied, they can then claw the land back and go on. So it's land banks were created to take these properties that otherwise weren't selling for the back taxes owed because they had just continued to amass back taxes, cancel them, but then get them back in the hands of sort of responsible property owners developers who could then get these back on the tax rolls, create some development, but it wasn't a speculative environment. It was very strategic, sort of planned approach. Kansas laws are just a little bit different. Right? And this was kind of the back and forth that we went through. Unfortunately, in Kansas that requirement isn't necessarily established that properties can be sold at tax sales for the back taxes owed. The properties in Kansas can be sold for a dollar. Right? And so as was described, you're right. There might have been a property where there was an 8 to 10 to \$12,000 demolition lien that was leveraged against the city, but if it sold for a dollar, the city's sort of out those dollars. Right? Same with USD 259. Same with the county. All of the taxing jurisdictions at that point in time are sort of out those proceeds. One of the things that we've talked about with the legislature is is there an amendment to the legislative, to the statutes that requires that when they go to tax sale that the minimum bid is the back tax that's owed? At that point in time, then yes. A land bank somewhat seems to make more sense. Right? But until such time as the legislature and the statute changes, a land bank doesn't really have any other leverage and authority. They're competing with the free market for properties, and they're spending dollars that they don't necessarily have. Right? The whole business model around the land bank is using the proceeds from some of these sales to then further the legal fees, et cetera, with wiping and cleaning sort of back taxes owed on the next series of properties, but working in close concert with the county to identify those properties that have significant back taxes owed so.

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Council Member Hoheisel stated two quick questions on that. One, does the money come from the land bank to pay off the taxes? Or are the taxes just cancelled? And then the second, is this requirements something we have to go through the state with? Is it not something we can address locally and make some restrictions or reconfigure the process to make it easier for the land bank?

Troy Anderson, Assistant City Manager, stated yeah. So, to answer the first question, the back taxes are cancelled. Yes. Everybody kind of walks into, eyes wide open that if a land bank is acquiring a property from a tax sale and actually, there's conversations with land banks acquiring properties before they even go to tax sale, right? So they're not having to compete with the free market. But yes. Those back taxes are cancelled and everybody just kind of walks into this 259, county, city, all the taxing jurisdictions that are on those very strategic select properties, those back taxes would be cancelled. In Kansas, to your second question, the statute would have to be revised. In other states, like I said, the statutory requirement is that those properties can only be sold for a minimum of the back taxes owed, and then anything in addition of that then comes in land bank for those properties that continue to just appear on a tax sale. So at this point in time, the legislature and the statute would have to be revised for us to kind of do something different.

Chris McElgunn stated thank you. If I might add something to that, is that there are other challenges also. One of the challenges is that what about the owner that does have some interest. Okay? That can be taken care of through the judicial process. You are transferring the forgiveness of the taxes to a constituent land bank, then that can manage and use that. And that is a pretty good idea. But I think, again, every county, every municipality is different. I can tell you that the number of parcels in Sedgwick County that would be something that a land bank would want, that would not sell for the full amount of taxes due and owing are very, very small. And I think that that is one way of going to the legislature and trying to figure out a way to accommodate that, but you're gonna need a broader array of remedies and programs to really build the type of portfolio that I think that you wanna build in a land bank. A good example is another county that we handle tax foreclosure. A lot of parcels for sale. Many of them go for less. Well, why is that? Anecdotal, years ago when the residential areas in one community were platted, there was one surveyor, and that surveyor had a drinking problem. And so as a result, all the surveys were one to two feet off on the various borders. So we sold about 175 ribbon parcels that went for less than the taxes we were owing. And, we had a program where we went out and approached the adjacent landowners and got them to come in and bid, but they were gonna bid for a ribbon strip that has, you know, 5 years of delinquent taxes. So again, I think - and I bring that up simply to prove the point that don't walk away from your discussions thinking that there is this big inventory of property that a land bank would want that will sell at a tax sale for less than the entire tax burden. So I just bring that up is that a lot more work needs to be done to make this program like that work.

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Commissioner Howell stated Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I think the last two comments were kind of where I was wanting to go. And every year we talk about delinquent taxes at the county and one of the questions I always ask is what's the amount of tax dollars that we did not collect that was levied through a process of basically patience over 4 years or these properties eventually go to a tax sale? And then - if I understand correctly, the way the law works is the government gets paid back first for an delinquent taxes, and then there's liens on the property that eventually if there's dollars left over for that sale, it takes care of the liens. And any dollars left over after that, after all the costs of selling that property, goes back to the rightful owner. And so there's a process by which the dollars are flowing to the entities in that order, I believe. If the property sells for less than those liabilities, then they're still paid in that order to the extent there's dollars available. So the license might not be satisfied. The people may not got any money out of their property, but the government does get its money first. And so to that point, if you ask is there really a problem, I think the last number I got - and someone please correct me if I'm wrong - but it was a - it was, like, less than .05% of levy taxes were not collected over that patient process. And so it's a very small number. Now, on year one it's much higher, but year two is a little bit smaller. Year three is smaller and yeah, year four are very small. Even- eventually goes to a tax sale. We get some of that money back on a tax sale. So ultimately, how many dollars will not collect through that process? It's a very, very small number. So I don't support land bank and then, you know, you mentioned Omaha a couple of times. I don't know if Omaha does it this way or not, but some communities in the country us tax dollars very intentionally to fund their land bank. And the land bank here, if I understand correctly, is intended to be self-funding. Now, what that means is ,and you said someone said something I thought was a notable point here. They may get the house in their control even before it goes to a tax sale. In other words, they preempt the process of a competitive bid for that property. The government has an interest in the home, they take it. Who knows who establishes the price using tax dollars. Then they ultimately remediate that property, wipe the taxes clean, clean up the title and sell it at a profit. And the money from that sale goes back into the land bank and begins to snowball. And that's how this has self-funded over time. That is, that's generally what happens in these land banks. One of my concerns is it is it's competitive with the real estate market, it's competitive with the builders market, the remodeling people, the people who were looking for investment properties to buy and remediate themselves. There is a problem with the government essentially creating a competition. And if you believe in free markets, I don't know. We have a problem to solve with the land bank, but there's a lot of other issues where I think this is not the end-all-be-all solution to this problem. There's a lot of cons as well. And I don't know that we have a problem. If we would simply work with people interested in buying properties to get their titles to be cleared and help them with everything we can to help them remediate those properties, you'll find out there's an interest in people as a business model going after these properties to remediate them in the private sector without the government getting involved in it. So I think our focus might not - might should be focused on codes and you know, bureaucracy and red tape. This slows down that process of getting this in the hands of private business owners to remediate these properties. Thank you.

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Commissioner Blubaugh stated I agree, Commissioner, and I guess the conversation earlier I don't know what to think about if a property, I wanna go back to the assessment value. If a property, taxes aren't paid for 4 years, and then we can't sell the property for what 4 years of taxes are, that it makes me think maybe it was over-assessed. If we can't go to sale and sell that property for a gain of more than what 4 years of taxes are, then it was probably over-assessed. And I do, whenever we've went through this in the past, it does seem like it comes down to a lot of times zoning and bureaucracy and red tape that stops this and kicks those developers back out of the core, back out to the suburbs to develop because it's just too challenging for them.

Council Member Glasscock stated I'll hop in. I agree with both the commissioners regarding specifically the code reform. That was the one point that I think speaks to this body or these bodies the most, and something that we can reform to make it easier to develop. And so I would be interested in review of our codes to make sure that we, you know, allow or review accessory apartments, backyard cottages, starter houses, every type of development opportunity. We look at zoning, seeing how we can zone by write more often, how we can make it easier for developers. And so I would be interested because that's a shared department between both entities of a complete review of how can we make it easier to develop properties, how can we make it easier that people can do it instead of us leading. Item 2 and Item 3 requires a lot of investment from us to make the decisions. Item 1 just unleashes the private sector so that they can go and solve a lot of these challenges and we make it easier for them to solve these challenges.

Council Member Tuttle stated and I'll just add onto that. I mentioned this during our housing workshop several months ago. So my colleagues at the city have heard of it. Maybe not at the county. But I do think we're doing a fantastic job. There's affordable housing and there's housing that's affordable. Right? Affordable housing is what a subsidized housing that's affordable is what role we can play in that. And often times, it is zoning changes from single-family to multi-family so more people can get in starter homes. But I went to a presentation, a national presentation, and there was a panel, and one of the communities was talking about having density bonuses. So if you were building housing and instead of having maybe a 30-foot requirement for height, they would allow a 45-foot requirement for height if a portion of it was affordable housing. And other communities, again, as Chuck mentioned, they have talked about eliminating parking requirements or limiting parking requirements to increase that density. So I just think this is a really good time for us to emulate other communities that are doing well, think outside the box and see what we can do.

Commissioner Howell stated I'd like to add one clarification. Again, we talked around it, but I just wanna make sure in Kansas, at least in Sedgwick County, if I understand correctly, if the property goes up to a tax sale, regardless of its appraised value, regardless of how much taxes are owed, it goes to a competitive bid process. And whoever wins that bid, those dollars are attributed to those buckets or money, government first, in that order. And if there's insufficient funds to pay the government back, it is then

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forgiven. So to the legislation that you talked about, Troy, I would absolutely opposed to that. Because it actually creates the need for a land bank. I don't think we have a problem here. Again, my point is almost none of the taxes that are levied or are not ultimately paid the government, very, very small amounts are actually forgiven through that process.

Brandi Bailey, County Treasurer, stated and if I can, I've got some specifics I'd like to share from this last tax foreclosure sale so that way it kind of gives context as to the dollar amounts that we're looking at. So we started this - the process that, for this is last year's tax foreclosure sale. We started in October of 2023. When we started that process, we had 385 parcels that were delinquent and they were selected to be put into tax foreclosure sale. And as this process went through, and we didn't sell these properties until the fall of 2024. So, before that fall sale, we had 309 of those parcels be redeemed. So that means that the person who owned that property came in, redeemed it, paid their taxes in full, all the fees that were associated with it. Out of the remaining properties, eight of those properties were essentially dropped from the tax foreclosure sale because of legal issues. So maybe they were in bankruptcy or whatnot. And then out of that, we had 68 remaining parcels that did go to sale in the fall. And out of those 68 parcels, we collect, we still had taxes owing of \$1.358 million. We collected \$1.244 million at the tax sale, which then went and paid off the taxes, paid off the fees, and then essentially the buckets as Commissioner was talking, it went and did the buckets. Out of that, we had \$113,796 in taxes that were abated out of the original 385 parcels that were initially selected. So we do collect a good portion of the taxes, even through the tax foreclosure sale. So we are not losing essentially. I know \$113,000, I mean, that's a lot of money, but in the grand scheme of things, we're not losing a lot of money because of taxes not being paid and they're going to tax foreclosure.

Troy Anderson, Assistant City Manager, stated and I'll jump in, just to answer Commissioner Howell's question, yes. This is absolutely just an ideological conversation. Right? Some states and some counties have very successful land bank programs and that's their community's choice of how to address some of these issues. I'm not saying one is right or one is wrong. This was just an evaluation of as the land bank here locally was trying to get started, and had ran into arguably some challenge, right, it was just an identification of perhaps why they may not have found the same success as other land banks. Absolutely agree with you 100%. It's an ideological type of conversation. If the community wants a land bank and, depending on how the statutory environment exists, that's how a land bank can come in and play. To your point, right or wrong, it's just an ideological conversation for sure. Yep.

Council Member Hoheisel stated and if I may just real quick. No. I mean, this is what this was to kind of stimulate some discussion around this because I don't think anybody can say the land bank has been particularly successful over the last couple of years. So this is more, essentially we need to either figure this out or scrap it and start over with something new. So this is just more to stimulate the discussion as to how to effectively work the land bank going forward. I agree with my colleague about looking at not

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zoning by right, but a lot of the zoning things to make it easier, streamline the process a little more. I know we've been hearing about housing accelerators around the country, working with state, county, and local officials to actually just come up with a pretty easy process to follow, doing away with some of the regulations. Again, not quite on-board with everything, but, it's definitely worth a discussion. And then also, we're looking at some things like the Air Property Act which creates a process especially for homes under a certain amount to be able to get them through the probate process in a pretty quick and efficient, again, streamlining the process, figuring out who inherits the house, who gets a particular amount of the house, coming up with some sort of mediation process for it. I think that's another thing because I know at least in a number of our areas of the city and county, that the number of vacant homes that we have where people are just sitting on the homes, waiting for it to get to the full years of a tax, falling behind on paying their taxes before we can actually do something to get people back into the house instead of squatters and a lot of the issues that we see. That's another one I'd just like to put in people's ear. I think that's a state fix there. But it might be something to look into a little more the Air Property Act.

Chairman Baty stated thanks, Councilman. I appreciate it. And, for the sake of time, I think we're gonna punt on the RHID. And what I'll do is maybe ask staff to send me our policy, and then maybe I'll send that over to the Mayor and the Manager and then maybe there could be a briefing on your end of what it is. It was designed for in-fill with the conversation we've been having about in-fill opportunities in RHID. It's a state program where many of our other 19 cities are trying to utilize this very aggressively, and we tried to form some policy around it, but it might be a discussion that we can have separately. And the mayor and I are gonna get with Gentry, and we're gonna talk about that networking event, to try to really engage some of these. I believe that Chuck had called it a type of investor and incremental developer, and what that could look like. So on our end, I'll make motion to receive and file the presentation.

Mayor Wu stated thank you very much. And again, thank you Brandi and Chris, as well as, Chuck for the presentations. Just wanted to give city staff an opportunity. I know that there's further discussion. This is obviously housing, is one of the functions of the City of Wichita's local government, but it is in conjunction with MABCD, which would be Sedgwick County and City, and that shared service between the two of us, allows for that further discussion that I think that Council Member Glasscock and Council Member Hoheisel mentioned, which is Code Reform. And so, maybe city staff, if we can have a workshop, in the upcoming months regarding how we can talk about code reform, that would be very helpful.

Council Member Ballard stepped away briefly.

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Robert Layton, City Manager, stated Mayor, I think there were a number of recommendations that were in the places for people report that would help us kind of lay the groundwork for that discussion, and then we could kind of build from there. I'd be more than happy. I think it's a good time to bring that back to the Council.

2.) Jensen Hughes Implementation Plan

Rusty Reeds, Assistant County Manager, reviewed the item.

Council Member Hoheisel and Council Member Tuttle stepped away briefly.

Robert Layton, City Manager, reviewed the item.

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, reviewed the item.

Mayor Wu stated I'll start off. Again, thank you, Rusty and Bob for that presentation. I'll start off with asking the city manager a couple of questions. In particular, I'm looking at ARPA, and our plan, and several times I see Wichita Fire Department and communication and emergency. Can you just explain how this is being integrated with these recommendations and how they may be complimentary?

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated ARPA, we have money that the council allocated for some communications improvements. Chief, I'm gonna ask you to help me in terms of the projects that are funded with the ARPA dollars or what we've already done.

Chief Elizabeth Snow, Wichita Fire Department, stated situational learning and also radios with ARPA dollar funds (unintelligible).

Council Member Glasscock stated Mayor, I have two quick questions regarding the draft in this document. On Page 5, Item Number 23 under Findings, could you elaborate more on that one?

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Chief Elizabeth Snow stated City Manager, (unintelligible) that's - those are drop down boxes that their arson investigation selected. They can only use one of the allotted drop down boxes, it only gives certain choices and the best choice in this case was undetermined. They could have listed it as arson, undetermined and it only gives a few other choices. The best choice in this was undetermined, so that is the reason why its listed as undetermined.

Council Member Glasscock stated so it was listed as undetermined, and then the lab later indicated as either a crime or arson?

Chief Elizabeth Snow stated no, the lab didn't. It's we listed it as undetermined, and then the lab - the ATF lab listed it as arson.

Council Member Ballard stated that's what it says.

Council Member Glasscock stated yeah, on Item Number 23, the language says there's an indication of expectation bias as the cause of the fire is listed as undetermined, however, the laboratory service request form indicates crime or arson.

Chief Elizabeth Snow stated right. That's and each one of those are just they're formed with only certain drop down boxes. You can't put additional information in or accurate information in unless it's specific to something. So when it goes to the first one, they put it down undetermined. When it went to the lab, they listed it as crime or arson. Does that make sense?

Council Member Glasscock stated I think so.

Robert Layton, City Manager stated it's not how we list it. It's how we're forced to list it under the KBI reporting form

Commissioner Howell stated just to follow up on that question, I guess from my perspective, I'm just wanting to know, did they detect accelerants in their samples they took from the site from the scene? It seem like, if they found accelerants, that would be the evidence I think that makes the difference here. So, can you, someone please answer the question whether or not there was accelerants found at the scene?

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Chief Elizabeth Snow stated to the best of my knowledge, there were not any accelerants listed. But I don't actually get a copy of that report. So it's based on - we don't have any influence on KBI or the ATF lists. So no, to the best of our knowledge, no.

Commissioner Howell stated if that lab report is available, can we see a copy of it to get that answer? I'm not sure if it's not allowed, we're not allowed to have a copy or...

Chief Elizabeth Snow stated I'll check into it, sir.

Chairman Baty thank you for this report. And just as a reminder, everything, the detail of all that was gone over is in these big spreadsheets here. And I think that's what Councilman Glasscock had referenced. Rusty, I have a question. And I've kind of harped on you on this one, and so it's not the most popular thing that's gonna be said in the room today. But I - I want to make sure to say it. The onus of implementation on these things and the - the accountability is gonna be held on these people sitting at this desk - on some of the electeds. We are going to be held responsible from the public to make sure these things get implemented. And I'm very grateful for department heads and staff, all the public safety who we have expressed significant gratitude for their work in this space. But ultimately, the responsibility, the implementation comes on our shoulders. And some of that is going to require some cost particularly on the 911 side. We've invested just in the last year incremental \$3 1/2 million into some of these things. There are advisory boards that are meeting. There are no electeds on these advisory boards to be in the room, and to hear what's going on, and to help advise in some of these discussions. I think it's appropriate for this, for this next year to have an elected from the City and elected from the County in the room, because we're the ones ultimately that're gonna be held responsible for the implementation of these recommendations. What say you?

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated that's the will of the governing bodies, if you choose to do that.

Chairman Baty stated where does that fit in what exists today?

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated so, when it comes to accountability, the advisory board is going to receive information, and they'll have the ability to ask questions, and there will be minutes presented that are public for people to review. I don't know how these governing bodies want a report back. Do you want a quarterly en banc, or an update meeting, or I don't know how you want to do that.

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Chairman Baty stated okay. I'm open to recommendations from the city

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated we'd be more than happy to just put that on as an information item for your next three en bancs. The only concern about having elected officials attending the advisory board meeting is you're going to be sitting through a whole lot of items that are really of not much interest to you, and it's gonna take a lot of time. But I think, if you want that connection with the elected officials, this may be the best time to do that. We can just put it on as an agenda item, or we can send out periodic updates to all of you like we do on so many other items. And I know on my side of the street the Council, if I gave them a monthly or quarterly report, then we would sit down and talk about it. But if you, as a body, as a combined body, I'm more than happy to add it for the next year to the other three en bancs.

Chairman Baty stated okay. Open to discussion.

Mayor Wu stated I wanted to know, so obviously we have the dates for the bimonthly meetings. When are they held? And remind us again, all the individuals who are in that room.

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated Sure. So the bimonthly meetings are February, April, June, August, October, and December. That was quick math.

Mayor Wu stated the time?

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated Those are at 2:00 pm in the afternoon. Those are Thursdays. That's the third Thursday, and it's at 2:00. I would just say the Chairman knows, if you layer this more, I had recommended, I talked to the Chairman of another layer, which would be, a committee that would be a subset of the advisory board. It would be five people. Elora, Chief Snow, the Police Chief, the EMS Chief, and the Technology - our - our Technology division head, and then two electives. And they would meet quarterly for an hour quarterly so that they could have direct interaction with the people involved in this, get direct answers. But that adds a layer. It adds another meeting to a list of already long meetings.

Chairman Baty stated I get that. And I appreciate the last thing I want to do is to create more work for more people. I get it. But we spent a lot of money on this report. A young lady was killed in this fire. There's been a lot of public information and a lot of public discussion around this. It's worth the extra work is my point. And I think that the people that are sitting here are gonna be held accountable to the implementation of these things. And I'm just speaking for myself and my seat. If I'm gonna be held accountable to the implementation, I want to be in the room to shape it. So that's just my view.

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Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated as far as the six meetings, Elora will speak to when they are. There's 12 board members. It includes Police Chiefs from Derby and Wichita, and there's a Suburban Law, which is Haysville at the moment, I believe, and then the Sheriff, and then it's Derby as a first class city, Wichita as a first class city, Fire Chiefs, County Fire District Chief, and then I mentioned that Suburban Fire has one representative, he is a Mount Hope volunteer, and he's also a Wichita Fire Lieutenant by trade. Then you have the Emergency Manager for Sedgwick County, the Chief Information Officer for Sedgwick County, and Assistant City Manager from the City of Wichita, and then Chief Lanterman from EMS. So as far as when they are, you can say.

Elora Forshee, Emergency Communications Director, stated yes, I apologize. Elora Forshee, I'm the Director of Emergency Communications. Those are as Rusty mentioned, he had the dates correct. They're the second Thursday of those months. They are at 2:00 pm. They are hosted at the Public Safety Building at 714 North Main. And while that is a secure facility, it is a public meeting. And, of course, I would welcome any of our elected officials always to attend that. They're about an hour long. Of course, they may go longer as we have more to discuss. It's going to be a busy year, so yeah. Thank you.

Mayor Wu stated I'm comfortable with having someone from our body be represented at these meetings. I know that, if I'm mistaken, are there also community members that are part of this advisory board?

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated there are not. This is a professional board. It was created by resolution back in the 70s and has last updated in 2012. But this is strictly a professional board. It's open to the public. Anybody can come, but those participating are the ones I mentioned, the 12 voting members or each one has a designee in case they can't come, but it's those folks.

Council Member Ballard stated thank you, Chairman. I definitely think that we need to have somebody in the room, somebody at the table. You know, somebody did lose their life. We have to do everything we possibly can to make sure that that doesn't happen again. So yeah, I'm definitely in favor of something like that. I don't know how you guys are gonna decide who that person is, but I appreciate the invitation that any of us can go, if it works out with our schedule, if you're not appointed to the board or whatever that might look like.

Commissioner Howell stated since this is a secure building, how does the public get entrance to the building?

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Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated So on meeting day, we have somebody that is watching the lobby and gets them up the elevator into the room to be a participant or to be an observer at the very least.

Chairman Baty stated Rusty, do we have a time frame of implementation, a target time frame on these things? Are we putting this out to a year? Is that, was that the suggested time frame from implementation? Something that's just going to be in process and will continue, and, as you mentioned, there'll be continual implementation.

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated it's going to be in process. And, as we continue to work through this, there are probably going to be some budget items that we'll need to work through, through this budget cycle at least on the County side, but potentially on the City side as well. So, you know, I'm anticipating that we'll be at this at least for the next 12 months, and then we'll reassess at that point where we are with the recommendations, the other considerations, and how the leaders of these organizations, Chief Snow, and Elora, and Kevin, and Chief Sullivan feel about things but, as well, our other system partners, our other Chiefs of Police and Fire Chiefs how they're feeling at that point if the system is working and if we've made improvements. And so I would say at least through January of next year or maybe even March you know, 12 to 14 months, and we'll be reassessing as we go.

Commissioner Meitzner stated thanks, Rusty and Manager. Thanks for the presentation and great summary of implementation and pending items. Related to this board, so there's 12 professionals on this board. It was chartered as a professional board. And it's kind of, thank you for the news that it's open to the public, and you've got the dates and the time. So I'm wondering, so if we added a member of the electeds, I'm not sure if they would be, do you take formal votes on any items?

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated if there are items that are system specific, if there's a policy that needs to be updated or changed that Elora has brought to this group because it affects all of them, things like that she will put to the group, and they will vote on implementation, more research, whatever the case. Most days it's a presentation of information. The subcommittee comes in and presents. Elora presents where they are with Emergency Communications, what's going on, what's new, what's different. But occasionally when there's issues that need to have ratification by the group, then that's when a vote takes place.

Commissioner Meitzner stated and that could be if it's a consideration for a budgeted financial item that on the City or the County side, then then you approach, or the manager approaches the Commission or the Council.

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Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated correct. This board is advisory in nature. They can't take action for the City or the County. But we do encourage them every budget cycle to please bring forward any projects that they believe are necessary and beneficial for Emergency Communications to serve the system. But then those have to be brought forward by whichever appropriate department head to their respective budgets process.

Commissioner Meitzner stated and I'm trying to digest, or understand if it's, you listed the people that were on this board. And I agree they are quote experts in their respective fields and the electeds are expert in their elected field and not maybe so much the areas that are the 12 board members. So, in listening to this, I'm kind of almost in favor, since we all know any of us can attend, I guess if we do have a member, if we decide to say we want a member on this board, I'm not sure that they should be voting members based on the professionalism of the makeup of the deal. And since it's open, I kind of feel like I, for one, and as public, would like to just attend and listen, which is what a member would do. Thank you.

Commissioner Howell stated or you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe this board has already adopted bylaws and elected their chairperson. Again, if a elected official is in the room, and they want to call them to answer a question, I think it's their prerogative to do that. But I would assume any elected official is simply in the audience and they're listening as an observer, you know, they could ask them a question if they want, but I don't think that they ought to be sitting at the table necessarily participating in all the work that's being done by the advisory board. So, to me, it's just very simple to say we ought to have someone over there by the intentional have someone in the room. But I would expect them to just be in the audience, sitting there available to answer a question, if asked, and simply be an observer, so a non-voting member, so to speak.

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated If you follow the rules of order, theoretically, the board members are going to speak, and the Chair should recognize the shares, I mean the Chair should recognize anybody who's not a voting member and allow them to speak, if they choose to do so. So, if somebody from the governing bodies is present, and they want to ask a question, I'm sure the Chair would defer, but they wouldn't necessarily be voting members to vote on any operational policies or issues that came before that board.

Commissioner Howell stated A- and in their bylaws they can certainly do that, but we just had KOMA training yesterday, and there's no obligation for any board to necessarily recognize members of the public. So they could do that if they choose, but that's their choice and within the bylaws.

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Chairman Baty stated so I'm gonna take a different approach. I think the people need to be in the room. This is important. The public, we're not just talking about the Brook Hollow fire incident report. We're talking about the public safety ecosystem, which, if we're being honest, was called into account with this incident. So the people need to be in the room. I would actually venture, I understand this is the professional leadership discussion taking place, and I am not an expert in Fire or 911 or EMS. We have experts. So I agree that shaping policy in that regard I don't think is, we had an incident at the County years ago, a few years ago, with the CJ Lofton Task Force that was formed to implement something very similar to this. It was an ad hoc separate task force. This was before my time on the county. Rusty, that was a very efficient, very effective group. Was it not?

Rusty Leeds, Assistant County Manager, stated we got a lot of work done, yes.

Chairman Baty stated I think Councilman Johnson was on that. It was Commissioner Lopez from the County. There was a lot. I'm just saying, what if we developed a quarterly task force of sorts, made up of an elected here, elected here, and some of that is focused solely, not just on the entire ecosystem, but solely on these recommendations. And if it's a time issue, I'm happy to serve from that side of things, from the County side. I want the public to understand that we are going to take this, not that we're not, but they need to know that we are working hard to implement these things and develop these things into our entire ecosystem - Public Safety ecosystem. So I would actually push us to develop this ad hoc task force committee for the next year to actually work and focus laser sharp on these 40 recommendations. I'm happy to do it if my colleagues have a different idea, I'd be happy to be the representative on the County side. I think it's needed. I think it's needed in this regard. I think this is important enough to have this sort of oversight and this sort of conversation.

Commissioner Howell stated just to register my opinion, again, I appreciate, you, Chairman wanting to do that, but I would also say if we're gonna make a selection of the five commissioners, I'd like to be considered for that as well. So to me, this is not a decision time. This is simply saying you're interested, I'm also interested. And, you know, I know that, chances to serve have been somewhat limited lately for me. So I want to make sure I register an interest again. Thank you.

Chairman Baty stated yup, certainly. Any feedback?

Commissioner Meitzner stated so your comments would say where were let's see. Slide number, Implementation, that you described, I wrote my notes. So you described those meetings in those months with the board. So you're suggesting that we add a quarterly meeting with all these board members, or just just a few members, just the representatives with the...

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Chairman Baty stated I'd bring them all in. If it's just me, I'm bringing, I mean, with the electeds a quarterly report. I think it's necessary. I think it's helpful. I'm open to shaping it, but we had a - we had a CJ Lofton Task Force. Councilman John- it was effective. Was it not effective? And I think we can mimic something like that on a quarterly basis for the next 12 to 15 months just to make sure these recommendations are getting in front of the people's representatives to make decisions.

Commissioner Meitzner stated Yeah. So it may not need all 12 members. It may be..

Chairman Baty stated I'm sure, certainly.

Commissioner Meitzner stated and I am curious, Brandon, your opinion of how that went.

Council Member Johnson stated no, I thought it went well. I can't remember our time increments that we had. I think 30, 60, 90 days. Then we jumped out 180. We had regular conversations and updates on policy. I thought it was very effective. I will say in that space, Commissioner Lopez probably did a little more than I did. I was present. I wanted to hear the conversation. We always kicked off every meeting with our thoughts. Then we heard the update, and we closed out the meeting with thoughts. But I thought it was effective. We stay focused on that. We did get a lot of work done and moved the issue forward. I think this is a good idea as well.

Mayor Wu stated I will offer a suggestion. So we already know when the dates of these meetings are. The 12 professional individuals are already present. The quarterly meeting with a smaller group than the 12, but still would allow for the individuals who are most directly affected by this implementation plan and the suggestion of adding two individuals from the County and two from the City immediately following that bimonthly meeting. So I would suggest February, June, October, and then February of next year having this group immediately following this Wichita-Sedgwick County Emergency Communications Advisory Board to stay for an additional 30 minutes to really just focus on the Jensen Hughes report.

(Unsure who) stated that's a good idea.

Mayor Wu stated If we're in favor of that, I will follow up with each of the council members and talk on our end. And would you guys..

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Chairman Baty stated I don't think we have to have the actual format built today. I think the point, I'm hoping to get agreement on, at least from this side and hopefully from the City side as well, is that let's formalize a task force of some sort, whatever it looks like, whoever needs to be in the room. I just think that the electeds need to be in that task force. And I think that we need to be laser sharp focused on these right here to make sure they're happening at least to our best ability. I understand not all of this is maybe a good fit for what we have here, and some of this is going to be customized to what we do here and what's unique, and we're going to let the experts advise on that. But I wanna formalize this. I want the public to see us formalize a task force, for implementation. So I'm happy to work separately with the staffs. Rusty, you and I have already I've been hounding Rusty on this idea for a bit. So, we can continue to formalize that and then find a way that each body can have a decision made on that. But I think it's appropriate in this regard.

Council Member Johnson stated I'll just add to what the Chairman said, just overall thoughts. I do think it's always good if there's an elected that can speak to the actual conversation happening kind of in real time. So, you know, you'll get a quarterly update. Staff always does a wonderful job with those. But if you have one or two electives that are in the space, whether they're helping shape anything or not, as the public is asking questions, especially of a Chairman, or a Mayor, or any Council Member that was, or Commissioner that was involved directly, then you can speak with authority to this is the conversation happening as much as you can, this is the progress being made in between those updates. So I think it is a good idea for electives to be in those spaces. And when it came to the CJ Lofton Task Force, I was always able to answer any question about what that committee was doing and what direction they were going because I was in the space. So I do think that is a good thing.

Council Member Ballard I just have a quick question actually for City Manager. Bob, I just have a question real quick. Chairman, you mentioned that you guys were investing \$3 million or whatever to EMS. Is there any of these recommendations that come from Fire that, I know yesterday we just started talking about budget. Is there stuff that we need to be considering moving forward that's gonna come with a price tag as well?

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated most of the recommendations have to do with training and communication issues leadership training, for instance. Chief, I'm not sure there's any capital expenses that are associated with the recommendations, are there?

Chief Elizabeth Snow stated I believe there's one recommendation to pursue the EMT Medical Pilot Program. You know, (unintelligible) opportunity to discuss our budget (unintelligible).

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Robert Layton, City Manager, stated yep. There was also a recommendation on accreditation, which is a pretty lengthy process and expensive. And so that's maybe one of the recommendations that we're, that's in process because we're trying to assess whether it's really worth that effort. There's many things we can do on process improvement that fall - that don't require accreditation.

Council Member Ballard stated and is the EMT the one that we had passed before?

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated yes.

Council Member Ballard stated okay. Thank you. I'm going to follow up on that. Thank you.

3.) Future En Banc Topics

Mayor Wu stated Again, thank you very much for going through just housing as well as the Jensen Hughes fire report. We really appreciate having this more open conversation where the two bodies come together. And we already have dates for the next three en banc meetings between the City and the County. So we thought this would be a great opportunity to throw out some of the topics that we could, as the two bodies, come together and discuss. As a reminder, last year we talked about Cultural Arts and Park, and also Public Safety, and then obviously today we had Housing as well as the Jensen Hughes report. If we can have this open conversation about future en banc topics, this would be the great time.

Chairman Baty stated Okay. As you may remember, in April, I believe it was last year or one of the en bancs last year, one of the agreements was that we develop a blue-ribbon committee made up of community members and they would have discussions about shared service opportunities and, try to formalize the discussion a little bit more. One of the discussions they've been having is centered around the long discussed Parks, Cultural Art, Rec, functional consolidation of those departments. That blue-ribbon committee is going to issue a report based on their conversations, and their research, and their discussions. And that report is coming in February. I don't know the exact date, and they'll issue it to both bodies just for review. So, my recommendation would be that since that report is coming in February, and we're starting budget season in February on both sides of the street that the next en banc can be a revisit of that to see if we can finally get across the finish line with some of those conversations. We either put it to bed or we move it forward. I think that would be an appropriate for the next en banc. Agree?

Mayor Wu stated I would agree on that. Again, the last time we had this conversation about Parks and Cultural Arts was back in April of last year. But prior to that, other councils had talked about this topic.

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And so it has been researched, it has been discussed at length. And then again, from this last en banc in April the recommendation was start forming a group of individuals that would really take this forward and just have further community engagement. So, I would agree that the next en banc topic should be regarding Parks and Cultural Arts.

Council Member Ballard stated outside of the blue-ribbon committee, what community engagement has been done on shared services?

Mayor Wu stated so again, it would not be a recommendation based off of all community members. I think from what I understand from the blue-ribbon group, they've talked to directors of those cultural arts facilities as well as some of the City staff and County staff.

Chairman Baty stated that's correct. PPMC was involved in that discussion too. But that's it. And then they'd give us a recommendation, and then our job would be to go solicit any more public feedback. That's the way I see that and envision that moving forward.

Council Member Ballard stated I think there's going to be, need to be a lot of conversations with the community so that they understand seeing cost savings. And the first thing that comes to my mind is somebody's losing jobs. So those are all things that are incredibly important to me, and I'm going to need a lot of feedback outside of just a committee that might have some ideas of what they think is best for City and County.

Council Member Tuttle stated I have a suggestion. And I hope it doesn't seem self-serving, but for the last year or so our Wichita Fire Department, our IFF, Via Christi, Kansas Health Foundation, other community partners, have been working on an initiative for creating a culture of wellness within our Fire Department, and specifically for cancer screenings. We have asked that a bill be introduced in the House. I'm going to testify today on the House Taxation Committee. It's House Bill 2024. And it would be a \$250 tax credit for any firefighter across the state, not just for Wichita. So it would be full-time, part-time or volunteer. And then with that, we should find out today if we get another funding source. But really just trying to look at fire and how we protect those who protect us. And then if this is a model that works within fire, could it be emulated in police or public works or different departments that have specific hazards that come with it. But very hopeful about the state law, and, you know, but just interested in, because it does impact county as well with fire. So it might be just updates would be an interesting on-off topic.

Council Member Johnson stated I would say maybe we keep housing on there and plug and play on that. So housing, the Mayor talked about it yesterday and today, we, the Places for People plan, maybe there's an update on that for both bodies to talk through what that looked like and zoning implementations

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throughout the City and County. Also, other aspects of housing. I had mentioned at the last en banc, looking at the eviction process, maybe there's other processes we could look at within housing to discuss, one, how they work, if there's any suggestions for changes to improve situations for people, but continuing to kind of plug and play on housing. We know that's a major issue in both Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita, and I think keeping that on there and talking about the different aspects would be a benefit.

Chairman Baty stated that's good, man. That's good. I have a suggestion that I think we should consider. I think we should discuss water. Obviously, the City of Wichita takes the lead in water. I think that you guys do a lot of things in water that is very admirable. There's things that we don't understand that all you do in water, in regards to not just the treatment facility, but all these other things that you're doing in water. And the conversation about conservation, about innovation, about contamination, I think that we need to jointly have that discussion. Obviously, the contamination issue is top of mind for a lot of people in this community, and I think this conversation could lead to, hey, how do we deal with some of these things jointly? I think everybody knows that we feel that the City and the County have been left out of the table in some of the contamination discussions, from the state, KDHE. We have been left off the table in these things. And I think that it behooves us to try to shape some of the policy moving forward. And at the very least, try to streamline some of the communication and try to create a different model. Obviously, everybody knows what's going on at 29 and Grove. Thank you from the City side for the actions that were taken last week. But this 29 and Grove can't be the last discussion that we have on water contamination. I think you might be aware that there's over 220 active contamination sites in Sedgwick County, and our citizens don't know that. So we need to continue this conversation, continue leading in this conversation. I think the longer we're dependent on the state, I'm very appreciative of our partners at the state and KDHE, but the longer we're waiting on them to help shape and lead here, I don't think it best serves our interest. So, I think that we need to take the lead here, and I think this would be a great en banc conversation.

Council Member Glasscock stated well, and I think larger than that, just natural preservation. So how we're doing water, how we're preserving our soil, land, trees, and then environmental concerns? I think everything can be tied under a natural preservation conversation as well.

Council Member Tuttle stated I was going to go in a slightly different direction, but all things water. One of the things that we're going to be working on, and Council Member Hoheisel and I are on a task force. We just have an RFP out to hire a consultant to help us with water reuse. We all know we're in stage two of drought, dreadfully worried that we're going to be in stage three, because we absolutely will put people out of business if we go into stage three. And so when we were in Topeka doing legislative visits, was it last week? I can't even keep track. We talked to several legislators about, there's no state legislation now. And so we want to be leaders in helping to draft that. And the biggest challenge is truly going to be the community education component of that, helping people understand that it's safe. But we have to be

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thinking of different ways for water within our community. 17% of the state gets their water from - from Wichita. So maybe we could have just a whole water topic and include the environmental component as well.

Chairman Baty stated Yeah. Beautiful. I think the last recommendation on my end, I'm sorry, Commissioner, is the obviously the MAC conversation will continue to escalate, once we get April and beyond. So I think that needs to be top of mind, both bodies, particularly on the mental health substance use piece that the County is going to be bringing to the table in this discussion. So, that's just another opportunity for just talking and throwing out topics for future en banc. I think that certainly deserves its place.

Council Member Johnson stated just one quick addition. Chairman, Representative Joe Seiwart also said he'd love to talk to us about water conservation and some ideas he had.

Commissioner Howell stated talking about consolidated services, I think we have an opportunity still. I talked about this a year ago in one of our en banc meetings, but between the City and County, the number of employees that you have in your organization, plus ours, plus family members, we're looking at probably north of 20,000 people insured through City and County health insurance. And with that number of people, we could come together and provide, if you will, a more robust set of services at a lower cost to the employer, if we worked together to create a health clinic for municipal employees, City and County employees and their families. You could have less, lower cost tests, lab tests and radiology scans and whatever type of services you need, it would be, I think, enhanced services at a lower cost to both City and County. So it's one of the most expensive things we have to pay for in our budget is health insurance for our staff. We have, you know, I'm glad to do it, but if there's a way to do this for less money to benefit both City and County, that's one of those opportunities we need to talk about. If we don't start the conversation, we'll never get there.

Council Member Glasscock stated I think that can be brought into the whole topic of wellness. How do we do wellness as two bodies of government for our employees? I think that's a good conversation.

Commissioner Howell stated and you could add child care and fitness in there as well.

Mayor Wu stated remind us, so I'll remind everyone when the next en banc meeting will be held. The next one will be April 29. Following that will be July 29. And the last one will be October 29. So that gives us some time to develop further, not only some of these suggestions, but, really appreciate the feedback. Because that will help drive staff, both the City and County.

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Robert Layton, City Manager, stated Mayor, thank you. We do have something that both bodies need to hear, and that is the recommended opioid strategic plan.

Chairman Baty stated that's a good one.

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated and I'm not sure that you'll want to wait until you're next en banc, so we may need to have a special meeting if you want to hear it together. And if that's okay with you, we'll work on a date. I think they're very close to having a final report.

Mayor Wu stated that would be great.

Chairman Baty stated Yeah, I'm absolutely open to that. I think we will be too. That was a big deal to come together and to try to find joint uses of those dollars, so okay, just keep us posted on that.

Mayor Wu stated may I, kind of tie a couple of these ideas together? So our joint legislative agenda actually has three main points, economic development, housing, and infrastructure. So infrastructure, obviously we've talked at length now about water and just conservation, contamination. So even if we have one en banc or a portion of an en banc dedicated to that would be helpful. The other one is housing, and obviously we talked at length today, but there are further conversations we can have regarding housing. I also would add that the multi-agency center can be part of that conversation. And we really do appreciate the County side with not just the Sedgwick County Health Department, but ComCare, and what you guys are doing with this ecosystem. And then finally, when it comes to economic development, I think that is really the conversation about shared services. The City does have 3000 employees, but we're not job creators. That is not our role as a government. 3000 public servants want to do a great job for the City, and the same amount on the County side want to do a great job for the County. So I really appreciate Commissioner Howell in talking about how can we talk about as a greater entity, having a greater buying power and getting a better bang for our buck for both the city and county employees? So I really do want to continue the conversation on shared services. I do believe that even that blue ribbon group is also part of that conversation when it comes to just one specific item. And I look forward to each of the council members, as each of our six council members and each of the five County commissioners have their own advisory board meetings, that once we get some feedback from the blue ribbon group, it will then go back out to those district advisory boards in both sides, and then really come together in figuring out how to move forward. So I really do believe that there's lots of opportunity for sharing. One of those is sharing a space right here, at City Hall. And so, I would suggest that, you know, our council chambers are often closed if it's not on Tuesdays during our council meetings, that there's opportunities even there for you all to utilize that space. I know that USD 259 was very impressed when they came and I gave a presentation in front of the council chambers, that facility is available. And so I do believe that

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there are more opportunities for sharing resources, as our ultimate goal between the City and County is serving the citizens of our community. And so I do believe that it is prudent and responsible to think more on how we can share and collaborate.

Commissioner Blubaugh stated Thank you. Just for you know, the time in February, we're going to get the results of blue ribbon are going to be presented to us at the commission and I assume with the City. And then, you know, now we're looking at April 29. And maybe this is an action item we can take during the presentation, but I'd like to have some kind of metrics or numbers, whatever ideas they have so that, you know, at the end of April we're not just saying, okay, that's good. I'd like to have a little bit of a metric or a little bit of an idea of how far do we want to take this.

Chairman Baty stated Yeah. I agree.

Commissioner Blubaugh stated yeah, so maybe we can get our finance people from the City and the County to give us some very preliminary numbers on any action we might be looking at.

Council Member Tuttle stated do you mean like cultural arts and park or a specific department? I'm asking because I don't know the answer.

Commissioner Blubaugh stated I just mean an outcome or an idea that comes from the blue ribbon committee, it'd be nice to have some kind of budget estimate as to is there a potential savings there or is it just a feel good?

Mayor Wu stated And I heard that also from council member Ballard, so same questions. Seeing what are the actual cost savings, so putting some numbers. And what does this mean in regards to employees? So we want to see numbers. And I, again, think that this blue ribbon group is just giving a suggestion, and then we, as a body, would then take it back to each of our district advise. I don't have a district advisory board, but you all have district advisory boards. And I think that that's how we move the needle forward once we get more data and information.

Council Member Ballard stated how are you guys going to prioritize what the next en banc is? Because all of those topics are extremely time sensitive with, you know, water and coming up on spring and summer and stuff, and then, you know, of course the Mac is right when it'll be transitioning out of the emergency shelter. So who gets to make that lucky decision?

Mayor Wu stated may I ask city manager really quick? You mentioned the opioid strategic plan. When will that be available? And then approximately, obviously between now and April 29 would be the meeting. Could that be a special meeting regarding the opioid strategic plan in addition to maybe getting that report from the blue ribbon committee so that you can combine those two together?

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Robert Layton, City Manager, stated yes, Mayor, I think that is possible. And I believe it's February. I believe, I haven't seen the final report or final recommendations, but I believe it's in draft form and very close to being completed.

Chairman Baty stated yeah, Rusty just confirmed. They're going to present to us on February 14th, he believes.

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated well, and the question was whether or not , just because of the interest of time, we were talking about one presentation to the council and one to the commission, but if you want to meet together in another en banc, we could hit that item and by then you should have the recommendations from the blue ribbon committee.

Chairman Baty stated okay. Why don't we visit when we get a little bit more concrete information about what that is.

Robert Layton, City Manager, stated and maybe we could shift it a little later in February. Because you know, I don't think 2 weeks will make a difference in either of those.

Chairman Baty stated agreed. There's a lot of important topics, so I'm not sure exactly which comes next. But there's a lot that we need to talk about.

Mayor Wu stated City Council members, Commissioners, any final thoughts? No. Well, thank you all again very much. We kept you a little longer than expected, but we really appreciate again having the opportunity to have the two bodies come together, and the two staffs come together and share a presentation that everybody gets to hear and then have open discussion is very important, and I really am very appreciative that you guys came over.

[Adjournment](#)

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shinita Rice, Deputy City Clerk