

# VOTER

©

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY

## LWVTSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JUNE

6

Tuesday Topics: NOTICE CHANGE IN VENUE

University United Methodist Church, 1621 SW College Ave. Lunch \$10.

**Speaker: Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**

13

Board Meeting, 12:00 noon, Topeka Shawnee County Library

### JULY

4

Tuesday Topics: **No meeting** because of Independence Day holiday.

11

Board Meeting, 12:00 noon, Topeka Shawnee County Library

### AUGUST

1

Tuesday Topics, TSCPL, 1515 SW 10th Av., Topeka.

Lunch provided by Millennium Café beginning at 11:30 AM. Speaker at Noon.

**Speaker will be Amber Miller, Kansas Children's Service League**, will speak about the work of KCSL at Highland Park Central and Stout elementary schools. Title TBA.

### September

5

Tuesday Topics **Speaker will be Susan Fangman, Kansas State University Extension Office**, will speak about Medicare Part D. Title TBA.

**If you need a ride to any League event, contact [Betsy Rohleder](mailto:ronbetsy@cox.net) via email [ronbetsy@cox.net](mailto:ronbetsy@cox.net) or phone 357-1995, or Bernadette Forge, email [b.forge@cox.net](mailto:b.forge@cox.net) or phone 232-9078.**

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Judy Moler, President



The new year for the League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County marches on with so many activities and so many ideas to be acted upon. The State League Convention was a high point in April. The speakers were outstanding. There was a welcome by USD 501 School Board President Patrick Woods.

Bob Eye, an attorney on the ACLU Board of Directors, gave us an update on lawsuits and potential lawsuits that are a cooperative effort by the ACLU and the State League. The message was loud and clear, "We are a team on fighting for voting rights in Kansas". Kim Lauth from the LWVUS and a liaison to the Kansas League was the lunch speaker. Her message was one of change and moving forward. She was a breath of fresh air!!!

The final speaker was Dr. Tiffany Anderson, Superintendent of USD 501. This woman has so much energy and many innovative ideas, she is amazing. Her own history of working with children in poverty through the school system and her plans for USD 501 were invigorating.

There were 14 members from our League in attendance at the conference. Our own Marge Ahrens completed her 2 years as President of the State Board at this meeting. Serving on the 2017-2019 State League Board will be Jacqueline Lightcap and Gwen Elliott from our League. Despite the rainy, dreary weather, it was an uplifting day.

Mayor Larry Wolgast was our May Tuesday Topics speaker. He gave an overview of Topeka: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Mayor Wolgast will not be running for Mayor again. He will be missed. One take away from the talk was his message on economic development, and its consistency with our own position

on Economic Development. I would like to think he heard/read our JEDO position and that helped move the action in this direction.

I want to remind you that our

## **Tuesday Topics in June will be held at the University United Methodist Church, 1621 SW College Ave.**

The Library will be using "our" space in June for their summer reading program. The cost of the lunch at the church will be \$10.00. Our speaker will be Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship here in Topeka. Sarah is intensely involved in social justice in our community.

There will be no July Tuesday Topics as that is July 4. We will resume meeting again at the Library in August. Thank you all for being flexible and attending these worthwhile Tuesday Topics.

Thank you, once again, for all you do to advance the dialogue in Topeka and Shawnee County.



## **Dues News**

At the annual meeting, the membership approved a change in the bylaws that would allow the board of directors to change the method of payment and collection of dues. At its May meeting, the board adopted a motion to implement a single date for the payment of dues by all members. The board set November 1, 2017, as the target date for the implementation of the new policy. The board also authorized an additional method for the payment of dues through the use of PayPal, which will be available on our soon to be redesigned website. **Members may continue to pay dues in person or by mail.**



# Topeka

## Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

by Glennie Buckley

Mayor Wolgast provided a rich overview of Topeka and the progress being made in multiple areas of interest to the citizens of Topeka. As Mayor Wolgast stated, progress doesn't happen automatically, but the city is getting better day by day. We need to think about where we want to be in ten years.

It has been vital to involve people and citizen groups such as the LWV through public hearings. There are 48 neighborhood organizations in Topeka, an affordable housing task force is working to address the need for low-moderate income housing. Community Development Corporations (CDC's) provide seed money that others can add to. According to Mayor Wolgast, government starts then private businesses follow with additional dollars.

Discussions were held in 2008-2009 about whether Kansas Avenue should be two lanes or four lanes. The decision was to have a two lane avenue. Wide sidewalks and pocket parks were part of the planning. There are 12 pocket parts, six statues, and two water fountains along Kansas Avenue and two additional pocket parks are being planned. Multiple entertainment choices have been available downtown including the Jazz Festival and Mars Chocolate Festival. The new plaza development will provide more space for families to enjoy the downtown area.

Mayor Wolgast spoke of the quality of life in Topeka. Loft apartments are in such demand than are available at this time. Millennials especially want to live, work, and play in the same place. Topeka celebrates the arts through First Friday events at NOTO, Arts Connect, murals around the city. Interestingly, no graffiti has appeared on any of the murals! Topeka needs to offer a quality of life that makes people want to stay here.

Economic development is the backbone of a community, said Mayor Wolgast. Workforce development, which is critical, is being addressed with Washburn Tech and the planned technology center in East Topeka. Even when businesses invest in a city, they bring fewer employees as technology has changed the way work is being done. While Topeka has lost some businesses lately, there are positive investments being made and businesses are growing. A new Federal Home Loan Bank will be built on Menninger Hill. SBL has grown from \$12 billion to \$35 billion. Reser's and Mars are both expanding.

In reference to recent flooding along Kansas Avenue, Mayor Wolgast said it was a design error that Bartlett & West is handling. The job of fixing the problem is about half finished.

Streets are being repaired in an order based on an objective report by an outside company that rated every street in the city. Current funding is such that we need more money to raise our street rating.



*Attendance at May 2 Tuesday Topics  
was 46 members and 5 guests*

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## **NOTICE: TUESDAY TOPICS CHANGE IN VENUE**

June 6, 2017:

University United Methodist Church, 1621 SW College Ave.

Lunch \$10.

Speaker: Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

# OBSERVERS: THE EYES AND EARS OF THE LEAGUE

*Basic to having effective League activity in a community is having an understanding of how the local government works. Our local League observers are the eyes and ears of the League, learning about issues that are or may become items for local study and action. Consistent League presence at these meetings adds to the League's visibility and credibility. Our League is very lucky to have a dedicated team of Observers. Thanks to the following members that are currently observing our local government:*

- **Topeka City Council** - Marge Soroko
- **Shawnee County Commission** - Nancy Perih (Thurs.), Elvera Johnson & Mary Jo Hobbs (Mon.)
- **USD 437 Washburn Rural School Board** – Mary Galligan & Jacquie Lightcap
- **USD 501 Topeka School Board** – Janet Cathcart
- **Washburn University Board of Regents** - Maryanna Quilty
- **JEDO** - Evelyn Davis & Camille Nohe
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation Council**- Lea Billinger & June Windscheffel

If you are interested in helping our League Observer any local government meetings (including others not listed) please contact either of the following people:

Observer Coordinator- Nancy Wagner :  
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LWV/ TSC President – Judy Moler:  
[jmoler46@gmail.com](mailto:jmoler46@gmail.com) 785-273-8480

# VOTER SERVICES

At this reporting, Voter Services has concluded its spring education program and registration of high school seniors in the five school districts of Auburn Washburn, Rossville, Seaman, Shawnee Heights, and Silver Lake. Our goal was to make students aware of their responsibility to participate in the voting process and how to do that. We registered 168 students out of 210 students that participated. The remaining 42 students were already registered or too young to vote in the elections of 2017. We consider this project a success. Much insight was gained as to how each school functions and handles the subject of voting. We have revised the program based on student input, and are now compiling teacher input for further revisions and how to pursue future registration in these schools. Shortly, we will compile our report to meet the final grant requirements.

We thank Bernadette Forge and Glennie Buckley for their ongoing voter education program at Highland Park High School, Topeka High School, and Topeka West High School. Reaching all senior students in Shawnee County requires multiple members committed to the cause. Thank you, Bernadette and Glennie, for your ever presence on behalf of Voter Services.

Another huge thank you goes out to Ethel Edwards who helped develop our grant project and created the technology needed to deliver the educational program. Finally, I thank Bonnie Walker who helped me register students at Silver Lake.

In late April voter registration was provided at the Multiple Sclerosis Walk at Lake Shawnee.

In the month of May, Voter Services will again register new citizens at the Naturalization Ceremony held at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site at 10:30 AM, Friday, May 19. Thank you to Ethel Edwards, Linda Holmquist, and Sharon Mayo for registering at this event.

If you have an interest in helping us register at a variety of events, please contact me. We will be most appreciative of any time that you can give us. Training is simple and can be given shortly before any event.

# LWVTSC – Dues Increase & Payment Changes

By Carrie Lancaster

At our Annual Meeting (04-04-17), an increase in dues was approved by the membership. The individual membership price is **\$60** annually. Individual Sustainer rate is **\$90** annually. Household membership is **\$90** annually. Household Sustainer is **\$105.00** annually. Student memberships are still **\$35** annually. Currently dues are paid by check, or cash at the meeting. In the future, we have plans to collect payments through the new website using PayPal.

During the Annual Meeting, yearly dues collection was passed by a majority; our goal is to make this change November 2017. Since we have several levels of memberships, we will need to use the following formulas:

**Individual** - \$5.00 per month X mos. through October

**Individual Sustainer** - \$7.50 per month X mos. through October

**Household** - \$7.50 per month X mos. through October

**Household Sustainer** - \$8.75 X mos. through October

**Student** - \$2.92 X mos. through October

For your convenience, you may add the annual amount for the year from November 2017 – November 2018 to the partial year thus paying with one check. It is our hope that yearly payments each November will prove beneficial for all members.

Although we will allow a short grace period until Per Member Payment is due in January, unpaid memberships will become inactive.

## LWVTSC Board Briefs

5/9/2017

Judy Seitz, Secretary

- Heard a report on the State League Annual Meeting held April 29 in Topeka
- Change of venue for June 6 Tuesday Topics meeting from the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library (TSCPL) to the University Methodist Church. The August meeting will be held at the library
- Began process of changing member renewal dates to be due at same time rather than the anniversary of the joining date



Lucy Ann "Nickie" Nichols Stein died in Topeka May 3, 2017, at the age of 90. She was born in New York City on December 17, 1926, to Arthur C. and Charity Norfleet Nichols. While in New York, she met Joseph Stein, a young physician

finishing his neurology residency. They were married in New York in 1950, and had a loving and long marriage until Joe's death in 2013. Nickie and Joe moved to Topeka in 1953. Nickie and Joe loved living in Topeka, where they raised three children and actively participated in local arts, education, and issues. During her career, Nickie worked in diverse roles as a registered nurse in nearly every hospital in Topeka, including Stormont-Vail, St. Francis and the Menninger Foundation's psychiatric hospital. She also worked as an instructor and mentor of LVNs and RNs. She was a legislative lobbyist for the Kansas State Nurses Association and the League of Women Voters. Nickie was an avid supporter of arts and culture in Topeka, from silent films, to theater, art and historical exhibits, classical music and jazz. She was an active member of the League of Women Voters, and she and Joe worked with local progressive political projects throughout their lives in Topeka. She is survived by her three children, by her grandsons and by her two wonderful great-grandsons. She also is survived by her brother and many nieces and nephews. She leaves behind a lifetime of valued friends in Topeka and throughout the country.

***Carol Yoho, a member of our League, wrote this beautiful article about her dad in 1999. He passed away April 10, 2017. Her husband, Max, passed away April 22, 2017.***



Cleve Martin

My dad, Cleve Martin, is retired and makes his home in Topeka. He is known around this community as a hard worker in service of others.

Always busy, he helps with bingo at the VFW two nights per week and drives at least once a week for the Red Cross. He can often be found serving coffee at Arab Shrine events or clearing dishes at Washburn University luncheons and dinners (for which he earns money for University United Methodist Church). He reserves some of his time for his first love, playing golf, for bowling and for having coffee at McDonald's with his retired buddies.

But he can just as often be found driving friends and acquaintances to appointments, getting groceries for the homebound, and checking on the needs of the widowed wives of his brothers. And he always has time to take me, his only daughter, to breakfast on Sunday mornings. I'm glad to see Dad enjoying himself and am proud of the way he helps others. I send him my love on Father's Day 1999.



Max Yoho learned at the age of 11 what many people struggle to fully realize until it's too late: life is short and you have to make the most of it. "Nothing could break his spirit," said Carol Yoho, describing her husband of 21 years who died on April 22 at the age of 82. "He never let the little things in life stop him. I think Max always had a vital spirit."

But it was Max Yoho's artistic works as an author and musician that most people will remember, she said. "He worked hard at honing his skills as a writer," Carol Yoho said. "He wanted to grab people's attention. He thought outside the box. He made people laugh."

*In Loving Memory* 

It was after his first wife Rosemary's death that Max Yoho got involved in an invitation-only writing group at Washburn called "Table for 8," a group that, 29 years later, is still in existence. In addition to getting many short stories and his poetry published, Yoho wrote several books. Yoho "always loved and made music," Carol Yoho said, as a singer and player of the guitar, harmonica, banjo and baritone horn. He also collected German military artifacts and was a metal and woods craftsman. Whatever, he did, Carol Yoho said, Max always did it to the fullest and with a zest for life. "He was very creative and he inspired a lot of people," she said. "People loved him."

*Posted on C-J Online April 30, 2017 07:37 pm - Updated May 1, 2017 08:29 am by Angela Deines.*

***Marge and Barney, members of our league, were frequent attendees of our Tuesday Topics. Barney showed up for the cinnamon roll and bowl of chili along with his loving devotion to his bride, Marjorye Savage Heeney. He passed away May 8, 2017 and will be missed by all who knew him or Marge.***

In   
Loving  
Memory



Barney met Marjorye Savage on a blind date in Lincoln Nebraska in 1948. They dated for several years, and Marge broke off their engagement to attend radio and drama school in New York. After several years of being a bachelor, Barney's uncle, Dick Delaney, encouraged his nephew to find his true love. So, inspired by his uncle's advice and undeterred by Marge's previous uncertainty, Barney located Marge in Oklahoma City and their courtship began again. They married in 1956 at St. Joseph's Church in Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

Together, Barney and his wife Marge helped found the Saint Patrick's Day celebration in Topeka. He was known for celebrating "the high holy day," which included his tradition of dressing up as a true leprechaun. His outfit was complete with a top hat, tails, and a white and green striped vest. The Heeney clan including his brother, Richard Heeney, would gather and celebrate with bagpipes, dancing, music and frivolity.

Barney enjoyed traveling. As a child, Barney's family did not go far from home, so he made a commitment to travel as an adult. Barney piloted the plane that took his family to many destinations both in and outside the United States. Although atypical for an attorney, Barney took a sabbatical in the late 1970s. Barney, Marge, John and Dan relocated to Tucson for one year. During the sabbatical, Barney worked in the parts department at a local general aviation airport. In 1990, during its civil war, Marge and Barney traveled by pickup truck from Topeka to El Salvador to deliver the truck and its supplies to the communities of that beautiful country. His travels included trips for 30 Elderhostel programs that they both taught and attended. He and Marge took trips to many exotic places to visit their daughter Mary and her family on their sailing trip around the Pacific Ocean.

Barney and Marge bought their tombstone in the 1990s and had it inscribed, "Off on another adventure" - who can argue with that?



## Observer reports from Shawnee County Commission, Topeka City Council, Various School systems and Topeka City Planning

### Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 4-17-2017

Observer Mary Jo Hobbs

3 Commissioners present

\*Quarterly report on Valeo - Bill Per-singer, CEO:

- \$270,000 budget deficit for the first three months.
- Medicaid expansion would bring \$1-1.5 million.
- Working with Sn Co Corrections on better prep for inmates prior to release.
- Decided against spending \$17,000 for Wichita State cost avoidance study to show how much preventive mental health care improves community (productive lives, less crime)
- Creations of Hope Gallery in NOTO helping with public perceptions of mental illness.

\*Brian Cole with SN Co Corrections commended Valeo for help with drug & alcohol treatment, revamping pre-release initiatives to reduce recidivism at jail. Kevin Cook asked what else could be done if Valeo had the Medi-caid moneys. Besides deficit, quicker prescribing time, 24 hr. security at cri-

sis facility, medically assisted detox for inmates, liaison to jail, more re-sources for co-responder program to work with law enforcement, communi-ty-wide opioid addiction program.

\*Approved contract for \$1,900.00 with Boys and Girls Club of Topeka for management of additional youth devel-opment program services in Velma K. Paris Community Center.

\*Chamber of Commerce Curtis Sneden and Andrea Bailey of Go Topeka said they had no new information on St. Francis and were having conversations with their partners trying to prepare community for a possible closure.

### Shawnee County Commission Meet-ing: 4-20-2017

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

\*Meeting consisted of routine busi-ness.

### Shawnee County Commission Meet-ing: 4- 24-2017

Observer: Elvera Johnson

All Commissioners present

\*Approved request from Health Dept. to apply for a grant from Kansas Health Foundation to establish a com-munity garden for women, infant & children clients. They hope the garden will provide produce for clients, but also to educate them about gardening & nutrition. Parks & Rec. representa-tive stated that some community cen-ters have gardens & they would be happy to partner with the Health Dept. to establish additional gardens.

\*Administrative communications:

-Shawnee County aquatic centers, es-pecially the MidWest Health Aquatic

Center, are featured in a current Parks & Rec Business magazine, a national professional magazine. Aquatic centers need 93 life guards.

-Solid Waste Dept. sponsoring an elec-tronics recycling day at the Expocentre 4-29-2017.

-Corrections honored volunteers at a recent event. They have about 100 vol-unteers and would like more.

Health Dept. is sponsoring a Walk at Lunch day 4-26-2017at the Capitol.

### Shawnee County Commission Meet-ing: 4-27-2017

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

\*Presentation by CSL, market research consultant for renovation of the Expo-centre. The 3-4 month market evalua-tion study will include analysis of pro-gram & events, market demand, eco-nomic impact, & financial operations. Meetings will be held w/ citizens & other stakeholders.

\*Approved request by City of Topeka to grant temporary easement for repair work to storm sewer in Crestview Park. While this work is going on, part of Shunga Trail will be closed.

\*Commissioner Cook stated that there are 12 prisoners who have been in SNCO facilities for over 3 months awaiting mental evaluation by the state. The relevant statue states evalua-tion is to be w/in 3 months. The con-cern is the cost to SNCO for housing these prisoners.



**Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 5-1-2017**

**Observer Mary Jo Hobbs**

3 Commissioners present

\*Approved request to hire a Mental Health Division Manager at the Department of Corrections for a higher hourly rate of \$28.30 or an estimated salary for the remainder of 2017 (assuming a mid-May start date) of \$51,055.52, including benefits.

\*Horticulture agent, Jamie Kidd, from Shawnee County Extension brought Save the Date cards for the Plant Sale to be held Saturday, May 6, 2017 from 9 am to noon at the Extension office parking lot, 1740 SW Western Av.

This includes Master Gardener grown: vegetables, bedding plants, native plants, pollinator plants etc. She reported that they grow tomatoes & peppers to donate to community garden.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 5-4-2017**

**Observer: Nancy Perih**

3 Commissioners present

\*Meeting consisted of routine business.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 5-8-2017**

**Observer: Elvera Johnson**

All commissioners present

\*Tom Vlach Director Public Works

requested & received approval for soliciting engineering services to widen & improve SE 45th street between SE Calif. & SE Croco, effective on or after 2019 taking 2 years to complete. This project will be coordinated with planned trail improvements along the south side of Lake Shawnee.

\*Most of the meeting was devoted to a presentation by John Knight director of Parks & Recreation regarding long range plans for Gage Park. It is the most widely used park in the county. Plans include improving road system, parking & signs, and to increase administrative cooperation between Parks & Recreation, Topeka Zoo, Helen Hocker Theater, & Children's Discovery Center. Representatives from all these entities were present & expressed their support. The commission encouraged the development of the plan.

\*Many seasonal employees are needed by Parks and Recreation: 12-15 horticulture workers, 10 golf course maintenance workers, 30 sports workers (score keepers), and over 80 aquatics workers.

**Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 5-11-2017**

**Observer: Nancy Perih**

3 Commissioners present

\*Approved request for \$20,795.15 to purchase 3 large high volume/low speed ceiling fans for Domer Arena, an area used almost every weekend. They are an investment in the comfort of Expo Centre's clients by circulating air during events occurring in times of high temperature and/or humidity. The fans will be incorporated into upcoming renovations.

\*Follow-up from previous meeting

comments re: prisoners waiting to transfer to Larned State Hospital for mental evaluation, a state obligation: cost to SNCO taxpayers to maintain 12 prisoners since Jan, 2017 has been approx. \$100,000.

**Topeka City Council Meeting: 4-18-2017**

**Observer Marge Soroko**

\*An educator from Topeka Zoo discussed their upcoming trip to the Galapagos Islands as a project sponsored by National Geographic Society which will cover all expenses. After their return a zoo program will be provided.

\*The consent agenda passed with more exceptions to the noise ordinance for spring & summer community events.

\*Discussion regarding the proposal to spend the excess funds from the countywide sales tax of about 10 million dollars. The council has proposed half toward Capital Improvement Projects & half toward a housing program. Discussion was tabled until the 5-16 meeting pending an opinion from legal council regarding whether funds can be used for housing when the original authorization was specifically for streets.

\*The Capital Improvement Plan & Budget were passed with Ms. Schwartz abstaining to avoid any possible conflict. There was a lengthy discussion on the obligation to follow & pay for those projects.

\*Water Improvement Projects are to be completed through the bonding process & the intent to issue bonds passed 10 to 0.

\*Need to change the city ordinance on concealed carry of firearms to conform with state law was discussed. If the current ordinance ends, then concealed



firearms will be allowed, unless, pursuant to state law, there are armed guards & metal detectors at each entrance.

Currently only the law enforcement center meets this standard. Limiting each building to one access would cost 400 to 560 thousand dollars depending on the type of personnel used. Open carry can be limited by posting a sign on the door.

**Topeka City Council Meeting: 5-9-2017**

**Observer: Marge Soroko**

All members present

\*Approved:

-Annex & rezoning of a parcel of land to improve the Reserve plant at 6th & Croco Rd. (10-0)

- Awarded the process to have a fund to pay for a downtown Plaza, more steps need to be taken. (10-0)

\*BNSF made a first request to Close the R4 crossing at East 8<sup>th</sup> & Adams. Will provide a road for residents to access the city when closed.

\*JUMP provided signed petitions requesting the council allocate funds for a housing program.

**Washburn Rural USD 437 Board Meeting: 4-17-2017**

**Observer: Mary Galligan**

7 members present

\*Approved (7-0): Agenda & Consent agenda items

\*Discussed on first reading (to be voted upon at May 1 meeting):

-Curriculum & materials for Geography/KS History; World Geography; Gov. & Civics; and Accelerated World History

- Capital outlay for SY 2017-2018 totaling \$5.6 million with a mill levy of 8.0 mills.

- Textbook and technology fees for SY 17-18

- Course and activity fees SY 17-18 (including adding a fee for ACT preparation course)

- Amendment to SY 17-18 school calendar to accommodate parent conferences.

\*Received communication regarding Kindergarten round up.

\*Went into 30 min. executive session for matters relating to employer-employee negotiations & personnel matters for non-elected personnel. No action was taken subsequent to the executive session.

**Washburn Rural USD 437 Board Meeting: 5-1-2017**

**Observer: Jacquie Lightcap**

4 members present

\*Approved consent agenda including the following: 4-17 minutes, bills in the amount of \$2,968,819.54, classified & certified resignations, classified transfers, certified resignations, new certified personnel, early childhood handbook, & treasurer's cash report

\*Approved 4-0:

-Final Read: curriculum and materials for: Geography/KS History (MS),

World Geography (HS), Gov. & Civics (HS)

-Final Read: accelerated World History (HS) curriculum

-Final Read: capital outlay for SY17-18, student fees (no change) for SY17-18, student course & activity fees (no change) for SY17-18, update to SY17-18 school calendar; aligns HS parent teacher conference with elementary and middle school.

\*Received/Discussed:

WRHS,&WRM Student Handbooks-first read (no major changes)

-WRHS Graduation Update: Sunday, 5-21-2017, 7 P.M. at Expocentre

\*Went into Executive Session at 6:53 P.M. until 7:18 P.M. to discuss matters relating to employer-employee negotiations whether or not in consultation with the representative or representatives of the body of agency; and personnel matters for non-elected personnel.

\*Subsequent to Executive Session, approved contract extensions for certified administrators, principals, coordinators, non-certified directors, coordinators, & supervisors. Meeting adjourned at 7:19 P.M.

**Topeka Public School USD501 Board Meeting: 4-20-2017**

**Observer: Janet Cathcart**

All board members present

\*School Highlights

--Ann Mah State BOE rep. 4th district presented 501 with Challenge Awards that recognize Kansas schools that are



making a notable difference in student achievement despite facing significant challenges in their school pop-

ulations. Stout Elem., Quincy Elem., Chase, Landon & French Middle Schools, and Highland Park HS were all presented with Challenge Awards.

--Linda Dane was 501 Senior of the Month: has a 4.57 GPA, valedictorian for Topeka West HS 2017 School graduating class, & received the distinguished Self Fellow from KU besides numerous other scholarships. She plans on becoming an engineer working with prosthetics.

--Angelica Brown is the Topeka West Student intern. She worked in the 501 Service Center learning the alarm systems for the district, having an early interest in electrical systems. She finished her high school requirements in two years, was able to enroll in the Washburn Tech program and will graduate 2017 with a HS degree & degree certificate from Washburn Tech. She also has had two businesses for the last couple of years. Her plans are to work in the field helping schools improve their systems and keeping children safe.

--Scott Elementary was the March attendance award winner.

\* Superintendent's Report:

The College & Career Readiness team, presented statistics on the ACT & graduation numbers. The number of single test takers increased from 574 in the 2015-16 school year to 657 in 2016-17. The number of total ACT tests taken increased from 743 in the 2015-16 school year to 900 in the 2016-17 year. The graduation rate is expected

to increase from 74.8% to 76.4%. Strategic outreach includes calls & home visits. A drop out task force has been implemented which will reach out to students & families to work with them so students have an alternative to just dropping out. On the Career & Job placement side there is a student hiring event April 26<sup>th</sup> at Highland Park HS & Topeka HS for positions available within 501, summer positions with SN County Parks & Rec. which has expanded paid internships implemented in TPS.

\*District Citizens Advisory Committee presented a report and recommendations. Their recommendations were being worked on at the same time as the 5 Year Strategic Plan. Advisory Committee's met many of the same recommendations. They liked the K-12 approach towards College & Career Readiness. They also felt it was important to begin discussing college and career readiness at an early age. The biggest recommendation was to move recess prior to lunch. Testimonial - "When students go to recess before lunch they do not rush through lunch and tend to eat a more well-balanced meal including more foods containing vitamins, such as milk, vegetables, and fruits" (The National Food Service Management Institute). There are several good reasons to move recess prior to lunch including less food waste, decreased discipline referrals, students are calmer and ready to get to work immediately instead of needing cool down time to name a few.

**USD 501 Board Meeting 5-4-2017**

**Observer : Annie Tietze**

6 members present; Peg McCarthy absent

\*School Highlights:

-Tavion and Antonio Lewis were introduced as students who were awarded Infinitec Assistive Technology Coalition Awards which celebrates accomplishments by students with disabilities using adaptive technology. They go to McClure Elem.

-McClure was named a 2017 National School of Character.

-Stephanie Harsin read the National Teacher Day proclamation which notes teachers as listeners, mentors, and role models. She included a discussion of the difficulties teachers face such as the cost of education and using resources like post-it notes over and over. Mrs. Harsin ended with saying "give us the tools, we get the job done."

-Scott Dual Language Magnet School was awarded the Attendance Award for the second month.

\* Disposition of Business by consent financial report was approved.

\*Consent purchases approved including:

Fire Alarm System Replacement at French Middle School, annual renewal of Cisco SmartNet Maintenance, renewal of ParentLink software for communication between parents, schools, & 501 Adm.,

Adobe Creative Cloud for Teams which is required for Career Technical Ed., swivel robots for recording of lessons & student interaction, Digital Signage & Promethean board devices for Jardine Elm., Consumable handwriting books for Pre-K to 5, Scholastic Expert 21 ELA Consumable textbooks, and renewal of agreement with Key Staffing.

Consent-Operations items approved:

Fire Alarm & boiler replacement at Topeka HS, Gym roof replacement at Jardine, tuck pointing & gutter replacement at Highland Park HS

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