



BEFORE THE KANSAS LEGISLATURE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
OPPOSITION TO SB 2219
WRITTEN TESTIMONY FROM THE CITY OF WICHITA
February 18, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to address this proposed legislation. While the City of Wichita actively supports and adheres to the current version of the Kansas Open Meetings Act (“KOMA”), we do respectfully oppose the amendment to impose an impractical and overly burdensome requirement on cities and other governing bodies of all sizes.

Under the proposed language, we are not just talking about the recording of City Council Meetings. KOMA applies to all subordinate bodies of the governing body of every municipality, which means advisory boards and committees such as park boards, zoning boards, community grant review teams, etc. For Wichita, this would be approximately 34 separate bodies that meet either weekly, biweekly, monthly, or quarterly in many locations, some without recording equipment.

The impact upon the City of Wichita to purchase, maintain and operate a large amount of audio-video equipment is estimated at hundreds of thousands of dollars. This does not even take into account the cost and additional time needed to hire and train City staffers to operate this equipment for each meeting. Next, the duty to upload and prepare audio or video files to the website or to otherwise “make available” within 24 hours would be an overwhelming task for staff. Finally, there is the cost of storing data in an accessible manner.

Secondly, the City of Wichita currently notifies the public of and provides access to the meetings of these 34 bodies, exceeding KOMA requirements by advertising notices of meetings of all subordinate bodies even if no requests for notice have been made. All City Council Meetings are broadcast live on City Channel 7 and the City’s website (www.wichita.gov). Video of all council meetings is available on the City’s website and permanently retained. In addition, meeting agendas and minutes for all bodies subject to KOMA (when available) are provided to requesters and published on the City’s website. All City advisory board members are provided with KOMA and KORA training, and many of these boards have an assigned attorney from the City’s Law Department who regularly attends their meetings to ensure compliance with KOMA and City ordinances.

The City appreciates your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Ken Evans
Strategic Communications Director

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