

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kent Glasscock at 1:30 p.m.. on January 25, 1996, in Room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Mike Heim, Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes
Fulva Seufert, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Mark Parkinson
Senator Bill Wisdom
Senator Alfred Ramirez
Kevin Kelly, Chairman of Consolidation Task Force, Wyandotte
Julius Novak, Wyandotte County Commission
Mike Jacobi, Local businessman from Wyandotte County
Whitney Damron, Attorney, City of Kansas City, Kansas
Joy Holt, Representative of United We Stand
Bert Cantwell, K. C. Chamber of Commerce (written only)

Others attending: See attached list

The minutes of the January 23, 1996 meeting were distributed and approved.

Chairperson Glasscock called the committee's attention to SB 464 - An Act concerning Kansas City, Kansas, and Wyandotte County; relating to consolidation; authorizing the governor to appoint a consolidation study commission; relating to the powers and duties of the commission. Chairperson Glasscock opened the public hearing on SB 464.

The Chairperson welcomed Senator Mark Parkinson who spoke favorably for SB 464. He said that the bill relates to an issue that has been involved in Wyandotte County since at least 1968, and relates to the question as to what can be done to possibly consolidate services and maybe even government functions in Wyandotte County. He stated that consolidation is something that should always be looked at by public officials, but makes particular sense in Wyandotte County for a couple of reasons. First, Wyandotte County is the smallest county in the state, and secondly, it's very unique in that there are only 2.5 square miles in Wyandotte County that are not part of a city. In that 2.5 square miles, there are about thirty-seven people that do not live in one of the three cities in Wyandotte County-- Bonner Springs, Edwardsville, and Kansas City, Kansas. Since 1968, people have looked at the issue of whether or not Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County could consolidate services or even whether they could consolidate their governing board so that instead of having a city council and a county commission, they would just have one governing board. He said that for a variety of reasons, the studies that have been done and that have recommended consolidation have not been aggressively acted upon. He expressed that the end result is a duplication of services is one of the reasons that Wyandotte County has a very high property tax rate. He summarized that in a nutshell what this proposal would be is the following: If the legislation is passed all the way through the Legislative process by February 15, on the April 2 Presidential Primary Ballot, the voters of Wyandotte County would be asked the simple question that is on the first page of SB 464 starting on line 22--whether or not a consolidation study commission should be appointed by the Governor to study the issue of consolidation. If the answer to that question is "yes," then by May 15th the Governor would be required to appoint a five person Consolidation Study Commission which would be made up of persons living in Wyandotte County who hopefully have some experience in public administration. They would be charged with the task of studying this in depth and developing a ballot question. In addition to the five persons who are appointed, they would be supported by an Executive Director. The Executive Director would probably have a small staff and would be able to consult with accountants and others who would be needed to do the in-depth study. He emphasized that the powers of the study commission are considerable. Public hearings would have to be held, and by November 29, 1996, they would have to issue a report with a final report to the Legislature by January 13, 1997. The bill specifically excludes Bonner Springs and Edwardsville. No written testimony was provided. Rep. Mays asked Sen. Parkinson about clarification on the bonded indebtedness. Staff was asked to research to see if the provision of bonded indebtedness is sufficient and not in actuality a reduction of the current amount.

Chairperson Glasscock introduced Senator Wisdom who was a proponent of SB 464 but emphasized that at the onset this was not the bill he would have preferred. He stated that the bill he drafted followed the guidelines of the last commission that studied consolidation. Senator Wisdom presented two amendments. The first amendment was attempted in the Senate where it was defeated.as amended by Senate Committee, on page 1, line 38 following "elected" by inserting "or appointed" and in line 39 striking all after "county"; by striking all in line 40. In line 41 striking "county." It also included inserting a new paragraph on page 2. (Attachment 1.) The second amendment was on page 4, striking all in lines 11, 12, 13, and adding an

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Room 521-S Statehouse, at 1:30 p.m. on January 25, 1996.

insertion. (Attachment 2.) Senator Wisdom said that one reason people do not like the City/Council form of government today is the fact that it is a non-partisan election. He said that his bill addresses this issue. He said that with or without the amendments, he supports **SB464** because he said that it was time somebody stepped forward, and that the Legislative body is the body to do it.

Chairperson Glasscock recognized Senator Ramiriz who spoke in favor of **SB 464** and stressed that lots of people have worked very hard to get a bill that was acceptable to everyone involved. He said that **SB 464** is that bill. His only concern is whether there will be a presidential primary, but he stated that the people back home want this bill.

The Chairperson next recognized Mr. Kevin Kelly, Chairman of Consolidation Task Force of Wyandotte County, who spoke as a proponent for **SB 464**. He first passed out copies of the League of Women Voters' representative Jeannette Armstrong's written testimony. (Attachment 3.) Mr. Kelly thanked the committee and promised to support **SB 464** by turning over his considerable library and research collected over the last two years. (Attachment 4.)

Chairperson Glasscock introduced Julius G. Novak, Legislative Liaison, Wyandotte County Commissioners who spoke in behalf of all the Wyandotte County Commissioners in requesting the Committee's consideration in reporting **SB 464** favorably. (Attachment 5.)

The Chairperson recognized Mike Jacobi, local businessman from Wyandotte County, who spoke in favor of **SB 464**. He said that this was a grandly crafted piece of legislation which is overwhelmingly supported by the KCK Chamber of Commerce, the Fairfax Industrial Association, The League of Women Voters, United We Stand, and the editorial boards of The Kansan and the Kansas City Star as well as many others. (Attachment 6.)

The next proponent introduced was Mr. Whitney Damron, Attorney for the City of Kansas City, who presented the written testimony of Carol Marinovich, Mayor of the City of Kansas City, Kansas. Mr. Damron expressed the Mayor's regret at not being able to be at the hearing because of the Chamber of Commerce luncheon in Kansas City, Kansas. Her testimony emphasized that she believes "a key component in helping us make our vision become a successful reality is change in our local governments by consolidating them into one unified body." (Attachment 7.)

Chairperson Glasscock next recognized Joy Holt representing United We Stand. She apologized for not having any written testimony, but said that she represents the grassroots. She strongly supports **SB 464** and stated that the sooner, the better. Representative Sloan asked her if she favored partisan or non-partisan, and she replied, "Partisan." She said that she believes everyone has the right to know where she is coming from and believes in being "up front."

Written testimony from Bert Cantwell of the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce was handed out to the committee members. (Attachment 8.)

The Chairperson recognized Allan Herrel of Paola, Kansas who asked for clarification about the 37 people as to how they are now governed.

Chairperson Glasscock announced that since there were no other conferees, the public hearing on **SB 464** was closed.

Chairperson Glasscock recognized Representative Gwen Welshimer who moved to introduce a bill as a committee bill. This bill is an act concerning townships; relating to the governing body thereof; relating to compensation thereof; amending K.S.A. 68-525, 68-531 and 68-542 and K.S.A. 1995 Supp. 68-530 and repealing the existing sections. Motion seconded by Representative Luthi. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 30, 1996.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: Thursday, January 25, 1996

NAME	REPRESENTING
Whitney Damron	City of KC, KS
John Dorn	KC Star
Larry Windholz	- none - - observer -
Mike Jacobi	None
Jeanette Armstrong	LNU of KS
ALLAN HERREL PAOLA, KS	SELF
Shirley Mingin	citizens
Mark Barallina	KDOCAH
Laura Weeks	Intern - Rep. Sloan
Jennifer Drabum	Senator Parkinson
Julius Mowch	K.C.
Jay Holt	UWSA KCR
Kevin Rellon	Consolidation Task Force Chairman
Wes Holt	K.C. Commission Assoc.
Anne Spiess	Ks. Assoc. of Counties
Charles Folt	Hannett
Verlyn Bohly	"
Sen. Wisdom	
Wes Holt	

STATE OF KANSAS

SENATE CHAMBER

MR. PRESIDENT:

I move to amend Senate Bill No. 464, as amended by Senate Committee, on page 1, in line 38, following "elected" by inserting "or appointed"; in line 39, by striking all after "county"; by striking all in line 40; in line 41, by striking "county,";

On page 2, following line 1, by inserting a new paragraph:

"For the purposes of this subsection, an official of the cities and county designated in this subsection shall include all persons appointed by the governing bodies of such cities or county and all persons appointed to an office of such cities or county by a state officer."

Senator _____

STATE OF KANSAS

SENATE CHAMBER

MR. PRESIDENT:

I move to amend Senate Bill No. 464, as amended by Senate Committee, on page 4, by striking all in lines 11, 12 and 13 and inserting:

"(2) Determine the time at which the elections of the governing body of the consolidated city-county shall be held.";

On page 6, following line 27, by inserting:

"(p) Elections of the governing body of the consolidated city-county shall be partisan. Election laws of a general nature which are applicable to partisan elections and which are not in conflict with this section or any specific law applicable to the consolidated city-county shall apply to elections of the governing body of the consolidated city-county."

Senator _____

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS

Testimony Before the House Committee on Local Government

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Kansas, I, Jeanette Armstrong, State Board Member, would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 464.

For the past twenty-nine years the League of Women Voters of Kansas has supported measures to increase the flexibility and efficiency of county government, including such measures as city-county consolidation and/or cooperative operating arrangements between units of local government. The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people. Senate Bill 464 would provide ample opportunity for the electorate of Wyandotte County to exercise such will through the election process, and if the proposed commission is approved, ultimately through at least one public hearing on local government plans being considered.

The League of Women Voters of Kansas positions also would support the provision in the bill which would treat a city-county consolidated governing entity as a county with statutory home rule powers of counties.

In addition to our League of Women Voters state positions on county government, the Kansas City, Kansas League of Women Voters, after study over a thirty year time period, adopted a position statement in support of the consolidation of the government structures of Kansas City, Kansas, and Wyandotte County in August of 1995. I have included a copy of this position statement for your perusal and the record.

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee, based on the long-standing League of Women Voters of Kansas positions outlined, I am respectfully requesting that you favorably report Senate Bill 464 to the full House for its consideration.

Jeanette Armstrong

Position Statement

Consolidation - Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County

The following is the statement of position regarding consolidation of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County as adopted by the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Kansas City, Kansas on August 14, 1995: (For more information, please contact Pat Yingst at 334-2615.)

The League of Women Voters of Kansas City, Kansas, supports consolidation of the governmental structures of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas with provisions for subsequent merger of other government entities. Such consolidation would involve the integration of many separate functions of the county and the city; it would require careful study of the existing "home rule" statutes of the state of Kansas and the careful writing of new enabling legislation; community support by ballot of any plan would be essential.

Because of the complexities of the undertaking, the League supports initial steps which meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Election of a policy-making body of legislators, not to exceed the number of state representatives from Wyandotte County, to serve part-time, and to be elected without party labels for staggered terms
- ✓ A full-time presiding legislator elected at-large who would also run without a party label
- ✓ A professionally-qualified administrator, appointed by the presiding legislator with the consent of the legislators
- ✓ Clearly defined lines of delegation of authority and responsibility
- ✓ Provisions of oversight and performance evaluation of the consolidated structure
- ✓ Assurance that any reduction in the number of employees will be through attrition only
- ✓ The presiding legislator should propose agendas and have veto power with more than a majority of the legislators empowered to change the agenda and override vetoes.
- ✓ All functions of the city and county governments should be provided for in the new structure
- ✓ The structure should provide for simplifying and combining related functions

January 17, 1996


House Local Government Committee
Kansas State House of Representatives
Capital Building
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Representatives,

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I would like to endorse the proposal before you today to establish a Governor's Commission to study city/county consolidation in Wyandotte County. It is my belief that such a commission will provide reasonable solutions to this question. In the event this commission is formed, I will in every way possible work to support it. This includes, but is not limited to, turning over my considerable library and research I have collected on this subject over the last two years.

Thank you for the interest you have shown in our community and for your assistance in solving this complex issue.

Sincerely,


Kevin Kelley

House Local Government
1-25-96
Attachment 4

TO: House Local Government Committee
Rep. Kent Glasscock, Chair.

FROM: Julius G. Novak, Legislative Liaison, Wyandotte county
Commissioners

RE: S/B 464, Wyandotte County Consolidation

I appreciate the opportunity to express the views of the Wyandotte County Commission in support of S/B 464.

My name is Julius G. Novak, former Wyandotte County Assessor, County Commissioner and State Representative.

S/B 464, which allows the Governor to appoint an independent Consolidation Commission has the support of Wyandotte County elected officials.

Merging of City and County governments isn't anything new. Consolidation first occurred in 1805 (190 years ago between the City of New Orleans and Parish County, LA).

Studies prepared by the National Association of Counties in 1994 revealed, of the 3042 counties nationwide, only 28 have consolidated governments. 99% of the nations's counties are yet to consider consolidation.

Of the six midwestern states, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska, none have consolidated governments. Wyandotte County may well be the first to merge city and county governments.

Wyandotte County Commissioners believe S/B 464, will allow ample time for consolidation panel members to study every aspect of merging City and County governments and adopt a plan in determining the feasibility of merging Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County.

Mr. Chairman, Wyandotte County commissioners respectfully request the Committee's consideration in reporting S/B 464, favorably.

Sincerely,
Julius G. Novak

House Local Government
1-25-96
Attachment - 5

"Now politicians of all kinds
who are not yet decided
may see how Wyandotte Countians
are no longer divided"

Recognizing that, my hats off to every one of our leaders. The public has pleaded for this opportunity. This legislature, and every single one of our elected officials, boldly delivered on it.

Consolidation is overwhelmingly supported by the KCK Chamber of Commerce (by almost 100% of it's membership in several surveys), the Fairfax Industrial Association (representing some of the largest corporations in the U.S.), The League of Women Voters, United We Stand, the editorial boards of the Kansan and the Kansas City Star, among many, many others. And now, every sitting politician in every affected government (all three county commissioners, and the Mayors of Bonner Springs, Edwardsville, and Kansas City, Ks.) who represent the interest of every citizen in the county, have held a joint press conference here in the rotunda of this capital building in support of this specific legislation.

This is a grandly crafted piece of legislation, **which proves to anyone and everyone who would ever endeavor to change their government, that change is indeed possible.**

Respectfully,



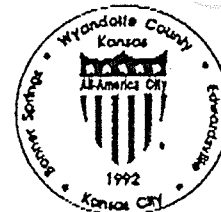
Mike Jacobi
testimony 1/25/96
Kansas House



Executive Chamber
One McDowell Plaza

City of Kansas City, Kansas

Carol Marinovich, Mayor



Kansas City, Kansas 66101
Phone (913) 573-5010

January 11, 1996

Representative Kent Glasscock
Statehouse Capitol - Room 521 South
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: CONSOLIDATION OF KANSAS CITY, KANSAS AND WYANDOTTE COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

Dear Chairperson Glasscock and Members of the House Committee:

I am Carol Marinovich, Mayor of Kansas City, Kansas. I am sorry I can not be here today to speak on the issue of the consolidation of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County governments. However, this is an extremely important issue to our community.

I was elected Mayor of Kansas City, Kansas on the platform of change. I believe change, when focused solely on what matters most for the betterment of the community, creates hope and opportunity for our community's future.

The Kansas City, Kansas City Council and I are committed to seeking ambitious and progressive initiatives which will build a new vision of where we want Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County to be five, ten, and twenty years from now.

I clearly heard from the voters during the campaign and continue to hear strongly today: A key component in helping us make our vision become a successful reality is change in our local governments by consolidating them into one unified body.

How committed are the Kansas City, Kansas City Council Members and I to consolidation? Well, let me say this, I have never seen a group of people who actively worked so hard to eliminate their jobs like this group!!!

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to the Mayors of Bonner Springs and Edwardsville and the Wyandotte County Commissioners for coming together to support this very important bill.

I also appreciate the concern Governor Graves has shown for our community by offering to form the commission to study consolidation in KCK and Wyandotte County. This will

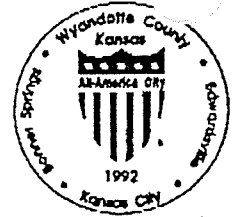
House Local Government
1-25-96
Attachment 7



Executive Chamber
One McDowell Plaza

City of Kansas City, Kansas

Carol Marinovich, Mayor



Kansas City, Kansas 66101
Phone (913) 573-5010

finally give the citizens the opportunity to vote on an issue that is so important to the future of our community.

I support this bill in its present form and ask that no amendments be offered.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol Marinovich
Mayor

cc: Members of the Wyandotte County Legislative Delegation
City Council Members

HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
JANUARY 25, 1996

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

I am Bert Cantwell and I urge you, on behalf of the Kansas City Kansas Area Chamber of Commerce, to report favorably SB 464 with no additional amendments on to the full house.

We see the consolidation of our city and county governments as necessary if we are to have a unified approach to solving the many serious problems we face; problems that must be solved if we are to reverse the negative perception that Wyandotte County is not a good place to raise a family or to establish a business.

High crime, high taxes, an aging infrastructure, and loss of population are some of the more serious problems that must be dealt with by our community leaders. Solving those problems will require strong, unified leadership. We simply cannot afford to have city and county governments at odds with each other. Right now, we can't even get agreement on what to do with vacant lots in the inner-city.

Since 1989, the population of Kansas City, Kansas has decreased by 5.8 percent. During that same period, the cost of city government increased by 22.5 percent and the cost of county government increased by 30.1 percent. When you combine the costs of the two governments the net increase in the total costs of both governments was 24 percent. The Consumer Price Index rose only 18.8 percent during the same period.

An additional consequence of the population flight is that the loss has primarily been in high and middle income families; leaving those who are least able to pay for government services. Wyandotte County currently ranks 98th in the state in per capita income of its residents.

Obviously, consolidation is not the cure for all our problems. However, the idea deserves an extensive study. The Chamber believes that consolidating the governments of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas would increase the efficiency of local government by streamlining the decision-making process and provide a more unified approach to finding solutions to our problems. It would be less costly as well.