

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jene Vickrey at 3:30 P.M. on January 26, 2006 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Mike Heim, Legislative Research Department
Martha Dorsey, Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office
Maureen Stinson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Rep. Jim Ward
Dwight Ritter

Others attending:

See attached list.

Bill Introductions

Brad Bryant, Secretary of State's Office, requested a bill relating to voter identification.

Without objection, the request will be accepted as a committee bill.

Chairman Vickrey opened the hearing on:

HB 2580 **Improvement Districts-compensation of directors**

Rep. Jim Ward introduced Dwight Ritter of the Oaklawn Improvement District. Mr. Ritter testified in support of the bill (Attachment 1). He explained that the bill allows Improvement Districts to adjust Director compensation by the adoption of a resolution.

Chairman Vickrey closed the hearing on **HB 2580**.

HB 2580 **Improvement Districts-compensation of directors**

Rep. Sawyer made a motion for the favorable passage of HB 2580. Rep. Goico seconded the motion.

Rep. Ohara made a motion to amend the bill, clarifying the language. Rep. Sharp seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Rep. Sawyer made a motion for the favorable passage of HB 2580 as amended. Rep. Goico seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Rep. Swenson made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2006 meeting. Rep. Lane seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

Chairman Vickrey adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 2006.

Testimony of Dwight Ritter
Oaklawn Improvement District Treasurer

Chairman Committee Members, my name is Dwight Ritter and I currently serve as Treasurer for the Oaklawn Improvement District in Sedgwick County. I have had the privilege of serving as a director for 16 years. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of HB 2580 and Improvement Districts.

Improvement districts are created to address a limited number of municipal type services. A petition signed by a majority of residential property owners and a map of the proposed improvement area is presented to the county commission. The county commission must hold a public hearing and consider the proposed improvement district as it relates to several statutory factors.

House Bill No. 2580 addresses the area of compensation for improvement district directors. The current law was passed in the mid 1940s, and as we all know things are much more expensive now. When our compensation was set \$5.00 could fill your tank with gas, buy some groceries, **and** take you to a movie.

The duties and responsibilities of Improvement Districts have changed almost as much. The Oakland Improvement District meets every other Wednesday and we are looking at meeting every Wednesday. In calendar year 2005, we set as a board on 97 nuisance abatement cases and the great thing was that 83 of those cases were cleaned up by the owners with no action other than sending them the letter telling them they were in violation and had 10 days to get it cleaned up.

We operate much like a small city in that we built and operate a community building; that is open and staffed from 8am to 5 pm Monday thru Friday. We sponsor our senior center program. That building also houses a SRS satellite office. We house and staff a commodity center in that building. We hire and supervise four full time employees and three part time employees. We oversee the operation and maintenance of one of the nicer parks in the south end of Wichita. With 6 baseball fields, shelter houses, basketball court, a hiking trail, and a nice playground. There are 20 cities in Sedgwick County. Oaklawn ranks ahead of 12 of those cities in population with almost 4000 people.

No one but the Directors themselves knows how many hours they put in every week. But I can tell you from personal experience that I am involved with Oaklawn business in some way almost every day. And I might add, I am delighted to have that opportunity to serve my community in this way.

HB 2580 allows improvement districts to adjust director compensation by the adoption of a resolution. If the proposed increase would result in board members receiving more than \$100.00 in a year, the resolution would have to be published in a newspaper of general circulation once a week for two consecutive weeks. This is the same way currently used by Townships to adjust their director compensation.

In closing, I want to thank you once again for your time, and the chance to provide you information on the Oaklawn Improvement District and their Board of Directors. I urge your favorable vote on HB 2580.