

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jene Vickrey at 3:30 p.m. on March 4, 2004 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Tom Thull- excused

Committee staff present:

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

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Rep. Long-Mast, Kansas House  
Pat Lehman, Kansas Fire Service Alliance

Others attending:

See Attached List.

Chairman Vickrey opened the hearing on:

**SB 292 purchase or installation of fire hydrants by fire districts**

Rep. Long-Mast testified in support of the bill (Attachment 1). She explained that the bill was born out of necessity because under current law, rural fire districts are not allowed to purchase fire hydrants. She said that the bill will help to make life a little safer, insurance rates a little lower, and things a lot easier for some people in the State of Kansas. Rep. Long-Mast informed that the bill will allow individual districts to purchase fire hydrants in areas that currently do not have them and thus allowing businesses and homes in the area lower insurance premiums by making water readily available in case a fire occurs.

Pat Lehman, Kansas Fire Service Alliance, testified in favor of the bill (Attachment 2). He said that the bill allows for the acquisition and installation of fire hydrants within the fire district. He explained that the bill is strictly permissive for all involved parties. Mr. Lehman stated that with more houses being built in rural areas that have their fire protection provided by rural fire departments, the greatest need in fighting fire is water. He said the need is growing for accessible water strategically located throughout the district.

Written testimony in support of the bill was received from Senator Jim Barnett (Attachment 3). He explained that the Attorney General office has issued two opinions that currently, rural fire district are not permitted to purchase fire hydrants in the State.

Written testimony in support of the bill was received from Bill Walker, Fire Chief of Coffey County Fire District # 1 (Attachment 4). He explained that a major change in our state has been in the rural areas,

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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where citizens are building large, expensive homes and businesses, which are often located miles away from adequate fire emergency water supplies.

Written testimony in support of the bill was submitted by Elmer Ronnebaum, General Manager, Kansas Rural Water Association (Attachment 5). He said present law does not allow the fire districts or townships to reimburse public water systems for installations of fire hydrants. He said the bill does not require installations be made but in those cases where the public can benefit, then the customers of the water system should not, necessarily, be required to pay for the costs of the installations as people beyond the water system's customers will benefit. He explained that the bill does not preclude any water system or other beneficiary from paying for the installation.

There were no opponents to the bill.

The Chairman closed the hearing on: **SB 292**

### **SB 292 purchase or installation of fire hydrants by fire districts**

Rep. Campbell made the motion for the favorable passage of SB 292 and recommended that because the committee is of the opinion that the bill is of a noncontroversial nature, be placed on the consent calendar. Rep. Lane seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **Minutes**

Rep. Yonally made the motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2004 meeting. Rep. Toelkes seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2004.