



**House Committee on Judiciary
Hearing on House Bill 2219
Hearing Date – February 18, 2019**

**Written Testimony in opposition to HB 2219 on behalf of the City of Manhattan
By the Honorable Michael L. Dodson, Mayor of Manhattan**

Good afternoon Chair Patton, Vice Chair Ralph and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary. My name is Michael L. Dodson, Mayor of Manhattan.

The City of Manhattan opposes HB 2219, requiring all bodies subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA) to record proceedings and make the recordings available to the public accessible within 24 hours after the meeting. Such legislation is burdensome to local government organizations and would be an unfunded mandate falling upon cities and their tax payers. These requirements are unnecessary, excessive and a burdensome cost for local governments.

- The City of Manhattan has 26 boards and committees subject to KOMA that meet weekly, monthly or quarterly, exceeding over 200 meetings annually. The City of Manhattan conducts highly transparent practices, with regularly scheduled open meetings and notices to the public of all upcoming meetings well in advance. The majority of our public meetings are scheduled in the evenings to accommodate members of the public wishing to attend and provide comment.
- The City of Manhattan has been providing video and audio recordings of City Commission meetings for over a decade. Furthermore in 2015 the City spent over \$18,000 in upgrades to our City Commission chambers which allowed for the live streaming and recording of City Commission Legislative Meetings and Work Sessions. This includes an annual expense of \$1,300 for video and audio recording and retention up to one year. It may be financially onerous for many cities in Kansas to incur this capital expense.
- Furthermore, this has allowed us to live stream and record other board meetings, including our Law Board, Planning Board, Board of Zoning Appeals, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Airport Advisory Board, and Historic Resources Board, given these boards regularly provide feedback and recommendations to the City Commission related to legislative action. However, this convenience for the public comes with added expenses related to staffing, publishing and retention of additional recordings. A requirement to record all public meetings for our 26 boards and committees would be administratively burdensome with significant cost implications. Many board and committee meetings are held in different rooms and locations than our City Commission chambers, which would require increased expenses to accommodate this proposed requirement.



- HB 2219 does not indicate the required length of retention for such records, as well as how and where these recordings must be accessible to the public. Indefinite storage of large recording files would require significant undue costs for storage and retention. The file size of a one-and-a-half hour meeting is over 1GB; storage requirements would be financially crippling for local governments.

For all the reasons stated above, the City of Manhattan opposes HB 2219, and asks the Committee to reject consideration this legislation and decline advancement of this bill to the full House. Thank you for your time and consideration.