



City Administrator Halley

2/14/19

Halley Roberson
City Administrator
Oberlin Kansas
1 Morgan Drive
Oberlin, KS 67749
HB 2219 - Testimony For: House Judiciary Committee

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the subject of requiring public meetings to be recorded.

The intent behind the Kansas Open Meeting Act (KOMA) is to improve the transparency, and engagement with government. The intent to build on the improvement KOMA has made is a natural desire for progression. However, the logistics of these additional regulations would be a strain on already strained municipal governments.

I am the City Administrator for a rural community. Adhering to KOMA can often be a challenge already. Since the paper only comes out once week, meetings are often delayed. As a rural municipality we rely heavily on the assistance of volunteer boards for information and often execution of plans. Our volunteers are GREAT! They make a huge contribution to our community. Having a requirement for them to add recordings of meetings would be difficult to accomplish. Meetings happen at people's homes, restaurants, and other places around town. Since they are volunteers, they have to work meetings into their already busy schedules and it is often in the evenings. Requiring them to have a recorder of video or audio would be a tremendous strain. It would also be an additional expense for city because we would need purchase numerous sets of this equipment.

My grandma used to say, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." I think the intent behind this is good. The implementation and sustainability will be a constant struggle. What I'm concerned of is the unintended outcome of people simply conducting meetings on skype, or zoom and not actually meeting. Further exacerbating a struggle in our overall society to be connected in reality and not simply virtually, causing a further disconnect with government and community. I hope the Judiciary Committee weighs heavily the implications of this legislation and the committee's support of the bill.

Sincerely,

Halley Roberson

City of Oberlin
1 Morgan Dr.
Oberlin, KS 67749

FAX: (785) 475-2925 | PHONE: (785) 475-2217
EMAIL: hroberson@oberlinkansas.gov