



Financial Oversight Committee

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

April 24, 2025

Welcome by Addi Lowell and Gil Alvarez

1. Adoption of Agenda

Recommended Action: It is recommended that the committee adopt the agenda.

Motion to Adopt the Agenda: Trish Hileman moved, Elizabeth Rapp seconded, Passed 14-0

Committee Member Bria Porter arrived after the adoption of the agenda.

2. New Business

A. Welcome

Contact: Kelly Bielefeld, Wichita Public Schools, Superintendent
Addi Lowell, Wichita Public Schools, Chief Financial Officer

Superintendent Kelly Bielefeld welcomed the committee members to the newly formed committee and shared the importance of the committee's purpose.

B. Committee Introductions

FOComm Committee members introduce themselves and their reason for serving on the FOComm. Committee members all have a similar passion for public schools and want to serve their community. Addi Lowell thanked the Committee members for their willingness to serve.

C. Group Expectations

Appendix 2

Addi Lowell reviewed the group expectations as outlined in the packet. Addi introduced Gil as the Chair of the committee, with Paul Lavender as the Parent Vice Chair and Lindsay Poe Rosseau as the Committee Vice Chair. Addi requested a two-year commitment from committee members and stated that meeting notices would be given 48 hours in advance.

The group norms emphasized that every voice should be heard, respect for everyone, assuming positive intent, supporting students and staff, being solution-focused, and having no personal stakes. Members who wished to speak after a topic should push their name plaque forward.

Voting procedures were also discussed, noting that staff members are not eligible voters on the committee. Only one motion can be sustained at a time, with discussion occurring before and after a motion is made, before a vote is taken. "Yes" votes will be collected first



by the raise of a hand. "No" votes will be collected subsequently. To abstain from voting will be counted as a vote "no". A quorum to hold a meeting requires 9 eligible members.

Recommended Action: No action taken.

3. Presentations

A. Facilities

Contact: Luke Newman, Wichita Public Schools, Director of Facilities

Summary: The committee will hear an update on the district's current facility conditions and facilities needs

Luke Newman shared a presentation regarding the district's current facility conditions and needs addressing funding concerns. He highlighted the funding gap that will occur with only \$20 million per year being invested into deferred maintenance of facilities, and shared that the backlog is estimated to grow to over \$3.59 billion in the next 10 years.

Committee Members had no questions on FCI.

Committee members discussed the future spending in deferred maintenance, emphasizing the need to avoid using the term "deferred maintenance funds" and suggesting "deferred capital investment" instead. They also requested comparative data from other districts to contextualize Wichita Public Schools' (WPS) financial situation, which Luke Newman will investigate. Additionally, the committee highlighted the limited funds available for the required structural maintenance at East and North High, noting only \$20 million per year for maintenance needs, and discussed the impact of ESSER funds and general fund transfers to facilitate maintenance projects.

Recommended Action: No action taken.

B. Finance

Contact: Addi Lowell, Wichita Public Schools, Chief Financial Officer

Summary: The committee will hear general information about the state of the district's current funding sources, and operating budget

Addi Lowell led a presentation on Wichita Public Schools' (WPS) current funding sources and operating budget, focusing on school finance, budget pressures from the current state of facilities, and short-term solutions for funding facility needs. The district's revenue sources include 17% from local revenue, 68.5% of state revenue, and 14.5% of federal revenue, with most revenue generated from taxes. The district budget is divided into operating (core services), capital (technology, facilities, vehicles, furniture), and special purpose (additional classroom supports, food, Medicaid services) budgets. The operating budget is influenced by enrollment, which has declined by over 4200 FTE in the last eight years. Short-term funding solutions discussed included private development, grants, and one-time cash investments. The committee also reviewed the draft Unrestricted Reserve Policy, recommending a



minimum and maximum unrestricted reserves cash balance. No action was taken on the proposed short-term funding solutions for FY26.

Recommended Action: No action taken.

4. Policy

A. Unrestricted Reserve Policy – Draft

Appendix 3

Addi Lowell explained the draft Unrestricted Reserve Policy, which recommends maintaining a maximum of two-months of operating expenditures in cash balance as suggested by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The committee discussed whether to use the term "fund balance" or "cash balance" to clearly convey WPS's intentions with the funds, and decided to update the language of fund balance to cash balance to align the appropriate terminology. Currently, there is no Board of Education (BOE) policy guiding cash balances, and this new policy aims to formalize existing practices for transparency. The committee debated whether the proposed minimum is safe, noting it does not include capital outlay funds, where WPS has adequate cash balances currently. Committee Member Landon Hauschild had to leave at the scheduled end of the committee meeting, and was not able to cast a vote.

Recommended Action: It is recommended that the committee approve this policy to proceed to the BOE policy committee, making changes to the policy where it references a "fund balance" to "cash balance".

Motion to Adopt the Policy: Lindsay Poe Rousseau moved, Diane Albert seconded, Passed 14-0.

5. Reports/Requests

Committee members raised several important questions. They inquired about the plan to revisit the bond that didn't pass, noting that leaders have discretion on long-term options. They discussed the fact that other states allow sales tax for schools, which is not an option in Kansas. There was a question about who holds the principal for the bond and whether refinancing with bonds would make sense for taxpayers. Additionally, members referred to the Budget Forms tab in the adopted budget book (pages 8-9, Code 99) and questioned whether the enrollment decline is due to losing students to surrounding districts. Lastly, they discussed the boundaries of Wichita and whether there is a way to bring students back to Wichita Public Schools (WPS) from neighboring districts like Goddard or Maize.

6. Adjournment

Recommended Action: It is recommended that the committee adjourn the meeting.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting: Brenda Dehn moved, Lindsay Poe Rousseau seconded, Passed 14-0.