Date: December 19, 2018
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: Law Enforcement Center, Classroom A; 320 S. Kansas Ste 100

Attendance
Committee members Present: Tony Emerson, Karen Hiller (chair), Jeff Coen
City Staff Present: Brent Trout (City Manager), Catherine Walter (Legal), Jacque Russell (Human Resources), Liz Toyne (Council Assistant)

1) Call to Order
Councilmember Hiller called the meeting to order.

2) Employee Residency Requirement: Brief Overview by Councilmember Hiller from the 3:00pm meeting
Councilmember Hiller provided a brief review of the meeting that occurred at 3:00pm. Staff completed a study of 27 cities and their residency requirement. There are also three articles that cover various aspects of the residency requirement. Alternate suggestions to having a residency requirement included:
- Incentive for employees who would choose to live within a determined distance.
- Residency hiring preference.
- There was also an earnings tax for Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri.
Councilmember Hiller restated that the committee does not want to restrict the policy further, but would like to hear from employees and public members as to reasoning for or against the policy that is currently in place with the City of Topeka.

Jacque Russell noted in the 3:00pm meeting that there were 83 applicants who entered the application process with the City but quit during the process noting they did not want to relocate to Shawnee County. There were 17,961 total applicants within the past four years, from 2014-2018 who began or completed that application process.

3) Public Comment
OFC Justin Long addressed the committee and noted that he is from Lawrence and he has been reminded by friends and family that he could work and live in
Lawrence as opposed to having to move here. (Get his statement about recruitment at WU, etc). OFC Long noted that one topic that crossed his mind is that when his parents age to a point where greater care is needed, he may move and leave his job in order to take care of family business.

Councilmember Coen inquired to OFC Long’s opinion about moving to Topeka and how removing the requirement might change his mind. OFC Long replied that having the option would have been great. He referenced to his aging parents saying that if the requirement was lifted, he would be able to continue working with the City of Topeka and help his parents in Lawrence.

Councilmember Hiller inquired with OFC Long about his service on the recruiting team and what his estimate might be as to how potential applicants might perceive the residency requirement. OFC Long was not sure of a number, but noted that providing applicants with the option to live somewhere else and move at a later time might be viewed more positively than requiring it outright. Councilmember Emerson inquired with OFC Long about being a homeowner and noted that OFC Long is a success to the requirement. OFC Long agreed, but suggested that the requirement may be something that forces him out eventually if a need to move closer to family arises. Councilmember Hiller noted that other companies in Topeka provided information that without the requirement, they noticed realtors and corporate heads not giving consideration to even buying a home in Topeka and inquired with OFC Long as to what his opinion might be. OFC Long noted that as it pertains to the Police Department, if newer officers want to be on special units, there is a department policy to reside within such a distance. It is also the opinion of OFC Long that with all of the work being done in the city to attract younger adults, many will choose to move here or very close to here on their own, regardless of a set requirement policy.

OFC Matt Blassingame inquired with Jacque Russell about the numbers of applicants in the pool from 2014-2018 that were discussed earlier and inquired if there was any way to quantify the number of potential applicants who would not begin the application process simply because of the residency requirement.

Chief Cochran noted a few policies that the police department have with regard to OFC Long’s testimony. Personnel with take home vehicles must live within the Shawnee County per Topeka Police Department policy, and officers would need to make a decision to either move or risk promotion to another unit. When talking about operational response, a stipulation could still be made by the Governing Body that when those individuals are on call, they must be
within such a distance or response call time. Councilmember Emerson inquired about having two classes of employment pools with officers living in two areas. Chief Cochran noted that there is not an issue with filling those positions. He elaborated that he felt as though individuals will not be living too far away from the city, as having to commute once himself, he hated having to drive daily. Councilmember Hiller inquired if having that requirement at the time Chief was hired is worth keeping due to the dedicated employees it has generated thus far. Chief Cochran noted that there is a generational shift and that although many employees will likely move to Shawnee County and the City of Topeka, having the option to be able to make the choice would be a benefit. Chief Cochran challenged the committee to ask themselves what the purpose of the policy is and what the goal is for our city. With regard to real estate showing people homes outside of Topeka, Chief Cochran feels that that is a different challenge and we as a city need to do a better job of promoting what we have to offer. Chief Cochran noted that many officers, himself included, prefer to have a “break factor” when raising their family in order to protect and shelter them a little bit. Chief noted that many of the younger recruits are single, and that they are likely to live in the city or county due to wanting to be near the excitement and activity. City Manager Trout noted that during training, officers are taught about their community and neighborhoods where they are serving, so that they get to know the area and the people they are serving. Councilmember Emerson listed three items:

- People who live in the community have a greater stake in the success of the community.
- Get to experience the policies and procedures that effect the residents of the community.
- Population of the city drives the health and vitality of the city. Getting the big picture, not just a single department.

Chief Cochran responded that he feels that those connections and partnerships that he has made during his time working and living in the city has been beneficial, however he feels confident that the barriers can be broken down and improved with the current goals of the City Manager and Governing Body. Chief Cochran noted that we as a community and governmental entity need to generate excitement and interest in what this city has to offer. Some of the new projects happening around Topeka are piquing interests, and the tax payers who are paying for services want to see action. As these projects are being completed people are getting excited.

Councilmember Hiller noted that if anyone wanted to submit a comment regarding this topic, emails could be sent to her at khillertopeka.org, likewise
the other committee members, Councilmember Jeff Coen jcoen@topeka.org and
Tony Emerson temerson@topeka.org

4) Discussion By Committee Members
No other discussion by committee members at this time.

5) Other Items Before the Committee
No other items.

6) Set Future Meeting(s)
The next meeting will be January 16th at 3:00pm. Location to be determined.

7) Adjourn
Councilmember Hiller adjourned the meeting.

STAFF REQUESTED: Catherine Walter, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Jacque Russell, Human Resources Director
Brent Trout, City Manager
Doug Gerber, Deputy City Manager

MEMBERS:  Karen Hiller (Chair)
   Tony Emerson
   Jeff Coen

The video of this meeting can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/PT8GK-Uk_Xg

City of Topeka Personnel Code: Residency Requirement (as of 9/19/2011)

Section 5. Residency Requirement.

A. Specifications. Employees, including department heads, employed after
December 31, 1981, by the City must be bona fide residents of Shawnee
County, except at the time of appointment or employment when they need not
be residents of Shawnee County, but shall establish residency in Shawnee
County within six (6) months after completion of the initial employment
probation. Employees employed in a public safety position, as defined by the
Human Resources Director, shall, within six (6) months after completion of the
initial employment probation, reside within the boundaries of Shawnee County
at a location which is no more than thirty (30) minutes travel time from the assigned reporting station or office. Said residency shall be maintained within the boundaries of Shawnee County for the duration of the employee’s employment. The City Manager may grant one (1) extension not to exceed six (6) months for establishment of residency upon request of an individual employee for good cause shown.