

# LWVKKC Observer Corps Reporting Form

Email \*

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Observer Name \*

Alicia M Atteberry

Meeting observed \*

- Knoxville City Council
- Knox County Commission
- Knox County Board of Education

Meeting date \*

MM DD YYYY

02 / 03 / 2026

### Three Main Observations \*

Most, but not all, sidewalks and entry areas coming up to 500 Main St. building were clear of ice and snow. At least twice during the evening, the agenda item displayed on screen was not updated to reflect current discussion, once for 20+ minutes.

During an involved discussion of a zoning variance (item 11j), it became difficult to fully understand what was being discussed because only Council members were provided a visual of the lot and plans being discussed. The plans were, however, available in the attachments of the meeting agenda. However, throughout that discussion and the entire meeting, rules, reasoning, and find distinctions were well explained and parsed out by the council and made easy for the audience to understand.

Did the meeting start on time? (use "Other" to write comments or concerns) \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Were all members present? (If NO, include missing members in "other") \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Were all members attentive? (include notes or comments in "Other") \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Were members prepared? \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Was the agenda posted online 72 hours ahead of the meeting? \*

Yes

No

Other: probably? .....

Was the agenda clear in conveying what was to be discussed? \*

Yes

No

Other:  
Agenda itself was clear, but for several issues - one dicussed at length - the agenda item on screen was not the item being discuss. ....

Was there adequate oppportunity for public input? \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Did it seem like some action items were discussed in a closed, rather than open session? \*

**Please note the importance of this question, as Sunshine Laws require board or commission members to only discuss business in open sessions.**

Yes

No

Other: .....

Was background information available to the public? \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Were the facilities/meeting room adequate? (enough seating, ADA access, etc) \*

Yes

No

Other: .....

Policy PositionsUntitled Title

View the League's [National](#), [State](#), and [LWVKKC](#) policy positions.

***LWVKKC Policy Positions: Childcare, Land Use, Health, Homeless/Mentally Ill Persons, Urban Forestry, Use of School Facilities by Communities, Teacher Recruitment & Retention***

Were there any issues on the agenda or brought up in public forum that are relevant to LWV positions or programs? \*

1) A primary point of concern in the public forum at this meeting was the effectiveness and availability of warming centers and shelters in Knoxville. The mayor began the meeting by praising the efforts of city employees and programs managing the severe weather in recent weeks; specifically, she noted that no one was turned away from a shelter and everyone the city could get to a warming center or shelter was transported. However, in public forum, nine community members highlighted their personal experiences with the failures of the same warming centers and shelter systems, specifically that official City of Knoxville warming centers only open when the temperature is projected to drop to 25° F or below, which is well below the point at which hypothermia and other exposure related issues become a concern for the unhoused. Council Member Amelia Parker also noted at the beginning of the meeting that, based on community communications to her on this topic, she is developing proposals to address these issues. In my opinion, this issue falls under the League's stated concern that healthcare, including preventative healthcare, should be provided equitably.

2) Re: item 12k for a ~\$65k grant to multiple organizations focusing on mental health services for youth in Knoxville, Council Member Denzel Grant commented that the grant application process may need review to ensure equitable distribution of funds so that larger, already well funded groups are not receiving "microloans" and other funds such as these. He notes that one grantee of the funds in question, Girl Talk, has multiple board members with potential conflicts of interest - specifically a ranking city employee of the department which funds the grant. This doesn't explicitly indicate "closed discussion," (i.e. related to Observer Corps purpose of ensuring Sunshine Laws are observed) but may be something to watch. The grants were chosen and vetted by the Mayor's Youth Council, and the mayor did respond to CM Grant's concerns by commenting that many of the grantees for this grant were, in fact, new, small programs. CM Grant did vote in favor of authorizing this grant, which was passed unanimously.

Do you recommend League action on any of these issues?

Other concerns or notes

Key discussion on a zoning variance (11j) seemed to essentially come to the conclusion (with the assistance of city attorneys) that the variance was granted illegally by the zoning board, yet the council voted 6-5 to deny an appeal by the neighborhood association. Vice Mayor Lynn Fugate expressed concerns the council was making a policy decision rather than following existing law.

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