



Observer Corps Report

Observer #2

Meeting Observed: Knox County Commission

Meeting Date: June 22, 2026

Agenda:

https://public.destinyhosted.com/agenda_publish.cfm?id=56691&mt=ALL&get_month=6&get_year=2026&dsp=ag&seq=5103

Video Recording:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUsRtrASBJQ&list=PLHG8_5NdPaHYvzwL1Ye4ZhkfozQyrBbeD

Three Main Observations:

1. The Commission **passed a moratorium on development or expansion of data centers** with 10 megawatts power usage or more until Planning Commission completes review and recommendation of a new ordinance.
 - a. Representatives from AT&T and Comcast were present and interested in ensuring that the moratorium would not impact telecommunications. Deputy Law Director Moyers confirmed that the resolution as written would not impact them.
 - b. Commissioner Jay was incredulous about the moratorium and the overall data center discussion, asking, "What are we doing right now?"
 - i. He stated that he did not understand why a moratorium was needed and suggested that there had been no community complaints about the impact of existing data centers in Knox County. Other commissioners disagreed with this (and complaints from the public were shared in last month's Commission meeting).
 - ii. Commissioner Jay suggested that the current focus on data centers is merely "because we heard about something on Instagram happening in Utah."
 - iii. Commissioner Jay asked Deputy Law Director Moyers if the moratorium would be permanent. Moyers explained that the moratorium would be a pause until a new ordinance could be put into place.
 - c. All Commissioners (except for Durrett, recused due to her employment) voted in favor of the moratorium.
2. New Knox County Public **Library Advisory Board members were selected** for four districts. District 5 incumbent Becky Hofseth was controversial.

- a. District 5 had two candidates, the incumbent Becky Hofseth and the ultimately selected Karen Vigirito. Hofseth's interview lasted about 45 minutes, as she spoke about being concerned about children having access to books in the library containing sexually explicit material, "transgenderism," and "confusing gender ideology".
- b. Hofseth also claimed that because the American Library Association has a "leftist agenda," the Library Advisory Board should "question their [Knox County librarians'] training, worldview, and how it's affecting our children."
- c. Commissioner Durrett asked each candidate how they would balance their own interests with the greater interest of Knox County as a whole. Hofseth responded that her focus is God's law above anyone's interests. Hofseth also stated that she had received a message from God to "go after this" service on the Library Advisory Board.
- d. Commissioner Jackson read a quote from Hofseth in Compass in which she had seemed to support the removal of Alex Haley's *Roots* from Knox County Schools. However, Hofseth stated at this Commission meeting that she did not believe *Roots* should have been removed.
- e. Commissioner Thompson pointed out that he is a fan of parental responsibility and that the Public Library already has a system in place to categorize age-appropriate materials and for parents to manage what materials their children can check out. Commissioner Thompson also pointed out that the Library Advisory Board is meant to be advisory in nature and is "not designed to be an advocacy arm... or legislative body."
- f. The following Commissioners voted for Becky Hofseth: Russell, Lee, Fox, and Thompson. Commissioner Thompson initially abstained but then switched to vote for Hofseth at the last moment after everyone else's votes showed that Vigirito had the majority.

3. This **meeting lasted over 5 hours**, until about 10:20pm.

- a. Multiple items pulled by Commissioner Fox off of the consent calendar still passed.
- b. Presentations included UT Extension for National Dairy Month and Property Assessor Phil Ballard explaining the reappraisal process.
- c. Significant time was spent interviewing applicants for the Knox County Public Library Advisory Board.

Feature Evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Meeting started on time?	yes		
All members	yes		Commissioner Russell was ill and participated over phone instead of attending in person.
Members attentive?	yes		
Did members come prepared to discuss agenda items?	yes		
Agenda posted 72 hours prior to meeting?	yes		

Agenda items clearly described what was to be discussed?	yes		
Adequate opportunity given for public input?	yes		As the meeting was running late, Commissioners Hill and Oster suggested starting Public Forum on Open Topics earlier than it was listed on the agenda so that speakers would not have to keep waiting.
Was there an appearance that some action items were discussed in closed rather than open session?		no	
Was background information available to the public?	yes		
Facilities adequate (room size, lighting, ventilation, speakers, audible, ADA accessible?)	yes		Audio was a little quiet at times.

Were there any issues on the agenda relevant to LWV positions or programs? 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*

League Position	Issue
LWVKKC policy - Land Use	Especially relevant to data center issue: <i>"We support land use policies, plans and processes that call for citizen participation, professionally qualified staff planners, planning commissioners with demonstrated commitment to serving the public interests..."</i> <i>We support programs and strategies that conserve... water pollution and protect waterways...</i> <i>We support policies and strategies that enhance community appearance and livability."</i> https://www.lwvknoxville.org/position_land_use

Do you recommend League action on any of these issues?

I recommend continuing having the observer corps at Library Board meetings.

Other notes/concerns?

Commissioner Fox withdrew his "March Madness" presentation from the agenda prior to the meeting.