

By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

• Leader & Times

The agenda was amended to include a Housing and Building Trade Board proposition at Tuesday night's city commission meeting. After the proposed conceal carry plan debate, the discussion of proposing these boards became heated.

The item was presented by commissioner Ron Warren, and he stated that he'd like to find if there was the interest in the board by advertising for applications.

"I've been thinking on how to construct a board, and then I actually had the idea, well maybe the better way to do it – instead of us deciding we want a board, and we'd like the board, we could go out and get applications from the public," Warren said. "We see if we have the interest of creating a board. Two boards, in creating advisory boards and having staff go out and ask for applications and see if we think we are getting the kind of interest from the public to serve on these two areas that we are looking for. And at that point, determine what makeup of how many people, by what type of interest and what type of people we want to put on these boards."



Warren then made a motion to ask staff to advertise for applications for a Construction Trades Board or a Building Trades Board, whichever is preferred, and a Housing Advisory Board, he said.

"I hear a motion do I hear a second?" Mayor Dave Harrison asked.

No other motion was made by any of the commissioners. Silence was broken by commissioner Dean Aragon asking a question.

"Can I ask a question? This is to see if this is what the citizens want, right?" he asked.

Warren replied, "This is to see if we have people out there that want to help out in these two areas. From the people I've talked to, there is interest, but when it comes to filling out applications and sending it in, it's a different thing."

"A motion though, correct me if I'm wrong, is whether or not we are interested in creating two new boards?" Mayor Dave Harrison said.

"I'm not saying we are going to create the boards, because if we don't have any answers, it's kind of silly to say we are going to create the boards. I think there's a need and I guess it's up to you guys to decide if you think there's a need," Warren replied.

Commissioner Joe Denoyer stated his opinion and said he feels that before soliciting applications, there has to be more direction in the make-up of the boards.

"These being unique and specific boards, as we have talked in the past, the make-up of these boards – just to solicit applications is one thing, but if you're looking for somebody in the electrical field, they are going to have – I feel, if there's interest in this board – they are going to have some direction when they apply," Denoyer said.

"As a board, what are we going to do?" he continued. "We haven't come up with that yet. What is the make-up, because like the Convention Visitors Bureau, they have a specific make-up on

the board – so many from hotels, so many from restaurants, so many – I feel that is essential in soliciting for board members. I feel we need more direction before we move forward. I think we can get there.”

Harrison then said, “I’m going to tell you how I feel. We have a housing department and we have a building department. We have a city manager and we have five city commissioners.

“And if we can’t run this thing and do it the right way, we get input from these folks all the time, all these same people that might be interested in a board... so we have plenty of information,” Harrison said.

“There are rules that govern this stuff or state laws, federal laws handed down. A lot of that, nobody has a choice about. In order to, go through the process and create two new boards, basically –“ Harrison’s voice trailed off as Warren spoke up once more.

Warren said, “What’s gonna happen with those two boards, there’s gonna be people of knowledge and have discussions that at this time aren’t taking place and ...”

“Why aren’t they taking place now?” Harrison interrupted.

“Because there’s not a board for them, and we don’t have the staff,” Warren replied.

“This is a board here,” Harrison said. “They can come here any time they want to. They were here one night.”

“We have a board here, and we want to handle every item in the code book that we have a discrepancy with, gonna handle it at this board meeting?” Warren said.

“Ronnie, until you showed up, we never had any discussions like that, and quite frankly, it’s interesting to me that a contractor sitting on this board brings this forward,” Harrison said. “We’ve been all over the place on this thing and it’s just time... you’ve made your motion, let’s see where we go.”

Warren withdrew his motion for the moment.

“Well, I’ll withdraw my motion for now, and then I’ll have all those people that decided that don’t care whether it happens show up, I guess,” Warren said.

A moment later Harrison said, “We form a board that is with contractors to give advice and the first time you don’t heed their advice then, they are upset and you have a whole new set of problems. They are not going to be the ones – the fox is not going to guard the henhouse here, I’m sorry. Not as long as I’m here. You guys can outvote me. That’s what it amounts to.”

“That is really not what the board is about, in those communities they actually have those boards,” Warren said.

“Which communities is it that have those boards?” Harrison asked.

“Garden City has one,” Warren replied.

“No, they do not.” Harrison snapped back.

“Yeah, they do,” Warren said.

“They do not,” Harrison said.

"Yeah, they do. You told me they have a board," Warren said.

They then spoke of the board that Garden City has. They argued the "safety" name in it, as if that discredited it from being a board.

However, research indicated many Kansas communities had building boards.

As listed on its website, Garden City does have a Building Safety Board of Appeals, which is "involved with issues of building construction and permits. The board reviews and recommends code amendments and changes in building construction methods. They assist the Inspection Department in building code interpretation. Ordinance No.2332 establishes this board. Please fill out an Advisory Board Application if you are interested in serving on a board."

Like Garden City, Dodge City also has a building board. The code is listed on the web page. "The building board of Appeals is involved with issues of building construction and permits, reviews amendments and changes in building construction methods, and assists the Inspection Department in interpretation. Representation should include persons from the design, real estate, general, residential mechanical contracting professions and other areas of interest," the page reads.

The page also states that the board consists of "seven board members who meet annually or as needed for specific issues."

The Building Trade Board in Hays involves 4-year terms, and its members are limited to two consecutive terms.

Hutchinson Board and committees determines questions of fact as to the acceptability and adequacy of alternate materials, equipment, and types of construction and provides for the review of the decisions of the building official in the interpretation of all building regulations."

Great Bend has many advisory boards, including a Building Board of Examiners and Appeals.

Winfield has a Building Trades Board and Emporia and Wellington do so as well.

Commissioners decided to take no action on the proposal.