



January 19, 2022

Senator Ty Masterson
300 SW 10th Ave, Room 332-E
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Senator Masterson,

The City of Bel Aire's governing body recently met to rank our seven legislative priorities for the 2022 legislative session. Bel Aire City Council officially adopted the following legislative policy at our January 18th meeting. Bel Aire continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in Kansas, and is committed to maintaining a high quality of life for residents through careful local stewardship. We appreciate your work on repealing the tax lid, limiting unfunded mandates and supporting mental health. Your support of these 2021 priorities made a difference to our residents.

This year the Governing Body respectfully requests your support maintaining the Countywide Sales and Use Taxes structure, amending the Senate Bill 13 burdensome notice requirements, affirming home rule, backing K-254 infrastructure funding and supporting State funding for mental health facilities and programs.

You may remember recently receiving correspondence from us about explicitly allowing local advisory questions to be presented on election ballots and consolidating Bel Aire in to one house district; we hope to see progress on these issues as well.

1. **Countywide Sales and Use Taxes:** Support keeping the current city-county revenue sharing formula in place to benefit all. The existing formula benefits both city and county tax payers and ensures there is a fair, predictable and consistent method to distribute funds that are generated primarily in cities.
2. **Property Taxes:** Any tax lid limits cities ability to legislate and spend funds that are raised locally. The current tax notice requirement are intended to foster transparency, but are structured to be burdensome and costly. After 2022 cities will be required to pay for these additional notices from local funds. **We encourage changing the Senate Bill 13 notice requirement to make this noticed process less complex and burdensome while still preserving the goal of transparency. This may be accomplished by requiring a single publication in the official newspaper, in lieu of individual notices every time property taxes are adjusted.**
3. **Home Rule and Properly Funded Mandates:** Home Rule is key to the success of cities to govern themselves based on citizen input and desires. Consistent with the Home Rule Amendment of the Kansas Constitution approved by voters in 1960, we support local elected officials making decisions for their communities, particularly local tax and revenue decisions. Any state or Federal mandates should heavily consider the Home Rule Amendment *and* be properly funded. Legislative requirements from the state or federal governments imposed on cities without proper funding negatively impacts the budgets of cities. **Strongly support home rule. Oppose any legislative mandates unless properly funded.**



4. **K254 Public Infrastructure:** Support state prioritization of K-254 safety and infrastructure improvements and recommend the selection of K254 for IKE Transportation funding. Studies have shown that regional and local growth for southcentral Kansas are tied improving the K-254 infrastructure. Bel Aire values the promotion of safety, economic development, growth, road improvements and other infrastructure related objectives along K-254 in the interest of the public good.
5. **Mental Health:** Support the State prioritizing the allocation additional resources for mental health programs and studying solutions to this statewide problem. Funding should be allocated for community mental health centers and additional bed space for patients with mental health issues.
6. **Election Ballots:** From time to time governing bodies want to ask constituents about their thoughts on local matters such as, investing in city parks, local term limits, or interest in certain services. These sort of questions bring great value to the local legislative process yet they are not allowed on county run election ballots. **Please support local engagement by passing legislation to explicitly give municipal governing bodies the authority to add advisory questions to elections overseen by the Secretary of State.**
7. **Redistricting:** Support a district map that allows the entire City of Bel Aire to be in one district. Though we appreciate and value Representative Ohaebosim and Representative Penn, our residents often find it difficult to determine in which district they reside as their neighbor across the street may have a different representative. Our constituents have shared they would prefer all of Bel Aire being in one district.

Our governing body is more than willing to meet with you to discuss how these outlooks can make our community and our State better. We would welcome an email or call if you need additional information from us on specific issues. My email is JBenage@belaireks.gov and I can be reached at (316) 684-0226.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to understand and champion these priorities on behalf of the City of Bel Aire. Our citizens truly appreciate your time and commitment as our Senator. You continue to be a strong supporter and friend of Bel Aire which is a great honor. Thank you for all you do in Topeka.

Respectfully,



Mayor Jim Benage