

City Clerk's Office

2011 Annual Report



City of Lawrence

What does the City Clerk's Office do?

The City Clerk is the designated Freedom of Information Officer for the city. The City Clerk's Office provides the retention and maintenance of official city records. We are responsible for recording all activities involved in City Commission meetings, including meeting minutes, ordinances and resolutions.

The City Clerk's Office administers various city licensing/permitting processes and coordinates public notices, legal publications and bid notices. The City Clerk conducts weekly public bid openings.

City Commission election filings and other notices and details of elections are administered by the City Clerk and coordinated with the County Election Officer.

The City Clerk's Office is a division of the City Manager's Office and is staffed by the City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager, Deputy City Clerk, Software Specialist, and part-time Administrative Support person.

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2011 Major Accomplishments

A few major accomplishments of the City Clerk's Office in 2011 include:

- Issued 894 licenses/permits and collected \$115,786 in revenue (12% more than budgeted);
- Placed over \$3,000,000 in special assessments on the tax rolls;
- Coordinated city approval and support for major events including KU Relays, Tour of Lawrence, and Bike MS;
- Created new license regulations regarding solicitors/peddlers and mobile food vendors;
- Significantly expanded City Clerk's Office web presence;
- Outsourced long term records storage and destruction;
- Implemented performance measures.

More details on these accomplishments can be found throughout this report.

Licensing/Permitting

The City Clerk's Office administers the licensing/permitting processes for various business and other activities. The table below includes the total number of licenses/permits issued by type.

Breakdown of alcohol licenses issued in 2011:

On premises CMB: 13

Off premises CMB: 38

On premises liquor: 123

Off premises liquor: 19

Temp. CMB/liquor: 17

Type	2009	2010	2011
Sidewalk Dining	25	27	28
Cereal Malt Beverage (CMB), all types	46	52	51
Alcoholic Beverage, all types	158	169	159
Street/Ice Cream/Mobile Food Vendors	5	5	5
Alarm Companies	13	15	15
Merchant Security, Service & Officer	89	116	133
Miscellaneous	15	18	8
Sign Hangers	25	27	23
Solicitors/Peddlers/Transient Merchants	178	183	143
Taxicabs and Pedicabs	5	17	14
Temporary Use of Right-of-Way	254	273	282
Tree Trimmers	25	29	33
TOTAL	838	931	894



O'Malleys Beverage, a local beer distributor.

In 2011 we recommended and the City Commission adopted a new licensing system for mobile food vendors, and changes to the solicitors/peddlers/transient merchants regulations that offered greater protections to the public.

Visit the City Clerk's Office online at

www.lawrenceks.org/city_clerk

for information on open records, elections, agendas and minutes, licenses and permits, special assessments, and more.

Customer Service Enhancements

Ongoing customer service enhancements include making information and materials available online. In addition to placing license/permit applications on the city's website, the City Clerk's Office also launched its own page on the website, and made copies of ordinances and resolutions available online. We also modernized license/permit application forms and made them available on the city's website.

Open & Transparent Government

The City Clerk is designated as the city's Freedom of Information Officer, and coordinates responses to many Open Records Requests. In 2011, the City Clerk's Office responded to 36 "official" requests, as well as countless informal requests for information and documents. As needed, the City Clerk advises and assists other departments of the city with records requests.

In 2011 the City Clerk's Office created a webpage with information on Open Records requests, a crucial addition to the city's online presence that allowed the city to receive a perfect score on a Lawrence Journal World evaluation of open records offerings of local governments in Douglas County (LJW, October 20, 2011).

In August, the City Clerk and Deputy City Clerk attended a League of Kansas Municipalities' training session on the Kansas Open Records Act and Kansas Open Meetings Act. The City of Lawrence hosted that training at Fire Medical Station 5.

The City Clerk's Office coordinates the publishing of many legal notices, ordinances, and other items in the local newspaper. In 2011, the City Clerk's Office incurred \$17,192 in publishing costs.

Temporary Use of Right-of-Way Permits

The City Clerk's Office processes Temporary Use of Public Right-of-Way Permits for activities such as

- Private utility maintenance projects;
- Private construction projects (road construction, curb cuts, use of cranes or other equipment on the right-of-way adjacent to private property, etc.);
- Events such as runs, bike races, festivals, block parties, etc.
- Sidewalk sales downtown; and,
- City utility or street maintenance projects (by private contractors).

This permit process helps protect public safety and the public's infrastructure investments. In addition to these permits, the City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager coordinated other approvals and city services in support of large events, such as the Kansas Half Marathon, Kansas Relays, Tour of Lawrence, Bike MS, and Hot Rod Hullabaloo in 2011, and numerous other smaller events.

The City of Lawrence responds to records requests in compliance with the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA).

Please visit

http://www.lawrenceks.org/city_clerk/public_records_request

for more information.



Pedestrians peruse the muscle cars at the Hot Rod Hullabaloo on Massachusetts Street in South Park. Such events often require City Commission approval and support from numerous departments including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Police and Fire Medical.

In 1991, the issuance of temporary use of right-of-way permits became an administrative process and 16 permits were issued.

	2009	2010	2011
<i>Temporary Use of Public Right-of-Way Permits Issued</i>	254	273	282

Governing Body Support

The City Clerk's Office supports the activities of the Lawrence City Commission in various ways, including attendance at meetings, creation of meeting minutes, filing of ordinances and resolutions, City Commission election filings, and execution of documents such as contracts approved by the City Commission.

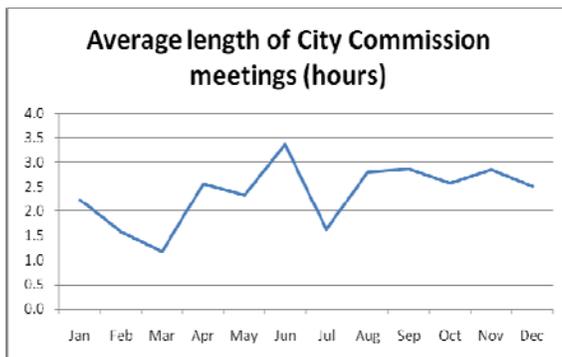
In mid-2009, the City Clerk's Office was reorganized following the departure of the former City Clerk, and the City Clerk's duties were absorbed by the Assistant to the City Manager. This overall reduction in staffing led to a re-evaluation of many procedures in the City Clerk's Office, including City Commission meeting minute taking. In 2011 the minutes were reformatted and simplified, and some extraneous elements, such as transcriptions of staff reports (which reports are available online) were eliminated. These changes not only saved significant staff time, but they reduced the overall length of the minutes, increased readability, and dramatically decreased the turnaround time for getting the minutes approved by the City Commission and available to the public.

	2009	2010	2011
Number of City Commission meetings	48	48	47
Average length of City Commission meetings	-	-	2 h 23 m
Pages of meeting minutes produced	1636	1510	724
Minutes approved without correction	98%	96%	96%
Minutes approved within 3 weeks of meeting date	60%	6%	89%



Tax certifications and exemptions

The City Clerk's Office annually certifies to the County Clerk the special assessments to be placed on the property tax rolls for the following tax year. **This year \$3,014,176.95 in special assessments were placed on the tax rolls.** The City Clerk's Office fields numerous inquiries from real estate agents and prospective buyers about specials owed on properties throughout the city, and processes pre-payments for special assessments that have not yet been placed on the tax rolls.



The City Clerk's Office coordinates the tax payments or exemptions for city owned properties. While most city property is exempt from property taxation, certain properties titled to the city, such as properties for which industrial revenue bonds have been issued, are subject to tax. In those cases the company receiving the bond proceeds is responsible for the payment of the property taxes, and the City Clerk's Office ensures that the property tax bills are sent to and paid by the responsible party.

Records Management

The City Clerk's Office maintains many records of the city, including City Commission meeting minutes, ordinances, resolutions, bond issuance documents, election related documents, certain license/permit records, and many other records. In 2011 we undertook a major project to outsource long term storage of records which had been kept at the Solid Waste Annex North (SWAN) building.

The project required coordination with various city departments to organize, label, and repack (as necessary) boxes of records to be stored at a private records management and storage facility. In total, **9,283 pounds** of records beyond their retention dates were securely shredded, and **1,289 cubic feet** of boxed records plus **165 rolled building plans** were transferred to the storage facility. The private facility offers cleanliness, organization, security and ease of document retrieval that could not be duplicated in-house without great expense. Photos of the project are below.

What's ahead in 2012?

The City Clerk's Office is poised to implement new initiatives and operational improvements in 2012, including:

- Acceptance of credit card payments for licenses and permits;
- Expanded use of enterprise content management software for faster retrieval of records;
- Reorganization and outsourcing the storage of records stored at City Hall;
- Implementation of Innoprise licensing system;
- Preparing for 2013 election filings.



Before: SWAN mezzanine, facing south



After: SWAN mezzanine, facing south



Before: SWAN mezzanine, facing north



After: SWAN mezzanine, facing north



Palletized boxes to be shipped to storage



Building plans in storage at SWAN