Legislative Update March 6, 2020

Welcome to the 2020 Kansas Legislative Session. This is the second year of the biennium, so bills and resolutions from the 2019 Session carried over to the 2020 Session. As a result, the bill numbers will not start over at 1 and 2001, but will pick up where they left off last session. Additionally, bills that “died” in committee last year have been revived and are available for debate.

For a review of common legislative terms, please refer to the “Common Legislative Terms” list on the www.KansasCounties.org website in the “Services” Tab under “Legislative,” or bookmark http://www.kansascounties.org/services/legislative/common-legislative-terms.pdf/view

Summaries of all legislation passed during the 2019 session can be found at www.kslegresearch.org under the Publications tab by searching the 2019 Summary of Legislation and 2019 Legislative Highlights.

What Happened this Week

After a wild turnaround week, this week in the Statehouse was very calm by comparison. The legislature was off on Monday and Tuesday, and even on Wednesday and Thursday, some committees did not meet. Friday the legislature was pro forma, meaning there was little actual business conducted.

While it was relatively calm, there was some activity. Many of the “blessed” bills were referred back to their original committees, where those committees will continue to work on these bills.

While the legislature was off, KAC Executive Director Bruce Chladny and Legislative Policy Director Jay Hall traveled to Washington D.C. for the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference. While there are many topics of interest to Kansas counties, of particular interest was the session about legislative trends across the nation.

There is a myriad of legislation dealing with the opioid crisis and how states are responding to it. In many states, opioid addiction is being treated as a mental health crisis rather than a criminal/law enforcement crisis. The major concern is in making sure that settlement funds from the opioid litigation make it to the local grassroots level.

There has also been legislation introduced in several states, including Kansas, dealing with pre-empting local governments from filing lawsuits in certain instances. This is similar to HB 2461 that has been introduced in Kansas.
Finally, taxation is an issue nationwide. The major theme nationwide, as in Kansas, is that any changes to taxation are felt most significantly at the local level, as changes that are minor across the state, but may be concentrated at the local level. This is something that is certainly an issue here in Kansas as well.

What’s Coming Next Week

With Turnaround now behind us and first adjournment a mere four weeks away, time is very short. As a result, the legislative calendar is packed next week. Timing is always an issue with legislation, but timing is especially a factor now, with very little time left for consideration in committees and on the floor.

Monday, March 9

SB 375, the FORWARD transportation program, is scheduled for final action in the Senate Ways and Means committee at 10:30 in room 548-S.

Tuesday, March 10

SCR 1601, the constitutional amendment to eliminate transfers from the state highway fund, effectively closing the “Bank of KDOT” will be heard in Senate Transportation at 8:30 in room 546-S.

HB 2510, which would allow special districts to be dissolved and their responsibilities assumed by another taxing jurisdiction, will be heard in Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government at 9:30 in room 142-S.

SB 468, which would provide the state fire marshal with law enforcement powers and require investigation of deaths resulting from fires, will be heard in Senate Federal and State Affairs at 10:30 in room 144-S.

Wednesday, March 11

SB 435, which would preempt local government from regulating personal package delivery vehicles within their jurisdiction, will be heard in Senate Commerce at 8:30 in room 548-S.

HB 2588, the FORWARD transportation program, is scheduled for final action in the House Appropriations committee at 9:00 in room 112-N.

SB 338, which allows for alternate budget procedures for local governments, will be heard in Senate Assessment and Taxation at 9:30 in room 152-S.
SB 457, which would require the use of the soil survey version dated September 16, 2019 to be used for property tax purposes, will be heard in Senate Assessment and Taxation at 9:30 in room 152-S.

SB 454, which would exempt election security records and cyber security records from disclosure under the Kansas Open Records Act, will be heard in Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government at 9:30 in room 142-S.

SB 407, which would require the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services to open inpatient psychiatric beds in Hays and Garden City, will be heard in Senate Public Health and Welfare at 9:30 in room 118-N.

HB 2529, which would extend the STAR bonds program, is scheduled for final action in the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development at 1:30 in room 112-N.

Thursday, March 12

HB 2420, which would allow military surplus vehicles to be registered for road use, will be heard in Senate Transportation at 8:30 in room 546-S.

HB 2522, which would establish a rural hospital innovation grant program, is scheduled for final action in the House Appropriations committee at 9:00 in room 112-N.

SB 380, which would prohibit municipalities, including counties, from imposing requirements on video service providers, will be heard in House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications at 9:00 in room 281-N.

SB 396, which would discontinue the apportionment of countywide sales taxes between cities and counties, will be heard in Senate Assessment and Taxation at 9:30 in room 152-S.

As with all legislative meetings, the schedule is fluid and subject to change on short notice. Additionally, please watch for email blasts from KAC for important hearings that have been added to the calendar, and please watch your individual affiliate and associate groups for discussion on bills that relate directly to your county office.

Other Resources

For daily information on things happening in the Legislature, follow @KansasCounties and @JayHallKS

You can find information on the Kansas Legislature, such as daily calendars, audio links and bill text at www.kslegislature.org

2020 Legislative deadlines can be found at www.kslegislature.org/li/documents/2020_deadline_card.pdf