



February 15, 2019

House Judiciary Committee  
Chair Rep Fred Patton

Honorable Chair and Committee Members:

The City of Hutchinson has for many years worked hard and spent considerable funds providing our citizens with live TV broadcast of all City Council regular meetings, as well as an accessible archive of past meetings online. We have invested significant funds into proper equipment and staffing, allowing us to provide quality and timely presentations of our City Council meetings.

House Bill 2219 would require any public body or agency subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to record audio or video of any meetings that are required to be open to the public and make that audio or video recording accessible to the public within 24 hours after the meeting. While the City of Hutchinson supports open and transparent government, HB 2219 is full of unintended consequences.

Hutchinson has roughly 10 councils, committees, boards, etc. that are subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act. Each of these organizations meet at least once a month and some more than once. In total we would be looking at upwards of 150 meetings throughout the year. Providing video/audio recordings of all of these meetings would be a significant challenge not even considering the costs associated with this bill.

We would anticipate investing money for setting up the various locations where meetings occur with the proper audio and video equipment to produce quality product (\$2,500-\$5,000). There would be labor involved in staffing all of the meeting locations with qualified staff to run the technology to ensure quality reproduction estimated at \$100 per/\$15,000 per year. There would be a question about captioning for hearing impaired which would cost about \$150 per meeting. Another cost would be storage or management of the recordings which could be done through a private source at an estimated cost of \$5,000 per year. In total it is realistic that the cost to the City of Hutchinson alone could be \$40,000 annually, aside from the cost of initial capital investments \$30,000.

The last point I would make concerns the decision making ability of the various boards and committees. Most are advisory in nature and make recommendations on policy and budgetary issues. Ultimately, these recommendations are vetted and approved at the City Council level where public access is truly not an issue.

I strongly urge you to consider the unintended consequences of HB 2219 and reject HB 2219.

Sincerely,

John Deardoff  
City Manager

JJD:lso