

Speaker 1 ([00:05:50](#)):

Are we ready?

Speaker 2 ([00:05:52](#)):

Turn your video on,

Speaker 3 ([00:05:55](#)):

Not on figures. Let's see. Thank you. Okay, now you're ready? Yep. Is my microphone on Kurt?

Speaker 4 ([00:06:18](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 3 ([00:06:18](#)):

Okay. Alright, let's get this minimized. Good evening everybody and welcome to the January 20th, 2025 Lord City Commission meeting. I'm going to start with asking for some directions on the meeting rules please.

Speaker 5 ([00:06:45](#)):

Thank you, mayor. Good evening everyone. Please silence your cell phones to minimize distractions. During the meeting when the mayor calls for public comment, please approach the podium to indicate you wish to speak. Virtual participants should use the raise hand function to indicate they wish to speak. When prompted, select join as panelists. There will be a brief delay as your role changes. Once your name is called, please unmute and turn on your camera. To provide your comments, please state your name and zip code. Before speaking, the city reserves the right to turn videos off or mute participants. All comments will be limited to three minutes. The primary format for accessing or participating in this meeting is in person at City Hall. Virtual access to view or participate in the meeting cannot be guaranteed. The chat function will not be monitored. If you have any trouble, the meeting can be viewed on the city's YouTube channel and cable Channel 25.

Speaker 3 ([00:07:44](#)):

Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. The first main item on the agenda is to approve the agenda. The city commission reserves the right to amend, supplement, or reorder the agenda. During the meeting, is there a motion to approve the agenda?

Speaker 2 ([00:07:58](#)):

Move to approve the agenda.

Speaker 3 ([00:07:59](#)):

Second. Motion to approve the agenda by Vice Mayor fdi. Second by Commissioner Little John. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 6 ([00:08:07](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 3 ([00:08:07](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 6 ([00:08:08](#)):

A. Aye.

Speaker 3 ([00:08:10](#)):

Okay. Motion passes. Five zero. Next item on the agenda is a proclamation tonight where we're going to recognize Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King and I'm supposed to have someone named Janet Craig Hare today to receive the proclamation. Ms. Hare works for the, I think it's the Equity Advisory Council along with the Lawrence Public Schools. Please stand here if you'd like to add anything before I do the proclamation, I'd appreciate it.

Speaker 7 ([00:08:41](#)):

Yes. Thank you. Mayor De and City Commissioners. On behalf of Lawrence Public Schools and our equity advisory council, thank you for issuing this proclamation. As you know, a focus on equity is at the heart of the work we do to serve students and families every day In the Lawrence Public Schools, the foundation created by Dr. Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King Jr. Helps us focus on the importance of making and supporting significant shifts in mindsets and practice to provide update and sustained equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students. Our schools take this opportunity to share his message through curriculum related assignments and programs such as the program at Billy Mills Middle School last Friday. As such, we would like to invite the community to our one Dream program in annual events, celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's theme, one Dream Protecting, respect, courage, and Responsibility in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

([00:09:41](#)):

Explores how we can continue working together toward inclusion and justice. Please plan to join us at 6:00 PM on Thursday, January 23rd at the lead center to explore a gallery showcasing student work and educational resources. The program follows at six 30 hosted by student MCs from Free State High School, Lawrence High School, and Lawrence Virtual School with student performances and a celebration of students and staff who carry Dr. King's ideals forward in their daily lives and make their schools better places for everyone to learn and work. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday and thank you again for recognizing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lawrence Public Schools and our equity advisory council.

Speaker 3 ([00:10:22](#)):

Thank. Thank you very much Ms. Craig here and appreciate you filling us in on the upcoming event. Although we're a day late on the proclamation for yesterday, it's still important for us to recognize, so I'll go ahead and read the proclamation. Thanks. Thank

Speaker 1 ([00:10:35](#)):

You.

Speaker 3 ([00:10:36](#)):

Whereas the city of Lawrence recognizes the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Devoted his life to eliminating injustice, racism, and fear with peaceful protests, unity and understanding with the faith that in the end, racial justice and harmony would prevail. And whereas Dr. King endured imprisonment, physical violence and adversity by government officials and racist evil doers to achieve change that would alter the course of American history with his leadership and practice of nonviolence, which continues to inspire this nation and the world to reaffirm the importance of education and fairness as a foundation to end prejudice and discrimination. And whereas Dr. King devoted his life to the

advancement of civil rights and public service, he believed in a nation of freedom and justice for all and challenged all citizens to help build a more perfect union and live up to a purpose and potential of America. And whereas we continue to commit ourselves to the dreams of Dr. King in this special year of commemoration, we engage in the valuable activity of reserving a day toward the end.

(00:11:36):

And we recall the legacy that Reverend Dr. King created and whereas it is remembered in the exceptional values expressed by Dr. King and his legacy as celebrated and recognized by National Holidays and the building of monuments for him as a model of American patriotism. Now therefore, I'm Michael Dever, mayor of the city of Lawrence, Kansas. Do hereby proclaim Monday, January 20th, 2025 as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and your thank you. Thank you very much. Okay, the next item on the consent agenda are considered under one motion and approved under by one motion. Members of the governing body may remove items for separate discussion if desired, members of the public may remove items identifies as quasi-judicial for separate discussions if desired, members of the public will be limited. Three minutes for those comments. Is there a motion from the commission to remove anything from the consent agenda? Okay, I don't think there's any judicial items on there. Is there? Nope. Anybody online commissioners?

Speaker 2 (00:12:51):

No.

Speaker 3 (00:12:52):

Okay. Very good. Okay. Is there a motion

Speaker 2 (00:12:54):

I move to approve the consent agenda?

Speaker 3 (00:12:56):

Second. Okay. The motion of the consent agenda is approved by Vice Mayor Finkel Dye, second by Commissioner Finkel Littlejohn. All in favor say aye. Aye.

Speaker 1 (00:13:08):

Aye.

Speaker 3 (00:13:08):

Alright. Motion passes. Five zero. Okay. The first item on the regular agenda is to direct staff regarding our key policy decisions in the development of the 2026 budget.

Speaker 8 (00:13:28):

Thanks, mayor. I think I'm going to kick this off. Good evening. From the weather outside, we know it's not May or June, it is January. This is months away from when we normally have these kinds of conversations about the budget. We are indeed months ahead of schedule and I'm happy to report that a tremendous amount has already been accomplished in to help our community navigate to a balanced and sustainable budget. Budget and strategy manager, Allie Porter and her team have engaged our executive team and many others in our organization to refine our already advanced data and decision-making tools. We have also engaged two additional teams to help in our work. One from our frontline employees and one from a group of community members who have expressed an interest in sharing their curiosity and serving as a sounding board. As we move forward, we have built significant program information into the

Balancing Act tool, which you have already used in a preliminary budget exercise, which we will discuss tonight.

(00:14:27):

Our work is largely to provide real options and accessibility for our entire community to engage with us in this process, making the information decisions more accessible and easier to understand, however, does not necessarily make the trade-offs easier. We are still months away from the final decisions in budget adoption, but the early work we do tonight and in the next few months leading to this spring and summer, we'll narrow our conversations and reduce, if not eliminate surprises. We are laying out very visibly what is at stake, where we are challenged in the options to move forward. As I hand the presentation off to Allie, I want to reemphasize in strongest terms the thoughtful engagement is the only thing that really helps us out in this work. We are facing difficult but very manageable realities as a community and as a city government. As you'll see, none of the early balancing act results suggests large swings in any program or large increases in property tax or fees, even if that's the direction we decide to go the work is in, finding the right adjustments and understanding that whatever we decide it is for the balance benefit of the most good, for the most of our neighbors, there are a hundred thousand different interpretations on the right balance.

(00:15:52):

Whether your perspective comes as a department director, a labor leader, a neighborhood advocate, small business owner, elected official, or city manager, we are interconnected and we will go together as one community in our work to balance our shared resources in addressing our shared needs. Everyone is accountable for our neighbors and we are bound and dedicated to the mission to create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home. If that, I'll hand it off to Allie, so she's going to walk us through what our preliminary information has shown and really hopefully lead to some discussion. Okay,

Speaker 9 (00:16:32):

Thank you Craig. Thank you. City commission. We do have a presentation for you this evening where we have separated into sections with questions, so I do plan to pause at each section as long as the mayor's comfortable with that format. Okay,

(00:16:50):

So the slide before you UCR 2026, preliminary budget in front of you along with a few of the preceding years. So a few things to note. 2023 are actuals and this was the last year that we utilize ARPA to supplement the general fund so that 800,000 approximately revenues over expenditures would not be there had we not utilized ARPA dollars to supplement the general fund. 2024 is the revised budget that city commission saw when they passed the 2025 budget in September. We will not have year-end numbers until closer to April. So at the moment these are budget numbers versus actuals. The 2025 budget again you see in both 24 and 25 the utilization of fund balance to approximately \$2 million in 24 and then 1.5 and 25 and then 2026 with our preliminary budget. So currently a \$6.5 million deficit. I just want to reemphasize it is January and so we talk a lot about how we are building a budget based off of assumptions and those assumptions will change because we are currently building a budget without a single 2025 data point. So 6.5 is a number that we're comfortable working from in January, but again they will change. Last thing I'll note on this slide is that these expenditure assumptions do not include a plan for L-D-C-F-M expansion.

(00:18:32):

So two of our assumptions in there is the growth of property tax and sales tax, property tax being our second largest revenue stream in the general fund. And so right now we are projecting 6.25% assessed valuation growth. This is a number that is traditionally provided by the county. They will give us a preliminary estimate late March, early April, so 6.25 seemed like a number, a conservative estimate again

that we were comfortable working with, but we will be able to update that when we have more information from the county in a few months. Second slide you see here for assumptions sales tax, this is the largest source of revenue for our general fund and we are currently projecting a 2% growth over 2025. Again, we've talked about it several times. You see that large spike post covid and then the normalization over the past few years and so how quickly are we normalizing and so we've projected 2% growth. Again, we will update as we get more information. Our first set of questions that I'm going to pause here is given where we are in the process, do you agree with these assumptions for property tax and sales tax and if not, what adjustments should be made?

Speaker 3 ([00:20:06](#)):

Do you want that feedback now? Great. I love this. Okay, I have a question just off the top of my head. I'm sorry for jumping out right away. So can you tell me what the last two years of annual growth of the assessed valuation has been or the dollars received from the county through assessed valuation?

Speaker 9 ([00:20:33](#)):

Yeah, so 2025 there was approximately 7% growth 20, 24 8% and then 20 23, 1 of our largest years 12%.

Speaker 3 ([00:20:44](#)):

Yeah. Okay, very good. And then I know we had already talked about this, but can you refresh my memory on the sales tax growth for the last three years?

Speaker 9 ([00:20:59](#)):

Yes, I can. So that large post covid spike, you saw the 16 ish percent

Speaker 1 ([00:21:09](#)):

And

Speaker 9 ([00:21:09](#)):

Then it started to drop, so seven and then the past several years about the two and a half percent.

Speaker 3 ([00:21:15](#)):

Okay, cool. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([00:21:17](#)):

No,

Speaker 3 ([00:21:18](#)):

Any other questions here on this one?

Speaker 6 ([00:21:23](#)):

I don't have questions.

Speaker 3 ([00:21:24](#)):

I do have any comments or feedback. Anybody, commissioners online, do you have any questions about these assumptions before we make any statements about whether they're sound fair or not?

Speaker 10 ([00:21:35](#)):

Amber has a question. No, I don't.

Speaker 3 ([00:21:40](#)):

Mayor,

Speaker 10 ([00:21:40](#)):

My hand's been up just waiting to be acknowledged. Oh,

Speaker 3 ([00:21:43](#)):

Sorry, I can't tell that

Speaker 10 ([00:21:45](#)):

Amber's.

Speaker 3 ([00:21:46](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 10 ([00:21:49](#)):

Thank you Allie. Real quick, the property tax grove, those are again, those are numbers that are from the county that come from the state, correct?

Speaker 11 ([00:22:01](#)):

Correct.

Speaker 10 ([00:22:04](#)):

And so those numbers are reflected. I'm going to back up real quick because I don't want to comment. I want to question. In the event legislation comes through and let's say it puts a lid on property tax growth or valuation, let's say it caps it at 4% like we've been hearing. Does that whatever we discuss today that will essentially negate everything? So if we say yes, we think it's going to be a six and a half percent growth or we say no, we should look at something a little bit lower to kind of come in under the legislature, what does that impact look like?

Speaker 1 ([00:22:44](#)):

Good question.

Speaker 9 ([00:22:46](#)):

Yes, so as you said, this is 6.25% growth. We did a quick modeling of 3% growth. That was the last legislative update I saw for 3%. And so rough math, again, there are several caveats in there that are hard for us to capture at this point in the process, but rough math would be about a million dollars less in the general fund from property tax collection if we were capped at 3%.

Speaker 10 ([00:23:20](#)):

And then I imagine with a look back going to the pandemic last year was probably our lowest sales tax collection

Speaker 9 ([00:23:31](#)):

Post covid? Yes,

Speaker 10 ([00:23:33](#)):

Post covid. Sorry, post covid.

Speaker 9 ([00:23:34](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 10 ([00:23:35](#)):

And so that number compared to the year before last was how much

Speaker 9 ([00:23:46](#)):

Again, sales tax difficult because our reports lag two months behind, so we haven't even wrapped it up 2024 yet, but the past few years we've been seeing approximately two and a half percent and then we are projecting right now 25 2 0.5% and then 26 2%.

Speaker 10 ([00:24:20](#)):

I do have a question about the male difference. It was a question I used to pose to Jeremy but it's not really germane to this. I'll just wait until after discussion, but thank you Allie.

Speaker 3 ([00:24:30](#)):

Thank you. Okay. How about feedback on what we're proposing to assume to grow or these growth estimates? Are we comfortable with them?

Speaker 6 ([00:24:48](#)):

I would say I think certainly for where we are, what information we have, I think this is good. I mean we saw the realtors recently released a report that said prices on residential properties were up about 4.3%. That's just residential though, not commercial. And of course valuations are based upon what exists on January 1st, 2026. So certainly I'm hopeful that 2025 we see some new projects coming out of the ground and we have people talking about those both residential and otherwise. So that would be on top of that and so I would have reason to believe that it could be better than that, but I think at this point we certainly can't project it being better than that. We'll know more on commercial and industrial increases in a couple months when the appraisals comes out with 'em and then we'll have to think about what other projects are starting and then I think sales tax, yeah, we've overshoot it. I don't want to overshoot it again. So 2% would be I think what we have to be planning on and if we're surprised we'll be happy.

Speaker 3 ([00:26:07](#)):

Yeah. How about you on the

Speaker 12 ([00:26:10](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 3 ([00:26:11](#)):

You feel that way? I

Speaker 12 ([00:26:12](#)):

Agree with Vice Mayor Keldi in terms of the property tax, it's kind of more or less a wait and see until we get more information on the sales tax. Yes, it does make me a little bit more apprehensive. We're estimating 2.5 for this year and then two for 26. So I'm almost to the mindset I'm hoping we'll make two for 26, but I'm not, this is the information that we have now, so I can't really say anything to the contrary.

Speaker 6 ([00:26:48](#)):

I will say one other caveat, we've been talking a lot about the World Cup in 2026 and if we're a host team and even half of what the state thinks we'll get off sales tax from the World Cup in the middle of the 2026 somehow it could be Beto, but again at this point I'm an optimistic guy. I think we can do better, especially with the World Cup that year and the full football stadium up and running and all those things. But I think for the purposes of this discussion we should be at 2% and if later in the year we start to feel better about it, we can talk about that. But

Speaker 12 ([00:27:28](#)):

I do have a, I guess question comment to piggyback off of Vice Mayor Finkel die, were these projections made just at our current state, not including if and when the stadium is up and running and normal projections of KU football during the fall and things of that sort and the distributed amount of monies that go into the town or any projected World Cup or World Cup stuff?

Speaker 9 ([00:27:57](#)):

Yeah, I guess the second part of that question, we intentionally did not factor in revenue from the World Cup as that would be a one-time revenue source that we're putting ongoing expenditures to. So that's intentional not to do that. I say holistically, yes, we try to include, but it's difficult given the improvements that were made there and we don't have any 2025 data points in regards to KU football. So holistically, yes, but still extremely difficult.

Speaker 3 ([00:28:29](#)):

Cool. I was just curious. Commissioner Larson has a question

Speaker 13 ([00:28:35](#)):

And Amber,

Speaker 4 ([00:28:36](#)):

I just more just a comment, just these two numbers, I'm okay with them. I wouldn't want them to be any higher than this than neither one of 'em given our history with both the sales tax as well as property tax, I think these are fine to start with.

Speaker 3 ([00:28:53](#)):

Okay. I'm sorry commissioner Sellers, your hand is fading because of the background. Unfortunately I can't see it very well so I apologize.

Speaker 10 ([00:29:06](#)):

Maybe I should change it to white so you can see it better. As far as the property tax growth, I think 6 25, I think for normal projections that would be fine. I'm just a little bit leery that the legislature is going to put that lid on somewhere between four and 5%. So I think we can go in for the next few months thinking 6 25, but we need to mentally prepare ourselves for something that may be around 4% growth just in case

the legislature caps it because they're wanting to be able to provide, show some type of relief for folks who have just kind been, I guess hit over the head by their own doing. So it's had a little to do with us more of what the legislature's been doing. So I can say six and a quarter is okay for now. I'm just in the mindset that we're probably going to see some legislation that's going to drop that for us.

(00:30:09):

I think the 2% gross number is the fairly conservative number that we need to just stick with since we've had some volatile pieces that have impacted our community and I know that we've, with the sales tax on groceries and state sales tax going down, that's going to cause some fluctuations as well. So I think this is just a perfect time for us to be sta at 2% and even moving forward just so that we maybe learn how to under promise and hopefully over deliver and be able to lose some opportunities later on down the line.

Speaker 3 (00:30:48):

Okay, thank you. Yeah, I think we should stick with 2.0 on our estimates for sales tax. Definitely want to underestimate if anything and on property tax, I'd be willing to go lower on our estimate in the future because the sustained level of increases over time probably isn't going to maintain, but it's possible and maybe because of the way we assess property and arrears it may be to our advantage. So I'm not quite sure where we're going to be as far as the value goes, but 6.25 seems conservative enough for me, but we may again, as commissioner sellers pointed out, need to consider lower amounts based on what the state's planning on doing in the future. So is that the feedback you need?

Speaker 9 (00:31:45):

Yes. Okay,

Speaker 3 (00:31:46):

Great. Thank

Speaker 9 (00:31:46):

You. Okay, next is our fund balance. As I noted earlier, we anticipating utilizing fund balance in both 2024 and as part of the 2025 adopted budget, I get asked regularly why do we have fund balance and what exactly is its purpose? And there are several reasons why we have fund balance, but two that I want to highlight. One again, we have a budget with revenues based on assumptions. That's not money sitting in a bank. We are assuming making assumptions that we are going to receive that and if those assumptions don't come to fruition, we still have obligations including paying our employees. So we need to have some fund balance to be able to deliver our core city services despite economic trends. The second main reason of the importance of fund balance is our credit rating. So the commission has made a strong commitment to our infrastructure and we are able to deliver on that commitment by utilizing debt. When we start to dip into fund balance with no plan to restore that, we jeopardize our credit rating and when you get downgraded, you risk paying millions of dollars more for nothing other than the fact that it's simply more expensive to borrow. So it's important for us, it's a best practice why we have fund balance. Our policy is 90 days goal with the 60 days minimum.

(00:33:19):

So before you see two charts here, the one on the left is no fund balance restoration forecast. So in 2024 we are lingering around that 60 days minimum. That's the yellow line. The orange day is the orange line is the 90 day goal. So unassigned fund balance in 2024, we are about at the 60 days and 2025 we eat into that more until we're actually negative by 2029. On the right is the 2 million fund balance restoration where you see we would make \$2 million in reductions as part of the 2026 and sustain that for the foreseeable future. So you see that build back over time. Now these are forecasts and I want to be very

clear that we are not saying this is what's going to happen. In fact, myself and many other individuals have an obligation to make sure that this isn't going to happen and we're actively working with departments right now in 2025 to make reductions so that we don't spend everything that was approved. But the point in showing this is really to show that trend that if we don't set aside any money for fund balance, we'll be going in a downwards trend versus the 2 million is more of an upwards trend.

(00:34:46):

The second chart here is highlights, our top cost driver, which is personnel. So this is personnel costs in the general fund. The yellow line is our fund balance. Actually I'm going to back up the orange line is our fund balance policy minimum. So as our expenses go up, you see that line also go up and then the yellow line is our actual fund balance and projected fund balance. And so you see the correlation of that going down the dark blue is what we spent on personnel. And the light blue again is how we supplemented the general fund with ARPA dollars in 20 21, 22 and 23. So our next set of questions tonight is if 2 million is the appropriate amount to restore fund balance.

Speaker 3 (00:35:47):

Okay, great. Questions from commissioners online comments, questions for her?

Speaker 4 (00:35:57):

I have a question. Mayor, could you go back to that last slide please? So between 2022 and 2023, there was a pretty significant drop increase our personnel, can you speak to that as to why that was such a big increase?

Speaker 9 (00:36:18):

So the city conducted a compensation study in 2018 and that was sat on for a little while and then was actually implemented I believe as part of 21 and 22. So that's when you see those jumps

Speaker 4 (00:36:36):

For 23, there's a jump there. It seems to be much more than 2021 and 2022. Am I not reading it right?

Speaker 9 (00:36:48):

Yes, I'd have to look at the exact dollars. I can't. Is it 21 and 22 that we did the, or was it 22 and 23? We did implemented the PACE study.

Speaker 8 (00:36:57):

I believe it was 22 and 23. Okay,

Speaker 1 (00:37:00):

Okay. Yeah.

Speaker 8 (00:37:00):

And that was \$11 million over those two years of additional compensation. Now that wasn't just general fund, but we did make those adjustments over those two years, implemented the recommended pay adjustments to stay up with market.

Speaker 4 (00:37:18):

Okay, thank you

Speaker 8 ([00:37:22](#)):

Commissioner

Speaker 3 ([00:37:22](#)):

Sellers I,

Speaker 10 ([00:37:26](#)):

I'm still thinking come back to,

Speaker 3 ([00:37:27](#)):

Okay, sounds good. How about y'all? Anybody have any comments on whether 2 million is the appropriate amount?

Speaker 6 ([00:37:36](#)):

I just want to ask this question. I had a few people ask me this so I think I know the answer, but it's not like we're going to, when you say we store fund balance, it's not like we're writing a \$2 million check. It's creating a budget that's \$2 million expenses over revenue so that that's how we build it up over time.

Speaker 9 ([00:37:59](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 6 ([00:37:59](#)):

Right?

Speaker 9 ([00:38:00](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 6 ([00:38:00](#)):

A few people yes.

Speaker 9 ([00:38:02](#)):

Asking

Speaker 6 ([00:38:02](#)):

Me if we're writing a \$2 million check or something. No, what we're doing is creating a budget that has revenue of expenses of 2 million.

Speaker 9 ([00:38:10](#)):

Correct? Yes. So in the preliminary budget you see that 2 million. So it's basically a artificial expenditure right now to do what you're saying? Yes.

Speaker 3 ([00:38:26](#)):

Commissioner Sellers has a question.

Speaker 10 ([00:38:37](#)):

I am going to ask a trending question on our CIP projects, but I'm not finding it quite the words quite right. I want to ask about it. So

Speaker 1 ([00:38:51](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 10 ([00:38:58](#)):

This is a difficult one. Yeah, let me know on this one a bit. I may come back to this at the end of your presentation. I did have a question but it goes a little bit more deeper into CIP and I don't want to get us off track.

Speaker 3 ([00:39:19](#)):

Sounds good. So I've just one if to Vice Mayor Finkel dies point, we're basically talking about the overall budget and how to either maintain our existing tax base and still maintain the existing operations. If we choose not to put \$2 million into fund balance, that would either lighten up the load of reducing our costs to operate the city infect as well. So we're not actually spending money, we're not putting money aside or planning on spending or saving as much using the existing dollars we're speaking about. Does that make sense? Probably not. Okay. If we took a million out of this and said, oh, we're only going to set aside a million dollars in fund balance as Vice Mayor Finkel, I was saying it's not like we're going to get a million dollars back, we're just budgeting less to spend overall as a city, some of which was a fund balance allocation. Correct. I want to make sure that's what we're getting.

Speaker 9 ([00:40:28](#)):

Correct. So we are proposing an additional \$2 million of ongoing expenditure reductions. So if a million dollars or whatever that number ends up being is less reductions, then

Speaker 3 ([00:40:45](#)):

Sure. But in the current budget deficit we have of \$6.5 million, if we drop the fund balance to decide to do it only to a million dollars, that would reduce our deficit to approximately \$5.5 million. Correct. To make the math simple for everybody. Correct? Correct.

Speaker 9 ([00:41:01](#)):

Yes. Thank

Speaker 3 ([00:41:02](#)):

You.

Speaker 12 ([00:41:03](#)):

May I add an additional question? And the projected 2029 forecast is just to get us back to the 60 day minimum of a fund balance?

Speaker 9 ([00:41:15](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 12 ([00:41:16](#)):

Okay. Otherwise we would be below it and we would have to do more work to get back to that six day minimum.

Speaker 9 ([00:41:23](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 12 ([00:41:24](#)):

Okay. Commissioner sellers. Okay, great.

Speaker 3 ([00:41:26](#)):

Okay, commissioner sellers.

Speaker 10 ([00:41:31](#)):

Thank you. Quick question, I'm jumping ahead a little bit just because I'm going to refer it back to this later on later on In your slide you have the approximate cost for employee for general fund employees. What percentage of our current two part question. One, what percentage of our current workforce is funded from the general fund and two, how many open, open FTE positions do we have that that would be funded from the general fund?

Speaker 9 ([00:42:05](#)):

So the first part of the question, and I for folks listening at home, I want to be clear this isn't a one-to-one relationship because we do program based budgets. And so when you look at a single FTE, that individual can be spread out over multiple programs and multiple funds. So it's not a one-to-one relationship relationship, but I definitely wrote this down somewhere. But there are approximately 580 positions that are at least partially funded by the general fund.

Speaker 10 ([00:42:43](#)):

And for the sake of this conversation partially means more than 50%.

Speaker 9 ([00:42:49](#)):

Any percentage.

Speaker 10 ([00:42:51](#)):

Any percentage. So currently 580 FTEs are partially funded out of the general fund.

Speaker 9 ([00:43:05](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 10 ([00:43:09](#)):

And how many vacancies do we currently have that could potentially be partially funded out of the general fund?

Speaker 9 ([00:43:21](#)):

Yeah, I do not have our vacancy information. I'm not sure if anybody from HR is on, but we can get that to you.

Speaker 10 ([00:43:28](#)):

Thank you madam.

Speaker 3 ([00:43:32](#)):

Okay. Okay then. So for the purposes of this presentation commissioners online, do you agree or think that \$2 million is the appropriate amount to restore the fund balance at this point in planning?

Speaker 4 ([00:43:54](#)):

For me, that's fine. 2 million is fine. That's the least I didn't want to do.

Speaker 3 ([00:43:58](#)):

Okay. Commissioner sellers,

Speaker 10 ([00:44:06](#)):

I'm agreeing that with that recommendation currently.

Speaker 1 ([00:44:10](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 10 ([00:44:11](#)):

Recognizing that we, I'll just leave it at that. Okay,

Speaker 3 ([00:44:16](#)):

Sounds good.

Speaker 10 ([00:44:17](#)):

I'll just stick with the 2 million. Yeah. Okay.

Speaker 3 ([00:44:19](#)):

Sounds good. What do you think?

Speaker 12 ([00:44:23](#)):

2 million is fine with me. I mean it's our policy minimum. I mean.

Speaker 6 ([00:44:28](#)):

Okay. Well certainly for the purposes of this discussion, I think it's a good number we should be working from. I do think this number, like the revenue numbers, there's lots of variables in it. I mean if we get a good sales tax yield, if we have a bad sales tax yield, there's usually some savings based upon budget that you can sometimes find throughout the year. If someone leaves their job, you have a vacancy. So to me this is one of the more, and of course anytime you're trying to guess six months in advance or certainly at this point a year in advance about what that'll be. I think for the purposes now it'd be 2 million. I do think as we get better numbers and we feel more confident about some of the numbers, I mean I might be willing to look at something less than 2 million, certainly over a million. We need to be restoring the fund balance. But I think this is mean. There's something there to be talked about, but for this purpose I think we need to be talking about 2 million now. If we can do it, we want to do it.

Speaker 3 ([00:45:40](#)):

Yeah, that sounds great. I agree with all that. Thank you very much.

Speaker 9 ([00:45:46](#)):

Okay. Employee compensation. I largely touched on this in the previous section, but this budget, the 2026 preliminary budget does continue our commitment to market-based pay. The slide before you see a few years looking back here are different pay groups and the different pay increases that were received by those groups. So from 2019 to 2025, our 2026 preliminary budget assumes a step plus 3% general wage adjustment. This was a semi difficult number for us to come to the conclusion on because all of our MOUs have wage ERs as part of 2026 and we are also conducting a compensation analysis in this current year. So a lot of unknowns, but we believe we're roughly at market that 3% would keep us at maintaining market. So that's what we've built in the preliminary budget. So question to commission, is there a continued commitment to staying at market compensation for all employees and employee groups?

Speaker 1 ([00:47:00](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 3 ([00:47:04](#)):

Do the room first this time. Anybody, any comments or what do you think about that?

Speaker 12 ([00:47:12](#)):

Right off? I would say yes, I'm fine with this, right as it stands, yeah, the continued commitment to stay at marketing compensation, but as Vice Mayor Finkel, I said we're still early in the process but as it stands now I'm fine with it.

Speaker 3 ([00:47:30](#)):

And I to presume that when we did our budget exercises that this commitment was factored into the numbers that we

Speaker 9 ([00:47:38](#)):

Calculating.

Speaker 3 ([00:47:39](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 9 ([00:47:39](#)):

Thank

Speaker 3 ([00:47:39](#)):

You. Okay, commissioner, vice Mayor Finkel, what do you think?

Speaker 6 ([00:47:44](#)):

I mean certainly that's a commitment we've had and we want to try to stick to that commitment. I will note that last year under the primary plan we went to the 1% under the primary plan and most of our other folks made the two and had something greater than the 1%. So I would say to the extent later in the process we're starting to think about things I'm going to be focused on trying to make sure we get that

primary plan, keep that at market. And I just want to make that note, but as we start our process, I think three percent's a good place to talk.

Speaker 12 ([00:48:24](#)):

I concur. I'd be interested in seeing that to get those folks back.

Speaker 3 ([00:48:31](#)):

Okay. And then Commissioner Sellers or Commissioner Larson, do you guys have any questions about this or feedback? I

Speaker 4 ([00:48:40](#)):

Don't have any questions to the 3% is the, I want to stay at Mark compensation for all groups to the extent possible. As we've all said, we're kind of early in the process here and we need to keep in mind more information as more information comes out, how that's going to turn out.

Speaker 1 ([00:49:01](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 10 ([00:49:08](#)):

Mayor, I'm fine with the staying with. We need to maintain market compensation. We're seeing it across multiple municipalities, multiple states. We're seeing it on a state level as far as compensation. I think at any point in time if we dip below, it's going to create a bigger gap and I don't want us to see us do that. I think something as we continue to move forward that we need to look at and address, which I think we do each year, we just do it later on in the budget process, is what these numbers look like as it relates to vacancies. And if there we need have more larger elevated conversations around freezing FTEs, eliminating FTEs to ensure that if there's any other variables that could impact where we may have some budget impacts as it relates to compensation. So I think right now is not the time for us to do any type of pay freezes or anything like that. So staying with the trend to ensure that we are paying folks your deserving pay, especially while things could potentially become I balance out of our control is something that I want to make sure we stay on track with it.

Speaker 3 ([00:50:28](#)):

Okay, thank you. Sounds good. I think you've got your input.

Speaker 9 ([00:50:32](#)):

Yes. Balancing act, this continues to be a tool that we lean into and refine. It is not perfect. It cannot capture all the caveats of a very complicated budget process. It's not statistically valid, but we do feel that it is an extremely effective tool to give the community handles to be able to engage with us in these budget conversations. So it's one that we've leaned into the past few years, leaned into it even more this year. Craig touched on the budget committee, so I won't go into the spiel I had about that, but we do have a community budget committee and an employee budget committee. They just started meeting, one of their early meetings was to complete balancing act in small groups. So we had the employees have three small groups on one day and then the community completed them in small groups the next day and their collected feedback showed that there are about a handful of programs that they would maintain including a compliance in the police department, investigations, patrol, specialty units, aquatics in parks and recreation, and then building safety and code compliance in planning and development services. No program was increased or decreased by all of the groups. And then four out of the six groups increased

property taxes to some degree. And there were also some suggestions for parks and recreation fee increases.

(00:52:11):

The city commission also completed balancing act and so we have those tabulated in front of you. Again, the handful of programs that are maintained, those underlined are the ones that the budget committees also maintained. And then in PDS, you see those in italics because four submissions maintained and one actually increased all commissioners decreased information services in the police department and then the golf course in Parks and recreation. And two of the five submissions increased property taxes again to various degrees and those suggestions for parks and recreation fees. So if I'm looking at these results, I see a handful of programs that are expected to be maintained, but by and large there are considerations for reductions in every other area that's not listed. So our question this evening is outside of those programs that we have shown, are there areas the city commission will not support some levels of reductions to balance the budget and in full transparency and recognition that this will result in employee headcount reductions to some degree.

Speaker 3 (00:53:30):

Okay, so there's other areas. Read that again. Okay. So are there areas of service the city commission will not support reductions to balance the budget. So do any commissioners want to? Okay, so Commissioner Sellers raised her hand please.

Speaker 10 (00:53:54):

I figured since you started in the room that we'll do online,

(00:54:00):

I made concurrence with our A compliant, we've made great measures to combine several different projects and to use that as a standard to make sure that we're addressing things as it relates to sidewalk safety. So no to a compliance, no to investigations note to building safety code compliance, things related to housing. So anything that has to do with key measures that we've elevated in the community as of lately. So around a place for everyone, a DA, not wanting to see us do any reductions in those things. So like code compliance? No, those are off the table for me.

Speaker 3 (00:54:46):

Okay. Anything else? Okay, commissioner Larson.

Speaker 4 (00:54:56):

No, I'm not. I don't have anything other than what has been listed at this point in time.

Speaker 3 (00:55:01):

Okay,

Speaker 12 (00:55:02):

Sounds good. But I would like, can you give us some more information about information services in the police department just in more in depth? I'm kind of curious a little bit about that one.

Speaker 9 (00:55:16):

I believe Deputy Chief Hefley is here and he could probably share some information.

Speaker 14 (00:55:33):

Good evening commissioners. Adam Ley, Lawrence Police Department. Question was Information services, what does it comprise? It's a little bit of a mystery and I apologize for that about not being more clear on the front end of this information Services is three units, the records unit, evidence unit and information technology unit within the police department. The main things that those units service are providing records to the public for police reports providing dissemination to the, I'm sorry, speaking of the records unit dissemination to the district attorney's office and our submission to the state of Kansas is required by law. That unit itself has gone from six technicians and a manager to four technicians and a manager in the last two years. The evidence unit is essentially what it is. It's three technicians who maintain physical evidence in the facility itself, transfer material to court, to labs for processing testing and such.

(00:56:46):

And then the information technology unit is two technicians and three other positions that maintain the networks including the mobile data computers that are in all the police cars, the network systems that are incorporated throughout the department. And they handled 1500 help desk tickets in the previous year. So their main function is to support patrol and investigations. And that is something that I own of not being able to articulate that well enough in this exercise. But the large funding, a large portion of the funding for that program, roughly \$760,000 is for software to operate a bunch of different services that support patrol and investigations including our body, body-worn camera and in car video programs. Back oh 12 to eight weeks ago we signed a contract to continue body-worn cameras in car video and digital evidence storage. Digital evidence storage is a sort of new thing within the last 10 years.

(00:57:59):

Majority of our evidence coming in, or at least a large portion of it is digital in nature. And where previously when I was a young officer, we'd maybe have a computer every once in a while and now every case has multiple terabytes of data on phones, computers, whatnot. This process also allows community members to submit digital evidence through our contracted provider in that. So that is where a lot of that equipment comes from. I'm sorry, where those costs come from. Additionally, our policy or some of the big drivers, our policy company, our records management system that we actually utilize out in the field and on the backend, a significant portion about \$40,000 year to pay is to pay for that. And then for computers, for the desk computers in the department as well. As I said before, the mobile data computers out in the field including a program to produce digital or I'm sorry, electronic citations so that we could also incorporate data collection for car stop data, which has been something that's come before the commission in the past. So I threw a lot at you. I should have paused for questions. If you have questions about that, I'd be happy to answer those.

Speaker 12 (00:59:20):

I think what was it earlier in what your comments were there already had been a reduction you said from the last year to this year.

Speaker 14 (00:59:29):

So two years ago the records unit was operated with six technicians and one manager. We reduced a position in there through attrition and previous budget cycles. And then we've had another person leave and elected to reduce that position to we all see this coming. So where we can make efficiencies, we are. But yes, that was a seven person unit that's down to five at this point. There was a reduction in hours to the public with those reduction in employees, which is something that we've taken to heart of doing less with less. But there are requirements of us in, especially when you talk about dissemination of case information to our partners in the district attorney's office, municipal court, federal prosecution, and then also private attorneys and things and insurance companies.

Speaker 12 ([01:00:26](#)):

Okay, thank you.

Speaker 3 ([01:00:30](#)):

So I think, yeah, I don't have any other questions. Anybody else online have any questions? Okay, how about you?

Speaker 6 ([01:00:42](#)):

Thank you for that. I don't have any

Speaker 3 ([01:00:44](#)):

Questions. Yeah, think we good? I think we

Speaker 6 ([01:00:45](#)):

Thank you. I mean I do think obviously, well early on in this by the way, Allie, I appreciate the, and all the staff, not just you obviously Allie, but this is more detailed than we had last year. More categories, more information that's appreciated. I think this is an example though where it's hard to, it's sometimes hard. I mean if you say you wanted to keep patrol and investigations the same, but then well what if you reduce information services? Does that really affect patrol and how all some of these interact, some of the most standalone, I mean animal control might be standalone, but obviously information technologies interweaving with interwoven, I guess is the right word, interwoven with some of those other. So I think we have to understand that as we move on. But I think the big takeaway there is kind of a goal to keep patrol investigations the same. And I do think that is a goal of mine and probably something we don't want to touch. I think on code compliance, I probably think I was the one posting who said let's increase it because I think that was a big part of the discussion we had with the development code

([01:02:10](#)):

Though I would say with the caveat that I think there has been just some discussion with the increase in the occupancy, we might not need as much enforcement in that category and that might free us up to be able to do some other code enforcements. So I do want to look at that as part of this process. But otherwise I think some of the lists that we have here I tend to be in agreements with and I think everything else has to be on the table.

Speaker 3 ([01:02:45](#)):

Yeah. Commissioner sellers?

Speaker 10 ([01:02:50](#)):

No, just real quick, it was just something that Commissioner Finkle, I said that Pete, my curiosity as far as code compliance and I just want to be able to say this on the record so we can kind of get the conversation going as it relates to budgeting. We have the report on as it related to what inspections we're looking like. We know that we have the new land development code. So I think there needs to be some conversation about how do we operationalize and execute better in code compliance. We are missing the mark and there needs to be better relationships between housing initiatives and code compliance within that group as a whole. And so I'm saying that not as a criticism, but as a critiquing opportunity for us to look at how to create better efficiencies with code compliance as it relates housing initiatives. Because again, we are talking about we have projects and programs that those two, that code compliance plays a huge role in and if we're deficient in those areas, then it's going to impact how efficient we can be in meeting the metrics for something like a place for everyone. So I appreciate Commissioner Kodi bringing that up and

being able to point out an opportunity for us to where it is not necessarily something that we per se need to put the technical work into, but it is definitely technical work that needs to be looked at and especially if we're going to put more money into it.

Speaker 3 ([01:04:37](#)):

Okay, thank you. So I am going to have to say I agree with some of the things that we need to remain in our policies specifically things that can cause us concern A, a compliance being one of 'em. So I think if we're going to focus on excluding groups, I don't really have a list of off limits. So my opinion really is that I'm looking to the group of employees I trust to come up with a budget that's going to maintain the best level of service we can afford for the tax dollars that we have coming in. And for me it's not about cutting, it's hopefully about benefiting from some of the costs and the money we've spent on automation and computer systems and operational databases that'll help us be more efficient. I hope so. Maybe we'll be able to do more with fewer people, but I don't have any specific places. I don't necessarily don't want to go I guess to answer your question. So I think in general everyone has these things you've heard. I don't have any thing to add other than we need to take opportunities where we can to benefit financially from the money we've spent on some of these upgrades we've done and hopefully we're going to see some financial benefits from that, especially with some of these organizations. We're talking about planning and development services being one of 'em, spending a lot of money on that computer systems to really automate some of these processes.

Speaker 12 ([01:06:19](#)):

I'm fine with the maintained ones and yeah, I am curious about a couple of them, especially the one I asked questions about how that works and with other ones in terms of it. That definitely piqued my curiosity, but I know we're very early in the process, so

Speaker 9 ([01:06:39](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 8 ([01:06:40](#)):

I'm sorry before we move off that, that one seems still a little fuzzy and while I know it's very early and the list that we were showing on the slide that was consensus and I think this is an opportunity for you all to say, yeah, I see it now. I'm not sure that I agree with it still because we're going to start using 25 to start

Speaker 3 ([01:07:03](#)):

Making

Speaker 8 ([01:07:03](#)):

Some decisions and narrowing. So

Speaker 3 ([01:07:06](#)):

For me to be clear, yeah, I think those one, those bullet points, 1, 2, 3, 4 of them I believe seem like things that all commissioners want to maintain still. I heard that from the previous conversations from what I can tell. And I think they're at least still on that at this point in time. While we're doing the budget it, there's other obviously costs, we're not talking about that, we're asked about that obviously we decrease, but these, I guess four, were all commissioner maintained. So I don't think any of us have changed our minds. No,

Speaker 6 ([01:07:44](#)):

I want to be clear though. Are you talking about the ones that are underlined or all of them listed,

Speaker 3 ([01:07:50](#)):

Underlined

Speaker 8 ([01:07:50](#)):

Was the consensus with the other,

Speaker 3 ([01:07:52](#)):

Correct. Right. The ones that are aada a compliance investigations and patrol aquatics specifically and co compliance.

Speaker 6 ([01:08:00](#)):

Yeah, I guess I'm to be clear, a investigations patrol, I'm fine with the quads and co compliance. Those are the ones I think those underlying ones. I think now we're getting into fees maybe and other things and recreation facility management and youth and adult sports, I mean. But in transportation planning, I'm not convinced in all those other ones. It's really the underlying ones I'm talking about. Correct.

Speaker 12 ([01:08:30](#)):

I'm fine with the underlying ones. And housing initiatives plus housing initiatives.

Speaker 3 ([01:08:35](#)):

Plus housing initiatives. Yes. And the other commissioners, commissioner Sullivans, was

Speaker 10 ([01:08:42](#)):

I not clear?

Speaker 3 ([01:08:44](#)):

I think you were, but I want to make sure I tried to reiterate it, but I didn't do very good job.

Speaker 10 ([01:08:50](#)):

It's okay. You can run the tape back.

Speaker 3 ([01:08:56](#)):

Run the tape.

Speaker 10 ([01:08:57](#)):

No Compliance housing initiatives. Investigations a a compliance or things that I don't want to see any reductions in.

Speaker 3 ([01:09:04](#)):

Yep. Okay. Commissioner Larson.

Speaker 4 ([01:09:10](#)):

Yeah, I would concur with that. Could you go back to that side real quick please? Definitely the ones that are underlined as well as the two that all commissioners said to be decreased as well as the PRC fees. I'm okay with all that.

Speaker 3 ([01:09:36](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 8 ([01:09:38](#)):

Everybody here? Okay, thanks for the recap.

Speaker 9 ([01:09:45](#)):

So on the revenue side, commissioner Larson just touched on this, but are user fees a consideration for this budget and then does property tax need to be held flat or is there tolerance for some increase to offset service reductions?

Speaker 6 ([01:10:02](#)):

Okay, so you don't have to go online? Sure. I guess I'm definitely interested in user fees as one, but I guess I'm also interested in an example would be code compliance fees and fines and even the application fees. But it is been a while since we've looked back at the fine schedule I think on some of the rental registrations and I'd be interested in looking at that. I mean I know it's not talking huge dollar amounts, but I do think that's something we want to look at. And again, if we're going to do something with code compliance, I think it could be a little bit more self-funded if we look at that.

([01:10:54](#)):

I'm interested in fees at Pauls and Rec. I'm also interested, I know we've talked about this, but diving back into naming rights or the ability to advertise at our facilities, this could be particularly important in 2026 with some of the things that are going on with the World Cup. So I'm interested in those sorts of fees as well. So I think we wanted to look at not just Parks and Rec, but I think we want to look across the board at some of our fees and see if those things we want to revenue enhancements that aren't just tax increases.

Speaker 12 ([01:11:53](#)):

Yeah, I would agree with Vice Mayor Finkel die. I wouldn't be opposed to that across the board. And also user fees and naming rights. I definitely remember that from Parks and Rec board. I had love to get that off the ground. I think that could be a great get and that we wouldn't have to necessarily depend on raising other things. So yeah, I'd be in favor of that.

Speaker 3 ([01:12:20](#)):

Okay. Mr. Larson raised her hand.

Speaker 6 ([01:12:29](#)):

W you meet it Commissioner Lawson? We can't.

Speaker 4 ([01:12:34](#)):

Sorry about that. Thank you. So on the second item where we talk about property tax, are you meaning the mill levy, does the mill levy need to stay flat? Is that what you mean by that? Allie?

Speaker 9 ([01:12:47](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 4 ([01:12:48](#)):

Okay, that helps. Yeah, I'm definitely interested in user fees across the board for Parks and Rec, definitely so, and I am definitely want to hold the mill. I'd be flat not interested in raising it, especially if we get a six and a half percent bump in our property tax overall from the county.

Speaker 3 ([01:13:14](#)):

Okay. Anything else?

Speaker 4 ([01:13:19](#)):

No.

Speaker 3 ([01:13:19](#)):

Okay, great. Commissioner sellers?

Speaker 10 ([01:13:25](#)):

Yes, I am in concurrence with Commissioner Gelda as far as not just looking at parks and rec fees, but we need to do a full analysis and assessment of fines and fees specifically around licensing, registration and development permits and things of that nature with the heavy emphasis on parks and rec. I do believe we do have a pego deficiency in our parks and rec department and I know it's something that we discussed and I think right now is the time that we need to address it or else we're going to continue to see reductions in offerings from parks rec and culture or PRC. As far as property tax, we managed to do something this year.

([01:14:13](#)):

I think at this point my thoughts are that we're going to have to look at an increase that could potentially take some of the strain off of instituting a 2 million reduction in expenditures that may or may not pan out to be what we think it may be. Yes, we could say we want it to be lower, but that may not come to fruition. And unless the legislature does us a favor and caps growth, which could, that would be a benefit for us in a way that for us at this point to say no and keep it flat is not being realistic. So while I can't say right now what an increase would be, whether it's a meal to meal, we know that those, depending on what the value of a mill is this year, but we do need to be realistic about what anywhere from a one to three mill increase would look like.

([01:15:18](#)):

And again, if we start talking about it now, it's not sticker shock in June and July and then in September when we're having those hearings and finally voting on the budget where we're talking about exceeding the revenue neutral rate and we're not spending 30 minutes, keep him hawing about setting a number so that we put ourselves in a better position to negotiate and do what's best for the community. So like I said, we do need to look at what an increase could potentially be. Not to say that we shouldn't live by the flat. I think that's in a sense that would be over promising and under delivering. So I think we need to go in knowing that we need to see what an increase could potentially mean for us, how that could better position us going into a World Cup where it's not guaranteed. We may or may not get support for the very thing that we think we're going to, that's going to be a cash this community me. But that better prepares the community to understand, to have a more heightened understanding of the budget process and the different variables that go into place.

Speaker 3 ([01:16:36](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 10 ([01:16:37](#)):

Yeah, flat flash not a option for me

Speaker 3 ([01:16:39](#)):

Right now. Sounds good. So did you get what you needed? It sounds like everyone's in favor of user fees for Parks and Rec. I think there needs to be some consideration for scholarship and making sure we don't create any barriers through these concepts or discussions. But I know we've made concessions in the past and I think we can do so in the future, but I think we have exceptional services in our community. We have exceptional recreational services and hopefully to carry this over to say planning and development service and inspections, if we're going to charge more and have more fees, we're going to provide better service and or more timely service or perhaps more transparent or obviously easy service to use and understand. So what I'm hoping for is we're going to talk about these fees if we're going to apply it to the betterment of the user, which is basically what, these are our user fees.

([01:17:43](#)):

So if we're going to charge people more money, they need to continue to get exceptional service. And I feel like it needs to be considered because many places use fees and maintain, I think access to people who can't afford the fees through other means. And I think our community has done so in the past. So for me, we need to consider that for several different layers. As far as the property tax goes, I want to maintain a steady mill levy, but it sounds like you may have support for some increase in the mill, so perhaps you should follow the advice and run some numbers on what it would look like for some sort of increase. Because I didn't hear no from you and I didn't hear no from you. So

Speaker 12 ([01:18:32](#)):

No, and especially seeing that the feedback from all the other groups that especially given what we had to do last year, dip into our reserves to go ahead and make up for this year. So I definitely think we need to at least have that opportunity or leave it as an option for us. So like we said, we've been saying all night, it's still early in the process, but I'd hate to go ahead and eliminate that option right now.

Speaker 6 ([01:19:04](#)):

I do want to say something, by the way, I kind of forgot to mention earlier, but I think the golf course is another example. We all said, I think it was unanimous, everyone said cut the golf course.

([01:19:15](#)):

But I also would say I think we didn't have the option to say we'll increase the green fees to offset that in that particular, so I do think, I mean I'd be interested in saving money in the general fund related to the golf course, but if that's some cuts in service and some increases in fees, I think that's part of that conversation. I've already heard from a couple golfers who of course have said on one hand they don't want the golf course cut like eliminated and maybe that's on the table, but the other hand is they say there's long lines and there's people waiting and so maybe there's some demand there that you could also capture some fees full.

([01:20:05](#)):

So I don't know, I think we all reduced the level of service for the golf course, but I am open to that. I mean I would say on the property taxes, I think to what Commissioner Littlejohn just said last year we avoided a property tax increase by cutting them to the fund balance. And I think we all agree we can't do

that. Again, I think we all agree that's not going to be on the table. So I think we're going to have to be weighing serious cuts in programs we all like versus that, but we can't dip into the fun balance again.

Speaker 3 ([01:20:51](#)):

And I think the intention as an exercise is to start having these conversations. I'm glad you pointed out when we had the choice in the online tool to formulate our budget, we didn't get down very deep and I talked about city manager, it'd be nice to have other ways to solve the problem other than just saying minus \$1.2 million. I know that's not how things work. And that was what I got. So that was the conversation we're having today and I think it was a way to stimulate conversation amongst all of us so that we are being realistic about what our expectations are, what the community's expectations are, and if we want to raise the mill levy that we're talking about it now and not six months from now. Because as some have pointed out with a six or 7% increase in valuation in the past, that would've been enough for us to sustain our budget without increasing the mill levy. And I want to know if we can work towards that goal where we're not continuing raising the mill levy and we have increased valuation because a cycle that just can't be unsustainable for us and for the people who are trying to live here. So that's where I'm at. Commissioner. Commissioner Sellers.

Speaker 10 ([01:22:07](#)):

Yeah, mayor. To that point, I do want to note that I think it goes, it should be stated that many of us do take into account sooner rather than later. Valuations in the mill levy, the mill increases maybe a little bit. Some commissioners do that a little bit sooner than others do, and sometimes the conversation doesn't lead itself to that because maybe commissioners are waiting on staff to give them their recommendations to then guide their own feedback. And so I think what this process has presented to this commission is for us as policy makers and budget arbiters to do our due diligence and our homework to understand the dynamics of this. I think in January of 2025 before a budget year, we shouldn't be talking about keeping things flat knowing that we have a six and a half million dollars deficit. That's not smart, that's not an attack.

([01:23:15](#)):

That's just saying that's not smart as it relates to budgeting and forecasting. So when you have so many competing values at play, I think for us to make statements, which I've heard doing more with less, if we're going to increase then services need to be better. I think one of the things we have to understand is that there's been a lot of subsidizing that's been done in our budget at the expense of the community wanting certain services to be exceptional and that's what happens when you try to do more with less. And so this process that we are starting sooner rather than where we typically have in the past, I hope is elevating that point that we cannot continue to do that. I've made the statement it's not my own that today's yesterday's price is not today's price. We've talked about the difference of consumer price index, municipal price index and mill increase and inflationary costs.

([01:24:28](#)):

And so these are the things that we as commissioners have to be thinking about in addition to the voices of the community and what they're wanting to hear. I mean what they're wanting and being able to find the balance and reconcile that by saying, yes, there might be some fee increases because we haven't done fee increases or we need to establish fees because we've been subsidizing things in other ways to accommodate for this without looking at the inflationary costs over so many years. And so I am hearing what everyone is saying, but this is not a time for us to virtue signal. This is the time for us to really put pen to paper and have those difficult conversations because there's a lot of competing values and something is going to have to be recognized these things and so some of it is out of our control and could be helpful, the legislature could help us in that and we need to recognize that and make that part

of this journey of learning not only as commissioners but also that staff is doing to help the community understand and learn the budget process.

(01:25:48):

This is not like our own personal budgets. This is something a little bit more far exceeding of that. And so I appreciate these conversations and I appreciate the questions that staff have brought before us, but I think it's a little too soon for us to say, well, if we're going to increase this, then we better be getting better something of this because you make the assumption that increasing means better when we don't realize the gap that we created by doing something when there wasn't a pay go behind it to begin with.

Speaker 3 (01:26:25):

Okay,

Speaker 10 (01:26:26):

Just want to make that statement.

Speaker 3 (01:26:32):

Do you have what you need?

Speaker 9 (01:26:34):

Yes. That is all our questions tonight. So just close to our last slide I think is our next step. So here you see us in January for tonight's discussion. We are planning to open balancing act to the public for the month of February and then coming back to City Commission in March to review the feedback that we receive from the public. From there you see a relatively similar timeline to previous years. So again, that's just all our questions again, which I think have been answered and that's the end of the presentation. So any questions I'm happy to take,

Speaker 8 (01:27:18):

Mayor, if I may, just to involve myself a little bit in this discussion, I've really appreciate it. The City Commission has delivered what we hoped for in the feedback, not only through your participation in the balancing act, but this discussion tonight, understanding it's not going to be, these aren't final decisions at all. These are kind of guidance. I do want to hold true to my statement that I made that I want to make sure that these are laying out very visibly what is at stake. So we put on there a slide about our average general fund employee salary is 115,000. That's a loaded cost and we're at 6.5 million. Okay? So that's about 50 some full-time employees equivalent. That's the work that we're going to start doing in 25. Commissioner sellers asked us how many vacancies do we have? We do not have that many in the general fund right now.

(01:28:19):

So we will be smartly and carefully trying to guide to where we think the reductions are going to come from because we have extra time to do that. So I want to be very visible and candid about what we're talking about here today so that it's not surprise. It's also not to alarm people that should not be alarmed. Most of our employees, most of our operations are going to be largely unchanged. So it's trying to walk that balance. But we did say we want to be candid about what's at stake. I want you all to, I want the people that are starting to engage with us. I want the employees and people to understand that. I'd also maybe highlight a little bit because I've been here through five budgets, six budgets.

(01:29:04):

When we talk about fee increases, we can do a lot with cost recovery, but there are some functions that simply do not have that do not offer that. And of the 50 some employees, many of those are not included in that. So this has to come from where it can come from in the general fund. And so I want to make sure that this is what's at stake. 6.5 million is a significant number and we're going to start doing that work so that we have the softest possible landing not only for service impact but also impact on the employees that might be impacted by this. So again, this is about starting to be very candid as early as possible, so it gives us the most options. I know we're going to hear from our community through this process. We hope that will help us get a better clarity, but we're still solving for 6.5. Okay, so maybe stop stating in the office, but I want to be true to the conversation that we promised.

Speaker 3 ([01:30:14](#)):

I appreciate that. Okay, any other questions from the commissioners to Allie for the presentation? Okay, public comment.

Speaker 15 ([01:30:43](#)):

All right. Yeah. My name is Eric Hyde. I live at the Polar Lofts. Just real quick, thank you Commissioners. I like most of what you're doing, what you're talking about. There's a few things I'm concerned about though. Let's see here. Oh, well the main thing that sticks out to me it's very deep to me is the, I don't know exactly what you mean by user fees at the parks and rec and I think that's kind of unconstitutional. I think people basically own the parks and because they're living in the city, I do understand there's other reasons why you need to charge fees and I'm not really against that. I just want to warn against relying too heavily on charging fees for park stuff. I did hear the police talk about information services.

([01:31:52](#)):

If I were a commissioner, which you probably know I'm running for city commission, I would support giving them a bit more money so they could process more of that information stuff because I mean they've probably got a lot of stuff to go through and we need some law and order in this community and we don't want it to get out of control here so they need more support just a little bit more. I'm sure they can do a lot with a little bit. I mostly like what I'm hearing. I like the code compliance thing. I like the fines for that. I think property owners, especially downtown, need to more have more integrity with their code compliance stuff and they need to take better care of their businesses downtown and that people are renting from or renting to run businesses out of and stuff like that.

([01:32:54](#)):

I think that's pretty much all I have to say. Just one thing that I want to point out before my time is over is that I know it's your job and I'm not criticizing you for that. I'm just, I'm hearing a lot of external focus on the variables like the money, the money, the money, money, money, money. But I think we need to have more moral concern in whatever we're doing, whatever decisions we're making, or at least include that and that way we don't get too focused on the money because we can solve all the budget crisis problems and I think our current budget is fine, but just needs tweaking Anyway. Thank you.

Speaker 16 ([01:33:51](#)):

I didn't quite track with everything that you guys were talking about in here, but let's talk about emotional blackmail because there was a little bit of that going on with your presentations. I noticed that when commissioners would ask city questions, they couldn't get direct answers. Ms. Larson, they never answered your question. I just want you to realize that. But they turn around and they're going to play emotional blackmail with you guys by asking you that question in a way that there's no way you can answer no. Do you support the city? Employees are not. That's called emotional blackmail and it's wrong and let's talk about direct representation. Amber Sellers is confused about what the public thinks about

property taxes and I can tell you that if she tries to raise the mill levy, somebody's going to get up in her face and they're going to fight like hell because we're done with the double digit increases in our property taxes, \$240,000 for a starter house.

(01:35:02):

I've said that in here before. That's not a starter house guys. You're going to end up with nothing but rich people and homeless people in this town. That's really where you're headed without some cuts because you can keep raising the rates and raising user fees and everything. Raising user fees has nothing to do with constitutionality actually. You can actually raise those all you want, but you're screwing your citizens when you do that and you're screwing your poorest citizens when you do that because the one that use the parks and recreation services are generally the working class and the middle class. You don't see the high class people out coming out and associating with them. They're too good for 'em. It's just the reality. I'm sorry that I'm the one that'll come in here and say this, but this is the reality of our town. We're segmented by income.

(01:35:53):

You either have or you don't have and we got a new Craigs tonight, it's going to come. Well, it's just going to have to come where it has to come from. He's got no freaking clue where he is going to get it, but he's going to say something like that. It just has to come where it has to come from. Why can't they answer your questions? These are your professionals that you're paying \$115,000 on average to out of your general fund. This guy's making close to three I think in his benefits package and altogether, I'm sure it's probably over that. Why can't they answer your questions? The simple questions that you guys have asked. I thought the two-part question that Ms. Larson asked was pretty easy. Why the hell can't they answer that? They come in here and they want to talk about millions and millions and millions of dollars and they give you one choice and that's to say yes, that you support everybody, but they won't answer your questions. It's emotional blackmail

Speaker 3 (01:36:54):

This. Mike, any other public comment in the room please?

Speaker 17 (01:37:18):

Thomas Dugger. 6 6 0 4 6. There's way too many things I could comment on over the last presentation. The Olympics coming to KAC Supportings the day of the announcement, people were buying houses before the prices went up in Wyandotte County the same day. They've continued to buy houses in Wyandotte and surrounding areas as an economic fact. There's also things like the K 10 connector you can get to supporting Kansas City free all the way there and it takes you three hours to take the loop. If you had a I 70 connector to legends, people would buy houses, rent, take hotel rooms here to go to the soccer In 2026 myself, I'm going to start some new businesses through the KU Small Business Center. I'll get grants. I'm going to get two buses to go from Topeka to Legends and back through Lawrence and I won't charge an arm and a leg. I don't need a large profit. I'm retired. I got plenty of income. I only charge 3% profit. Everybody else wants oh, 10 to 15% profit and oh, sidewalk safety. You went from a C minus to an FF minus. It is unsafe for me to take the buses in Lawrence. None of the bus stops are cleared from ice except for Central Station by the library and a couple other places like Dylan's and Walmart, Hy-Vee, those have cleared except Hy-Vee. I had to walk from Clinton Parkway and Consolated a hundred yards to catch the number 11 busts to Central Station and he waited there for me to walk the a hundred yards because he saw me and there's no sidewalks shoveled. There's a pile three feet high all along the curb the entire length.

Speaker 3 (01:40:22):

Thank you sir. Appreciate it. Thomas.

Speaker 17 ([01:40:26](#)):

Thank you for your time.

Speaker 3 ([01:40:35](#)):

Any other public comments in the room? I Okay. Let's see what we have online.

Speaker 6 ([01:40:49](#)):

Can we take down the PowerPoint presentation so we can see a little bit on Zoom?

Speaker 18 ([01:40:57](#)):

Can you do that?

Speaker 6 ([01:40:57](#)):

Yeah. Thank you.

Speaker 18 ([01:41:06](#)):

Melinda Ball. I

Speaker 11 ([01:41:13](#)):

Hello. Thank you for this time. I wanted to first start off, I'm a proud state of Kansas employee with the University of Kansas. I've been employed there for going on 12 and a half years. I do not have market pay. I've never had market pay. They've told us for many years that they're going to work on getting us market pay. I don't have market pay. With that said, it is, I'm sure this is an unpopular statement, but University of Kansas is a pretty large employer of the community and at least for staff, I can't speak for faculty nor as administrative level, like duet level, but for just general staff, employees don't have market pay and haven't had it. I don't even know for how long. And so looking at that concept and listening to the possibility granted has been confirmed, but to raising property tax, while I don't have market pay to basically help city continue, they already have market pay.

([01:42:41](#)):

They now need to keep it up, which I understand and I would like that for them, but when you're six and a half million dollars in deficit, I think that might just need to be put on ice for at least a while because again, 12 years I have not had market pay and I have certainly had to do a lot more with less and I'm not wanting that for anybody else, but it is really hard to know that that's a possibility that it just feels like robbing Peter to pay Paul in a if a balance can't stay budget, budget can't be balanced to consider market pay being put on ice for at least a while. Thank you.

Speaker 3 ([01:43:38](#)):

Thank you Melinda.

Speaker 18 ([01:43:56](#)):

Julie Jones.

Speaker 19 ([01:44:03](#)):

Hello. Julie Jones. 6 6 0 4 7. I'm responding to an article I read about the quote that Mr. Owens made about two ways for us to make up this deficit. Either we needed to bring in more business or we needed to pay more taxes. And I will, what's the word I want to use? Piggyback off of what Ms. Ball said in that

raising those employees pay. I think they should have had, since they're supposed to be the best, they should have been able to forecast in the first quarter that okay, we're not rolling here. We usually do, we need to cut things back immediately. To me that is a market rate pay individual. I think the unhoused program is taking us down the sewer and the numbers are not fitting with the rate of placing those people in housing. And in fact, that last article that came out in Lawrence Journal World stating that there was 700 here versus the last meeting I sat in on, they said there was 441.

(01:45:36):

It's not working, but yet we're still giving them millions and so not for putting the monkey on our back. You guys figured out there with your budget and your market rate paid people because they're supposed to be the best of the best. So you figured it out and stop putting it back on our backs because you are running people out of town. Those people carrying you right now are selling their houses and leaving and I don't see any new business coming in and I don't know why because you've got market rate people that's supposed to know how to do that. Thank you.

Speaker 3 (01:46:20):

Thank you Julie.

Speaker 5 (01:46:37):

Steven Watts.

Speaker 20 (01:46:39):

Alright, thank you. Is this functioning correctly please?

Speaker 5 (01:46:42):

Yes

Speaker 3 (01:46:42):

Sir.

Speaker 20 (01:46:43):

I want to let you know about the trash viewpoint that we've been subjected to by the media market rate paid specialist who had us looking at some idiotic Mr. Finkel, I identified what needed to happen. That's what you get for market rate pay. You got the guys on the zoom meeting looking not at the people talking hearing voices. This is done on purpose. That being said, yeah, this market rate pay stuff, there's no reason that the city has to analyze everybody's pay as it's been brought into civility to a certain extent. How about identifying those people who are making over X amount of dollars and focusing on that market rate pay instead of across the board? Why should the guy living on \$40,000 a year compete with the guy living on \$200,000 a year? How many?

(01:47:49):

Let's look at the departments where the big fat checks are going because it's very clear that it is personnel costs that weigh the town down. It's that way in every business. So there's no reason that you cannot expand the horizons in terms of where you analyze to do the cuts. It's not fun. It never has been fun. However, this is what happens when you try to jam world class products into an above average, but still average college town in the middle of flyover country USA. It's not a world class anything. And that's okay. It's a great place. However, when you make all of these promises that it's going to be the best ever to strive for, we're going to get the Nobel Peace Prize. Wow. That's been going on as long as I've been

associated with the University of Kansas, which is over 60 years. So I hear what Ms. Ball is saying, how about doing a market rate paid comparison to other civil servants in state employment instead of wealthy communities that seemingly have the money to do it and they're not also championing the homeless issue, which we're trying to do in this town. There are all kinds of ways to reinvent the wheel with respect to where can the money come from. It's just an idea, but you can expand the way you look at what is available. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([01:49:30](#)):

Thanks, Steve. I,

Speaker 18 ([01:49:45](#)):

Linda Wine Master Linda. Wine Master. Linda, you can.

Speaker 21 ([01:50:16](#)):

Okay. I found me on mute button. Sorry. That's all right. Hi. I'm just calling because it appears with the city that if you're a law abiding, tax paying citizen that doesn't really require a lot of services in the city. You are just pounded on by the city. We have the homeless mess, we have illegals. I have stopped shopping completely downtown and I love to shop. I have been followed. I have been harassed relentlessly. I have finally with my husband's backing, he rode with me one time and he saw three illegals following me and he said, you're done shopping in Lawrence. So what's the motivation to live here? We've lived in big cities, we've lived in Fort Lauderdale and Dallas and Denver. We moved away from those places because of the stuff you're trying to implement and shoved down our throats in Lawrence. We liked the idea of the small town.

([01:51:24](#)):

We liked the idea of the laid back college town, kind of the hippie town when we first moved here 26 years ago. But you have ruined all that with your big ideas of forcing stuff that nobody I know wants this homeless thing has got to stop. We need to back up. We need to follow state law. We need to follow our own city ordinances of no camping. This is outrageous us. So we need to get back to the basics and stop with your pipe dreams of I don't know what, as Steven before said, we are a small town. That's what attracted us to Lawrence. Thank you

Speaker 3 ([01:52:14](#)):

Yolinda.

Speaker 18 ([01:52:25](#)):

That's all the comment, mayor.

Speaker 1 ([01:52:26](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 3 ([01:52:31](#)):

I Alright, so that will end our public comment on the only regular agenda item we have. I guess we'll move on to the work session item, which is to provide feedback and direction for development of a new county city emergency medical services agreement.

Speaker 22 ([01:52:53](#)):

I'm going to go ahead and start. I'm going to do it from here tonight. I'm nurse a swore back and it'll take me longer to get up to that podium then the presentation. Good evening, mayor and commissioners. This is Casey Toomey, assistant city manager. I'm going to ask interim fire Medical Chief Joe Hardy and our interim chief of staff for Fire Medical McKenzie Elle to join me at the podium. We're here tonight to discuss our operating agreement with Douglas County for the provision of emergency medical services. We often refer to that as EMS. You may recall that we extended our existing agreement with the county through the end of 2025 and we've already begun working with our partners on the next agreement, but tonight we wanted to give you all a formal opportunity to share any strategic direction that you might have that could serve as guardrails for our continued to work.

(01:53:46):

The county commission is also having a similar conversation at a work session on their agenda tomorrow. After tonight and tomorrow we'll continue to meet with the county and hope to bring back an agreement to you all for your approval before adoption of the 2026 budget. Before I turn the microphone over, I do want to just point out that from our perspective, our partnership to provide EMS countywide is serving our city and county residents well and should continue significant work was done with the last rewrite of the agreement, including establishment of a governance committee and an MOU that guides the administration of our agreement. Both of these items have really improved administration of the agreement and provide regular opportunities for us to discuss and resolve operational issues as they arise. So tonight might be an opportunity just for you all to confirm what you think is going well, ask questions and discuss areas where you'd like to see further refinement in our next agreement. So chief, if you're ready, I'll go ahead and turn over you.

Speaker 23 (01:54:52):

Thank you.

Speaker 3 (01:54:53):

That's very good.

Speaker 23 (01:54:54):

Good evening. My name is Joe Hardy. I'm our acting fire chief with L-D-C-F-M. Thanks for having us. See

Speaker 3 (01:54:59):

You Joe.

Speaker 23 (01:54:59):

I'll begin by going to the first slide. What I'd like to do is give a little history behind where we came from and where we're going. So back in 1996, the idea came we would be have a merger, so the City of Lawrence Fire Department and the Douglas County Ambulance Service combined. And that's in 1997. So I know you're doing your math, you're thinking that was way back when. Well, that was when I came on the department. So don't say anything out too loud right now saying it's a long time ago. So in the merger we had a new emblem, we had a new department, we did fire medical together and just like any relationship, we learn a lot. We brought two departments, we brought strengths from both departments and we combined two entities that were doing great jobs and we were learning. And so from that time on, you got both fire medical and so we were improving our standards of protection for both the city and the county.

(01:55:56):

So that's something I've been proud of to work for and to see where we are today. And so I really want to talk about the strength of what we have is that relationship that we've had. And so I really want to see this, encourage us to keep looking forward and proving and building off of where we come from. And so in 2007 we had a emblem change to Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medical and something I want to focus in here. Lawrence is a little bigger than Douglas County and so something that we've kind of improved over the years is to include both the city and the county. And so in 2023 we had an emblem change and so we included both entities and so that's something that we've been proud of as well over the timeframe. You see on the slides, you see a memorandum of understanding the cooperation agreement. Those have changed. And so what I really want to say is the focus has been a change from when we started until we readdressed it in 2021 and then we did an extension in 2023 to get to where we are now. And so that's something the further slides are going to kind of push towards what we want to look at. Maybe not swinging so far and so short, maybe we can find somewhere in the middle. So thank you. I'll hand the presentation over to McKenzie. Thanks Joe.

Speaker 13 ([01:57:14](#)):

Hello. Alright, so like Chief Hardy said today it's going to be a pretty quick presentation. We're not going to have a lot to give you during the presentation. We are looking for your questions, your direction from these questions that we'll ask later on to kick us off, excuse me. As you know, we're doing a lot with L-D-C-F-M, we're talking about station expansions, we're looking at our programs, our service levels, all the things with that. The EMS agreement from 2021 had a one year extension from 2024 to 2025 or 25 to 26. So this next year is a big year as it pertains to the EMS agreement.

([01:57:57](#)):

Just looking at our response times and our capabilities, our incident count increasing, all the things that you can find in our document, the community risk assessment standards of cover, which is on our website we want to dive into for conversation, but then also for follow up by the governance committee. So the three things that we're really going to be talking about today are the service scope, the operational model, and the terms of agreement, financial considerations. So for service scope, I'm going to have all these questions at the very end as well on one slide that you guys can read through. Should L-D-C-F-M continue to operate under the current model? Should the city of Lawrence and Douglas County continue to partner to provide L-D-C-F-M? We have lots of different strategic plans and alignment between those plans. We want to make sure with this next agreement that everything is supported through the direction from both city and the county commissions and then also through our documents going forward. And then the agreements as well.

([01:59:03](#)):

Operational model. Should L-D-C-F-M continue to provide the same service programs? What are the acceptable service levels? So the service programs are things like fire suppression, our EMS, tech, rescue, hazmat, and then also the service programs that you'll see in the balancing act that are articulated with or are supported by the different components of those programs so that we can see what service level is optimal from the city and from the county as well. And then we have two of our service programs, the matrices up on the board. So this is one, this is EMS right now with the city of Lawrence icon. You can see that we've identified as a level four. This is the same thing that you'll be seeing in the balancing act. So just cut and pasted into here. We talk about the frontline apparatus with the levels of service. We talk about accreditation as it relates specifically for this one for EMS, cardiac arrest survivability, which is tied to our city strategic plan. It's A-K-P-I-A medical director participation and support the amount of our staffing that our paramedics versus EMTs providing basic life support and advanced life support for paramedics. And then this percent of the city area within a four minute drive time from an L-D-C-F-M station, that is where tied back to one of those slides I had in the beginning that green standards of cover, that green blanket where we can reach throughout the city and also throughout the county within four minutes from our current stations.

(02:00:46):

And then we have fire suppression where we also talk about the drive time from L-D-C-F-M stations, skills verification. The fires contains the room of origin, which is another KPI that we see in the city's strategic plan staffing as it relates to an FPA standards truck availability, and then accreditation as it relates to fire suppression. So that concludes the service level matrices that we're providing to you guys today. Just as conversation starters and to show you what we're going to be basing a lot of our conversations on when it comes to funding and desired service makeup or program makeup.

(02:01:36):

So the final item, terms of agreement and financial considerations, what terms should be considered for the next agreement? Right now we have a three year term. We did the one year extension and in our governance committee we have talked about potentially doing a five year term and wanted to get opinions on that. The governance committee meets at least once quarterly. In the last year or so, we've actually met quite a bit more, whether it's because of new programs like our mobile integrated health team providing updates to the county and to the city on how that program's working. The budget adjustments or the budget conversations that have happened outside of those quarterly meetings, we've decided to do more. We did monthly meetings at one point and then that has gotten us here today. So also the current financing methodology includes three categories. We have our fire only, our EMS only and then our shared.

(02:02:32):

So every expense that comes out of L-B-C-F-M is categorized into one of these three things. Our shared services right now per the EMS contract or per the EMS agreement is 36% of the shared expenses is billed to Douglas County and 64% of those expenses are billed to the city of Lawrence. So the city of Lawrence actually with the agreement is the umbrella entity. So it takes a hundred percent of the expense and then it bills and gets revenue for that 36% from Douglas County. For the fire only. That is a hundred percent City of Lawrence expense. Basically how we refer to this is if we were only a fire department and we only did fire services, these are those expenses. Fire hose is a big one. Investigations like fire prevention, fire investigations goes into this bucket. EMS only is if we were only an EMS department, what expenses do we have that would include medical supplies And we have a logistics technician, things that are only supporting the EMS functions of the department. So most of our expenses are actually in the shared, which get that 36 64 split. I said this is how we do our expensing, it's also how we do our budgeting. So we are interested in knowing if there are any concerns or questions with this methodology from the commission. And that concludes my new questions. So this is back to all the questions put onto one slide and we are very interested in hearing discussion questions from you guys and then direction.

Speaker 3 (02:04:14):

Wow, thank you. Any other presentation before I ask for the input? Okay, great, thank you. So I think I'll start online Commissioners. Anyone want to start? Oh, they did. You didn't tell me. Sorry. Well then we can just roll and I'll just keep in the room then please. I don't know if anything jumped out at you, but I'd like any feedback since you were more accustomed to this agreement. Probably have a lot more understanding of it.

Speaker 6 (02:04:54):

I can jump in. I think high level, I like our model obviously I think we should be combined. I think we have efficiencies being combined. I think that's certainly something we want to continue to partner with Douglas County on jumping to the bottom, I would say we took a big step forward with this agreement in defining the fire only the EMS, only the shared services. We used a consultant to help us do that. I don't see wanting to change the basis of that agreement. I think it's only been in effect a couple of years. I think it seems to have worked and I don't think we wanted to start from scratch on that by any stretch.

(02:05:44):

So I think where to me the question comes is I think we created the model based upon how we've historically done things and we're about to enter a time in which things are going to change. Maybe both sides. I mean I think we need to be and will be talking about expansion and how does this agreement give us flexibility to talk about expansion? How do we work with the county on expansion? The flip side is we could be talking about reduction in service levels and we could be talking about how that's affected and how do we have those discussions with our partners. I mean we had a little bit of this come up last year and I don't think we have a great way to work with our county partners and have that discussion. And I guess I think that we have to figure that out. I mean example could be the county might want to expand EMS out into the county, they might want more and does this model allow for that? And if we see some cuts either somewhere, how do we have that interaction? And does that then allow for the, do we have a model that changes the shared services cost and how do we account for that? Or do we have a model that's static for five years?

(02:07:38):

So I guess that's where I wanted to see some conversation. I could see level of service changes from us or the county. I could see serious discussion about expansion and how level of service combines with those. And I guess the last part of that would be when we're talking about the construction of buildings, is that covered by this or is that different somehow? Is that a shared service that's paid 64 third year? Is that a different question? And then obviously if for example, just a hypothetical that if the county wanted a new EM s only station, is that something we consider and how does that factor in? So I guess I think it's that. Again, I like the agreement. I think we've made a lot of ground with it. I clearly think we need to cooperate. I think we just need to have to figure out how this agreement can help us or help get us to the discussions we have to have both on levels of service and possible in eventual LDS expansion.

Speaker 12 (02:09:01):

Yeah, I would concur. I think our partnership works well and I think it's beneficial to go ahead and work with the county on that. And for those services, vice Mayor FDI did bring up a great point about expansion of fire stations and we have yet to have those conversations with the county and I'm hoping that we can use this as a vehicle to go ahead and get into those deeper discussions about that and what their needs or what their wants might be as well because they could want to expand certain services and it would be beneficial to us and know which ones and how we would interplay with that. But yeah, and what they like in terms of service levels as well, because we might have different expectations, which isn't entirely the case. We do serve different parts of the county. But yeah, I feel like I'm reading a partial book on this. I'd like a little bit more information before I can actually sit down and make a little bit better decision. But I'm looking forward to those conversations.

Speaker 23 (02:10:18):

Sure, appreciate the comments we're going to present tomorrow at the county. And so our goal is going to be to hopefully be that person in the middle that can help facilitate that conversation and hopefully get those questions answered and we've documented those here as well. So yeah, I look forward to seeing what we can do. Yeah,

Speaker 3 (02:10:37):

Yeah, thank you. I think the EM s centric conversations need to be stepped up as much as possible based on the level of service and the amount of calls that the increase that they account for in the increase. And so for me, I am comfortable with the model. I think we want to continue to partner with them. I think we want to continue at a minimum to provide the same level of service based on the costs and the ability to manage those things. And I believe some of the downfalls we have, we really can't overcome based on the

fire level models of service because we just don't have an extra truck sitting around. We don't have extra mans, we don't have the training. Whatever those things were deficient in, we can achieve some of them, but probably not all of them. But perhaps we can offer a better level of service through via our EMS services.

(02:11:31):

And again, I think we pointed out infrastructure may be the answer, but we can't do that without a partner right now because of our finances. So the county may be a great partner to help us with some of those goals from an infrastructure standpoint, especially as we expand outside of our current footprint. But I think the term of the agreement, I think again, depending on how we grow and what annexation things occur, I think as long as the costs are covered and everyone's comfortable, the longer the better is always, in my opinion. As long as we're planning for growth and planning for those things, then a longer term agreement is better for all of us because it's less conversation and more action for us all doing and serving. So that's kind of where I'm at.

Speaker 13 (02:12:20):

I did want to add just with the reading half the book or getting half of the book completely understandable in our governance conversations, we were looking at the year ahead and started to identify some of these big policy questions where we wanted to make sure we weren't assuming that everyone liked how everything was. And so if there was something big where a commission said something's wrong from my perspective, we need to change directions completely. We need to get a third party and these big conversations that needed to happen, we wanted to make sure that we weren't missing those or not making space for some of those to come up.

Speaker 12 (02:12:55):

I appreciate that. And granted, there's only three of us, so I am speaking for myself in this and I would assume that the other folks here are

Speaker 3 (02:13:08):

Speaking

Speaker 12 (02:13:08):

For themselves on this. Yeah, we have some information.

Speaker 3 (02:13:11):

This is for us to educate ourselves and to talk. I think that's really, you want to hear from us. That's

Speaker 12 (02:13:17):

What

Speaker 3 (02:13:17):

I heard at the beginning of the conversation, but I think you've gotten most of what you needed. I hope for tonight and look forward to you sharing your vision with the county as well and hopefully manifesting some of these changes and getting a more stable and better service for us all. So thank you.

Speaker 13 (02:13:36):

Perfect. So next steps, we're going to take this information, we're going to go to the county, have the same conversation. There's just probably going to be a little bit more informational with the two new commissioners. They were provided the same documents that you all have been provided just about who L-D-C-F-M is, our standards of cover, our annual report, some accreditation documents. So we're going to have the same conversation, get their feedback as a governance group. We're going to go back or the governance committee, go back, discuss it, and then report back to you. So this is just the beginning of all of these fun conversations.

Speaker 3 ([02:14:09](#)):

Great. Good deal. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mackenzie. Thanks again. Joe. Anything else?

Speaker 12 ([02:14:17](#)):

No.

Speaker 3 ([02:14:17](#)):

Okay. Do I need to have a public comment on this item?

Speaker 12 ([02:14:20](#)):

Yes, yes

Speaker 1 ([02:14:27](#)):

Please.

Speaker 15 ([02:14:33](#)):

Eric. Hide. Polar lofts is where I live, so I would not be standing here if it was not for Lawrence, whatever it was called. Then the paramedic service in Lawrence and then it merged to what it is now. So Eve Tollfree, she was Eve McIntosh at the time. She saved my life. Sorry for repeating that if you've already heard me say that. But I am definitely in favor of supporting the EMS here. I used to be a paramedic in Leavenworth County and that service is not supported very well and I don't want to defraud anyone. But yeah, let's say I will detract from that comment.

([02:15:39](#)):

I just think you need to support the Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medical. Just bite the bullet, support them. It's going to cost a lot of money. It reminds me of playing that game. SIM City when I was growing up. It's ambulance service costs so much money. The ambulance and fire cost so much money in that game. It's just a pain in the butt. But anyway, it's necessary. And what I was going to say also is that I think there's some closed facilities. I don't know if you can use them, but I think we need to open up or see about opening those facilities up again here in town. I don't know if there's any other places in the county that you can look at. I know when I worked in Leavenworth County as a paramedic, there was this one county station. I don't know if there's anything like that here. I never worked here for the service, but I know that was pretty helpful. But on calls, so you could send the ambulance there anyway, I don't want to take too much of your time on that. There's probably already stuff like that in place with the WUSA and stuff anyway. Yep. I would just say let's support him and that's that you can't do anything else.

Speaker 3 ([02:17:10](#)):

Thanks Eric.

Speaker 16 ([02:17:16](#)):

I've never this thing on, I've never run into anybody from EMS that I've had any kind of problem with. Can't say the same about the police department. How about we defund the police and we put more of the money into EMS? Haven't ran into a cop that I did not have a problem.

Speaker 17 ([02:17:54](#)):

Thomas Duggar 6 6 0 4 6. I've had the unfortunate opportunity to use the EMS in Shawnee County, Douglas County, Johnson County, Wyandot County over 15 times since the April, late April when I came over to Lawrence for the first time from Topeka when I was staying with my brother there. Long story short, the EMS people are the best people there. He is also the fire department. I personally know a chief, the top dog on the president of the Firefighter's Union. I personally know him and were friends. I found out information from him. Other firefighters, other EMS people about how much problem there is in Lawrence, specifically at the shelter. They go there 10 times more than any other place. The main reason is they can't not let people in with severe medical problems. They let everybody in and staying in a group facility doesn't help them. So EMS and the fire products come out frequently. And as far as fire stations, EMS stations, there hasn't been enough fires in Lawrence to justify more fire stations. EMS. I can see maybe one or two strategically placed ones. Make sure the time from when they get a call until they arrive is down within 10 minutes.

Speaker 3 ([02:20:21](#)):

Sounds good. Is that it? Thomas?

Speaker 17 ([02:20:23](#)):

Thank

Speaker 3 ([02:20:24](#)):

You. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([02:20:32](#)):

I

Speaker 3 ([02:20:33](#)):

Think that wraps up

Speaker 1 ([02:20:33](#)):

The room. Ready to go?

Speaker 17 ([02:20:40](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 18 ([02:20:55](#)):

Steven Watts.

Speaker 20 ([02:20:58](#)):

Thank you. Excuse me. The fire department does a good job in our community. Unquestionably. However, there's something funny going on in that operation over there. I mean, you can't get a line item budget on it. How can we participate in helping us fix this problem if insular departments are permitted to

behave in this jocular like fashion? We lost the last police or the last fire chief and yet he's already working as an assistant fire chief in Fairfield, California. Why did he leave? We were told it had to do with personal choice. It's all groovy, but something funny going on additionally, I'm going to say it one more time. The video creation person makes certain those of us participating via Zoom do not view the public speakers. Why can't you ask them, Brad, to turn on the thing on for us. They're doing it just to be spiteful. Thank you.

Speaker 3 ([02:22:10](#)):

Thank you Steve.

Speaker 18 ([02:22:33](#)):

Melinda Ball.

Speaker 11 ([02:22:36](#)):

Hello. Thank you again for this time. I wanted to support this plan and support EMS and the firefighters, but I also wanted to take a moment on how we can best protect ourselves for an environmental disaster because we're not in a protective bubble and you see across the nation natural disasters occurring of flooding fires and such, and the emergency EMS and firefighters and even police, they'll be the ones that will be who we rely on. And I think that's something to take in consideration. But also I think how we plan and develop our city and county makes a difference. And we live in between two. Rivers and floodplains are extremely important and those need to be protected as open space because it's likely we're going to face a pretty bad flood just like we did in 93. And it's just something we have to consider. Clinton Reservoir is really helpful for us, but it is also a damned river essentially. And that dam will not last forever. And so it just, smart growth is really important and will help save lives and costs if not now into the future. Thank you.

Speaker 3 ([02:24:43](#)):

Thank you, Melinda.

Speaker 5 ([02:24:50](#)):

That's all the comment online.

Speaker 3 ([02:24:53](#)):

Very good. Okay. That'll end our work session item and move on to commission items. Does anyone from the commission have anything to discuss or bring up

Speaker 12 ([02:25:05](#)):

Of us? Three?

Speaker 3 ([02:25:06](#)):

Yes. It's a very small commission. It's like the county

Speaker 2 ([02:25:11](#)):

Used to be.

Speaker 3 ([02:25:11](#)):

Hey, until now. Okay. No, I don't have anything to talk about from the future. Agenda items, anything to be moved or moved up?

Speaker 12 ([02:25:28](#)):

Looks fine.

Speaker 3 ([02:25:29](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 12 ([02:25:30](#)):

I don't see anything. No.

Speaker 3 ([02:25:33](#)):

Okay. Very good. So we'll move on to the city manager's report,

Speaker 8 ([02:25:38](#)):

Just two update items. The utility billing report as well as a notification as our policies require that we're notifying you. We have a relative being employed or about to be employed with the L-D-C-F-M and very supportive of this candidate and don't think that the conflict will have any problems.

Speaker 3 ([02:26:00](#)):

Okay, good. Thank you. Any questions on that? Okay, very good. And then anything from the commission calendar that you want to talk about?

Speaker 6 ([02:26:15](#)):

Same Andrew report, this public comment.

Speaker 3 ([02:26:17](#)):

Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot I missed that one again. I just could not get used to that. Okay. Any public comment on the city manager's report please, Eric?

Speaker 15 ([02:26:29](#)):

Yeah, I just want to say that Eric had Dear commissioners, I just want to say that I don't think it's a problem either. The city manager is relative with the EMSA conflict of interest is what I'm talking about. It's a job and everybody has a fair shot at that job or should have a fair shot at that job or whatever. Exactly. He's talking about it sounds like I'm saying the right thing. Anybody thank you.

Speaker 3 ([02:27:03](#)):

Sounds like it. Thanks Eric. Okay. Any other public comment? City manager's report. Okay. How about online?

Speaker 5 ([02:27:14](#)):

There's none online, mayor.

Speaker 3 ([02:27:15](#)):

Okay. Very good. Thank you for reminding me. Any commission calendar items? Okay.

Speaker 12 ([02:27:27](#)):

Nope. Don't see any? Nope. Very

Speaker 2 ([02:27:29](#)):

Good.

Speaker 3 ([02:27:29](#)):

Alright. I think at this point in time we're going to live end our live broadcast and give anyone time to leave the room. Who needs to before we open it up for public comment.