

Speaker 1 ([00:06:26](#)):

Oh, here comes Commissioner Sellers. Oh good. I'm sorry. I didn't tell

Speaker 2 ([00:06:28](#)):

That. Maybe she was going to be late. Sorry, I missed that I was signing. No, no. I just saw her at a corner of my eye.

Speaker 3 ([00:07:25](#)):

Okay. Close

Speaker 4 ([00:07:26](#)):

Enough your, yep. Ready? Ready. Okay, I'll Tony, I've got a go. Oh, gavel. Even though there's nobody here. Good evening and welcome to the Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 City Commission meeting. The first item on our agenda is to adjourn into executive session, so I'll consider a motion.

Speaker 5 ([00:07:46](#)):

I move to recess in executive session for approximately 20 minutes to discuss privileged legal communications from the city's attorneys regarding the terms of a contract pursuant to KSA 75 dash 43 19 B two. The justification for the executive session is to keep attorney-client privilege matter is confidential at this time. The City Commission meeting will resume its regular meeting in the city commission room at approximately 5:22 PM after the executive session is concluded.

Speaker 4 ([00:08:14](#)):

I have a second.

Speaker 6 ([00:08:14](#)):

Second.

Speaker 4 ([00:08:15](#)):

Okay. Motion by Finkel Dye. Second by sellers. All in favor say Aye.

Speaker 6 ([00:08:19](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 4 ([00:08:19](#)):

Aye. Motion opposed. Motion passes. Five zero. We'll see you in 20 minutes Left here. Yep. Hey, I'm going to gavel us back into session here so that we can recess into another executive session.

Speaker 5 ([00:28:37](#)):

I moved to recess into executive session for approximately 20 minutes to discuss the possibility of acquiring real property in the city pursuant to the exception under KSA 75 dash 43 19 b6. For the preliminary discussion of the acquisition of real property, the justification of the executive session is to keep the possible terms and conditions of the property acquisition confidential. At this time, the City Commission will resume its regular meeting in the city commission room at 5:43 PM after the executive session is concluded.

Speaker 4 ([00:29:05](#)):

Second. Alright. Motion by Finkel Dice. Second by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye. Aye. Aye. Motion passes three zero with two abstaining. We'll

Speaker 1 ([00:29:14](#)):

See you in 20 minutes.

Speaker 4 ([00:51:24](#)):

All right. Okay. Welcome everybody back. We're back from our executive session and we don't have anything to report from that meeting, so I'm going to go ahead and ask Sherry to read the rules of the meeting before we proceed.

Speaker 7 ([00:51:39](#)):

Good evening everyone. If you would please silence your cell phones to minimize distractions during the meeting. 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. 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. 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. All comments will be limited to three minutes. Please state your name and zip code before speaking. The city reserves the right to turn videos off or mute participants. Thank you, mayor.

Speaker 4 ([00:52:37](#)):

Thank you very much Sharon. A. We'll go ahead and move on to item B, which is to approve the agenda and the City Commission reserves the right to amend, supplement, or reorder the agenda during the meeting. Do I have a motion to approve the agenda as is

Speaker 5 ([00:52:50](#)):

Move to approve the agenda.

Speaker 4 ([00:52:52](#)):

Second. Motion by Finkle Dye. Second by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 5 ([00:52:56](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 4 ([00:52:57](#)):

Aye. Motion passes. Five zero. All right. Alright. Next on the agenda are some well-deserved proclamations, and the first one this evening is to proclaim the month of April, 2025 as Mathematics and Statistics Awareness month. And today we have Professor Margaret Bear of the KU of Mathematics Department here for the proclamation.

Speaker 8 ([00:53:28](#)):

Thank you very much. So mathematics and Statistics Awareness Month has evolved originating as Mathematics Awareness Month in 1986, but it started even earlier at KU in 1984. It is a time to increase the understanding and appreciation of mathematics and statistics we hope to convey to all, but especially to children and their parents that mathematics is interesting, fascinating, useful, even magical and sometimes mysterious. You can follow mathematics and statistics awareness month on social media, on Facebook, and on X where you will find news, history, puzzles and problems. The KU math department always sponsors a number of activities for mathematics and Statistics Awareness Month. We've already completed our own KU student math competition in March, but this Saturday is probably our most popular event, which is the math and statistics competition for third through sixth graders. That will be this Saturday, April 5th from two to 3:30 PM in 405 Snow Hall up at ku. Later in the month, April 21st, we will have the Russell Bratt Undergraduate Colloquium, which will be given by Kelly McKenna of the IEE, which is the largest organization specializing in technology for humanity. Mathematics and statistics are of increasing importance in all walks of life, and we want to expose young and old people to the value and joy of mathematics. Thank you. Thank

Speaker 4 ([00:55:15](#)):

You. Thank you very much, professor Bearer. We appreciate those words and I love the mathematics proclamation, so I'll go ahead and do it. So whereas mathematics is the foundation of discipline for science and technology and mathematical reasoning analysis and problem solving are increasingly vital in preparing our youth to lead productive and responsible lives. Whereas mathematics is a living and growing discipline continually being created and discovered. The power of mathematics is revealed in the richness and beauty of its intellectual structure and the diversity of its applications to almost every field of human endeavor. And whereas the beauty challenge and excitement of mathematics and its potential to enrich individual lives require that thorough mathematics education, we make its opportunities available to all of our citizens. And whereas the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics, a joint venture of the American Mathematical Society, the Mathematical Association of America and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics was established to articulate and advocate sound public policy concerning the mathematical sciences and the field's ability to contribute to the public welfare. And whereas the Department of Mathematics at the University of Kansas is dedicated to the creation application and teaching of mathematics and to serving the mathematical needs of the community. Now, therefore, I'm Mike Dever, mayor of the City of Lawrence, Kansas. Due hereby proclaim the month of April, 2025 as mathematics and Statistics Awareness Month to be observed in the schools in the city of Lawrence in recognition of the importance of mathematics and mathematics education. Thank you very much.

([00:56:59](#)):

Thank you. Thank you. Okay. And the next proclamation on our agenda is relative to autism Awareness, acceptance month, I should say. And Dr. Moscone with the Kansas Center for Autism and Research and Training is here to receive it. Thank you.

Speaker 9 ([00:57:23](#)):

All right. Well thank you for the invitation. I appreciate this opportunity to highlight both the significant work that's been ongoing within our community related to autism, as well as some of the important but often unmet needs of the autistic community. So I direct the Kansas University, Kansas Center for Autism Research and Training or kt, and KT was first established in 2008 through a private gift. KTT has worked since this time to provide services to autistic individuals and their families, including both direct service. This past year we've connected with close to 1000 individuals, autistic individuals and their family members seeking diagnostic assessment support services within the community. Since its inception, CAPEHART also has provided training education to providers, to caregivers, family members across the state in the tens of thousands. So large numbers, learning how to do empirically supported gold standard approaches to supporting for supporting autistic individuals across the lifespan.

(00:58:36):

A major mission of what we do also is to advance new knowledge through research and discovery. And University of Kansas has become really nationally, internationally recognized center for autism research. We're quite proud of that and quite proud some of the important discoveries that have taken place here and understanding the biology of autism as well as pushing forward with new, more effective support strategies for autistic individuals who have diverse needs. I mentioned before the unmet needs of autistic individuals and the supports and the individuals that we work with are quite diverse. Many of them will have average to above average intellectual abilities, wonderful skills and strengths. Each of them faces different challenges and has different needs from us as a community. We try to train individuals, we try to research better ways to provide those supports and really meet individuals where they're at. Still, there are a lack of adequate services for these families. And so we hope that this month really brings visibility to that and can help us as a community do a better job to bringing those supports to those families that need them. So thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 4 (00:59:51):

Thank you very much Dr. Moscony, and I appreciate the words and I hope I look forward to the proclamation. Thank you. Whereas autism or autism spectrum disorder is a complex mental condition and lifelong developmental disability characterized by difficulties in the way a person communicates and interacts with others. And whereas one in 36 children in the US have autism up from the previous rate of one in 44, and whereas boys are nearly four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls, and whereas autism prevalence is lower among other, excuse me, among white children than among other racial and ethnic groups. And whereas only 21% of people with disability including autism, are employed. And whereas nearly 60% of people with autism in the US are employed after receiving state provided vocational rehabilitation services that help individuals with autism explore possible careers, find a job, and secure needed accommodations in the workplace. Now therefore, I'm Mike Dever, mayor of the city of Lawrence, Kansas. Due, hereby proclaim Wednesday, April 2nd, 2025 as World Autism Day and proclaim the month of April, 2025 as Autism Acceptance month and urge each resident to be a friend and advocate of the entire autistic community. Respect and support those with autism champion acceptance, not just awareness of differences, provide meaningful opportunities for autistic individuals and their families and act fearlessly to stand alongside the autism community in the pursuit of a better world for those with autism. Thank you very much.

(01:01:41):

Okay. Thank you for that one. And then last but not least, we have a proclamation regarding the Mayor's water challenge for water conservation in our own. Trevor Flynn is here, along with some other guests. Yeah.

Speaker 10 (01:01:52):

Good evening, mayor and commissioners. I'm Trevor Flynn, our assistant director of the Municipal Services and Operation Department. I'm here tonight with I would like Kathy introduce

Speaker 11 (01:02:00):

Herself. Kathy Richardson. I'm the sustainability director and this is Luna.

Speaker 10 (01:02:04):

Hey Luna. Pleased to have Luna join us up here tonight. We appreciate the opportunity to be here today to support our community's efforts and commitment to environmental sustainability and stewardship. I'm excited the city of Lawrence is joining communities across the country in the Wildlands National Mayor's Challenge for water conservation, which allows us the opportunity to inspire our residents to use water

more efficiently, reduce pollution, and save energy. April's Earth Day, month, and a great time to think about water conservation as we warm up and start hooking up garden hoses and turning on our sprinkler systems. Outdoor watering practices can play a significant role in our opportunities to conserve water throughout April. The city's communication team will be providing messaging, promoting water conservation, and simple ways to save water along with other Earth Day activities. We encourage residents participate in this challenge for water conservation, make a pledge to use water more efficiently. Thank you.

Speaker 4 ([01:03:00](#)):

Thank you very much Trevor, and thank you Kathy for your other sustainability efforts, and I'm sure Luna appreciates what you're doing for us in our future. Thank you very much. I look forward to reading your proclamation. Whereas the city of Lawrence continues to explore ways to manage residential consumption of water and power and to inspire its residents to care for our natural resources. And whereas cities can engage in efforts to inspire their own communities as well as their neighboring cities to become better environmental stewards. And whereas the 15th annual wildland and National Mayors Challenge for water conservation is a landmark nonprofit campaign encouraging people from all walks of life to conserve water and other natural resources to help ensure a sustainable future for our communities. And whereas from April 1st through the 30th of 2025, the city of Lawrence wishes to inspire its residents to take the wildland National Mayors Challenge for water conservation by making an online [pledge@mywaterpledge.com](mailto:pledge@mywaterpledge.com) to reduce their impact on the environment and see immediate savings in their water and electricity bills. Now therefore, I Mike Dever, mayor of the city of Lawrence, Kansas, do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2025 as national mayor's challenge for water conservation and encourage the citizens of Lawrence to participate. Thank you, Trevor.

([01:04:28](#)):

Okay. I think next item on the agenda is the consent agenda and items on the consent agenda are considered under one motion and approved by one motion. Members of the governing body may remove items for separate discussion if desired, members of the public may remove items identified as quasi-judicial for separate discussion if desired, members of the public will be limited to three minutes for comments. Is there any member of the commission that would like item removed from the consent agenda?

Speaker 12 ([01:04:59](#)):

Yes, mayor, a community member has asked to pull D eight A.

Speaker 4 ([01:05:04](#)):

D eight A. Okay. Okay. Is there anything else we'd like to pull from the consent agenda? All right. We do have one quasi-judicial item. Is there a member of the public like to speak to that? Should I do that separately?

Speaker 12 ([01:05:26](#)):

Just ask a few more. Yeah, you're fine.

Speaker 4 ([01:05:28](#)):

Yeah. Anybody? Alright. So is there a motion but for D eight A for approval of the consent agenda,

Speaker 5 ([01:05:39](#)):

Move to approve the consent agenda with the exception of D eight A.

Speaker 4 ([01:05:44](#)):

Okay. Motion and seconded. Aye. I'm sorry. Commissioner Sellers motion by Fin Dye seconded. Aye. Sellers all in favor say aye. Aye. Aye. Motion passes. Five zero. Okay. Item D eight A.

Speaker 13 ([01:06:06](#)):

Hello, David Bain. 6 6 0 4 7. This ordinance hits everybody, students, workers, roommates. Excuse me, sorry. Sorry about

Speaker 4 ([01:06:15](#)):

That. We're going to wait for people to leave David so we can hear you. This is pretty loud. Thanks.

Speaker 5 ([01:06:21](#)):

You might raise that up a little bit too. Raise the thing to get a little closer to you.

Speaker 4 ([01:06:38](#)):

Okay. Fire away please. Thank you.

Speaker 13 ([01:06:40](#)):

Okay. This ordinance hits everybody, students, workers, roommates. The FHA protects some, but the constitution should protect us all from baseless caps.

([01:06:55](#)):

Where's the evidence? Five Adults ruin the neighborhood more than four. It's arbitrary and it's unconstitutional. There should be no cap limits with no proof. It helps if L-G-B-T-Q and other groups get an FHA out. Why not a constitutional out for everybody? Why don't we all count? The planning commission admitted on February 26th said, no studies, no proof that four fixes anything over five. Bell terrace states you need a reason, not a hunch. Show us the data or this fails in court. Moore versus East Cleveland isn't just about grannies, it's about all of us. It choosing we choosing who we live with. This isn't safety, it's dictating our homes. Even if students and others don't get FHA cover queer and disabled folks do this, is this inclusive? It's a lawsuit waiting to happen. Picture a thousand square foot home with one bathroom, four adults fighting over it. Now a 10,000 square foot, five bathroom home with space galore. Same cap. Some people will lose their place to live and families on waiting list. Not solutions to our housing crisis. Misty Boss Haing said, doubled up families invisible in the homeless count.

([01:08:37](#)):

Lose options. It's kicking out our most vulnerable, our strategic plan. Sit strong and welcoming neighbors now capping a 10,000 square foot home at four when it could easily house 10 and the permits dropped in 2024 to 57. This shrink supply, it doesn't strengthen it. Why do we even have a cap? Ordinance 10,001 20 streamlines the code, but 10,000 1 21 muddies it with a cap that defies logic. Two years of expert input and 2019 housing studies said higher limits all tossed for a few homeowners gripes. Mr. Watts also said in his comment, his existing limits aren't even policed. Looks like I'm out of time. Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 4 ([01:09:39](#)):

Thank you David. Any other public comment on D eight A and the consent agenda?

Speaker 11 ([01:09:48](#)):

So I thought that DA didn't have to do with residential caps. It does. I have it.



Speaker 4 ([01:09:55](#)):

Does it? Does you have? You're welcome to come and speak for three minutes.

Speaker 11 ([01:09:59](#)):

Okay, I need to pull up my document here. My name is Ellen Johnson and I am here because city ordinance right now are preventing the establishment of necessary sober living environments and supported housing for mentally ill and drug addicted community members leaving homelessness and transitioning from prison, jail shelters, drug treatment and psychiatric care facilities. And the burden to house these individuals is following on neighboring communities in Shawnee County, Johnson County, Kansas City and KDOC. Shawnee County has 178,000 people and 44 Oxford houses. Douglas County has 112,000 people and 12 Oxford houses. Not a good look. They are picking up your slack and the cause is city ordinance. So today I want to focus on a part of the solution, though this is not the whole solution. We need a change in city ordinance to allow for the establishment of more sober living environments like Oxford houses.

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

This is the simplest and most direct approach to addressing this frankly embarrassing failure on the part of our community. And I want to tell you why it's the first best step. I can't see the clock. TRC is great. Detox is not enough city laws limit the number of people allowed in a house that limits sober living environments. Okay? Oxford houses are critical to reduced recidivism for both criminal and addictive behavior. And I sent you guys a document, some research and I tell you what pages this is on. Also, at 24 months, Oxford residents are 75% employed per this study as opposed to 46% of residents, excuse me, individuals receiving only the usual care. And I believe they're twice as likely to regain custody of children lost to the state and half as likely to permanently lose rights. So this brings families together and city ordinances are stopping that right now.

([01:12:01](#)):

Oxford houses are sustainable and I want to bring up, this is very important. They are cost effective because right now the federal government is slashing funds for drug treatment, for mental illness. It's slashing social services. Oxford houses are self-governed and they're paid for by the residents through rent. They're a very low financial investment with a really high payoff and we need them in our community and city ordinance is stopping them. I don't live in Oxford. I'm not an Oxford resident. It wasn't for me. But I see the utility and I see people coming out of it like rock stars. It's really great. We need it here. Please let it happen. It's a good thing. Thank you. Thank

Speaker 4 ([01:12:41](#)):

You. Any other public comment on this item in the room? Okay. Sherry, anybody online?

Speaker 8 ([01:12:51](#)):

We do have one.

Speaker 7 ([01:13:00](#)):

Chris Flowers. Chris Flowers.

Speaker 14 ([01:13:11](#)):

Hi, this is Chris Flowers. I didn't read the consent agenda, but I'm just going based on what I've heard. When it comes to occupancy limits, I think it's California, they do theirs by two in a room and then plus one. So if it's like a three bedroom house, it'd be I guess seven because it'd be two for each three rooms and then one that could possibly live in the living room or something like that. So that's something to

consider. And also I don't think it's based on family status either. I think it's all around because it's also based in actual safety and if ours was based in safety, it wouldn't, the number of people would be the main thing and not if they're related. And also I've heard about the argument against letting too many people live in a house is like, oh, well what about the parking?

(01:14:16):

Well, is there any way you can limit how many cars can be registered to an address? If someone doesn't have a car, why can't they live in the house? That argument well about parking, it wouldn't be valid to them if they don't have a car. This idea that we're going to have parking problems is based on the idea that everyone has a car and that's not necessarily the case. So I think there'd be better ways to go out about the parking situation than just limiting all houses to four. I think you should go after the cars themselves and I just want to agree with some of what's been said. We need more occupancy. I mean we need to get away with the occupancy limits I think. But occupancy limits that are based in actual safety and not based in trying to keep parking out of neighborhoods or whatever. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

Speaker 4 (01:15:20):

Thanks Chris.

Speaker 15 (01:15:23):

That's all I call.

Speaker 4 (01:15:24):

Okay, thank you very much. Alright, commissioners, any comments on discussion here on D eight A

Speaker 5 (01:15:38):

At the same place? Obviously this is the second reading of the ordinance, so I haven't changed my position. I am interested in more Oxford houses. I mean I think there's some possibilities there that we could look at outside the occupancy limits. I guess I do have a question maybe for Tony. I know we don't want to comment on the legality of the current ordinance, but the original occupancy of three and four, was that challenged in court and what happened with that?

Speaker 16 (01:16:11):

Yes, it was challenged and it was upheld by the federal court

Speaker 5 (01:16:15):

And so that was a three four and of course this ordinance raises it to four and five, so I'll continue to support it.

Speaker 4 (01:16:26):

Got it. That makes sense. Yeah. Anything else? Nope. Sellers anything?

Speaker 6 (01:16:31):

No. I mean like Commissioner Fle die. I am insistent on my point that I voted for five, but I would rather vote for no occupancy limits. I think the idea of having occupancy limits gives us a perception of perpetuating discriminatory behavior, although we don't want to lead with the negative, but there are negative externalities that could happen when you have something like this. And so I think it's more of an



ordinance that is more problematic than it is beneficial and it's counterintuitive to what we're trying to do in a place for everyone, but things can be amended in time.

Speaker 4 ([01:17:11](#)):

Exactly. Understood. Thank you. Anything else? Okay, well there's a motion for us to approve D eight.

Speaker 5 ([01:17:20](#)):

So it looks like two motions probably. So first I'd move to adopt on second and final reading ordinance symbol 1 0 1 2 0, which is the entire development code. The next one is the occupancy one.

Speaker 4 ([01:17:34](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 6 ([01:17:35](#)):

Second.

Speaker 4 ([01:17:35](#)):

Motion by fin dice, seconded by sellers. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 5 ([01:17:39](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 4 ([01:17:40](#)):

Aye. And second one,

Speaker 5 ([01:17:42](#)):

Adopt on second and final reading. Ordinance number 1 0 1 2 1, which is related to the occupancy. Right.

Speaker 4 ([01:17:49](#)):

So we'll need to second on that one second. Second. Okay. We got a motion by Finkel Dice. Second by sellers. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 5 ([01:17:57](#)):

Aye. Aye. Aye. Nay.

Speaker 4 ([01:18:01](#)):

Oh, so the motion passes for one with Commissioner Sellers dissension.

Speaker 3 ([01:18:08](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 4 ([01:18:11](#)):

Alright, we'll go ahead and move on to our general regular agenda items and the first one is to receive an update on the development of the preliminary 2026 budget and to provide direction to our staff.

Speaker 17 ([01:18:27](#)):

Thanks Mayor. I'm going to kick this off and then Allie's going to lead us through it and look forward to some discussion on this. As you'll see, it's still not July yet. We are still very early in our traditional schedule for considering the budget. We started several months ago with discussions with you and internal preparations just after we'd adopted the last budget. Knowing that we had a significant challenge this year and wanting to spend a lot more time on development of alternatives and also to engage other parts of the community, broader parts of the community, deeper parts of the community, and also engage parts of our team Lawrence in deeper respects. I'm proud to say we've done all of that so far and we are continuing to do that in a number of ways. And tonight was a check-in that we scheduled to report on what we found to give you some feedback on the parameters that you set for us and then to talk about this is what we did with those parameters and this is how we are preliminarily seeing the direction of the budget that we'll be working very hard to deliver to you in the first part of July of this year.

([01:19:51](#)):

So I'm going to cover kind of some background of how we got here.

([01:19:56](#)):

There are four key challenges and this is mostly a reminder and reset of what we talked about last budget year and that we talked with you a few months ago on. So our community continues to have a lot of wonderful employers that don't pay property taxes. So that has been the characteristic of a university city and that is who we are and who we have been. But as we've increased our residential tax base, we have not grown proportionately to the commercial tax base and these costs are catching up with us. Residential property tax pays a tax rate at 11.5% and commercial pays at 25% and generally that's accepted to be the deal for being a part of our community. They pay a bit more on proportional taxes and service consumption and that helps to support residential communities because we all understand the importance of strong welcoming neighborhoods and that's who we are and that's what we're about.

([01:21:03](#)):

We have not gained that portion yet. We're working mightily with other partners to grow our tax base, but that continues to be a growing contribution to the lopsidedness of how much it costs in our service consumption to provide the services our residents expect and demand and how we're actually situated to pay for that in a sustainable way. The second big piece is that in 2018 we captured a market survey to understand how our compensation, how we were compensating our team members that were providing these services in a competitive way to other cities for similar work. We understood that we were behind the market and we were considerably behind the market and spent a couple of years making up that difference that totaled about \$11 million. That additional \$11 million is built permanently into the amount it costs for our payroll and that continues to be added onto as cost of living and other factors are factored in.

([01:22:09](#)):

So that was another big piece. We made a big investment back into our workforce to pay in a market competitive rate. The third significant piece that hopefully everybody's noticing by now is we really decided to reinvest in neglected infrastructure. This is not just streets and alleys and roads that are very visible, but it's also in our underground infrastructure. It's also in our stormwater systems. It's in our sewer and water systems and our treatment facilities that allow us the capacity not just to grow into the future, but also to keep up with ever-changing and increasing regulatory restrictions and requirements. And finally, we were very proud, especially during the pandemic, to address what we saw and our community was telling us was an obligation to address homelessness and to provide new programs and assistance in an emergency shelter capacity and start people on recovery to addressing homelessness.

([01:23:21](#)):

We're very proud of the work that we've done. We've reported on that. We're seeing progress that's in partnership with Douglas County through a place for everyone and with many other not-for-profit partners that have been doing heroic work in this space. And we've seen real results. Nevertheless, the initial investments in that work were through ARPA funding, which was one time through pandemic relief, which was largely part of the creation of the exacerbation of our homeless problems. We used our ARPA investments to get us started, but we recognized even as we were starting that investment that these were going to be ongoing lifts. These were going to be ongoing investments we were going to continue to need to make until the system got up and moving. And then we exited people from homelessness and we saw our population of people experiencing homelessness decline. We're working towards that, we're seeing the progress towards that.

(01:24:17):

But those ongoing expenses in these early stages are very necessary. And we did not ever identify sustainable ongoing revenue until this last year when we did ask the population to provide a sales tax and we doubled our sales tax for and expanded the purpose of that. And now we will see in this upcoming year, we will see the results and the ability to start collecting that sales tax, but it still only captures part of what we are investing in, responding to homelessness. So those four big pieces, there are other things, but those are the four big pieces that when I'm in communication with the community members or people are asking me, Hey, how did this happen? Those are the big four reasons that I think we've seen big challenges. So that's gotten us here. The next slide really just shows a little bit more about what I said on the pie charts that talk about the distribution of our real estate taxes and who we are from a property valuation standpoint.

(01:25:20):

And that's a big part of how we get our money in addition to sales tax. So I wanted to characterize those first pieces and as I turned it over to Allie just to express upfront and I think you'll see the evidence of it. Usually we're just now starting the budget conversations. While all these departments are doing all the hard work of delivering services, they don't have to worry about getting their sheets in and doing their proposals and having difficult planning conversations about budget all year round this year. It really is all year round. So I want to express my appreciation to all the people that have been engaged in that work. I want to express my appreciation to the new Citizens committee and some of our other employees that have done that work to help us in ideation about how do we fix this problem, how do we get new ideas into this and how do we set ourselves up to a sustainable future? And then of course, the budget team, Allie and her team and the executive team that have had to do a lot of extra work on top of everything else I have and hopefully you'll see some of the results and the ideas that we're going to present before you.

Speaker 18 (01:26:33):

Earlier I had told Craig that a more seamless transition would be if I started on the next slide, but he wanted me to speak to this graph and I suppose as budget manager, that's a fair expectation. So going back to the increase in personnel costs, the chart in front of you, you see our general fund personnel costs from 2019 in into 2024. So you see that increase in 2021 and 2022 as we implemented the pay plan. The light blue portion is the subsequent supplement of the ARPA dollars that we used. And then you see the policy minimum in orange. So as our expenditures go up, our policy minimum went up and then the corresponding yellow line is the fund balance going down.

Speaker 6 (01:27:36):

Sorry, I turned your camera on. I think it threw you off.

Speaker 18 (01:27:39):

Oh, you can leave it off. That's fine too. The 2026 preliminary budget is before you 116.47 in revenue. This is slightly lower than the revenue estimates that we showed to City Commission in January. We have updated our assessed valuation from a six and a quarter to 5% after some initial conversations with the county. Again, those official preliminary estimates aren't provided until the summer, but for right now we are operating with 5% growth. Instead of the original projection of 6.25, the expenditures have also gone down slightly, mainly due to information from the state on rates for capers and KPNF. So those came back a little bit lower than we had projected, so it worked in the positive for us. So in total, a deficit of 6.6 million compared to in January, we said 6.5. Again, these expenditure assumptions for 2026 do not include a plan for the expansion personnel of L-D-C-F-M.

(01:28:56):

Okay. Balancing act. Balancing Act is our public engagement tool. We have found it to be extremely effective in giving the community handles to engage in pretty complicated conversations with us on the budget. And it's easy I think, for me in particular to get lost in the work, but I do want to highlight this is the first year that we are looking at preliminary numbers for the upcoming budget instead of last year's number of an adopted budget. So I want to thank our departments who went and did a lot of hard work to get us to this place, but it's a really big deal to have to be looking forward with next year's numbers so we can have some transparent, educated conversations on what budget impacts look like.

(01:29:51):

Commission completed Balancing Act in January. We had shared this slide previously, so there were a handful or so of programs that all commissioners maintained. There are two that all commissioners decreased, and then two of the five submissions increased property taxes. And then we also saw some suggestions for fees with parks, recreation and culture. Following our January 21st meeting, we open balancing act to the public. So that was live from February 1st and yeah, February 1st until March 7th. We also did two community engagement events so you could come in and complete the exercise with your neighbors in small groups. We did the same thing with our employees and then we did two pop-up sessions. So you may have seen Mary and I out at the library and Sports Pavilion, Lawrence handing out QR codes, try to convince folks to take the exercise. I don't know if folks appreciated it so much, but we encouraged participation. So that was something new for us to try in total 637 submissions were received and compare that to last year when we opened it up twice in the first round, we had 200 submissions in the second round 300, so about 500. So we do have 140 some odd more submissions this year.

(01:31:22):

As you could probably expect, there was a wider variation in the 637 responses that we received compared to commission. But again, there were a handful of programs that were maintained. So you see those in front of you. A, a compliance facility, maintenance, street maintenance and MSO Patrol and investigations in the police department. And then youth and adult sports in parks, recreation and culture. About 70% of submissions maintain property taxes, about a quarter increased, and then the difference they're decreasing. Craig noted our two budget committees. We have a community budget committee and the employee budget committee. They are bringing different diverse perspectives and we've enjoyed the opportunity to hear their feedback. They've been meeting about monthly. So they were the first group that actually reviewed the feedback that we received from Balancing Act and just some general takeaways that we got was that they saw balancing act as a useful tool to gauge community priorities. There was support for exploring fees for parks, recreation and culture, and then a reduction in homeless solutions to offset other departmental impacts. I think this was especially true given the passage of the recent sales tax.

(01:32:49):

So our challenge as staff was taking balancing act, which we have by nature classified as a qualitative priority exercise and attach numbers to it. So we developed a tier system based on the average change in service level and it's meant to highlight the levels in which programs were prioritized. So we looked for those natural breaks in the data and put them in tiers one through four and then assigned reduction

percentages to hit an anticipated deficit of \$6.6 million. So tier one where our programs, excuse me, that were to be maintained, tier two would see approximately 6% reduction, tier three, approximately 13% reduction and tier four approximately 20% reduction.

(01:33:56):

The attachment in the packet has the full list where you could see the submissions of the public and the commission. Those in bold are the ones that overlap between the two data sets. But in front of you on the slide, you do see the similarities between the two submissions that we received. So the ones that were in tier 1, 2, 3, and four in the same of both submissions and then highlighting here, those that are different. And in orange you see the three programs that change to service levels from the commission to the community. So if the mayor doesn't mind, I'd like to pause here and ask the commission if there are specific changes to any program prioritizations that we're seeing. Is there a particular program that you feel needs to be in a certain tier given the information that you've seen?

Speaker 4 (01:35:09):

I do have a question about that. So when you were kind determining these tiers, how did you arrive? I think I understood you think you said it, but how did each tier arrive at its percentage? In other words, how did two become six or three become 13 or whatever it is. So can you just make sure I understand how you allocated?

Speaker 18 (01:35:28):

Yeah, I would be honest and say that it's subjective. We looked at what is an appropriate spread of reductions that would still get us to that deficit number.

Speaker 4 (01:35:41):

That's what I thought. Okay, thank you. I just want to make sure I understood that. Anybody have any changes to what is currently, I believe the prioritization or to move anything based on what we've got back from Balancing Act.

Speaker 6 (01:36:01):

Allie, real quick from the budget committee comments in regards to reduction of homeless solutions, was that more of a conversation around just the different leverages of money where it comes from the idea of because of the sales tax, we can not pursue so much money in the special alcohol tax because that'll free something up or what was the conversation around reduction to offset?

Speaker 18 (01:36:26):

Yes. So when the committees were looking at it, they were looking at the general fund portion of the Homeless Solutions division, which is approximately two and a half million dollars I believe. And so I don't like speaking for other folks, but I would say general sentiment was that this was a newer program and they understood that there needed to probably be reductions in most areas, but to have less reductions that could be offset by reductions to the general fund portion of the Homeless Solutions Division. And again, I believe that was especially true given the additional money from the sales tax anticipated money from the sales tax.

Speaker 3 (01:37:20):

Gotcha.

Speaker 5 (01:37:31):

Ken, question on MSO. One of the ones that had a bigger difference was MSO transportation planning.

Speaker 18 ([01:37:40](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 5 ([01:37:41](#)):

Remind me, I think immediately go, I don't know if it's planning and zoning transportation planning. So make sure I'm understanding the difference between is this, what's MSO Transportation planning?

Speaker 18 ([01:38:01](#)):

So this is Jessica Morten's umbrella of our, and I'm forgetting the acronym. NPO.

Speaker 5 ([01:38:10](#)):

Okay, so that's in MSO. I guess when I looked at that, I was thinking that was pd, but that's MSO. Okay.

Speaker 18 ([01:38:15](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 5 ([01:38:16](#)):

So it is what I was thinking it was. Okay, good. I'm going to add one other question on, well, I'm forgetting it now, but okay, I'll come back to it there. I'm sure I'll have in my notes here somewhere.

Speaker 12 ([01:38:42](#)):

Okay, have a question. So with the balancing act, the internal group, I think it was various employee groups was on one and then there was another one that was Citizens within Lawrence. How does that show up on here under these tiers? I'm looking at the slide that says balancing act differences. Are they just lumped in with the community tier?

Speaker 18 ([01:39:07](#)):

Yes. So all of those are in the community data set. Yes.

Speaker 4 ([01:39:20](#)):

Is there much statistical variance that you could see in the data set of community members who work for the city and community members that don't?

Speaker 18 ([01:39:29](#)):

I would assume that's a possibility. We haven't looked at it. We can.

Speaker 4 ([01:39:34](#)):

Yeah, just curious.

Speaker 18 ([01:39:35](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([01:39:40](#)):



Okay.

Speaker 18 ([01:39:41](#)):

Okay. Well you'll see this question again at the end.

([01:39:51](#)):

Okay. So where we are today, given those two data sets, you see the ranges of potential reductions for each general fund department as well as the corresponding percent of their budget. That would be a reduction again to reach a target of \$6.6 million. So we are going to go through some preliminary department proposals tonight. I do emphasize the word preliminary. They're subject to change. I've said this before, but it's worth repeating. And that is nobody wants to stand in front of the commission and talk about reduced service levels. And it actually pains me to be talking about some of the things that you're going to see in these proposals, just like I know paying the department heads who had to put them together.

([01:40:52](#)):

But it is our responsibility, our professional responsibility to confront this reality and be honest with the public about what these reductions could look like. So that's what you're going to see here today. These proposals are based on the tiers that we created following the commission's feedback from Balancing Act. And we have said on record many times before that to achieve reductions of the magnitude that we're talking about. It will equate to less positions and a smaller workforce going forward. So several of the positions that we're talking about tonight are currently, or we anticipate that they're going to be vacant in the future, but we are implementing a few policies to align vacancies in areas targeted for reductions. So we instituted an internal hiring policy and here in the near future we will be rolling out an early retirement incentive program. And again, this is about making, creating vacancies to be able to move folks into areas that are more prioritized and retain as much of our workforce as we can.

([01:42:19](#)):

MSOs proposal, again, this target ranges from 730,000 to 1.1 million. There are some revenue enhancements that you see, so it's not all reduction focused, including charging staff time to geo bonded projects and also shifting the levy maintenance budget out of the general fund and into the storm water fund, dropping a crew in streets, which would equate to four FTEs, an administrative reorg of two FTEs, and then reducing that general fund transfer that is made to the airport by increasing fees, which would be equate to one less FTE Fire Med. We actually have two proposals for L-D-C-F-M. The city's preferred proposal is going to shift resources to increase our EMS response, which you can see from this chart here. The increase in the EMS incidents compared to fire. So it does require additional revenue from the county, which we are at this time unable to totally rely on. So we have created a second proposal that's going to greatly impact fire medical services but would have no additional revenue from the county.

([01:43:49](#)):

So again, that preferred proposal, a target of 1.5 to 1.9 million depending on the dataset, would drop an engine and UPS staff the ladder at station five from three personnel to four personnel, and it's also going to add a medic unit into the system. Again, this increases addresses the increasing EMS call volume while also providing less fire response capability. It will reduce the minimum daily staffing from 39 to 38, and if we utilize the same methodology for the shared obligation costs, we're going to have more EMS response. So that would increase that. So the city's portion would be 58% and the county's portion would be 42 compared to the current 64 36.

([01:44:52](#)):

The alternative proposal, if there is no additional revenue from the county, is to shut down that engine and up staff the ladder at station five, and that would result in the elimination of nine sworn FTEs consolidating their command structure of their battalion chiefs from six to three. So the elimination of

three sworn FTEs, reduced number of staffed ambulances and the elimination of four sworn FTEs, and then the reduction of sworn positions in training and or prevention. So two less, the police's target was pretty close, 1.2 to 1.3. Looking at the reduction of six sworn officers reducing their admin support, so two less civilians and then eliminating an information services supervisor, one FTE.

Speaker 6 ([01:45:59](#)):

Hey Allie, real quick, because I don't know whether our methodology is, if you're wanting us to ask questions after each section or go through all of them and then ask questions, I may forget something that way, even if I do write it down. But I wanted to go back to the proposal for fire medical under the last bullet. You said if same methodology is shared obligation costs would change and it looks like a 6% shift. So tell me about that. If the same methodology, are you proposing a different methodology that is more

Speaker 18 ([01:46:33](#)):

No, and I'm going to have Chief Wade come up here if you would like, but the idea is that we would drop an engine, so that's going to change our staffing ratio of the fire side, and you're going to add a medic unit, which is going to increase the staffing ratio on the EMS side. So it's the same methodology, but different percentages given a decrease in the fire side of staffing. And the increase in the EMS side,

Speaker 6 ([01:47:00](#)):

You hypothesize that that shift is numerically about 6%?

Speaker 18 ([01:47:05](#)):

Yes. Okay.

Speaker 17 ([01:47:07](#)):

And if we are currently in an agreement which we extended for this year, we're in negotiations or we'll begin negotiations with the county on how we split that up. So the assumption is we would use a similar methodology, but right now under the agreement it doesn't automatically shift the cost.

Speaker 4 ([01:47:27](#)):

Okay, good question. Thank you.

Speaker 18 ([01:47:29](#)):

Did I say that right? Okay. Planning and development services, so their target ranging from 130,000 to 365,000, reducing their planning service level, which would equate to one less FTE, maintaining the current capacity for code compliance response. So they were recently approved for an additional FTE, but that one FTE wouldn't move them to the next service level. So the director believes that we can stay at the current service level and eliminate that one FTE and then some minor reduction to the capacity for housing initiatives to utilize outside consultants. Oh, that's no,

Speaker 6 ([01:48:32](#)):

We were going to tell you afterwards. Basically

Speaker 18 ([01:48:35](#)):

I spoke to this

Speaker 6 ([01:48:36](#)):

Briefly

Speaker 18 ([01:48:37](#)):

And I'll let Chief if there are any questions, and then parks, recreation and culture. So a target of approximately 1.7 million, again, both in the commission's dataset, in the public's dataset, it was approximately the same. So introducing access fees at Sports Pavilion, Lawrence and recreation centers to support operations, increasing other user fees to align with service costs, so increase in the revenue side, reduction of SPL hours and fewer programming options, which would equate to the reduction of three FTEs. And then eliminating approximately 20 part-time maintenance positions and reduced contracted services, which will result in less mowing and the delay or elimination of playground and shelter replacements outside those city attorney's office, approximately \$80,000. So increasing their cost recovery that they see and discontinuing a transfer that department has regularly made to the vehicles and equipment reserve fund economic development, a range of 80 to \$180,000, so a reduction in contract for services. And then homeless solutions is probably where you see one of the largest spreads, 160,000 to 550,000. So there is a planned reduction in the LCS contract, also a reduction of one FTE and then reduced funding for camp site cleanups.

([01:50:31](#)):

Just some general considerations as we close a reminder of setting aside that \$2 million for fund balance restoration. You see on the left, no restoration there and how expenditures continue to outpace revenues and eating away at fund balance. Again, the orange line is the goal and the yellow line is the policy minimum. And then the right chart, again just to highlight the trend of seeing that fund balance increase versus decrease. If we are to set aside an amount for fund balance restoration, these are 20, 24 revised budget numbers, they're not actuals. Hopefully in the next very quickly we will have a year-end numbers from finance and we can update these and hopefully in the positive, our departments are taking very proactive measures to not see this trend. And so making those reductions where we can, and so we're hoping to see a more positive impact once we have actual numbers. We asked these questions at the January 21st meeting and looking to reaffirm them today or get new guidance. The first one being is 2 million the appropriate amount to restore fund balance. Is there a continued commitment to staying at market compensation for all employees and employee groups? That question on specific changes to any program prioritization and does property tax rate need to be held flat or is there tolerance for some increase to offset service reductions?

Speaker 4 ([01:52:29](#)):

Is that the end of yours? Going through the full?

Speaker 18 ([01:52:33](#)):

Really just see our next steps here of coming back to commission in June with our proposed CIP and leading up to a city manager's proposed budget on July 8th. But yes, closing with these questions.

Speaker 4 ([01:52:56](#)):

Right on. Thank you very much. Ellie.

Speaker 5 ([01:53:02](#)):

Questions two questions for Allie and then I think I have a question for every one of the departments, but two things. One, when you talk about certain programs, well make sure we're on the same page when we

talk about market rate pay under, when we say maintained, we are talking about folks getting raises, right? I mean,

Speaker 18 ([01:53:28](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 5 ([01:53:29](#)):

Right. So that's built into the system.

Speaker 18 ([01:53:31](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 5 ([01:53:31](#)):

Right. So assuming that's how we do that, I know you're just thinking about ruling out an early retirement incentive program. Do you think by July we'll have any estimates on if or what that might save us in the 26 budget, or do you think you'll have numbers associated with that?

Speaker 17 ([01:53:55](#)):

Yeah, preliminarily, we're planning this to do O2 phase. So July 1st we may have a first offering and then after that we would have a second offering. This isn't designed to necessarily show any savings different than what we've just described to you. What we're trying to do is create vacancies so that we can move the vacancies to where we're reducing staffing and then refill with where we are not reducing staffing. So think of the org chart today versus the org chart. January 1st, the org chart, January 1st will be a smaller org chart. It needs to be still people in the positions that respond to the priorities and where we're doing reductions. We want to see those vacancies in those places and we won't refill those. That's not how it'll all line up. So we're trying to create more vacancies and then hopefully we will either have people take new jobs that are the ones that are prioritized, or we will have the vacancies in the right spot and we won't have to refill them. So it's not necessarily taking, and we talked about there will be an effect of taking some people that retire at the top end of the pay system and we hire in at the lower end. There is an effect of that. It's not why we're doing this. It will have an effect. But I don't think we've necessarily calculated because we don't know where those positions are going to be necessarily. We haven't calculated there will be some effect of losing more senior people and hiring in more junior people likely.

Speaker 5 ([01:55:40](#)):

Yeah, I didn't know. I mean obviously you hear about early retirements across all sorts of businesses, and I assume there was some calculation people use to estimate what those savings might be across 900 employees. But I mean, that's kind of my question. Is there some guesstimate or some kind of standard thought process on that or not? Maybe it's

Speaker 17 ([01:56:03](#)):

Not. It is one we've spent a lot of time on, mainly because we don't know where those will be. They tend to be people that have ascended. So you don't see a lot of frontline employees generally that are qualified for retirement. They've ascended. They're certainly usually at the top end of the pay structure. So yes, there will be an effect there, but it would be very difficult right now to kind of guess across 900 employees on where they might fall. It's likely to be towards the higher ends of our pay system.

Speaker 5 ([01:56:38](#)):

Okay. And Allie, I think you said that hopefully by next time we get the presentation we'll have a better understanding of the fund balance from 2024 as well as maybe some updated numbers on sales tax and property tax.

Speaker 18 ([01:56:52](#)):

Yes. I think we missed Rochelle's group just by about a week too early. We probably could have, but yes, we will be getting that here shortly.

Speaker 3 ([01:57:00](#)):

Good.

Speaker 6 ([01:57:03](#)):

I only have a couple of questions on the additional slide with the economic development piece. Is that, and the reduction is for contracts and services, and I do apologize for not asking for this earlier. I would be interested in knowing for the last two years, just different, I have an idea of what they are, but the contracts for services that we've had under that department and costs, just so we can see what has the department has done and is that maintaining an FTE for that department or what would be the FTEs for? Or is that totally removing the FTE from the economic development piece?

Speaker 18 ([01:57:44](#)):

It would be reducing their contract for services and so they have 1.5 FTEs and it's maintaining those currently. So

Speaker 6 ([01:57:51](#)):

It maintains the current one point.

Speaker 18 ([01:57:52](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 6 ([01:57:53](#)):

Okay. I

Speaker 12 ([01:57:57](#)):

Have a question. Could you go to the police slide please? So could you explain to me what that first bullet point is?

Speaker 18 ([01:58:15](#)):

I'm going to let Chief Lockhart speak to that

Speaker 19 ([01:58:29](#)):

Commissioner. I'm not sure what that means either. I didn't write that. What we have talked about is eliminating six sworn police officer positions, but we don't know where those are today. So we're starting an academy class coming up next week. It takes 36 weeks to hire a police officer. We know by the end of the year we've done some calculations. We should have six people who will retire. We don't know where those people will be necessarily. Also looking at the early retirement incentive, I've got 22 people who could take advantage of that. Some of them are supervisory, some of them are frontline. So what we're

hoping is that when that information comes out, we're able to reevaluate, as Craig mentioned, reimagine what that org chart looks like. But those vacant positions are people we don't have today. We're down nine positions today. So we've got the same patrol and investigative response to things that we would have today, even if we were to eliminate those nine positions.

Speaker 12 ([01:59:28](#)):

Great. Okay. That's what I was wondering. I know that was a, investigations and parole were two areas that we did not want to impact, but you're telling me what I'm hearing is that those six positions aren't filled anyway.

Speaker 19 ([01:59:42](#)):

They're not filled today. We're down nine right now. We consistently run anywhere from five to eight down. So that's why we don't know where they would come from by the end of the year. Patrol's obviously our priority investigations is a priority for us as well. They make up the majority of our staff. So we've got a hundred plus in patrol, about 20 in investigations. So out of our 152 that were authorized, 120 plus are in those two elements.

Speaker 12 ([02:00:10](#)):

So

Speaker 19 ([02:00:10](#)):

There's not a lot sworn people outside of those two elements.

Speaker 4 ([02:00:14](#)):

Got it. Thank you. So Chief, lemme ask you then, if you were to explain to me if we have nine positions filled the budget that you've proposed along with this target of 1.2 to 1.3 million, that would be what you would need to reduce if you had nine new people on or is this 1.2 to 1.3 million at the current staffing level, which is six below where you want to be right now.

Speaker 19 ([02:00:43](#)):

So the budget reduction that is on this slide is what we think will get us to that number. So reducing six sworn vacant positions, the two non-sworn support staff, and then one supervisor in information services. We know we have one retiring in information services right now with the retirement incentive. We could have two, but we couldn't lose both of them at the same time. So we may have two, as Craig mentioned, reevaluate how supervision looks in that division.

Speaker 4 ([02:01:13](#)):

Okay, so I don't think, I'm sorry, I'm confused. So you're saying we have a deficit of six, we have a desk of nine and currently we're not paying six officers that you have planned on having on staff and in your budget currently, but we aren't paying those people currently. There are not six officers or you're down six currently

Speaker 6 ([02:01:33](#)):

In

Speaker 4 ([02:01:34](#)):



Your current budget, correct? Right. We're down nine right now. Okay. Nine. I'm sorry that we were authorized for in 2025 that we are not paying. Okay. So if we move forward to next year, right now, in order to do that we have to reduce 1.2 to 1.3 million from that and your proposition or you propose that that come from six sworn not hiring these people that we're considering having an academy for because I'm confused.

Speaker 19 ([02:01:58](#)):

Okay. So yeah, it's a little bit confusing. I apologize. So what we're doing is it takes us 18 weeks in the academy, 18 weeks of field training to fully train a police officer. So with this academy class starting, we will be down one person, so we're hiring nine that will get us to 151 out of 152. What we have anticipated is known retirements, people that have already said I'm going to retire this year. We know there's going to be seven of those between now and the end of the year.

Speaker 4 ([02:02:28](#)):

So

Speaker 19 ([02:02:28](#)):

That will bring us to within the six sworn positions that will be vacant by the end of the year. We only run academy classes once a year. Roger.

Speaker 4 ([02:02:37](#)):

Okay, Roger. So that makes sense. Okay, so I was trying to find where the balance is coming, but I think you got there at the very end, so not very much.

Speaker 19 ([02:02:44](#)):

Yeah, so like most departments you can hire somebody and spool 'em up in about two to three weeks with police and fire. It's just not that

Speaker 4 ([02:02:50](#)):

Easy. I just more about the dollars at this point in time and when we budget it, it's one thing when we actually have to pay those people and all those benefits and it impacts the budget, then I want to make sure we have those funds available. Correct. And I don't want to push away from the street level policing and from what you're saying you believe are going to have retirements anyway that'll move those positions so we're not in excess of the number we can afford currently. Correct. Okay. Very much. Thank you

Speaker 6 ([02:03:19](#)):

Allie. I have a question. Allie, chief, I mean you Thanks

Speaker 2 ([02:03:23](#)):

Chief.

Speaker 6 ([02:03:24](#)):

Thank

Speaker 2 ([02:03:24](#)):

You.

Speaker 6 ([02:03:24](#)):

Thank you though. And it might be a little bit of a question for you and mostly a question for city manager not to flip the tables on what we've been doing in the process that we've been going with, how to look for six and a half million dollars. What have you seen with municipalities that have gone to 32 hour work weeks or reduced work weeks, whether it's 32, 4 day, half day Friday to address their budget shortfalls? You want to start?

Speaker 17 ([02:04:09](#)):

Well, I mean we've kicked around ideas like that at city hall levels. I don't know that we, there's some departments that are using alternative workforce. I mean this is a 24 7 operation that does a wide variety of things. So between parks and recreation, police and fire MSO, all the different shift things that we have, there are alternative schedules for more traditional office hours. We definitely can look at that. There are some cities that I'm aware of that do that. Private sector has done a lot of modification of that on the reading that I've done. So I do think those are there. I think there's some places where we've reduced, I would say just remembering the records department at the police department, they've dropped a day of the week where they're providing services and I don't think that's caused that much of a disruption. So there are some places where we could do some adopt some alternatives. We just haven't really teased them out that much.

Speaker 6 ([02:05:06](#)):

Tease them out. Yeah, I mean I would definitely be interested in knowing how light communities have fared with us. I know there's a couple of municipalities in Missouri. There's definitely some on the east coast, definitely some in the Sunbelt states. I would mean not to detour what we are on right now, but I would be curious if it's something that we could propose maybe in the future if we want to look at it as a one day pilot or I think it's something worth curiosity from a public health and work-life balance state of the affairs. Yeah,

Speaker 18 ([02:05:46](#)):

We saw a case study I want to say in California and they went to 32 hour work weeks for a small pool of folks to try it out and it wasn't about reducing their salaries, they forwent increases going forward so it helps in the future budgets,

Speaker 6 ([02:06:05](#)):

Right?

Speaker 18 ([02:06:07](#)):

Yeah, we can

Speaker 6 ([02:06:07](#)):

Look at that. I'm in no desire to reduce salaries, but I would like to look at it from definitely a cost savings and I know that some of the reports that I was able to skim there was definitely a better quality of life work balance, a reduction in sick leave, reduction in call out times. So I think there's something to be said about it and I think we're a community that's a good enough size that could potentially tease something out with that. So that was my question, comment.

Speaker 5 ([02:06:46](#)):

Like I said, we've already got a couple of them done, but I guess I have questions for most of them, so I'm going from the beginning. So connected city, remind me, I think we have three street crews. You say drop one street crew. How many street crews do we have

Speaker 20 ([02:07:11](#)):

Now? That's probably where I'm going to. We have never filled this four, so this group of four, I held them starting last summer when I was being asked to fill them. This was an additional crew you authorized about two years ago I believe, which would've brought us up to four total crews. So this would leave us with the amount that you've been traditionally seeing. I saw our budget challenges and just worked with my team and said, Hey, I'd rather not hire people. I'm going to have to lay off. So this is kind of where we've been sitting means we don't get to things as fast as people would like and we certainly have taken on more infrastructure and we're trying to maintain it at a higher level, but this is where we've stood for about a year and a half now.

Speaker 5 ([02:07:58](#)):

I guess I didn't remember we added one. I was thinking we had three. So it would still be a three?

Speaker 20 ([02:08:02](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 5 ([02:08:02](#)):

Okay. And then the airport due to new fees, I assume that's new airport fees? Is that what

Speaker 20 ([02:08:11](#)):

You're This is new airport fees, so we've been working for about the last year or so now since I took over direct oversight over the airport with our airport manager, Scott Wagner, and have been doing a business analysis and looking at what opportunities we have to improve the financial health of our airport, our regional airport. So those are things that are awaiting a further conversation with the governing body, but that would basically remove the subsidy of the general fund to the airport.

Speaker 5 ([02:08:44](#)):

Appreciate that. That was my last question. I will just throw out real quick, I appreciate the administrative reorganization. If two FTEs don't

Speaker 21 ([02:08:53](#)):

Appreciate

Speaker 5 ([02:08:53](#)):

You working on that. Okay. If I have a medical question, we all like the first option better, but we won't go there at the moment. Question on the same kind of question. Reducing two sworn FTEs in training and prevention, how many FTEs do we have there now? What kind of cut are we talking there?

Speaker 22 ([02:09:14](#)):

So in both those divisions we have a chief officer along with a captain and a lieutenant in both the prevention and the training division.

Speaker 5 ([02:09:22](#)):

So possibly talking about going from six to four.

Speaker 22 ([02:09:28](#)):

It is the consistent, so just three in those positions, they're the same person. They're 40 hour, 20, 80 hour employees and so we would reduce from three to two.

Speaker 5 ([02:09:36](#)):

Three to two. Okay. I'm with you. Okay. I think that was the only question I had for you. Thank you.

Speaker 22 ([02:09:47](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 5 ([02:09:47](#)):

Yeah. Police, we talked about planning and development. Jeff's back there somewhere. He said we do seem planning service level one ft. Is that a planner? Is that a plan position or some other position?

Speaker 16 ([02:10:08](#)):

Right now it's a planning tech. It's a position that takes the administrative load off the planner so they can focus on applications and not worry about filing fees and those kinds of things. So it kind of lets planners focus on application load and so does some of that back of house stuff that we need to have done.

Speaker 5 ([02:10:23](#)):

Okay, so it's a planning tech position. Question on just curious, and I know you're very new to the system, but as we look ahead in 2026, I mean do you think the new PDS planning system, is that going to, I mean we might reduce some level of service, but will we be at a position in 2026 so we maybe don't have as much administrative load, we might have some efficiencies. I mean I think that's what we were hoping to get.

Speaker 16 ([02:10:53](#)):

That's the hope. I don't know if we're far enough along to be able to say that's a reality at this point, but that is kind of the desire to get to is have that system really start flying very well and take some of that load off of us.

Speaker 5 ([02:11:06](#)):

Yeah, I would hope so. Okay. Code compliance, and I know I sometimes think about code compliance two different, I mean there's kind of two different code compliance I think. I mean there's kind the rental registration, short-term rental code compliance and I think that's a little different than code compliance of I guess maintaining properties and some of that. Is that two different divisions? Is that the same people?

Speaker 16 ([02:11:37](#)):

It's the same division but it's two different work teams effectively.

Speaker 5 ([02:11:40](#)):

That's what I was thinking.

Speaker 16 ([02:11:41](#)):

So the people that go in the field, there are two people that do rental licensing and they go both short-term, long-term rentals, respond to complaints and issues related to the rental licensing program. We have two individuals that work on property maintenance code issues, site plan violations or any of those other development plans that kind of run afoul of that. And so it's really, it's two teams of two that kind of work in those and they do have some ability to go kind of across the lines so they can go both into the PMC and into the rental licensing at times, but we really have two people specifically focusing on two different segments in some degree.

Speaker 5 ([02:12:14](#)):

I know there's a lot of discussion and amongst the development code committee and I think among the public about that rental side of it, about looking at possibly raising either rental registration fees and or in particular the fines on violators and possibly creating actually a third person in that group but offsetting it with fees, is that being looked at for the 2026 budget?

Speaker 16 ([02:12:46](#)):

It's not something we'd looked at quite yet because what we're still trying to understand is the balancing that goes on in there. The way that rental registration was constructed is that it is effectively cost recovering and property maintenance code inspections that really is no ability to cost recover to some degree. So what we're seeing with the segments that we have now with the three and the six year inspection cycles and what we're seeing is those are really balancing out well. So if we were to change the schedules or the frequencies of inspections, we would probably be looking at changing up to having more staff because we wouldn't be able to accommodate that with what we currently have. So if we went from three to six or to two to four or whatever iteration that may be more inspections would necessitate another staffer to kind of go out and do those checks with it I guess.

Speaker 5 ([02:13:35](#)):

Yeah, I mean I think I'm interested in trying to, I mean we can talk about that at another point, but I guess I'd be interested in looking at the cost recovery method for that. I think there's some concern about that, but this is questions not comments so I won't go there. But

Speaker 6 ([02:13:51](#)):

To that point, if I could piggyback yes, increasing the FTEs would change the frequency and of course we would want it to be cost a pego in a sense, not a sense we want it to be a pego, but that's also predicated on what we are doing with the three to six year inspections. Are they meeting the metrics that we have, which I don't think we have. We've been very clear about what metrics are as far as repeat offenses prohibiting the frequency, which is one of the reasons why I asked for the report of inspections to know what is it that we're looking at as far as what two FTEs are doing for rental inspections. Is that enough? Does that justify health and safety? Does that justify strong welcoming? Is that doing what we need to do? So I guess my pushback on that that I would need to know is based on what we're doing with inspections, the frequency of inspections, the passing rate of inspections, what would be the number that we would say that for two people for a department doing year round rental inspections, a passing rate of such should be what we would think to have and are we as commissioners okay with that number based on the number of rentals we have.

([02:15:13](#)):

Not a question you can necessarily answer right now, but I think that's where my mind is going with this and the concern for loss of an FTE as it relates to the different types of code inspection. So I guess my question would be if there was a formula, the idea two FTEs are expected to inspect how many units per

year and how many units do we expect to pass inspection based on that formula and that cycle. So I don't know if that exists, don't want to add. I think this is part of a bigger conversation when we talk about code inspection, but I would definitely, I would be interested to know is there an internal metric for that department that has come up with something like that? Because I just think saying two FTEs is good for what we have now, what is that based off of? So sorry, I'm again

Speaker 3 ([02:16:14](#)):

Dialoguing

Speaker 6 ([02:16:14](#)):

Why asking questions, but I would be curious to know if there is a internal metric as far as the number of inspectable units in a year, knowing those FTEs, how many do we hope to accomplish and what is that rate? What is that percentage if it exists? If it doesn't, I'd be curious to know.

Speaker 4 ([02:16:35](#)):

Yeah, I think you can get that information. I know that I've seen reports and hopefully they've got good data on how many they're doing and how they're doing, so I would love to see that as well. One question I want to make sure I got from you. We talked about your two teams, the reduction in the added position is not removing one person from your current team of two, it's not adding an additional person or am I incorrect there?

Speaker 16 ([02:16:59](#)):

No, it'd be maintaining the two teams of two we currently have.

Speaker 4 ([02:17:01](#)):

Okay. So it says maintain current capacity for co compliance response capacity, meaning the number of people, not the ability to inspect, but the number of people that you're going to keep on staff but remove the position that isn't currently filled as well. So this is another position we're not going to fill, but you already have budgeted if need as required I guess since it's been approved.

Speaker 5 ([02:17:26](#)):

Correct.

Speaker 4 ([02:17:26](#)):

Okay, thank you. Any other questions for

Speaker 5 ([02:17:30](#)):

One last question and I guess this kind of goes with the, and I know this is way too early to tell, but any estimate on, again talking about level of service of planning with the new development code, less things going probably to public hearing, more things being administrative, maybe some less BZA and so forth. Any estimate on the time savings or the efficiencies related to that? And the answer is probably too early, but

Speaker 16 ([02:18:00](#)):

Yeah, we're only about 18 hours into the new code



Speaker 5 ([02:18:03](#)):

Into effect hours.

Speaker 16 ([02:18:05](#)):

It's been a busy day. It's technical,

Speaker 5 ([02:18:07](#)):

Right. I love it.

Speaker 4 ([02:18:08](#)):

It's

Speaker 16 ([02:18:08](#)):

Been a minute for us, it's early. I think with what we had structured in the conversations, I would anticipate seeing that, but it's a little early to tell at this point in time in some of the conversations leading up to today and people getting their bearings on that, there have been a lot of conversations about the way that the mixed use districts have the reversions for our districts and how that affects projects. And so what we may have would've seen as a rezoning may just go through as a reversion in there and be a different way of handling it. So some promising conversations, but I would hope that it would be the case, but I can't say for certain yet.

Speaker 5 ([02:18:45](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 4 ([02:18:46](#)):

Fair enough.

Speaker 5 ([02:18:48](#)):

Okay, that's all folks. Jack, thank you. Okay,

Speaker 23 ([02:18:57](#)):

I re culture. I was listening for that.

Speaker 5 ([02:18:59](#)):

Oh, oh, I'm sorry. Culture. Thank you. I have to work on that. Volkswagen culture, thank you

Speaker 6 ([02:19:07](#)):

Even is cards.

Speaker 5 ([02:19:08](#)):

I know. Okay. I know last year we were talking about possibly doing some reduction in hours everywhere. Do I read this right? That the current proposal is just SPL hours or all works into ours?

Speaker 23 ([02:19:28](#)):

SPL is one of the positions that we need to reduce hours. One of the three positions, FTEs that we're reducing is currently vacant. We've had to do some shifting so it's necessary to reduce that with if we do not replace that position. So right now that is targeted for elimination for next year based on a vacancy that is in place right now that we did not hire this year and there's that direct effect it takes us, that is the sport, that is the facility that opens the earliest. So it takes overnight crews as early as two, three in the morning to come in for five 30 and it's hard to staff that all the way through without hiring another position. Now again, depending on what happens with the retirements, things will shift. The organizational chart will look different next year, but as it is, this would make our facilities consistent with one opening time and allow us to reduce that, continue to reduce that FTE.

Speaker 5 ([02:20:42](#)):

Okay. I guess I remember last year some conversations about now that we had some numbers that maybe some rec centers would close from two to four o'clock or one to four o'clock or

Speaker 23 ([02:20:54](#)):

Right.

Speaker 5 ([02:20:55](#)):

I mean are those things you're still looking at?

Speaker 23 ([02:20:57](#)):

Not really. Last year's direction was not necessarily as respondent to the balancing act where our facilities this year did not take that big prioritization hit as it did last year. So that's not something we're looking at. The one that took the biggest hit, and it's on the list as well, is our parks, trails and open spaces, which is where we're looking at reducing those 20 part-time seasonal, which we did the calculations since this slide was created and that's equivalent to four FTEs annualized. So they're working March through October, November FTEs. It's a good number of hours. So if you add all those up, it's equivalent for FTEs that we'd be losing. So the shift, there is a shift from what the cuts were last year, which were part-timers in our facilities, in our programs to parks, trails and open spaces. Those temps, or I'm sorry, part-timers that mow parks, they mow trails, they mow. That's that's where the shift is compared to last year.

Speaker 5 ([02:22:14](#)):

Okay, thank you for that. I know this is preliminary, so not holding you to anything. I mean I know we downsized some maintenance last year and that led to the closure of Martin Polk. I think it's Martin Polk, right. Would you expect any polks to be closed because of this additional reduction completely closed like in that sense or just not maintaining the same way?

Speaker 23 ([02:22:44](#)):

There will be a reduction either in portions of parks that we can no longer mow maintain, so there may be reduction in square footage, acreage, there may be reductions of parks that are underutilized. Again, we don't know what that final number's going to look like, but we know the four FTEs of part-time do a certain amount of work that we cannot recuperate without other staff. So we will have lost specifically park trails and open spaces. It will be visible to the community. It might impact certainly community parks, it might impact neighborhood parks that we just need to focus the remaining resources in other areas. So we are going through a process now planning what that is. Some might be just a slight level of service level reduction where we mow less frequently, but some of those as we're going through seeing what our resources we will have might be great reductions in certain areas and we'll try to be as forward

communicating as much as we can in the process. But there will be tangible, physical, visible impact. Yes, \$1.7 million is a big chunk of our budget.

Speaker 5 ([02:24:11](#)):

And just to be clear, of the 1.7 million reduction in the fees you think you might add, what do you think that is it 1.7 after the fees,

Speaker 23 ([02:24:25](#)):

It doesn't even come close the fees we're looking at. We routinely increase programming fees that's done on an annual basis as we create programs and see how they shift and what the market bears and what we have to pay our instructors, but the fees to access our centers, we're looking conservatively. We do not want to overburden the community with what it would take to cover 1.7 million of a deficit. I think the number we're throwing out there is five to \$700,000. So there's no way to balance this budget on those fees.

Speaker 5 ([02:25:10](#)):

Yeah, I guess what my question, and I appreciate that and I know that's going to be something we talk about as well, but is it 1.7 you're cutting from the budget or is it if you can get \$500,000 in fees, you're cutting 1.2 million?

Speaker 23 ([02:25:28](#)):

That is correct. We're talking about

Speaker 5 ([02:25:31](#)):

Net

Speaker 23 ([02:25:31](#)):

In many cases. So if we followed exactly what the balancing act said, we would be giving up some programs that make more money than they lose. So sports programming for instance, had a reduction that if we followed the balancing act to the letter, we'd lose several hundred thousand dollars. So we've talked about that. Should we be looking at net in some of these self sustain programs or those that recover a good amount of or more of their cost. So there are a few of those. So the number that we're looking at will be net off of the \$1.7 million, which will be balanced with additional revenues and current revenues as well.

Speaker 5 ([02:26:16](#)):

Perfect. I appreciate that. Thank you

Speaker 6 ([02:26:20](#)):

Luis. To piggyback on that, based on the presentation we had last week a couple weeks ago,

Speaker 23 ([02:26:28](#)):

Bouncing act, right? I mean I'm sorry, from the master plan.

Speaker 6 ([02:26:30](#)):

The master plan, yes. When you talked about cost recovery for programs and that you hadn't, that the department hadn't put things in place where it was breaking it down for each program, is it your hope, since we're looking at this from a net perspective, is it your hope that by July you will have something in place that you can look at that and hope that this number?

Speaker 23 ([02:26:54](#)):

Yeah, we're actively working on that. My hope is that yes, by July, absolutely it might take a little longer than that. We might have to go through some public process, certainly certain public information and education, but we're meeting on that weekly. We've met with finance to make sure that we're capturing the right cost to allocate to our programs. So yes, so our hope is just moving forward with that and having an answer to those questions as soon as possible.

Speaker 6 ([02:27:24](#)):

No, because I remember

Speaker 23 ([02:27:27](#)):

The

Speaker 6 ([02:27:27](#)):

Team saying that we don't really have those percentages and what are good spaces for us to be in. So the thought is if we know something by that's still

Speaker 23 ([02:27:35](#)):

The intention,

Speaker 6 ([02:27:36](#)):

We can still continue to move that. Thank you.

Speaker 4 ([02:27:37](#)):

Yes. So that's good for me to jump in then make sure I understand. On your reduction of hours, you're only talking about it at Sports Pavilion then, is that the only facility that you're Right

Speaker 23 ([02:27:48](#)):

Now that's it, yeah, potentially at aquatics we might have to do that as well, but it wouldn't be as severe and those would be our least used times where we're looking at that as a possibility. But SPL is the only one we've identified right now as reducing those number of hours, which is three and a half hours a day more than our other facilities are open

Speaker 4 ([02:28:16](#)):

And that the fee proposal would not just be for sports pavilion, but all of our centers we're going to need to have some sort of uniformity amongst all

Speaker 23 ([02:28:24](#)):

Correct. I

Speaker 4 ([02:28:25](#)):

Would like to just pick one and just slap it with a tax and when other centers may have one.

Speaker 23 ([02:28:30](#)):

No, we're looking at options for, I'm sorry for program, like a membership package, maybe adding aquatics to it, maybe not. So we're looking at comparing to other cities, seeing what offerings there are out there as well. Price points. So it would be likely, unless we're talking about what if somebody doesn't want to go to SPL, should we have at least Lawrence Recreation Center package? You can pick one or you can pick a family of locations. So that's what we're looking at. Again, we don't want to overburden somebody if they're not going to use sports pavilion, they're only going to go to East Lawrence. Let's provide an opportunity for 'em to do that and not make it cost prohibitive. So we're considering all those things as we talk about revenue opportunities. Again, I've said it I think from the beginning by initiating fees, we're hoping not to make it inaccessible to anybody. Another thing we're hoping to do is enrich our scholarship programs and our scholarship philanthropy to support that so that those that cannot afford to access our facilities with fees would have an opportunity to do that as well.

Speaker 4 ([02:29:42](#)):

And that the reduction in hours at SPL is related to the lack of being able to hire three more people. So this three FTEs is that equivalent reduction. I wanted to make sure I understood that.

Speaker 23 ([02:29:52](#)):

That is correct and it's one in particular position,

Speaker 4 ([02:29:56](#)):

One

Speaker 23 ([02:29:57](#)):

That takes care of that. And again, as we go through this process, we are making our best guess as to who's going to be in what position and how we restructure. Craig has made it very clear that we need to look at 2026. So right now we're about identifying the number of positions, three of which happen to be vacant and we're working around those, but right now that position is not slated to be opened or refilled. I'm sorry.

Speaker 4 ([02:30:34](#)):

Okay, thank you very much. Is that it?

Speaker 5 ([02:30:39](#)):

That's all I have. Thank you. You took all my questions. Thank you. I have a couple more, but that one, economic development, does that, the branding get your answer to that or just Greg Brand? Just a small question. I know when we do IRBs and some of the things, we get a fee and obviously if we decide to move forward with the KU project for example, there might be a fairly large fee there that's different than some of our other projects. Is that factored into this economic development budget and how that might offset that?

Speaker 24 ([02:31:18](#)):

I don't believe as it currently stands, those fees are put towards a staffing position in the department. That is something I want to evaluate though before the city manager's recommended budget, because we do some of those benefit districts like a community improvement district, we do have the ability if the

developer is agreeable to charge an administrative fee and that does accumulate over time and that can help offset some of our costs for maintaining compliance over maybe a 22 year incentive district. So I think it's definitely worth looking at.

Speaker 5 ([02:31:57](#)):

Yeah, I mean certainly with the crossing and now gateway, we've seen two of the larger projects that I think we could at least consider that.

Speaker 24 ([02:32:06](#)):

Right. And on the front end when we're evaluating a request, there's also pass through funds, but those just go to fund the consult fees and bond council fees.

Speaker 5 ([02:32:19](#)):

Yeah, no, I understood that. Homeless solutions then. Hey Misty, remind me what, as I recall, the LCS contract was a Tencent reduction in 2026 and then 25 after that.

Speaker 21 ([02:32:42](#)):

Yes, 25.

Speaker 5 ([02:32:43](#)):

And remind me what the 10% is that 250,000. 350,000. 350,000. And then same question I've asked, remind me how many fts you have on your team now. So when we're talking about one ft reduction out of how many

Speaker 21 ([02:33:03](#)):

That would leave me,

Speaker 5 ([02:33:05](#)):

I was thinking that. So from two to one? Yeah. Okay. So we fund other folks to be part of the team, but that's not our employees. Right though, when we talk about the homeless out,

Speaker 21 ([02:33:29](#)):

I

Speaker 5 ([02:33:29](#)):

Forget the name of the homeless HRT

Speaker 21 ([02:33:31](#)):

Homeless Response Team.

Speaker 5 ([02:33:32](#)):

Response Team, yes.

Speaker 21 ([02:33:33](#)):



Yeah, so we contract, but we do have those individuals 40 hours a week, so they really are designated to the team as full-time to the team.

Speaker 5 ([02:33:46](#)):

So are those, just so I know, are those City of Lawrence employees?

Speaker 21 ([02:33:50](#)):

No, sorry, those are all contracted staff.

Speaker 5 ([02:33:53](#)):

Yeah, that's what I thought. I just wanted to be sure.

Speaker 21 ([02:33:56](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 5 ([02:33:56](#)):

So when you talk about one FTE reduction, you're talking from two to one?

Speaker 21 ([02:34:00](#)):

Yeah, so that yeah, that would be in the general fund and so thankfully we have the special alcohol funds for those contracts, so that would not affect the contracts that we do have.

Speaker 5 ([02:34:12](#)):

Yeah, I think it was mentioned earlier is the general fund number two and a half million or what you have funds from the tax going forward. You have funds from special alcohol home sorts of things. How much is your general fund impact? I

Speaker 21 ([02:34:32](#)):

Believe for this year's 2.7.

Speaker 5 ([02:34:35](#)):

2.75.

Speaker 21 ([02:34:36](#)):

2.5.

Speaker 5 ([02:34:37](#)):

2.5. I thought that's what they said earlier. And would that be the same in 2026 or would the tax reduce that

Speaker 21 ([02:34:46](#)):

It would reduce the general fund if we do these changes? No,

Speaker 5 ([02:34:49](#)):

But I meant

Speaker 6 ([02:34:52](#)):

You want to know how much of the general fund, yeah,

Speaker 5 ([02:34:55](#)):

I mean the tax just went into effect, right? So I was just wondering if we allocated all things being equal without the cuts. Is the allocation of the general fund money in 2026 low because of the tax? Am I asking that question?

Speaker 24 ([02:35:12](#)):

It would be a net reduction in the budget. So it represents with the tax revenue, the new sales tax revenue. The way I think about it, it's easy for me. We had a million and a half of ARPA funds and that was one time funding. Now we have \$1.2 million of sales tax funds coming in, so it partially offsets those ARPA funds that we use to start up the operation. So it is a net reduction potentially of \$550,000 to the overall homeless solutions budget. And I want to go back, sorry vice mayor, but just to clarify, we do use some seasonal part-time positions, so I just want to be transparent about that, especially with some of the winter sheltering programs that we've supported. But we are working with Lawrence Community Shelter to have them take the lead on administering that program starting next winter. Okay.

Speaker 4 ([02:36:13](#)):

You need the help. Thank you. Appreciate

Speaker 5 ([02:36:14](#)):

It. Thank that. Thank you. Okay, I think those were all my questions.

Speaker 2 ([02:36:20](#)):

Misty. I did have a question on homeless solutions. Did you, regarding the funds for the campsite cleanups, did you know what percentage of that range that would be?

Speaker 21 ([02:36:36](#)):

I do not recall what that percentage is, but I'm happy to share that

Speaker 2 ([02:36:40](#)):

Once

Speaker 21 ([02:36:40](#)):

I grab it.

Speaker 2 ([02:36:41](#)):

I'm just curious. That's all I have.

Speaker 4 ([02:36:51](#)):

Any other questions right now? Do you mind if I open it up for public comment?

Speaker 3 ([02:36:59](#)):

Sure.

Speaker 4 ([02:37:00](#)):

Okay. With everybody. Okay. Is there a public comment on the regular agenda item?

Speaker 25 ([02:37:23](#)):

Good evening. My name is Seamus Albert and I am currently the president of Lawrence. Professional Firefighters, once again found ourselves on a challenging budget and as CD employees, we are scrambling and working with our department directors to find ways to trim our operating costs. Cutting costs has become a routine work for us at L-D-C-F-M for context, I want to make sure that it's entered into the discussion over the last 18 to 24 months as the budget pinch has begun and we recognize that maybe some of our tax revenues were not living up to how we projected it. We've cut as a department, nearly \$2 million out of our operating budget before we consider any of the cuts that have been proposed tonight. So we are already leaner than we were this time last year, the year before that and the year before that. So please keep that in mind as you move forward through these discussions. To be transparent, as a membership, our priorities are the same as they were last year. Staff our primary fire apparatus with four people, as that is a minimum safety standard, provide us with enough full-time positions that we're not constantly keeping people on duty beyond their 24 hour shift and recognize the need and make a plan for station six and seven to address the increase in the call volume. In particular our EMS calls. They need to be addressed. It's growing.

([02:38:58](#)):

This is not the first budget deficit and in the past when we've gone through these tough times as a community, we've made cuts where they're necessary, but we've always funded our core services. We've always kept healthy funding for police, fire, utilities, streets, et cetera. I ask that you step into that philosophy and maintain. There are plenty of decisions that can be made in this chamber, changes that can be made to the way we do our budgeting, the way we do our operations. You can change more efficient maintenance schedules, you can change hours to facilities fees like that. But what you can't change, a variable in which we have not a tremendous amount of power to change within these walls is the number of heart attacks that are going to happen in the city of Lawrence. We can't change the science of how fast we need to get stroke patients and stroke victims to the hospital to prevent long lasting deficits. We can't change the science that says that modern fires burn faster and hotter and more dangerously because all the plastics and glues that are in the construction, that's a variable that we don't have control of. But they do demand a response. They demand our attention and demand our current service levels to handle that on behalf of our citizens. So make the cuts where they're necessary, but please fund our public services. Thank you. Thank you, sir.

Speaker 26 ([02:40:36](#)):

Hi, my name is Sherry Ellen Becker. I've lived in Lawrence since the late seventies, even before Sports Pavilion was built and it was going to be free for all of us forever, but I'm here to talk about charging for access to the recreation centers specifically for junior high and high school students. That's the only thing I'm really worried about is because my daughter teaches at West and I told her we're headed down this path about, I dunno, a month ago. And then she came back to me and said, I talked to everybody at work. They're really upset about this because we have a lot of kids that take the bus and then go to a rec center until it's time to go home for supper. And their parents feel really good about it because they're in a positive space that's somewhat supervised. I mean, they're not breathing down their neck or anything, but it's a good place for 'em.

([02:41:40](#)):

And I said, well, last year they said if they did that they'd have scholarships. And she said, that's not going to work. And we have two different reasons why I think it's not going to work because I know what it's like to need a scholarship for almost anything. I'm one of eight kids. My parents went to the eighth grade

and a lot of people would qualify for reduced or free lunches, but they're not going to apply for it. It's just not in their DNA. And she says that they feel that even if they would apply for it, the paperwork is just one hurdle. It's not going to happen. It's just easier to say, go downtown, hang out downtown for a couple hours till you can come home or go to the skate park. But see, that's abandoning the kids that need this positive supervised space the most and then sending them to spaces that are not as good of a place for 'em. And I think that there should be an exception made. I think 18 and under should get to go in for free and we adults know our stations in life and if we have to apply for a scholarship and it's important to us, we will. But I think that the kids deserve, they're an investment in this community and we need to give them all the ability to grow and thrive that we can and that's one way we can do it carte blanche free for kids.

Speaker 4 ([02:43:18](#)):

Thank you. Thank you Sherry.

Speaker 27 ([02:43:25](#)):

Hi, my name's John Inman. I'm the vice chair for the Lawrence Police Officers Association. I understand that we are staring down a difficult time of some budget decisions and a lot of decisions need to be made that aren't necessarily going to be easy. What I do want to start with is as a organization, we do support our chief and the decisions that he has made going through this tough time. But what I do want to talk about however, is as a goal to raise concerns and to kind of talk about some of the problems that might come with some of the cuts that are being proposed to the police department specifically.

([02:44:04](#)):

So starting off, it seems like our budget has increased if you look at it, but a lot of those things are things that we have no control over, such as the doubling of the cost for jail services. Dispatch over the last three or four years has gone up about \$700,000 as well as the Humane Society contract also went up over the last three to four years as well as our competitive market pay plan across the city and with us as well. With those, we've also already made cuts about two and a half million in light items over the last three years. That includes a lot of things like equipment, crisis response, team funding, training funding, travel funding, our drone program, the Burton NASH co responder program, community Engagement Accident Investigations unit, and a lot of other cuts across the board where we have programs that aren't functioning any longer.

([02:44:54](#)):

When I look at those things, what I see is that we don't have anything really left to cut other than what chief proposed this positions. The problem is once we get into that, we don't really ever operate at full strength. Like chief said, usually we get from five to eight under what our sworn capacity is. When our sworn capacity drops to 145, which is what it would be, we'd be operating five to eight under that, which would put us at the operating capacity of the early two thousands. Right? The city has only grown since then and we are getting smaller as a department. One of the proposed things was cuts the information services. A lot of people don't understand the information services and our IT department is not just simply doing it work. A lot of that covers our body-worn cameras, which is going to be helping hold our officers accountable on the street as well as our software that helps officers on a daily basis go to calls and respond to emergencies and our command and support staff, everything trickles down to patrol. So even if you cut a position at the top, usually they're doing some level of support that helps patrol function overall. Same with our civilian staff as well. In conclusion, the idea for us of doing less with less just doesn't simply work for public safety.

([02:46:08](#)):

There's going to be emergencies that need responses. There's going to be fires that need to be extinguished. There's going to be crimes that need to be investigated. We are committed to keeping the city safe, but we're going to need the people and the funds to be able to do that. Thank you. Thank you

Speaker 28 ([02:46:44](#)):

Mayor. Commissioner Sean Coffee, resident of the city of Lawrence since 1975 and former employee with the Fire medical department within the city of Lawrence. As I sat through this and I read the paper this morning, I just can't help but think about all the difficulties that all these folks have gone through to try to work through this difficult process. I can't imagine the headaches, the stomach aches and the heartaches that's taken place as we've gone through it. But one of the things that hit me as I was reading through this was that as I looked at the fire medical departments program, I looked at it and it kind of hit me. I got on in 1985. At that time we had four stations. We had four engines and a ladder truck. Here we are 40 years later and we're looking at four engines and a ladder truck.

([02:47:36](#)):

I kind of chuckled a little bit when the LPOA officer mentioned about the two thousands in the growth of the city in 1985, Monterey Way was the edge of the city. Farmland was out in the East Hills Business Park. KLWN was out at 31st in Iowa, kind of on the edge of town in the country. But since that time, we've seen a large growth within our city. In fact, we're way behind and we're looking at two new stations and one should have been built years ago. Right now. Anyway, the reductions have been recommended and most of 'em have all taken place in the general fund. As we go through these, there's a lot of heartache and pain that's coming not only to the city employees, but to the community possibly as well. I do have a question. Why only the general fund was targeted? What about finance, hr, it, the city manager's office? What about reductions in those areas?

([02:48:40](#)):

The budget tool, good way to try to get interaction from the public, try to get more people involved, but just remember that was less than 100% of the, less than 1% of the population of the city of Lawrence that participated in it. So very small sample infrastructure. We talked about how important it is in updating our infrastructure and getting it in place, and we all know it needed to be caught up, but these are difficult times and maybe there's some small reductions in certain areas that can save us on some of that infrastructure that we could put back in. Same with the fund balance. We've seen an ally showed us where it's going. It's not going in the direction we want it to be, but maybe it doesn't need to be 2 million every year. Maybe this year we do a million. What's the projection there and 2 million beyond after that, what's that taking place?

([02:49:36](#)):

And then one that's probably not real popular will make me real popular is the market based pay plan. This is a tough time for everybody. Maybe there's options there where there can be some slight reductions as well, but still keep us in the market. And then the last thing I want to mention is something I thought about as well, and it's been discussed and I tried to confirm it a hundred percent, but that KU and their service delivery for fire service, the whole town gown discussion. I will tell you I'm 99% sure that the city of Manhattan receives some type of stipend from the University for fire service and I think it's something that's worth looking into in these extremely difficult times. Thank you everybody, and I appreciate your time.

Speaker 4 ([02:50:26](#)):

Sean, you got too much. Any more public comment in the room?

Speaker 29 ([02:50:51](#)):

Hello, I'm Howard Callahan and I'm one of the two remaining outreach case management positions at Bur Nash. Got to say, I'm a little terrified when I think of the sheer volume of response that I and we who work in services have been called upon to respond to and watching in very key areas, those programs get diminished and discontinued. There is a downstream effect of this that terrifies me. I need a robust city

program to coordinate with as a case manager with the mental health center. I've been doing homeless services for a long time. We need those boots on the ground. We need Sicily with her magic Rolodex, able to troubleshoot problems as they arise. I look at the number of crises that I've watched Sicily and Misty navigate through again and again and again and again and again. If they're telling you what they need, that's what they need. They're competent. They know what they're doing. They've shown some of the most leadership that I've seen in this community in quite some time. We need to not walk back everything that we stepped up to do over the last five years. Thank you. Thanks Howard.

Speaker 4 ([02:52:56](#)):

Anybody else? No. Okay. How about online? Sherry?

Speaker 7 ([02:53:02](#)):

Yes. Chris Flowers.

Speaker 14 ([02:53:08](#)):

Hi, this is Chris Flowers. Just some thoughts I had first when it comes to the budget committee that was mentioned was that the group that met in private that last I heard there, they might have signed some confidentiality agreements and I was just wondering if that's true and if they did sign confidentiality agreements. I don't think, I mean, how can you trust what Craig is saying is true if he's saying that they voted on this, if none of 'em can verify that they actually did or not publicly. So I kind of have a problem with that, but I don't know how far that confidentiality agreement extended to. I'll come back to that maybe, but also when it comes to money, I think in the past the city has used, there's some kind of neighborhood program that gives money to neighborhoods for projects. I think maybe the owl traffic reconfiguration might've used it.

([02:54:12](#)):

I'm not sure though. But I was just going to say, how about we quit making new product, quit using that for new projects and use it. I think you can use it for maintenance using it to maintain sidewalks and streets so we could use that money instead of our own money and quit building new projects that I don't think we really need. Also that balancing act, I think it was a joke because you couldn't reduce all areas. I don't believe you could reduce the golf course all the way, but you could close the Prairie Nature Center, so I didn't like that part about it. I think we should be allowed to reduce everything we want and let the city manager gauge whatever he wants from that. Also, police suggestions. Quit going after drugs, quit doing those police saturations. Why are we paying police to work overtime to do a police saturation? We need to end those. Quit going after drugs. Also, can we replace some of the police work with other cheaper employees like noise ordinances? How much training would you need to go to tell someone to turn it down or put your barking dog away? Could we replace cops doing that with someone that needs less training and isn't going to cost as much per hour?

([02:55:40](#)):

Also, I like the idea of KU helping with buyer calls and so I think that's about all I have. And also, I didn't like that budget committee meeting in private and I do think you should. Oh, the other question I have is how many of them supported increasing fees and reducing homeless solutions? Can the city manager tell us if it was, what percentage of 'em supported that or that? Thanks

Speaker 4 ([02:56:12](#)):

Chris.

Speaker 14 ([02:56:12](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 4 ([02:56:13](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 7 ([02:56:16](#)):

We have one more Mayor, Julie Jones.

Speaker 15 ([02:56:38](#)):

Good evening everyone. I have a couple of comments about the budget tonight myself. One thing I was told off the record by a police person was that they spend a lot of their time picking up the homeless people to haul them to the hospital because they have figured out that if they claim to be suicidal or I'm going to kill myself or something like that, then they have to respond to 'em and then they get a ride to the hospital or they get a ride to Burt Nash or wherever they want to go. I think they should be reduced to one phone call per month of those calls because they're constantly coming out of union at the loop. It's like the new homeless shelter.

([02:57:30](#)):

So that would be one way to reduce that without reducing the staff on the police and the fire department. I don't think you would come to our homes and tell us, well, one way to reduce your cost in your home is to take down your smoke alarms because you would save on batteries. And to me, by doing reduction in the police and fire department, you are putting the rest of us at risk for when we do actually need them. Thank goodness I haven't needed them yet, but my day will come. The other thing I noticed was like one of the other people mentioned earlier, there were certain departments that we couldn't look at and were no deductions on as far as employees for the city. I've heard buzz about people from the city being reduced, but actually in the building itself, for example, in the water department, it was last quoted, they had 26 people there in that department, but we no longer have meter readers.

([02:58:36](#)):

We have our billing goes to St. Louis and we have a fancy machine that calculates our water usage. So are the rest of those in the office and what are they doing? Transparency would be really nice there. Key thing that's missing with the city, the other thing is if I have a budget short in my home, I don't go on vacation. I don't go on training. I don't do anything like that. And that was one of the things I cut on the balancing act was no conferences, no training, no retreats for anybody because of the budget shortfall. That was weird that everybody was gone two weeks ago. And then the budget, a balancing act, that budget tool, I was trying to help people via next door trying to get through that because they didn't understand it. And so that's such a small percentage of people in the city that we actually had trying to use that tool time. Oh, sorry.

Speaker 4 ([02:59:43](#)):

Thanks. Thanks Julie.

Speaker 7 ([02:59:47](#)):

That's all the comments, mayor.

Speaker 4 ([02:59:49](#)):



Okay, very good. So do we have any feedback to give based on some of the questions that Allie started with in our slide presentation? I think we've got to give him some feedback and I think if you have any other additional help, that would be great.

Speaker 6 ([03:00:12](#)):

Hey, Allie, real quick. I think in our packet slide 29, the slide that says the no fund balance restoration with the 2 million fund balance restoration, I can hypothesize what we're utilizing to do the 2 million, but if we were going to look into doing the fund balance restoration, what vehicle would we use to drive that? Are you thinking mill increase? Is that based on reduction in cost that there would be a 2 million or are we thinking about an actual mill levy increase to restore that balance?

Speaker 18 ([03:00:56](#)):

I'm struggling with my presentation. Oh, here we go. Okay.

Speaker 6 ([03:00:58](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 18 ([03:01:01](#)):

I'm going to go to our first slide here to see the preliminary budget. So that 2 million is additional reductions in expenditures that we are proposing for 2026,

Speaker 17 ([03:01:15](#)):

Which is included in the 6.6,

Speaker 18 ([03:01:17](#)):

Correct. So

Speaker 6 ([03:01:19](#)):

It includes

Speaker 18 ([03:01:19](#)):

The

Speaker 17 ([03:01:19](#)):

6.6, what's in the 6.6?

Speaker 6 ([03:01:21](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 17 ([03:01:21](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 6 ([03:01:24](#)):

Plot twist.

Speaker 12 ([03:01:29](#)):

I did have a quick question. So the programs we saw here obviously doesn't include all the programs within our funds. What are the plans? Are there plans for any more cuts with some of these other programs that we do that we have? Are there any other plans,

Speaker 18 ([03:01:49](#)):

Other programs?

Speaker 12 ([03:01:50](#)):

Are these the only cuts that we're looking at right now

Speaker 18 ([03:01:55](#)):

In general? Yes. These are our general fund reductions. I guess while I have the floor, just like the community did balancing act for our general fund public facing programs. Our executive team did balancing act for our internal services where they basically got to buy the level of service that they expected from our internal services, from budget, from finance, from the city manager's office. And so there were approximately about a half million, \$400,000 reduction in internal services that have been built into the 2026 preliminary budget.

Speaker 17 ([03:02:45](#)):

You might explain cost allocation then because for the public more than,

Speaker 18 ([03:02:49](#)):

Yeah, so our internal services are largely in a separate fund called Admin Services fund 6 0 1. And what we do there is we cost allocate those charges out to our other funds as basically a cost recovery for providing those services to water to the airport to transit. And so the general fund on average, if you take say a hundred thousand dollars employee in the internal services, 60% of that, so \$60,000 hits the general fund and then the rest is spread out amongst our other funds. So those costs, about 60% of that cost is built into the expenditures you see here of 123 million.

Speaker 3 ([03:03:43](#)):

Got it.

Speaker 12 ([03:03:51](#)):

Okay. That's fine. Yeah, I'm good right now.

Speaker 4 ([03:03:57](#)):

Anybody else? Okay, so I got a couple of questions about just as far as discussions about out the estimates we've kind of created for fees for parks and rec and those kind of things, those projections, have you looked at those or did you scrutinize those numbers at all as this leader of this effort in this instance? Or do you feel comfortable, I guess, with some of the presumptions we've come up with when we've crafted this or the individual budgets preliminary from the department heads, you've gotten good data in order to determine if some of these things are really going to work out the way

Speaker 18 ([03:04:49](#)):

The parks department has worked with our finance department and our finance director. I would say that I think Louis said he was shooting for July, so there's a lot more conversations that have to go before we can

Speaker 4 ([03:05:01](#)):

Stuff.

Speaker 18 ([03:05:02](#)):

Yes,

Speaker 4 ([03:05:03](#)):

But you feel like they're gathering all that enough so we can make good decisions as far as how to balance these things using less, more direct means like fees, for example, and fairly we can do it efficiently without tons of extra overhead to try to pay for it. Does that make sense?

Speaker 18 ([03:05:20](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 4 ([03:05:21](#)):

We think we're going to collect all these fees, but then it costs us more to collect than it actually is going to gain. So I want to make sure we, I've seen that happen in the past and I want to

Speaker 18 ([03:05:29](#)):

Make sure

Speaker 4 ([03:05:29](#)):

That we've thought about that in the long run for this assessment too.

Speaker 18 ([03:05:33](#)):

Yeah, I suspect many folks will be brought to the table to try to identify those hurdles and unintended consequences and things like that as we refine what those numbers could look like

Speaker 17 ([03:05:46](#)):

For

Speaker 18 ([03:05:47](#)):

Increases.

Speaker 17 ([03:05:47](#)):

Mayor, if I could just add a little on that. Luis has extensive experience and several members of his team have extensive experience in other jurisdictions that have collected fees from the very beginning.

([03:06:01](#)):

Largely this is a professional characteristic of parks and recreation, certainly all the other stops I've made, recreation fees and how you make a class and how you balance out, will you get enough people attracted at a certain price point. Those elasticity kinds of calculations are a big part of the profession of parks and

recreation and culture. And so I have confidence that we're just not used to it here, but in the rest of the country it is quite common and there's really good data behind how you develop these programs. I also have confidence with our recent consulting engagement with the parks and recreation master planning. Those consultants also helped us strategize on those and there were some recommendations made through those. So I do think we have the capability, quite honestly it's about political will. We have not experienced that before and we even heard about it today about this community is not accustomed to it, so that's going to be something we wrestle with more than it is a technical recommendation. I think we have the right people to give good technical recommendations. It's about whether our community can adjust to something that's different for the history of our community.

Speaker 4 ([03:07:23](#)):

Very good, thank you. And then before you leave, you talked about your FTE equivalents when we had say a number or say a dollar value and you tried to equate that to a full-time equivalent number in some of your discussion in that it's not necessarily a person but it's a dollar value. Can you tell me how you come up with the full-time employee equivalent number when we're talking about it's a thousand, if it's a hundred thousand dollars, what does that mean from an FTE perspective and does that change depending on what departments you're in or because you kind of talked about this in a more nebulous way on when there's not a person but there's a dollar but we're adjusting for the equivalent of a full-time employee and I just want to make sure I understand what that means.

Speaker 18 ([03:08:13](#)):

We ran the average salary and benefits of general fund employees to be I think approximately 115,000. I said a hundred thousand just because that's easier math when I talk about 60% of it hitting the general fund. So that's why I said that number.

Speaker 4 ([03:08:34](#)):

I just want to make sure I understood that because what I was trying to get the math from and then I think that was it on your part there, so I appreciate your time. If anybody else wants to ask anybody any other questions or comments before we give guidance, I'd open the floor.

Speaker 5 ([03:08:54](#)):

I was just going to highlight looking at the preliminary budget numbers, internal services has gone down from 2025 to 2026 from 11 five to 11 5, 5 2 to 11 5 4 2. I assuming there was, as we said, all of these would include some sort of salary increases. I mean that's where we're showing that there's actual a decrease in the amount of internal services, budgets, hr, finance, city management attorneys. Correct?

Speaker 18 ([03:09:31](#)):

Yes. This is a combination of those decreases that those departments made as well as paying off our temp note for the Tyler ERP financial system. So we had to build up that fund balance for several years and do not plan to continue needing to build that up into 20 20 26. But yes, it includes the same pay increases for those internal services employees.

Speaker 3 ([03:10:12](#)):

Anybody else? I think

Speaker 6 ([03:10:27](#)):

We're ready.

Speaker 4 ([03:10:28](#)):

Tell us some

Speaker 6 ([03:10:29](#)):

Questions,

Speaker 4 ([03:10:31](#)):

Whatever you'd like. Questions I'm ready to,

Speaker 6 ([03:10:33](#)):

I said I'm just ready to get to the policy questions.

Speaker 4 ([03:10:35](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 2 ([03:10:38](#)):

Well I guess I'll start her off. I think 2 million is, since it's coming out of the 6.6, I think it is appropriate. I'm fine with the prioritization as it was. I think our aspect of it, I didn't see any changes from kind of collectively as the commission what we were looking at in terms of compensation per employee groups. I would want to stay at market compensation and I would be open to number four. I don't necessarily have a limit right now in my head, but this is kind of an unprecedented time so we're kind of keep our options open, but that's where I'm at right now. Appreciate that. Thank you

Speaker 6 ([03:11:53](#)):

Allie. Just real quick reading the slide again about the budget, I just want to make sure I'm not assuming something. The final line where it says fund balance restoration, it's slide seven for us in the packet there's the 2 million for the 2026 preliminary, so I might have read this correctly that we've not done any fund balance restoration for 23, 24 or 25.

Speaker 5 ([03:12:24](#)):

No, we spent money,

Speaker 18 ([03:12:26](#)):

There are no dollars set aside for fund balance restoration in 2025. Something we're talking about with departments actively not spending their full budget authority so that there will be savings there, but it's not something that we've budgeted.

Speaker 6 ([03:12:47](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 12 ([03:12:54](#)):

On item number four, alley down at the bottom, do you mean that you said does property tax, do you mean the mill levy? Is that what you

Speaker 18 ([03:13:01](#)):

Yes, the rate

Speaker 12 ([03:13:02](#)):

The mill levies. Okay.

Speaker 18 ([03:13:03](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 12 ([03:13:04](#)):

Not because the taxes are going to go up with valuations. Yes.

Speaker 18 ([03:13:07](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 4 ([03:13:17](#)):

I am pretty comfortable just going ahead, if you don't mind, I'm just going to try to answer your questions. I think we should do what we can to restore the fund balance to the best of our ability. I know we can do so through different means and maybe some of it'll come back to us through savings, so I appreciate that. I understand that most of the commissioners have committed to and are interested in maintaining the market compensation for employees and I offer that up as an opportunity to find some savings if these measures don't work out, if individual departments or persons want to participate in something that would be less of a reduction in the future. I think that's a reasonable request and something that I've mentioned before and we've done in the past, but I'm more interested in trying to do our best with some of the plans that already been offered this evening. I don't really have any changes to the program prioritizations. I really do want to focus on how we formulate our EMS and fire in general through Douglas County and the city and I think we need to prioritize clear conversation on how we're going to find those funds and make sure that we can fund our new equipment and the people that we may not be able to add through the existence of a new engine or fire apparatus. And I'm not interested in raising the taxes. I'd like to hold the flat mill.

Speaker 2 ([03:14:45](#)):

I'd like to jump in and add that on the fire and med. I am definitely going for the preferred choice and I'll be interested to see what those further conversations with our partners in the county look like.

Speaker 5 ([03:15:10](#)):

I guess I'll jump in and say a few things maybe longer than others. I guess one on the fund balance, I think we need to be heading towards restoring our fund balance. I think as the mayor said and has mentioned, there might be some other ways as we look at what happened in 2024, what happened in 2025 and to see where we're at. I mean I also think I've looked at those charts several times. Our charts for example, show that our fund balance is going to continue to increase, right? Well if we do what we say we're going to do, we'll actually have a flat one that we'll spend 116 million in 2025 and we'll spend 116 million in 2026, which means our fund balance policy will not be continually increasing. It'll be flat. And so when we look at some of those chart, I think we need to make sure we we'll factor in what we're actually budgeting. I mean I know those charts we have now are based upon the preliminary budget,

Speaker 3 ([03:16:12](#)):

So

Speaker 5 (03:16:13):

I'm not saying they're inaccurate, I'm just saying when we come back we're going to be looking at where we started and then if we have 116 million budget in 25 and we do 116 million in 2024 and matter of fact if we don't do \$2 million, we might actually have \$115 million budget, not 116 million budget.

(03:16:34):

So you'd actually see the fund balance policy going down and so to more accurately understand where we at with the 60 days versus the 90 days, yes we need to be moving in that direction to build our fund balance up. But I think as we get further into this process, I want to look at that and there may or may not be that exact \$2 million. So I'm interested in studying that as we go forward. Again, appreciate where we're at. Certainly support building back up the fund balance and making sure at the 60 days. I just think there's some more analysis there as we go farther.

(03:17:16):

I wanted to say, as others said tonight, I appreciate all of our department heads and exec team working on these very difficult budgets and working, trying to find the ways to meet this difficult budget. I know it is not easy and I know it's not certainly not fun and it's not easy and so I do appreciate the efforts and I appreciate what we've seen here tonight. I have a few comments about a few of those and I'm not saying that to dissuade the hard work that's being done or think that me sitting up here have all the answers. I support our department heads coming up with the ways to meet these tough goals. But I'll say a few things on a few of those budgets and I'm getting to that obviously fire medical, I think we have lots of discussions to have with the county and I look forward to those discussions and we will have to circle back around to that. I think with police, our goal is not to have a reduction in investigation in patrol

(03:18:38):

And I understand that there's been other cuts in police and it might be hard to do that, but I think we want to continue to look at ways not to reduce investigations and police, I mean investigations and patrol and we have been working to get that number up and I think we're committed to that. But is there other places to look? I think we need just to think about that planning in development. I understand the reduction of the one FTE. I'm certainly hopeful that we don't have a necessarily reduction in service level now that we've made large contributions into the new system and into the new development code.

(03:19:38):

I actually hope, I'm hoping as we get into 2026, we're seeing the level of service increase mean and the level of going through projects get better. So I do think I understand the one FTE there, but I also want to think about how some of the other changes, and I'll say something about that in a minute, in a larger scale, I also am very interested in as we've talked about, looking at raising fees and fines so that we can keep that added FTE position or add code compliance. It's something that is brought up a lot during the development code and I think there's real concern as we're moving into 2026 of those issues. So I'd like to look at that and like to have some more discussion on that. Appreciate the woke at Parks and Rec. I do support fees. I do think we have to move to what many other communities are doing and I do think we have to have a continued conversation.

(03:20:52):

Last week, two weeks ago, whenever we had a parks and rec consultancy, they pointed out to us that they'll pat us on the back, which rightfully so that we have 30.89 acres per a thousand residents of Polk land and the average in the Midwest is 12 acres per a thousand people. So we're nearly three times the number of acres. So again, will it be a loss to reduce some of that acreage from usable land? Yes, but where does that leave us in comparison? We also have 3.21 square feet of indoor space compared to two square feet, an average per thousand. Again, pat us on the back. That's good. But again, I think when we talk about reducing levels of service, we're talking about things we expect in this community had it so good for so long. But I do think we want to put that in perspective as we continue to look at some of these



spaces and make sure we all providing good services, a good level of service, but understand what that means and we are way above average according to our consultants at least in some of these areas. So I think we want to look at that.

(03:22:14):

And I guess I would say big picture when I been involved in lots of budget cuts, not in the city, I mean we've done some in the city too, but when I've done it either at my office or at nonprofits and other boards and committees I've been on, one of my philosophies is always if we cut pick a number, we cut a million dollars from the budget in 2026 and we give you a million dollars back in 2027, would you add back exactly what you cut or would you say I could do something better with that million dollars if I cut out some of these services, would I bring those exact services back or would there be something better I could do with those services with that money? And I know for some groups, some departments it might be, yeah, matter of fact, if I lost six police officers, I'd bring six police officers back.

(03:23:20):

I wouldn't do anything different. But I maybe that's not the answer. Maybe it would be that I would start a new unit, I would start a new different type of unit that I don't have now. I do something different and I guess I like to look at things that way. We have invested so much in the last several years that I'm excited to see how they play out and I'm sad we're talking about these things in the context of a budget cut. But if you think about, I was writing these down the other day, I mean how much staff time we've used creating the land development code, creating a place for everyone, creating our asset management plan, creating our environmental plan, implementing our new finance system, implementing our new project management system and PDS and codes.

(03:24:22):

And we've done all of those things. I mean we've used a lot of staff time getting you those plans in place. Now I hope we have staff time to implement them. We reduce the boards and commissions greatly. We had estimated something like \$400,000 in savings if we reduce the boards and commissions. Again, I'm hoping in 25 and 26 we see our employees being able to do more as they implement things. And so I know we're in a position where we're looking at cuts, but I also hope that we're still looking forward to say how have these changes we made, how have getting these plans in place, how are we going to see service increases and how does that play out in our budget? So anyway, I'm just, if we weren't talking about these budget cuts, what would we be talking about with all those changes and having those plans behind us?

(03:25:30):

Someone was asking me the other day why we've had a lot of small city commission agendas and I was going back and looking at those city commission agendas in the last couple of years and it's an update on place for everyone. It's an update on the development code, it's an update on the asset management plan. It's an update and these are things are kind of behind us in the sense that with the plans in place now we have to go implement them. I'm excited where the city's going and I think we need to make sure as we go through a budget cut, but also as we look to the future, what sort of services are we going to be providing to implement those and all. They're the same services we've done for the last 10 years, the last 15 years or the different things we need to focus on now. So again, I'm excited about seeing where we go in that direction. So end of rant. Sorry, and I guess I didn't answer the other two questions my rants over, but at least some

Speaker 6 (03:26:39):

Questions

Speaker 5 (03:26:41):

Going to get to. I'm a believer in market compensation. I don't believe in asking people to do more for less. I mean I think people, and if we're asking more of our employees, they should be paid for that. I don't disagree with the mayor necessarily if I would consider if there was something else brought to me, but my philosophy is that market pay is important. I kind of mentioned my program prioritization a little bit there. I don't necessarily have any major changes, but I pointed a few of those out and I think I was the property tax I had like it to be held flat, but is there a tolerance possibly. But I want to see where we go from here to there as we continue this difficult work. But I think I would not go to a tax increase first I would say that, but is there a tolerance? Possibly, but let's see where we're at. It'd be a small tolerance.

Speaker 12 ([03:28:00](#)):

Okay. Okay. So I'll go ahead and go. I definitely want to look at restoring the fund balance and depending on what our budget actually is, whether it needs to be 2 million or somewhere in that range, definitely make it as appropriate based on our budget, definitely want to stay with the market compensation. That's something that I was in the commission in 2018 when the market study was done and I'm sure would like to see that continue. I think it's fair and it's appropriate to do that, do that. As far as program prioritization, I would like for us to look at that full-time position in planning development for code enforcement. If there's any way we can figure out some way to keep that with something that's kind of hard fought with some of the neighborhood neighborhood groups, I'd sure like to try to keep that and definitely I might have absolutely no interest in raising the mail levy. Okay.

Speaker 6 ([03:29:05](#)):

I guess that leaves me okay. I'm trying to get all my thoughts down to something a little bit more succinct. I think I echo everyone's sentiments. Thank you for this. I think for me what this presentation lets me know is that there's still some pieces that I require from staff to help me become a little bit more sure and confident of where we're going with these cuts. I think to see it in presentation, I can kind of get it from everyone's body language nonverbal communications here. It is very dense and it's very thick and you can feel it. I don't ever want to feel this way again in this room. I know I will and I probably have, but I don't want us to feel so heavy about this. This is heavy. But for a lot of our departments it's timely. I've said it before, today's price is not yesterday's price and we can no longer expect a champagne taste on a tap water budget.

([03:30:13](#)):

We just cannot. And I think there are some things that we've benefited from as a community that we really haven't taken on our full responsibility for and this is where we're at. I think to Commissioner Finite's point, we have gone through a laundry list of incremental changes that we have made in policy and in efficiencies that are making us better so that we're not here for eight hours talking about things that we should have took care of two years ago. We're doing the work now, so kudos high fives for us for doing that work and for charging staff with that. And most importantly for the community's involvement in that. As far as I'm going to jump around as far as priorities with planning and development, we've heard a lot about code enforcement and I think we're kind of using it as one umbrella, but it is comprehensive as far as what we're looking at as code enforcement, whether it is for the inspection side, for rental inspection as well as property.

([03:31:24](#)):

I think that's going to be part of a bigger conversation as we move forward and kind of Venn diagram and we talk about a place for everyone and affordable housing, there's things that we have to look at at a bigger scope that yes, this is a micro piece of it. My brain's not going to allow me to micro target too much of this without speaking to the bigger piece that we're doing. So what we do with this is going to Commissioner F's point could impact how we operationalize and implement some of these big hairy audacious goals that we've committed to a strategy and now we have tools to do that. So not necessarily

saying we need to maintain the one FTE, but I would like to hear from department staff, like if we're not making the mark as it comes to inspections, what do we need to do to get to that point?

(03:32:11):

Do we need to look into pulling in partners, whether that's county, whether that's KU to do that. So that's kind of where my mind is with some of these as far as hands off or reprioritizing things, economic development for sure. I would like to see us put a little work towards that. I think once I get some of the requests that I asked for, I could have a more solid answer, but I would hate for us to see what reductions in that looks like or how those reductions show up. Seeing that we've made so much effort to address I think the city has with support from the county to address economic development from a small business all the way up to commercial and what we can do with that homeless solutions. I know that there's going to be a shift with the funding with that, more conversations to be had about how we do that. I think it's going to be a huge lift for LCS us weaning them off if that's how you want to articulate it.

(03:33:17):

I just hope this community shows up because again, it's not a privilege. It shouldn't be a privilege to have an emergency shelter in your community. You should have the expectation of having it and all the services that go with it, but don't want to preach the choir. As far as the 2 million, I think that is a start. I think I have more questions as to how do we need to map out what that looks like as it relates to obligations coming off for geo bonds and is 2 million something that needs to be, is that annualized, is it ally or what are we looking at as far as how do we address that? But I think 2 million based on what it's looking like from the last two years. I don't like where we're heading with this and we've had this conversation since Jeremy, so none of us can say this was, we didn't know this was coming. It's been preached to us. So thank you Jeremy, wherever you are.

(03:34:23):

As far as the market compensation, I'm the same. I'm not being a former state employee. The idea of knowing that so few people can determine your pay is very hard. We've made progress and we've seen what we've done with that progress. I don't want us to do any reductions or freezes. I think at a time where things are very precarious in our world right now, that's a freeze or a reduction is not going to yield a net positive for us. It hasn't for the state, it hasn't done it for a lot of states and municipalities, so I don't expect it to do it for us here. I do like the idea of what would it be if we imagined a four day work week or a reduced and how could we do that? Not saying we could implement that for 2026 if we could, that'd be great. But essentially what could that look like for maybe 2027 or moving forward to help us as commissioners think about that. I talked about the changes in prioritization, the infamous mill levy piece.

(03:35:30):

I think this is the tool for us to use in addition with others. This is the first, I think this will be the most present for commissioners as well as for the public for us to have that conversation around reductions in costs and property tax and how can we use both if not just relying heavily on one or the other. There's some legislation that may or may not impact us. We have to see when the legislature comes back next week after their vacation. But I mean for me to say right now, no property tax, I can't do that. That is so preemptive of us in a tool that we could use that. I think making a statement of that right now would be very premature on our part knowing that we don't know where we'll be in July. So

Speaker 4 (03:36:24):

Understood.

Speaker 2 (03:36:26):

And again, thank you all for all of your hard work and all the department heads and everybody involved. I know this has been really rough and nobody really likes to go through this, but we really appreciate all of your efforts in providing us this material so we can make these informed decisions. So appreciate it.

Speaker 4 ([03:36:42](#)):

Yes, thank you very much Ellie and all the people that contribute their time and energy so that we can try to make the best decisions for everyone. And I know this is not fun and I'm sorry to be sitting in on this, but I'm happy to help and try to be as open-minded to whatever possibilities there are so that the hardship is minimal on everyone, but there's going to be some hardships unfortunately with this deficit.

Speaker 5 ([03:37:08](#)):

I did want to say we had gotten this government finance review article

([03:37:16](#)):

For those obviously in the public who haven't seen this. I mean it's a full page article in the government finance review talking about our budget process and the way we do priority based budgeting, the way we do balancing act and the engagement. And of course Allie and Craig and Casey O highlighted in here. But Craig, I think we really need to put this out there somehow on our budget page because I mean it's a nice article about you, but really it explains what we're doing. And I don't think the public, I mean some of the public does not understand some of the aspects we've been trying to do with this balancing act and all of that. So I don't know if it's the city manager report or if it's on our budget page on the website. I think we need to get that out there for people to read and understand the process we're using. I think it's informative. I mean it's also complimentary, but it's informative and I think that's the important part.

Speaker 6 ([03:38:22](#)):

I would like to take it even further and loop this into some of the work that Corey is doing. We on a cycle receive the outcome team updates and as we continue to bring community on board and understanding about the strategic plan and the role that they play in it, why are we not doing that to the public? So balancing act to me was a way of introducing the community to the strategic plan and the outcome areas of the strategic plan. I would like for us to see that done operationalized in some way. And this is me, I've already sent the email to Corey to how we can share those outcomes and commitments to the community. So then that may fall up under that transparency role

([03:39:17](#)):

Of understanding where how does one articulate transparency, this is one way to do it. Oftentimes folks are not going to find which meeting we had, the strong welcoming neighborhoods outcome. But if there's a way that we can operationalize that in that community engagement, that word that I don't really like, that needs another term. If we could do that, I think that could help connect and tell the story. We've always talked about how do we do a better job of telling our story. And I think there's a way to tell our story where we're giving the work back and the community is giving. The work is sharing in that responsibility as well. So outside of your purview, your scope, but definitely helps to be forward facing in the work that you're doing. So just a thought,

Speaker 12 ([03:40:15](#)):

Just add one thing. I just want to thank staff for the work that they put into this and what I noticed throughout the entire presentation was staff positions that were proposed to be cut, a lot of those weren't filled already. And so I really appreciate you looking at that so thoughtfully and to try to mitigate some of the pain maybe on that if the positions aren't even filled, do we really need them?

Speaker 4 ([03:40:41](#)):

Yeah, thank you. Okay. So do you think you have what you need to move forward or at least to some of the general incentives by counting and such?

Speaker 18 ([03:40:53](#)):

Yes. And if I may briefly, because I've heard quite a bit about fund balance restoration and I appreciated the comment that I heard about, we seem to be doing this every year, right? Reduce, reduce, reduce. And so our fine balance restoration, that \$2 million, yes, it is about protecting us from economic downturns. Yes, it is about keeping our bond rating so that we can borrow as cheaply as possible, but it's also to try to set us up sustainably in the future so we can stop having these reduction conversations. So we don't want to keep having these conversations either. And so that's for me one of the primary reasons when we talked about this at the beginning of the process, what that number should be, that's where that came from. And there's too many unknowns. Could the state cap our assess valuation growth in the future? There's too many things that could happen, but that seemed like an appropriate number to set us up so we could hopefully try to have growth conversations versus reduction conversations in the future.

Speaker 4 ([03:42:04](#)):

I agree with that. Thank you.

Speaker 18 ([03:42:09](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 4 ([03:42:13](#)):

Good. Thanks everybody for showing up and giving us the feedback we needed. Hopefully you got the feedback you need. I'll give everybody a chance to leave if they'd like to before we move on to any commission items, take a minute. Okay. Item G on the agendas are commission items. Anything anybody would like to bring up this evening?

Speaker 6 ([03:42:52](#)):

I have one thing, but if someone else has something I can, okay, I did find it. I know that we always have this weird awkward, this awkward break in between when we as a city go to NLC and then the chamber does their fly in. And so I know we talked about this creating some type of strategic strategy around how we address those two. I would like to propose that this commission that we draft a resolution to be shared with our Kansas delegation about some of the things that we're seeing in budget and budget concerns, how it impacts some of the work that we're doing with federal dollars and things that impact us specifically tax exemption on municipal bonds. I know that we've talked about that. It's been stressed to us in several policy settings and we're not getting a clear message on it. And I think a resolution from us for what it's worth is a way of saying that we as a commission believe that for this community that congress needs to pump their brakes on tax exemption means or else it's going to essentially create catastrophe for us on a local level.

([03:44:21](#)):

I would be open to adding additional pieces. It could be around the funding CDBG dollars for hud. I think that's another area that we've utilized and we've been good stewards of that money and I would hate to see that go away. I'm not going to ask this commission to say anything about diversity, equity, inclusion, but at least those two. I think those are two areas that could impact us. Not just us as a municipality but all municipalities. And I feel like it is that time that we need to let our delegation know. I mean I know it was shared when a couple of us went on the hill. Sometimes things are worth repeating.

Speaker 4 ([03:45:13](#)):

Sure. And reminding the messages. So do you already have a message crafted in your mind or do you think staff has already done something? Well last time,

Speaker 6 ([03:45:21](#)):

I mean I can push something together. I'm always about, if I want to say the work,

Speaker 5 ([03:45:27](#)):

I think Neil NLC has a draft.

Speaker 6 ([03:45:29](#)):

They have one and

Speaker 5 ([03:45:30](#)):

For tax and tax exempt, they have a draft, a model resolution we could certainly look at.

Speaker 6 ([03:45:35](#)):

They have a model one NBC Leo, we drafted ours based off of, there are some municipalities that kind of drafted theirs based off of the NLC one because they wanted to do some other things that were more specific to their federal dollars. But again, I appreciate staff put that together. That was something that I shared. I shared that tip that Rochelle told us about with our audit and how we have these things put together. So I was teaching folks in NBC Leo like, Hey, tell your city manager, go back to your finance team, ask for this. And I think this is an opportunity for us to elevate our voices once again to say these are not necessarily political points. These are points that impact our ability to function and have autonomy and that any impact from Congress on this would be detrimental to us.

Speaker 4 ([03:46:27](#)):

And repeating that again would be important at this point. Especially when we go again in April. I think

Speaker 6 ([03:46:32](#)):

Very much so. Okay.

Speaker 2 ([03:46:33](#)):

Very good. I'm sorry,

Speaker 5 ([03:46:36](#)):

Go ahead.

Speaker 2 ([03:46:36](#)):

Oh, with that, if possibly I'd like to add some EDA stuff, economic development. I know that the city and county have some programs going through that agency and especially since Senator Moran is chair of that committee that usually overlooks that. I think that might be present just to make sure that we still get those funds coming towards us. He's the chair. Senator Moran.

Speaker 4 ([03:47:04](#)):



Yeah, he

Speaker 2 ([03:47:04](#)):

Is. Yeah.

Speaker 5 ([03:47:05](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 4 ([03:47:08](#)):

That's good.

Speaker 6 ([03:47:11](#)):

Of course. I think it's something that needs to come back to us to review

Speaker 4 ([03:47:14](#)):

So I will

Speaker 6 ([03:47:15](#)):

Just didn't know if there were specific, do you

Speaker 4 ([03:47:17](#)):

Know what to ask to get the language together so make sure that commissioner and or other language, I think it's important when we go on the end of the month that maybe we have that message

Speaker 17 ([03:47:27](#)):

Do

Speaker 4 ([03:47:27](#)):

An elevator speech I guess.

Speaker 17 ([03:47:29](#)):

Right. Evie with the chamber has reached out to me and we're trying to coordinate something. I've sent something out to staff and we'll do that. Your comments, commissioner sellers are also part of it. And then we will now draft a resolution that you can execute before we go. Beautiful.

Speaker 4 ([03:47:49](#)):

Sounds good to me. Is that okay with everybody else?

Speaker 12 ([03:47:52](#)):

When is that happening? End of this month.

Speaker 4 ([03:47:54](#)):

At the very end of the month. 28th

Speaker 12 ([03:47:55](#)):



Or something. 30th.

Speaker 4 ([03:48:00](#)):

Any other commission items at that point?

Speaker 2 ([03:48:03](#)):

I think Vice Mayor Finkel was going to say something

Speaker 5 ([03:48:07](#)):

Mistaken. You just completely threw me off. I can't remember now. I'm sure I'll come up with a later. Thank you though. Thank you for pointing out my forgetfulness.

Speaker 12 ([03:48:22](#)):

Could we put that on the calendar? Sherry?

Speaker 7 ([03:48:24](#)):

It's not on there. Yeah, we'll get the DC fly in you mean?

Speaker 12 ([03:48:29](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 7 ([03:48:30](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 12 ([03:48:31](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 7 ([03:48:34](#)):

I'm not sure we had more than three going so that might be why it's not on there. We can put it on there.

Speaker 3 ([03:48:47](#)):

Okay. Future agenda.

Speaker 4 ([03:48:48](#)):

Anybody else have anything? Commission item wise? Otherwise we've got the future agenda items to look at. Which doesn't look too exciting Next week we like not exciting. Yes. Okay. Alright. Anybody else want to add? Otherwise I'm going to move on to the city manager's report.

Speaker 7 ([03:49:08](#)):

And I'm sorry mayor, there's nothing on the city manager's report. The heading just didn't get removed.

Speaker 4 ([03:49:12](#)):

Look at that. That's what I thought, but I wanted to make sure I blew by at one time and I don't want to do Alright, so no city manager's report. The commission calendar looks like there's some opens for ribbon cuttings needing, if I need to do one of those, let me double check. I can try to help on either the 10th of

the 20 on the 24th maybe. So whatever needs to be done, I can help if you need to share. Okay. Anything else? Okay, I am going to go ahead and end our live broadcast. I'm let anyone else who needs to leave and we're going to go ahead and read the public comment speech public is allowed to speak on issues on items not scheduled for discussion on the agenda. The comments should be limited to issues.