

Speaker 1 ([00:04:31](#)):

You guys ready to go to this thing?

Speaker 2 ([00:04:34](#)):

Good evening. Welcome to the September 16th, 2025 Lawrence City Commission meeting. First item on our agenda is to consider a motion to recess into executive session.

Speaker 3 ([00:04:44](#)):

I move to recess an executive session for 30 minutes to discuss privileged legal communications from the city's attorneys regarding a pending legal matter pursuant to KSA 75 dash 43 19 B two. The justification for the executive session is to keep attorney-client privileged matters confidential. At this time, the City Commission will resume its regular meeting and the city commission room at 5:31 PM after the executive session is concluded.

Speaker 2 ([00:05:09](#)):

Second, that's a motion by Finkle Dye, second by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 3 ([00:05:14](#)):

Aye. Aye.

Speaker 2 ([00:05:15](#)):

Those opposed? Motion passes five zero. We'll see

Speaker 1 ([00:05:18](#)):

You at 5 32 back from our

Speaker 2 ([00:35:26](#)):

Executive session and we have nothing to report at this time. Yeah, at this point in time we're going to restart the meeting with item B at 5 45.

Speaker 1 ([00:50:02](#)):

Okay. I think we're

Speaker 2 ([00:50:02](#)):

Ready to get back started to our main meeting after our earlier executive session. Next item on the agenda is to proclaim September 15th, 2025 through October 15th, 2025 as Hispanic Heritage Month, and I wanted to reach out and see if anyone here was to receive the proclamation so I could introduce them. Otherwise I was going to go ahead and read the proclamation. Anybody. Okay, now go ahead and start in on this. Whereas Hispanic Heritage Month has been celebrated since September 17th, 1968, when President Lyndon b Johnson signed the National Hispanic Heritage Week bill into law, making a week of recognition and appreciation for the contributions and achievements of the Hispanic, Latino and Latinx community in the United States. And whereas on August 17th, 1988, president Ronald Reagan expanded Hispanic Heritage Week to a month long celebration, providing an opportunity for the planning and coordination of the activities and events to honor the rich history, culture, and diversity of Hispanic, Latino, Latinx Americans.

([00:51:14](#)):

And whereas the months from September 15th until October 15th is of significant historical importance as it spans various national independence days in Latin America and South America, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile, highlighting the deep connection and shared heritage between these countries and the United States. And whereas throughout the American history, Hispanic, Latino and Latinx individuals have played crucial roles in shaping the nation, contributing to every aspect of society from the arts and sciences to the economy, and serving with valor and distinction in the US armed forces with over 1 million Hispanic, Latino and Latinx veterans who have bravely defended our freedoms. And whereas Hispanic, Latino, Latinx heritage is deeply woven into the fabric of American life with rich cultural traditions, languages, music, cuisine and customs enriching our nation and fostering an environment of diversity, inclusion, and understanding. And whereas the city of Lawrence proudly embraces its Hispanic Latino, Latinx community members and seeks to promote cultural awareness, appreciation, and unity, striving to create a welcoming and equitable city for all residents. Now therefore, I'm Mike Dever, mayor of the city of Lawrence, Kansas, to hereby proclaim September 15th, 2025 through October 15th, 2025 as Hispanic Heritage Month, and I urge all residents to join in celebrating and recognizing the enduring contributions and impact of Hispanic, Latino and Latinx Americans on the history, culture, and shared identity of our city and nation.

Speaker 4 ([00:53:06](#)):

I'm sure we're probably going to do the same thing. I did want to make a point of personal privilege, sorry, I apologize for not doing this before the reading of the proclamation, but I do want to extend to the community as well as the invitation that was extended to us for this Saturday for the, I do believe it's the mural, the unveiling of the public artwork for the Lata that's being sponsored by the Art Center. Several other sponsors, the city and Van Gogh and others. I don't want to say too much because I don't want to miss anyone, I don't want to miss anyone, but that is this Saturday starting at five 30.

Speaker 5 ([00:53:40](#)):

So

Speaker 4 ([00:53:40](#)):

You can go to the Lawrence Arts Center's website too for more information for that, but

Speaker 2 ([00:53:45](#)):

That's a great connection. Thank

Speaker 4 ([00:53:46](#)):

Want to encourage the community as well as commissioners to attend. Thank you.

Speaker 2 ([00:53:49](#)):

Appreciate that. Thank you. Alright, next we're going to move on to approve the agenda and the city commission reserves the right to amend, supplement, or reorder the agenda during the meeting. Is there a motion to approve the agenda as it stands?

Speaker 3 ([00:54:03](#)):

Move to approve the agenda.

Speaker 2 ([00:54:05](#)):

Second. Motion to approve the agenda by Fin Dye. Seconded by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 3 ([00:54:10](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 5 ([00:54:11](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 2 ([00:54:11](#)):

Those opposed? Motion passes five to zero. We're going to move on to 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. Three minutes for comments. I understand that there's a request to remove item D five B, is that correct?

Speaker 4 ([00:54:39](#)):

Yes. Mayor, before that, no, we don't do this very often, but I would like to introduce a motion to reconsider as it relates to approving the agenda. Since I did vote in the prevailing, I'd like for us to reconsider rearranging the agenda under regular agenda items, moving F three for that to be the first agenda item that we discuss. That'd

Speaker 2 ([00:55:06](#)):

Be good ideas.

Speaker 4 ([00:55:06](#)):

It would be F three and then F1 and then F two, but we would need to have the vote to reconsider.

Speaker 2 ([00:55:12](#)):

So we need to vote to reconsider the order of the regular agenda items.

Speaker 4 ([00:55:17](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 2 ([00:55:18](#)):

Is there a motion? I think second.

Speaker 4 ([00:55:27](#)):

Second. The motion

Speaker 2 ([00:55:28](#)):

Is moving to Yes,

Speaker 4 ([00:55:30](#)):

I motion to reconsider the notion of the approving the agenda and to insert under regular agenda items F three before F1.

Speaker 2 ([00:55:40](#)):

Okay, that's a motion by sellers. Is there a second?

Speaker 3 ([00:55:45](#)):

I'll second it but I think maybe for the record say why you might do that.

Speaker 4 ([00:55:48](#)):

Yes. I think my rationale is because I'm looking at the agenda as we're looking at the utility rates and we have discussions that kind of, I think the budget decision precludes some of these discussions on these other items and I think for the interest of time and any further discussions than we may have in the budget since we have some options there that may require staff to do a little bit of research and digging if we are not in consensus with our decision.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:17](#)):

Got it. In case we need to recalculate rates, we need that time before the meeting is over to do it first.

Speaker 4 ([00:56:22](#)):

Well I think mostly for just the rationale for the decisions that are potentially available to us for the budget.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:28](#)):

Okay, sounds good. So then is there a second?

Speaker 3 ([00:56:33](#)):

I second it.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:34](#)):

Alright, second by think aye. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 3 ([00:56:38](#)):

Aye. Aye. Those

Speaker 2 ([00:56:39](#)):

Opposed. Motion passes five zero. So do we need to make a motion to reorder the agenda to move item three to the first item and to continue items one and two in their existing order?

Speaker 6 ([00:56:52](#)):

Commissioner sellers included that in her motion?

Speaker 4 ([00:56:54](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:55](#)):

Okay. Okay.

Speaker 6 ([00:56:56](#)):

Okay. Yeah,

Speaker 4 ([00:56:57](#)):

Very

Speaker 2 ([00:56:57](#)):

Good. Thank you.

Speaker 4 ([00:56:58](#)):

I kind of looked over at Tony, I wanted to make sure I got permission. I split that in there. There.

Speaker 2 ([00:57:03](#)):

Okay, very good. So we've done the work on the later items, so we're back to the consent agenda right now.

Speaker 5 ([00:57:11](#)):

Correct.

Speaker 2 ([00:57:12](#)):

And we had a request to remove item D five B. Is there any other item that would be required to remove from the consent agenda by the commission? Okay, then we should have,

Speaker 6 ([00:57:26](#)):

I'm sorry, mayor, can you state, I'm struggling to hear which item are you?

Speaker 2 ([00:57:30](#)):

D five B is removed from the consent agenda for separate discussion. Perfect,

Speaker 6 ([00:57:34](#)):

Thank you. You

Speaker 2 ([00:57:35](#)):

Bet. Okay, so is there a motion to approve Yes to the public?

Speaker 6 ([00:57:43](#)):

Nothing. Only quasi-judicial items?

Speaker 2 ([00:57:46](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 6 ([00:57:48](#)):

There's none on the agenda.

Speaker 2 ([00:57:50](#)):

Yeah. Okay, so we have a request. So is there a motion to approve the consent agenda minus item D five B

Speaker 3 ([00:58:01](#)):

Move to approve the consent agenda with the exception of D five B second.

Speaker 2 ([00:58:04](#)):

Okay, that's a motion by Finkel, by second by Larson. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 3 ([00:58:08](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 4 ([00:58:09](#)):

Aye. Aye. Those

Speaker 2 ([00:58:10](#)):

Opposed. Motion passes five zero and let's discuss item D five B.

Speaker 7 ([00:58:21](#)):

I believe an email was sent to all of us regarding this item from East Lawrence Neighborhood Association and so is, I'm not sure I don't see him.

Speaker 8 ([00:58:32](#)):

Barry's here. Barry.

Speaker 7 ([00:58:33](#)):

Oh, Barry's here. Okay, Barry,

Speaker 8 ([00:58:37](#)):

You want to cover it?

Speaker 7 ([00:58:38](#)):

So would you be able to come forward and just let us know?

Speaker 9 ([00:58:47](#)):

Thank you commissioners. I am Barry Linsky. I'm president of East Lawrence Neighborhood Association and I'm here because we have some brick sidewalks on Connecticut Street that have been there for over 130 years and I've got three minutes to try and save them. Item before you is to approve a bid to reconstruct the sidewalks. About 80% of the brick would be lost and 20% of it would be relayed in place. We've done some brick sidewalk work as volunteers in the neighborhood and a lot of what was done 30 plus years ago is still in the same shape as when we did it. If it's done right, it can last forever With concrete, not so much.

([01:00:18](#)):

Property owners were theoretically given a choice about whether they wanted a brick or concrete for this project. However, we heard from several people that staff very, very vociferously urged people to choose

concrete and a lot of the basis for that was cost. As it turns out, the cost is not what the engineer estimated in their engineering report that the bid is based on. The engineering report was that brick would be \$250 for a square yard or I mean no for nine square yards. The actual price was one 50. Their estimate for concrete was \$80, but the actual is a hundred, so 150 versus 180 versus two 50 people are going to make a different economic choice. I urge you to defer this and let's look at it again. Thank you.

Speaker 2 ([01:01:59](#)):

Thanks Barry. Okay, any other public comment on this item? D five B

Speaker 10 ([01:02:20](#)):

Eric High at 6 6 0 4 6. I used to live in the East Lawrence neighborhood in the Polar lofts. I went to one of the East Lawrence neighborhood associations. Barry means really well for that neighborhood, so I would listen to 'em. I really don't like that complex up there. All a loud noise on the Sundays, but anyway, the baseball thing, whatever, back to the points, he's right. I even tried to repair some of that brick sidewalk there myself near the Penn Street Lofts, but it's a lot of work. I just don't know how to dig it up and do it myself, so I just put gravel there for safety so people wouldn't trip on things and so they wouldn't get mud on their shoes. But anyway, I'm definitely, sorry, I'm trying to wrap it up. I think what you should do is the brick sidewalks that he's talking about, you should protect those and then other sidewalks that need a lot of repair, you should stick to concrete because elderly people and people in disabilities and stuff they need to get around but just defer it. Like Barry said, it's a good thing to do. And I'm done. Eric.

Speaker 11 ([01:03:47](#)):

Hello David Baston? Yeah, if the numbers that Barry was describing is correct, I know we're big on public trust and I mean actual numbers for people to make informed decisions off of would be really good. So if that is the case, then it probably does need deferred and then give people some actual numbers that they can make good decisions off of. Thank you.

Speaker 12 ([01:04:10](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 13 ([01:04:16](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Holly Krebs. I'm taking the time to read some more of Barry Schlansky's commentary that was provided to you in writing so that everyone knows more information. The planning staff and neighborhood stakeholders have been collaborating on an update of the East Lawrence neighborhood plan since 2021 based on extensive public input planning. Staff drafted the following proposed goal statement as its very first item under the heading of public realm. Quote, encourage brick sidewalk along Connecticut, Rhode Island and New York streets. Approval of this bid item will result in the exact opposite of that outcome. According to the bid specs for the project area 1,769 square yards of brick sidewalk, about 80% would be replaced with concrete while only 454 square yards of brick sidewalk about 20% would be restored and reset with brick. Ostensibly property owners chose which material would be used, but several of them reported to ELNA that they were very strongly encouraged by city staff to go with concrete.

([01:05:21](#)):

The reality is that concrete was chosen for many low income residents needing cost sharing assistance were automatically defaulted to concrete. Property owners who did not affirmatively make a choice were automatically defaulted to concrete. Two homeowners reported to us that they affirmatively chose brick, yet the city's online system did not register their preferences. They were hopefully able to get this straightened out, but we have no way of knowing if there were others who were unaware that their

preferences were not correctly noted. It was represented property owners that brick could be significantly more expensive than concrete. According to the bid sheet the city's engineer's estimate was that brick sidewalk restoration would cost \$250 per square yard over three times more than the estimated \$80 per square yard for concrete. In fact, the actual bid tells a very different story. The cost of brick restoration is \$150 per square yard, just one and a half times the cost of concrete at a hundred dollars per square yard. We have to believe that if presented with this more accurate and reasonable cost estimate, more property owners would've likely chosen brick EL and a representatives met with three staff members of MSO and the city's communication director on May 19th, 2025 to request that the Connecticut Street Project be deferred for a year. In support of our position, ELNA noted that prior to undertaking any major infrastructure initiative in the neighborhood, it would be prudent to wait for the completion of the neighborhood plan update to serve as a guide. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([01:06:49](#)):

Thank you. Holly.

Speaker 2 ([01:06:58](#)):

Anybody else in the room? Is there having been online? Sherry?

Speaker 6 ([01:07:05](#)):

No. Mayor. Okay. Yeah, no, but Evan is on. Yeah, I'm going to ask if we have Evan

Speaker 4 ([01:07:12](#)):

Or Andy on to speak.

Speaker 2 ([01:07:15](#)):

All right, so we've got some feedback, some questions about whether or not our cost estimates were accurate to begin with and whether or not we represented the true costs of the brick sidewalks versus the concrete essence. That's kind of what I'm hearing and what I saw in the letter that Mr. Linsky shared with us earlier. I don't know what kind of questions to ask specifically, but it sounds to me like there's some

Speaker 3 ([01:07:38](#)):

Evan's on,

Speaker 4 ([01:07:39](#)):

Evan's on,

Speaker 2 ([01:07:39](#)):

I dunno

Speaker 4 ([01:07:40](#)):

We could

Speaker 2 ([01:07:40](#)):

Hear from, so if you've got one specific you want to ask him right away, I

Speaker 4 ([01:07:43](#)):

Just maybe some rationale around the 80 20 split since I know the Sidewalk project blended with the A projects I know Andy and Evan are on, so maybe they can provide some additional context to this and speak to the contents of the letter.

Speaker 5 ([01:07:59](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 14 ([01:08:07](#)):

Hi, can you guys hear me?

Speaker 15 ([01:08:08](#)):

Yes we can.

Speaker 14 ([01:08:10](#)):

Alright. My name is Evan Cor. I'm the city's a DA compliance administrator and thank you Mr. Mayor and commissioners. First I want to say that the city staff is excited about the contract before you tonight because the brick square footage prices came in lower than anticipated in previous communications with property owners. We use the national brick average, which is two times the cost of concrete and the bid came in a little under one and a half times the cost of concrete. We fear that delaying this project by Rebidding, it could increase the square foot prices moving forward and we may not receive as favorable of brick prices. Additionally, after the contract approval, residents will receive another letter with material and installation square footage prices based on the contract in front of you. And since the brick estimates came in lower than the estimate, property owners can inform us by the end of September if they would like to make a change. This will ensure that property owners get whatever material they would like based on whatever the bid prices came in and we could still stay on track with the construction schedule.

([01:09:21](#)):

Staff have been in ongoing contact with property owners in the a a right of way project area. So this Connecticut project from ninth to 12th since October of 2024 when we announced that this project was coming in, kind of the next steps along in the process in February and March, we provided the inspection letters that showed property owners what hazards were present and estimated ranges based on material selection. And again, for brick, we were using the national average, which is typically two times the cost of concrete. And I can assure you that anyone who expressed that they wanted their repairs in brick, either through our online tracking tool by phone or emailing me directly, they have been accounted for. All my correspondence with the property owners. I always offer to meet with them in person at their property to answer any additional questions they may have because I know this is a large project and there's a lot of moving pieces and many property owners have taken me up on this offer.

([01:10:20](#)):

They always either meet, they always meet with me and an inspection member from our inspection staff every time we go out and in some cases an engineer depending on kind of the questions involved. And in numerous cases I've met with property owners multiple times. It's important to note that this area is a little bit unique. Of the 78 properties along this project area 51 are rental properties and in many cases property owner owns multiple rental properties along the stretch, which may also lead to the reason why they would choose concrete versus brick because it's a cheaper option and it's a rental. I can't say that that's exactly why they did it, but that could weigh into some of it. However, every property owner along this project stretch if they choose to go with the city contractor in the estimates in front of you under the cost partnering program, through the a transition plan, as mentioned in previous other commission meetings and as approved through our a transition plan, the city pays for the demolition, the removal, excavation,

grading, retaining walls, traffic control design, and any hazards caused by city infrastructure including city street trees or underground utilities, slope and width issues, residents pay for whatever material they choose and the installation of that material of their identified hazards.

(01:11:45):

In addition to the cost partnering that every property owner can participate in, the city has two other financial assistance options. One is financial aid, which is income based and if qualified, the city pays 100% of those repairs in concrete per the policy. The default material is concrete when the city covers a hundred percent of that cost. That ties to our sound, fiscal stewardship and our strategic plan. The other type of assistance that an owner occupied resident could apply for is owner occupied corner lots where the city pays 50% on top of all the additional things we're already paying through our cost partnering. And so that can go to material and installation costs and that can be either brick or concrete. Of the 27 remaining owner occupied properties that would qualify for additional financial assistance, only one chose to go with the financial aid, which he's getting a hundred percent paid for in concrete and one is doing the 50% because it's a corner lot based on square footage and the city is paying 50% an additional 50% of her brick.

(01:12:54):

So residents also have the option throughout this process. Like I said, it's been going on since last October and people have, and property owners have been aware since February and March what their options were. They can also do self-repair or hire their own contractor if they, as long as they follow city sidewalk standards and can get it cheaper. There are a few property owners that are doing self-repair and some that are hiring contractors and as long as that work is complete by the time our contractor starts so we can tie into the work that's already been done, that's perfectly acceptable. And I always tell people whenever they get these estimates, feel free to shop around, get some prices, see what if you can get something better. If you know a contractor or some of these property owners have relationships with contractors, then by all means whatever is the cheapest option for residents.

(01:13:43):

However, if they use their own contractor or do self repair, they don't qualify for the cost partner eating items that the city pays for because the sidewalk repair decisions are up to individual property owners. We work directly with affected property owners. Staff did not feel that it was appropriate to give out resident names and material choices to elna because those decisions are up to the individual property owners and it can be based on a lot, lot of factors, whether it's accessibility reasons, financial reasons, maintenance issues, or just aesthetic preferences. So with that I'd be happy to answer any of your questions and I believe we also have CC Riley who did the brick policy online and Jake Baldwin who's the engineer on this project as well.

Speaker 2 (01:14:28):

Thanks Evan. That was very thorough.

Speaker 3 (01:14:30):

Evan, can you tell me, so you started with this, but what's the next step in the process if we approve this? You said something about sending out ledges and then people could still make a choice. Tell me about that.

Speaker 14 (01:14:42):

Yeah, so the next step in the process is once the contract's actually awarded or you guys approve it, then each property owner will get a letter that says this is what the square foot for concrete came in at. This is what the square foot for brick came in at and this is your total square footage of responsibility so they can

decide what they want to go with and since this brick price came in a little bit cheaper than the two times cost that we originally quoted, they can make that change and as long as they let us know and in the letter we'll say as long as you let us know by the end of September, we can make those changes and work with the contractor to do a change order. I mean it will take some work on our side, but we want to make sure that people have the options available to them and then we will continue with our construction project hopefully without much delay.

Speaker 3 ([01:15:32](#)):

Thank you, that's helpful.

Speaker 2 ([01:15:40](#)):

Anybody have questions for CC or the project engineer?

Speaker 9 ([01:15:49](#)):

I would just see if she has anything she wants to

Speaker 2 ([01:15:50](#)):

Add. Yeah, cc, you have anything to add to this conversation? I have a couple of questions for Evan, but I wanted to see if anybody else had anything to say.

Speaker 6 ([01:15:58](#)):

It looks like Jessica's on, so I'll move her over not cc. Okay,

Speaker 2 ([01:16:03](#)):

Jessica, then

Speaker 14 ([01:16:12](#)):

Sherry, I think it was cc. I don't think Jessica was planning to talk about this issue. Sorry,

Speaker 16 ([01:16:18](#)):

Is she not? Ashley is cc. I must be on Jessica's Zoom from the last time we had a

Speaker 2 ([01:16:23](#)):

Person.

Speaker 16 ([01:16:24](#)):

Sorry about that. No, I think Evan did a great job explaining the process and like he mentioned, we've been following the brick streets and sidewalks policy that was approved last October and I'm really excited to see this through.

Speaker 8 ([01:16:42](#)):

Okay, I have a question for Evan. So Evan, you said that the letters would go out if it's approved tonight, the letters would go out. How quickly do you get those out the door? We've only got about a week and a half left before the end of September.

Speaker 14 ([01:16:55](#)):

My original plan was if it got approved tonight then I would work on getting them to our admin staff tomorrow to get 'em sent out by the end of this week. If you advise if that was too quick of a turnaround, we could maybe push it back to the end of the first week of October or whatever. If we needed to give a little bit more time, I think that would still be okay with our contract or construction contract, but we'd have to look into that

Speaker 2 ([01:17:25](#)):

And to follow up on that, Evan, so from my understanding then us approving this tonight, the cost changes would really be borne by the landowner or the property owner because it's material related. Simply you said if they cost share everything else is paid for but for the materials,

Speaker 14 ([01:17:42](#)):

So the only thing I would change is if a resident currently chose concrete because they didn't think that the brick prices were going to be low enough, they let us know, Hey, with these new prices I'd like to go to Brick, we do a change order and kind of revise the plans and get that to our contractor and make those changes. Or vice versa. If somebody's like concrete came in a little better than I thought too, I'll go to concrete or whatever it may be.

Speaker 2 ([01:18:11](#)):

Okay, good. This would not affect our costs and then the timing, it sounds like it won't affect the timing. That was my other questioning. If we do delay it a week, it's not that big a deal, but it will provide the landowners a little bit more time to make that decision, especially if it takes a little while to get this stuff in the mail.

Speaker 14 ([01:18:30](#)):

Yeah, I mean Jake would probably be better at if it would affect construction timelines. When we talked earlier today, I don't think that it would too much. It just depends on how quickly we can do change orders and get the changes to the plans so the contractors are aware of, hey, this person's now going brick, this one's going concrete, whatever it may be, but I think it should still stay on track with our contractor schedule and you're right, it would only affect whatever their hazards were and whatever material choice they selected.

Speaker 2 ([01:19:02](#)):

And then the 51 rental sites, are they all owned by 51 different people or is it multiple people going to be able to affect this change with more? Is it easier to get ahold of say the 10 people that own the five properties or is this going to be 51 people will have to be in touch with?

Speaker 14 ([01:19:19](#)):

Yeah, so they're owned by multiple people. Everybody will get a letter that reflects these prices and we'll have on there that if you want to make a change to let us know. There are a few property owners that own, there's one individual that owns four properties. I think another one that owns two or three, but most are just one. They're kind of one-offs rental. Most of I can say, like I said, since I've spent a lot of time in this area over the last handful of months, most of these people I've kind of spoken to kind of as this process has evolved and kind what our prices we're looking at and some options and things like that. There were some people that had initially said that they were going to go with their own contractor, but were kind of waiting to see what the final prices came in at, so there's already been some communication there. So I think the ones that have really had an eye on this are already kind of aware that some prices are coming.

Speaker 2 ([01:20:13](#)):

Okay, great. Thank you.

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

Any other questions for anybody? So I guess I don't know if Jake wants to weigh in, could we go to October 3rd to October 6th?

Speaker 17 ([01:20:29](#)):

Hi, good evening. Jake Baldwin, engineering program manager at Ms O. Yeah, I think we've got the flexibility with our contractor to extend that as needed.

Speaker 3 ([01:20:38](#)):

I think we go to October 6th that gives them a couple weekends in between.

Speaker 2 ([01:20:43](#)):

That'd be fine. Yeah. Yeah, I think that's a great idea.

Speaker 8 ([01:20:45](#)):

How long do you think they would give you on that Jake latest date that they would want to definitely have a number?

Speaker 17 ([01:20:55](#)):

I don't know the answer to that question. Luckily this is a contractor we have a great working relationship with, so I think we're going to be able to sort this out. Whoever needed, they just need some time to talk to their subcontractor who's doing the brick work to make sure that they understand the schedule and cost ramifications.

Speaker 5 ([01:21:11](#)):

Okay, thanks. Okay,

Speaker 2 ([01:21:14](#)):

That's fine. You got what we need tonight.

Speaker 4 ([01:21:20](#)):

So is there a suggestion to defer it to October 6th for the purpose of

Speaker 3 ([01:21:25](#)):

No, I think no, no, just approve it so they can get, so the contract's approved and then

Speaker 4 ([01:21:29](#)):

Just

Speaker 3 ([01:21:30](#)):

With the caveat that the landowners having to October 6th to respond. So I'll just add that to the motion if that for

Speaker 2 ([01:21:37](#)):

The material choices. Yeah, but

Speaker 3 ([01:21:39](#)):

I

Speaker 8 ([01:21:39](#)):

Would also add that the letters have to be out of the office by the end of the week so people can get them timely.

Speaker 7 ([01:21:45](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 2 ([01:21:47](#)):

I think that's appropriate.

Speaker 3 ([01:21:48](#)):

Okay. Shall pay for motion

Speaker 2 ([01:21:51](#)):

Things up? We can try.

Speaker 3 ([01:21:53](#)):

Okay. Move to waive the requirement rebid number 2 5 0 0 5 6 for the Connecticut Street A DA brick reconstruction project. MS five dash G 24 million award the bid to King's Construction in the amount of \$556,031 and authorize the same manager execute the construction caveat with the addition that staff will get the ledgers out to the homeowners on material selection by the end of this week and the landowners would have until Monday October 6th to respond.

Speaker 2 ([01:22:28](#)):

Okay, it's a motion by Fle Dye. Second. It's a second by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye. Aye was opposed. Motion passes five zero. Thank you very much for your help online and in the room today. Go ahead and move on to our regular agenda items, which is now going to be ordered. First item on the agenda for tonight is to consider adopting resolution number 7 6 3 2 approving and appropriating the 2 0 2 6 city of Lawrence operating budget and adopting the 2 0 2 6 through 2 0 3 0 capital improvement plan.

Speaker 5 ([01:23:26](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 18 ([01:23:40](#)):

Is that working? Kurt was my, yes. Okay. Sorry. Thank you. I don't think I've ever had to raise the S before. This is a big evening for me. Good evening. We are here this evening for our budget adoption. We have a very brief budget presentation for you. So just a review of that 2026 budget process. Again, something for 2026. We started in 2024, so I think I stand here for a lot of people saying that this is a long time coming very intentional process and I want to thank so many people who made it what it is this evening for you.

(01:24:16):

Again, this is approximately 431 million budget across all funds. And then based off of feedback that we heard from City Commission, we have put together three mill levy scenarios for your consideration this evening for the city's general fund, our primary operating fund. So scenario A is our proposed the city manager's proposed budget, which is a flat mill levy and it combines additional revenue from Douglas County to restore eight L-V-C-F-M positions for new medic unit. And it has the original parks recreation fee proposal that you saw. So that proposed estimated tax rate for the general fund would be 21.142.

(01:25:11):

Scenario B took the laundry list of items that we heard at the public hearings and basically added all those together. So in addition to that, additional revenue from Douglas County for the eight positions, it adds one more to L-D-C-F-M two police officers, \$175,000 for the farmer's market. CIP project, \$25,000 for small business support, \$20,000 for neighborhood program and then it is the updated PRC proposal, so there's \$50,000 to offset that revenue loss. This would have a proposed estimated tax rate of 21.63 and then scenario C is what you saw on the public hearing, so a 0.8 maximum mill levy above what you saw. So 21.942 and all that increment \$1.2 million is going to fund balance in this scenario. And again, it has the original, the higher parks and recreation fee proposal.

(01:26:27):

So our action this evening is to adopt resolution 7, 6, 3, 2, and if you look at the packet in front of you that Mary was so gracious to hand out, you'll see the resolution, you'll see the insert that we need to have in the packet with the highlight here. So that's what will change the general fund numbers and then you'll see the three scenarios broken out. So scenario A, you flip that you see what you would insert on the second page, scenario B and C. The commission is welcome to vote on one of these three or any iteration thereof as long as we do not exceed the maximum mill levy. That's all I have.

Speaker 2 (01:27:22):

Wonderful.

Speaker 18 (01:27:23):

Yes sir. It's

Speaker 2 (01:27:24):

All in our hands.

Speaker 18 (01:27:24):

There it is.

Speaker 2 (01:27:25):

Really. Well thank you very much. I appreciate that Ellie. Okay, any questions for LA while she's standing up there?

Speaker 5 (01:27:52):

You want me to open it up?

Speaker 8 (01:27:58):

I got a question for Ally and I don't know if Ally would answer this or the chief of police would answer it. We got, I'm assuming everybody got a letter this week asking about the police positions that were up cut I

guess for this budget as to whether or not those positions would still stay intact but not filled or would they completely be taken away from the police department?

Speaker 18 ([01:28:22](#)):

Yeah, so I'll start and then I'll let Deputy Chief Hefley add anything. So when we gave directive on what the sustainable budget would look like, we were looking approximately a five year horizon. So a multi-year, not a one year thing. I'd say from more of a practical internal standpoint, there's not much of a difference. We're going to remove it from a budget on a sustainable sustainably so it would be removed versus an alternative.

Speaker 8 ([01:28:55](#)):

Okay, so they will be just removed?

Speaker 18 ([01:28:58](#)):

Correct.

Speaker 8 ([01:29:00](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 19 ([01:29:02](#)):

Hi, Adam Hefley, deputy chief. Sorry, I can't add a whole lot to that. If the positions aren't funded, I assume they would remain unfunded the following year and the direction we received was to make sustainable cuts, so a one year reduction wasn't going to meet the assignment I was given.

Speaker 5 ([01:29:23](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 19 ([01:29:24](#)):

If that makes sense.

Speaker 8 ([01:29:25](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 5 ([01:29:25](#)):

Thank

Speaker 8 ([01:29:26](#)):

You.

Speaker 2 ([01:29:31](#)):

And I think the question was is it disappear to those Lisa, I think, is that what that email was saying that the

Speaker 8 ([01:29:37](#)):

Yeah, disappearing versus being just unfunded like we do in the CIP, we just put something as unfunded.

Speaker 2 ([01:29:43](#)):

Yeah, well we deal with that all the time.

Speaker 8 ([01:29:44](#)):

Yeah, we do. But just the positions though are they're gone or they don't just go to an unfunded category? I guess it's the same. Yeah, correct. Okay.

Speaker 2 ([01:29:56](#)):

So when we have open positions like we might currently have for an existing officer or say even a firefighter if there's positions open aren't currently filled, those are there still, even though there's not people in the position.

Speaker 18 ([01:30:11](#)):

Yes, we have vacant positions with funding attached to them

Speaker 2 ([01:30:16](#)):

Attached. Those are vacant. There's funding sitting there though we're not using it. There's funding attached. It's just why you remove it. Okay.

Speaker 18 ([01:30:21](#)):

Yes,

Speaker 2 ([01:30:21](#)):

That makes sense. Thank you. Okay, that makes sense to me. Any other questions for Ellie right now? I think that was mine.

Speaker 7 ([01:30:38](#)):

Okay. Commissioner,

Speaker 4 ([01:30:41](#)):

I was thinking of a hypothetical to give Allie to speak to the, so let's say, okay, so we have the cuts. Let's say we next year we have two stellar recruiting classes that give us numbers that will exceed the budgeted amount. What would be, talk us through what that scenario would look like. I'm assuming that would come back to us as a budget amendment or how would that come back to us if we had a scenario of something like that?

Speaker 18 ([01:31:12](#)):

Yes, I think I'll let Craig start on his authority to have the police department over hire and then I can add anything.

Speaker 20 ([01:31:19](#)):

Sure. We have faced that in times, sometimes we're predicting what turnover we may have, so we may know that there's some retirements and I have authorized over hire not just in the police department but other places, fire in particular. If we know that we're going to have vacancies, we'll have people ready to fill those positions by the time that they come up. Most of the time in my six years here, those all have all

been theoretical because we have more vacancies occur than we can fill, especially in those two departments that have long lead times

Speaker 5 ([01:31:54](#)):

With

Speaker 20 ([01:31:55](#)):

The selection and the training to get 'em ready for the positions. So I have used some discretion at that working with the command staff in both departments and we've done this in other departments, none come to mind, but there are other departments where we'll do this too. We've got authorized salary and we've got a lot of work to do. We want to get those positions filled and not have long-term vacancies. We have played with it a little bit with the budget shortfalls and we have let some vacancies run a little bit longer and those are sometimes things that we do just to try and make it meet, but it's, it's not good practice to do. But if we don't budget for the position themselves, the sustainability of our budget requires that we don't think that we're going to hire more people than we actually have money for and we can't do that.

Speaker 5 ([01:32:52](#)):

Okay, thank you.

Speaker 2 ([01:32:58](#)):

Okay, any other questions? Alright, let's open up to general public comment on this item.

Speaker 12 ([01:33:09](#)):

John M 6 6 0 4 9. The city spending way more than the revenue it brings in. If you normally spend 10 million a year maintaining roads and now you borrow 10 million to do the same work while freeing up the 10 million to spend elsewhere, you're using debt to balance the budget. You're just calling it capital spending instead of operations. That's the magic trick. You appear to balance the budgets without cuts or new revenue, but you do it by quietly accumulating obligations each slight of hand, whether it's borrowing, deferring maintenance or shifting funds adds another layer of future costs. And because these obligations aren't obvious or immediate, they pile up unnoticed. This is how cities slide into insolvency, not with a dramatic collapse but with a slow steady drift into financial fragility. You say we have an excellent credit rating, but credit ratings don't measure fiscal health. They measure the likelihood that investors will get paid back.

([01:34:08](#)):

That's it. Credit agencies don't care if a city can afford police officers or keep the water running. They care about whether the city will raise taxes, cut services or slash budgets, whatever it takes to make the next bond payment. That's not a measure of solvency. It's a measure of how aggressively a city is willing to squeeze its residents. A city plan to reduce the debt burden must be published. The city needs to be much more aggressive in paying down the debt burden five years from now. You may not be in the big chairs on the dais, but your legacy of debt will still be with the town's residents. Thank you. Thanks John.

Speaker 13 ([01:34:54](#)):

Good evening. I have an image, Kurt for Holly Krebs and it's not that image, that one's for the utility right There is also one that I see. Yeah, it's

Speaker 3 ([01:35:11](#)):

Right there.

Speaker 13 ([01:35:11](#)):

It's

Speaker 6 ([01:35:12](#)):

The other one We did a little rearrange,

Speaker 16 ([01:35:16](#)):

So it's that one.

Speaker 13 ([01:35:17](#)):

Thank you. Okay.

Speaker 16 ([01:35:19](#)):

Alright, and you're on

Speaker 13 ([01:35:22](#)):

Commissioners. As you know, the Coalition for Collaborative Governance has concerns about the sustainability of the long-term debt that the city is considering in the 2026 through 2030 CIP. We appreciate your previous attention to this matter and your plan discussion of this issue on October 7th, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate our most substantial concerns for your consideration. The chart before you shows the city's plan for paying their current and proposed general obligation debt through 2035. If the city approves all debt proposed in the CIP before you, the city's debt service payments for these bonds in 2030 will be \$10 million more than this year's payments, which is an 84% increase. The city is planning to pay for these larger payments through 2032 by using funds from the bond and interest fund balance in 2033 through 2035. The city anticipates paying for their debt obligations by breaking with their fund balance policy and dipping into reserves that I believe are intended for emergency purposes.

([01:36:21](#)):

While Commissioner Finkel said that this fund shouldn't be susceptible to emergencies, I would posit the opposite. If our community has a flood or other natural disaster, the city will likely need to take on potentially substantial debt to attend to our community's disaster response. This fund would finance some of that emergency debt. This chart also assumes that the city will only take out approximately \$6 million annually in geo debt and 2031 through 2035, which is only about 7% of the geo debt that the city is proposing for next year alone. Our coalition is concerned that the city's proposed debt for the next five years may significantly limit the city's future capacity to financially manage planned or unplanned needs during the 2030s. Since March, our coalition has been asking about the city's long-term plan for paying their debt. We received this chart in August, but six months after we first asked.

([01:37:19](#)):

In the middle of the budget public hearing, I finally received a document about the city's plan for paying for the half of their debt that's funded by revenue bonds. Unfortunately, the document I received is three years out of date and does not include the additional \$200 million in current and proposed debt that's paid for with our utility fees. We had hoped that the community and commission would have access to this up-to-date information before the commission approved the 143 million of revenue bond debt in the proposed CIP before you tonight. Additionally, our coalition's research into the city budget has revealed documentation inconsistencies that make it impossible for the public to understand the actual numbers for

the city's debt issuances, debt payments, and capital expenses. We continue to request that the city provide clear and consistent numbers based on cashflow about the amount of new debt reissued, temporary notes and capital expenses that the commission approves. We appreciate the commissioners and the finance department's continued attention to these issues. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Speaker 21 ([01:38:26](#)):

John Edmond Lawrence Police Officer Association chair. I can probably answer some of your questions in my three minutes about what you're asking for. Commissioner Larson, first I want to thank you guys for all the work that you've been doing. I know this has been a long budget season and definitely not an easy one as far as what I was asking for in that email. I essentially, our fear is it took us a long time to get up to 154, which is what our maximum number that we got to in about 2013, I believe to get there. It took grants that no longer exist and some mill levy increases, which is obviously something that the community has decided is we don't want any more mill levy raises. So my concern with cutting these positions is to reach any level of rebuilding our numbers. We're going to have to do some level of mill increases or large budgetary changes to make that happen.

([01:39:19](#)):

And I'm not sure how that would go about, but that's kind of why if there's a way that we could hold those positions to where slowly we could rebuild over time to get back to a better staffing level, that is kind of why maybe that is an option. I don't know if it is or not. I'm thankful that we have this proposed two officers with the small mill increase. I know it isn't obviously our whole budget, which would be nice, but it is something and that does mean a lot to us overall. Really what's happening is these cuts and losing all these positions, it is really hurting our recruiting and retention, which is something that is more of a long-term problem that we're worried about a lot of recruiting right now. It really follows college sports for those who are college sports fans. Right now with NII deals and transfer portals, really good young athletes are going to the places we're making the most money and the climate's the best, right?

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

We're a little bit behind. I'm not here to argue about our pay tonight, but what I am worried about is just the overall climate of the policing in our city. As the market of policing is changing a lot less and less people want to become police officers and we need to do a good job of having a good system in place to be able to get the most qualified candidates to come police our streets. So that's really all I want is just a forecast for the future that we can get better and not just have these continual slashes and ultimately hurting our department even worse in the long run. Overall though, I'm going to choose to trust you all. I do believe that you have the city's best interests and our interests at heart and I look forward to working with you all in the future. Thank you. Thank you, John.

Speaker 22 ([01:41:20](#)):

Good evening, commissioners. My name is Carol Cumber, 66049. The Lawrence City Commission has expressed interest in rec fees in spite of opposition to community members in their own advisory board. Taxpayers are already supporting recreation centers in the taxes we pay every year in our high property taxes, high sales taxes, and motor vehicle related fees. Our city commission believes that 500,000 they will generate for the rec center fees will somehow solve their budget deficit problems. We do appreciate the city's commission's revised PRC recreation facility members, ship and fee schedule that made adjustments to some of our community's concerns and issues with the rec fees. Your 2026 membership target goal of 3000, which is 3% of our population will with a revised revenue of estimated 450,000 or 400. Yeah, thank you commissioners and PRC for addressing my no rec fee petition and community concerns with the revised membership fees, but there is still a problem you may not have

addressed Through my community outreach and talking with different community residents, they're still opposed to your monthly and annual resident fees.

(01:42:42):

If rec fees are implemented, some residents will consider joining other health clubs that have more to offer than SPL, like onsite pools, saunas more and better equipment, smoothie bars, cement court surfaces for pickleball tournament play. With this in mind, PRC may not reach their target goal at 3000 memberships and our budget will still be in deficit. Some residents have expressed another thought on the proposed fees. We already pay for our rec centers and our property taxes. If membership fees are implemented. They only provide limited access because when there are basketball and volleyball tournaments, we are still unable to use SPL making it a limited access for the rest of the residents. The city is gaining three fees, our property taxes, the membership fees and tournament rental fees. This is why we are opposed to the rec fees. Still there is a chance to make this work. That is why my petition with 1,995 signers urged the city to explore the alternative funding sources listed on my petition to maintain and improve the rec centers. We hope you will reconsider not implementing the proposed rec fees. I want to thank you for your time and service to our community. Thank you.

Speaker 23 (01:44:15):

Good evening commissioners. Rod McKinney. One comment and two related questions that I'd like to get an answer to sometime, whether it's tonight or not. Regarding the bonds, I don't think it's right for all of the residents of Lawrence to have to pay for the bonds to create infrastructure for new housing developments. They've been paying for their facilities for years. Those sewage, fire, stormwater, et cetera, are used specifically by the people in the new housing developments. Those are the ones that should pay for it. Now, many cities, as I'm sure you're aware, many cities have created special taxation districts to allocate bond payments to those who exclusively benefit from those developments. And I would like to see Lawrence do the same thing. As far as the questions I'm going to use the rates here that were proposed, those may may change, but I had an explanation of the proposed Lawrence 2026 mill rate of 33.99 and that may change in light of some of the mill rates of some of the nearby counties or nearby cities.

(01:45:43):

Comparable cities, for instance, compared to the high tax city of Olathe, Lawrence's 33.99 mill rate is 45% higher, 45% higher and it's 134% higher. Repeat that 134% higher than Overland Park's mill rate. That's huge. That's an enormous difference and that's especially painful since you don't have anything to do with Douglas County's rates. But Douglas County's rates are three point 10% of the average income, excuse me, I take it back, of the median income of Lawrence citizens is paid just in Douglas County tax rates. And then we have the city rate on top of that. So two questions. What the heck am I getting out of this? And me and tens of thousands of other people in Lawrence, all I see as a result of this is traffic jams and extra time that it takes me to get to places. I understand preventative maintenance, but this is an awfully high price tag for preventative maintenance. And the second part of the question is what's so different about Lawrence That our mill rates that we can't manage our obligations and budgets as well as Overland Park and Olathe. Thank you,

Speaker 5 (01:47:12):

You

Speaker 15 (01:47:20):

Good. Evening city commissioners. My name is Angel Vera KU student body representative. I'm here to speak to echo some sentiments from a previous speaker in terms of park and rec fees in consideration to how this affects the student body. At first I was hesitant to speak because students receive receive access

to rec centers on campus with their student fees itself. But one thing I did not consider was the summertime. As many college graduates will note, the summertime offers a great sense of economic uncertainty. And with that, some students, because they're not registered for classes during the summertime, they're unable to access university recreation centers. And so they rely on city recreation centers to have a sense of community and have a sense and have a sense of wellbeing. So I would ask in consideration to what was laid out, I believe in the park fees when it comes to adults, what was it, \$250 a year if I recall or and how it's structured. I noticed that for students in public school system, I think under a certain age they get access free. While I'm not asking for college students to receive free admission to park and rec services in the city of Lawrence, I would ask a reconsideration of having a specialized fee for college students that go to KU. Thank you.

Speaker 2 ([01:48:41](#)):

Okay, thanks.

Speaker 24 ([01:48:49](#)):

Hello, my name's Rodney Cummer, 66049 and I'd like to address the recreation fees. As our ex-mayor said when SBO was built that there would be no charge to use the facilities. Unfortunately nothing was documented concerning these fees. Since you now are in a situation that you need to raise money to pay for your budget, I request that you put a five-year freeze on any increases to the fees that you authorize. Please put this in writing so there will not be any confusion in the future. Please put whatever you desire in writing and your reasoning for this decision. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Speaker 11 ([01:49:34](#)):

Hello? David Bain? Yeah, I just wanted to, when Allie was talking about Douglas County funding eight people, maybe I got that twisted. I know that Douglas County, I thought they were going to fund a medic unit and Lawrence was only going to fund one extra person. And then you guys taking out engine number five would seven of those people would be basically doing that. Seven of the people will basically be on that medic unit. So maybe I got that all twisted around and then to circle back to you guys getting rid of engine number eight. I think it's a bad idea.

([01:50:38](#)):

I know, I think Brad said, I think we had like 200 calls, fire calls, which I know that unit, I don't have the exact numbers, but I know that engine is on way more calls than that, so I know I don't think it's a good idea. I do appreciate you guys going to open up another station, but as far as dropping, that one I'm not a fan of at all. And just like the police officer was up here talking about them losing positions too, I mean public safety should be your number one concern, not taken away from that to do some other projects. So I'm totally against what you're doing with fire engine number five and also with the police department and I think we can do better than that. Thank you. Thanks David.

Speaker 25 ([01:51:53](#)):

Good evening. My name is Seamus Albritton and I am currently the president of Lawrence Professional Firefighters. I'd like to start by mentioning that in my comments on this item two weeks ago, I was a bit more emotional than I intended. I hope that you guys can extend me some grace as I continue to advocate for my peers in the community. But just as two weeks ago, I'll begin by saying and making remarks to be clear that I'm not here to question you all as individuals and your commitment to the community. I'm here to question your priorities as policymakers for the community. All three of these options presented in front of you will result in one less firetruck for the citizens of Lawrence in 2026. At the last meeting, there was some remarks in response to my public comment stating that the number of working structure fires have not increased significantly year over year.

(01:52:50):

And to a certain degree that is true. And our fire marshal, who's in the room deserves credit for putting on a fantastic prevention program. But calling attention to that single data point presents a very narrow view of what emergency services is and what we represent in this community. Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medical, like every other modern fire department in the country, our fire trucks respond to and are needed at so much more than structured fires. We respond to car wrecks, natural gas leaks, carbon monoxide emergencies, electrical emergencies, hazardous materials, emergencies, water rescues and drownings, confined space incidents, elevator rescues, aircraft emergencies, landing zone coordination for serious medicals that require air vac. And of course, just like everywhere else in the country, serious EMS calls require extra hands and the best model for that is sending a firetruck.

(01:53:58):

So when you look at the full spectrum of 9 1 1 calls that firetrucks are responding to in the city of Lawrence year over year, there is significant increase, very significant. This is not an opinion, it's a fact and it's documented in the city's reports. Yet and despite of this proposed budget, all three options in front of you, call for a cut of a firetruck. Commissioners, we cannot say that we prioritize wellbeing of our citizens while voting to delay emergency response. We cannot pretend to support public safety while voting to dismantle infrastructure. I ask you to reconsider not for me, but for the citizens that you and I have taken an oath to look after and support. Thank you.

Speaker 26 (01:55:01):

Good evening, commissioners. My name's Simon Stevenson, secretary for IF Local 1596, and I'm going to echo a lot of sentiments that Seam has just set up here and maybe drive home a few more numbers for you. And I know he wasn't the first one. David kind of talked about that 211 number that was spoken about two weeks ago and how that's only a small piece of the pie. I'm going to give you a little bit more information here. And granted I don't have information going all the way back from 2015 because given how our reporting system was done at the department, things changed over around 2020. So I've got some information here starting around 2020, going through 2024, and these are numbers of just fire trucks going out on calls. This has nothing to do with medic trucks, this is just fire trucks. So in 2020, fire trucks responded to 7,476 calls.

(01:55:55):

In 2021 they responded to 8,552 calls. It's almost a 14% increase in 2022, 10,002 calls, 16% increase, 2023, 11,062 calls, another 10% increase. And in 2024, 11,969 calls for an 8.2% increase. Altogether between those five years, that's a 60.1% increase of firetruck being used throughout the city. So I just want you guys to make sure that you are getting the whole picture of what you're potentially looking at when you're making this budget. I understand things are tight, but I feel like that 211 number that was spoken about two weeks ago is not, while it wasn't malicious, is not an accurate representation of what's going on at the fire department right now. So our department's built off redundancy, right? And that 211 number really is when you have multiple fire trucks going to one call minimum of three, right?

(01:57:04):

So in 2024 we talked about 11,969 calls. That's basically minus that 211. You're looking at 11,758 other calls that they're going on during that time. So if you're already taking three out of the system, there's a fourth going out of the system, now you're looking at one coming across town on a 20 minute drive for a cardiac arrest for your family member because we lost our redundancy. This is why it's important. This is why things matter. This is why that truck makes sense and why it needs to stay in service. I appreciate your time. Thank you.

Speaker 5 (01:57:41):

Thank you

Speaker 10 ([01:57:53](#)):

Eric. 6, 6, 0 4 6, okay, I'm trying to think of a way to explain it to you, to everybody. So when I was growing up, I used to play this game Sim City a lot. I'm sure maybe some of you in here have played that game. Don't lie. Alright, so in Sim City it's very accurate to reality because when it comes to the police and the fire and even things like parks, we'll get to that next. So we'll start with police and fire. You have to adequately fund them. You can even overfund them a little bit and it's still okay. All you have to do is take care of your city, your residential, your commercial, your industrial and things like that.

([01:58:42](#)):

So give them money. Looks like you've made it hard to them. You're going to drop an engine, so maybe you should think about deferring this budget boat because they don't need an engine dropped. They need your money, they need your support no matter what. I was very amazed and I'm very grateful for our city manager, Craig Owens. I felt like I felt his spirit when he was explaining to you the hiring process involved for the police. I felt like I understood where he is coming from and I am very grateful. Thank you for that TROs. And so when it comes to parks and rec fees, I'm kind of having a change of heart here.

([01:59:31](#)):

As you know, before I said I was the first person to talk about it, I didn't mean the first person ever. I know Bob Shum talked about it before. I meant the first person to talk about it this year, and all I see is all these people coming up here to this podium talking about the same thing and they ain't doing a very good job talking about it. So anyway, the police is integral to the part of Parks and rec, especially the parks. But let's talk about parks and rec fees. Okay, fine. You want to charge parks and rec fees to people. I think you should set sort of like a timeframe. Make it a year two, three, we're going to charge you fees for this amount of time. We're going to revisit it later. So that's what I think about all that stuff and I don't think I really have anything else that's applicable to the budget, but yeah, think about it. Thank you. Thanks Eric.

Speaker 27 ([02:00:41](#)):

Good evening commissioners. Jack Dolan 6 6 0 4 6. I know you've heard a lot of my comments over the last few years on fire department staffing growth and just general safety of our community. I came here tonight with a different view. I got my haircut so that you guys might hear what I'm saying, but in all seriousness, I was looking through Allie's presentation when she gave it. There is an option there. Option C restores \$1.2 million to general fund. That's enough to keep engine five. I know you hear a lot of problems, you hear a lot of wants, a lot of asks. This is me trying to solve the problem for you. That's the option there tonight. It's available. The money can be there as we've shown. So please reconsider this. Please make the right decision. Thank you. Thanks Jack Barry

Speaker 9 ([02:01:57](#)):

Linsky 6 6 0 4 4. I didn't cut my hair so I may be SOL to know, but anyway, in recent years, the city commission has recognized the value that neighborhood associations provide and has provided for small grants for staffing and communications through the general fund. As you know, city planning staff has been working on revisions to the East Lawrence neighborhood plan and move the process forward by writing some draft goals. Unfortunately, they did not have the budget to send postcards to residents of the neighborhood to get input and feedback on the draft goals. Elena stepped in and we published the information on how to engage in our neighborhood newsletter, put it on our social media, and in our weekly e-news blast that goes to several hundred people. As a result of this partnership and Elena's outreach participation was much more robust than it otherwise would've been. Although we're primarily a volunteer organization, our neighborhood coordinator who has paid for 10 hours a week but works a lot more is the engine that powers the train.

(02:03:48):

Due to her efforts, well over a dozen volunteers put in over 40 hours for producing and distributing each newsletter that goes to nearly 1500 addresses in the neighborhood. We have monthly meetings, we monitor policy matters and we actively celebrate our culture. We are an essential partner in collaborative efforts among many community stakeholders to restore the municipal stadium at Hobbs Park for the future. We collaborate with other neighborhoods to offer assistance and mentorship based on our years of success. And like Elna, other neighborhoods that serve Brook Creek, Pinkney and Schweiger are well tuned into the needs of their neighborhoods and actively involved in communications and building community time. Thank you.

Speaker 12 (02:05:00):

Thanks Barry.

Speaker 5 (02:05:12):

Somebody's coming up.

Speaker 28 (02:05:22):

Sean Coffee. 6 6 4 0 9. Good evening commissioners here to talk again about the budget as relates to the staffing for engine five. One of the things that the fire department through the years has been taught is to bring data to the commission data, data or justification of what we're doing. And through this process, it looks like about nine meetings. I've still not seen the data from the city saying why this should happen. I picked up on the 211 numbers as well. Seemed to be a big one, but just to let everybody know in that 10 year period, the mean value of that was actually about 237.9 with a high of 308 structure fires in 2022 by closing engine five we're returning to 1985 levels of staffing. In 1985 we had 110 structure fires. In 2024, we had 211, same number of people dealing with a 92% increase. Other calls that Seamus mentioned, 1,224 in 85, 5,403 in 2024 for 428% increase. The same people doing the call work EMS 36 calls in 1985. Now they ran 11,956, which is about a 3311% increase in call volume.

(02:06:54):

Personnel was talked about 20 15, 1 31 personnel in 20 24, 1 59. Most of those people have been brought on to deal with overtime increases, increases in benefits in vacation, sick leave, as well as three months of parental leave. Nothing increased on the fire suppression within the city. It's been talked about EMS from the county. The medic unit Medic 12 was put on by the county and now they're funding medic six. We're talking about fire suppression. Where's the data from the city showing need for suppression, reduction of staffing? Where's the industry standards? Did you ask for us from US Fire suppression data, an outside consultant, the NFPA standards Justification about ISO. What about the fire department? I guarantee if you ask Chief Hardy, he would tell you this is not a good idea and he's more of an expert in that field than a lot of us. We are all tired and ready for this process to be over about nine meetings, but unfortunately it'll be the firefighters and the citizens that have deal with the consequences of these decisions. Thank you.

Speaker 29 (02:08:27):

Hello Melinda. Ball 6, 6 0 4 6. I have a question about what if Lawrence wins the jackpot and has the World Cup here next year and there's an incident that needs fire response. How would that be handled if we're going to even further reduce what we currently have? On top of that, this grandiose stadium that KU is putting on building, they want to put on, I think do it with say nine, eight or nine major concert events. That's a lot of people for that stadium. So if we are to reduce our current coverage, if there were to be an unfortunate incident there, how would that be handled? Is there coverage there? Particularly closing was station five in that location. Seems a pretty much a bad idea. So anyway, thank you.

Speaker 5 ([02:09:30](#)):

Thank

Speaker 23 ([02:09:31](#)):

You more.

Speaker 5 ([02:09:43](#)):

Any

Speaker 2 ([02:09:44](#)):

Pets in the room? How about online, Sherry?

Speaker 6 ([02:09:50](#)):

Yes, we do have a few. Lori Trojan? Lori Trojan?

Speaker 30 ([02:10:09](#)):

Hello? Can you hear me? Commissioners?

Speaker 2 ([02:10:11](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 30 ([02:10:12](#)):

Okay, thank you so much and thank you so much for allowing me the time to speak on behalf of the Lawrence Farmers Market. My name is Lori Trojan 6 6 0 4 6. I am the owner and steward of Wild ID Herb Farm. I am a vendor at the Farmer's Market. I am a board member of the Lawrence Farmer's Market and also have taken a very active role in the steering committee that is leading the push for a permanent location for our farmer's market. We are imploring you to support option B in the budget to support the Lawrence Farmer's Market with \$175,000, which will fund our design phase of our permanent location, a pavilion structure, which will allow our almost 80 vendors farmers to be able to sustain themselves year round. We are currently experiencing great insecurity in the farmer's market only because we have a temporary location and so many vendors depend on the Lawrence Farmer's Market for their full income for themselves, their families, their farms.

([02:11:34](#)):

We have an impact on thousands of community members who come through that market every week and we have been very active recently in conducting our feasibility study, which we have discussed with you and our community engagement project is in full swing. We've already had a town hall. We have tabled it some very large events here in Lawrence and has been a wonderful response and great support from the community for this permanent structure. We've also had other organizations who have suggested an interest in sharing the use of that structure now. So I would ask you, implore you to please support option B to continue to support the Lawrence Farmer's Market, which is such an integral part of this community. I appreciate your time and know that you understand how important this is, so thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

Speaker 5 ([02:12:41](#)):

Laurie.

Speaker 6 ([02:13:16](#)):

Jeffrey Heppler.

Speaker 31 ([02:13:23](#)):

Hey y'all. Can you read me?

Speaker 2 ([02:13:25](#)):

Hey Jeffrey. Gotcha. We can hear you

Speaker 31 ([02:13:33](#)):

Jeffrey. 6, 6, 4 4. Can I get a thumbs up from everyone if you hear me?

Speaker 2 ([02:13:40](#)):

We got you Jeffrey. Yes, sorry.

Speaker 31 ([02:13:41](#)):

Okay, great, great. That's just a little, let's see. I want to know what are we missing with all the discussions we have about our budget because this is what we're talking about are getting these essential services. I honestly expected more questions from the commissioners in the initial report that was given for discussion, but I appreciate all the commentary points that they bring up. Let's find the Lawrence Farmer's Market. A home that needs to happen as far as rec center fees go, it's a barrier and direct center should be eliminating barriers. That's the point of it. It is a community service that should be accessible to the public at no cost, whether it's a financial or other barrier, that's the city's responsibility as far as the services go. If we're going to charge fees, how are we going to go back to making them free again? I would like to ask, you all want to build a new fire station, but how are you going to fund it with our current deficit, let alone the staffing of it?

([02:15:19](#)):

And I appreciate the points of bringing up a natural disaster fund or even just an emergency fund in general. It looks like we're chasing our tail here as far as money goes. Unfortunately, we're talking about raising the mill levy as the source of funding. Rick fees is a source of funding and I had really like to see some creative ways to make some money to have the community that we need. This conversation's not over, I feel. So I wonder if there's any power to defer this decision so we can have a budget that reflects the community's needs. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([02:16:06](#)):

Thank you. Jeff Carter,

Speaker 6 ([02:16:27](#)):

Samuel Carter.

Speaker 32 ([02:16:32](#)):

Good. Good evening commissioners. Thank you Mayor. Thank you. I am Samuel Carter, 6 6 0 4 6. I saw on the agenda a \$20,000 for a neighborhood program. This is my first time seeing this on the agenda though. I did read the submitted comments and there are a lot of really good things in those comments, but I do also want to be sure that our public funds are being used equitably and transparently. And I just have a bunch of questions about this neighborhood program and if you addressed any of these questions

earlier, I'm sorry I missed the beginning of the meeting, but principally if option B is approved, I was wondering if there would be a public hearing of this at some point or if it's then considered like a done deal or approval for the city manager to execute contracts on these. I just want to know what the opportunities for public engagement there are in these questions. I don't live in any of the four neighborhood within the boundaries of the four neighborhood associations though my neighborhood association is within a low to moderate income census tract and I looked it up and it turns out there are a lot of neighborhood associations within low to moderate census tracts. I think there were 25 other neighborhood associations within low to moderate income census track. So I guess one question would be why are we funding these four but not the other 25? I mean I think that might be something useful for the public tier.

(02:18:24):

Alright, I got to go. Well principally thank you.

Speaker 2 (02:18:32):

That's all the comment. Thank you Sherry

Speaker 4 (02:18:36):

Mayor, real quick. I had a couple of questions for Conice that came up that have spoken to projects that are included in this that have been ongoing projects. I didn't know if Barry or someone was here from land that could speak to some of the questions regarding the \$20,000.

Speaker 32 (02:19:03):

It looks like I'm still connected. Sorry about that. Apologies.

Speaker 2 (02:19:07):

Mute yourself.

Speaker 32 (02:19:07):

Yeah, yeah. If I have a few more seconds, take

Speaker 2 (02:19:11):

Your time is up. Sorry Samuel, we turned off the clock and I can't recall where we were but you can weigh in on the next one if you need to.

Speaker 5 (02:19:20):

Thank you.

Speaker 2 (02:19:21):

Oh, we got two weighing in. Yeah,

Speaker 4 (02:19:23):

A couple now. So Barry, I know that your comments in regards to the funding as it relates, I know there was, you've shared it with, you shared it with us. I know that Holly Joyce has shared it with us, kind of the framework for the work that's going to be done and I just wanted you to, if you could highlight some of the language that was in there. I know I shared my comments and I don't have a problem sharing them to the public to Holly about wanting to at least give this a year because of some of the pieces that were

discussed in the framework are not necessarily indicative of what the requests for the funding is. And so I wasn't against the program, I just wanted us to have another year to kind of flush out and the commission could add some deliverables or at least some framework around those deliverables as it related to that. So I didn't know if you wanted to spend for the sake of the conversation, speak to the original document that was shared with us several years ago and kind of how that would impact or how would that be operationalized or how would this proposed funding if approved would be operationalized as it relates to that plan?

Speaker 9 ([02:20:35](#)):

Okay, going back to the 1970s, the city of Lawrence funded neighborhood associations through community development block grants. That stopped approximately five years ago when the community development block grant advisory committee was eliminated and the recommendations were instead made by staff. The city commission at that time decided to fund the four neighborhood associations that had previously been receiving funding. As one of the speakers pointed out, there are many other neighborhood associations that would be eligible based on low and moderate income criteria. About three or four years ago, the four neighborhood associations put together a draft plan that would try and create a mechanism whereby other neighborhoods could share in this kind of program.

([02:22:05](#)):

We already do have deliverables for the four neighborhoods. We present lists of things that we've accomplished, collaboration that we've done, best practices to be shared, how many people our newsletters reach, et cetera. So there already is a framework, but what we were hoping to do is work with the staff to put something together that could be done on a citywide basis. The concern that I have about not funding for a year is that that would eliminate some of the resources that we have to work on this program with the staff and with other neighborhoods. And a lot of the infrastructure that exists right now would be diverted to other fundraising efforts rather than trying to create a more comprehensive program for all neighborhoods in the city. So I don't know if that answers your question or not

Speaker 4 ([02:23:33](#)):

A little bit. It leads into it, so the proposal was for \$20,000. So is it the idea that these four or five associations would then take on the task of engaging with others? Because I know in the proposal it talks about neighborhood associations that would be eligible for those that have at least five or more engaged residents with the demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion to be a part of the funding priority. So is that what you're proposing for this \$20,000 or is the \$20,000 proposed to make whole the \$5,000 that the big four big five typically received in previous years of CBDG money?

Speaker 9 ([02:24:20](#)):

It would be both. Okay. So we would have money to continue our ongoing work and we would take on the task. We've already taken on the task of trying to put together another more comprehensive program. The issue is whether or not we can have the level of staff engagement to move it forward and we can certainly try to do that without staff engagement and just come to you in a year from now and say this is our proposal. We would prefer to do it more collaboratively, but that's not up to us. We put this forward and we're hoping to get some engagement.

Speaker 4 ([02:25:15](#)):

So in your eye you're proposing that the \$20,000 would be open to any of the neighborhood associations that meet? Well right now it's general fund dollars. It is not conditional to the CDBG piece of low and moderate. So technically this \$20,000 could be open to any, but the idea is that you're wanting it to be open just to those neighborhood associations that have low and moderate income residents. Correct.

Speaker 9 ([02:25:44](#)):

If the budget item is \$20,000 for neighborhood associations, then presumably it could be allocated in whatever manner the staff wish to do. So I would assume that they would be taking direction from the commission. Clearly we would like to see at least some portion of it allocated in the way that it was previously, but no guarantees.

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

Right. This isn't a Got you question. I'm just trying to understand because I think it was presented in one way, but I want clarification as to there's multiple ways we can look at this and yes, we do have that discretion and so in my mind I want to think about what is the best pathway to this based on the proposal that was provided to us in addition to knowing what is available, whether it is directly to neighborhood associations or that it's a pass through to land and we give the authority to land since they can act as a fiscal agent to then pass that money through. So again, I'm just trying to understand.

([02:27:06](#)):

I don't know what the, not to interrupt, I want to finish my point here. I'm sorry. Okay, thank you. So with the \$20,000, because I'm hearing a couple of things and I am not trying to hamstringing you on anything, I just want to know us agreeing to this \$20,000 means that, is it the intent in your opinion as a president of a neighborhood association that this money be divided to four or five other neighborhood associations to do the work and that was provided to us in this proposal or are you wanting something different that of course staff has the authority given by us via the city manager to do that. So I'm just trying to understand if we vote on this, is Elna expecting to get \$5,000 or is it expecting to get some amount of money to help move forward efforts to address the proposal?

Speaker 9 ([02:28:03](#)):

I would say Elna is hoping to get some chunk of money which would be used to help create a more comprehensive program for neighborhoods across Lawrence.

Speaker 4 ([02:28:23](#)):

So it's to help, so the money would be used solely to kind of build out this proposal or would it be utilized to do this work in addition to the normal operations of what the funding was used for? For staff, like you said, for staffing support,

Speaker 9 ([02:28:37](#)):

It would be used it for both purposes.

Speaker 4 ([02:28:42](#)):

Okay. Okay. Yeah, I think that covers everything. Thank you sir. Thank you. All the questions I have.

Speaker 5 ([02:28:49](#)):

Yeah, thank you Barry.

Speaker 4 ([02:29:01](#)):

So I know we're kind of quiet just to kind of continue to piggyback on this. I know that when this came before us, when it was brought to us by Commissioner Larson, the idea was that this was a part of a PayGo that we would find somewhere in the budget to cut funds to supplement this 20,000. That has not been the case. This is being presented to us as part of that mill, which I understood it to be that that was

something that Commissioner Larson did not want to entertain. So I guess my question to you, commissioner Larson, is this something that you're willing to entertain that it's part of us exceeding revenue neutral, that mill levy funding will be utilized to fund this \$20,000 if we approve it?

Speaker 8 ([02:29:45](#)):

I think I would just stand by what I said before and that is that my preference would be to find some cuts somewhere to offset that so there

Speaker 4 ([02:29:54](#)):

Is no mill levy

Speaker 5 ([02:29:55](#)):

Increase. Okay.

Speaker 4 ([02:29:57](#)):

So with that being said, you don't really have a position as to whether or not this would be funded this year?

Speaker 5 ([02:30:03](#)):

Correct?

Speaker 4 ([02:30:04](#)):

At this point in time. Okay. Okay.

Speaker 2 ([02:30:15](#)):

I got two or three things that we need to address, but I want to make sure somebody else may already have 'em down so I wanted to make sure we address 'em.

Speaker 4 ([02:30:22](#)):

Mayor, I always have a lot to say. Mayor, we give you the floor.

Speaker 2 ([02:30:27](#)):

I just want to make sure we address. I think we did the hold open positions for public safety versus the idea of just earmarking the funds but not using them. I think we got some pretty good clarity, but I think that was brought up and we need to discuss it a little bit. Clearly the discussion of fees and holding 'em up for longer than or defining the exact time period for such fees. Should we approve them? And again, I think it's premature, but I think it is something we should talk about once we get there is whether or not we want to put some sort of sunset on the fees or time to reevaluate them down the road or perhaps we can't make those commitments for future commissions. I want to address that question,

Speaker 4 ([02:31:12](#)):

Mayor.

Speaker 2 ([02:31:13](#)):

And then lastly, sorry. Oh yeah, you got it. The public neighborhood Associ.

Speaker 4 ([02:31:18](#)):

I had another quick question. I don't know if angel's still here. I know he's our KU angel. I just wanted to ask a point of clarification. I know it has been a while since I was a student at ku, but I do believe I still can access the rec center of the amount of money I paid for it while a student, so I want to make sure I heard you clear. If a student is not enrolled in summer classes, they are not able to access the rec center during the summer months.

Speaker 15 ([02:31:46](#)):

I believe that to be true in consideration with student fees that students pay every semester based on credit hours

Speaker 4 ([02:31:53](#)):

With

Speaker 15 ([02:31:53](#)):

The university.

Speaker 4 ([02:31:54](#)):

Okay, I wanted to make sure that, thank you

Speaker 2 ([02:31:56](#)):

Doke. Anybody want to jump in on this?

Speaker 7 ([02:32:03](#)):

Oh, I just had a question regarding the parks and rec proposal. It's more of the administration. Luis

Speaker 4 ([02:32:13](#)):

Is online. Okay,

Speaker 7 ([02:32:14](#)):

Cool. Thanks.

Speaker 4 ([02:32:16](#)):

While we're waiting on Sherry to tee up Louise, he's

Speaker 7 ([02:32:20](#)):

On. Okay, he's there. Alright, I

Speaker 4 ([02:32:21](#)):

Have a question for Allie afterwards.

Speaker 7 ([02:32:23](#)):

Alright. Yeah, hopefully just a quick one. And with the proposal included in all three options, I just wanted to make sure that the administration of this new program, there's a plan to go ahead and have it up in place.

Speaker 33 ([02:32:44](#)):

Yes, there is absolutely. We've been working on this possible eventuality since we started discussing fees and we continue to talk about the logistics and administration system wise, staff wise, training wise. So yes, we will be intending for this to be in place January 2nd.

Speaker 7 ([02:33:10](#)):

Okay. Just curious.

Speaker 4 ([02:33:12](#)):

Okay, Allie, I have a fuzzy math question. So based on option B and option C, what is the difference as far as funds, the amount of funds that would be available to us? Are there option C minus the funds used for option B?

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

Yeah,

Speaker 4 ([02:33:33](#)):

I know for

Speaker 18 ([02:33:34](#)):

The math, so option C which is the 0.8 I think was just over a million dollars, like 1,000,010 thousand. Okay.

Speaker 4 ([02:33:44](#)):

Yeah, I remember one zero, I saw it in my notes, I wanted to make sure that was correct. And then option B was like, was it

Speaker 5 ([02:33:54](#)):

8 7 8 4, 8 8?

Speaker 4 ([02:34:07](#)):

I got two different numbers somewhere.

Speaker 5 ([02:34:11](#)):

6 68,

Speaker 4 ([02:34:13](#)):

I got 8 57 somewhere and then I got seven something somewhere else else and I feel like this is a dejavu question. I'm not

Speaker 18 ([02:34:24](#)):

Sure I understand the question.

Speaker 4 ([02:34:25](#)):

No, I was okay, so the 0.8 you said was like 1,000,010, so option B was that's I keep forgetting option piece number, which is horrible. I have two different numbers written in my notes, so that's bad on my part

Speaker 5 ([02:34:54](#)):

I got 600,000

Speaker 18 ([02:34:57](#)):

I think seven 70

Speaker 5 ([02:34:58](#)):

This,

Speaker 4 ([02:35:06](#)):

That's roughly a difference of 240 K between the two.

Speaker 5 ([02:35:14](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 8 ([02:35:19](#)):

All right, I've got one please. Could we get a little bit clarification? There was discussions and based on what I've written in the budget about the fire engine, one of the fire engines being taken out of service, could we get clarification on what that, is it a certain one or is there definitely one that's being removed?

Speaker 18 ([02:35:37](#)):

Yeah, so I don't know if Chief Wade or Chief Hardy, but there is engine five and ladder five at station five and it will be engine five.

Speaker 8 ([02:35:47](#)):

It'll be what

Speaker 18 ([02:35:48](#)):

Engine five. Five

Speaker 8 ([02:35:49](#)):

Engine five. That will be completely taken out of service. Yes.

Speaker 2 ([02:35:53](#)):

Ladder five will still be there,

Speaker 34 ([02:35:55](#)):

Ladder

Speaker 8 ([02:35:55](#)):

Five will still be there

Speaker 2 ([02:35:56](#)):

And the paramedic Chief Hardy can probably speak to that.

Speaker 34 ([02:36:01](#)):

Good evening commissioners, just to answer the question, I think you asked which truck would be taken out of service Commissioner Larson, that will be engine five. Engine five contains four people that ride that truck we'll up staff the ladder to put them at four and then the engine will be out. So that's a drop in of three personnel.

Speaker 3 ([02:36:22](#)):

And where will the ambulance go?

Speaker 34 ([02:36:24](#)):

We haven't decided that yet. We had got communications going on with the city and the county and L-D-C-F-M and so we'll be deciding that here over the next few months to decide where that's going to go.

Speaker 8 ([02:36:37](#)):

So what happens to engine five if it's out? What do we

Speaker 34 ([02:36:40](#)):

Do? Yeah, we don't have the staffing for it if that's what we choose to do. And so it will sit, we have our next topic will be talking about station six expansion and that will be where that truck would relocate to or one of our trucks would relocate out there.

Speaker 8 ([02:36:55](#)):

Okay, thank you.

Speaker 5 ([02:36:59](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 2 ([02:37:07](#)):

All right, it's quiet up here. Anybody want to proceed with any kind of questions or comments?

Speaker 3 ([02:37:15](#)):

I can make some comments. Be careful what I say because when I say 211 it all comes back at me but I still That's okay. Couple things I'd say, I mean jumping on a couple points, we've talked about the debt level before and I appreciate the groups that are concerned about our debt level because we have increased our debt, but as we've also talked about, I think the other line of questioning of us would be why do you have 34 million in reserves in that account and it's because we've been planning to spend them down for this purpose and we have this plan. Now certainly when you look out 10 years you can do a chart and it shows a negative in there in a little less than 10 years. But of course that's premised on an assumption on what we fund in the CIP going forward.

([02:38:20](#)):

It's an assumption based upon what the property values are in the future and it also is assumption based upon what the mill rate is and for example, one of the reasons we might've taken these differently when we talk about station six, and I'll come back with that and I talk about by fire, but even when you see

some of those proposals, we're talking about a mill levy increase to pay the capital expenses for the expansion station. So those assumptions, there's a lot of different assumptions in there. It also, like I said, depends on what our property values are and how we grow and how we don't grow. So yeah, there's a lot of assumptions in there. I feel comfortable with the assumptions we have. I feel comfortable with the plan we've been working towards and I feel good that we'll be able to accomplish that and so I'm comfortable with that next year when we get to the point of looking at the CIP, we'll have to decide do we fund everything we have in the CIP for 2027 in the next five years And when we have new information, the answer might be things are looking good, we're good to go.

(02:39:28):

The answer might be it's not looking good and so we have to change the CIP, but that's why you look five years in advance, but then you also make the decisions every year. So I feel good about that and I feel good about where we're at at the moment on that. The other part of that is going to the comments about Olathe and Overland Park having much lower property tax rates than us. Absolutely true. However, Olathe has, I think something very close to 60% residential tax-based revenue and 40% commercial we're 75% residential and 25% commercial. When you have a high commercial tax base, you have low property taxes. Olathe, Lenexa all have low property tax rates than us because they have high commercial values. We've talked about this for a long time. 75% of the money we spend is on the back of residence, only 25% on the back of the businesses, which again, big difference in Olathe and in Overland Park.

(02:40:38):

And so we have to continue to do economic development, we have to continue to bring in commercial properties. We hope as we bring in commercial properties that we can get those built and get those moving and that'll help change that tax base. When you look at other communities that have less commercial tax base, we look a lot more favorable. Obviously we're at 33 and something depends what we do tonight, but let's say we're at 33.67, 33, so basically 33 Topeka, 33.95, six KCK 34 Dodge City 36, Manhattan 44, Ottawa 44. Why do they have higher mill rates than us? Because they have a lower commercial tax base than us and they have to, and so they're trying to find those balances. Yes, you can find some cities that have a lower tax rate than us, but when you compare ourselves to Topeka and Manhattan, Ottawa, KCK, we have a lower tax rate. Obviously I want to keep tax rates low, but I also want to support the things we want in this community including public safety.

(02:41:55):

Again, I won't say anything else about the rec fees. I'm a big supporter of the \$50,000 pay down to get the lower rates. I still support that. I understand that. Again, just like the tax rates, some people use our rec centers heavily and some people never step foot in our rec centers and we think maybe 3% of our community might heavily use the rec centers. That's a hundred percent of our property rate. Taxpayers are supporting that. And so I think in lots of ways, just like the pool and other fees we have that having those fees is the right balance to help keep property taxes down. And in a perfect world, yes everything would be free, but it's not a question of whether or not it's free. The question is who's paying that burden? And I think this is a right move on that and I do not think, I do not believe in tying the hands of future commissions.

(02:42:59):

They all have to make those decisions. They might raise them, they might lower them, they might eliminate them, but that's for future commissions to decide. So I'm not in favor of that. As for the police, obviously I'm a believer in trying to get that number back up. As we talked about last time they were at 155 and then now at 145 this would get them 2024. They were 145. We're going to try to continue to build that up. I don't think we can, I understand the answer. We can't quite leave them unfunded, but I can say I support continuing trying to raise that number to keep out to increase the number of police we have on patrol and so I'll continue to support that and hope we can build that number back up then.

(02:43:56):

As for fire, again, probably anything I say won't satisfy everyone in the room and what they believe. I will say that I'm a big supporter of fire. I was a big supporter of keeping station six in the budget, putting station seven in the budget two years ago. I believe we need station six. I believe eventually we'll need station seven. I'm going to be willing to vote for a tax increase if we took up the other item first. You've heard me say that, that we're probably going to look at somewhere between a one to three, three and a half mill increase to fund that additional firetruck when we get the station open and I'll support that when we get to that stage because I do think it's necessary. But again, I think it is very fair to say that we all reducing a fire truck true statement.

(02:45:05):

I also think it's a true statement to say, and I didn't hear any of the speakers say tonight that there's going to be an additional ambulance on the road during this time. It's also true that we'll reduce the fire truck, but it's also true that if we go with option B, we'll have the same number of firefighters, which is 159 firefighters. And again, is it a true statement that they do different things than they did before? Yes. But if we go with option B, we'll have the same number of firefighters we had last year in a different arrangement, but that is up from 150 firefighters in 2021. I think that's when Chief Coffey retired. So we're up nine officers from that time and we're up from 131 officers in 2015. Again, true statements also a true statement that we're taking a firetruck out of commission.

(02:46:02):

So all of those things can be true, but I'm supporting the option B so that we can get and keep the 159. I also will support, as I said, going to station six and going into the 27 budget, starting to hire those people in 26 to get that station open in 27 and 28 and have that firetruck back online. So I think those were my notes. Oh, I'd say on, I understand the KU student issue, I will say you can buy monthly passes and you can buy punch cards and so I do think if someone is here for a month or two in the summer, they can buy that. And depending on their economic status, many students would fall in the absolutely free category. They would pay nothing to use it over the summer based upon their income. And some students would pay the eight, I mean the \$12 a month, and I do think that's fair, it's less than the student fees I believe they pay at the rec center during the school year.

(02:47:15):

So I'm going to support option B. Oh, last thing I wanted to say. As it relates to the neighborhood program, which is the same that relates to the foremost market, CIP, the small business program, all three of those, I do expect to hear more about those and figure out exactly what we're going to do with those dollar amounts. The foremost market I understand is if they select and we go into a design phase, this would help the design. That's not, hopefully they'll raise the money privately to actually build it, but this will help get to the design phase of it. But again, I'd want to see what that contract looked like. There could be other things involved. The county could be involved. Douglas County food policy could be evolved. I'm willing to set that aside, but I would expect at some point that comes back to us the same on the small business support in the neighborhood program. I'd like to know a little bit more exactly how that's going to be set up and distributed, but we have several months till we get to that point, so hopefully we can hear more about that before we have to actually allocate it. And so I'd support scenario B. Well, thanks Fred.

Speaker 4 (02:48:25):

Mayor, real quick. I had a question for, I would say for Chief Hardy, I know we had conversations last week about implementing the plus one and kind of what that meant for numbers. If we were to maximize what we have available in the 0.8 mil increase, which is what we agreed upon as far as exceeding revenue neutral based on my fuzzy math calculations in addition to that one FTE, that's part of option B, that gives

us a little bit of wiggle room to maybe add up to three additional for a total of four FTEs for fire and medical. Would that be enough to bring engine five back online?

Speaker 35 ([02:49:19](#)):

Hi, McKenzie is L chief of staff of Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medical. So if we added three additional employees on top of the one that was in option B, those would just go into our workforce to help offset overtime expenses, decrease burnout, decrease the amount of hours that firefighters are working. However, it would not be enough to staff an additional engine unless staffing was changed.

Speaker 5 ([02:49:41](#)):

So

Speaker 35 ([02:49:41](#)):

The three additional positions with three shifts, we would technically need nine

Speaker 4 ([02:49:47](#)):

Nine

Speaker 35 ([02:49:48](#)):

To do three per shift for those three shifts for 24 hour shifts.

Speaker 4 ([02:49:53](#)):

Thank you for clarifying that.

Speaker 2 ([02:50:04](#)):

Anybody else want to chime in at this point?

Speaker 7 ([02:50:11](#)):

Well, I guess I'll go next. I guess Vice mayor kind of stole a lot of my thunder, but

Speaker 3 ([02:50:18](#)):

Shouldn't let me talk first.

Speaker 7 ([02:50:20](#)):

It's all right. It's all right. It's all right. But yeah, I do like the aspect of the option B the most, especially with the firefighter addition. Kind of get us back to that number we had before two police officers get them back to bring them back somewhat. And then of course the farmer's market, I had the opportunity to go ahead and talk with some representatives from them to get a better sense for myself of the plan that they're considering. So I look forward to hearing more information regarding that and kind of the progression of that because I think I've made it pretty clear that I've always supported having that sustainable food nature in downtown or around downtown for quite a while. I'm still not giving up on the dream on a downtown grocery store, but this is a small step towards that progress. Small business support.

([02:51:23](#)):

I would definitely like to see exactly where that money goes as well, but I'm definitely in favor of that as well because I think that's one of the few ways that we can generate revenue for a city is by supporting our small businesses and entrepreneurs. So neighborhood program, I'm thankful for commissioner sellers, kind of flesh that out a little bit and I look forward to more information about that. And then parks and rec fees, I'm proud of Luis and the department making inroads and having the ability to make progress to support folks so that they don't have to make those expenditures. Some of the folks there, but I know it won't get all the way there, but at least it's for our kids and folks that financially it might be even more of a burden to go ahead and help them out. I think that's helpful and most of all, and to also jump on with vice mayor.

(02:52:37):

Yeah, it's the key to this and the key to hoping, helping to maintain any sort of structure with our poverty taxes to get more commercial because it way more contributes than residential. So the more that we can add to that, the more that we can keep that mill levy a little bit more stable. So that is the goal. I know it's more of a long-term goal, but I think we're working towards it. And finally, I would like to say I want to thank staff, all staff, everybody that spoke and all staff in here and all who are listening for all their hard work since last year. I know this has been a difficult process, but I think you've been commendable and the ways you've stepped up those that are here with us and those are not, I want to say I appreciate you all. So yeah.

Speaker 2 (02:53:30):

Yeah, those are great words. Agreed. It's a lot of work for these it especially once we took 6 million off the budget, they seem to find it.

Speaker 8 (02:53:43):

So at the first of the year we kind of head start a little bit of a head start on a budget when we had a meeting at the commission and talked about what our wants were for this budget and we had tasked staff with bringing a budget that had a flat mill levee rate, but then also would build back our reserves \$2 million. I believe that's what it was. And so that's what staff brought to us and that's the budget that I can support. I think Vice Mayor said quite a few things I do believe, but at the same time, this additional 0.488 mil levy increase for scenario B, my preference would be to find some additional cuts. So I can support scenario A, but I cannot support the other two.

Speaker 2 (02:54:28):

So yes to A, but B and C is not an option for you? Correct.

Speaker 8 (02:54:31):

Okay,

Speaker 2 (02:54:32):

Thank you.

Speaker 4 (02:54:42):

All right, mayor, I am not going to split hairs tonight, but I am going to just go through the list of what's proposed and option B because I do believe that we have the overall consensus for that. Although when I presented this, when we had our discussion about the exceeding revenue neutral, which we knew was inevitable because of such a time as this, maybe in two or three years down the line, we can start looking at being firm on revenue neutral. We're just not in that right now. There's too many variables at play that

are not dictated by us. We've talked about that. Vice mayor has spoken to that, you've spoken to it. Many of us have spoken to that over the past year, not just with staff but also with community advocates. And what it boils down to me is that we do the work that we do and the work that staff does that our constituents don't often have a day-to-day understanding of.

(02:55:36):

It's not about a lack of transparency. It is about the true complexity and competing values that a city budget does have. We have over a hundred thousand people, well roughly a hundred thousand people who live in our community and probably at least a hundred thousand different opinions as to what the budget should look like. And so how do you take those different competing values of different groups that may find commonality or may see the budget as a cooperation or less of a collaboration and help them understand what that truly does look like. And so we are not synonymous, I mean we are not the only ones that are in this situation. All municipalities are, even your county governments are. And so I think there's, like I said a couple of weeks ago, this is still an opportunity for us to continue to elevate the conversation around what staff and what community can engage in what we also engage in with staff and community about the budget and what that means.

(02:56:38):

So echoes dittos to everything that you said and then some, because I think we've all spoken to it in many different iterations from the deus. I want to go through the pieces. Like I said, I wish there was a lot of consensus around CI don't propose exceeding revenue neutral just on a whim. There is a lot of intentionality. You would've heard when we did have discussion what my intentionality was around. It has evolved a bit, but the idea is that that 0.8 could do something. We could have done more, but again, this is about finding common ground where we can and point it's a consensus. So the consensus was for us to have 0.8 and nothing more than that and then we're getting something that's about a little bit less than that, which it hurts. It really hurts. I think we really could have better prepared ourself for the discussion that's going to happen next with expansion of station six.

(02:57:35):

I don't disagree with Commissioner Finkel. I think we just have different perspectives on how to get to the same location. I'm just glad that we're both getting to the same location and I think we all are wanting to get to that same goal of expanding and making sure that we're putting, preparing ourselves for what that looks like and positioning our community well. So starting with the farmer's market, I couldn't be more proud of this commission wanting to agree and move forward with that. Yes, if you look at the CIP, the original proposal, it is for a total project of \$5.9 million. I think there's the idea and the intent to have some cost sharing to this, and I think it's cost sharing from public private dollars, but even mostly on the public side as far as the city and county. And I hope that this is a conversation that we can have with the county.

(02:58:19):

I understand that it is the Lawrence Farmer's Market, but we, as one of the board members spoke today, we have vendors who come from the county who support. So this should be a shared cost amongst us all, not just on the burden of the city. Okay. So I'm glad that we're continuing with that seed money to keep it going. As far as the economic development dollars, we shared that. I do believe we're going to have conversations about that. I've talked to staff about what that looks like. And so that will come back to us in some form way. I do believe what that looks like is more to come the additional FTE for LKPD.

(02:58:59):

This is the kind of, if part of how do we ensure something that's there that's not there. If we know that we have the discretion to hire more, but it may not be in good practice. These are more continued discussions around the budget that we need to continue to have not only as a commission but also with the community and what that looks like as far as public safety from the police side as well as from the fire, which does

lead me to, yes, we are adding into that one FTE. I wish it was more my one meal wasn't going to get us nine if perhaps if we would've fully dedicated the 0.8 yes. But I don't think it was the appetite for the commission to, again, too many competing values. So this is a tough one. It really is. So like I said, as we think about what's coming ahead of us, I like to think of it as preparing on the front end to rip the bandaid off on the back end because we are going to have to entertain a meal increase.

(02:59:54):

So does the bandaid come off a little bit? Does it not sting as much if on the back end, if we would've prepped it for the front end, maybe could have. It wasn't that much of an appetite for the commission to go down that route. So we'll have to look at it on the back end. But we have the one is better than none. It almost just kind of feels like a net zero at this point. As far as the rec fees, again, we can argue about woulda, coulda, should have, could have been there, wasn't there, whatnot. Is there an appetite for a sunset? There could be. We can always put that in. That is a tool that is available to us as commissioners that sometimes we don't often use. Maybe because we're afraid to use it, but it's available. So I don't want to freeze anything.

(03:00:41):

If there's an idea of doing a look back, we can do that. You don't necessarily have to put it in resolution. It is the discretion and the authority of a commissioner to say, Hey, let's look at this. If we want to look at this in 27, we can. If we want to look at it in 28 or if you want to look at it in 2030, that discretion and authority is there. We don't necessarily have to always put some, I know everybody's like put it in writing. We need to, some things you can need to put in writing some things. It's just of the authority and as an advocate and the constituents, you can bring that up to your elected official to say, Hey, you need to look back at this. So the 50,000, I'm not opposed to that angel, I don't think you're wrong, but I think there's something there as far as with the rec fees and for students and students who are not enrolled.

(03:01:29):

So to commissioner, to the vice mayor's point, most of the students being a poor college student, just because of you're working through, you're probably going to qualify for the discount. If not, it's 12. But I would even advocate, and I would be proud as a commissioner, as the university being and my alma mater and in my backyard to advocate to be a change so that students who are enrolled, if they're enrolled in the previous semester and they're not taking classes in the summer, they should be able to utilize the rec center. Like I said, when I paid for it as a student, it told me I had so many semesters after I had graduated that I can use it. And I can tell you I haven't used them all. So I'd be willing to gift that to some students if they needed it for the summer. I probably got about 12 semesters worth of rec credit that I never utilized.

(03:02:16):

So I'm okay with the 50 k. I think there's some advocacy efforts that we can talk to that I'd be willing to engage with you about if we wanted to. And then of course, lastly with the neighborhood money, of course there needs to be more discussion. I think what I shared tonight, like I said, I wanted to take a step back so that there's a lot that needed to be flushed out. If there's appetite for us to flush it out this year, I'm not opposed to the 20, but I'm not in favor of giving four associations \$5,000 to do whatever. If we really want to be intentional about building strong, welcoming neighborhoods, and we're going to identify our earmark money for that, then we need to make sure that it is equitable and inclusive of all the neighborhood associations based on what that criteria is. So begrudgingly, I am voting for b. I wish there was more of a consensus and an appetite from the commission to vote on C.

Speaker 2 (03:03:10):

Understood. Thank you. Good points. Again, I want to make sure everybody's clear on where we're at. I think we've got a pretty great selection process that we've gone through over the last eight or nine months.

It feels like forever we've been talking about this budget, but I'm really excited to try to take some of the suspense out of what we're doing and move it forward and having this time the community to talk to us about us and tell us what we got wrong. And I think tonight's about figuring out what we got and what we got wrong and our first blush. And as a leader, you have to take a look at what you taxed the city to do. And it was impressive what was done by staff from the lowest level of staff members to the highest, highest level at the city manager's office, trying to take ownership of this reduction that the city demanded of them.

(03:04:03):

So I'm really appreciative of all the work that was done. Know it's grueling and hard to see things taken away from a budget, but it's important for us to exercise our brain and work through these solutions in these problems. So then we can talk about the future. And I think that's really what I want to talk about right now is we as a commission have kind of seen, there's a consensus on agreeing to a 0.488 mil levy increase, which is less than the original maximum of 0.8, as commissioner sellers pointed out. If we went with more, then we'd have more wiggle room perhaps would be a good way to put it. But I really want to be intentional about any increases that we have and I appreciate that SEA also doesn't do away with some of the rec fees that we've talked about. So for me, taking a step back from the recreation fee conversation, I think this was a good feedback, good consensus making opportunity for us to pull back on some of the fees and to clarify who and what we'd have to pay.

(03:05:07):

When we made these cuts, we took things out and I think intentionally we're putting them back in. I was one of the strongest for not trying to raise the mill levy or not really remaining revenue neutral with the appraisal increases, but I mean I wanted to try to commit to try to not increase again, not increase the mill levy. And unfortunately we're at the point now if we want to do the things for the firefighters, for the police officers and for these other community benefits, we're going to have to increase it. So I'm willing to make a move towards this as a reasonable opportunity for us to be moving forward with some of these ideas that we left behind when we formulated this budget to begin with. And so for me, this feels like a cleanup of some of the things we may have missed and for me, I know the firefighters we're going to have a conversation about equipment and fire stations, but long range, I think Vice Mayor Finkel D pointed out, we're going to have some mill levy increases coming whether I like it or you like it or not. If we want to have the public safety and the security that are being preached here tonight, it's going to cost us a lot of money and we need to make a concerted effort to make that public and that we make the right decision in how we spend those dollars. So for me, I'm in favor of moving with scenario B at this time, even though I task the staff to doing less. I really appreciate what they've done and I'm willing to move forward with scenario B.

(03:06:41):

So in that case

Speaker 3 (03:06:42):

For motion,

Speaker 2 (03:06:42):

Yeah, please,

Speaker 3 (03:06:43):

I move to adopt resolution number 76 32 including option B and approving and appropriating the 2026 City of Lawrence operating budget and adopt the 2026 to 2030 capital improvement plan. Second. Is that good enough?

Speaker 2 ([03:07:02](#)):

Yeah, that's a motion by Finkle Dye in a second.

Speaker 3 ([03:07:06](#)):

Oh, I'm sorry. I was looking at Sherry. Yeah, Sherry, is that woke with, yeah. Okay. Motion. Just making sure the motion sounded right.

Speaker 2 ([03:07:14](#)):

Second

Speaker 3 ([03:07:15](#)):

And

Speaker 2 ([03:07:15](#)):

Then second by sellers. All in favor say aye. Those opposed?

Speaker 8 ([03:07:20](#)):

No.

Speaker 2 ([03:07:21](#)):

Okay, that was something. Motion passes four one. Okay. Did I need to do a tally vote on that or not? Forgot to ask.

Speaker 5 ([03:07:34](#)):

Roll call. Is there a roll call required?

Speaker 2 ([03:07:37](#)):

No. Need a roll call? Didn't know if I had to do a roll call. Vote on that

Speaker 6 ([03:07:42](#)):

Roll call Vote is.

Speaker 2 ([03:07:44](#)):

We did it last time. I wanted to make sure. Okay. Okay. Alright, so I think that item's over, we're going to take a 10 minute break at this time. We're going to come back at around eight 12 or so I think. Is that be right?

Speaker 1 ([03:07:58](#)):

Eight 15. Eight 15,

Speaker 4 ([03:19:38](#)):

Yep. A little tar for the party, but we're here.

Speaker 2 ([03:19:41](#)):

Okay, let's go ahead and start back in. The next item on our agenda is to receive our water and wastewater utility rate presentation and consider adopting our first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 6 3, providing for revised schedule of rates for water service and stewards disposal service by amending Lawrence City Code chapter 19. Article three sections 19 through 312 19, 3 11 19, 3 15, 19, 3 17 and 19 3 24.

Speaker 36 ([03:20:12](#)):

Good evening, mayor and commissioners. I'm assistant director with the Municipal Services and Operations Department, Trevor Flynn. And I'm here with our other assistant director, Melinda Harger, and we have our director, Melissa online along with our consultant with Ralph Teis. Colin DRA online as well. And I'm going to kick it over to Melissa to get us started and move her slides and then we're going to kind of rotate around here a little bit.

Speaker 37 ([03:20:35](#)):

Good evening, mayor and commissioners. We're happy to be here tonight to present the water and wastewater rates for the City of Lawrence for 26 to 28. This will be our second time doing adoption if you choose to consider it, of a three year rate structure for water and wastewater. We did build this budget and this rate structure around our connected city Key performance indicators from the strategic plan, the first one being resident satisfaction with water and wastewater services. We are looking forward to seeing what the upcoming resident satisfaction survey tells us about the work that we've done over the last decade or so. Additionally, keying in on providing clean and safe drinking water through our compliance and ensuring that we have little to none when it comes to violations related to clean and safe drinking water. Again, water and wastewater assets. A key for us is also that they're in good or better condition and we are continuing to make our focus on renewable energy for facilities which will over time bring costs down and provide a healthier environment for all of the community. In addition, the last one that we have is our capital projects that we focus on trying to adjust to have less of an impact on our climate and using two systems, one lead and the other, which is called Envision.

([03:22:20](#)):

So taking off of those really important performance indicators and strategic direction. Over the last 10 years, this team has focused really hard on getting the work going to fund and develop these CIP projects, which you've referenced in your previous conversation and we've been discussing throughout this last summer. We have leaned hard into best practices related to asset management, really trying to trade the concept of reacting always in an emergency, rather working towards proactive and preventative maintenance programs. We're not where we want to be yet, but we're a lot further than we were 10 years ago and I want to thank our dedicated team of staff that continue to push forward in this area for best practice related asset management. Additionally, we are seeing some reductions in waterline breaks and we'll talk a little bit about that as well as sewer issues and really continuing to work on our INI issues with our stormwater.

([03:23:30](#)):

Additionally, just want to note that we are increasing our environmental stewardship through our best practices for nutrient removal and optimizing the work that we do with watershed management. And last but certainly not least, this governing body has helped tee us up for the future with facility upgrades and the correct staff to meet those regulatory requirements. So we are moving from o and m to capital, so let's talk about some completed projects. We have in the last year finished up the Stratford water tower replacement, which went into service last summer in July and it took more than 10 years of planning to get us there. So this has been a big project for the community and we are also working on the new amenities that will go in the footprint of the old water tower. We completed the work on the advanced meter infrastructure for the city, which was a project that started in the fall of 22 and wrapped up last spring or not last spring, spring of 24, which replaced the 33,000 water meters across the city and made

them smart meters, giving not only customers but also staff real-time information to work with and to help customers with problems related to leaks and other issues.

(03:25:04):

We continued an aggressive waterline replacement program including a significant amount of line replaced along Clinton Parkway that was more than a mile and was prone to breaking. I do remember quite a few of those the first summer that I was here. And so that also enabled us to replace a crumbling asphalt curve path and we put in new piping to manage stormwater while we were at it. In the recent years, our water line program has been targeting resiliency and trying to help customers that are supplied by a single fed line and getting to a system where there is redundancy work at the cross gate drive.

Construction is now complete along with Clinton Parkway and WUSA Drive to reduce and increase the system's resiliency for all of our customers. Our sewer sewer rehab program also has had a lot of money going into it to help with our residents in that aspect as well.

(03:26:16):

90,000 feet have been replaced at a cost of about \$4.5 million and additionally we're getting down here the treatment plant. Over the past few years, conditions assessments have been completed for the call water treatment plant and the Kansas River Wastewater treatment plan and they identified maintenance needs to be prioritized again through our asset management practices and developing programs within our operating budgets to address those on an ongoing basis. And this last year we did complete a new water distribution system master plan and that had not been updated since 2012. This plan is going to help us be able to rightsize the system and ensure we're building the right infrastructure at the right time.

(03:27:08):

Trevor, next slide. Thank you. And the last one that I'm going to talk with you about tonight was a big project that occurred last year, which was the replacement of the water transmission Maine along New York Street. Those that have lived in that area while will remember back in 2019 that we had a 24 inch ductile iron transmission in Maine that was experiencing quite a few failures between the thousand block and the 1300 block of New York Street and there was quite a bit of money and effort put into making repairs there totaling over \$150,000 we worked to develop project and last year we replaced just under 5,000 feet of 24 inch water transmission main and also worked on the sanitary and storm sewers in the adjacent areas. This project will bring much needed relief to having those streets stuck up in that area, I believe Now I turn it over to Melinda,

Speaker 36 (03:28:18):

Trevor, Trevor. So I'm going to kick us out with some ongoing projects and I'm going to start with a big one, which is our Kansas River Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project. This project, the primary driver is a regulatory to ensure the city meets the stringent permit limits for nutrients in our current discharge permit to the Kansas River. This project's major upgrade to the plant as we convert our treatment process technology to address nutrient reduction utilizing new and retrofitted infrastructure. Additionally, the project is addressing several key items that were identified through a condition assessment and includes other major improvements including UV disinfection, new grit removal, a new fermentor and a new S SCADA server building. This time prior, 80% of the construction is complete at this time and the figure on the right has some of the key improvements highlighted with number one is a new infrastructure, a very large and tall thickened waste activated sludge basin.

(03:29:16):

Number two is a retrofitted basin that is going to be our new return activated sludge fermentor, which provides much needed carbon to the new process. And the three and four, those are all our retrofitted aeration basins that are now retrofitted to be biological nutrient reduction basins. And then the new UV facility is number five and that's for disinfection with no chemicals. We're just going to be using the UV

on that. And then on six is our new SCADA server building and we're looking forward to wrapping that one up and hopefully have some ribbon coating and tours out there here pretty soon. Another one is our call infrastructure rehab project. This project is in full steam right now. The carbon contact base and replacement project is a deferred maintenance infrastructure improvement project replacing a base that was constructed in 1917 with longstanding structural deficiencies that had reached the end of its useful life years ago. The new basin that is now under construction will incorporate modern design that will optimize our carbon treatment process. Carbon is one of our most expensive chemicals we use and we anticipate this project will result in efficiencies with our carbon usage. The project also includes new plug flow basins associated yard piping and concrete surface repairs to the adjacent carbon building.

(03:30:42):

Now an ongoing project in an area of the plant that is rarely seen unless you get the tour to the bowels of the basement of the old call plant. This is the pipe gallery project and this is another improvement project addressing aging infrastructure. The pipes and fittings requiring replacement are from the original renovation of this side of the building in 1954 and these critical components were identified as part of our condition assessment of our assets. And this project will also require lead and asbestos abatement and it will be procuring a services for engineering in early 2026 to get that project rolling. Now I will turn it to Melinda by gallery.

Speaker 38 (03:31:24):

Good evening. So I'm going to start off here with our MSO campus, one of our other large projects. This project is a two phase project to relocate divisions of the municipal services and operations department to a consolidated campus there on the city owned farmland remediation property. The phase one building that you see here, this picture on the right was taken last week, so we do have our precast walls up. This phase one building will hold our divisions of streets, stormwater water distribution, wastewater collections, traffic inspections, construction management and engineering, as well as our administration for the department. Phase one also includes vehicle wash bays and a fuel island. So some of these divisions and this equipment is currently at 11th and Haskell, so a lot of that will be moving out. We are on track to move in by this time next year we will all be situated there. All of those divisions that I've mentioned, we will have 130 employees call this particular building their new home base. Phase one construction started in December of 2024 and so our completion date is early summer, but it will take a couple months to get everything moved in and over there.

(03:32:41):

The project budget, we are on budget and the cost is 64.8 million for this. Since we are talking water wastewater, I wanted to mention that the water wastewater fund is supporting 23.6 million in revenue funds for this. So 23.6 million is what's coming out of what we're talking about tonight. I do want to highlight several operational benefits of the campus and its alignment to the strategic plan. So first off are the regulatory drivers. So again, relocating MSO employees and equipment to this new facility eliminates environmental hazards and structures that we currently have in the floodway and the floodplain. It also aligns with our remediation efforts. We are able to use, for example, our parking structures. Our concrete is going to be capping some of the issues out there. It's one of the remediation methods under efficient and effective processes. That commitment, this centralized facility will increase our efficiency and reliability of day-to-day delivery of KE services. A resource efficient campus aligns with our city sustainability goals including energy and water efficiency, open space goals, occupancy, safety, wellbeing, and sound like pollution reduction. We are on target and have already submitted the first portion for Lead gold on this facility and I cannot forget to mention engagement empowered teams. The conditions and efficiency of a new campus allow staff to excel in their work. It increases employee satisfaction as well as retention, which we know is a struggle at times.

(03:34:17):

So our Southwest conveyance corridor program, this is one of our capacity and growth related programs. It's an ongoing comprehensive program to convey wastewater from the west side of Lawrence to our two wastewater treatment plants that are on the east side and southeast of Lawrence. The project includes modeling, prioritization of collection system improvements and expansion. We have several construction projects that will be bidding in 26 including a force main access and cleaning project in the spring pump station 44 and 45 abandonment will happen in the summer next year, the bid for that and then pump station nine improvements will bid in fall of 26 with construction happening after that.

(03:35:00):

I want to highlight a few of our other ongoing projects. So we have the K 10 utility relocations. KDOT is expanding course Westlake of the SLT from two lanes to four lanes between I 70 and US 59.

Construction began on that in September of 24. City of Lawrence had several existing utility crossings impacted by the highway expansion as well as several future utility crossings proposed in our integrated plants. So this project includes relocation of all of those utility crossings and construction of new utility crossings. The construction began in the spring of 25 and is anticipated to be complete by the end of next year. I want to highlight our eagle bend NYSC irrigation water supply projects. So this is one where we worked with Parks and Rec to construct a new raw water pump station waterline to support the irrigation systems out at the Eagle Bend Golf Course YSC Clinton Lake softball complex as well as the arboretum.

(03:36:09):

So it will supply raw water from Clinton Lake as opposed to using treated water. What this will do then, since our parks rec and culture department is responsible for payment of the cost of that irrigation at these facilities by irrigating with raw water, it's going to substantially reduce that cost, provides long-term savings as well as it's a more sustainable solution. So producing less treated water at the city's water treatment plants does reduce the amount of chemicals and energy required. And the construction on this began in spring of 25 and will be complete by spring of next year. Moving on to our waterline replacement program, this is a program in the five year CIP that has funding anywhere to five to 7 million a year. As previously mentioned, we updated the water distribution master plan and the associated hydraulic model. With that completed early this year has really helped us to size some of the infrastructure and make targeted investments. So examples of that on Maple Lane, there's a transmission main replacement where we're installing 16 inch in lieu of upsizing to 24 inch and that's based on those demand projections that came out of that model and known system capacity.

(03:37:30):

Also a KU gateway project. We're utilizing it right now to review what is proposed for the domestic and the fire flow demands and that way we can evaluate and mitigate other impacts in the broader system. We've also utilized this. You may have noticed some of our water tank projects that were in our CIP did reduce substantially in costs from last year to this year in the CIP and a lot of that was based on some of the detailed inspections that we have completed as part of our waterline program. We also looked at other things within our distribution system, which is our tanks.

(03:38:09):

We use our waterline replacement program to coordinate with some of our street projects so that we're performing the work concurrently. Again, we don't want to mill and overlay a street and then come back and replace waterline later. So we have been successfully doing that. We added Waterline in the Jayhawk Watershed project. You might be aware of the impact on Tennessee between sixth and eighth. So there waterline replacement there, Iowa Street, Bob Billings Parkway, that will be starting up soon. And then of course in our street maintenance projects we look at Waterline at the same time and then this year added an on-call contractor, an in-house design to have more flexibility and to address our concerns more quickly. Under the sanitary sewer rehab program, as Melissa mentioned, there was a substantial amount of linear footage of, I wanted to clarify it wasn't replacement, it's the lining that was done four and a half million with the sewer rehab program here in the next coming year, we're going to be looking at Pinky

infrastructure improvement project. That's sanitary and Waterline West Campus Road Infrastructure Project that is also sanitary and water mains, the 2026 sanitary sewer rehab, which is pipe bursting scattered throughout town and then a quail run neighborhood INI reduction program. So those are some of the things that covered with the three to 5 million in the next year.

(03:39:45):

And then another thing that we did new this year was provide a separate funded category for development driven CIP projects, our water wastewater projects. We group these together with intentionality and to plan for these based on a variety of indicators including measured wastewater flow and development growth in certain areas. So the plan is to have these on a separate list. It really highlights those that are driven by development and that we will look at these each spring as we're updating our CIP and be able to adjust the timing of these. And you may notice that a couple of these had already been on the previous funded list and we did adjust the timing. We pushed those out because as we're looking at again the current capacity, what our models are showing where developments happening, they didn't need to occur in 26 and 27 and that was the southeast conveyance project as well as the west of K 10 water storage project was previously a west of K 10 water pressure zone. And again, through our master plan, we determined it needed storage and not a new pressure zone. And so the scope of the project changed and we were able to push it out.

(03:41:06):

One other project I want to mention is the treatment plant expansion project. So as some of you may know, we bid that project in 2015 and we did need to add a long list of alternates at that time. We rebid the project. One of the things we were not able to do at that time was a second treatment train. So we did two and a half MGD for capacity and instead of five MGD that has served us well to this point, but we know that in the next five years it's likely with development happening west of K 10 that we will need that additional capacity. Good thing is it's already designed, so we do have the drawings for that. It will take a little bit to revamp those. But a lot of this, what you see here is the additional cost for constructing that second treatment train to add that capacity.

(03:41:59):

One thing that wouldn't be needed before that, that's not strictly development driven is our WUSA biosolids project. So that's not on this list, but it would need to happen before the expansion again, when the WUSA treatment plant project was under design, we looked at a solution for the solids that are produced through that biological process and we determine land application now over time for regulatory reasons and what we're seeing with the uptake and then also how often the fields may continue to be wet. We cannot apply at some of those rates that were originally anticipated. So before we expand the plant, we would need to do the biosolids project. So that's on a separate list, but I did want to mention that because you'll probably hear us mention that in the coming years. So with that, I am going to turn this over to our rate consultant for the next few slides. Okay, thank you. So Colin,

Speaker 39 (03:43:02):

Hi. Hi Colin. Colin dra. I'm the vice president with Rep Tells and I'm the project manager for our engagement helping the city of Lawrence develop the rates that we are discussing tonight. So I'm going to talk a little bit about some of the key drivers of our forecast and the proposed rates. Before we get into those, I did want to just touch briefly on the process that we follow to do the financial forecasting that has the rates is sort of the outcome of that. So we do look at revenues to begin with sort of baseline revenues. So if we didn't adjust our rates, what would we expect our revenues to be over the next five years? And that's going to be a function of growth in customer accounts as well as usage by our different types of customers. So we look to basically establish a normalized baseline of usage over the next five years that we can compare to projected expenditures to see how close we are without any rate adjustments to where we see our expenditures going over the next five years. So we do that sort of revenue baseline and we'll

look at a visual here in a second to sort of demonstrate what that looks like. The next step is to project expenditures.

(03:44:22):

So we start of course with the budget and then from there on the operating side we're looking at making assumptions on inflation or personnel cost increases and those sorts of things just increases in operational cost that we would expect to incur over the next five years. On the capital side, we look at developing a capital financing plan. So this is all the stuff that Trevor and Melinda and Melissa have been touching on the past few slides is all of those various projects, whether ongoing or down the road, developing a plan for financing those between cash and debt funding. And then that's incorporated into the projection of expenses as well. So we have baseline revenues, we have a projection of expenses, and that last step is really to compare the two to see how we're doing and to the extent that there's a gap between projected revenues and expenses, that's where we typically recommend adjustments to rates.

(03:45:24):

So that's sort of the 30,000 foot view of the process. It's basically a projection of the money going out and the money coming in if we don't do anything and then we basically look to see how to align the two over time. We typically do that for a five to 10 year period. We're showing you a five year forecast with a three year adoption, fairly typical and certainly the way we looked at it last time. So that's sort of the overview of the process. I did want to touch on just a couple of the drivers you see on the slides, just that first one in terms of equipment repairs and maintenance. And Trevor and Melinda kind of mentioned this earlier, but really just making sure that we're doing what we need to do to maintain our infrastructure. So you could kind of equate it to making sure you're changing the oil on your car.

(03:46:17):

There's certainly a cost to that and making sure that we do that, but it's a lot less expensive to maintain things than to replace them when they break. So that's certainly something that we factor into the projections, just kind of going down the list, energy is a big driver. Water and wastewater utilities are very energy intensive, especially as it relates to treating water and trading wastewater as well as moving it around whether you're pumping water around your system or conveying wastewater around energy is a big cost for us. Process changes to address regulatory issues, whether it's nutrient removal or other issues, definitely energy intensive and our energy utilities are also adjusting their rates. So that's an input cost into what we see in terms of our water and waste water. We need to make sure that we're factoring that in inflation. Just wanted to kind of touch on that briefly.

(03:47:20):

We did a three year adoption previously, and that was right at the cusp of where we were starting to see that sort of post COVID rapid inflation increase between operating costs or even the cost of executing capital projects. So you have COVID, all of the federal government stimulus, all the additional money flowing into the economy and then one sort outcome of that is there's more money available that increases demand for beds and services. And we did see inflation sort of tick up as a result of that. So that's something we had to incorporate. Now that inflation has sort of come back down, but the costs themselves haven't necessarily decreased, it's just the rate of change has come down. So that certainly still factors into our costs. The other thing where everyone in the industry collectively has to keep an eye on is the impact of potential tariffs and tariff retaliation.

(03:48:17):

It may not necessarily be things that we buy directly, but it could just impact the things, the inputs into the things that we buy. So that's a potential risk there in terms of our costs. So it's something to keep an eye on regulatory requirements. Trevor touched on that in terms of the nutrient removal and the requirements there. To the extent that we have to do things to comply with state or federal environmental regulations, that's something that we will certainly do, but we'll have to incorporate the cost of that into the rates. And

then the last one, the big one, just CIP for infrastructure improvements and development driven projects. And I was kind of taking notes on the years as I think Trevor was talking, having a component of infrastructure that's over a hundred years old in the case of the 1917 item and then the other one in 1954. And I will say as shocking as that might sound to people listening, that's not at all unusual to have pieces of infrastructure that are 50, 60, 75 years old. And the reason for that is a lot of these things, they last a long time, especially if you maintain them, but eventually they do need to be replaced.

(03:49:37):

And so one of the things that we have to incorporate into the rates is the cost of financing those improvements. And so we certainly look at that, whether it's cash funding or debt funding. One advantage to debt funding, and I know there's a lot of discussion and consideration on that balance, what proportion of our infrastructure should be funded with cash versus debt? But one thing to kind of keep in mind is we are constructing things that last a long time that will benefit people not only today but much further down the road. So you think about something that's going to last 50, 60, 70 years to spread that cost out over the useful life of the asset. Or another way to think about it is all the people that benefit from it as opposed to kind of placing the burden on today's users who spread that out.

(03:50:29):

That's certainly a consideration when you're funding infrastructure that lasts as long as the utility infrastructure does. So that's a consideration as well. We flip to the next slide, it's just a visual representation of that process I mentioned earlier. So the stack bars represent projections of expenses, so we kind of go from most important kind up on down the line there. So the starting point is paying for our operating costs at cost to operate the system day to day. And then from there we have debt service on infrastructure improvements, whether it's ones that we've already completed or proposed debt funding down the line, but just starting to layer in the funding for capital infrastructure. Debt service is a big chunk of that expense, but water utilities are very capital intensive. They require a lot of infrastructure to deliver the service, so it's not unusual to have a good chunk of that be debt funded.

(03:51:34):

And then we also have a transfer in there to the general fund by policy and then at the very top cash funding of capital improvements. So that's an option that we have is to kind of increase that cash funding of capital improvements and maybe reduce the reliance on debt over time in terms of just comparing to existing revenue, that's that baseline comparison that mentioned earlier. So if we don't do anything, we kind of see where our revenues will, it looked relatively flat, they'll actually probably decline slightly because usage tends to go down over time as people become more efficient, install more efficient fixtures and appliances. So we'd expect in the absence of any adjustment to revenues, that line could be somewhat flat or maybe even slightly declining depending on our growth. And then we have the proposed revenue there from the proposed rate adjustments and what we're looking at is about a 7.9% revenue adjustment between water and sewer.

(03:52:40):

And that plays out a little bit differently in the individual rates because the other thing we dig into is the various rate classes that we have, whether it's residential, multifamily, commercial, industrial irrigation or rural water. Really just looking at the cost to serve each class based on their usage characteristics and making some adjustments to the rates that way. The other policy lever we have is the fixed charge versus the volume charges. Historically we've increased the fixed charge by less and had less fixed fixed revenue recovery. The advantage to that is it does tend to help those lower usage customers because that's less impactful to them. Also recovering more revenue on a volumetric basis and it puts more of the bill under the customer's control and maybe encourages them to keep an eye on their water usage and to conserve as well. Just in terms of what's driving the overall adjustment recommendations.

(03:53:43):

Really it's just sort of an outcome of everything that's led up to this point, whether it's the budget, the CIP, there are some assumptions in there in terms of cost increases beyond the budget year. But for the most part it's really just an outcome of where our revenues need to be to fund our expenses and to ensure that we're aligned with our reserve policies and our financial metrics to maintain our bond rating. So that's where those recommendations come from. We go to. Yes. Okay, so this is just an example of a 4,000 gallon bill just for water and wastewater. So the change from 25 to 26 is just under \$10 a month or right around 8%, maybe a little north of 8%. And again, that's going to be a little bit different depending on who you are. Lower volume customers see slightly lower increases because we're out increasingly fixed charge by as much higher volume customers might see slightly higher increases and there's some differences by class, but everyone's kind of riding around that overall revenue increase range.

(03:54:56):

And we can go to the next one just to kind of put a bow on it, 7.9% is the recommendation for revenues. We have dug into how that plays out by between the fixed charge and the volume charge and by customer class just to ensure that we're recovering those costs fairly based on how customers use the system. So there are some differences there, but for the most part, the overall recommendation is driven by just the need to fund the expenses. We did see a need for something higher several years ago, and that is the advantage to reviewing this periodically and either doing a multi-year adoption and reviewing it or reviewing it more regularly is when you do these multi-year forecasts, you're able to kind of keep it somewhat stable. And that's certainly an advantage to the way that the city approaches rate setting is. It looks at things more regularly and the goal is always to keep those rate adjustments somewhat stable year over year knowing that our costs are free.

(03:56:07):

So that's certainly a best practice. Something that we recommend is even in the case of a multi-year adoption to just make sure you keep an eye on things and course correct as you need to. And just on that last bullet, and I think you kind of came through and Trevor and Melinda's comments as well, but job one is safe and reliable service and high quality service delivered to customers, but we also recognize that any adjustment to the rates has an impact. So we are also focused on the lowest cost of ownership and that focuses on, I think really just some of those things I mentioned earlier, not only keeping an eye on today, trying to have good fiscal stewardship, but also thinking over the long-term, making sure that we maintain our infrastructure and try to deliver our services efficiently and as effectively as we can over the long-term and looking with a long-term view and also just making sure that we're retaining our assets in terms of asset management. So I believe with that, I'm turning it back to Melinda to talk about excess.

Speaker 38 (03:57:21):

Yes, so commissioners, the action that we're requesting tonight is to adopt ordinance 10, 1 6 3 and the next steps would be the second reading of the ordinance on October 7th, and then the rates would be effective starting January one. So we now stand for questions.

Speaker 2 (03:57:39):

Thank you, Melinda, appreciate it. Any

Speaker 3 (03:57:42):

Questions right now? Can you remind me what the bonded projects, we have a ratio of income to expenses and we have a reserve requirement. Do you remember what those are?

Speaker 38 (03:58:01):

That is a great question for Colin to answer.

Speaker 39 ([03:58:05](#)):

Sure. Yeah, so by policy, I believe it's 250 days of expenses in reserve and that's sort of a target. I think if I remember from your policy, you don't want to go below 2.25, 2.50 is kind of a target that's really driven again by our current credit rating and there's a mixture of factors that go into that, but those two are definitely key kind of days, cash on hand as well as debt service coverage ratio, which is the other one that you have alluded to. So you take revenues minus expenses and divide that by the annual principal and interest payments on outstanding debt. And I believe we've heard from our ratings agency that the objective there is or is to get to a 1.7. So that's what these are kind of designed to do over the next three years.

Speaker 3 ([03:58:59](#)):

And I'm sorry, say again what our debt service coverage ratio is.

Speaker 39 ([03:59:04](#)):

1.7 is the target. Yes.

Speaker 38 ([03:59:11](#)):

And so this does get us there after the three years. We get it right at 1.7.

Speaker 3 ([03:59:21](#)):

And again, just to be clear, for those I guess only reading the paper, the 7.9% is an aggregate number, the actual rate increases for residential, commercial sewer or waste, they're all slightly different than that, but aggregate is about the 7.9%, correct?

Speaker 5 ([03:59:42](#)):

Yes, correct.

Speaker 8 ([03:59:47](#)):

Do you have a breakdown of what that would be for each one of those categories?

Speaker 38 ([03:59:52](#)):

We do. There's a very large spreadsheet for that, so we might be able to have it pulled up if you had a particular one you were curious about.

Speaker 8 ([04:00:04](#)):

No, if it's just the average, if this is the average percent increase, just curious how much would each, like water versus sewer versus the various utilities?

Speaker 38 ([04:00:15](#)):

Right. On the water side we

Speaker 8 ([04:00:17](#)):

In the commercial versus residential,

Speaker 38 ([04:00:19](#)):

Right, we were using the 4,000 gallons as your typical household and on that we were seeing it vary 8.3%, 8.5% in that range over the three years for the 4,000 gallons. As Colin mentioned, the heavier users are going to see higher increases, but the base rate, we have less than a 7.9% increase, so the lower users are going to see the lower increases.

Speaker 5 ([04:00:47](#)):

Okay,

Speaker 2 ([04:00:52](#)):

And can you touch on the walk Russo wastewater treatment plan expansion? So you're talking about going from two and a half MGD S to five, MGD S and you want to do a biosolids project. I think I was trying to understand what you want to do prior, which is not in the list, what that cost estimate might be. For the biosolids project,

Speaker 38 ([04:01:12](#)):

It is listed in the funded list on water wastewater. It just isn't considered development driven because in about five years time we're likely not going to be able to land apply anymore. There's times now that we have to pay to haul that, those solids away from the plant. Like in 2019, I think that was the year we spent over 200, 250,000 in hauling because that was a really wet year. So the fields never dried out. You can't apply the solids on wet fields.

Speaker 2 ([04:01:45](#)):

The land application process wasn't available and so we just had to dispose of it at some registered facility.

Speaker 38 ([04:01:53](#)):

We put it out to bid and had to pay a contractor to haul that. And it's usually applied to farm fields fertilizer,

Speaker 2 ([04:02:00](#)):

It's land applied, you just have to pay to have it transported and

Speaker 38 ([04:02:02](#)):

To somewhere else to continue to sea hauler. Yeah.

Speaker 2 ([04:02:05](#)):

Got it. And then the two and a half million, so we're going to go back and ask what is the demand currently, what's the current use of that 2.5 MGD right now at the walk Rusa wastewater treatment plant, how much of that capacity are we currently using right now?

Speaker 36 ([04:02:23](#)):

Oh, it's an interesting plant you could throttle at pump station 10. So we keep it typically between two and 2.5. It really depends on what the main plant's doing because we need flow at the main plant, so when we hit rainfall, wet weather, high flows, different story, but generally it is treating 20% of the town and the main plant's treating 80% of the town

Speaker 2 ([04:02:54](#)):

And the biotreatment, I should say, the technology we use for reaching the effluent limits for that plant were rigid because of the low flow. Some of the requirements I remember correctly back when it was permitted and I know the nitrogen standards have been lowered so that we can emit less nitrogen in our effluent. Do the current technologies that we designed to meet and exceed those upcoming regulatory requirements. You mentioned we already had design phase done, so would it truly be just implementing what's been designed or are there technical limitations or environmental regulations that might limit us from using the existing technology that we have right now?

Speaker 36 ([04:03:38](#)):

To be clear for the WUSA plant, if we did that second train, if we use that current design, it has outperformed our expectations with the phosphorus removal and the nutrient reduction is generally on target. There's one month of the year that gets a little challenging and you got to remember these are bugs. So when you talk biological nutrient index, so when the bugs get out of balance, they just take a little bit, they take a while to recover. So you see the improvements very incrementally and sometimes your assumptions are misled and then you have to make another adjustment because it really didn't react. But the goal out there, I believe on the design were one and 10 or one and 10 and the plants consistently, we try to get down to four on the nitrogen consistently, but we're well below our permit limits on phosphorus because we were fortunate enough to be permanent based on our build out capacity on the full design. And so we're well under our, it's a mass limit, so it's your concentration times your flow to give you a pounds per day type thing. But those are all calculated based off the concentration of one milligram per liter phosphorus.

Speaker 2 ([04:04:48](#)):

Okay. So we're totally using the, we can use the current, using our diverter flow, we can use the maximum current capacity of the wastewater treatment plant if we need to.

Speaker 36 ([04:04:59](#)):

Yeah, two

Speaker 2 ([04:05:00](#)):

And a half million gallon.

Speaker 36 ([04:05:01](#)):

Yeah, during wet weather we could actually go to five just and

Speaker 2 ([04:05:04](#)):

Oh we can. Okay, cool. So and then this phase would be for us to then take over less demand from the main plant and transfer that demand to the WUSA plant. And then is it also allow faster from the west then? Is that part of it? Is it where any growth, is it going to be heading southeast then following?

Speaker 36 ([04:05:27](#)):

I think part of those master plans is I think switching, I'll get the pump stations mixed up, switching to another pump stations. We have two lines going out to the WUSA plan. Okay.

Speaker 38 ([04:05:37](#)):

That's the southeast conveyance project that's on the development driven. I saw that the southeast side of town to send all of that to WUSA as well.

Speaker 2 ([04:05:46](#)):

Very good, thank you.

Speaker 3 ([04:05:50](#)):

You were talking about the WUSA biosolids management. So CIP 1.5 million in 2027 and 10.5 million in 2028. It's in the CIP now.

Speaker 2 ([04:06:03](#)):

And

Speaker 38 ([04:06:03](#)):

That is funded with these rates as well.

Speaker 2 ([04:06:05](#)):

That's already paid. That's not, the money that you talked about wasn't included.

Speaker 38 ([04:06:09](#)):

Right. All of this, all the development driven projects and the biosolids, all of that is funded with the 7.9%

Speaker 2 ([04:06:16](#)):

Degree rate. Okay, thank you. Alright, thank you. I want to make sure we're missing that part.

Speaker 38 ([04:06:21](#)):

Now I will say a lot of those development driven projects are shown in those later years of the CIP. So what the rate increases would look like in those later years, 29, 30, 31. It's really going to depend on do some of those development projects push out? Do we have some contribution from developers on some of these projects? That's one reason we're also keeping them on that list,

Speaker 2 ([04:06:47](#)):

Like impact fees or something like that. That's what you mean by participating? Yeah. Okay. That's what I thought.

Speaker 3 ([04:06:54](#)):

Just

Speaker 2 ([04:06:54](#)):

Benefit districts input, please.

Speaker 3 ([04:06:56](#)):

All the above.

Speaker 2 ([04:06:57](#)):

Got it. Alright, any other questions right now that doesn't sound like it? Public comment on item one.

Speaker 13 ([04:07:24](#)):

Hi Holly Krebs. I have a couple of images.

([04:07:40](#)):

Thank you commissioners. I greatly appreciate that you're considering the city's updated water and wastewater utility rates tonight in conjunction with your final 2026 budget approval staff's presentation identified reasons for these increases, including increased operational expenses and debt payments for many substantial capital improvement projects. But this presentation did not provide much information about the impact of these increases on your constituents. The Coalition for Collaborative Governance aims to increase transparency about the city's budget by providing longitudinal comparative data that helps our community better understand the impact of the city's budgeting decisions. So we produce this chart, this chart that shows that changes in the city's utility rates that have occurred in the last five years and are anticipated for the next three years. This chart shows that in the last five years, the community has seen a total 54% increase in our water and wastewater rates and the proposal before you would increase them a total of 25% more over the course of the next three years. Could you display my second image?

([04:08:45](#)):

This portion of the chart highlights the financial impact these rate changes have on an average household. For these calculations, I use the average 2020 utility bill numbers provided in the city's 2022 utility fee presentation, and I use the average increase in stormwater and solid waste fees from the last two years to estimate their increases for the next three years. This data shows that an average household can expect to pay \$190 monthly in 2028, which is an 85% increase since 2020 with an average of more than a hundred dollars extra per year. This also shows that the total increase in an average household's annual city utility costs can be expected to be 1040 \$5 more than it was eight years ago. For context, the median household income in Lawrence is \$63,000. In the last five years, property values in Lawrence have increased 40%, which translates to about an extra \$300 annually in city taxes for a median priced home.

([04:09:45](#)):

While the city absorbed this extra revenue, it did not increase the property tax rate during this period. On the other hand, the city has chosen to increase our utility fees by 49% during the same five year period, which increased average utility costs by about \$600 annually. The commission and city staff spend a lot of time examining the city's operational and infrastructure needs that justify these increases, and I ask how much time is spent considering the financial impact of these increases on Lawrence residents. Many community members are concerned about the financial strains that increase property taxes, utility fees, inflation, and more are placing on their households. And may the information I have offered you help you better understand the substantive impact these decisions have on members of your community. Thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 29 ([04:10:36](#)):

Hello. Funding the city's capital improvement projects is one of the main reasons given for substantially increasing the city's utility rates. But the staff's agenda item, report and presentation barely touched upon the city's most expensive capital investment, the 100,000,130 million MSO campus. This project is not listed in the projects highlighted in the staff report and the slideshow you saw only included a title on the MSO campus slide without publishing its budget expectation, expected completion date, or any other project details in writing as the staff provided for other projects presented tonight, I believe the city's most expensive project deserves more explicit documentation when the commission is deliberating increasing these utility fees that will have substantive financial impact on Lawrence residents. Many of the city's capital improvement projects are debt finance, and since March, the Coalition for Collaborative

Governance has been asking for information about how the city is planning to pay for large amounts of debt that have been approved in the last few years and are being considered tonight.

(04:11:39):

Two weeks ago during the budget public hearing, we finally received a document that included information about the city's projections for paying the debt that these utility fees fund, but the information we received was only up to date as of the city's 2021 bond issuances and did not include more than 200 million in approved and proposed debt through 2030. When the commission is considering substantially increasing fees charged to Lawrence residence, I believe the commission and the public should also receive clear information that demonstrates the need for this additional revenue. The proposed utility fee increases will bring an additional 18 million in annual revenue by 2028, but it is unclear how much of this revenue is needed to cover the city's larger debt payments because they have not released their long-term debt payment plan that we have repeatedly asked for. Finally, as the commission considers this agenda item and the following items, it's worth noting that the utility fee revenues can be used to augment the general fund, which pays for our fire medical police and parks rec services.

(04:12:44):

Tonight you made the decision to raise property taxes, institute parks and rec fees and make cuts departmental budgets to address a 6.5 million budget deficit. You're also considering instigating a budget proposal to staff to a new fire station that is estimated require 4.7 million in annual operational costs and could require a 2.3 0.25 mil levy increase more information about anticipated operational costs, capital investments and debt payments paid by utility fees could allow the commission and public to better understand how this new revenue will be used and if it could possibly support some of our community's critical public services in the future. Thank you.

Speaker 10 (04:13:30):

All right, Eric. Hide 6 6 0 4 6. If I'm not mistaken, that was Lawrence accountability project. I could be wrong about that. Anyway, they ought to rename that Lawrence accountability expletive project because they're just a bunch of whiners. Like I used to whine about a whole bunch of stuff, but I see what you guys are doing. So again, lemme bring up my sim city analogy. Sounds funny, but when you play SIM City, you got to take care of your water stuff, your water and your waste. Otherwise your city goes to crap. So a few years ago, I said maybe more than a few years ago, I said, ah, don't do this water stuff, don't increase the fees. Well, you got to do it. You just have to do it to keep the city functioning. I saw it a long time ago in the paper. Craig Owens was for infrastructure. That's one thing I really like about Craig Owens is for infrastructure. This is infrastructure. Okay, you brought the \$4,000 average household thing. Well, I just did this tonight. Crazily looked at the carpet squares. Each one of these has 40 lines in it, and there's about a hundred squares in here. It's about 4,040 lines. You can count 'em. Anyway, I wanted to mention also that I'm on social security disability income and I can pay my water bill. I don't even need no reductions. Sorry, I told you I was going to to decrease.

(04:15:11):

I can also pay my energy bill fully. I don't need any reductions. I am married, so that helps. And my mortgage, my property tax rate, it ain't that bad. You know why it's not that bad? Because I fixed up the house that I purchased before I purchased it. So the person that I bought it from reduced the rate something like 40,000 ish off of the appraisal value, which the mortgage broker at Landmark National Bank said he hadn't seen a long time. So basically what I'm trying to say is, oh, one thing I wanted to mention before the Time's Up is that this affordable housing initiative, I'm unclear who's really responsible for the water lines in these things, but the sewage pipes or wastewater pipes, I know at the Polar Lofts when I lived there, the maintenance man said it backs up every single year. So we've got to make sure that all these affordable housing plans, they've got some good piping. Otherwise you're just

going to have incurred expenses later. Maybe you, but keep the property people responsible is what I'm saying, if it applies. Thank you. Thanks Eric.

Speaker 2 ([04:16:38](#)):

Okay, any other public comment in the room before I move to the online folks?

Speaker 5 ([04:16:53](#)):

Jeffrey

Speaker 6 ([04:16:54](#)):

Heppler.

Speaker 31 ([04:17:00](#)):

Thank you, Sherry. Good evening Commissioners everyone. Jeffrey LER 6 6 0 4 4. Trying to get my notes in order here. A lot of notes tonight, man. This is a busy meeting. I just have some policy suggestions. I suppose I would like for you to hold KU accountable for stormwater runoff. I've been working in landscaping for many years and I see people pass on their water problems to their neighbors. So not only can you but ask maybe developing policy for incentivizing people to implement water absorbing landscaping features like rain gardens, drainage basins, swales, et cetera. This will reduce the burden on the entire system. It starts at the home.

([04:18:04](#)):

Yeah, and going back to ku, this new gateway project presents a really amazing chance to not pass the problem on the city. I know they're developing their plans right now for creating this plaza with the student housing and commercial spaces and whatnot, and that presents a great opportunity for them to develop some innovative stormwater management techniques or at least implement them. Last couple things I'll say is I'd like you to consider folks that are on a fixed income for these increases and to consider, and I think that this has already been taken into consideration folks with irrigation systems, is there's a way to charge extra in order to adopt, get them to adopt perennial landscapes. Again, just a policy suggestion, nothing is predictable in the flow events that we're going to experience in the future. So I appreciate the city investing in this infrastructure. Thank you.

Speaker 5 ([04:19:25](#)):

Thanks, Jeff.

Speaker 6 ([04:19:41](#)):

Samuel Carter.

Speaker 32 ([04:19:42](#)):

Hey, good evening. Thank you, Sherry. Good evening, commissioners. Mayor, vice Mayor, apologies again if I missed this, but I noticed on the development driven CIP projects a total of about 75 million over five years, and I don't know if the developments are paying for themselves or if that is coming from just the general wastewater funds, but I'd be curious to know if it's the latter. What percentage of the revenue increase is attributed to paying the development driven CIP projects? And that was my only question. Thank you.

Speaker 2 ([04:20:29](#)):

Thank you, Samuel.

Speaker 6 ([04:20:31](#)):

That's all the comments, mayor.

Speaker 2 ([04:20:33](#)):

Alright. Thank you Sheri. Right, so the action is to adopt on first reading the ordinance. Before we do that, I think we've had some conversations about how we're moving forward, but I don't know if anyone has any suggestions on changes or any kind of feedback after hearing from the public.

Speaker 3 ([04:20:59](#)):

Melinda, I think you had addressed this kind of in your opening speech, but Samuel's question that most of those development driven projects are not in this three year plan, correct?

Speaker 38 ([04:21:11](#)):

Correct. If we look at when we would actually start paying back the debt for those projects, it's less than a million in 2027 going off of memory, but I think it was like 7.6 million in 2028.

Speaker 3 ([04:21:23](#)):

That's exactly right. Good job.

Speaker 38 ([04:21:26](#)):

And so those amounts, we would actually start paying back in those later years, 29 and 30.

Speaker 3 ([04:21:33](#)):

And certainly those certainly could be benefit districts or other things that obviously that's why we listed them as development driven. Correct. No guarantees.

Speaker 38 ([04:21:42](#)):

Right?

Speaker 3 ([04:21:43](#)):

That'd be up to five people. A po probably, but yes. Okay.

Speaker 5 ([04:21:55](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 4 ([04:21:57](#)):

Melinda, this might be a question for you or it might be a question for Melissa and I think it might be a question for all the above. I know we've gone back and forth, I've brought this up to the commission several times about the portion about reduced services for elderly, and I know we did some language updates on that and I think the question is, and I do believe, think maybe Mike or Melissa got back to me on it, but I'm still, I was confused about the rationale for it. We talked about expanding that to include individuals that may qualify under having a disability or make a HUD voucher, and I think when we were having an initial conversation, it was when we had additional, we had our ARPA funds and it looked like it was going to cost maybe an additional \$600,000 to rectify that. Outside of that, is there a reason why

we wouldn't expand that? I thought maybe there was conversation around we don't have the ability to do that because of state statute, but I was trying to look for my email and I can't find it. So

Speaker 38 ([04:23:00](#)):

Yeah, Melissa could probably speak to this better, but I understand that we cannot use water wastewater generated revenue from the rates to cover those programs. So it would have to come out of the general fund or another

Speaker 4 ([04:23:12](#)):

Resource cover it.

Speaker 37 ([04:23:13](#)):

Yeah, and that is correct. We worked with Rochelle on that, but it is part of the bond covenants.

Speaker 4 ([04:23:19](#)):

Okay. So that's what it was. It needed to come from the general fund and not from, okay, thank you on that. You have questions

Speaker 7 ([04:23:32](#)):

To kind of piggyback on that and as part of the bond covenants that monies, if it's bonded out for those purposes of wastewater or water, it has to be used specifically for that purpose. Am I correct in thinking of that?

Speaker 38 ([04:23:44](#)):

Correct. We can't use, for instance, the water wastewater funds. We can't use 'em for another purpose to do street improvements unless the street needs to be repaired because the waterline was cut that we cut through the pavement in order to replace the waterline, but we can't divert those funds to anything other than water wastewater.

Speaker 5 ([04:24:13](#)):

Anything

Speaker 39 ([04:24:14](#)):

Else?

Speaker 4 ([04:24:18](#)):

If you entertain me, mayor, I wanted to have Holly come back up to the day as to answer a question for me.

Speaker 2 ([04:24:26](#)):

Holly? Krebs.

Speaker 4 ([04:24:28](#)):

Krebs. Yeah. So before I ask my question, Holly, I wanted to know, are you here speaking on your capacity or are you speaking on the capacity of the coalition?

Speaker 13 ([04:24:39](#)):

I have been here on capacity

Speaker 4 ([04:24:41](#)):

Of the coalition. Okay. So in your slide, your slide number two that you presented about the estimated average of City of Lawrence utility payments, where you started it from 2020 and went on to 2028, so I want to make sure I was reading this correctly, is that what you're stating here is that this is based on the average bill per year. This was the average increase per year, and so your last section where you say the total anticipated average increase over eight year period is 1,040 5, 27, correct?

Speaker 13 ([04:25:12](#)):

45, yes. A thousand,

Speaker 4 ([04:25:14](#)):

1,040 5, 27 over eight years.

Speaker 13 ([04:25:16](#)):

Yes,

Speaker 4 ([04:25:16](#)):

Correct. So based on a monthly bill that is roughly about \$11 a month, because you said over an eight year period,

Speaker 13 ([04:25:31](#)):

That's total. So the total that you would pay in 2020 versus the total that you would pay in 2028, the 2028 total is a thousand dollars more than what the same household would've been paying in 2020.

Speaker 4 ([04:25:51](#)):

Is that counting for inflation? So you're saying that a bill in 2028 is going to be a thousand dollars more than it is in 2022

Speaker 13 ([04:25:59](#)):

Than 2020

Speaker 4 ([04:26:00](#)):

In 2020,

Speaker 13 ([04:26:01](#)):

Exactly.

Speaker 4 ([04:26:02](#)):

So it'll be a thousand dollars more annually.

Speaker 13 ([04:26:04](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 4 ([04:26:05](#)):

So you're taking that 1,045 and dividing it by 12 months then?

Speaker 13 ([04:26:10](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 4 ([04:26:14](#)):

So you're saying it's going to be an additional \$87 on top of what? So it's additional \$87 a month that someone is paying based on what they would pay in 2020? Yes. So the change would be over eight years.

Speaker 13 ([04:26:29](#)):

Right, but just to clarify that each additional year that the annual increase would be a hundred dollars or more.

Speaker 4 ([04:26:39](#)):

Right,

Speaker 13 ([04:26:40](#)):

Exactly. And so after all of those eight years that in 2028, my household would be paying a thousand dollars more per year,

Speaker 4 ([04:26:49](#)):

It

Speaker 13 ([04:26:49](#)):

Was paying eight,

Speaker 4 ([04:26:50](#)):

Not accounting for inflation, compounding it to be roughly about \$10 a month that they're paying difference over an eight year period

Speaker 13 ([04:26:59](#)):

In that each year you're paying \$10 more per month and then the next year you're paying \$15 more per month and then the next year,

Speaker 4 ([04:27:11](#)):

So for the 2028 year is going to be \$87 more than you would, it would've been in 2020, which translates to roughly \$10 a month additional each month over an eight year period. I'm just trying to understand your math because your math is a little bit fuzzy here because it's a little bit conflated because it says total anticipated average increase in annual utility costs over an eight year period,

Speaker 13 ([04:27:35](#)):

Which

Speaker 4 ([04:27:35](#)):

You're not counting for inflation. Exactly.

Speaker 13 ([04:27:38](#)):

It was hard to make that statement clearly. Yes,

Speaker 4 ([04:27:41](#)):

Absolutely. And that's what I'm saying. So it's hard to make it clear. So then it takes a little bit of liberty here because what you're saying is that over, you're saying that a person will pay a thousand dollars more over a eight year period?

Speaker 13 ([04:27:53](#)):

No,

Speaker 4 ([04:27:53](#)):

Not counting for inflation. Exactly.

Speaker 13 ([04:27:55](#)):

So that's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is,

Speaker 4 ([04:27:58](#)):

But that's what the interpretation is. So help me understand what you're trying to say.

Speaker 13 ([04:28:01](#)):

Sure. That in 2028 that the annual utility costs that an average household would be making are, when

Speaker 4 ([04:28:10](#)):

You say average household, what does that mean? That

Speaker 13 ([04:28:12](#)):

Is based on the average utility bill that

Speaker 4 ([04:28:17](#)):

For a multifamily or for a single family,

Speaker 13 ([04:28:22](#)):

I'm using the data that the city provided in their August, 2022 presentation about utility bill rates and they give average utility bill prices for solid waste, stormwater and water and wastewater.

Speaker 4 ([04:28:42](#)):

Do we know if that's based on, and I'm going to pause.

Speaker 13 ([04:28:45](#)):

Sure.

Speaker 4 ([04:28:45](#)):

Do we know if that's based on single family multifamily? That was single family. Single family. Okay. Right.

Speaker 13 ([04:28:51](#)):

So using that as a baseline, then what I did was I took all of the percentage increases that have been made in all of those fees since 2020 and then ran the numbers in an Excel spreadsheet to find out how much additional money and average household would pay each year. And so

Speaker 4 ([04:29:14](#)):

An average single family household,

Speaker 13 ([04:29:17](#)):

I was just using the average waterproof, but

Speaker 4 ([04:29:19](#)):

I'm just telling you, she just said it's a single family, it's not multifamily, it's not a family that has a reduced fixed income. It doesn't mean someone that is elderly. I appreciate this. There is value in data, accurate data, clear concise data. Yes. This takes a lot of liberties and I'm not trying to indict you on anything. What I'm trying to say is that in the world of advocacy, when you talk about transparency, accuracy matters. When you say the anticipated average increase in annual utility costs over eight years for who? It's different for a family, it would be different for a family of four than it would be for playing nearly a six and a person of one. And so yes, it may be splitting hairs, but you're making a generalization that may not be true for everyone. So if you're wanting to paint a picture that speaks to the individuals in this community, then you have to do the work to make sure it identifies with each particular group. What does that look like for multifamily? What does that look like for single? What does that look like for someone that is elderly? Because you don't take into account that someone who is elderly gets a discount, so their increase is not, so yes, it's an average, but you can't do averages. There could be a median, there could be variations. So I do appreciate you providing data, but this data does not tell a full picture. It tells a conflated picture. Do you understand where I'm coming from? It

Speaker 13 ([04:30:51](#)):

Tells an average. It

Speaker 4 ([04:30:52](#)):

Tells an average based on an aggregate. When an aggregate is not inclusive, it's not. So if you're going to tell the story of a single family, a single family is different than a multifamily, it's different than a family of six. It's different than a family of two. It's different from a family of one. So I may not pay an average of 10 45 over eight years accounting for inflation. So this doesn't tell the full story. It tells a story, but it does not tell the full story. Do you understand where I'm coming from?

Speaker 13 ([04:31:28](#)):

I do. And it would be wonderful if we could get all of those numbers, but

Speaker 4 ([04:31:31](#)):

The way that, and I get that. So was that the request that you made? Sorry, do not interrupt me while I'm speaking, is that the request that you made to staff? You were able to quote and cite the 2022 report, but what you did not do is do the work that was fully outlined in the 2022 report. The 2022 report did not just

give you single family, it gave you multifamily. You didn't take account for individuals who have reduced, who receive reduced costs. So this number is not accurate. It is a number, but it is not accurate. So as an advocate speaking on collaborative and transparency, this is not a transparent number. So I'm not upset about the delivery, I'm upset about the diligence that was put into it and how it's being presented. If it's your job to show transparency in government and in works and in funding, then do the work to ensure that you're telling the full story and not just a narrative. That's all the questions I had. Thank you.

Speaker 13 ([04:32:48](#)):

I do want to clarify that the average information was,

Speaker 4 ([04:32:51](#)):

Again, you keep saying average, and I keep saying average for who? Because we're not an average. You have a family size of what? Five five. I have a family size of one. What you paying utilities is not what I paying utilities. So I don't want to know the average. I want to know what does the impact a single person, what is the impact for a family? Tell that story

Speaker 36 ([04:33:14](#)):

In three minutes.

Speaker 4 ([04:33:17](#)):

True advocates do that work. So tell the full story.

Speaker 13 ([04:33:22](#)):

I did try to get more specific information and that when I asked about the difference in the class rates, I was told that the 7.9% for the next three years was the average across all of the classes. I did a whole bunch of math to figure out the different percentages and decided that it was too much in the weeds. And so single families would be an 8.3 or more percentage, whereas the commercial increase would only be 6%. The industrial increase would be more like 10. So

Speaker 4 ([04:33:51](#)):

Is your 10 45 based on an 8.3, a 7.9 or a 6%?

Speaker 13 ([04:33:55](#)):

I used what was presented in every single agenda item. Thank you. Because that was the information that was available to

Speaker 4 ([04:34:01](#)):

You. Thank you.

Speaker 10 ([04:34:02](#)):

All disturbance.

Speaker 4 ([04:34:03](#)):

Thank you. Thank you, Holly. Thank you. I don't have any other questions, mayor.

Speaker 2 ([04:34:11](#)):

Thank you. That's good. So we got to decide on our utility rates here this evening. Feel like it's important to say that the average increases that we are speaking of are similar to the average increases that have experienced that we've experienced for almost 20 years on average. These utility rates are what they are. They reflect inflation, they reflect some growth, but they also reflect aging infrastructure and a new attention to detail on how we take care of our equipment. So for me, if we're able to accomplish all that and keep the rate and average rate, it's been for many years that I feel pretty comfortable with where we're headed, but I'm not happy that we have to increase the pricing here and it's just a matter of how we have to function as a government to continue to provide the best drinking water in the city, excuse me, in the state, but more importantly, fire protection water that we need to help the firefighters serve the hydrants to provide the safety and the service that we need in our community.

(04:35:15):

This is all related. This water is going to be used for fire protection. This water is going to be used for industry. This water is going to be used by our community, but this water needs to be provided and we have to somehow pay for that. And I think these rate increases are reasonable at this point in time. And although it does reflect, it does affect everyone differently. Commissioner S, you're right. I feel like it's decent reasonable data that we've been provided and it makes it clear that our increases are consistent with what they've been in the past. Yet we're providing better quality services, I hope, and expanding our services throughout the community. So thanks for bringing us what I believe to be a reasonable utility rate given the things we're trying to accomplish. And I'm looking forward to approving it.

Speaker 3 (04:36:02):

I would just say a couple things. One is I appreciate Colin and his analysis. I mean really it becomes a math problem after we approve the CIP. It's how do we pay for it and how do we pay for the bonds and with making some assumptions going forward. But I'm very comfortable with our CIP and the things we've been doing to make improvements and so that's how we get here. Second, I'd say, again, I asked this question and it's something I've talked to a lot of people about paying these revenue bonds back. Unlike the general fund or unlike the geo bond fund, we actually have 250 days, not 90 days of reserves in the revenue bonds, what our bond requirements are. So two 50 days is a lot in reserves and there could be a lot of changes and you still have plenty of money to meet all your bond obligations plus a 1.7 debt service coverage ratio both on one hand, sadly large numbers.

(04:37:12):

On the other hand, there's no question in my mind we'll be able to pay off all the bonds that we buy because so really strong numbers. And so anyway, I'm not worried about that. I'd also say just because we were talking about earlier, I saw in the news this week, Olathe is raising their rate 6.5%. Topeka raise the water rates 11.6% and the wastewater rates 8.25%. So between the two 10.1%, Manhattan did just do 3%. So anyway, right there in the averages because costs are going up. But anyway, I agree I'll support what's before us and I understand it's just like the property tax increase, not something I'm excited about doing on one hand, but on the other hand, I think it's what we need to do to keep the city moving forward in appropriate infrastructure.

Speaker 7 (04:38:21):

Okay, thank you. Yeah, I would agree. I mean I don't think it's something that any of us are excited about, but the prospect of the rates and the amount of increase, but we understand its importance because if doing this will help us along in conjunction with our asset management plan that we've developed to go ahead and check out exactly what we've got, what state it's in and when we need to replace it or repair it. And if we don't, I mean we reduce the lifespan of it. If we try to do it later, it's going to cost more. We risk catastrophic failure. So all of the above. So we're just trying to get ahead of that and make sure we stay on top of it because anything else would actually cause our taxpayers even more money. And also as

a part of the presentation, I commend staff because as a part of it as well on there is the lowest cost of ownership for safe and reliable service. So they've gotten it as low as they can to make sure that we keep everything safe and reliable and resilient and sustainable. So I appreciate that aspect and I want to thank them for that. So thank you. Goodbye.

Speaker 4 ([04:39:44](#)):

I echo the previous sentiments of fellow commissioners. I have stated this isn't easy work, it's difficult work, it's competing values, it's all the things that we take into account. I appreciate the remarks of the mayor and the vice mayor and my fellow commissioners on this. The point I will make that we didn't really spend a lot on because oftentimes it's low hanging fruit, but it's also invisible fruit is that we've come back and we've had this conversation several times about what opportunities we have to expand supporting our fellow brothers and sisters and siblings in this community around utility equity and supporting those who may need to reduce. We know that there are other municipalities that do this. We understand where the money has to come from. Knowing that, I'd like for us as a commission to start thinking about some policy opportunities there for that.

([04:40:35](#)):

I know that we've had organizations utilize Ahab dollars to do that, and there was some contention within previous boards about whether or not utility assistance if we should use Ahab dollars for utility assistance and we need to do that. We had a EE that submitted a letter for comment that talked about the impact that this has on our housing choice voucher community. We know that there can be some variations in that. And now that we know how that impacts them, I think this is the information that we needed so that we can start to sit down and perhaps task staff or even within ourselves to figure out how we can make this work. Because I do not, if there's something that we can do from a general fund aspect to support individuals who need that, whether they're disabled, they're receiving a voucher or they're over the age of 60, we need to do that or else we're pulling money from somewhere that really could be utilized in the space for a different intended purpose. So I'd like for us to try to revisit that and see what we can do to kind of,

Speaker 2 ([04:41:39](#)):

I agree

Speaker 4 ([04:41:39](#)):

Remediate that.

Speaker 8 ([04:41:43](#)):

I would agree with commissioner sellers on that as the letter we got from Shannon au with the housing authority. She laid out a couple scenarios and I would hate to see any scenario where they couldn't be approved for or the voucher couldn't be approved because it's outside of the, it exceeds the amount of income, the 40% or income ratio. And I think it is time that we start looking at potential programs to assist those with their utility bills. Especially can be low income. The housing vouchers, I know we've got a senior citizen program right now, but the income levels on that are you got to be pretty low income in order to qualify for that. And that's another area that maybe we can look at. But then also previous years we were looking at more of a 10% increase, projected 10% increase for these upcoming years. So we have gotten that down to 7.9%, which I do really appreciate that very much. But we still need to stay in our proactive mode, which was discussed earlier in the slide presentation that we're now in a proactive mode for maintenance and we've already seen some of the results are coming in on that where we have reduced water line breaks, reduced sewer backups and reduced flow and infiltration issues. So it's

working and we need to stay in that mode of being proactive and this is one way to do it. And so I'll support this.

Speaker 3 ([04:43:18](#)):

Thank you. You ready? And move to adopt on first reading ordinance number 1 0 1 6 3

Speaker 4 ([04:43:28](#)):

Second.

Speaker 2 ([04:43:30](#)):

Okay, that's a motion by Finkel Dye and seconded by sellers. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 8 ([04:43:35](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 2 ([04:43:36](#)):

Those opposed? Motion passes five zero. And then also with a note that we want to address the utility assistance program in some way that's going to go beyond just senior fringe level incomes and other through the general fund.

Speaker 8 ([04:43:52](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 2 ([04:43:59](#)):

Alright. All right. The next item on the agenda is to receive an update on the L-D-C-F-M expansion station. Number six, consider approving 5 55 Stone Ridge as a selected location for L-D-C-F-M station six and directing the city manager to develop a future budget proposal that includes property tax increases to support staffing four station six, followed by construction of a redeveloped station. Three.

Speaker 40 ([04:44:27](#)):

Give just a second here. There we go. Alright, good evening, mayor, vice Mayor Commissioners. I'm Steven Halstrom, project manager for construction in MSO. I'm joined tonight by some of our internal L-D-C-F-M staff as well as our consultant design team from SFS architecture for L-D-C-F-M expansion station number six to give you an update on our design process so far and are seeking approval to move forward with the design of our preferred location that was chosen through our site selection process.

Speaker 39 ([04:45:00](#)):

Try the space bar

Speaker 40 ([04:45:03](#)):

Nothing.

Speaker 39 ([04:45:07](#)):

Try the right or left arrow

Speaker 40 ([04:45:09](#)):

Keys. I did those. I did that. Up and down arrow, up and down. There we go.

Speaker 39 ([04:45:19](#)):

Well no, I just did that for you. So you got to do the same thing.

Speaker 2 ([04:45:23](#)):

Is

Speaker 39 ([04:45:23](#)):

That the slide you on?

Speaker 2 ([04:45:24](#)):

It's a mouse.

Speaker 40 ([04:45:29](#)):

Okay, there we go. Now I'm on slower. Yeah. Alright, so apologies for that. A brief overview of the agenda for tonight's presentation. We'll do just an introduction, a brief project timeline here. We'll go through an overview of the pre-design process we've been through so far, and then we will discuss the guiding principles and the space needs analysis overview that were formed as a result of our visioning and programming sessions. We will then get into our site evaluation and selected and discuss the preferred site with you. We will discuss the health and safety considerations that are incorporated into our design as well as the sustainability initiatives that are guiding us throughout the design process. And then we'll discuss next steps in this pre-design process as well as overall steps moving forward with the project.

([04:46:20](#)):

So brief overview of our pre-design timeline. Back in March, we brought an engineering services agreement to you for the pre-design phase with SFS architecture. And shortly after that in April we got kicked off with our pre-design kickoffs and went straight into late spring into our visioning and programming. And then June we began the site evaluation process and the site selection process that continued through the summer. And then the next steps are our concept design workshops, the more site specific steps in the process for the overall project timeline. So late 2025, early next year, we plan to bring to you a supplemental agreement for additional engineering services with SFS architecture to continue with detailed design and get us through the construction documents phase for construction. We'll undergo that detailed design in 2026 and then begin construction in 2027 with the station operationally ready for service in 2028. And with that I will hand it over to Lindsay Tetro with SFS architecture who is a senior associate and our project lead.

Speaker 41 ([04:47:32](#)):

Good evening, excited to be here to share the process that we've gone through so far. This started after our kickoff. We hosted a series of benchmarking tours with the L-D-C-F-M station design committee. We toured three of their existing stations, stations one, four and five as well as two peer stations that we had designed in Overland Park. The purpose of these tours was to hear feedback about the operational considerations that were working well in the existing stations as well as to hear firsthand what could be potentially improved within those stations. Sharing some of our peer stations that we have designed helped us to showcase some health and safety considerations that we have incorporated into other facilities as examples as we kicked off our programming and visioning session.

([04:48:33](#)):

So that was next up. We hosted a full day workshop where we went through an exercise initially to define the values for stakeholders. You'll see the different color post-its here were perspectives of different stakeholder groups and what would drive value to them through this process and this project. We had discussion and organized these items by commonality and these ultimately resulted in our guiding principles for the project. This session also included initial discussions about our sustainability initiatives as well as a recap of our benchmarking tours and was a full half day session that discussed the specific needs program for the expansion stations. So you'll see here the guiding principles that came out of that visioning workshop. These were drafted and adopted by the stakeholders. We'll look to these throughout the design process. They're intended to make sure that we're always reminded to be prioritizing the right things as we move through the critical decision making process throughout the design.

(04:49:53):

So following those sessions, we developed a first draft of the space needs program. This is how we think of a recipe card for the new station. These are the specific spaces and areas that we feel are necessary to meet the operational objectives for this project. So you'll see on the right a summary of those spaces in general departmental categories. And then on the left of the screen is a more specific breakdown of the individual spaces that would be considered for the expansion station. This first draft was capturing all the wants and needs that we heard through our programming sessions. And so as we moved into review of this, we received feedback that perhaps there were some things that could be reduced. And with our second draft we were able to determine that about a 500 square foot reduction in space needs could be made due to priorities and training spaces being provided at other stations.

(04:51:03):

So through this second draft, it was determined that a training room size could be reduced from the 32 we had previously to 24 as well as we had programmed initially for three flexible office spaces. It was determined through discussions with the station design committee that could be reduced to one. At this time we also started to do preliminary budgeting and we evaluated the space needs with a cost per square foot estimate to determine the construction costs as well as projected soft costs to evaluate the total project budget. And at this time it was determined that the space needs we were programming was going to exceed the likely budget available for this project. So at that point we had some additional discussions to further prioritize and refine the space needs for the station. This included eliminating the large training room and training mezzanine space as those spaces were nice to have but not necessarily critical to the function of these expansion stations.

(04:52:19):

Additionally, with that training room being removed from the space needs, the station office was given some additional space to accommodate the training functions within that area. Also, the day room was slightly reduced, but the big reduction here was moving from three drive-through apparatus bays to two drive-through bays. So that was quite a reduction in square footage and this ultimately landed us just under 13,000 square feet. And I will show you here on this next slide how those two budgets compared as we were looking at the cost. At this point, we were considering a different cost per square foot based on different space types. For an example, the apparatus base space would be a higher volume, more utilitarian type space, no air conditioning, more utilitarian in its finishes and not as dense in its wall construction. And so for that, we would assign a lower cost per square foot than for say a toilet shower changing room that would have a lot of intensive finishes and fixtures and costs.

(04:53:42):

And so at this point we are evaluating these different space types based on their square footage and those assigned costs. You'll see when we were at just around 16,000 square feet, also taking account in our soft costs for land acquisition as well as owner contingency and e costs as well as other professional and testing fee allowances, we were about \$2.3 million over budget. We then, in terms of reducing the square footage, felt like we had a reasonable targeted space needs program to be able to move forward in

evaluating our sites. With this, we had made the decision to consider removing an apparatus bay as we moved into our site evaluation process. We wanted to make sure we were not short-changing ourselves since we knew that was a potential need and wanted to make sure any sites we evaluated could accommodate that third base base. So the big unknowns at this point were the site as well as site development costs.

(04:55:07):

So that land acquisition cost and any site development cost, because we don't have a specific site at this point, were conservative estimates. And so that is where we left our space needs programming efforts and moved into our site evaluation and selection process. You'll see here on the screen coverage gaps that were identified by LDC FM when they conducted a 2020 station optimization analysis. These identified two key gap areas, one in the northwest and one in the south area of the city. So this was the starting point for our site evaluation process. We targeted both of these gap areas using the initial property criteria that you see to the left of the screen. There were a total of 25 sites that were identified and evaluated between both the Northwest and the south gap area. Four of those were city owned properties. We used the five dimensions of risk that were also used in the station optimization analysis to further refine and prioritize those sites.

(04:56:30):

And then you'll see on the right hand of the screen an evaluation matrix. We in our visioning session, discussed these evaluation criteria with the stakeholders and agreed that the location and access and cost and schedule were the higher priority major drivers for this project. So they were given a higher weight in terms of their ranking as we looked to evaluate sites. So this was a tool that we utilized and compared different sites with this scoring metric. It wasn't the end all be all, but it was a means of providing data that we could use to consider as we selected our preferred site. So you will see the scorecard here for our preferred site of 5 5 5 Stone Ridge drive.

(04:57:29):

Additionally, you'll see on the screen here drive time analysis. This was done for both a four minute operation service time as well as 10 minutes, which would be considered for the county. On the right side you'll see in red the designated gap area. Currently the blue shading is only highlighting streets that exist at this time. As further development occurs towards the west, you would see those areas would be filled in and would fall within that four minute drive time analysis. As we honed in on our preferred site selection, we held a evaluation workshop. The colored blocks you see on the screen, those represent the different major program components of the fire station. And so we worked collaboratively with the station design committee to look at preferred adjacencies and how these different programmatic elements might fit on these different sites. You'll ultimately see the rough solution that we landed on for the 5 5 5 Stone Ridge drive property.

(04:58:51):

Coming out of that discussion, we did a more detailed test fit to be able to prove out that rough concept would in fact work on the site. Some of the key considerations to this particular property is you'll see an access road to the south or the bottom of that diagram that is an access road for the neighboring church property. That access would be maintained and would not be impacted by the new station's construction. Additionally, we were able to test fit a layout that preserved all of the maintenance offset requirements and distances for the existing water tower and then also to the northern edge of this site. There is a residential development that has been experiencing some stormwater management challenges. We feel with this project it would give us the opportunity to address some of that stormwater runoff and be better stewards to that property to the north.

(05:00:07):

So as we look at this step to reevaluate the budget, now that we have a preferred site, we were able to by eliminating the land acquisition costs since this is a city owned property, additionally we had been carrying an allowance for a potential traffic signal. This site would also determined not to need that additional infrastructure. So it was a very positive for the budget exercise to be able to take away those costs from this total project budget. It allowed us to be able to accommodate that third apparatus space and still come in with underneath the budget that has been stated for the project.

(05:01:01):

As we are moving into concept design, wanted to provide just a brief overview of some of the health and safety design considerations. We are representing here a hazard based zone concept design and we will represent this red, yellow, green concept throughout our early design phases to drive home the separation of the living or green zone spaces from the higher contaminant, red zone apparatus based spaces. We strive to separate those for the health and wellbeing of the firefighters and EMS personnel. We do this through pressurized transition zones between those spaces. Additionally, wanted to highlight some of the features that we are including from a live and work environment that promote the health and wellbeing as well as sleep hygiene. We're always striving to provide natural daylight within these spaces as well as make it feel like a home. This is a second home for first responders and so we strive to make it feel like that. Also considering individual bunks within this concept planned and gender neutral toilet shower facilities.

(05:02:25):

So as we begin to further our sustainability initiatives, we've reviewed the regional county city and L-D-C-F-M sustainability goals and have looked for commonalities and how we look to ultimately achieve the goal of lead gold certification for the project. So we're using this alignment of the county, city and fire department goals and the project needs to prioritize our approach to achieving lead gold certification for this new fire station. We're not just chasing points, but we're using lead as a guide. We want to make sure that we're delivering a healthy building that is high performance cost-effective to build operationally durable and affordable to maintain. So as we get into our next steps, once we have confirmation on a site location as Steven had outlined, we would be getting into our concept design workshops in the sustainability workshop. This would include a deeper dive into specific systems, materials orientation, construction considerations needed to guide our work as we move into further details of the design.

(05:03:48):

Additionally, with the MEP workshop, we would begin to review potential building system options and evaluate those against the facilities needs as well as our sustainability initiatives. We then would further develop our concept on the site and floor plan and begin to explore massing studies that would also align with our sustainability initiatives. So concluding our concept design and Steven had mentioned our goal is to complete that here in late 2025 and come back seeking approval to move into full design services here in early 2026. And so with that I will turn it over to Allie to go over some of the funding considerations.

Speaker 2 (05:04:36):

Thank you.

Speaker 18 (05:04:40):

Good evening commission. We did want to touch base on the operating side to the capital, so just past this, but our proposed budget had increased funding from the county to maintain several of those positions that we had talked about eliminating, adding that additional medic unit for expansion and then did remove engine five from service that had an updated funding percentage instead of the 64 36, about 59 and a half and 40 and a half. And again that was only agreed upon for the 2026 budget. L-D-C-F-M did get a charter group together and their recommendation was to maintain their current staffing levels, which is four person on all fire apparatus and then two person on all ambulances.

(05:05:28):

So I shared this chart previously at our June 17th city commission meeting. I take all these numbers for a grain of salt. They are a lot of assumptions built in here, but approximately \$4.7 million operating on the city for station six. And then you see station seven and then station three has the capital along with the years. At the bottom you see the general fund mill levy estimated as well as the mill levy for the debt sign. So actions requested for this evening one is to approve 55 Stone Ridge as the selected location. And then also again, building a station without a staffing plan is not ideal. It's not a best practice. So we are looking at approaching this with mill levy property tax and look for direction from commission on that as well.

Speaker 2 (05:06:28):

Ellie. All right, I think that's it as far as our discussion goes. Commissioners, do you have any questions before we take public comment right now? Okay. I had like to open up public comment on this item relative to future fire station funding.

Speaker 10 (05:07:02):

Sorry, I'm going to go first just because I'm my P first. My name's Eric Hyatt. 6 6 0 4 6. I wore my hat it off. And then now is this appropriate time to use this helmet? It applies to what you're going to do here on March 16th, 1994. It's about 5:30 PM on West 27th Street. I was wearing this helmet. It still fits me. It was my brother's helmet. It doesn't really fit. Wait, it doesn't really fit me all the way. Anyway, out across the street I was hit by a car 16 day coma. The lady who responded to the call was a former shift supervisor or whatever her title was Eve Tolley. Her name was Eve McIntosh at the time. So all I'm really trying to say is you got to pass it. You got to give 'em what they want because there's another kid like me who might live and I'm sure a lot of you guys want me dead, but I have right to life and see this little indentation right here.

(05:08:14):

This is like the left windshield post. I went up over my handlebars because my front tire hit. The left front wheel went over my handlebars and the left windshield post hit me right here. And so I have a scar on my chest because they extubated me and stuck a tube. I had blood, my lung was full of blood, couldn't breathe. Bilateral clavicle fractures, multiple contusions, bilateral hemispheres outside the deep mid brain. I should not be alive. There was another kid who was in the ICU with me at KU Med where they life-flighted me from LMH to KU Med. This kid just fell off of the back of a truck. I was probably just having fun. My dad told me about this and that kid died and I didn't die. He did though. I'm still alive. So anyway, just give 'em what they want. Thank you. Thank Eric.

Speaker 25 (05:09:34):

Good evening. My name's James Holbert and just a couple brief comments. I'm sure you guys are aware. I've been involved with IAFF leadership for some time now, a good chunk of my career, and came into the leadership role sometime around the first time a department document published and analyzed the data that said, Hey, we got these coverage calcs. So this is not the first time you all as a commission have received a presentation like this in commissions before you. So I've had the opportunity to speak on behalf of my peers in front of numerous commissions, a couple of city managers and three fire chiefs now. And a pattern that has emerged is a city manager will ask, Hey, this needs to be done is going to cost money, what's your plan? This is the plan I suggest whether that's mill rate or not and commissioners will speak of the importance of this item, but when it comes time to write that check, it's never actually written.

(05:10:38):

So if you make a commitment tonight, please stick to it when it comes time for budget process next year. So lastly, we're by no means anti-tax, anti city hall, it's going to cost money. We understand that our priorities are public safety and I hope you guys can share that as well. But looking at that presentation, I would ask for some clarification on the cost for station six and only because I think some of those numbers are old and didn't that number of 23 firefighters included, some of those seem to have are currently built in the budget that you guys just passed such as the ambulance. So maybe if we can get some clarification on that. I think that's important as we discuss potential mail rates, opportunities to look at station seven or the moving of station three. So thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 42 (05:11:43):

This is Chris Flowers. I just wonder all when it comes to public feedback, have you got the public's feedback if they want this at the price that's being asked or is it just how do we improve fire safety type question. And also the other thing I was is I'm not necessarily supportive of a mill increase. Is there any way you can reduce other staff? It just seems to me if we grow as a city shouldn't, why should the mill increase? Shouldn't the increase in people like the tax be self-sufficient? I guess so. I just don't know about that.

(05:12:39):

And also, I mean I am not asking for this, it just seems kind of BS that when this fire station is going to benefit the people that are living in that area, but when it came to building that stuff for ku, we used the special tax district where it's the KU people that will be funding a project that benefits. Well, the argument is, well, it benefits them the most, so shouldn't they pay for it? So why is it, it just seems we pick and choose when we are taxing people that we are going to say, well, they're getting the most benefit. And then other times it's, well, the whole city's going to pay for it. So I would just wish that we quit doing some of the special tax district stuff or start doing it in this case when it's a fire station for the people in West Lawrence, why should all the Lawrence pay for it? But I'm just, I'm against Raisin Mill to pay for this. I think you should find budget cuts, cut other stuff. But thank you. Thanks Chris.

Speaker 28 (05:13:56):

Sean Coffey 6 6 0 4 9 and very excited to see this proposal and hopefully it'll move forward. It's been about 10 years in the making by the time the station if it goes forward would be done. It'll have a great impact on our community. I will tell you my enthusiasm is somewhat tempered based upon what happened earlier tonight with the budget. But I think all in all this will be an exceptional addition and I'm glad to see the city moving forward. As far as the mill levy, I know that's always difficult, but it was interesting to watch the presentation before. We're talking about \$18 million as it relates to infrastructure. And I know that's not Mills, but still that's about 18 mil increase per year for that work. And when I pay that out on my wallet, it doesn't care whether it's a mill levy or whether it's a tax that's on my water bill that I'm paying or sanitation. So I know a mill levy will be difficult, but in light of what I saw earlier, I don't think it's as great as challenge maybe as we see. But thank you. If you move forward with this, I appreciate it and it'll be a big service to the community and I do feel it'll be a challenge for the firefighters for the next couple of years as they wait for that to be opened. Thank you very much.

Speaker 11 (05:15:27):

Sure. Hello David Bain. Obviously I'm for funding that for sure. Yeah, I mean if you look at it in just, I mean what's a life worth? I mean if they save one life to me it's worth a hundred million dollars. So I'm definitely for anything that supports saving people. So thank you very much. Thank you.

Speaker 2 (05:16:11):

Anybody else speak to this in the room? Okay, Sherry, anybody online?

Speaker 6 ([05:16:20](#)):

No, mayor.

Speaker 2 ([05:16:22](#)):

Alright, back to the commission.

Speaker 3 ([05:16:27](#)):

I guess we probably should get a clarification on that slide with the 23 firefighters, three battalion chiefs, I assume there's now three battalion chiefs in station six.

Speaker 18 ([05:16:42](#)):

No. So what you saw on that slide is if we were to go back to our 64 36 split. Exactly. So the county has took on a higher percentage this budget, which covered those battalion chiefs and a couple other positions trained lieutenant thinks. And so if we go, we couldn't afford them in future years if the county weren't paying for them.

Speaker 3 ([05:17:04](#)):

So putting those back in now budget?

Speaker 18 ([05:17:06](#)):

Yes,

Speaker 2 ([05:17:12](#)):

Budget in budget.

Speaker 3 ([05:17:15](#)):

But does the 23 include 23 new firefighters now budget or 23 including the ambulance that the county just put in?

Speaker 18 ([05:17:24](#)):

No, so that would be eight of those 23.

Speaker 3 ([05:17:27](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 18 ([05:17:29](#)):

But again, right now the county is covering all of those. Exactly.

Speaker 7 ([05:17:33](#)):

Oh yeah. Got it. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Speaker 3 ([05:17:39](#)):

Go ahead.

Speaker 7 ([05:17:40](#)):

I just had a quick question about the discussion with the county, like future budget discussion. I don't know if yourself or Chief Hardy or any sort of progression on that.

Speaker 20 ([05:17:57](#)):

Yes, we've continued to meet. I think there's a lot of anticipation for the outcome of this meeting and the budget that you passed. But yeah, it's progressed and we are understanding, I think we did this in 2020. We had Wichita State help facilitate those conversations where there were a lot of different big picture things put on there about the different ways that we could address the funding and the split and their share, our share. Those have been resurrected and broadened. So I do think there's an openness to kind of look at this holistically, but we've got these realities that are facing both of us in timeframes that are well known in those. But Casey Tome has represented us along with our team over here in those conversations and they've been very productive.

Speaker 4 ([05:18:57](#)):

Do those discussions look at either expanding or re-imagining the funding model or criteria? I mean I think we've condensed it down to it's a matter of we cover fire, they cover medical, but from a usage perspective and there's a lot of different other variables that go into it that I feel like are not taken into consideration as we talk about splits and that maybe it sometimes gets lost in this simplification of it and I get it. But at the same time this idea of I'm committing we have to commit this so much to a 60 40, is the rationale for that. Is there an appetite to really look at that and maybe look at how we look at the funding variables that go into that a little bit differently?

Speaker 20 ([05:19:56](#)):

Yeah. Yes, there are. From our perspective, going back again to the last conversation we had that was facilitated by a consultant, we did look very broadly at all the different factors that could be there. And we eventually narrowed it down to just a few and that's where we're sitting. It doesn't mean it's absolutely right. There isn't an absolutely right. There are many, many factors in a very kind of unusual county and city trying to do something that's clearly we do as a joint operation.

([05:20:33](#)):

And even going back to there will be some people that were around when the 98 conversation, I think it was 1998 conversation when we did the merger, those conversations also bear on this looking at what other counties in Kansas do. Those are all things that we're looking at as well. Time will run out on this. We had to extend the agreement so that we gave ourselves more time and it's still getting shorter. So eventually these conversations have to narrow down to a few factors and then we move on with what's going to happen. But when you talk about fairness and equity, those sorts of conversations with two political entities in a very critical service, those are complex. So I think we are enthused with our partners in the county and how they're approaching it. We are trying to reciprocate with that. And I know the elected leadership, you all and the county elected leadership have been very engaged in this as well. And we've got important projects to get moving

Speaker 5 ([05:21:45](#)):

On.

Speaker 2 ([05:21:54](#)):

So we have to decide if we agree whether or not we agree on the location. I think overall give guidance on whether 5, 5, 5 is a reasonable location. I dunno if we've heard much about that.

Speaker 4 ([05:22:04](#)):

Yeah, I just want to make sure I understood this from the design in the packet. I noticed that the initial design had the bay facing sixth Street, but now it's looking like it's facing stone. Is that putting it more towards the residential area and less so is the proposed area for the station more closer to the residential? So it's north of the water tower and not south of the,

Speaker 41 ([05:22:30](#)):

It's yes north of the water tower,

Speaker 4 ([05:22:32](#)):

But

Speaker 41 ([05:22:33](#)):

We were striving to put the more residential side of the station towards that side of the residential development to the north. So as we get into further design considerations, we'll be looking at scale and potentially keeping that side of the station at a smaller scale that is more akin to the residential side of the site with the apparatus bay, the emergency generator, all of those more noise generating components buffering those towards the southern side of the building. But still a fire station inherently comes with noise. Yeah,

Speaker 4 ([05:23:23](#)):

I'm not complaining. That's just right down the street from where I live. I was just, and I get it all. So I hear it from Walker, from station six as well as station three. So I'm just thinking I didn't graduate with a fire science degree. I'm just thinking about just curve and response. I just didn't know if that turn, and I know the light will be, there probably has to be some reconfiguration of the light there and just didn't know if that impacts as it relates to it being closer to street and just what was the rationale for the changes in

Speaker 41 ([05:24:00](#)):

There is some infrastructure major water lines that are coming from Stone Ridge into the water tower.

Speaker 5 ([05:24:08](#)):

So

Speaker 41 ([05:24:08](#)):

That is limiting us a little bit as well. But that response path is nice because it gives visibility to the intersection and then there's potential for whoever is operating the apparatus, they could potentially control that signal

([05:24:25](#)):

And so they have better, you can go east, west or north south with that. If you were to respond closer to sixth Street, you're a little limited with the median and that being turnaround divided road. So it ended up being a more optimal position. But we're very early that test fit you saw was just an initial can all of these space needs fit on that site? Can we make that work? So we will be going through additional iterations of that layout with the station design committee. And so this is really just the first step in making sure this site can accommodate the space needs that we've identified.

Speaker 4 ([05:25:08](#)):

And I know that the westbound traffic there is that narrowing westbound with the median. So thinking about that. Okay, just wanted to, just curious so far as the different layout formats there. Thank you.

Speaker 8 ([05:25:28](#)):

My support. I support the proposal. I appreciate that we are using land that we already have really do appreciate you finding that and being able to use that for this purpose. I believe obviously we need another fire station, and this has been 10 years talking about it since I've first got on the commission. We've been talking about it, the need for this and the various reports that have been written about it. And I do believe that it will require a mill levy increase in order to pay for this going forward. So I'll support this.

Speaker 2 ([05:26:04](#)):

Okay, thank you. Would you like to weigh in on this?

Speaker 3 ([05:26:08](#)):

I talked about it earlier. I support

Speaker 2 ([05:26:10](#)):

The

Speaker 3 ([05:26:11](#)):

Location and I know that we have to, I support the budget that supports it.

Speaker 2 ([05:26:16](#)):

So on the record, yes.

Speaker 7 ([05:26:18](#)):

Yeah, I as well as Commissioner Larson said, it is city owned property, which is a benefit that kind of cuts out one component of it. But yeah, I support the stations and what comes along with it as far as the financial discussions and it's something that's got to happen, something we've been talking about for a long time. So I think moving it in motion is prudent. Great,

Speaker 2 ([05:26:45](#)):

Thank you. Mr. Sellers, do you have anything to add on this in your opinion? On the location? Okay.

Speaker 4 ([05:26:50](#)):

Yeah, like I said, it's right down the street from my house, so I've gotten used to all the different noise and I live right down the street from the police station. So it's almost like a public safety symphony that I hear every night when I'm not here.

Speaker 2 ([05:27:04](#)):

Sonic sirens,

Speaker 4 ([05:27:05](#)):

Yes. So yeah, I have no qualms in regards to us committing as a commission to addressing this as a mill increase. I know that we're not alone in this. Municipalities have had to utilize it to do it. So I don't have any issues with that. I just hope I can't speak for future commissions. But again, this is a proposed 3.25 mil levy increase, so I don't want other commissions to lose sight of that's just for this and not to use that to kind of consolidate all other. And so that too, the point, I think we've heard it here that if we're going to say 3.25 that it is 3.25 for this. And so if there's any other considerations that need to be had for additional mill levy increases to address other budgets or other provisions or programs that we don't lump that into this 3.25. So we short change. So that would be my only point to add is that

Speaker 2 ([05:28:12](#)):

Point that out

Speaker 4 ([05:28:13](#)):

Don't subsidize,

Speaker 2 ([05:28:14](#)):

It's all in one bucket. Right.

Speaker 4 ([05:28:15](#)):

That's a very good point. Say 3.25 for this. It's 3.25 for this.

Speaker 2 ([05:28:21](#)):

Okay. I feel the location makes sense. Obviously we are going to need to increase the mill levy and I think the community needs to know that we're going to have to do that in order to pay for the personnel and the equipment and facility. So the commission, whatever it might be at that point in time, needs to be prepared to move forward with those kinds of things. But I think what we're trying to relay is this is going to require mill levy increase. There's no extra fluff in the budget. I've had these conversations with the city manager, he's probably tired of hearing about it, but we've tried to find whatever savings we can and we believe that there's not much more within we can do. So I guess we have to ask for more if we want to do more when it comes to public safety.

([05:29:05](#)):

And that's going to mean the largest sizable, one of the largest mill leve increases we've had probably in a long, long time. So it's going to be for a specific purpose, but we need to be serious about this and consistent with our thoughts. And I appreciate everyone being honest about what we're going to undertake in the future, but that we need to be a good partner to the county. And I think by this agreement tonight, I think we're trying to reflect our commitment to public safety and to our 60 or less percent investment in this organization for now.

Speaker 4 ([05:29:42](#)):

And mayor, I would just add to that, I know Craig has stated this as we talk about further discussions on agreements and whatnot, and just to really maybe call upon this commission to think about the nuances and conversation around what a shared cost is to this. I think that it likens me to previous commissions conversations around addressing houselessness and how there have been previous tones of saying, well that's a county responsibility, it's not a city. And how we've evolved in that conversation. I think this is one that needs that. It's about time for us to evolve the discussion, to evolve the discussion a little bit more than maybe, than others have been willing to. Because I'm hearing different things from different county commissioners that I'm hearing from admin. So there might be an appetite for us to maybe have a more

fuller joint discussion about this so that we know what, not necessarily what's on the table or what's off the table, but how do other commissioners on the city as well as in the county, identify what responsibility is? Because it seems like when we didn't have that conversation about houselessness, it dragged on

Speaker 5 ([05:31:01](#)):

And

Speaker 4 ([05:31:01](#)):

It came to a boiling point to where we are now. I don't want us to get to that, especially as we start seeing these things closer, closer to us on the timeline. 2034 is going to be here before we know it, so,

Speaker 2 ([05:31:17](#)):

Okay. I think we move forward on that item. And so is that the action? Do you want to make

Speaker 3 ([05:31:24](#)):

A motion

Speaker 2 ([05:31:24](#)):

Or is there any kind? I don't.

Speaker 3 ([05:31:25](#)):

Do we need to move? Move, yeah. Move to approve. Five. Five. Five. Stone Ridge is the selected location for the CFM station. Number six

Speaker 2 ([05:31:33](#)):

As a motion.

Speaker 3 ([05:31:34](#)):

Yep. I think we should get this on the record.

Speaker 2 ([05:31:36](#)):

Yes, please. So there's a motion by Finkel Dye. Do I have a second? Second. Okay. A second by Littlejohn to approve the location at this point in time. At 5 55.

Speaker 7 ([05:31:47](#)):

Correct.

Speaker 2 ([05:31:49](#)):

So there's a motion. A second. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 3 ([05:31:51](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 2 ([05:31:52](#)):

Those opposed. Motion passes five zero on the location of the station numbers

Speaker 3 ([05:31:58](#)):

I move. We direct the city manager develop a future budget proposal that includes property tax increases to support staffing for station six, followed by construction of redeveloped station. Three

Speaker 2 ([05:32:08](#)):

Second. Okay. That's a motion by Finkle Dye and a second by Littlejohn. All in favor say aye.

Speaker 3 ([05:32:13](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 24 ([05:32:13](#)):

Aye.

Speaker 2 ([05:32:14](#)):

Those opposed? Motion passes five zero. Much for that Vice Mayor. Thank you. Go ahead and move on to our commission items if there are any.

Speaker 4 ([05:32:28](#)):

I know we've had a couple of constituents. Just wanted some clarification on last week's minutes. We did approve those. There was a question in regards to the conversation around the Community Connect program, and so I know that the minutes states that there would be additional public engagement working with community stakeholders, and I know that the group had stated about having a work group and so I think they were asking for clarification for that. I think there was the idea that what they saw in the minutes didn't really interpret as to what their request was, and I didn't want that to be lost. So I think it was more like it may be a potato potato thing where they're asking, the request was for a work group and we said that we would want staff to go back and have those discussions. It's just the minutes, say additional public engagement, which I stated to the group. I think there is room in that interpretation to include a work group, but I think they wanted some assurance and so I am only one person, but I just wanted to bring that to the attention of the commission that was shared.

Speaker 2 ([05:33:47](#)):

So our intentionally vague statement needs to be more specific perhaps.

Speaker 4 ([05:33:50](#)):

Well, as long as we believed that what is going to happen is what the group wanted, then I think that's what they're wanting to know. If it's not the intent, if it wasn't the intent of the commission to have staff create a work group, whatever that means, ad hoc or whatnot, then I think that's what they're wanting to know. So

Speaker 2 ([05:34:14](#)):

Community

Speaker 4 ([05:34:14](#)):

Engagement doesn't necessarily equate to a work group?

Speaker 2 ([05:34:19](#)):

No, it does not, your

Speaker 4 ([05:34:20](#)):

Honor. So I think that's what they were wanting to know.

Speaker 2 ([05:34:23](#)):

I think we'd have a majority of people would approve or agree that we want to clarify that point. I think community engagement is part of it, don't you? Commissioner, vice Mayor fdi, what do you think?

Speaker 3 ([05:34:34](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I guess the question is, is it like a work group or just are they afraid that public engagement just means a session at the library or something? Yeah, I guess I read that to say working with community stakeholders to look at data security oversight and policy related to the use. That would be, I was focused on that. I guess I hadn't really looked at the minutes that closely for that purpose.

Speaker 4 ([05:35:06](#)):

And like I said, this was brought to us, so I

Speaker 3 ([05:35:08](#)):

Stated

Speaker 4 ([05:35:08](#)):

That it was my attempt that a work group can fall up under the umbrella of additional public engagement working to build upon these things. I didn't feel like that. Not calling out didn't mean it wasn't going to happen, but that was my interpretation and I just wanted to know if that was the same interpretation that other commissioners had.

Speaker 2 ([05:35:28](#)):

I think majority, I think it's agree with your interpretation

Speaker 4 ([05:35:32](#)):

And

Speaker 2 ([05:35:33](#)):

That we intend on having some sort of work group come out of this. I think a policy group of some sort.

Speaker 4 ([05:35:40](#)):

I know there's some groups that can build upon that. We talked about the DOJ report. There is a group that is incorporated into that that I feel like could really tie into this work, as I stated last week. So whether it's a work group ad hoc, I don't know if calling it a thing changes the intent. I think the intent is to have community members working with staff, staff to process through this and looking at oversight and policies related to this and bringing that back to us as a discussion for us as a commission to make that final determination.

Speaker 2 ([05:36:18](#)):

Think we're all good with that or at least the majority of us are from that point.

Speaker 6 ([05:36:25](#)):

I am not sure what you want me to include in the minutes that's any different. That was already,

Speaker 3 ([05:36:31](#)):

No, I think you're saying don't change the minutes. Don't change it. No, but

Speaker 6 ([05:36:34](#)):

For tonight, what do you want me to add? That's going to further clarify what you said at the last meeting.

Speaker 2 ([05:36:41](#)):

I think she's more stating the obvious that she's talked about last time and I think you want to make sure it's clear to all of us. Is that right? I mean, it wasn't maybe clearly reflected in the minutes for you.

Speaker 4 ([05:36:51](#)):

I get what Sherry say. I know. I know. I just want to make sure I'm, I'm processing through that. What would you want to put in there?

Speaker 3 ([05:36:59](#)):

Yes. The public engagement, working with community stakeholders means a Wilco made up of community stakeholders. I think that's what the question is. We're okay. Yes. Does that, I think the fear is that they thought public engagement just meant they could show up and talk out loud

Speaker 4 ([05:37:22](#)):

And

Speaker 3 ([05:37:22](#)):

That's it. Three minutes and that be it. But I think what the intention was is that there was actually a working group that works on it.

Speaker 4 ([05:37:30](#)):

Yes. It's not necessarily a work group, it's just a working group or

Speaker 8 ([05:37:34](#)):

Yeah. So is that a working group selected by the commission or is it just a working group of those folks who staff? They had a group

Speaker 3 ([05:37:42](#)):

Left. We've directed staff. Staff to work with the folks who are heal

Speaker 8 ([05:37:46](#)):

And

Speaker 3 ([05:37:46](#)):

I know Kincaid and others were part of

Speaker 8 ([05:37:48](#)):

That. That's what I took it as the folks that were talking.

Speaker 3 ([05:37:53](#)):

Did that make sense? Sherry

Speaker 8 ([05:37:54](#)):

Formed a group? I don't think so. No. Or Sherry,

Speaker 3 ([05:38:00](#)):

We'd like a working group made up of community stakeholders.

Speaker 5 ([05:38:06](#)):

Okay.

Speaker 20 ([05:38:27](#)):

We will work with that. I'm quite sure that we're going to hear if it's inadequate and I think there probably has been some outreach that already happened in the last week, right?

Speaker 33 ([05:38:37](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 20 ([05:38:38](#)):

Okay. So again, if we're not getting it right, we'll keep going until we get it right.

Speaker 4 ([05:38:44](#)):

And like I said, I don't think the intent was to ensure that to the vice mayor's point, that we're not just saying, this is getting together. Let's have a conversation. That's it. It's the idea of processing through this. And so what does that look like? Which there are entities and groups within this that could be doing this work as we do have a group dedicated based on the DOJ work that could be pulled into this in addition to individuals that represent the coalition as well as LKPD staff. Sounds good.

Speaker 2 ([05:39:26](#)):

Okay. Sounds

Speaker 5 ([05:39:27](#)):

Good.

Speaker 2 ([05:39:28](#)):

Any other commission items before I moved on to the future agenda items? I didn't see anything particular on here. Anything anybody wants to bring up relative to the agenda? Upcoming agenda items? I, okay. And

Speaker 6 ([05:39:51](#)):

I thought I heard somebody start to, no,

Speaker 4 ([05:39:53](#)):

No.

Speaker 2 ([05:39:53](#)):

That

Speaker 4 ([05:39:54](#)):

Was just me exhaling. Trying

Speaker 2 ([05:39:55](#)):

Not to. Okay. Now we'll go ahead to the city

Speaker 20 ([05:39:57](#)):

Manager's report please. The only item is irregular utility report. Thank you. Indeed.

Speaker 2 ([05:40:03](#)):

Public comment on the city manager's report. Not in the room.

Speaker 6 ([05:40:10](#)):

We do have hands are down.

Speaker 2 ([05:40:14](#)):

Hands are down.

Speaker 6 ([05:40:15](#)):

Yep.

Speaker 2 ([05:40:16](#)):

Okay. No comment on the city manager's report, commission calendar this evening. Anything to bring up? All right. Anything?

Speaker 7 ([05:40:32](#)):

I think, yeah, I'm going to be in with the inner city visit on the 14th of October.

Speaker 2 ([05:40:38](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 7 ([05:40:39](#)):

I don't think I'll be around for that one. October 14th

Speaker 3 ([05:40:42](#)):

And I'll be in SKA on the 21st.

Speaker 2 ([05:40:45](#)):

21st

Speaker 7 ([05:40:46](#)):

To you. Okay.

Speaker 2 ([05:40:47](#)):

In

Speaker 3 ([05:40:47](#)):

October.