

**CITY OF LAWRENCE**  
**Common Council**  
**May 4, 2026**  
**Regular Meeting**

MEMBERS' PRESENT: Councilors Carlos Jennings, Kristie Krone, Tracy Boyd, Zach Cramer, Rick Wells, Sherron Freeman and Betty Robinson

MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tyrrell Giles and Liz Masur

ALSO, BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Mayor Whitfield and Aidan Horgan

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Adkisson, Zach Myers and Caylin Cook of McCarter & English, LLP

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Goodnight, Terri Falker, Jim Perron and Jami Weirich and Nick Rahmel

STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Renea Rafala and Shawn Fugate

Council President Zach Cramer called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was recited. A moment of silence was observed in honor of Mayor Deb Whitfield's mother, who recently passed away. Condolences were extended to the mayor and her family.

Roll call was taken. Seven (7) council members were present. President Cramer recognized there was a quorum. A quorum was confirmed.

Present:

- Councilor Wells
- Councilor Freeman
- Councilor Robinson
- Councilor Jennings
- Councilor Krone
- Councilor Cramer
- Councilor Boyd

It was also recognized there were extra copies of the agenda located at the back of the room along with a sign-up sheet for comments from the citizens.

COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS & SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS OR RESOLUTIONS:

**Councilor Robinson**

Councilor Robinson addressed a question raised during the previous council meeting regarding approval authority for claims. She stated that a Lawrence historian identified Ordinance No. 7 (dated February 20, 2005), which clarifies that only the legislative body (the Common Council) has authority to approve claims for the City of Lawrence.

Councilor Robinson reported that:

- Attorney Amber Finley reviewed the ordinance.
- The Board of Public Works may review claims, vouchers, and invoices.
- The Controller may not pay bills without Council approval.
- Copies of the ordinance were made available to council members.

### **Councilor Wells**

Councilor Wells discussed the relationship between Board of Public Works approvals and Council approval authority, particularly regarding professional service contracts and expenditures exceeding \$2,500. Discussion followed regarding the need to clarify approval of language within professional services contracts.

### **City Controller, Terri Falker**

The City Controller, Terri Falker, clarified that she did not recall participating in a meeting with Councilor Robinson and Amber Finley. This is referenced during the discussion but reiterated that claims are not paid until approved by the Council.

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### **Councilor Krone (Presentation on Behalf of Councilor Masur)**

Councilor Krone presented remarks regarding environmental health and sustainability initiatives, including:

- Reducing turf grass in favor of native pollinator-friendly plantings.
- Concerns regarding lawn care chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
- Potential environmental and health benefits include reduced pollution, improved water quality, and flood reduction.
- Reference to scientific studies and EPA materials related to environmental impacts and public health concerns.

Examples of pollinator-friendly landscaping at Fort Ben Library were highlighted.

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**Councilor Wells** addressed deteriorating road conditions on Kingsboro Drive, reporting:

- Numerous resident complaints regarding severe potholes and roadway damage.
  - Communication with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and street department officials.
  - Confirmation that Kingsboro Drive is scheduled for complete replacement during the summer.
  - Concerns regarding inadequate temporary patching efforts.
  - A request for additional temporary repairs until full replacement occurs.
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**Councilor Krone** commended the Department of Public Works for promptly addressing safety concerns involving a deteriorated pedestrian bridge on Promontory Road near 86th Street. He noted:

- DPW responded within 48 hours after concerns were raised.
  - Temporary repairs were completed to eliminate dangerous holes.
  - Engineering and contractor evaluations are planned for permanent repairs.
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**Councilor Boyd** recognized Jami Weirich for leadership during Earth Day community cleanup efforts involving residents, elected officials, businesses, and neighborhood participants.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF 04-15-2026

A motion was made by **Councilor Jennings** and seconded by **Councilor Boyd** to approve the minutes of April 15, 2026, regular meeting.

- Councilor Wells – Yay
- Councilor Freeman – Yay
- Councilor Robinson – Yay
- Councilor Jennings – Yay
- Councilor Krone – Yay
- Councilor Cramer – Yay
- Councilor Boyd – Yay
  
- **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PAY CLAIM VOUCHERS 5-4-2026:

Payroll Claims for [March 30, 2026] \$1,147,575.48 and payroll claims for [April 15, 2026] \$1,166,494.38. Invoices [for vendors] as presented today for \$2,696,702.29.

A motion was made by **Councilor Freeman** and seconded by **Councilor Jennings** to approve pay claim vouchers.

- Councilor Wells – Nay
- Councilor Robinson – Yay
- Councilor Jennings – Yay
- Councilor Krone – Yay
- Councilor Cramer – Yay
- Councilor Boyd – Yay
- Councilor Freeman – Yay
  
- **Result:** Motion carried 6–1 (Approved).

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE: **No reports presented.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**a. Proposal No. 3, 2025**

**Title:** An ordinance amending Title 1, Article 2, Chapter 5 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Lawrence, Indiana.

The proposal remains before the Public Safety Committee for consideration and recommendation.

Representatives from:

- Lawrence Professional Firefighters Association Local 416
- Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 159

provided presentations regarding proposed benefit changes and associated financial analyses.

### **Topics Discussed:**

#### **Baker Tilly Financial Report**

Union representatives explained:

- The Baker Tilly report was provided during contract negotiations.
- Financial projections reflected negotiated compensation and benefit proposals.
- Reports included assumptions regarding salary increases and civilian staff considerations.
- Senate Bill 1 (SEA 1) may impact prior financial assumptions.

#### **Bereavement Leave Proposal**

Discussion included:

- Current bereavement leave policies for police and fire personnel.
- Proposed increases in bereavement leave.
- Expansion of eligible family relationships.
- Mental health considerations for public safety personnel.
- Potential costs and usage projections.

Council members requested:

- Historical bereavement usage data over several years.
- Comparisons with similar sized municipalities.

#### **Holiday Time Rollover Proposal**

Discussion included:

- Increasing post-2019 employee holiday rollover caps from 96 hours to 250 hours.
- Operational and scheduling impacts.
- Existing unfunded liability concerns related to accrued leave balances.

#### **Sick Time Proposal**

Discussion included:

- Increasing sick leave accrual caps from 200 to 600 hours.
- No increase to maximum payout upon retirement or separation.
- Use of sick leave for hardship and injury situations.
- Potential reduction in overtime if employees accrue additional leave instead of calling off work.

#### **Additional Discussion**

Council members and union representatives discussed:

- Financial affordability.
- Contract negotiation history.
- The administration's involvement in negotiations.
- Future inclusion of council representation in labor negotiations.
- Clarification that the proposal remains in committee and no action was taken.

**b. Proposal No. 1, 2026**

**Title:** An ordinance amending Title 1, Article 1, Chapter 2, Section 12 of the Municipal Code regarding Common Council approval of expenditures of professional service contracts.

The proposal remains before the Committee of the Whole for consideration and will be brought back before the Council at a future meeting.

Councilor Wells inquired about the anticipated committee meeting date. President Cramer stated that:

- The meeting will occur before the next Common Council meeting.
- It will likely occur immediately prior to the next council meeting.
- The exact date and time had not yet been scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

**a. Resolution No. 3, 2026**

**Title:** A resolution of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, opposing federal proposals to increase commercial truck size and weight limits.

The resolution was introduced and copies were distributed to council members.

**Presentation by Coalition Against Bigger Trucks**

The Council heard a presentation from Aiden Hogan, Regional Director for the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, who appeared virtually.

Mr. Hogan explained:

- The Coalition Against Bigger Trucks is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization opposing federal legislation to increase commercial truck size and weight limits.
- Current proposals would:
  - Increase truck weight limits from 80,000 pounds to 91,000 pounds.
  - Increase twin trailer lengths by approximately 10 feet.
- The proposals are being promoted by shipping industry lobbying organizations.
- Numerous public safety, transportation, and local government organizations oppose the proposals.

Mr. Hogan stated concerns include:

- Increased roadway and infrastructure damage.
- Increased crash frequency and severity.
- Increased local government maintenance costs.
- Greater impacts on local roads and residential neighborhoods.

He further noted that:

- The federal surface transportation reauthorization bill is under congressional consideration.
  - Congressman Jefferson Shreve serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee reviewing the legislation.
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## **Council Discussion**

### **Councilor Krone**

Councilor Krone expressed support for the resolution, citing constituent concerns regarding increased truck traffic on East 75th Street near Carroll Road and Pendleton Pike. Concerns included:

- Increased commercial traffic associated with retail development.
- Narrow roadway conditions.
- Safety and infrastructure impacts on residential streets.

### **Councilor Wells**

Councilor Wells discussed longstanding concerns regarding heavy truck traffic through residential neighborhoods in his district, including:

- Industrial traffic routing through residential streets.
- Street deterioration and infrastructure failures caused by heavy trucks.
- Dangerous roadway cave-ins and damage near Van Cleave Street.
- Requests for truck routing restrictions and weight limitations.

### **Councilor Jennings**

Councilor Jennings asked questions regarding roadway weight capacities and concerns related to truck rerouting during road construction projects. He expressed concerns that current truck weights already exceed what many local streets can safely accommodate.

Mr. Hogan responded:

- Federal and Indiana truck weight standards currently allow up to 80,000 pounds.
- Local municipalities face significant enforcement challenges regarding truck traffic restrictions.
- Infrastructure damage from heavy trucks is substantial and disproportionate compared to passenger vehicles.

Additional discussion included:

- The impact of commercial freight on local infrastructure.
- Historical federal investment in rail transportation.
- Consideration of rail alternatives for freight movement.
- Public safety concerns related to larger trucks.
- Reference to the Council's previously adopted Vision Zero resolution.

## **Approval of Resolution No. 3, 2026**

A motion and second were made to approve Resolution No. 3, 2026.

**Vote:** Approved unanimously.

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## **COMMENTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

### **City Events and Community Activities**

Jami Weirich., Director of City Events, addressed the Council and provided updates regarding recent and upcoming community events.

#### **Earth Day Cleanup**

- Approximately 1.35 tons of trash were collected during Earth Day cleanup efforts.
- Additional neighborhood and park cleanup activities also occurred.
- Appreciation was extended to volunteers and council members participating.

#### **Upcoming Events**

The following upcoming events were announced:

- National Day of Prayer — May 8 at the Community Center.
- International Festival — May 9 at Civic Plaza.
- Films at the Fort — May 29 featuring *Despicable Me*.
- Live Longer Lawrence Health and Wellness Fair — May 31.
- Farmers Market opening scheduled for one month from the meeting date.

Residents were directed to “Visit Lawrence Indiana” for event information.

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### **Financial Questions to the Controller**

Councilor Jennings questioned the City Controller regarding statements made during the State of the City address concerning remaining budget funds from prior years.

Discussion included:

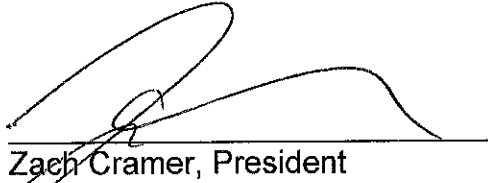
- Clarification regarding general fund balances and appropriations.
- Clarification that most additional appropriations discussed previously were not from the general fund.
- Questions regarding purchase orders and encumbered funds rolled over from 2025 into 2026.

The Controller agreed to provide rollover and encumbrance figures to the Council.

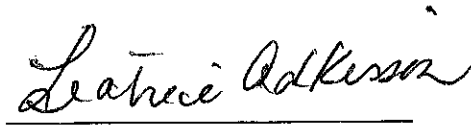
CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments were presented.

ADJOURNMENT: President Cramer called for adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m., by President Cramer.



Zach Cramer, President



Leatrice Adkisson, Clerk

These minutes are not intended to be verbatim. They are a summary of discussions held, except for the motions.