CITY OF LAWRENCE
Common Council
October 15, 2026
Special Meeting

MEMBERS' PRESENT: Councilors Sherron Freeman, Carlos Jennings, Tyrrell Giles, Kristie Krone, Betty Robison, and Zach Cramer
MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS:
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
ALSO, BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Mayor Whitfield and Chief Bigsbee
ALSO PRESENT: Chief Wallace, and Clerk Adkisson
STAFF PRESENT: Terri Falker, Eric Martin, Janette Jackson, Shawn Fugate, Jim Perron, and Kyle Kovert
STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Renea Rafala

President Zach Cramer called the special meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Council members and attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Council President announced that **Six (6) council members were present**, establishing a quorum.

NEW BUSINESS:

1) Proposal No. 6, 2026 – An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana for Appropriations and Tax Rates Adopting 2027 Budget

The City Clerk read the title of the proposal into the record. President Cramer noted Mayor Whitfield and the City Controller had previously introduced the proposed 2027 budget, which was available online. The proposal would be finalized using the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) Form 4, substantially like the public notice associated with the meeting. The related DLGF Form 3 was available for review through the Gateway website.

President Cramer requested a motion to establish the following rules for the public hearing:

- Each individual speaker would be limited to three minutes.
- The total speaking time for all individuals in favor of the proposal would be limited to 10 minutes.
- The total speaking time for all individuals opposed to the proposal, would be limited to 10 minutes.

A motion was made by Councilor Jennings and seconded Councilor Krone to approve the hearing rules. The motion passed by voice vote, with no opposition recorded.

The City Clerk confirmed that the proposal had been properly advertised and noticed.

Public Comment in Favor

The floor was opened to individuals wishing to speak in support of Proposal No. 6, 2026. No comments in favor were recorded in the meeting transcript.

Public Comment in Opposition

Daniel Rapp
Address: 5718 Wallingwood Drive

Mr. Rapp spoke in opposition to the proposed 2027 budget, raising concerns regarding budget transparency, the balance of the General Fund, and the City's financial position.

His comments included the following points:

- He referenced page 13 of the proposed budget, noting projected revenues of approximately $57 million and expenditures of approximately $56 million across the budget, while questioning whether these figures included funds beyond the General Fund.
- He cited the General Fund figures on page 13, identifying approximately $30 million in revenue and $31 million in expenditures, and questioned whether the proposed budget was balanced at the fund level.
- He referenced the mayor's stated objective on page 34 of maintaining a balanced budget and expressed concern that the General Fund projections appeared inconsistent with that objective.
- He noted that certain revenues are restricted to designated purposes and therefore cannot be freely transferred to cover other expenses.
- He expressed concern about prior supplemental appropriations in 2024 and 2025 and the General Fund's reported financial position through August 2026.
- He questioned whether the General Fund could face a deficit for the remainder of 2026 and in the future.

Mr. Rapp was advised when his three-minute speaking period had expired.

Virtual Public Comments

The City Clerk confirmed that no comments had been received from members of the public attending virtually.

With no further public comments, President Cramer declared the public hearing closed.

Council Discussion and Questions to the Administration

State-Shared Revenue

Councilor Krone asked City Controller Terry Falker about the increase of approximately $2.8 million, or 21%, in state-shared revenues listed on page 24, line 335 of the proposed 2027 budget.

The City Controller clarified that the revenue was associated with wheel tax collections and could be used only for road-related purposes.

Councilor Krone thanked the Controller for the clarification.

Questions Submitted by a Member of the Public

Councilor Freeman referenced an email received from Mr. Tom Burns expressing concerns and submitting questions regarding the proposed budget.

The administration stated that the questions appeared to be the same questions previously submitted by Councilor Rick Wells on Mr. Burns's behalf and that responses had been provided.

Councilor Freeman asked about the appropriate procedure for members of the public seeking answers to questions about the budget.

President Cramer recommended that residents first contact the council member representing their district and, if necessary, reach out to the at-large council members. It was also acknowledged that contacting the administration or City Controller directly would not be inappropriate, although contacting the council member was identified as the preferred initial approach.

Administration's Comments on the Proposed Budget

President Cramer invited the administration to provide additional comments on Proposal No. 6, 2026.

The administration stated that the proposed budget had been prepared using the information available and expressed hope that the budget would be acceptable to the Council.

No further questions or comments were recorded.

President Cramer entertained a motion to table Proposal No. 6, 2026, concerning the adoption of the 2027 budget.

A motion to table the proposal was made by Councilor Jennings and seconded by Councilor Giles.

The motion was put to a voice vote, for those in favor and those opposed.

Motion carried unanimously.

No further discussion was recorded.

ADJOURNMENT: President Cramer called for adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 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.