CITY OF LAWRENCE
Common Council
October 21, 2026
Regular Mid-Month Meeting

MEMBERS' PRESENT: Councilors Sherron Freeman, Tracy Boyd, Rick Wells, Carlos Jennings, Tyrrell Giles, Kristie Krone, Betty Robison, and Zach Cramer
MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS:
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
ALSO, BY MICROSOFT TEAMS:
ALSO PRESENT: Chief Wallace, and Clerk Adkisson
STAFF PRESENT: Jami Weirich, Renea Rafala and Paul Wanner
STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

President Zach Cramer called the special meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Council members and attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Council President announced that **Eight (8) council members were present**, establishing a quorum.

The meeting was declared properly noticed in accordance with the **Indiana Open Door Law**. Copies of the agenda and citizen comment sign-in sheets were made available at Six council members were present in person.

COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS & SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS OR RESOLUTIONS:

Road Safety Concern — Sunnyside Road

Councilor Freeman reported concerns about repeated accidents on Sunnyside Road near Indianapolis. The councilor noted that warning signs were present on both sides of the road but expressed concern that the existing measures might not adequately alert unfamiliar drivers to the sharp curves and roadway conditions.

Councilor Freeman asked whether rumble strips or similar roadway treatments could be installed to improve safety. The councilor reported that two accidents had occurred in the area during the week of the meeting and referenced prior communication with the Department of Public Works.

No formal action was taken.

Councilor Wells' Comments Regarding the 2027 Budget

Councilor Wells expressed uncertainty about attending the anticipated budget meeting later in the week and requested that the following concerns be reflected in the record.

Councilor Wells stated opposition to the proposed 2027 budget, characterizing it as structurally unbalanced. The councilor expressed concern about an ongoing General Fund deficit of approximately $1 million and the possibility that an additional deficit from the current year's budget could carry into 2027.

Councilor Wells also questioned the distribution of proposed budget reductions, stating that some departments faced cuts exceeding 30%, while the Mayor's budget had been reduced by approximately 5%, with no corresponding personnel staffing reductions.

The councilor cautioned that these reductions could affect essential public services and lead to additional appropriations for which funding might not be available.

Councilor Wells thanked Tom Burns and Daniel Rapp for their assistance in explaining the proposed budget and reiterated the councilor's intention to vote according to personal judgment and conscience.

No formal action was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR FIRST OF MONTH MEETING OF 10-5-2026

A motion was made by **Councilor Jennings** and seconded by **Councilor Boyd** to approve the minutes of the regular first-of-month meeting, October 5, 2026.

Vote: Unanimously.
Vote: Approved 8-0.

- **Result:** Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF 10-15-2026

A motion was made by **Councilor Jennings** and seconded by **Councilor Freeman** to approve the minutes of the special meeting, October 15, 2026.

Vote: Unanimously.
Vote: Approved 8-0.

- **Result:** Motion carried.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE: No reports were given

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Proposal No. 1, 2026 — Professional Services Contracts

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

The President stated that the proposal remained before the Committee of the Whole for consideration and recommendation to the Council.

Action: No final action was taken. The proposal will return to the Council when appropriate.

2. Proposal No. 3, 2026 — Code of Ethics

Title: An ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, adopting a Code of Ethics.

The President stated that the proposal remained before the Committee of the Whole for consideration and recommendation to the Council.

Action: No final action was taken. The proposal will return to the Council when appropriate.

NEW BUSINESS:

Rezoning Petition No. 26-LZ-0079775 — 9775 Fall Creek Road

The City Clerk read the rezoning petition into the record. The petition concerned the property located at 9775 Fall Creek Road, near the Guys Crossing shopping center anchored by Kroger.

Public Hearing Procedures

The Council approved rules governing the public hearing, including the following time limits:

- Petitioner's initial presentation: 10 minutes.
- All public comments in favor, combined: 10 minutes.
- All public comments in opposition, combined: 10 minutes.
- Petitioner's response: 5 minutes.
- Public comments in response to the petitioner's remarks, combined: 5 minutes.

The motion to approve the hearing rules was made and seconded. The rules were approved by voice vote.

Individuals wishing to testify were sworn or affirmed, and the President opened the public hearing.

Petitioner's Presentation

Joe Cauldron, representing the petitioner, presented the request to rezone the approximately 1.08-acre property from split C-1 and C-3 zoning to C-3 zoning.

The property contains a former bank branch. The petitioner explained that the property had been left with split zoning following earlier rezoning activity associated with development of the surrounding shopping center.

The petitioner stated that the prospective purchaser intended to redevelop or reuse the building for retail purposes. A restaurant had initially been considered, and a site plan had been prepared showing potential restaurant use. However, no tenant had been secured, and the petitioner wished to preserve flexibility for other appropriate C-3 uses.

To address compatibility concerns, the petitioner submitted a list of proposed prohibited uses and requested that the list be included as binding commitments associated with the rezoning.

The petitioner explained that the proposed restrictions were intended to exclude uses considered inappropriate for the property or inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood shopping center.

Council Discussion and Questions

Council members discussed the proposed uses, restrictions, and anticipated redevelopment.

Topics included:

- The possibility of a restaurant, light retail business, or personal service establishment occupying the property.
- The distinction between permitted C-1 and C-3 uses.
- The meaning of light retail under the zoning ordinance, including retail uses involving goods generally below the applicable weight threshold.
- The proposed exclusion of uses such as bars or taverns, utility substations, and wireless communication facilities.
- The distinction between a restaurant and a bar or tavern based on the proportion of revenue derived from food versus alcohol sales.
- The possibility that the building's former bank vaults could affect redevelopment.
- Whether the property would likely be leased to a tenant following acquisition.
- The property's size and the potential need for additional land for certain high-volume restaurant uses.
- Applicable site development standards, plan review, inspections, and any additional approvals required for a future development proposal.

The petitioner confirmed that the proposed restrictions were intended to demonstrate a commitment to compatible development and stated that the final use would depend on the eventual tenant and the Council's decision.

No members of the public spoke in favor of or against the petition during the designated comment periods. The City Clerk reported no virtual public comments.

City Staff Report

Renea Raffa, Director of Public Works, presented the City's staff report.

Staff expressed support for rezoning the property from split C-1/C-3 zoning to C-3 zoning, subject to incorporation of the proposed list of prohibited uses as recorded commitments.

Staff explained that the property's location within the existing shopping center made a variety of C-3 uses potentially appropriate, while certain uses could be incompatible with the surrounding businesses and neighborhood.

Staff also noted that future redevelopment would remain subject to applicable zoning requirements, development standards, plan review, and inspections. Any restaurant proposal would need to meet site circulation and vehicle stacking requirements.

Staff recommended approval contingent on the prohibited-use commitments being incorporated into the rezoning.

Council Action

Motion 1 — Amendment of Petition: A motion was made by Councilor Jennings and seconded by Councilor Wells to amend the petition to include a written commitment from the petitioner adhering to the proposed list of prohibited uses.

Action: The motion passed by voice vote.

Motion 2 — Approval of Rezoning: A motion to approve the rezoning petition, as amended, was made by Councilor Wells and seconded by Councilor Jennings.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

Disposition: Rezoning Petition No. 26-LZ-0079775 was approved, subject to the written commitment incorporating the prohibited-use list.

Proposal No. 6, 2026 — Adoption of the 2027 Budget

Title: An ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, providing for appropriations and tax rates and adopting the 2027 budget.

The President noted that the proposal had been introduced as new business on October 15, 2026, when the Council held a public hearing. The Council discussed scheduling a special meeting to allow sufficient time for public consideration before budget adoption.

The initially proposed meeting date was Friday, October 23, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. Council members discussed scheduling conflicts and the possibility of meeting the following week.

The Council expressed a preference for Monday, October 26, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., subject to confirmation of room availability and coordination with the administration. The President stated that notice would be provided as soon as possible.

Action: A motion to schedule the special meeting for Monday, October 26, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., was made and seconded. The motion passed by voice vote.

Disposition: Consideration of the 2027 budget was deferred to the proposed October 26 special meeting, subject to confirmation of the arrangements.

Proposal No. 7, 2026 — Salaries of Appointed City Officers and Employees

Title: An ordinance fixing salaries of appointed officers and employees of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, for 2027.

The Council considered the proposal on first reading.

A motion to continue discussion until October 26, 2026, was made and seconded by Councilor Freeman.

Action: The motion passed by voice vote.

Disposition: Continued to October 26, 2026, special meeting.

Proposal No. 8, 2026 — Police and Fire Department Salaries

Title: An ordinance fixing salaries of appointed officers and employees of the Police Department and Fire Department of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, for 2027.

The Council considered the proposal on first reading.

A motion to continue discussion until October 26, 2026, was made by Councilor Wells and seconded by Councilor Cone.

Action: The motion passed by voice vote.

Disposition: Continued to October 26, 2026, special meeting.

Proposal No. 9, 2026 — Compensation for Elected Officials

Title: An ordinance fixing compensation for elected officials of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, for 2027 and providing an effective date.

The Council considered the proposal on first reading.

A motion to continue discussion until October 26, 2026, special meeting was made and seconded by Councilors Jennings and Robinson.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

Disposition: Continued to October 26, 2026, special meeting.

Proposal No. 10, 2026 — Sanitary Sewer Utility Rates and Charges

Title: An ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, adopting a new schedule of rates and charges for services rendered by the City of Lawrence Sanitary Sewer Utility.

The proposal was presented for consideration.

Action: The proposal was referred to the Administration and Finance Committee. The transcript does not clearly capture the motion, second, or vote associated with this referral; those details should be verified against the official record.

Proposal No. 11, 2026 — Private Hydrant Fee

Title: An ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana, reducing the private hydrant fee collected by the city from customers served by the City's water utility.

A motion to refer to the proposal to the Administration and Finance Committee was made by Councilor Jennings and seconded by Councilor Cone.

Action: The motion passed unanimously.

Disposition: Referred to the Administration and Finance Committee.

Proposal No. 12, 2026 — Sewage Works Improvements and Revenue Bonds

Title: An ordinance concerning additions and improvements to the sewage works of the City of Lawrence, Indiana; the issuance of revenue bonds to fund the costs; the collection, segregation, and distribution of sewage works revenues; protection of bondholders' interests; related matters, including notes issued in anticipation of bonds; and repeal of inconsistent ordinances.

A motion to refer to the proposal to the Administration and Finance Committee was made by Councilor Jennings and seconded by Councilor Robinson.

Action: The motion passed by voice vote.

Disposition: Referred to the Administration and Finance Committee.

Proposal No. 13, 2026 — Waterworks Improvements and Revenue Bonds

Title: An ordinance concerning additions and improvements to the waterworks of the City of Lawrence, Indiana; the issuance of revenue bonds to fund the costs; the collection, segregation, and distribution of waterworks revenues; protection of bondholders' interests; related matters, including notes issued in anticipation of bonds; and repeal of inconsistent ordinances.

A motion to refer to the proposal to the Administration and Finance Committee was made by Councilor Jennings and seconded by Councilor Robinson.

Action: The motion passed by voice vote.

Disposition: Referred to the Administration and Finance Committee.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS:
Jami Weirich, Director of City Events, announced the following upcoming community events:

- **Halloween Fest:** Friday, October 23, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Civic Plaza.
- **Boo Bowl:** October 31, 2026, at Eugene Burns Park. The event will feature a football tournament involving youth football players.

The Council received the announcements. No formal action was taken.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

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

Leatrice Adkisson, Clerk

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