

**CITY OF LAWRENCE
Common Council
March 19, 2025
Regular Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilors Kristie Krone, Sherron Freeman, Zach Cramer, Lisa Chavis, Rick Wells, Tyrrell Giles, Carlos Jennings, Liz Masur, and Betty Robinson

MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO, BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Adkisson and Michael Allen (Frost Brown Todd)

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Goodnight, Jami Weinrich, Paul Wanner, Humphrey Nagila, LeAndre Level and Jim Perron

STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Mayor Whitfield, Renea Rafala and Jeanette Jackson.

President Cramer called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was administered, followed by a moment of silence.

President Cramer recognized there was a quorum. 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: Councilor Wells mentioned he recently met with INDOT regarding the medians on Pendleton Pike. The topic of this meeting was the tons of complaints that have been received concerning these medians. Councilor Wells stated it's a huge inconvenience for some of the businesses on this road. Some of the issues are the timing of the left turn lights, with a strong possibility of a driver making an U-turn, while drivers are also given the right turn arrow at the same time. Councilor Wells also mentioned he received a lot of calls, concerns and questions regarding the recent "Boil Your Water" advisory. After living in the city for over 60 years, he has never seen the need for the entire city to boil water over a main water break. Councilor Wells also said he would like to see the administration get a better handle on getting notices like this out to the citizens.

Councilor Robinson expressed support for Councilman Wells' earlier statement regarding the need for better communication, especially during emergencies. She stated, although she had sent out as many emails as possible by 11:15 a.m. to notify constituents, many people still did not receive the information. She also emphasized the need for the administration to improve communication systems, as it should not all fall on individual council members to get the word out during emergencies. Councilor Robinson also mentioned a constituent reached out in February after receiving her water bill on the due date, which caused confusion

and panic, especially since she was unable to pay it on time through the kiosk. The online payment system showed a late fee would be charged if not paid by 7:00 p.m. Councilor Robinson contacted Cathy Retmier who clarified that payments are accepted at the kiosks and online until midnight on the due date without incurring a late fee. However, payments made after the due date would incur a late fee. The constituent was helped by the utility staff, particularly Cathy, who worked with her to resolve the issue. The constituent expressed appreciation for the assistance. Councilor Robinson acknowledged that during these challenging times, especially with the lack of financial assistance for Lawrence residents' water bills, the utility staff had been doing their best to support residents. She also stated the administration should review and enhance communication protocols to ensure timely notifications. Particularly in emergency situations and continue to assist residents with water bill payment issues and ensure clear communication regarding deadlines and fees.

Councilor Wells mentioned, a resident, an elderly woman, reported a stray dog in the neighborhood that she was afraid of. While the dog was not aggressive, it was young and playful, and the resident felt uncomfortable. She was unable to contact the Animal Control Officer, so Councilor Wells intervened. The Animal Control Officer responded and assessed the situation. However, due to the dog not being sick, injured, or aggressive, the officer explained that Indianapolis Animal Care and Control would not accept the dog, as they were at full capacity and only taking dogs for euthanasia in such cases. Councilor Wells expressed concern over this situation, emphasizing that for a community of 50,000 people, having no local animal shelter is problematic. Many smaller communities have shelters, and Lawrence should consider the possibility of establishing one to better handle such situations and protect the welfare of stray animals. He also expressed further discussions, and research should be conducted on the feasibility of establishing a local animal shelter for Lawrence and consider increasing community awareness and support for addressing stray animal concerns.

Councilor Freeman mentioned the need to educate the public as to where to pay their water bills, especially since the building remains closed and customers cannot pay in person. People are being advised to either pay their bill at the kiosk or mail it in. A distinction was made between the City of Lawrence and Lawrence Township concerning water bill payments. Residents within the City of Lawrence pay their water bill to the City of Lawrence (Tax District 407). Residents in Lawrence Township pay their water bills to the City of Indianapolis (Tax District 4401). She stated there was a concern that media coverage caused confusion by mentioning "Lawrence" without specifying whether it referred to the City of Lawrence or Lawrence Township. The need for clearer public education on this matter was emphasized, as many residents were unclear about the differences. It was clarified that City of Lawrence water bills are paid to Lawrence Utilities, while Indianapolis water bills are paid to Citizens Energy Group.

Councilor Krone extended congratulations to the Lawrence North Boys Varsity Basketball Team for their Regional win against Mooresville last Saturday. She mentioned a couple of the players are students of hers and expressed how proud she is of their achievements. She also wished the Lawrence North boys' team good luck in their upcoming semi-state game this weekend. A constituent of Councilor Krone in Glen Cove, located off Oaklandon, raised two concerns:

- The storm water drain in the area is in need of repair, as the street is eroding due to poor drainage.
- Trees planted by the builder approximately 35 years ago are causing damage to sidewalks due to their roots.

This constituent is a member of the HOA and has already contacted the Streets Department regarding these issues. Councilor Krone stated she has also been in touch with the department and has gathered photos to share with them. She wanted to bring these issues to everyone's attention for awareness and further action.

President Cramer took a moment to recognize the Automotive Service Technology students at the McKenzie Center for Innovation and Technology. This program provides students with hands-on career experience and offers affordable vehicle repairs to the community, charging only for parts and no labor costs. President Cramer also shared his positive experience after having his own car serviced at the McKenzie Center and praised the program's effectiveness. He encouraged others to utilize this resource, as it offers a cost-effective way to have automotive needs met while helping students gain valuable career experience. He described the program as a "win-win" for both the students and the community.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS OR RESOLUTIONS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES REGULAR MEETING 3-3-2025

Councilor Chavis made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilor Jennings Robinson 2nd the motion. Vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS 3-19-2025: Councilor Jennings moved to approve vouchers and claims. The motion was seconded by Councilor Krone. Payroll Claims for \$0.00 [payroll] and Invoices [for vendors] as presented today [for \$114,172.04]. Roll call for a vote was taken, (8) ayes Councilors Giles, Chavis, Robinson, Cramer, Jennings, Freeman, Krone, and Masur. (1) nay Councilor Wells, Motion carried 8 – 1.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: Councilor Chavis, chairperson of the Administration and Finance Committee, delivered a report. The committee gave a favorable recommendation to move the request of the Controller's Office to void outstanding checks issued by the City of Lawrence before 12/21/2022.

President Cramer delivered a report from the Committee of the Whole. The committee passed an unfavorable recommendation to the full council for Proposal No. 2, 2025 - 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 On Expenditures Of Professional Service Contracts.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: a.) February 19, 2025 - Signing of Vouchers, Approval of Claims and Authorization of Payment. Councilor Chavis moved a motion to approve payroll claim and vendor vouchers for 2/19/2025. Councilor Jennings 2nd the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Controller's Office request for the Lawrence Common Council to void outstanding checks issued before 12/31/2022. Councilor Masur moved a favorable motion to void these checks. Councilor Robinson 2nd the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposal No. 2, 2025 - 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 On Expenditures Of Professional Service Contracts. Councilor Wells made a motion to approve this proposal. There was no 2nd. Motion failed.

NEW BUSINESS: Presentation was given by Macy Pohl from the Lawrence Advisory Council on Disabilities. (Please see the attached)

Resolution No. 1, 2025 - A Resolution Of The Common Council Of The City Of Lawrence, Indiana Recognizing The Month Of March As Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month In The City Of Lawrence. Councilor Chavis moved a motion to approve this resolution. Councilor Jennings 2nd the motion. No further discussion. A vote was taken. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Greg Goodnight, the Chief of Staff, addressed several points, including the monitoring of Senate Bill 1, which could negatively impact local cities, particularly in terms of property tax revenue. Mr. Goodnight along with Lawrence Utilities Director Paul Wanner discussed the main water line break, explaining that the water utility acted swiftly to contain it and prevent contamination. The two also answered questions asked by a few of the councilors. They are looking into ways to improve communication with residents about such issues.

The city's controller, Mr. Humphrey Nagila, provided a financial update, discussing the city's cash balance, revenue, expenses, and reserves. The Controller also presented an overview of the 2024 finances as a follow-up from the Finance Committee's request. Mr. Nagila was asked questions by Councilors Wells and Chavis, which were answered.

Deputy Chief LeAndre gave an update on the Neighborhood Hub Initiative. He stated the city has a new initiative and encourages neighborhoods to register with the city, even for those not part of an HOA. The city has created a "Neighborhood Toolkit" for communities interested in forming their own neighborhood association. Mr. Level mentioned two communities are currently registered and for more information, visit the city's website. Mr. Level additionally mentioned to the council about upcoming events, including the Spring Fest, a cleanup day, and the upcoming State of the City address and health fair.

- **Spring Fest & Easter Egg Hunt:** April 19 at the Community Park, in partnership with YMCA. Volunteers needed to help fill Easter eggs.
- **Neighborhood Cleanup Day:** April 22, 2025, starting at 7:30-8:00 AM at the Community Park's Activity Center. Multiple neighborhood cleanups are planned, including cleanup in Winding Ridge. The school district will also be involved.

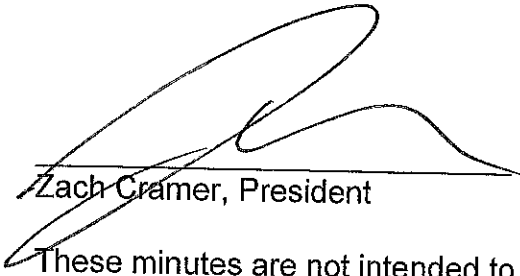
Mr. Level stated Shredded day was a huge success after being missed last year. He gave thanks to Former Police Chief Gary Woodruff who played a key role in reinstating this event. Mr. Level also provide more information on a few more events. Live Longer in Lawrence Health Fair, on April 28th. More information will be given at the State of the City on April 23rd. He also mentioned the introduction of new technology in the PAR and he hopes this will encourage the council to consider this new technology for improving transparency.

COMMENTS FROM THE CITIZENS: Terry Davis, 5311 Tradition Drive, Lawrence, IN. Mr. Davis has concerns with increasing numbers of rental properties in his neighborhood. These properties are not being maintained. His concerns are also box trucking blocking sidewalks and leaking oil, creating safety issues. Also concerns about abandoned vehicles in the subdivision.

Daniel Rap 5718 Wallingwood Drive, Lawrence, IN. Mr. Rapp inquired about the 2023 Annual Financial Report from the Gateway system, which has not been posted to the city's website despite requirements for public transparency. He is also concerned about the lack of transparency.

Charles Turner 5822 Wheeler Road, Lawrence, IN. Mr. Turner has concerns about the Purple Line Bus's hours of operation and excessive bus activity in the neighborhood. He also has concerns with multiple buses running at once and speeding through the residential areas. Mr. Turner asked the question, if the city is incurring any costs related to police response or hospital runs involving the homeless riding the bus.

ADJOURNMENT: Councilor Cramer called for adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33. 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.

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