

CITY OF LAWRENCE
Common Council
October 15, 2025
Regular Meeting

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

MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilors Freeman and Tyrrell Giles

ALSO, BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Adkisson, and Scott Krapf, of Frost Brown Todd

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Goodnight, Eric Martin and Terri Falker Jim Perron, Chief Curtis Bigsbee and Firefighter Nick Rehmel

STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

Council President Betty Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

Roll call was taken. Seven (7) council members were present. President Robinson 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: Council members were invited to share comments or recognitions.

- **Councilor Masur:** Commended the **City of Lawrence Police Department** for significant reductions in crime during the past year:
 - Homicides: ↓ 77.8%
 - Aggravated Assaults: ↓ 20.5%
 - Robberies: ↓ 3.8%
 - Burglaries: ↓ 36.8%
 - Auto Thefts: ↓ 37.4%Praised the department for doing an outstanding job protecting the city.
- **Councilor Chavis:** Provided remarks on the city's **2026 proposed budget**, noting:
 - The city has maintained strong financial performance with increased operating balances.
 - The proposed 2026 general fund budget includes a **\$4.5 million increase**.
 - The council seeks to pursue a **zero-based budgeting** approach to ensure sustainability, particularly in light of **SEA1** impacts.
 - A projected **\$1.5 million reduction in appropriations** may be necessary to achieve a cash-neutral position.
 - The council's goal is to maintain an operating balance of **\$5.75 million** (approximately half the estimated property tax distribution).
 - The council supports a **3% raise for civil employees** in the 2026 budget.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS OR RESOLUTIONS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES' REGULAR MEETING 10-6-2025

Councilor Jennings made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilor Krone 2nd the motion. Vote was taken.

Robinson – Yes, Jennings – Yes, Chavis – Yes, Masur – Yes, Krone – Yes, Cramer – Yes, Wells – Yes.

Motion carried unanimously, 7 – 0

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Proposal No. 3, 2025** – *An Ordinance Of The Common Council Of The City Of Lawrence, Indiana Amending Title 1, Article 2, Chapter 5 Of The Code Of Ordinances Of The City Of Lawrence, Indiana.*

President stated this proposal remains tabled by the council. No questions or comments were raised.

- **Proposal No. 6, 2025**

An ordinance amending Title 3, Article 3, Chapter 13 of the Code of Ordinances regarding graffiti elimination.

President Robinson stated this proposal remains tabled by the council. No questions or comments were raised.

- **Proposal No. 7, 2025** - *An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Lawrence, Indiana Adopting a Code of Ethics.*

President Robinson stated this proposal is being referred to Code and Rules Committee for consideration for recommendation. No questions comments were raised.

NEW BUSINESS:

Public Hearing on 2026 Budget - (Public Notice Advertised)

The **Council President** opened the public hearing for the **2026 City Budget**.

Public Comments

1. Daniel Rapp, 5718 Wallingwood Drive

- Questioned about the **absence of administration officials** to address the public.
- Requested details on **salary structures** for elected officials and employees.
- Asked about **police and fire department staffing and salaries**, citing past issues with union agreements.
- Expressed concern over the **large increase in general fund revenues** (from \$29 million to \$51 million).

- Alleged a possible **property tax increase** of approximately **\$19 million**.
 - Urged transparency and accountability in the budget process.
2. **Matt Huckleby, 10216 Wellborne Drive**
- Criticized the **lack of transparency** and public involvement in the budget process.
 - Noted that **budget data was released too late** for meaningful review.
 - Expressed concern about **declining city reserves** (from 22% to 13%) and potential risks if revenues fall short.
 - Questioned **cuts to public safety and infrastructure investments**:
 - Fire capital investments down ~90%
 - Police training down ~45%
 - Street department improvements near zero
 - Park capital budget reduced to ~\$12,000
 - Urged the council to take leadership in restoring transparency and financial responsibility.

Public Hearing Closed

Hearing no further comments, the public hearing was formally **closed**.

QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION:

Chief of Staff, Greg Goodnight attended to answer questions.

- **Council President Robinson**: Asked for a list of **stormwater, sidewalk, and road projects** for 2025–2027.
Response: Chief of Staff did not have the list available.
- **Councilor Chavis**: Requested a **redline version** of the salary ordinances comparing 2025 and 2026.
- **Council Vice President Cramer**: Asked for clarification on the **mayor's office budget increase** (~90% over two years).
Response: Chief of Staff clarified that the increase was largely due to the transfer of communications functions into the mayor's office in 2025.
- Council agreed that future **committee and finance meetings** would be scheduled to further review the budget with **administration and the controller present**.

Action Items:

- Clerk to schedule a **Committee of the Whole** and a **Finance Committee** meeting.
- Administration to provide:
 - Redlined salary ordinances (2025 vs. 2026)
 - Breakdown of communications/marketing expenses
 - Attendance of the **Controller (Terry Falker)** at upcoming meetings.

Additional Administrative Comments

Controller Terry Fauller confirmed attendance at prior budget meetings and agreed to attend future committee sessions.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS: Citizens' Comments (*Limited to 3 minutes per speaker*)

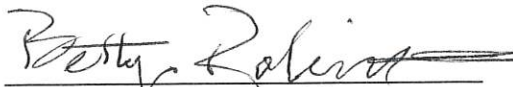
Daniel Rapp (5718 Wallingwood Drive)

- Questioned whether the **public notice** for the budget hearing was properly published in the **Indianapolis Star** as required (10-day notice).
- Asserted that lack of notice reduced public participation.
- Criticized the administration's **absence** and lack of responsiveness to taxpayer concerns.

Council Response:






Council President clarified that the council does not respond to questions during public comment but may address them afterward if possible.

ADJOURNMENT: Councilor Robinson called for adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m., by President Robinson.


Betty Robinson, President


Leatrice Adkisson, Clerk

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

Item	Action	Status
Approval of October 6, 2025 minutes	Motion passed 7-0	
Proposal 3, 2025	Tabled	
Proposal 6, 2025	Tabled	
Proposal 7, 2025 (Code of Ethics)	Sent to Code Committee	
2026 Budget Hearing	Conducted; comments received	
Committee of the Whole & Finance Meetings	To be scheduled	