STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

FULL COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Full Commission Special Meeting, Monday, August 28, 2023, with ten members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO, presiding. Stites, Commissioner Seventh District, was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; Wendy Green, Assistant Counsel; Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk; Jeff Conway, Assistant Counsel; Monica Sparks, Deputy Unified Government Clerk; Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer; and Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director.

Mayor Garner said before I call the meeting to order I want to announce that we do have individuals attending remotely as well as on-site. All participants joining by phone, should please mute your phones when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, make sure you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak so the public that is participating knows exactly who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is also current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General Office. Also, please be sure to speak loudly and clearly into the microphone to ensure that your comments are being captured by the Clerk for an accurate record of the meeting.

Mayor Garner called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Markley, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Garner.

NOTICE OF FULL COMMISSION MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Monday, August 28, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Municipal Office Building.

Mayor Garner said this is a public hearing. The governing body is basically conducting two hearings. Tonight we'll hear public comments regarding the governing body intent to exceed revenue neutral rate as well as comments regarding the Proposed 2023 Amended Budget and the 2024 Budget. I'll now ask our County Administrator, David Johnston, to lead the meeting.

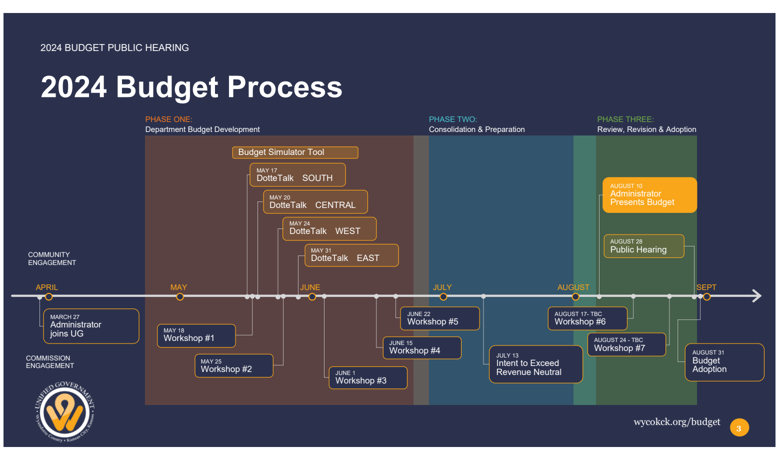
<u>Public Hearing Agenda:</u>

Item No. 1 – 212673…Two Public Hearings: (1) To consider exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate; (2) Public comment on the Proposed 2023 Amended Budget and 2024 Budget.

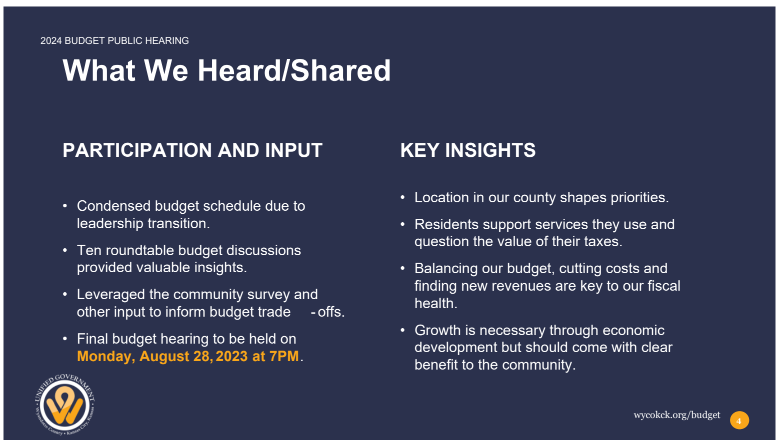
Synopsis: Two public hearings:

- Governing body' intent to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate and consideration of a resolution and ordinance approving the same.
- Regarding the Proposed 2023 Amended Budget and Proposed 2024 Budget

David Johnston, County Administrator, said today we're having a public hearing on a few important items facing our community and to start us off we have both our Interim Finance Director and our Budget Director to lead the process and start the discussion, so I'll turn it over to Debbie and Reggie.

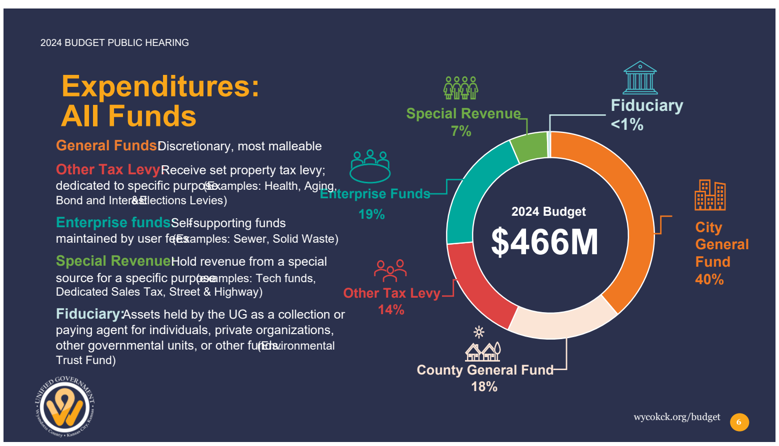


Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director, said about six months ago we started our budget process and since then we have had seven budget workshops and then we've also been out to the community in five different outreach events to get the public's feedback on our budget. During that process we've gone through three different phases. Phase 1 where departments develop their budgets and this is also where we got feedback from the community. Then, we have Phase 2 where we consolidated and prepared information that we got from departments and also from the community and also from the Commission. Then, we had Phase 3 and that is where County Administrator Johnston presented his budget on August 10th and today we are here where we're in our final public hearing and we're looking to have a budget workshop next Thursday, which will be our eighth budget workshop and then looking to vote on our budget on September 14th.



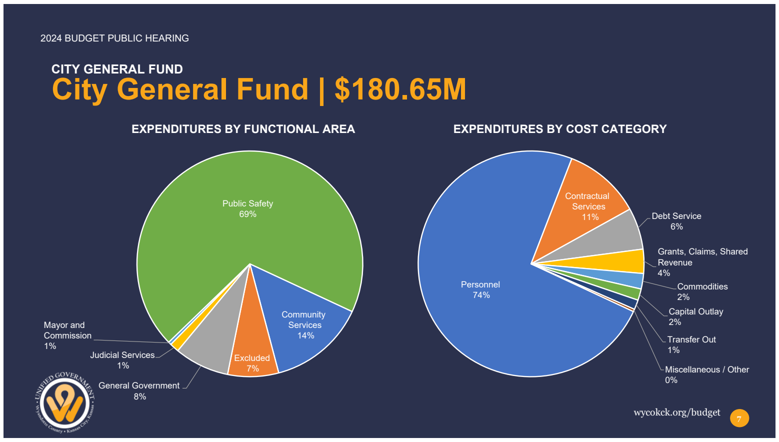
Some of the things that we heard and shared when we were out with the community, it depended on where you were in the community, that shaped your priorities. Some places we heard they wanted more services from the community and then some places we heard they wanted tax relief. We also had residents that were in support of services they use and they also definitely questioned the value of taxes.

Going into this budget process our main thing was to foster physical discipline and responsibility based on feedback that we got from auditors that came in last year and did an audit on the Unified Government, so our main thing was to stabilize our financials and then also prepare for the future today.

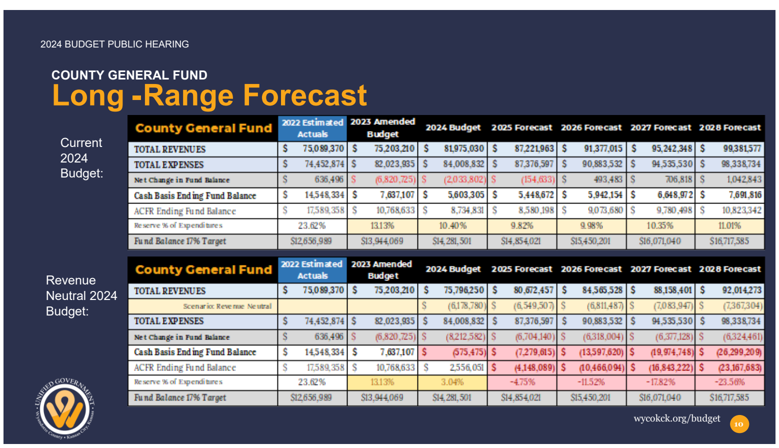


This year's 2024 Budget is a $466M budget. We have 32 different funds here. One of the funds is a new fund where we're providing infrastructure support to Bonner Springs, Edwardsville and Kansas City, Kansas and this fund is called the County Infrastructure on Financing Mechanism Fund and, again, it's a $466M budget for the whole Unified Government. It consists of the City General Fund which is 40% of the $466M and then we have the County General Fund which is 18% of that pie. Then we have our Enterprise Funds which are self-supporting funds maintained by user fees and they're 19%. Then we have our Other Tax Levy Funds which we receive property tax levy and those include Health Department, Aging, and also Election levies. We also have our

Special Revenue Funds at 7%. Special Revenue Funds hold revenue from special sources for specific purpose.



The City General Fund is the largest of all those funds at $180M. We can see Public Safety is 69% of the funding from the City General Fund and that includes the Police and Fire Departments. Then also the expenditure cost by category, the largest category there is Personnel at 74% and then Contractual Services at 11% and that includes things like software contracts, also our transit contract and also legal contracts that we have.



County General Fund	2022 Estimated Actuals	2023 Amended Budget	2024 Budget	2025 Forecast	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	$ 75,089,370	$ 75,203,210	$ 81,975,030	$ 87,221,963	$ 91,377,015	$ 95,242,348	$ 99,381,577
TOTAL EXPENSES	$ 74,452,874	$ 82,023,935	$ 84,008,832	$ 87,376,597	$ 90,883,532	$ 94,535,530	$ 98,338,734
Net Change in Fund Balance	$ 636,496	$ (6,820,725)	$ (2,033,802)	$ (154,633)	$ 493,483	$ 706,818	$ 1,042,843
Cash Basis Ending Fund Balance	$ 14,548,334	$ 7,637,107	$ 5,603,305	$ 5,448,672	$ 5,942,154	$ 6,648,972	$ 7,691,816
ACFR Ending Fund Balance	$ 17,589,358	$ 10,768,633	$ 8,734,831	$ 8,580,198	$ 9,073,680	$ 9,780,498	$ 10,823,342
Reserve % of Expenditures	23.62%	13.13%	10.40%	9.82%	9.98%	10.35%	11.01%
Fund Balance 17% Target	$12,656,989	$13,944,069	$14,281,501	$14,854,021	$15,450,201	$16,071,040	$16,717,585

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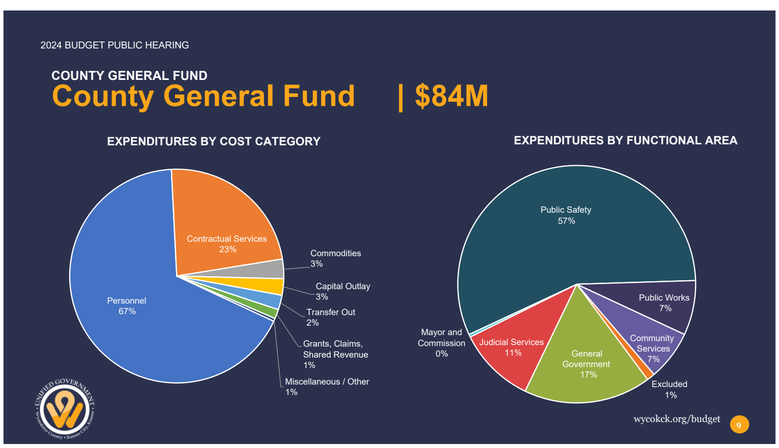
TOTAL REVENUES	$ 75,089,370	$ 75,203,210	$ 75,796,250	$ 80,672,457	$ 84,565,528	$ 88,158,401	$ 92,014,273
Scenario: Revenue Neutral			$ (6,178,780)	$ (6,549,507)	$ (6,811,487)	$ (7,083,947)	$ (7,367,304)
TOTAL EXPENSES	$ 74,452,874	$ 82,023,935	$ 84,008,832	$ 87,376,597	$ 90,883,532	$ 94,535,530	$ 98,338,734
Net Change in Fund Balance	$ 636,496	$ (6,820,725)	$ (8,212,582)	$ (6,704,140)	$ (6,318,004)	$ (6,377,128)	$ (6,324,461)
Cash Basis Ending Fund Balance	$ 14,548,334	$ 7,637,107	$ (575,475)	$ (7,279,615)	$ (13,597,620)	$ (19,974,748)	$ (26,299,209)
ACFR Ending Fund Balance	$ 17,589,358	$ 10,768,633	$ 2,556,051	$ (4,148,089)	$ (10,466,094)	$ (16,843,222)	$ (23,167,683)
Reserve % of Expenditures	23.62%	13.13%	3.04%	-4.75%	-11.52%	-17.82%	-23.56%
Fund Balance 17% Target	$12,656,989	$13,944,069	$14,281,501	$14,854,021	$15,450,201	$16,071,040	$16,717,585

Here we have a view of our long-range forecast for the City General Fund. On the top we have the budget that we proposed with modification that we got direction on related to Pilot Relief that's included there. At the bottom we have what revenue neutral looks like related to the 2024 Budget, so we zone in on the 2024 column in the top financials and we can see that our fund balance is 24%. So, one of the things that we shoot for at the Unified Government, we have a policy where we want to be at 25% fund balance, but the base, if we can't get to that 25%, is 17%, so we can see in 2024 we do have the 24% which is a little bit below the 25% and these numbers do include targeted Pilot Relief for certain members of the community.

As we get out to 2025, we can see we still have a 22% fund balance which is a little bit below the 25% that we shoot for. As we get out to 2026, we do drop to 19% fund balance and then out in 2027 we do drop below the 17% base that we want for our fund balance, the absolute floor, which was in our policy. In 2028, we drop to 13.5% fund balance which is definitely below our 17% floor.

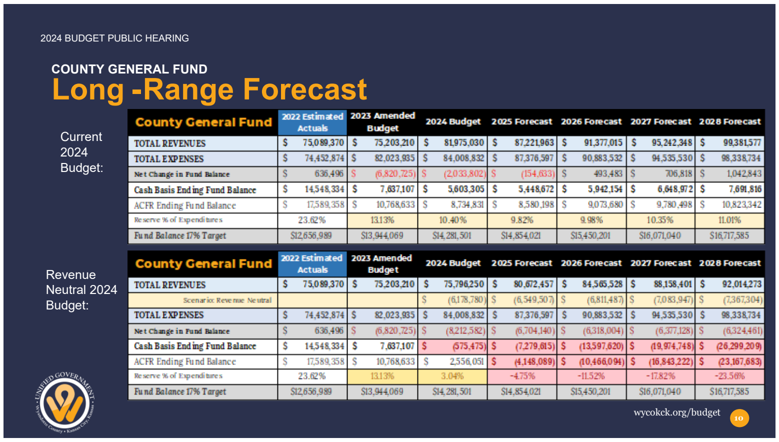
Within the City General Fund, if we look at if we were to go revenue neutral, we would be okay in 2024. We would have the 21% fund balance. It's not at our floor of 17%. It is higher than that, but it's below our targeted policy which is 25%, but as we get out to 2025 we can see that our fund balance does severely drop to around 16%. Then, out in 2026 we dropped to 10% for our fund balance and then in 2027 we actually dropped to a negative cash fund balance of $6.8M and then that next year, in 2028, we almost dropped to a negative fund balance of $19M.

So, starting in 2027, going revenue neutral we wouldn't be able to approve a budget without taking some measures to cut expenditures.



Our next largest fund is our County General Fund at $84M. The largest expenditure category there is Personnel at 67%. The next one is Contractual Services at 23% and then Expenditures by functional area. The largest expense category there is Public Safety which includes the Sheriff and Emergency Management. Then we have General Government which is 17% and that includes departments such as Finance, Legal, County Administrator's Office, and HR. Then we have

Judicial Services which is 11% and that includes departments such as the District Attorney and District Courts.



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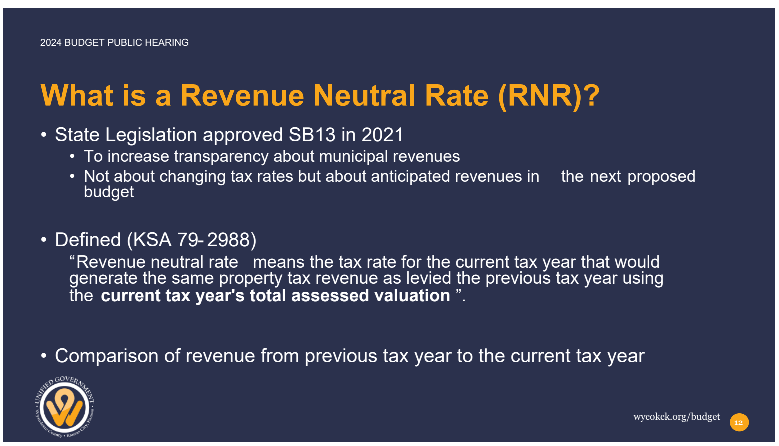
The financials here we have a setup where we see the long-range forecast and the top is our current 2024 Budget, the bottom is our Revenue Neutral 2024 Budget. If we zone in on the 2024 Budget in our current—what we propose we can see we do have a 10% fund balance and one of the things here is, again, we do have where our financial reserve policy is. We want to have a 25% fund balance and absolutely the floor would be like 17%, so we are below even the floor of 17% for the fund balance there.

As we get out into 2026, we can see that the net change in fund balance does turn positive. In 2024 the net change in fund balance is a negative $2M, but as we get out to 2026 we're about a half million dollars positive almost and it does start to go up each year, but we still are not meeting our fund balance targets out to 2026, 2027 and 2028 even though we do have a structurally balanced budget.

As we look at the Revenue Neutral 2024 Budget estimates we can see that our fund balance is like a 3% fund balance and so what happens is $6.1M is taken from the revenues and we end up having a structurally imbalanced budget, about $8.2M, and it doesn't allow us to even approve a budget this year without some additional cuts if we were to go revenue neutral.

As we get out to 2025, the deficits just start to keep growing and there's not a year going from 2025 to 2028 where we could approve a budget without taking some drastic expenditure cuts and our actual fund balance ends up being—like percentage ends up being like negative going out to 2025 to 2028, but finally in 2028 we have a negative fund balance of 23%.

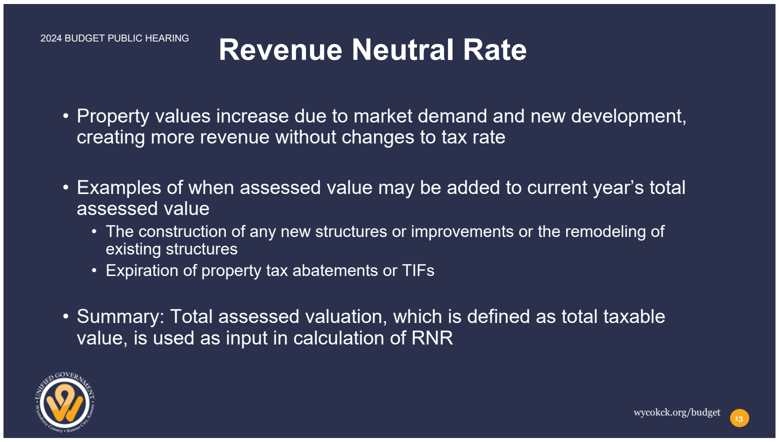
Some of the things that we were able to do in this proposed budget, we were able to reduce debt issuance by $3M in 2024 for about 16% and we were able to add Capital Projects within Parks, Facilities, Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Technology.



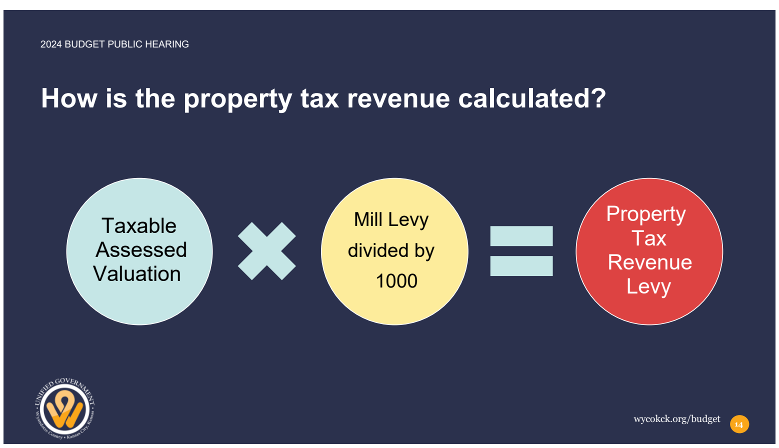
I'm going to turn it over to Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer.

Debbie Jonscher, Interim Chief Financial Officer, said I'm going to spend the next part of the presentation talking revenue neutral rate and how we calculate the tax revenue information. Just some background on revenue neutral. State Legislation approved Senate Bill 13 in 2021 and it was to increase transparency among municipal revenues, so it was talking about anticipated revenues in the next proposed budget.

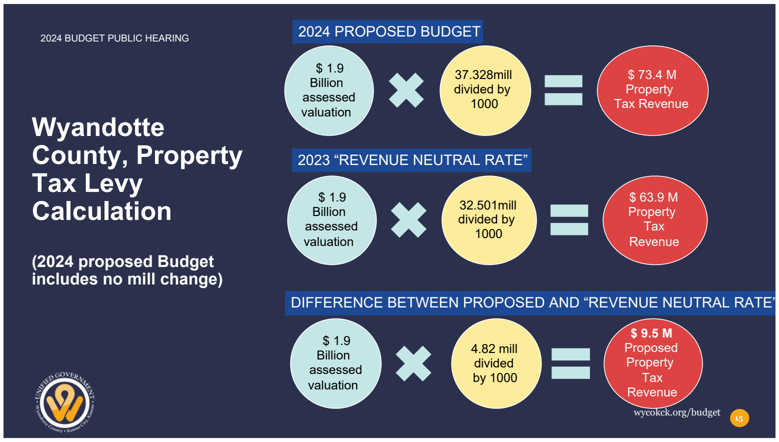
Defined revenue neutral rate means the tax rate for the current tax year that it would generate the same property tax revenue as levied the previous year using the current year's total assessed valuation. So, it's a comparison of revenue from the previous year to the current tax year.



Property values increase due to market demand and new development that creates additional revenue without any change to the tax rate. Examples of when the assessed value might be increased to the current year could be construction of any new structures or improvements or even remodeling to existing structures or the expiration of property tax abatements or TIFs. So, in summary, the total assessed valuation, which is defined as total taxable value, is used as an input in the calculation of revenue neutral.

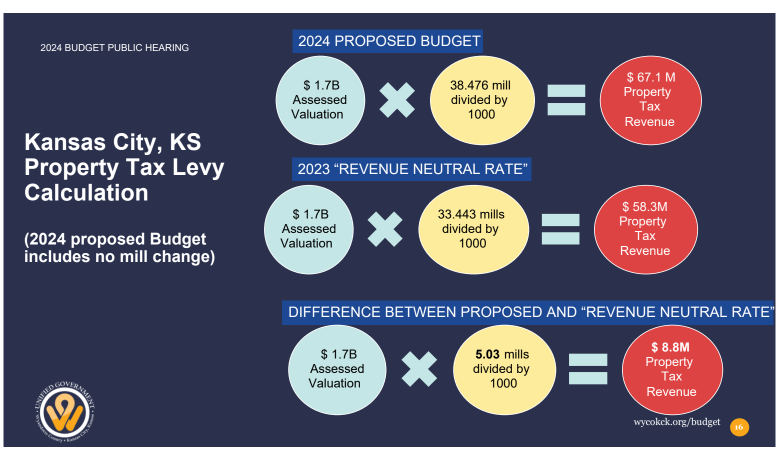


This next slide just shows the formula for how property tax revenue is calculated. You take the total assessed valuation, times it by the current mill levy, and then you divide by a 1,000 and the reason you do that is because one mill is worth a 1,000 and that gives you the property tax revenue.



On the next couple of slides we're going to actually talk about—we're going to show how this is calculated for the County and the City. This one is the calculation for Wyandotte County. The top row is the 2024 Proposed Budget. We're taking the $1.9B of assessed value that was certified by the County Clerk, we're going to times that by the current mill rate proposed in the budget, which is the current mill rate that was certified, 37.328 mills divided by 1,000 gives you a total of $73.4M in property tax revenue. I just wanted to note that that's total property tax revenue for the County levy which includes all eight tax levy funds, the largest one being the County General Fund, but that includes all of the revenue that is split over all of the County funds.

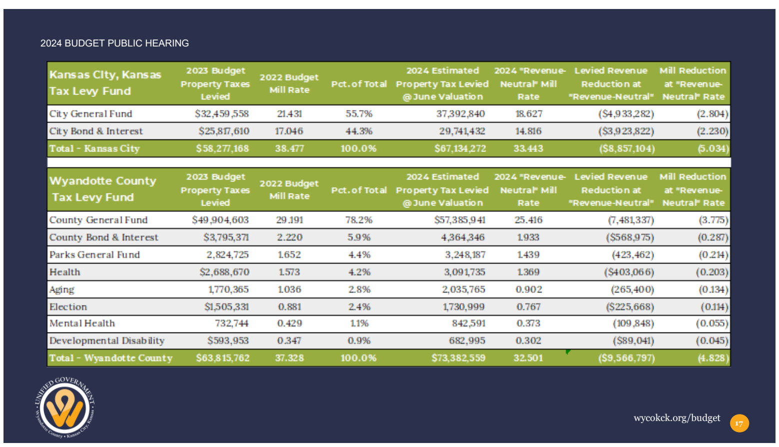
The middle section shows the calculation based on revenue neutral rates, so it would be the same $1.9B. Now the revenue neutral rate is 32.501 mills generating a property tax revenue of $63.9M, so the difference is 4.2 mills and $9.8M in property tax revenue is the difference between the proposed rate at the current mill levy tax rate versus the revenue neutral rate.



The next slide we go to Kansas City, Kansas. For this one the assessed value is $1.7B, again, certified by the County Clerk. The current mill rate is 38.476 mills divided by 1,000 and brings $67.1M in property tax revenue. On the City side there are only two property tax funds, the General Fund and the Debt Service Fund, so that's the combination of those two funds, the tax revenue that's collected.

For the Revenue Neutral rate calculation, it's the same $1.7B. The revenue neutral rate for the city is 33.443 mills bringing in a total of $58.3M in property tax revenue, so the difference on the City side is 5.03 mills for a total of $8.8M in property tax revenue.

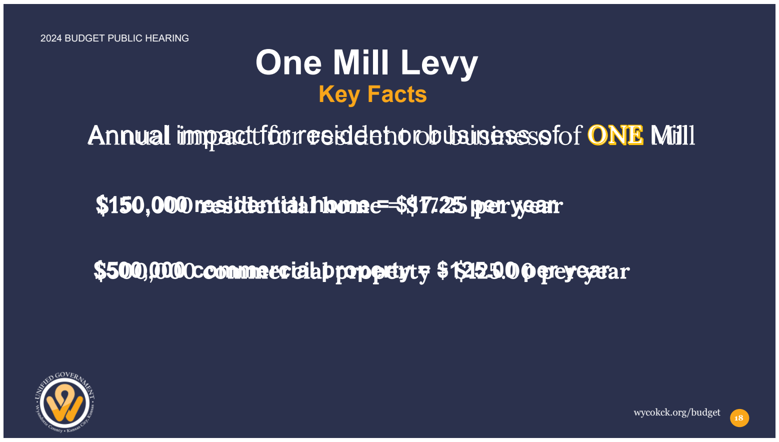
I did just want to note, as I said, there's only two funds that get the property tax revenue. One of them is the Debt Service Fund which accounts for 44% of that mill levy, so if you're talking about reducing mills on the City side, it would come from the City General Fund, the other 56% due to the fact that's what's in the City Debt Service Fund covers current outstanding debt that has already been issued on City debt.



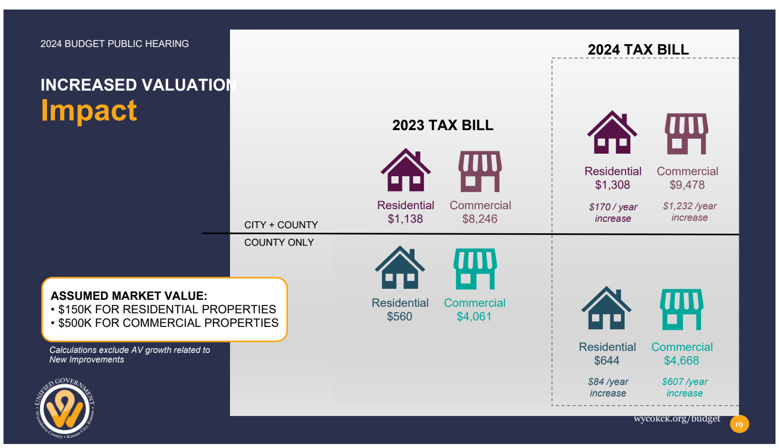
Kansas City, Kansas Tax Levy Fund	2023 Budget Property Taxes Levied	2022 Budget Mill Rate	Pct. of Total	2024 Estimated Property Tax Levied @ June Valuation	2024 "Revenue-Neutral" Mill Rate	Levied Revenue Reduction at "Revenue-Neutral"	Mill Reduction at "Revenue-Neutral" Rate
City General Fund	$32,459,558	21.431	55.7%	37,392,840	18.627	($4,933,282)	(2.804)
City Bond & Interest	$25,817,610	17.046	44.3%	29,741,432	14.816	($3,923,822)	(2.230)
Total - Kansas City	$58,277,168	38.477	100.0%	$67,134,272	33.443	($8,857,104)	(5.034)

Wyandotte County Tax Levy Fund	2023 Budget Property Taxes Levied	2022 Budget Mill Rate	Pct. of Total	2024 Estimated Property Tax Levied @ June Valuation	2024 "Revenue-Neutral" Mill Rate	Levied Revenue Reduction at "Revenue-Neutral"	Mill Reduction at "Revenue-Neutral" Rate
County General Fund	$49,904,603	29.191	78.2%	$57,385,941	25.416	(7,481,337)	(3.775)
County Bond & Interest	$3,795,371	2.220	5.9%	4,364,346	1.933	($568,975)	(0.287)
Parks General Fund	2,824,725	1.652	4.4%	3,248,187	1.439	(423,462)	(0.214)
Health	$2,688,670	1.573	4.2%	3,091,735	1.369	($403,066)	(0.203)
Aging	1,770,365	1.036	2.8%	2,035,765	0.902	(265,400)	(0.134)
Election	$1,505,331	0.881	2.4%	1,730,999	0.767	($225,668)	(0.114)
Mental Health	732,744	0.429	1.1%	842,591	0.373	(109,848)	(0.055)
Developmental Disability	$593,953	0.347	0.9%	682,995	0.302	($89,041)	(0.045)
Total - Wyandotte County	$63,815,762	37.328	100.0%	$73,382,559	32.501	($9,566,797)	(4.828)

This slide is just a summary of everything I just talked about all in one table. On the top you'll see the Tax Levy Funds for the city of Kansas City, Kansas. With the same information it shows what was levied in the 2023 Budget. In the middle we have the 2024 estimated property tax levy that was certified with the June valuations and then the levied revenue reduction would be if we were to go revenue neutral. We have that information for both the city and the county. You can see the City is at—the revenue reduction would be $8.8M and the County would be $9.5M, close to $9.6M.

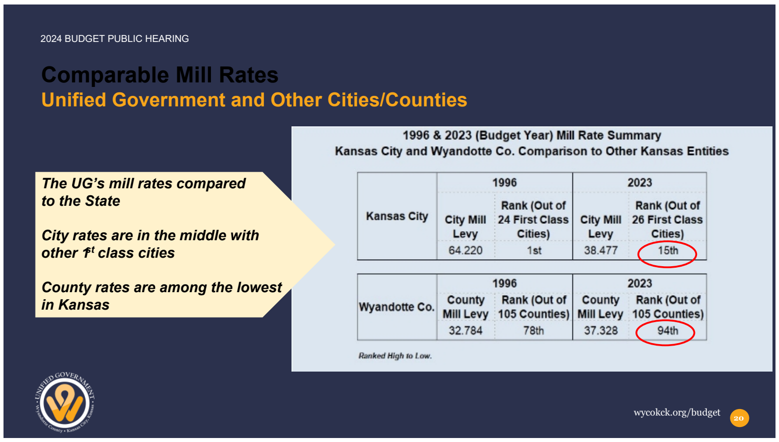


This just shows the annual impact for a resident or business of one mill. We're using $150K for a residential home and $500K for a commercial property. I'll just note that, as I said, for the city and the county the one mill is worth on the City side 1.7M and on the County it's worth 1.9M and so the change in a mill, the annual impact for a residential home at $150K is $17.25. A commercial property valued at $500K that one mill—any change in the mill by one would be $125 per year.



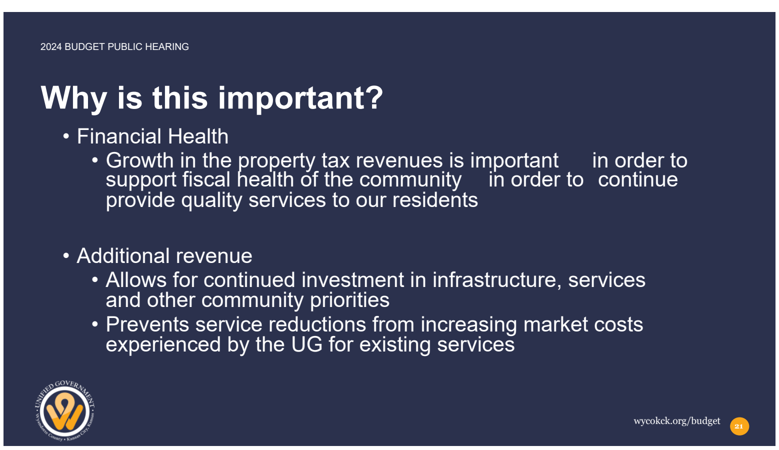
This next one is just showing the impact on the 2023 tax bill and what the 2024 tax bill would be and this assumes no change in the mill rate. This is just adjusted for the assessed valuation growth. You can see the top half is for a Kansas City, Kansas resident, so you're seeing both the city and the county. For the 2023 tax bill a residential homeowner would pay $1,138 and a commercial property would pay $8,246. With the '24—or the new assessed value that residential customer would now pay $1,308, so that's an increase of about $170 per year and on the commercial side it would be an increase of $1,232.

The bottom half shows just the County, so this would apply to residents in Bonner Springs and Edwardsville. Currently the residential tax bill would be $560 and commercial $4,061. With the new assessed value for 2024 a residential would be $644 for about an $84 increase and for commercial it amounts to a $607 increase for the entire year.



This is just some information we've provided in the past showing where the city and county rank in comparison to other Kansas entities. This is just to see where we were prior to consolidation. In 1996 Kansas City's mill levy was 64.220 and we were ranked first out of 24 first class cities. In 2023 our mill levy is 38.477 and out of 26 first class cities we are now ranked 15th.

On the County side, in 1996 the mill levy was 32.784 and they were ranked 78th out of 105 counties. In 2023 the County mill levy is 37.328 mills and we are ranked 94th out of 105 counties.



Just kind of recapping why this is important. Growth in the property tax revenue is important in order to support fiscal health of the community and to be able to provide quality services to all our residents. The additional revenue does allow for continued investment in infrastructure services and other priorities and also prevents service reductions from increasing market costs.

This last slide is just noting some key budget dates. Reggie mentioned some of these. Tonight we're at the public hearing for the revenue neutral rate and the budget. For the revenue neutral rate, you will be asked to approve a resolution. I did just want to note that you received a corrected copy this evening. The one that was put into the packet we discovered had an error in one of the numbers so we did distribute a new copy for that resolution that there will be action on later. We have an additional budget workshop on Thursday, September 7th at 5:00 p.m. On September 14th we have the budget adoption and we've listed out all the actions that will we be required—that we will take action on that night. There's several ordinances. One for the Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District, Sanitary Sewer Rate, and the Solid Waste Fee. There'll be a resolution for the BPU PILOT, and an ordinance for the Storm and Water Utility Fee. Then there will be an ordinance/resolution adopting the Unified Government Budget and Capital Improvement Plan.

I did also want to note we have the resolution for the Wyandotte County Library scheduled for Thursday, September 28th due to the fact that they are holding their revenue neutral rate public hearing on September 19th so we will bring back their resolution to the meeting on September 28th for approval and that still meets the timeline to be able to get that information to the County Clerk by October 1st.

This is the end of our presentation.

Mayor Garner said thank you for that presentation. I will now open the public hearing and ask the Clerk if any notifications were received from the public who wish to express their comments regarding this item.

Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk, said we do have one request that I will read here momentarily followed by approximately 15 others that are sitting here in the audience tonight that want to move forward here. So, the first one is by Susan Stevens. She states, I and many of my neighbors have had no income increase in a long time. We need relief from all these rising costs in food, energy and housing. Commissioners are accountable for the proper use of the COVID relief funds and by voting no on increasing our tax burden, you are voting yes to allowing your community to heal and thrive. Please vote yes for the people and also resolve to apply those federal funds where they are most needed. Thank you.

Now we will—just as a note to the audience here, it's part of this conversation. When we call your name, please come forward and state your name and address for the record. You will have three minutes to speak. I will let you know when you have one minute remaining. We will also call who's on deck following, so be prepared once we mention your name to come forth after the current speaker.

Mayor Garner said why don't we start online first. **Mr. Deichler** said we have no one online. I should have mentioned that. Wait, we do have one hand now.

Louise Lynch said first of all I want to say that we are back at this rat race talking about the revenue neutral as we did last year and the year before and it seems to fall on deaf ears when it comes to commissioners, all except Commissioner Tom Burroughs, who votes for the people to give us some relief. We talk about all these numbers and all what it can do, but I want you to look at the reality of the situation. You had over 40 people in the tax sale that had to be pulled out of the tax sale because they were struggling, for whichever reason it was, they were struggling. To not put it in revenue neutral, to put them further back for the following year, is ridiculous. If you want to save money, get rid of some of the staff whose positions are not filled or who are working and don't even live in Wyandotte County.

I understand that the Administrator sent out a note to the commissioners that he hasn't been there long enough to take the deep dive into the budget and revenue neutral to see which way it goes. He was not willing right now to push some of that forward. I hope to God that's not true because you are no longer new Mr. Administrator.

There are many housing issues we have talked about that is not affordable and not once have you asked for any of that information so that you can move forward on it and it's been months. I've been waiting for your call. You have not called back. My commissioner, Commissioner Ramirez, has done nothing to reach out to the people. He is very seldom around when you need his input or be able to talk to him as we saw earlier in the month when we had open mic and he was nowhere around to listen to his constituents, but I do remember during the recycle fire he was looking for a hose in a fireman's outfit because he was not a fireman. I hope he found one.

Last year during the middle of the night the budget hearing—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining—**Ms. Lynch** said Commissioner Davis put in a slush fund. I want to know and I asked last week, where has all that money gone, what has it been used for if not for the people. Do you know you have senior citizens who cannot get transportation to doctors, not even once a month, because not enough money is put in there, but we're talking about parks, we're talking about aquatic centers and basic living needs are not being met. People need food, people need medicine, seniors need transportation. I recently lost 90% of my vision and I don't have access to services because there is no money to be found. What are people supposed to do.

What you put on this tax revenue, those costs that go the landlords go to the residents. I want to tell all of the residents if they do not approve revenue neutral, we do not reelect them and we start the recall. **Mr. Deichler** said your time has expired. **Ms. Lynch** said we can no longer play around with this. Enough is enough.

Mr. Deichler said there is no one else online. I'll start to call the attendees here.

Sam Coulson, 1895 So. 7th St., said there's an expression that all models are wrong, some models are useful. The further into the future you forecast, obviously, the further the forecast is going to be incorrect, but I can tell you with a little bit of certainty that already the talk of exceeding revenue neutral has already started to cost the counties money. Normally I have interest in the tax sales, the tax auctions. If the UG is going to raise taxes, and I'm under no illusions, but if you vote to give yourself permission to eat a second hamburger, you're going to eat a second hamburger, so I'm aware of what's going to happen tonight. I have lost interest in pursuing the tax auctions so there's already some lost revenue for the county.

I do not think you're going to bring in as much money by exceeding revenue neutral as you hope because I for one—if you do, I have options. I can afford for two years to not pay my property taxes. I can afford to be delinquent and pay the penalty and fines and the interest for the sake of just trying to get my message across. I think I can read the link longer than the UG can remain solvent and I have options, so I say this out of someone who has options. The people who do not have options and they are forced to choose between eating or paying taxes, I have a feeling they're also going to go delinquent and I don't think we're serving their interests either. **Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Mr. Coulson** said I do not think exceeding revenue neutral will bring in as much—as least long term, as the models anticipate.

Marcia Rupp said I'm here to talk about the budget and I'm here to talk about Parallel Parkway, which years before COVID, I would come here and talk about Parallel Parkway and we did a pretty good job of mending Parallel Parkway and making it go, for what, two years or three years, but it's at the point now if you're coming off 635, right there, I believe that's 45th or 44th where the lights are at, where you go down to 47th on Parallel, that whole lane is torn up. The whole top of the overlay is gone and so from that point to 63rd, it is just beyond—I mean it's just been repaired so much that it's getting bad, so it's time to grind and overlay that and when you get to 63rd, it starts smoothing out. So, just stop there and if you want to continue on the next year with the rest of it, we'll see what it's like.

Also, remember all the departments are important, but our emergency units are most important and we need proactive policing and the only way you can do that is to bring in more police officers. So, our new Administrator, keep bringing them in.

Sharon Gaither, **2000 So. 10th Terr.,** said I'm hoping the commissioners will listen to the people of Wyandotte County and vote yes for revenue neutral. Commissioners, you represent the Unified Government of Wyandotte County. Unified has many meanings, consolidated, cooperative, undivided, together, one harmony, to be in agreement. Commissioners, you seem all to be content to bring strife to our community and cause hardships for many of the people who voted you into office. I say to the people of Wyandotte County, if the commissioners will not listen to the people and to do the right thing and vote yes for revenue neutral, then on the first Tuesday in November, people go to the polls and let your vote be louder than your voice.

Sandra McGill said I'm in District 1. I just simply have one thing I'd like to say. Stay revenue neutral. Taxes are so high. Not only do we have to pay property taxes to live here, but we also have to pay automobile vehicle taxes. I don't know if Wyandotte County just wants us to drive around in older cars, but there's no way to afford newer cars because of the taxes here are just ridiculous along with the homes. There are many of us who are going to lose our homes or get behind in taxes. Trying to get help is hard, but stand behind taxes for something we have already paid for or not being able to pay the taxes simply because we need to increase it—I understand there are budgets out there, but I do see a lot of loss of monies in the schools, mainly in the college and the K-12.

I've worked in the schools all my life. I was born and raised here, been attached to K-12 and the Community College and I do see a lot of loss and I know there's also a lot of extra high salaries that can be either stayed and not increased that would help also with the budget. I really think the budget needs to be heavily looked at and think about your community and think about how we'll be if you can at least stay neutral. They're already too high as it is, so stay revenue neutral and take care of your community.

David Beauchamp, 11827 Marxen Road, said I was a math major in college. Numbers don't scare me. Even though I've heard a lot of talk about revenue neutral, I realize it's not sustainable.

We can’t do that. Having been a military officer, I now am a retired guy and I live by knowing that my personal budget will increase by a COLA, cost-of-living adjustment. I don’t know exactly what the increase in inflation is here in Wyandotte County. I don’t believe that our budget should increase by more or even less than what the inflation rate is. The appraised values here in Wyandotte County, I can only speak from my own personal experience, has gone up very much and so my taxes have automatically gone up by that. Based upon the proposed budget, even on top of my appraised increase, it’s another 10% above that raise of what the proposed budget is.

Ladies and gentlemen, I’m not suggesting that we try to do neutral, but I am suggesting that we need to take responsibility to be fair and only increase the—don’t increase the mill. We’ve already got the increase from the appraised values. We don’t need to increase the mill, that’s giving a double dip, so don’t do that.

The other thing is, only increase the county budget, the library budget, the city budget only by whatever the inflation rate is, period. Don’t exceed it, live within our means and that means that we need to control expenses to meet our budget. **Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Mr. Beauchamp** said that’s my input from a resident up on the north of the Legends.

Fannie Hill, 4310 Parallel, said thank you Reggie. I appreciate you for letting us see where we was because our thing is we realize that we need money, but there’s so many cuts that can be made. I want to thank Commissioner Bynum. She was the only one that showed up at the meeting that we wanted to meet with and there was so many cuts and we shared them with her with the hope that she would share them with you all and you all would understand that there’s other ways to get money besides off the back of the taxpayers who’s saying we don’t have any more money. You know, Ms. Townsend, with you being my commissioner and the things that happen with the appraisals in our area and being an attorney, that you would let them walk on your community like that without speaking out against it because I have the percentage rate.

In the Strawberry Hill area the percentage of the appraisals only went up 19% and in the Westheight area, it went up 19%. That was the top rate and in the northeast area, ours went up 34% and in the Riverview area, theirs were 32%. There’s no fairness and no justice in that. Strawberry Hill gets to pay that—I mean I thought how can this be happening and with my commissioner being an attorney and with all the commissioners nobody saying anything about it. Like Mr. Davis said, our appraisals were affected by redlining. At the meeting he mentioned that.

The appraiser told me when I went to him to find out why is my appraisal so high he said redline affected. We're law abiding citizens, abide by the law and the rules and nobody said a word about it and it's public knowledge. I forwarded mine to the attorney. **Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Hill** said this is not right, so we're asking you all to stay revenue neutral. We can't afford it and the appraisals that they did, if they go up that high on the appraisal and revenue neutral, we'll all be under the bridge in this area.

Mary Martin, 804 So. 89th St., said I'm here to say that I'm definitely revenue neutral. I just looked at the organizational chart of Wyandotte County. I don't know if everybody's seen it, but for me there's plenty of cuts that can be made instead of trying to balance the budget off the back of the citizens of Wyandotte. I think we've been taxed enough, we're overburdened in our taxes. I'm just going to quickly give you a few suggestions on how you can cut the budget, cut some of the fat, make it a little bit more just for the people. On this glorious day of the March on Washington, by way of Martin Luther King, I think that we're asking for some justice here tonight. So, on that behalf, I would like to see within the Finance Department, you take that delinquent tax that we're paying that department and move it to Finance. I think that would save hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I think we should look at that Economic Development Department and put the Community Development within that as well as the Development and Coordination and Customer Service. I don't even know what that is, but because it's on your organizational chart I believe you, but I want it added to the Economic Development, it makes more sense to me. It's a little top heavy for me. The Appraisal I would like to see—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Martin** said Mapping added to the Appraisal—to separate those two and to have two separate departments is crazy to me. It doesn't make sense, it's a burden. When we're talking about Mapping, the appraisal. Within your Accounting, I think the budget needs to be put into Accounting. They're the same. They shouldn't be separated. Too top heavy for me.

Just quickly, the Police Department and Sheriff Department, I've always had a problem since I moved here coming from another state that sometimes the Sheriff Department appears, sometimes the Police Department appears on the same kind of call, the same kind of service. I'd stop that. In most states those duties are separated. **Mr. Deichler** said your time has expired. **Ms. Martin** said I think it should be clear. Can we ask for more time or is this a locked in game tonight.

Commissioner Bynum made a motion to approve another two minutes. **Ms. Martin** said thank you, Commissioner, I appreciate that. **Mayor Garner** said hold on, second to that. I'll second it, go ahead.

Ms. Martin said basically I'm just saying that the Police and the Sheriff Departments should have defined duties, separate duties and I would really like to see the Sheriff Department take over that police—or Parking Control. There's not a whole lot of parking to me where you have meters here in Wyandotte and Parking Control is minimal, so I think the Sheriff's Department should do that as well as evictions which most cities do with the Sheriff Department. I'm just giving you a little avenue to think about, reducing some of our employee debt because when I looked at the budget you told me we had 67% money going to Personnel. That would be a big problem when you have that much.

Okay, I've got a couple more. Your Legal Department, you have too many attorney's here trying to take care of your business. If you take care of your business on the front end, you don't have to worry about the Legal lawsuits that you might have to be facing. **Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Martin** said too many attorney's, let's cut them back. Look, I want to expand the Emergency Management because when I look at your flowchart, you're not talking about what happens if a disaster occurs in Wyandotte. What happens if we have some economic environmental situation. You act like everything is going to be okay every day. When we see cities burning, we see cities flooding, so I want to see some emergency disaster, put a little money in that.

Finally, Public Works. Sister girl was right about our streets. She said Parallel, but if you ride around in Wyandotte County, our streets are atrocious. Potholes, we're going off the road to try to get to and from home. I'm saying put some more in the streets. Do some sidewalks.

Mike Kozisek, 9120 Ann Ave., said I looked at my numbers and calculated out what my percentage increase is by each of the different taxing authorities. For County, mine was up 10.41 and for City, it's up 16.69%. That to me is kind of excessive given that at this time a lot of people in Wyandotte County are struggling because inflation has taken away so much of our assets and are making it really hard for us to spend money. Everything costs more. I can see that you need to increase, but I also feel like this is an excessive increase compared to what is going on this year in your community. We need to focus on keeping the health and wellness of our people in this community, but we can't do that by taxing them out of this community.

Joseph Prather was a no show.

Dr. Brenda Andrieu, 2805 No. 67th St., said we all want better services and facilities, but if we can't afford them, we shouldn't buy them. If it is something we must have, we need to cut other programs, facilities, or services so that we can afford it. You must promise not to increase taxes. Kansans from all economical levels are pleading with you to not raise taxes because they are hurting financially. Price increases affect people on fixed incomes more than any others. I wondered why people would oppose the community college building a structure in the downtown area. I found out the Unified Government increased taxes by over 30% for homes in a financially depressed area because a new facility was built nearby. When these people can no longer pay their taxes, they will be evicted and may become part of the homeless population. This seems like a ploy to drive poor people out of their homes and a land grab for the government. If this is not a land grab, you won't raise taxes, you'll find ways to reduce them.

Dan Meara, 8217 Wood Ave., said I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you. I'm in Mr. Kane's district. I have previously served as a county counselor in another county and my experience was that in a regular tax collection program that additional revenues, not expected by your budget, can be realized by tax foreclosure proceedings. I'm wondering what your program is in regard to that number one, and number two is that projected revenue from tax collection included in the projections of the finance (inaudible).

Darnell Busch, 2301 Sherman, said my wife and I are wanting to build (inaudible) land grant. We're wanting to build in our area, but we can't find the infrastructure for the land that we want. The infrastructure is not there. The roads are atrocious. There's been trees and overgrown greenery, so what we want to build we can't and we're prepared to build and it's not, I don't believe, it's our job to tell you guys how to cut and how to do the budget. We've all said that we don't want taxes raised and you guys are supposed to do what we ask you to do, so I personally don't think that there's nobody here that said, hey, we need to raise taxes. I think that the commissioners who we voted to get you guys up here that you need to do what we ask you to do and nobody here said we propose raising taxes. I think that you guys should sit down, and I'm not trying to tell you what to do, I'm just trying to let you know the way I feel and that's we want to build here. We want to spend our money to build a house here, me and my wife, but we don't have the infrastructure and you guys are asking for additional monies to provide what should already be provided.

I'm just not understanding why the money we already—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Mr. Busch** said we already pay in taxes can't be—you guys I would think that you could massage it or do whatever, but I don't want our taxes raised and I don't think there's anybody here that does.

Pamela Penn-Hicks said I appreciate being able to talk to you about our budget. This community is under a tremendous strain. Not only are we talking about the UG budget tonight, but we're also dealing with increased BPU rates, increased PILOT rates, and our tax valuations on our homes. The bloated budget that you all have proposed for 2024 is going to sink people further into debt. Most of us do our best to pay our bills, so we're asking the UG to do the same. What we all try to do is live within our means and pass the revenue neutral budget for 2024 giving us a years grace, ask the UG departments and agencies to find savings within that year and use the next budget period for 2025 to do that deep dive to find a way in which we can meet our obligations in this community without burdening the public, the taxpayers, the homeowners, the people who want to live in Wyandotte County.

We need a government structure, so we're asking you, our commissioners, to stop digging a financial hole that prevents the community's ability to get back on our feet while we deal with inflation and higher cost for everything. The pandemic has hit us all hard. We need a government structure that protects and supports the citizens it represents and governs, not one that undermines our ability to live in Wyandotte County. This government structure is out of balance and we require this Commission to do the work to fix it.

I pray that you are listening and that you will grant the relief we need, that you will examine this not only from a fiscal position, but a moral position as well and deal with the individuals who actually live in this county, want to support this government, and want to be able to continue to live in Wyandotte County as productive citizens. We hope that you are listening and that you will act accordingly.

Tscher "CeCe" Mance said when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked bear through, the people mourn. The definition of a representation is the action of speaking or the action on behalf of someone or the state of being so represented. The legal definition of representation is a statement of fact or in writing made to one party by another party before or at the time of a certain—at the time of some matter or circumstances. The definition of tax is a compulsory contribution to state revenue levied by the government on workers income and business profits or the added cost of some goods and services and transition. The definition of a voter is a person who votes or has the right to vote at an election. The definition of maleficence in office is committed when any public officer or public employee shall, number one, intentionally refuse or fail to perform any duty lawfully required of him or her as such officer or employee took the oath or to intentionally perform any such duty in a unlawful manner.

We vote for you guys to represent us. You don't represent us, but you constantly tax us, which is illegal. Representation with—I mean taxation without representation is illegal in all kinds of ways, but when you knowingly know that you come up here and take these seats knowing that you don't listen to us, you ignore us, you dismiss our cries when we stand up here and say don't raise our utilities, don't raise our taxes. You took a oath to do right by the people and you don't and you knowingly do this because you continue to do it even though we say something, this is maleficence of office. **Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Mance** said if you pass this tax bill and raise our taxes like the utility did, then that is furtherance of the maleficence and I am prepared to go forward from there.

John McAllister, 526 Sandusky, said first I want to say thank you to the Police Department, Sheriff's and all that. They do an outstanding job. Thank you to the Fire Department, they do an outstanding job and thanks to my commissioner. He got our streets and our alleys paved. I greatly appreciate that. Okay, when you say a billion dollars in debt, that blows the common guy away. It blows us away. We pay such high taxes. Where did our money go. I'm asking where did our money go. Don't do the Harvard, Yale college thing and try to hide numbers. We want to know where the money went. We've been paying taxes forever, now it's gone. We want to know where it is. You don't go a billion dollars in the hole or $999M in the hole without something happening. Where did the money go. Where did it get wasted. Now, I propose that perhaps now they're going to raise my taxes, I'm going to have to work some more overtime or not go to restaurants and bars. If I don't go to restaurants and bars, the bars and restaurants go out of business because I'm not there or other folks ain't there.

Maybe perhaps we need to look at the government and do some cuts, maybe combine some commission areas, maybe cut the fat. I know there's fat there. Government always has that fat. Government even at the best is rotten. We know that because we read John Locker Jefferson as boys and girls in school, so I propose please tell us what happened to the money. You weren't in power when whatever happened to it happened, so we won't hold you responsible, but let us know where the money went. If there were some bribes or payoffs or something, we want to know that and also lets cut reasonable stuff and if somebody's getting overpaid, cut their wages and say, hey, look, we're in the financial hard times. That's what you do at a business. **Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Mr. McAllister** said I want to thank you very much for letting me speak, probably the stuff you don't want to hear. I want to say also thanks to all the veterans who work for the government and all the guys that served. But these are the facts, a billion dollars in the hole, no it'd be like to me being a million dollars in the hole at my little residence and my residence is not worth what you guys say it is worth. I want to thank you for your time. That's all I'm going to say and I'll see you guys later.

Mr. Deichler said, Mayor, that represents the sign up list and there's no one online.

Mayor Garner said okay. Is there anyone else that would like to speak. This is your opportunity. If you do, just come forward one at a time. Make sure you state your name and address for the record and speak clearly into the mic.

Carolyn Wyatt, 359 Troup, said we had an audit not too long ago and they said we had 30 something Assistant Chiefs or something like that in the Fire Department and this is a small county. Every time something happens that's not a fire, but the Fire Department and the paramedics go together. Back in the day you just had an ambulance, so there is money there. All you need is an ambulance if there's not a fire. You don't need the Fire Department going, so that's money there.

Also, it's like a school and you have a principal and you have all these different jobs, teachers or whatever, and they're responsible for like doing their job. So, this is the UG and you have a lot of departments, and so it's like going through each department and find out where the waste is, where you don't need the people there, you can move them somewhere else, but there's a lot of waste I'm sure in these departments. I'm not for laying people off, but it's like just go through the departments and find out where the waste is and that's money. Like I say, Fire and Police get half of the budget and we know that, but this is Wyandotte County, it's not that big. You know it's not Kansas City, Missouri, so what I'm saying is there's a lot of waste there I'm sure also.

I'm just saying, you know, you're commissioners and people are having hard times and you probably have some relatives having a hard time too, so basically, you just need to think about the people, what you can do for the people. Like you said, if you go through that audit, you can find the answers, you can find the money because there's a lot of departments spend a lot of money and you have a lot of people in and few people in one department—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Wyatt** said you have a lot of leaders in there, so you need to cut them down too. Just audit these departments and see what's in there and what needs to happen, so it's not that hard.

We have a new County Administrator. I'm sure he's seen the audit and all they do is go through that audit and find out where the money—where the people can be moved or where you're doing double work. Like I said, in the Fire Department, you've got an answer right there. You know the fire and the paramedics going together. You don't need 30 Assistant Fire Chiefs. That's all I want to say.

Carcy Milton, 110th Terr., said I want to talk about the property tax. I did have the opportunity to do the appeal and it was reduced, but if I find out that it's going to be bumping right back up, oh my God, I went through that whole effort of getting my taxes reduced and they agreed, and I did get a good reduction, but if you guys are going to raise it back up again, that was totally a waste of time. I'm not really worried about wages that much because I used to be in the UG myself; however, when I think about in the past when like Cerner, the EPA building, were those people properly taxed. Do they bring any revenue into this county. If you want money, you need to go out and get innovative and bring in more industry and jobs and companies into this area. You got all those warehouses out there. I hope they're paying their fair share also.

You know in the past when I was a UG person, they used to just allow them to come in without paying tax. I think they gave them some type of timeframe where they didn't have to pay anything, but the rumor that I heard is that someone like Cerner, and it could be just a rumor, that they left without paying their fair share. Yeah, we do need money into this county, but go out and go after the people with the money, industry, bring them in here. You're developing and building things out there all the time, so let them come up off some money. They got more money than anybody.

Now, I wasn't going to bring this up because it was just an idea I had, but when I heard the Northeast Junior area was increased 33% and there was a big discrepancy between different districts or areas, I was wondering, it's just a thought and it may not even be viable, are you able to look at the average median income of a particular area and base—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining—**Ms. Milton** said base tax liabilities off of that. If you've got a low income area, if you're going to come up with a percent, oh, you're going to pay 5%, for example, for taxes based off what people can afford to pay. I don't know what kind of citizens we're trying to grow here, but when people are in a retirement state, like I am now on that fixed income, it seems like you're trying to eliminate those and bring in the working class. That was one of the things I wanted to talk about. Let me see what else I got on this thing here. Well, I think that covered it.

Brian Heinen, 4367 Troup Ave., said I might be fine with the property tax increase if it was based in reality. At the time we bought our house it had been sitting empty for two years in a neighborhood where every other house was abandoned, foreclosed or condemned. We paid $35K for it at the time and the time since we moved in, we've made necessary repairs like replacing the roof and cosmetic updates. We were finally able to remodel our dilapidated bathroom and kitchen. Flippers have come into the area and fixed up other houses, but our street has remained much the same, well, improved now that the known drug house across the street has finally been evacuated, but the property is still a mess. That our house is valued at $160K is laughable. It just shows me how out of touch this Council is with reality, with the reality of people who live here.

Andrea Duzak said this is my 17 year old son Devin. We reside in a generational house meaning my father bought that house when I was in my mother's stomach. My father unfortunately passed away in 2015, tragically. I bought the house out of probate and, of course, I had to have an appraisal. My appraisal person sat on our Board of Tax Appeals across the board. I went in there, hey, this is what the value is. He valued my house at $25K. Today, 2023, you guys have our home, and we have half a bath less than everyone in my neighborhood, at $176K plus. I would like to know which one of you want to take on my budget. I'm disabled. I earn $914 a month. My BPU, yeah, I had to call them and get an extension today because they want to make me due on the 28th, my BPU for last month was $309.37 for the two of us. We turn off every light, we don't leave anything on, we don't have extra anything. I don't even have air conditioning, so these 118 degree days me and my son were sweating it out to all the (inaudible) up in here. Okay, $914 a month. I rounded it down, $300 last month for BPU, that leaves me $614 for the month. Well, commonly, we're behind on BPU. Why, because we also had to pay the taxes before we lost our house. So, there's my juggle, do I pay the BPU or get our home condemned for not having utilities or give my son, hey, let's go live on the street again because that's where we were. This boy has done 14 miles on his feet at six years old and not complained because we didn't have it, but we had to get things taken care of for my household to go around. I have a very resilient son. I'm very proud of him and it's just him and I. That's it. There's no more family for us, it's just him. He's the end of my generations.

My family's been in this city since 1912—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Duzak** said here's the thing, BPU $300. You guys want to now raise us up on our taxes. We don't even know for sure what it's going to be, but last year we were trying to put back $176 or so average per month for the taxes so we didn't get behind, so we wouldn't be on the tax sale. I get the *Wyandotte County Echo* every single week. You all want to know how thick that Wyandotte Echo was on the tax sales, CeCe, I can't wait to see you to tell you, this thick. It's in my truck, I could gladly bring it in.

Alright, you tell me, $300 for utilities, another $300 for the—you're behind on utilities so there's $600 gone, right, okay you've got $176 gone for your taxes, but yet we don't really know what it's going to be so let's go on up another $225, $200. I've got to feed him, I've got to clothe him and at 17 he's already six foot and at 11 years old, this boy wore a size 13 shoe and he's still in it thankfully. You tell me where I'm going to pay for house insurance, truck insurance—**Mr. Deichler** said your time has expired. **Ms. Duzak** said two months ago (inaudible) $2,000 for tires and brakes on my truck because we couldn't afford it and pads and calipers and everything because that's how we got, but we do everything that we can.

Last August we were here, we asked you guys what do we pick, taxes or BPU because it's not happening. I'm 45 years old, I don't want to leave my city. I don't. I've been here all my life. My son was born here. I'm sorry I went over on your time guys, but thank you for hearing me out because this is serious. We're going to live in our truck and I can't do that to my kid. When he was five, he begged me for hot water. That's all he wanted. I asked him if you could have anything in the world son, what would you like and he said mama I just want hot water so you don't have to carry the pans into the bathroom and burn yourself. Please don't make me do that with my child. My home is the only home in the entire neighborhood who has not been flipped. Guess what, the house next door to me just sold for $250K. Okay, they have a half bath more than me because years back when I was nine years old my father and I put a tile drain in. We took out that half bath because we didn't need it because my dad struggled as a single father. He worked for this city. My dad retired in 2009 from Water Pollution Control. My dad was A.J. Duzak. He was the Water Pollution Control Safety Manager for you guys for 27-29 years, something like that and he retired from here because he loved this city. He loved our house. Please don't make us lose our house. It's ridiculous.

I tried to appeal last year, no, it crashed. When I'm putting in the payment under protest thing or whatever it was this year, oh, didn't we drop that off at the annex. A month and a half later I get a thing saying oh no, no, we didn't receive your stuff in time, so tell me where are we going to win. I don't even want to win guys, I just want to live. I want my son to live. He's it, that's all I got. Thank you for hearing me, but you all tell me where you're going to live on $914 a month.

Curtis Martin, 3071 N. 32nd, said I voted to elect the Mayor and a lot of people did. He got in here as our Mayor and he went in on the grounds of cutting the rates on BPU and our taxes. That's what he shot for and, commissioners, you all haven't done anything. You all have been going against Tyrone since he's been in here on BPU and on taxes and that's ridiculous and you're not doing your jobs. Dealing with the fact of where this money is going, you need to go back to the table and get this order going all over again because as I ride around and see all these new cars and trucks that this city has done bought for small Wyandotte County and you're going to wonder where the money went, all these new cars. I don't know who set that up, but Tyrone's put in a position to get that money back or squash the funds and it's going to be a hard deal. Do you need to get cars—get the cars repo because it's hurting Wyandotte County.

Like she said about the Fire Chiefs, all these Fire Chiefs in little Wyandotte County is ridiculous to pay these guys all this money, retiring from the Fire Department, getting all that money for a little small Wyandotte County. It's off the hook.

Commissioners, you all need to go back to the board, start this all over again and find out where the money is going before you start hitting us in our heads. It's ridiculous. That's all I've got to say.

Lisa Walker Yeager said I don't know about you all, but I shed a couple of tears off the lady what she just said because you're not understanding what's really going on. I'm trying to be calm to be intellectual. First of all, Andrew Davis, you're over majority—you and Ramirez I think are over all the houses in that—that go to foreclosure and all that or rehab. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Yeager** said you're not, you're not on the Housing Committee or dealing with none of that, okay, I apologize, but I thought you were on something dealing with the housing part. I do know here for a stake, and I'm just going to speak up for Parkwood neighborhood, which is one of the historic neighborhoods that is being majorly attacked. They're not only being stolen, our homes are not only being stolen from us, our taxes are raising. We have a house, as she spoke, $350K. I grew up in the neighborhood, not only did I grow up in our neighborhood, we don't have not one grocery store that even speaks on raising our taxes. Our schools are inadequate. Our swimming pool for our neighborhood is the only swimming pool in the community that is totally inadequate. We just got a playground. Wyandotte County only gave $8,500 to a playground that basically CarMax had to come in and fund for the rest of it. That's sad. We don't have a basketball court, that's what our kids play. Our pool has been around—I'm 55, been around longer than my great-grandpa and it's the only pool within our community.

You spent $500K for John Garland Park to get it redone and it—**Mr. Deichler** said one minute remaining. **Ms. Yeager** said and it has gas pumps right next to it. So, where is our value in our homes that you're raising it up. We've asked you, we've begged you, and if you're trying to build more houses in our community, stop pushing out people that are trying to stay here. We're paying to be here, don't push us out because nobody's coming in. Who wants to come live in Wyandotte County. That's what you've got to look at. Nobody wants to come live here and pay extra taxes, put their kids in schools that are not really above average or even average. USD 500 has had it. My family is related to the Pinker, that's my mother, she is a Pinker, Delores Pinker was over in the school district.

When it comes to BPU—**Mr. Deichler** said your time has expired. **Ms. Yeager** said more than anything that's going on with the way that our rates. (Inaudible) and Bill were like this. So, you all need to sit down and talk, you all put your heads down, but you all in a collaboration to take our properties and that's what I'm saying. You all are collaborating to take our properties from us and uplift the north end area because you all know it's valuable. We paid it here, we've been here, our families have been here and I'm asking you to make a change. I'm asking you and if you all don't do this, then I know each and every one where you all sit because when they did do that audit, not one of you all has been here all that time, has been uplifted for defrauding this government. Now, let my taxes come up high and you all not doing anything, your license is getting removed because I will call Department of Justice and you all need to try to work this out.

These people should not be crying, worried about their family homes being gone. Our senior citizens do not have a place to stay. I'm pissed off behind that because I know, I had conversations with certain people. They're on fixed income. When they come to a certain age if your property goes over $200K, there is no help for them. They are not protected and I told you that, I know that for a fact and I'm not just getting on you, Ms. Townsend, because it takes a collaboration of everybody, but if you all want to keep playing, you already had an audit. I do have a personal number to the Department of Justice, so I'm going to suggest that you all take time out, get on this and make it happen because I'm upset behind you all taking our people's homes. This will not go down on my watch.

I'm sorry for yelling, but I'm upset behind you taking people's houses that work 30, 40, 50 years to get their houses paid for and they cannot afford taxes. Now, you want a solution, the solution is when you get 60, 65 and older, they should no longer have to pay taxes and veterans should be included in that. If you're living on a disability, we should be able to work out something so we can work with them on their taxes. I'm not just talking about ways of not being able to adjust the situation. When it's in a historical neighborhood, to keep those people in their homes, there is federal money to help them. It's called tax abatement. **Mr. Deichler** said your time has expired. **Ms. Yeager** said I'm done.

Reece Towers, 615 No. 82nd St., said I just wanted to let everyone know it's election season. We've been here, we've plead, we done cried about lowering our taxes. They know what the issue is. This is nothing new. We have people in leadership making six figures, six figures. You're making six figures. We got 30K Assistant County Admins for what. All you need is one County Admin and one Assistant County Admin. This county is too small for that, but I'm here to say it's election season. There's about four or five seats up here that are available, your vote matters. You cannot continue to vote in the same people and expect different results. You cannot continue to vote in the same people and expect different results and you have the power to recall them. Taxes have been raised and everything that's going on, it don't affect one minority group, it affects all of us. It affects every last person in here and it takes us to unify, to come together and stand for change.

You can recall these people. Just because they got an office don't mean you can't change the game for a recall. Collectively we can get it done. It's election season. Stop begging these people for something that they know that needs to be done. You are their boss, you pay them. They need our money for the city to run. My question is what are you going to do about it.

Mayor Garner asked, is there anyone else that would like to make comments? Anyone else, your last opportunity before I close the public comment session. Okay. I will now close the public hearing. Do any members of the Commission have any questions or comments they'd like to make to the public?

Commissioner Townsend said I appreciate the comments made and participation by everyone here today; however, since there were a few references to my profession and what this has to do with revenue neutral, I thought it appropriate just to address that. I grew up in the north end, I still live in the north end, I support the north end by my presence, my service here as a commissioner. I understand what the impact is on taxes raising. Everyone up here is going through the same thing. I'm retired myself, but I chose to remain here when I could be somewhere else and help those people that I saw grow up. Many have moved on, but I want to correct, not misinformation, but apparently misunderstanding about what attorney's do. We don't come with magic wands. They can tell the State of Kansas who does the appraisals what to do with that. Can I try to help you, yes. I've gotten call after call. People say they want their taxes lowered or they do not agree with the assessment. Challenge the assessment and yes, you have to do it each year. That's what I would tell you. Since I have been here this Commission has not raised taxes, no—and I'm not—

Mayor Gardner said let's be respectful while the commissioner has the floor.

Commissioner Townsend said we control raising or lowering of the mill rate. The assessments are done by the State of Kansas and they determine the value. Do I agree with what that might be, no. So, if you do not agree with the assessment, then challenge that. There's a two-story house right next to me that went up for sale and I looked at it. It was $230K. Why are these assessments so high, those are valid reasons and I would say challenge them. That is not done here by this Board. I hope they can hear this.

In terms of Parkwood, if you listen to the comments I made just last Thursday about Parkwood and the pool, that's not going to be in this budget, but I reminded—and this Council, the Mayor, the Administrator all heard that there is to be a presentation shortly by Parks & Rec to identify what the condition of Parkwood Pool is and where should we go from there on. So, as a commissioner, I'm doing my job.

It's unfortunate that so many this is their first time here ever and I'm glad to see it, but you have to follow what's going on throughout the year. When you look at the cuts, last year as commissioner for the people in District 1, I did not go along with the budget when it was increased and it had to do with Fire Department personnel. I respect them, but when you've got 69% of the city's budget going to that, where does that leave for the people who want to see the roads. I'm tired of having to tell people, well, we can't do it this year, we have to do it next year. So, you have to be real about what's been happening, so if all of a sudden you've been awake and good for you, but I have been on the job and don't mind being the only no vote as I was years past. I was joined last year by one other commissioner, so you have to look at where this money is and the majority of it. I don't want to say don't pave that street, don't improve Parkwood, but you better look at and understand where the majority of the money is and has been and that started time before.

So, yeah, I'm proud I'm an attorney in good standing and I'm still living in the northeast and dealing with the same issues you are. I'm also from Dunbar Elementary and I can see what the difference in black ink and red ink is. When you are paying huge chunks of money in one area, that doesn't leave a lot for some of the other stuff. Thank you, Mayor, for the opportunity to share those comments.

Mayor Garner said I guess I'll give my comments. Revenue Neutral doesn't—it's not going to lower your taxes, but what it will do is the Commission does have an opportunity to put a pressure point on raising taxes and that's what the majority, I believe, about 99% of the people in here, what I've heard them say. I was elected by a majority of the people and part of that was a community-driven agenda to address some of the issues that you've heard today. Not by myself, because I can't do it by myself, I don't vote on anything, but to try and work collaboratively with this body to push forward, hopefully, a vision and agenda given to me by the people and hope this Commission would embrace and listen to the people.

Since I've been Mayor tax, spend, borrow, depleting our savings to make up the difference, providing corporate welfare, big giveaways to big multi-million dollar companies who haven't paid their fair share, some still aren't, has not been a good business model for Wyandotte County and it's not a good business model for any successful business that I'm aware of. Then you ask yourself when you look at that, how does that work for us when you look about projected bankruptcy, I didn't do that. When you look at unsustainable debt, I didn't do that. There's also, do your own research, there's some media outlets that said that we're number 11 as worst-run cities in the nation and as Mayor that's troubling to me. The affordability of our community is being put at risk. We are literally shaking down many in our community with year after year tax and increases that have the probability to tax people, as you've heard tonight, into poverty, out of our community and some into homelessness while also stifling the potential for new expanded revenue streams from business that could bring jobs, resources and expanded tax base if we don't give away the farm and the anchoring of working middle class residents right here in our great city of Wyandotte County.

Some people have told me that I've talked to since I've been Mayor believe that decades old establishment model that has redline many disinvested much and created an environment to where people are being taxed into utter desperation is not sustainable. We cannot continue to create an environment where we are perpetuating the importation of poverty into our community. I don't want our community to be seen in the metro or nationally as a home base for homelessness or a portal for poverty.

We have entirely too many Land Bank city-owned properties that can be directly directed to people not being able to afford, not to just the cost of living and not paying their taxes, but people just not being able to survive. I've talked to a lot of people and people see me out just about every day in Wyandotte County, talking, supporting, connecting, and I've talked to a lot of people working three jobs just to make ends meet. People having to make hard decisions on whether to put food on the table, clothes on their kids back, or to pay their BPU bills.

What hurts most is when I listen to seniors that are on fixed incomes that have no other means of financial resources to make ends meet, people literally working hard just to stay above water, people that do have homes that maybe can pay their property taxes and they're working overtime or two or three jobs to do that, but they don't have any money left to keep their house upgraded so now they're worried about codes coming and putting a sticker on their house.

I believe in community-driven servant leadership and putting the hardworking people of this community above power, privilege, influence, and non-elected bureaucrats and big government. This government is bloated, that's my belief. As I've listened to the residents of all backgrounds, nationalities, throughout every corner of Wyandotte County, I simply do not believe that there's a shared consistence of our residents to continue to raise taxes and fees. We must be bold, courageous and responsible in meeting and exceeding what the majority of the people are saying to us and that is they need relief. They need a Commission and a government that will listen to them and they need a Commission and a government that will work hard to put the people of Wyandotte County first.

That is a message that I will continue to advocate for, that is a message that I will continue to send as Mayor throughout the halls of here at City Hall and I will continue to say that we've got to do better for our people and I know that we can do things responsibly without sacrificing essential services. But, those of you that have listened to me, yes, we are in a budgetary crisis. Sacrifices will have to be made, not just at the Unified Government level, but also sacrifice going to be made within our community and we have to decide what those sacrifices are and what those look like.

So, as a result I join this community in rejecting exceeding revenue neutral and I ask that our commissioners take a pause. This is the second year that I've listened to heart wrenching stories of residents literally begging for relief. These two meetings have been the hardest meetings that I've been to since I've been your Mayor, last year and this year, hearing these stories and literally going out in the community and seeing people begging me, literally with tears in their eyes, and knowing there's nothing I can do as their Mayor to help them. It hurts me because I listen and I care, and I believe that these commissioners care too. I just ask and I believe the community is asking for once put the needs and the requests of a desperate community above this government.

I will now have a motion for Commission mandated approval of the resolution to approve exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate.

Action: **Ordinance No. O-89-23 and Resolution No. R-54-23,** "An Ordinance and Resolution of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas to approve exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate." **Commissioner Markley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McKiernan, that the ordinance and resolution approving the Unified Government exceeding the Revenue Neutral Rate with the corrected numbers of 33.4429 for Kansas City and 32.501 for Wyandotte County for the tax year 2024 be adopted."**

Mayor Garner said before I ask for roll call, there's one point that I'd like to make. In 2019 the Unified Government's budget was $376M, in 2020 it was $394M, in 2021 it was $381M, in 2022 it was $420M. This year we're operating on a $432M budget. In 2024 the budget that is being projected is $466M. Now, I'm not a mathematician, but I believe there was a mathematician that spoke about looking at the inflation rate and just ask yourself, and I've asked myself from day one when I became Mayor, I think we need to do a better job with the people's money and a better job of being able to talk about exactly where it's going and how it's being spent.

Roll call was taken and there were eight "Ayes," Markley, Davis, Bynum, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane and one "no," Burroughs.

Mayor Garner said with no further business to come before this governing body, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

Adjourn

Commissioner McKiernan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Davis, to adjourn. Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Markley, Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane.

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 8:45 p.m.

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Brett Deichler
Unified Government Clerk

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