CONSENT AGENDA ITEM NO. ____

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS **SPECIAL MEETING, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2024**
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Meeting, Wednesday, August 7, 2024, with eleven members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; Burns, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Hill, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Lopez, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO; presiding. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Alan Howze and Bridgette Cobbins, Assistant County Administrators; Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel; Shelley Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer; Debbie Jonscher, Deputy Chief Financial Officer; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director; Michael Peterson, Assistant Budget Director; Karl Oakman, Chief of Police Department; Daniel Soptic, Sheriff; Jeff Miles, Director of Water Pollution Control; Diana Miles, Solid Waste/Recycling Manager; Renee Ramirez, Director of Human Resources; and Monica L. Sparks, Interim Unified Government Clerk.

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 their phones at this time when not speaking to avoid background noise. During the meeting, make sure you announce yourself by name and title every time you speak, if you're allowed to do so, so the public that is participating knows exactly who is speaking. It's also critical so that whenever you're speaking it can be appropriately captured by our Clerk for the record. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is also current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General's Office. Please make sure to speak clearly and at an audible level into the microphone to ensure that your comments are heard and an accurate record of the meeting can be made.

Mayor Garner called the meeting to order.

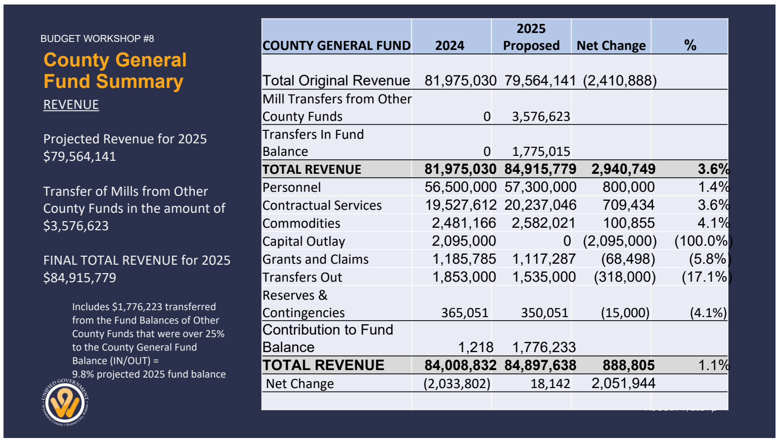
NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Wednesday, August 7, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building for a Budget Workshop. Roll call was taken and there were eleven "Ayes," Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Garner.

CONSENT TO MEETING of the governing body of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, accepting service of the foregoing notice, waiving all and any irregularities in such service and in such notice, and consent and agree that we, the governing body, shall meet at the time and place therein specified and for the purpose therein stated.

Mayor Garner said tonight we're continuing our series of Budget Workshops and these workshops are specifically for our commissioners. Our County Administrator presented his budget proposal last Thursday. Tonight and tomorrow evening we will be discussing the budget and have the time to ask details to our staff and to our Administrator. For this session, we will be focusing on the county side of our financials here at the Unified Government of Wyandotte County. At this time I'll ask our Administrator, David Johnston, to take the lead and make the presentation.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said, commissioners, thanks for being available for today and tomorrow for our sessions. As the Mayor indicated, last week I presented, as legally required, a recommended balanced budget for your consideration. The unique situation with this budget is you elected to give us a policy direction to use the revenue neutral option that state law gives elected local officials. That truncated our budget process by about six weeks, so that started its own calendar that's driven by state statute. There was a lot of work going into this. We had to really understand what impact this new approach that we never had done before, get our hands around it to be able to do a recommended budget. Staff and I did that and came up with this, but I think it's good to have a quick primer and I've asked our CFO, Shelley Kneuvean, to do a quick overview about our situation when it comes to the county side of the budget. So, Shelley, would you please take over.

Shelley Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer, said we do have a couple of slides to share with you and then we'll go back and leave one up on the screen just as a good reference document so that as you have discussions about what should be included or not included in the budget, there's a good guide for you.

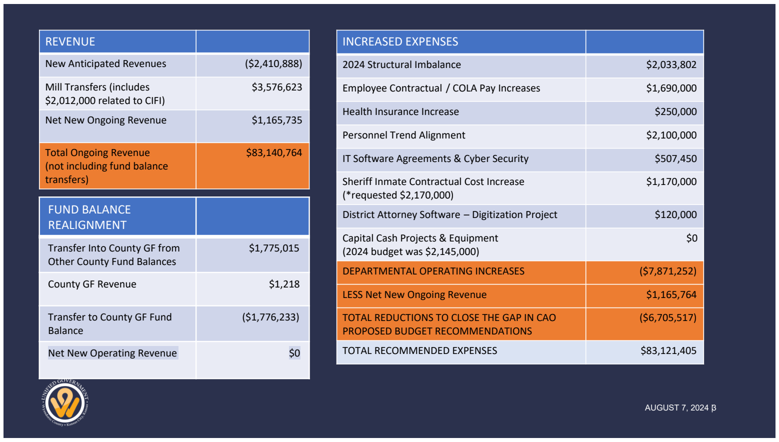


COUNTY GENERAL FUND	2024	2025 Proposed	Net Change	%
Total Original Revenue	81,975,030	79,564,141	(2,410,888)	
Mill Transfers from Other County Funds	0	3,576,623		
Transfers In Fund Balance	0	1,775,015		
TOTAL REVENUE	**81,975,030**	**84,915,779**	**2,940,749**	**3.6%**
Personnel	56,500,000	57,300,000	800,000	1.4%
Contractual Services	19,527,612	20,237,046	709,434	3.6%
Commodities	2,481,166	2,582,021	100,855	4.1%
Capital Outlay	2,095,000	0	(2,095,000)	(100.0%)
Grants and Claims	1,185,785	1,117,287	(68,498)	(5.8%)
Transfers Out	1,853,000	1,535,000	(318,000)	(17.1%)
Reserves & Contingencies	365,051	350,051	(15,000)	(4.1%)
Contribution to Fund Balance	1,218	1,776,233		
TOTAL REVENUE	**84,008,832**	**84,897,638**	**888,805**	**1.1%**
Net Change	(2,033,802)	18,142	2,051,944	

This slide is a slide that you saw as part of the County Administrator's budget. This gives you the overall revenue at the top, what we had anticipated from '24 to '25 was that revenue would go down, so our property tax was flat and at the presentation you have a detailed breakdown of what those other revenues are, so we're not going to repeat things that you've already got. We anticipated about $79.56M after revenue neutral and that was because some of our other funding sources that go into the County General Fund were decreasing, so that's about $2.4M.

As part of the solution that was brought forward to you all to consider we did transfer some of the mills from other county funds in order to be able to help fund the operations that come out of the County General Fund and there's a detailed list of those mills that were moved over. Then, a separate issue was we also took a look at the fund balances in those other county funds and we were able to move those that were over 25% per policy over to the County's General Fund because we were under and still are under the 25% policy, but this helped move us in the right direction.

On the expenses, you'll see there that it's $84.897M, so it's a balanced budget with about $18K left over. If adopted in this manner, then that $18K would go to the fund balance. So, as you put everything together, those are important numbers.



REVENUE	
New Anticipated Revenues	($2,410,888)
Mill Transfers (includes $2,012,000 related to CIFI)	$3,576,623
Net New Ongoing Revenue	$1,165,735
Total Ongoing Revenue (not including fund balance transfers)	$83,140,764

FUND BALANCE REALIGNMENT	
Transfer Into County GF from Other County Fund Balances	$1,775,015
County GF Revenue	$1,218
Transfer to County GF Fund Balance	($1,776,233)
Net New Operating Revenue	$0

INCREASED EXPENSES	
2024 Structural Imbalance	$2,033,802
Employee Contractual / COLA Pay Increases	$1,690,000
Health Insurance Increase	$250,000
Personnel Trend Alignment	$2,100,000
IT Software Agreements & Cyber Security	$507,450
Sheriff Inmate Contractual Cost Increase (*requested $2,170,000)	$1,170,000
District Attorney Software – Digitization Project	$120,000
Capital Cash Projects & Equipment (2024 budget was $2,145,000)	$0
DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING INCREASES	($7,871,252)
LESS Net New Ongoing Revenue	$1,165,764
TOTAL REDUCTIONS TO CLOSE THE GAP IN CAO PROPOSED BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS	($6,705,517)
TOTAL RECOMMENDED EXPENSES	$83,121,405

AUGUST 7, 2024 β

On this next slide I thought this might be a better way to capture it for you and you've got a copy at your place as well, but it takes that information from the last slide and puts it into the revenue separating out the fund balance because fund balance is a one-time revenue. It's not your ongoing revenue. So, the ongoing revenue that we had, it matches the page I just went through. So, we had new anticipated revenues going down by $2.4M. The mill transfers that does include because I wanted to make sure it was highlighted the way CIFI, the County Infrastructure Funding Initiative, has been funded was through a designation of mills, so if there's any discussion or desire to look at that differently, it's part of the funding source for the General Fund just so you guys have that information. Then, the other 1.5 roughly came from other funds as well.

Then, the net between that minus 2.4 plus the 3.5 that meant that we had net ongoing revenue as part of the solution we were bringing forward for a balanced budget of a million one. The ongoing revenue—so, I backed out that fund balance transfer because that's one-time money. It's not money that would be there year to year, so I backed it out and our ongoing estimated revenue is $83.1M.

On the expense side then over on the other side and when we presented this information to you there was a couple of slides that talked about this was our funding gap, so we had these things that we knew that were coming in terms of contractual requirements, high priority needs like cyber security. We had some software expenses, we had a structural imbalance in this fund last year, which means that last year we did use the fund balance to balance the ongoing operating cost, so we have to address that so that we have a structurally balanced budget and don't continue to deplete the already underfunded fund balances. As part of our strategy, this is a list of the things that did increase and I just want to highlight as we looked at this, so in other words, a different way to say this is that in ‘24 we used $2M roughly of the fund balance to fund ongoing operations. Unless we get rid of whatever the ongoing operations are, we have to make that up with ongoing revenue.

We had the employee contractual and for all employees a COLA pay increase included, we had the modified health insurance increase. Originally we were looking at a 7%, we did reduce it down to 3%, so that was part of our strategy of how did we balance the budget to bring forward to you all. We had a personnel trend alignment, that was $2.1M, the software agreements and cyber security improvements that we feel are mission critical of $507K.

I want to pause on the next one. The Sheriff inmate contractual cost increase. The Sheriff, based on the contracts we have for outside housing for medical and for food anticipated that those costs are going to go up and based on headcounts of about $2.17M. I think I’ve highlighted this a couple of times, but I do really want to emphasize that we were not able to build in the funding for all of that and so that’s a concern that we share with the Sheriff. I’m sure he might have some comments he wants to share with you because best efforts can be best efforts, but when it comes to jailing and you’re housing people, you don’t really have the discretion as to whether or not to feed them or provide them medical. You’re kind of the recipient, so it’s possible that those costs may come in over what we were able to fund and if that occurs, we would be coming back to you for a budget amendment. But for a balanced budget for the starting point, this was what we could build in based on all the things that we were balancing.

The District Attorney, the Commission, and Mayor funded a digitization project a couple years ago and so that project has ongoing maintenance that goes with that software system and so we had to build that cost in. Then, as part of our strategy we zeroed out what’s called Capital Cash Projects & Equipment.

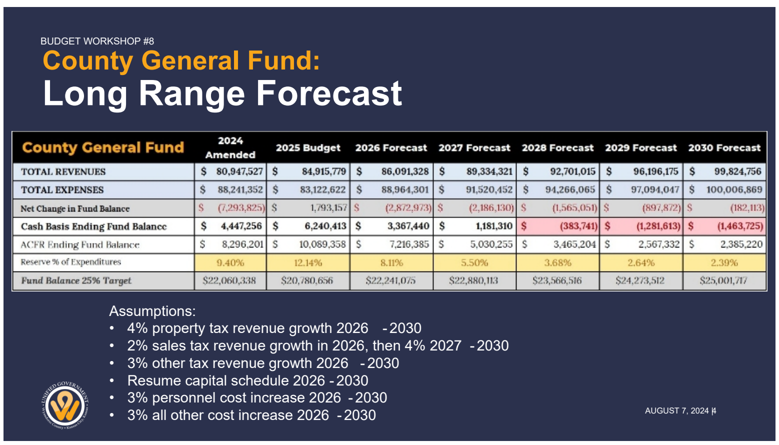
Commissioner Kane said could you please explain what that means? **Ms. Kneuvean** said Capital Cash Projects are things that we were not bonding. We were not issuing debt. These were things that we were going to be paying cash for and we had—last year in the budget we had $2.1M, so it might be cars for a department, it might be the list that there was in ‘24 would be different than it would be in ‘25, but as part of the Capital Improvements Plan there would have been a forecast for the next year. Here’s what’s anticipated and the net increase from the 2.145 in the ‘24 budget would have been another 850K, so we couldn’t afford to fund that and we couldn’t afford to fund the 2.1 like carry forward. So, we are looking at what those projects are and what our strategies are as well as looking at debt and what our strategies are. There's a couple of big projects on the debt side that get impacted, but this was on the cash side, so it's equipment for the Sheriff's vehicles, it's equipment—frankly, it's the remodel of the jail intake. There was additional funding that we were wanting to put in for this year. I'm trying to think of some others. We had—I'm thinking of city side, but we can provide you with a list of those. You actually probably have them because we did a whole workshop on the Capital Improvements. One of those previous workshops had the Capital Improvement Plan in it. It just was something that there wasn't—any capital project that we funded would have to cut from somewhere else and so it was just a matter of where we found ourselves.

With those increases noting that the Capital Cash Projects was zero, then that meant that there was 7.8M in the County Administrator's presentation he highlighted a gap for you and it's a bigger number because we weren't able to achieve all those things. We knew we wanted to do, for example, 2.17 for the Sheriff's cost and we couldn't work that into a balanced budget, so we ended up at 7.8M, less that new revenue, because part of the strategy was moving mills over. So any time you're trying to balance a budget you can increase revenue and you can decrease expenses. That's the two levers you can pull. In this case we had the opportunity—different than the city side that we'll talk about tomorrow, but there's other funds that get a portioned bills and so we were able to pull some of the mills to come over and help shore up the County General Fund. The alternative to that would be we would have to do more reductions in order to balance the budget.

The net reduction to close that gap of what was presented in the budget was 6.7M. It is a balanced budget. You'll see when you back out that fund balance transport, it goes from 83M on revenue, 83M on expenses. There is, like I said, roughly an 18K or so difference in terms of revenue versus expenses and once the budget gets adopted then those funds would be designated to go to the fund balance, but that doesn't happen until the end of the year because we have to actually see what the expenses are and what the revenues come in at. So, fund balances happen at the end of the year typically. This one-year fund balance realignment is outlined up above and David's presentation—the County Administrator had given you the details of what those dollars were from each of the funds.

The positive news is that all of the county funds that had a portion of the mill that have operating dollars in them, not capital, but operating dollars now all have a 25% fund balance to meet the policy that was adopted by the Mayor and Commission, so that is a good thing. We're not there on the county side yet. When you look at those fund statements you'll see revenue, it'll say transfer in, that's those fund balances and then you'll see a miscellaneous, which is essentially the transfers out, which we can do these at the beginning of the year because they're existing, they're sitting there and we can move them over to the county if that ends up being the desire of the Mayor and the Commission.

I felt like this was a good snapshot as you talk through different ideas, different projects, initiatives, things that you might want to trade out on recommendations to give you what the dollar is that we're targeting because we are statutorily required to have a balanced budget.

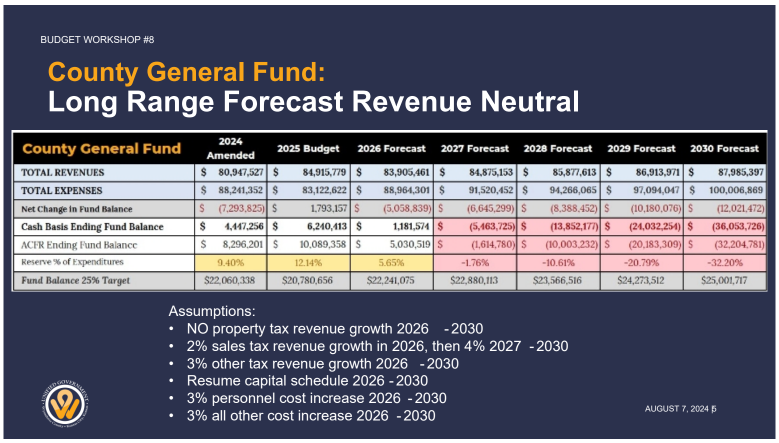


County General Fund	2024 Amended	2025 Budget	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	$ 80,947,527	$ 84,915,779	$ 86,091,328	$ 89,334,321	$ 92,701,015	$ 96,196,175	$ 99,824,756
TOTAL EXPENSES	$ 88,241,352	$ 83,122,622	$ 88,964,301	$ 91,520,452	$ 94,266,065	$ 97,094,047	$ 100,006,869
Net Change in Fund Balance	$ (7,293,825)	$ 1,793,157	$ (2,872,973)	$ (2,186,130)	$ (1,565,051)	$ (897,872)	$ (182,113)
Cash Basis Ending Fund Balance	$ 4,447,256	$ 6,240,413	$ 3,367,440	$ 1,181,310	$ (383,741)	$ (1,281,613)	$ (1,463,725)
ACFR Ending Fund Balance	$ 8,296,201	$ 10,089,358	$ 7,216,385	$ 5,030,255	$ 3,465,204	$ 2,567,332	$ 2,385,220
Reserve % of Expenditures	9.40%	12.14%	8.11%	5.50%	3.68%	2.64%	2.39%
Fund Balance 25% Target	$22,060,338	$20,780,656	$22,241,075	$22,880,113	$23,566,516	$24,273,512	$25,001,717

The last two slides I wanted to share with you, the Budget team put this together. I think this is very important because one of the premises is that we're trying very hard and we can always do better, but we're trying very hard to make sure there's no surprises. So, while we're bringing forward a balanced budget recommendation to you for this year, you can see that '25 this year is a balanced budget. Next year, if this is the assumptions, so if property tax goes up by 4%, sales tax by 2%, other revenue 3%, we pick back up on our cash capital and if personnel continues to increase at 3%, and then just normal inflationary costs, which really isn't captured in this anywhere because if there is an inflationary cost that a department had, they had to absorb that as a reduction as well because there was no more funding coming to that department. If that happens, what you can see is revenues and expenditures next year we're already looking at almost a $3M deficit.

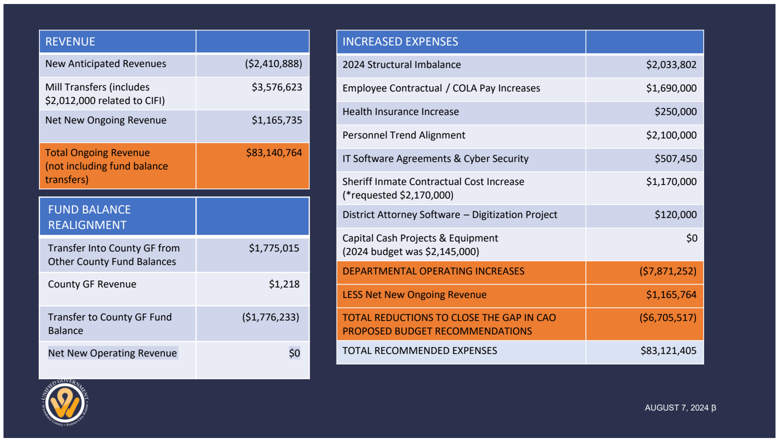
So, while we've got a plan in front of you, and with your direction and guidance, we'll have a budget that will be balanced. We have some work to do in terms of what's the future forecast and what we can do to start addressing that sooner than later because we will be back at this again unfortunately.

So, it's 2.8M if you can see that in terms of—and when it says net change in fund balance, all that means is that for revenues versus expenditures with these assumptions, that's the difference. If you funded that way with those revenues and those expenses, you'd be upside down 2.8M and you'd have no choice but to use fund balance if there is one or to make reductions.



The next thing that we put together, and this is the final slide, is that we did want to forecast if there was a decision in the future to do revenue neutral again, so that you just have that information and it gives you time to think through and as we all work on this and learn these budgets together, this would be the net impact in '26. Instead of being roughly a $3M deficit, it would be 5. Again, that's based on these assumptions and those assumptions may be good, may be bad. They're on the side of conservative honestly, but that's best to do when you're forecasting budgets out. You know, who would have predicted, for example, a worldwide pandemic. You don't necessarily know and data is informative as to what those revenues will be.

I wanted to share that with you just so that again no surprises. I don't want people to be like, well, I thought we balanced last year and why are we at this again. This particular side of our budget is just—it needs to—it's got some issues that we need to address longer term, so regardless of what ends up being a part of this.



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I wanted to go back to this slide and just leave that up there for you as a reference so that you have kind of those high level dollars.

Mayor Garner said I did want to read a—I know some of our commissioners may have got, hopefully, all of you've gotten it and had time to read it, but I had a conversation with the District Attorney and he had a follow-up. He's not here with us tonight. He had business out-of-town, but he did want me to read this memo to the Commission in regards to this budget conversation. So, this comes from Wyandotte County District Attorney Mark Depree, Sr., 29th Judicial District of Kansas. He says "this memo is a follow-up to the budget recommendations presented by County Administrator Johnston on Thursday, August 1, 2024. During the budget presentation the following was stated by Mr. Johnston. Number 1, District Attorney's Office will receive $120K of new money. The above mentioned statement is not accurate. As I clarified during our conversations, the $120K presented as a new funding increase is not a new funding request of my office. This was money that was approved by Commission in 2022 as part of the original digitization ongoing costs.

Number 2, District Attorney's Office had a new Sex Crime Victims Advocate position via a grant. The above statement is not correct. Although the office does have a Sex Crime Victims Advocate, this position is not new and is from a grant the DA's Office received in 2018. Additionally, the position is currently counted in the 3.5 Victim Advocates and also needs assistance.

I appreciate the opportunity to clarify statements previously made and wish to further emphasize the DA's Office commitment to serving our community and working collaboratively with each of you. As you may have seen in recent news outlets, the Wyandotte County's District

Attorney's Office was proud to receive a $683K grant for victims. Although this is a major victory for our county, this grant funding is to provide funding to victims of gun violence such as damage to their homes, medical bills, etc. and cannot be used to fund Victims Advocate positions.

The request of four additional Victim Advocates at the cost of approximately $380K is to address the 900 plus case load our Victim Advocates are managing, which is nearly triple the case load of other Victim Advocates in our region. In the state of Kansas there is a Crime Victim's Bill of Rights, KSA 74-7333 which requires among several things that the victims receive through formal and informal procedures prompt and fair redress for the harm which they have suffered and information should be made available to victims about their participation in criminal proceedings and the scheduling progress and ultimate disposition of the proceedings.

In the alternate, some help is better than no help. As such, if a minimum of two Advocates are funded in this budget with a plan to fund the additional two Advocates in the upcoming years, that would provide a great deal of assistance in carrying out our statutory obligations to the victims of crime within our county.

I acknowledge these are hard financial times for our community. I appreciate the nuanced decisions you must make; however, as the duly elected District Attorney in Wyandotte County, it is my moral and statutory obligation to act as a voice for victims rights. I'm requesting that you join with me to elevate our support for victims of crimes in Wyandotte County. Be blessed, Mark Depree, Sr., August 6, 2024."

Commissioner Kane said I got several emails, but I got one that stuck out in my mind and it won't take long to read, but I need to read the whole thing. "Dear Commission Kane, I would like to provide an overview on our current trash collection service and the implication proposed fee not being increased in 2025. Currently, our services is $17.94 per month which covers both trash and recycling collection. This fee also grants access to valuable additional services including recycling yard waste open Thursday to Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at 3241 Park Drive. Household Hazardous Waste is open the third weekend in April to October at 2443 S. 88th St. Dumpsters Days is held the first Friday and Saturday of April and September at 47th & Orville. The proposed increase of $1.07 per month in 2025 would raise the total fee to $19.01. It is important to note that the Commission decided against these fees, we would unfortunately have to cut all these additional services. For context the Recycling Yard Waste Center alone serves an average of 604 visitors each Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Without this service, yard waste would likely end up at the curb, improperly bundled, leading to Waste Management refuse of collection. This could result in the community littered with debris, increased illegal dumping and residential potential facing to the need to hire a third party for yard and storm debris cost that would exceed the proposed 19.04.

In the conclusion, the slight increase in our monthly fee is crucial not only to maintain our current service, but for also preserving the cleanness and the safety of our community. I urge you to consider a long-term benefit of this increase and the potential consequences of not moving forward."

I got a couple of these from a couple different people and I agree with them that if we eliminate things like that, where are we going to be. How much stuff is going to get to the curb. We already have—we don't have enough code enforcement to go around to look and see what's going on, so this is going to increase—people are going to put oil back in their sewers, so I would think that we would want to leave this the way it's supposed to be with the additional $1.07 per month so we can take care of all these needs. I didn't realize that many people use those places, 604 visitors each Thursday, Friday and Saturday alone, so I would like to reconsider that and go ahead and put it what it was supposed to be.

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you for the presentation and thank you to the Budget staff for the hard work you did. It was a very short time period that you had to do all this and create the budget. To the personnel trend alignment, I know we spoke about this in past conversations. You adjusted it. Did you change the trend at all. Did you leave it at 93% or did you just do what you needed to do to bring it down to the 93? **Ms. Kneuvean** said I don't know that we've had time to calculate it because it's offset by the positions we've eliminated and so I don't know that we've done a reset of that calculation because the calculation is mathematical. Here's the cost of 100% of all the positions versus here's what we actually budgeted. I don't know if the Budget team has anything to share on that, but we can bring that back in terms of what would be the budgeted number now. **Commissioner Ramirez** said I was just curious if we changed—**Ms. Kneuvean** said it should change slightly. The additional money if built into the budget would keep us at the 93%, but we should see a slight offset because of the number of positions changing because we proposed reducing a number of positions, so that should change the math a little bit.

Commissioner Burns said 604 a day for three or four days, are all of them Wyandotte County residents or is that even checked? **Diana Miles, Solid Waste Manager,** said yes, we do verify that they're Wyandotte County residents with a driver's license or a utility bill. That number, can I ask, it was 604 for what event? **Commissioner Kane** said Recycling Yard Waste Center on average is 604 visitors each Thursday, Friday and Saturday. **Ms. Miles** said so that's probably an average a month, about 600 people, but we are open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. **Commissioner Burns** said 600 a month? **Ms. Miles** said yes.

Commissioner Hill said thank you for the report. With regards to what our Mayor just mentioned when he read the letter from Mark Depree, will those changes be made, he mentioned a couple of errors. I just was wondering will those be changed or how does that whole process work? **Ms. Kneuvean** said his letter is correct that the software maintenance was approved as part of that original project for digitization. Now that the project's done, the maintenance starts kicking in and so now it has to be built into the budget, so when I say new I mean a new expense just to clarify. I agree with his statement. As far as the Victim Advocates, we were not able to fund that request to get to a balanced budget. To fund, originally he asked for four. I believe he revised that to three at one point and he got two with this letter, but in order to fund those, we would have to offset that expense somewhere. For every dollar that goes for something else, something else has to offset it, but we weren't able—I mean we were—with such dramatic reductions, we weren't able to fund new things for anything beyond that list that you see there. I say new things meaning new expenses. For example, food and medical at the jail are not new. The costs are going up, so these are new expenses that are going up. So very similar for the District Attorney, but new positions we were not able to build any of those in, but that may be a direction that the Mayor and Commission want to go and we'd look for some guidance on what do you want to offset that with for us to research and make sure it's eligible and so forth from the funding source.

I know also that the conversation with the District Attorney, we did share the comments from the Mayor and did encourage him to get with the Police Chief and look at ways that maybe the two Victim Advocate groups—how they work now, they've very bookended is how I would call it. Like you have people giving Victim Advocate services for folks that have had crimes committed, but once there's charges filed that go to the District Attorney, so that level of charge then it goes over to a different group of people under his purview. So, one of the suggestions passed along to him was based on the Mayor's comments that maybe there's some opportunity for the two departments to collaborate to try and explore opportunities to partner. Certainly, the way it operates now, there's a good handoff. There's a good separation, but that was something we mentioned to him and, of course, we always support grant efforts of all the departments, so we would certainly provide letters of support and so forth if there's additional funds through the Department of Justice for these expenses.

Mayor Garner said just a point of clarity, I did mention that to the DA in my conversation and he pointed out that would be great, but he does service the county side, so when you talk about his Victim Services Advocates they go through the judicial process at the Courthouse. I believe his budget is taken out of the county and the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department is taken out of the city and I don't believe the Sheriff's Department has Victim Advocates. I know there is a partnership with Ad Hoc Group Against Crime to help with some of that, but in talking to the DA even with that, that still doesn't address the needs of the influx of victims that are needing those types of services.

Commissioner Townsend said I'll pick up from where the Mayor left off. I also spoke with the DA last week and I'm glad to hear—I want to make sure I'm understanding because I mentioned to him offering—I don't know if any discussions had been in place with the Police Department because I can remember when the DA made his presentation it seemed like the length of time that his Victim's Advocates have to handle these cases from the time charges are filed—till possibly charges are filed or if through trial or through sentencing and thereafter. It seems like that span of time is so much longer than what our Advocates on the Police side. So, I would really like to see that explored and my thought was I'm not sure why if you move the people, the money would not follow that position. So, you're going from whatever it is, the county to the city or whatever, but I don't know that should create an imbalance.

Secondly, with regard to the recommendation not to have some of these Dumping Days, what are the alternatives for not having them? What gives me pause is the year beyond what we're even talking about now and seeing red ink. I'm happy to see that we have—that the CFO and her staff have taken into account the deficits and getting rid of them, but we're just going to have to I'm thinking just toughen up in some way so that we come up with a balanced budget this year and looking at what's coming even in 2026 it's dangerous. So, can we talk about some of the alternatives that would allow these proposed budget ideas to remain in place? So, first with the DA and then with the ending of some of the Dumpster Days and it would be helpful to be able to say to our constituents we're not going to increase your trash deposit by another dollar or whatever the contractual matter was supposed to be for that increase.

Mr. Johnston said I'm going to answer the second part of your question Commissioner Townsend and it comes with Commissioner Kane's comments as well. The solid waste I want to remind you is an Enterprise Fund. It's not part of the General Fund and the reason why that recommendation was made is that we heard from the citizens before you through all of last year about all these increases whether it was stormwater, whether it was these types of things. Everything's an increase, that's the message we heard from the public and, therefore, as we talked about this recommendation, this is divorced from the General Fund because it's an Enterprise Fund. Because what we heard from the public we thought it was due for your consideration and what drove this is contractually Waste Management rates go up, so there is this idea that then that's going to be absorbed with an increased rate and we continue our services as we would provide. But if it goes up from $17 to $19, let's just round numbers, that $2 is capacity that would have to be paid for out of the consumer's pocket and to keep things balanced at let's say a neutral rate, no increase to the fee to the citizen, we have to cut services.

So, it's there for your consideration. It's independent from the General Fund operations that we're talking about, so if you want to keep that Enterprise Fund whole, you can do that. Just understand we did outline impacts of when you don't increase revenue, we have to make adjustments to service levels. Just like we're talking about in the General Fund, so even though it is an Enterprise Fund, it is under your purview and does cost our citizens money. So, since it was strongly talked about during the year, we threw that out as a thing for you to consider. If you don't want to, you don't have to because it doesn't impact the General Fund budget. I thought that clarification was important.

Commissioner Townsend said I appreciate that staff heard what was repeated indeed so many times during public comment about the increase in fees. So, again, my question is, if we eat this contractual increase, keep the current rate for trash and water whatever it is 17 point something, what would be other alternatives because I was under the impression there were other alternatives that can deal with the trash or the special days that are being taken out.

Ms. Kneuvean said I can provide a little bit of more information on that. One of the things that we discussed is for yard waste on storm events declared by the Mayor, Commission, a significant event that we would reopen so that the citizens could take their storm debris. Currently citizens do have the ability as part of the current contract to take their yard waste or leaves, any branches and have that picked up from the curb. They do have to cut those branches into approximately four foot sections and bundle them so there's at least a way for them to dispose of that. The other things that we've talked about with the department in terms of other alternatives is researching what other communities do. Mid-America Regional Council has solid waste grants and so looking at ways to get grants to help fund some of these activities because they do exist and it's not something we've been real aggressive after, but just looking for—because that'll help on the long-term.

Then, for the household hazardous waste, just a reminder, right now there's seven events throughout the year. We recommended keeping two, so there would be one in the spring, one in the fall. People would just have to coordinate their schedule that way. We've also talked about looking at, as I said, other communities and perhaps charging for services. It's a very common practice on the Missouri side. It's a nominal small fee, but if there's items taken to a recycling like a Yard Waste Center or taken for household hazardous waste, then there's a small nominal fee the person is charged. We've got a little bit of runway if this is a direction you all go. We have to cover the cost of the contract going up. That's a required contract. It's a very good contract in terms of the rates that we do get charged, but they're entitled to an inflationary increase and there's a whole methodology. So, currently of the $17.94, $15 of that goes to the contractor that's picking up the curbside. The other item is that curbside there is bulky pickup right now, so instead of taking it over to the Dumpster Days, you could put it at the curb.

Yes, I understand that there's been customer service issues and missed pickups so that's something that we need to be aggressively managing and continue to manage anyway. But their cost would go up and that would cut into that extra that's funding some of these other community focused activities, so it's just balancing the 46,000 accounts that we have with the folks that do take advantage of these great services and looking at what might be some alternatives in terms of nominal charges or grants that might be available with no guarantees of that obviously or increasing the monthly rate and keeping the services. So that gives a lot of options for the Mayor and Commission to consider when it comes to solid waste.

Commissioner Townsend said thank you for helping to clarify some of those options that we currently have and would help us to entertain keeping that rate at 17 and whatever it is and not having to pass on that increase to our citizens.

Karl Oakman, Chief of Police, said I just wanted to respond on the Victim Advocate question regarding the Police Department. Our Victim Advocates handle quite a bit of issues with the community, basic victim of crimes. They do the U Visa process as well as the lethality assessment and the domestic violence assistance. They work with all the shelters and other things. I don't see a problem with us just continuing with those victims through the prosecution process. I would have to see what that looks like, but they still interact with them even when they're in the DA's Office. So once they—because what you have to understand is they build that relationship when that incident happens, so they're with them the whole process. Another thing our Victim Advocates do is they respond 24 hours a day to the scene of homicides, major shootings, major assaults, rapes, they do quite a bit. Like I said, when you talk about—and then the other side a large majority of those cases never even get to the DA's Office because they're municipal level, but they still require the same victim advocacy as well as we have a robust Spanish speaking unit that really gives support to our Spanish speaking population. But that is something we can definitely continue with that victim through the process, but as far as us losing a position, that would be devastating to the community.

Commissioner Kane said clarification. Thanks, it's 151 people a week, but since we got the DA and the Police Chief, can we hear from the Sheriff because we also had a situation with him, can we do that please?

Daniel Soptic, Sheriff, said there's actually quite a few different things to talk about. I prepared some comments and I'll give those and we can ask questions. A colleague of mine told me some time ago that you deliver bad news in a suit and so, unfortunately, that's what you've got. Let's start with some basic stuff and some of this you guys already know, but I think for a point of conversation the Sheriff's Office, obviously, makes up over 50% of the county's budget. Over three-quarters of my total budget is personnel costs. Adequately funding of the Sheriff's Office is a requirement by statute. In the case of Board of Commissioners versus Nielander was heard by the Kansas Supreme Court clearly defines your guys' role and my role. In years past, budget shortfalls within the Sheriff's Office have been covered by fund balances and unspent money within other county budgets, but due to the revenue neutral these funds and unspent monies are most likely—less likely to exist.

The cost of running a law enforcement agency, and more importantly, running a Detention Center increases every single year and most of those costs are out of my control. Once a week I receive a report that outlines the jail admissions, so the number of bookings in that seven day period, and I actually received the newest one today. In the last seven days there was 167 bookings and 65 of those remain in custody. For 2024 the total number booked in a seven day period only dropped below 100 one time. So, that's some background or some information in general.

As far as it relates to the budget process, on the day that the revenue neutral vote occurred I addressed this Commission and advised you at that time that the Sheriff's Office budget had no room for cuts or reductions. In fact we were looking for ways to expand services in the coming years. It's an expectation and, quite frankly, a demand from this community on us. Once the revenue neutral vote occurred, I immediately arranged a meeting with our County Administrator and new CFO. I will take this opportunity to say as negative as some of this may sound, it is not a reflection on the County Administrator or the CFO or any of her staff. They've been great to work with and, unfortunately, they've been tasked with something that in my opinion in some ways is undoable.

During that meeting we had a conversation about some things that we could do. I agreed to freeze some deputy spots for 2025 as a show that I'm willing to work with the Commission, with the Unified Government to try and find a way to offer some savings. After that meeting I went back and we took a second look at my budget just to see if there was anything that we were missing, anything at all that we could try and contribute. I still at that time, and still today, stand by there's no cuts, but there were a few things that we identified—I identified that we could defer to 2026. I created a memo and sent that to the County Administrator and the CFO outlining the few items along with the 10 positions that I would be more than willing to defer although I still believe that's a troubling thing to do because what we know is if you think it's expensive today, wait until 2026. But, either way, I created that memo and I still stand by those things today.

As the budget process continued there were items added to the list as being removed or not funded from my budget. Keep in mind I didn't cut anything. My memo outlined deferrals, not cuts or underfunding of anything. I informed the County Administrator and the CFO through numerous emails and phone conversations that I had not approved these funding cuts and I can't authorize them. In the recent days I again met with our CFO and informed her again that the additional cuts and reductions identified in the budget were not obtainable.

On a side note, other cuts that are being considered to budgets in other departments have a high probability of impacting jail population numbers and that in turn will affect housing cost, which you've already heard at this point are underfunded. One of those examples would be cuts to pre-trial services and I don't know exactly what those are, but for anybody unfamiliar with that pre-trial services has a direct impact on jail population.

Items identified as cuts or reductions in this budget beyond things that I identified create a safety and security issue for the Detention facility, a safety and security issue for my staff and/or impedes on my ability to fulfill my statutory obligation to maintain and run the Detention Center and the Sheriff's Office. I need the Commission to understand that while I understand the numbers were put in to make the math work, at the end of the day some of these bills are coming one way or another. Housing cost is coming one way or another, medical cost is coming, food cost it's coming and it's all driven by population. Our population has been extremely high in the facility and I know our CFO mentioned that these are some goals we're trying to obtain. I'm 100% on board with trying to obtain goals, but I told her numerous times I think it's important to be very transparent with you.

I don't think we might be back for a budget amendment, the County Administrator's Office will definitely be back for a budget amendment. There's no doubt in my mind. We have a lot of historical data that we use to come up with our projections, not to mention some things that are just contractual increases. Medical for example. We know what it's going to be. We know we're going to pay and we know based on this budget it's not completely funded.

Those are my prepared remarks. I'm willing to take any questions and I appreciate the opportunity.

Commissioner Bynum said to the Sheriff, DA and other county funded departments, I was not sure what tonight's county workshop would bring and I'm interested in a more deliberate walk through of the county funded departments and where the cuts have been made. I know we've seen a lot of big picture like the Sheriff is probably the biggest picture. For example, if we funded two

Victim Advocates in the DA's Office as his latest request, my math says that's $193,500. So to Commissioner Hill's point, yes we can do that, we just have to find 193 to cut somewhere else and so I'm a believer and have been since the beginning of this year's budget process that it's the Commission that needs to own the decisions that are made. We're going to adopt a budget a week from tomorrow by law, so whatever our conversations are we have eight days and I know Dr. Kneuvean, you know, in her mind we have four days because she's got to go do the work and put it together to bring it back to us.

If we had a deeper walk through of county funded departments, if we wanted to find $193 or we wanted to respond to the Sheriff who we've eliminated basically a minimum of a million dollars that you know you're going to need—**Sheriff Soptic** said a lot more than that, but yes. **Commissioner Bynum** said so I'm just speaking to my fellow commissioners when I say we need to own that and we can send Administrator Johnston and send Dr. Kneuvean and the staff back and we can tell them go find 193 so this department can have two Victim Advocates, go find what the Sheriff needs. You know we've known since we made this decision it was going to be painful. I guess what I'm saying is we're here tonight to do this work. If we need to do this work tonight until late into the night, we've been here late before, so I just kind of want to make that as a comment.

I'm going to switch over to the solid waste even though it's not what we came to talk about tonight, but Commissioner Kane brought it up. It's worth discussing and I did receive multiple emails about the impact of what just leaving the trash fee at its current rate will do and I believe all of that, so I have a couple of things to say about that. Grant funding to fill that gap so that we can have seven Household Hazardous Waste Days and the Recycling Center open on the weekend, etc. would be a one-time deal. I don't know where we're going to find a grant that would pay us annually $400K-$500K for those items. I think we need those items to the point of the email that Commissioner Kane shared. Just imagine what our community is going to look like without those items available to us.

With all due respect to Waste Management, I don't have confidence that what they provide to us in service is the answer for taking away Household Hazardous Waste and Recycling Days and Dumpster Days. I am sorry, I have no confidence in that as a proposed solution.

One thing, and I will say this, if we instead of increasing the fee $1.07, if we backed off that $1.07 to .75 cents and we are coming at that as more of a compromise, .75 cents a month would raise approximately $490K, so we could return some of those activities, some level of those activities more than what is proposed as the cut and maybe a little less than what we have right now. I would offer, you know, .50 cents a month, .75 cents a month rather than $1.07 and I'm just putting that on the table as a compromise.

For now, Mayor, those are my comments. I really would appreciate a little bit more of a walkthrough of the—for tonight the county departments, what we're going to live without, etc. Tomorrow night on the city side, what are we going to live without as we walk through the departments because we all knew when we made the choice that it would hurt. So, anyway, like I said, we have a week, one week by law.

Mayor Garner said to answer your question, Commissioner, I guess in short order and I agree and I know that several of you all were involved with pre-budgetary discussions with the CFO and our Budget Director. There was a lot of generalizations that you're talking about that you see tonight and I guess what I'm getting is you'd like to see more direct what are the things that are being cut and what are the things still on the table that possibly this Commission could decide on whether that's something to cut or not to cut. The Administrator is indicating that would call for another meeting that we could call, so I'll call another Special Meeting. He will have staff prepare line items of things this Commission can go through, debate, talk about, and make a decision on what things maybe to remove from the cuts or maybe some things to add to the cuts that aren't there to try to get us to where you all feel we need to be to help our CFO get you a balanced budget. We'll have another meeting for that.

Commissioner Lopez said how can we get this budget going without our 2023 audit? I see we're going off of our budget, but where's the audit. How can we have our numbers together? **Ms. Kneuvean** said an audit for any organization should be done within six months of the yearend, so for us we're on a calendar year, so ideally we would be done in July. So part of the budget process always is looking at actual receipts and looking at the revenues that have been posted in order to project those, which that is something that we were able to do and use that information. It's not audited numbers yet because the Auditors then go through and they do testing and compliance and so forth. We did have some issues with getting things posted on the expense side which has been remedied and caught up and so we're going to be striving to bring forward the audit by the end of by the end of this month. There was a domino effect, frankly, that predated me, but the ‘22 audit didn’t get done until ‘24, this is the big audit and we just finished the ‘22 single audit which is our federal grants, literally just got that this week and we’re midstream on the large financial audit. But for budget purposes that’s always the case. You don’t have the final audited numbers, but there’s data in the system that you can use and then most organizations you’ll see that it’s unaudited numbers, that’s not a very common thing.

We want to do better on getting back on tract on the time with the audit so that we do have that information earlier. We implemented a whole new system. There’s a lot of why’s as to why they’re behind or we’re behind which is not an excuse, it’s just a reality. So, ‘22 fell behind partly because there was a cyber event in ‘22 and the systems were shutdown for several months, we had a new system that we implemented, a financial system, which we hadn’t fully implemented. All the personnel was still running in the Legacy system. That got implemented in January so we had two systems that we were running and when you’re doing an audit you have to combine that information to give the Auditors in one consolidated way, so there have been definitely some challenges and we need to do better.

In terms of how the projections for revenues are done, it’s less about the audited and it’s more about the actuals and making sure that the actuals are posted. Then, looking at trends, I think we talked a little bit about this in terms of BPU for example. Any revenue source we look at the trends, but we also look at information that we may have that is going to influence that revenue source. There’s nothing an audit would be able to tell us because GM’s going to shut down. You know that’s like a market factor, so it’s really a combination of things that go into coming up with those revenue estimates, but at the end of the day they’re estimates. They always are estimates and if they come in more or come in less, that’s when we need to be building into our process a routine of coming back to you, sharing that information with you in a timely manner.

I am committed, the County Administrator is committed, to get to where we’re doing monthly financials to the Finance & Economic Development Committee as well as the full commission quarterly or monthly if the Commission would like. But monitoring that and discussing that as it’s happening closer to real time so that if these projections—I mean it could be these projections are too high and if that happens, then we need to make an adjustment. You can see like for this situation how tight the budget is. It may be that the revenue projections were too conservative and sales tax comes in better. Well, we need to share that information with you along the way so that you can make adjustments through a budget amendment if there's a desire to do so. So, there's ways the process can definitely improve, but for a budget you're not going to typically have your audited numbers for the prior year. You'll have numbers, but not necessarily fully audited—**Commissioner Lopez** said that can put more money in our pocket and we don't know it. In the end—because like I'm looking just, for example, the Special Parks/Recreation—here we go, you have a capital outlay for 2022 zero, 2023 zero, 2024 zero, but now we're looking at 2024 at 50K and then there's difference on 2023 there's no numbers for the grants in—or I'm sorry, the transfers out, but there's numbers that they're not there, but they're there, but then from 2023 they're not there. 2024, where are we coming up with those numbers?

Ms. Kneuvean said Parks is a particularly complicated department because it is funded from multiple funds, so there's funds that come from the City General Fund that's done through a transfer, there's funds that come from the County General Fund through a mill levy and that is all then put into a combined fund. There's also the Special Recreation Fund that is a different funding source and how those things get funded particularly with capital is going to vary. There's funds this year related to the Rock Island project that has been talked about for the Park Department to do the design for the park. That's in Tourism Fund, so I know that it is challenging. The document has the information, but it's in a way that for those complicated departments, it is difficult.

It's not that the audit found more money. It's that there was money budgeted that year out of that fund for 50K for a specific thing and then the next year it wasn't or the previous years it wasn't. So, those were specific decisions. Where you will get an audit that will give you updated information primarily is going to be on your fund balance because what the audit does is it's looking at here were your revenues, here were your expenses, final actual audited numbers and we estimate that based on what we know. We do a trial balance basically. We're very close, but if there's some adjustment that gets made due to the audit, that's where that number can change. The audit's not going to find money. What was approved in the budget was approved in a budget. I hope that helps. I know it is complicated.

Commissioner Lopez said right, well I'm just doing the math here and it's like even on the Tourism & Convention, if you do the math it's not—it's showing zero, but it's not showing the—there's almost a $90K difference, but it's not showing. It's like what happened to the 90 grand. **Ms. Kneuvean** said I would have to look at the documents you're looking at. I don't know if you want to Reggie.

Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director, said when you say 90 grand, are you looking at 2023 Actuals in Tourism? **Commissioner Lopez** said yeah, there's a difference from there to—well, from 2022 and then there's nothing for 2023, but then now we're down 90K to 250K. **Mr. Lindsey** said one of the things going on with the—when you have like a 2022 column and a 2023 column, those are separate years and the numbers won't match up because it depends on what was paid out in those particular years. So, like if there is a difference of $90K, it could have been like a $90K more spent or $90K less spent in that particular year. **Commissioner Lopez** said but again, the 2023 audit would really help us put more stronger numbers together. Correct? **Mr. Lindsey** said that definitely would help, but as Shelley said, as far as us putting together a budget, we definitely had to like pull from our system the financials that we had to help build this budget. They won't be a whole lot off, but I mean we possibly could have some more funding to come through or we could have less funding.

Commissioner Lopez said so in the end we could be just freaking out over nothing that there's—we got to cut here, to cut here and the jail needs this and our DA needs this, but we'll probably have without the 2023 audit—**Mr. Lindsey** said there probably wouldn't be like any—like looking at the Tourism Fund, it wouldn't be like a million dollar swing or anything like that. **Commissioner Lopez** said I get that. I'm just saying in general there's probably—when that come out, then we'll be able—I mean the money is probably there. We just don't see it yet because the audit's not done. This is what I'm asking. **Mr. Lindsey** said we definitely will have firm numbers when the audit comes out, but when we have started the budget process in the past we don't have like the audit. We usually would get the audit in May and we would be forecasting what our expenses and revenues from that prior year would have been and we wouldn't be a whole—just like millions of dollars off because of a difference between the audited statements and unaudited statements.

Commissioner Lopez said do we have an audit that's not certified. Even though if it's not certified, can the Commission still get that even though it's not certified? **Mr. Lindsey** said what we use to build this budget as far as like historical numbers, they came out of our financial system, so it wouldn't be like near certified or anything until the Auditors finish. **Commissioner Lopez** said it's basically kind of a draw. **Mr. Lindsey** said it looks like David is trying to say something, so I'll let him.

Mr. Johnston said if I can interject real quick, we did use end of year '23 numbers that were in our accounting system. Those will be reflected into any audit anyway, so it's not like this is a—we used numbers that were projected. At the end of '23 we had numbers that still needed to go through an audit process, but we had those yearend numbers which served as the start of our budget process. So, this idea that—what Reggie was saying is that there may be a little difference, but not enough where you're saying I can come up with $3M to pay for these things. It's not going to be that and so we used actual yearend numbers that we had in our budget.

You also heard from Shelley she inherited a mess caused by things beyond our control because of a cyber event which books were down, but also at the same time we were dealing with that, we decided we're going to a new reporting system and doing a transfer. That's where they were saying we had to combine data from two different systems to come up with the numbers that the Auditors were requiring which took—it's one of the reasons why the audit wasn't done. But to get to your, I think, real question you can have confidence in the base numbers of the budget process. It's not going to say that there's this $90K—we can figure out where that $90K discrepancy is, but I don't think there is one. As Reggie was saying, it was based on activity of each fiscal year. I really don't see where there is an issue on the numbers that were used in this budget creation.

The bottom line is you passed revenue neutral. It created a huge gap that we need to cut. I know I have staff that doesn't like that. I know you don't like that, but that's the policy decision you gave us and we have to make cuts. When we gave that budget to you last week, it became yours to own, that's fine, but that gap doesn't go away. As Commissioner Bynum reminded all of you, if you want to fund $3M, you've got to find $3M in these departments to cut further. So, it's not like you're going to walk away tonight or any other Special Meeting that you're going to have everything else squeaky clean. No, the gap is we have a $7M gap on the county that we got to fill. It actually was more because we did mill transfers and we did revenue transfers to balance revenues that we talked about that were in special levies. That's what revenue neutral did. We didn't get any new property tax revenue, so that's the rude reality, but as we said and I think a lot of you commissioners said this publicly, before and after the decision was made a lot of people aren't going to like it, there are going to have to be cuts, there is going to have to be different ways of doing things in 2025. Every decision has a cost, every decision that you make has a cost.

When you talk in economics, when you choose to do something, you're also choosing not to do something and that's where we're at is that, you know, if you want to restore some of these things, other departments are going to sacrifice and that's the bottom line that I have to keep reminding you.

Commissioner Lopez said I totally hear where you're coming from. I understand. Number one, why don't we start with these nonprofits that we fund. Why don't we just start there, cut those loose. What are we funding them for. There's no reason to. Let's take care of that. Just get rid of that, then we can come and see what we have left so we can have these departments cut whatever they need to cut or make the—start there.

Mr. Johnston said one of the reasons some of the not-for-profits did receive a cut, but those not-for-profits which is a value decision that you have to make collectively also provide public good services to our public. I mean we could have said let's kick out $100K from the warming shelter. All right, then you're going to catch hell from people saying you're heartless and the people on cold days, the homeless may die. That's what you're going to hear. So, the value is provide some funds to provide that service. That's what you said this government needs to do. We have many other types of things like that. I had a conversation with some other agency that said with that cut we're going to have to cut services to you. I said, well, you're a countywide service, you're supposed to just provide services to the county, so what are you going to do internally, you're going to cut services to your funder. Articulate that. We're talking looking at our administrative costs. You need to look at your administrative costs first, not threaten me of less services to Wyandotte County residences and businesses.

We were asked to make adjustments, you make adjustments too, so there are a lot of not-for-profits whom we partner that also are providing the services of grants that we receive. We don't make—there's some grants that—a lot of grants that we receive that we give it, pass it through. We're a passthrough agency, so it's those types of things—it's not as easy as you think I guess for lack of a better term. We're here to provide a balance, but no one's going to leave here happy on the 15th because that's the reality of your budget. There will be changes in 2025 and you might have to—we have to make adjustments one year. What really is interesting is that one slide that they used earlier is this action makes next year's budget a little bit more interesting than I think anybody thought and that means that's where priority based budgeting comes into play because as we prioritize services and monetize them the lower priorities may be defunded. If my departments haven't heard that, that's what priority based budgeting provides as a tool for decision-making. The problem is a lot of those lower priority fundings are the ones that are popular, not fundamental to government. Really interesting discussions next year. We have to get through this budget process and I think we all recognize this is not going to be easy.

I'll commend the Sheriff. He has been very good to work with in providing balance. You know he articulated about court cases, talked about the role of the Sheriff's Office, he's been at the table. The DA really has been through the table. They just have a specific view of the world that they have, that they inherited when they decided to run for office and they take their job seriously. All our departments take their job seriously.

As I said last week, this budget process forces us to take a critical look at the services we provide and serve as kind of a reset for the future because it's not our money, it's the people's money. We forget that and sometimes what we've provided for years may have to be discontinued because other things are more important or they're saying we don't want to give you more money, bottom line, and costs still go up. I mean the talk that we talked about last year or last week, is that we're not immune to inflation, but when we don't have more revenue and we still need to provide services and buy products to provide the services that we are, that has to come off the top. When we want to be a fair and just employer and make sure that all employees get a raise, but we don't have more revenue to come in, we have to take that off the top; therefore, the available revenue goes down. That's what an impact of revenue neutral did for us, but as I said, I understand that dynamic, we'll make it work, but we can only make it work if I find $7.8M to cut.

I never thought I would have this pontification today. That's not my job to lecture my bosses, but here we are. The reality is cuts have to be made everybody, changes have to occur because if you look at the long-range budget slide, we're back to the red numbers that we fought last year to defer. Do you want the state to reorganize this government, do you want to take away the authority, no, not on my watch. I said that last year. I'm not going to have it in the future either; therefore, we have to—as Commissioner Bynum told me a few times, we're going to have to suck it up. Now, how we suck it up I need 11 people to pass a budget with this reality and do I like it, no, but it's the reality we have to deal with. So, I'm finished for the night.

Commissioner Lopez said, Administrator, I've got one question for you. According to WYEDC's report from 2015 to 2023 there's been over $5.3B in investment. Where is our return at? **Mr. Johnston** said well we have those investments and this is a quick—my thumbnail understanding of the dynamics of economic development in Wyandotte County is we're very rich in incentives. If you look out west where a lot of the work has been done, most of them are in a STAR Bond, that's a 20-year where you lockup the growth of sales tax within all those districts. That's a long time. We have a couple CID incentives that are sales tax. We have one that's ending soon which is a TIF sales tax. When you look at the growth revenue that is—yeah growth is investments there which is measured in private sector investment to build buildings and a few other economic indicators like jobs in there, are the tax dollars coming our way, not yet, but that's the risk of investment. To get it, you needed those incentives so you're saying we're to have this type of dynamic we are going to have those 20-year footprints where we do not see the growth in sales tax revenue and the like. We've also used in some cases the tax abatements to support the IRB program as a 10-year instrument. Normally they would receive a small, negotiated pilot with an appreciation of one or two percent a year, which is far below inflation. And if you noticed a couple weeks ago you passed a whole change that we're using IRB's now with a graduated 10-year thing where you start off with—I can't remember if it's 10 or 20%, but there's an increment every—I think it's 20 years then two years later it's 40% that we get more of the money from the incentive instead of just giving it all to support the project.

As I mentioned, the economic development approach with our new Economic Development Director will be a strong discussion before you as we take a look at the policies that we need based on the reality of today. I'm always reminded on the Commission that Mayor Marinovich had 28 years ago when they started looking at what this community needed and they took bold steps to create the raceway and the Legends and there were strong—we condemned homes and assembled the property to create wonderful venues that we accept as normal today which served as a catalyst for the development on the west side. When I talked to long time residents, oh Dave, there was just a few houses and it was as rural as rural can be. Look at it today. They're engines that create jobs and all that but that was because of a risk that the Commission made at that time. They said we need that to get those things.

Well, we made decisions about bringing Marvin Windows here out of North Dakota and Minnesota and they're building now out by Amazon. They're going to be a good provider of jobs for a product needed in the central part of our country, but they're located here. We have Orange EV off of Turner Diagonal. I was amazed that company was here. They make electric power, battery powered semi-trucks for short haul. Their biggest customer is DHL in airports, riverports and seaports because they have an environmental ethic that said we don't want diesel fuel. They're manufactured right here, but they got an incentive and it's nice to put on our portfolio that we have that type of business here as we look to market this area for similar business. Where are they, they're locked up. Those incentives will end some time and we should get the benefit. Those decisions were made. We have to be patient to follow them through.

We also need to understand there was a hope to look at investment on the east side of our community. We're going to have to have similar type of investments to spur market interest to build here too. Do we get away from it, probably not.

Commissioner Lopez said so what happens when these big outfits—these big outfits are rolling in the do-re-mi big time. They can afford to be here without these incentives, but let's roll the dice and I bet the dice says when their incentives are up, they're gone and then we give another incentive to the next outfit to come in so they can make all their money and we got to pick up the tab again. **Mr. Johnston** said well, let's start for that decision of that business to locate here first. Those businesses have choice in where to locate. I mean if you've ever been through a site selection process, it is brutal where they narrow down the sites for their consideration. Once they come up with a—so, they have choices to where they're going to set their investment and then when you get into the short list, they actually make the site visits. You don't know they're in town, but what they're looking for is a no. Why should I come to—I'm looking for a reason to know why, they want the job to be easier for their client. We went here, big red circle, you don't want to come here, you don't want to go to this community, this one didn't have as many red circles, so your best possible thing is, number one, is this community. It's competitive so you have to think about if they have a 20 or 30 year presence, they provided jobs in our community for 20 to 30 years, but we also need to balance that by having a strong business retention expansion program, which we do not have, which is going to be one of our priorities with our new Economic Development Director.

We also need to get back the Small Business Assistance Center that left town and located in Johnson County and challenge them to get back here because 80% of a local economic growth of a community is on the small and medium size businesses. When they have to go to training in Johnson County for seminars and tax help and all that, more often than not they got to close their business and when they close their business they lose money. So, we need to have those sources here to support their existence here. If we continually have a good environment, we can have them be here longer than the incentive because it is expensive to them to find a new home, so why wouldn't we want to keep them here by changing our environment into a business friendly environment. And I think that's what I've heard from most of you sitting around this table and Commissioner Townsend on the screen, that that's a weakness that we have. We are not business friendly, we will be business friendly and we will keep the businesses longer here than far longer than the incentive because the incentive is to get them here, then we have a moral obligation and an economic obligation to keep them here.

Commissioner Lopez said I understand, but what about the incentives for the affordable housing, Section 8, things like that. That's all owned by a bunch of Hedge Funds, but yet the one Hedge Fund did $200M last year, but they just suck the wealth out of affordable housing and we get duped every time, so just omit that. **Mr. Johnston** said what you heard from many different folks over time, we have a variety of housing problems, not just a housing supply problem, it's a diverse of the supply problem. I can tell you one of the interesting discussions that we have internally when it comes to the residency requirements with people, they want to have that extension and all that. I can't find an affordable place for my income to live in Wyandotte County. It's one of the major reasons that we hear from our employees, so okay, you got six more months to find a place, but that's your last extension and they hope they can find someplace. We've lost some employees because they can't find a place, but the issue is we don't have a supply, so what's the incentive to supply. Right now the market, because interest rates are high, we're not building single-family homes, but the market is saying we'll buy multi—we'll fund multifamily buildings so people can rent. That is what the market is telling us; therefore, you do have—we have some nice market rate ones. We have Legends 267 that just opened, that's market rate in the Legends.

We have problems as you come east where you have other economic strata that influence values. We have distressed census tracts. The federal government along with state government says we have programs to help invest in distressed census tracts, but there are economic parameters. Salary parameters. You have to allow folks to live in that meet those parameters. We have employees that qualify for that. I mean they're not all for the very poor, but they're workforce housing whether it's—you know we have—one of the common things about we heard from the developers on LIHTC is building homes for your police officers and for your employees. That's fine, but they never answered the other question that I think you're leading to. How do you ensure that they'll remain quality far past your ownership. You know that's our responsibility to adequately fund inspection programs and if we want to have that insurance, we have to invest in our community that way too to have decent housing for all people who call Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas and that takes resources too.

So, we need to have an adequate supply of diverse housing to meet people of all economic strata, all economic means. Right now we have significant disparity in the supply, but that's just one of the wonderful challenges that we have to embrace and look at it from a policy standpoint as we move forward. You know you can't do everything as policymakers. You're limited by your resources, you're limited by your personal philosophies that need to have consensus, but that's okay. It's happening in every community. You just have to define yourself on what those values are and try to implement them the best we can with the resources, but tonight I'm telling you I got a $7.8M gap and we need your help. That's why I gave you a budget recommendation.

Commissioner Lopez said, Administrator, I have one more thing. I want to say I appreciate all of you here, the Budget, Dr. Kneuvean, and, Administrator, you started answering—you were starting to get fired up, where has that guy been? I want to know where has that guy been. **Mr. Johnston** said well, they've heard it. I try to be sedate because if I want heat to come, I want it to be on you 11. We're here to help you.

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you to the Budget staff, thank you Dr. Kneuvean and, of course, our County Administrator. I think I'm going to be like our Administrator. I'm going to say what I want to say for the budget and just leave it at that and not speak on the rest of it for the rest of the remainder until we pass this budget next week. For the past three years I fought against this. I still don't believe in it. I still believe it is a fiscally irresponsible policy decision. We're robbing Peter to pay Paul and robbing Paul to pay Peter right back. We as a Commission say we want to move forward. This is moving us backward and members of this board and the community have been pushing this for years and we're here tonight—we're all fired up about this because you can tell we care about this community. I know, David, you and your staff have done what was needed to be done because we gave the policy direction and I thank you for that, but before we made that decision we as a Commission also gave direction to our County Administrator to find cost savings, to do his job, to find the streamlines.

I've said it before and I'll say it again, we as a Commission need to stop legislating as we are the County Administrator. We continue to do that. That is not our authority. That is not our job. I know my fellow commissioners and some community members have told me to just bite the bullet and vote for this. I cannot in good conscience. My district—days after we took the revenue neutral vote, I kept getting calls and texts of them disappointed in my decision and I've said since day one that my district does not support revenue neutral rate and I will continue to follow that because I represent my district of Argentine and Rosedale.

We have the Sheriff and the other Constitutional officers. We are bound by state law to fully fund their departments. Now, yes, it is our decision, but we're not experts in running a jail, we're not experts in prosecuting crimes or maintaining all files and documents of the Deeds Office. How are we the ones to decide what's a fully funded department. They are the ones that have the expertise to provide us the numbers of what a fully funded department looks like. We're making departments fight each other for the finite resources that we have. That's not fair.

Again, like I said, this will be the only time I'll talk on this and I'll just leave it and not speak anymore, but again, I do not believe in this, never will believe in this, it's fiscally irresponsible and once this passes, and this is not against staff or you David in any way, shape or form, but we will officially be taking steps backwards instead of forward. Every other community around us is progressing while we go backwards. We had Edwardsville and Bonner Springs residents come and speak to us about going revenue neutral rate, but yet their own City Councils voted to exceed the revenue neutral rate. I'm just frustrated to where we are.

I will leave that I will continue to fight for my district for what my district wants and I want to thank again staff for everything that you do every single day because we could not do our job without you.

Commissioner Kane said wow, you gave me my speech. This is my 19th budget and this is the first time I've seen this many people, heads of departments, here. This is the lowest morale I've seen in the 19 years I've been here because what you've been asked to do. You've been asked to do the impossible and you folks in financial, I don't know how you go home and sleep because you probably can't. I got the same phone calls saying what are you doing. If revenue neutral was so good, so many of the surrounding municipalities would have done it last year. The only one that did it was Louisburg. Where else across the United States that they go revenue neutral. How do we handcuff the financial department and heads of departments and then we're not filling some jobs. I know people aren't getting laid off, but it puts an extra burden on the employee that's there already and it's frustrating for me and I wasn't here the night of the budget. I was with my family on vacation. I don't care if you people like it or not. My family is more important than this, but this isn't working. This isn't what I was hoping—this isn't what I expected.

You know some folks come in and they yell and scream at us which I think is totally ridiculous because that's not the way you run a meeting, but this is going to adversely affect us, maybe not next year, the following year. You can see the numbers on the chart that there's going to have to be some major adjustments and when Cooley was here several years ago, and I can't remember what year, Reggie and I was talking about this the other day, Cooley's beating his finger on the table saying do not lower the mill levy so we lowered it two and I think we raised it three the next year. This is where we're at. We go revenue neutral and then next year we have an ah shit moment and then we say oh well we didn't now that was going to happen and the presentation you gave before they went downstairs, and I watched it on TV, was phenomenal.

Everyone was told what would happen if we went revenue neutral and I'm frustrated by it. I'm like you, I was going to wait till the other day, but since you got fired up and I'm fairly calm, and I will tell you Commissioner Lopez was there, Commissioner Stites was there when David, I, Alan, and Bridgette had a somewhat heated conversation about some of the things that were being eliminated. My background is in safety and a lot of those jobs are in safety. A lot of those things were in safety. You know we want our employees to be safe as possible, to have as much manpower they need to be safe as possible and we want our community to have this be the safest community as it possibly can. Now, what we talked about has since changed, but I'm telling you I was so pissed when that happened because I'm sitting there thinking what are we doing, why would we do it this way. You know I damn near got fired from the UAW when they were telling me the same thing they told you guys because I couldn't bite my tongue and I don't know how you guys do it.

I'd like to speak on not just the people that live in Wyandotte County, but the people that live and work here because you're equally as important as the rest and sometimes we don't look at you as we're equally important and you are and I feel sorry for you what you're going through.

Commissioner Burroughs said, Administrator, you gave a very good overview of the challenges we have before us and these challenges weren't received lightly. I remember sitting here the last four years looking at where we were financially and how our financial stability was being challenged and we threw that on your plate when you first got here and there was a commitment that we were going to right size this and get it taken care of. I don't know how we were helping you or how we were hurting you, but we managed to push it out an additional year. This is the first budget you've presented to us and it's been explained pretty well and I think you followed the request of the Commission that there would be no layoffs and nowhere in here did I see a layoff, so I believe that—I commend you for ensuring that voice from the Commission was heard and implemented.

Two, we're almost to the point where the across the board cuts were one thing, discussion from department leaders were another and I think collectively they've come together and made the choices they chose to make and it's before us tonight.

I do want to commend everyone for the strategic realignment of the resources to meet the 25% fund balance. This was something that we had talked about for four years and to finally see it and transparently done across the board it freed up two point some million dollars to go into the General Fund or to help us offset our shortfall. I commend you for that. That's something that was in violation of our policies that we didn't address over the years, but now we have and it saved us two point some million dollars. That is to be commended.

I do have a couple of questions. The commodities I see is up $101K. Do we know why we have a 4% increase in commodities moving into next year? I don't need an answer now, but that was just one of the questions. I mean commodities is usually—maybe it's my perception of what commodities is. I'm usually thinking of paperwork for the departments, reams of paper, ink cartridges, pencils, things like that. If there's other things, please let me know as we go forward, but that's a 4% increase. That's almost even to what we asked for on a 5% cut in some of the strategic cuts that we made.

The other one was the raises were given to the employees, so we chose to continue to move forward with our employees in mind, so I appreciate that. The personnel trend realignment was something that was discussed a couple of years ago that we were slow tracking, trying to get moving and now it's here. I know that we're still working on that, but I'm pleased to see that move forward and I think it'll give us a truer picture of what our cost for our personnel will be not only today, but next year.

There's a couple of funds that I really want to question and I haven't heard or seen them anywhere in the budget and one of them is the punitive penalty from the casino for not building the casino hotel. I think that's around $450K a year, I believe, something like that. The 3% split from the gaming revenue, I don't know where that's at. I haven't seen that in the budget. If it goes into the General Fund, what is it paying for and how is it being tracked to ensure that we're utilizing those monies in a way—and I do know that there was a $1M Opioid settlement that the million dollars came into, I believe, the Health Department and the Police Department advocated for that money a year ago. I don't know where that money went or if it ever came in. I would like to have some kind of information as to what happened with that Opioid settlement money.

On your page with the long-range forecast you have from 25 to 30 a five-year span, a $20M—a $20+M increase in growth in the General Fund on the county side, so we're projecting basically, I'm going to guess, maybe a 4% growth over those five years. If that's not correct, please correct me. **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Burroughs** said okay, thank you. A 20M growth and that is money that I hope that we can, by streamlining and rightsizing our budget, that we'll be able to put in places that we hear this evening that are extremely important. But with that growth, I also see why we only have a 2% growth in sales tax moving forward when I know the state sales tax continues to grow. We go from 2% next year, but 4% the following four years and so if we're being a little conservative, maybe because we haven't got our audit back, I can respect and appreciate that conservative approach to that sales tax. Every year that I've been here that has been underestimated and a couple of times quite significantly. So, I would like to see if we can't get a little bit better grip. All of this might free up about another million, million five, maybe even two million and I know we're not there and I'm not trying to add extra work. These are just things that I haven't had a chance to have an answer to or get an answer to.

With that, I just want to commend you for the time and effort you're putting in to meet the Commission's request of doing revenue neutral. That request came from the public. The only other thing I would say is if we're going to cut services and not cut personnel, what are the personnel going to do when those services aren't being provided? If we're not going to have additional refuge drop-off, what does the personnel do that day? I'm sure there's plenty of work out there, but it's one thing to cut services and not layoff personnel. It just sends a message that these services—if we do it, how do we do it and not cut personnel. I don't want to send that message to the public. I don't think that's a good message to send. With that, I just want to thank you all for the discussion this evening and the presentation.

Commissioner Bynum said, Commissioner, those are good questions and I appreciate them and I think we'd all kind of maybe like to hear those answers whenever. You know maybe tomorrow, I don't know or maybe next week before we adopt, but I think those are good questions and I was just going to make a couple of comments to Commissioner Lopez questions and concerns regarding incentives and abatements and things like that. Several weeks ago during our process I had made a request that post budget we have a full look at all of that and my request was a look back of 10 to 15 years. For example, we know we have an expiring TIF at Plaza at the Speedway. For example, we have one of our Logistics projects that I believe is within the next few years rolling off of its abatement.

So, I was interested in what those benefits will be when those abatements end and kind of a look back at, again, 10 to 15 years' worth of economic development projects what was the incentive or the abatement given and when will it realize a revenue stream for us. I think that'll be really interesting because at the end of the day every economic development deal that we've made here has been made based on economic development policies that are set and adopted by the Commission. We adopt those policies, so if we are at a point in time when we don't agree with our own policies, then my suggestion would be that we have Commissioner Burrough's committee work with staff, review every policy and bring back recommendations. That would be the appropriate way. I don't think setting policy on the dais is appropriate. I think your committee should study, identify what they all are, and any recommendations you think should be made and then bring those forward. So, just kind of a comment because, Commissioner Lopez, those are good questions, but it's up to us to decide what economic development policies we as a Commission want to adopt.

Mayor, I only have one more question and that is at the starting point, after we adopted revenue neutral I'm pretty sure that the very beginning of that process when a few of us sat down to begin looking at, as Dr. Kneuvean said, here's where we are, here's the gap, etc. The initial request that was made was to these department heads, both city and county, go find us 5 and 10%. I mean that was our starting point, correct, and they've all done that to the best of my understanding. Then you know we've had to tweak here and there, but that was kind of where we started with the revenue neutral process was go find 5 to 10% everybody and so I'll just close by joining my commissioners in thanking not only the Budget staff and the CFO, but the elected leaders and every single department for doing what we asked you to do.

I do sit beside Administrator Johnston on the dais and so I do lean over periodically and say it's going to hurt, but we're going to live through it. It's going to hurt and we're going to live through it and I firmly believe that because we as a community have been through really bad times and have come out the other side. So, I'm a believer that can happen, but I just want to make sure staff and department heads and elected officials do know that we know what we asked you to do and we appreciate that you delivered.

Commissioner Davis said where do you start. I do want to thank staff and David for your work, our ACAs. This is not easy and just being here in the room thinking different commission meetings you feel different tensions and with that it's like they're angry at us or they're disappointed or something which is kind of the nature of the job unfortunately. I do appreciate you all coming up with this because I know that none of this was easy and was probably not what everyone thought this was going to be. Well, I shouldn't say everybody. It's probably not what most of us thought this was going to be for our budget.

I want to point out a couple of things and then kind of ask some questions. It is my understanding, and someone correct me if I'm wrong, that the Unified Government and the Community College are the only two governing entities going revenue neutral in Wyandotte County. Is that correct? **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Davis** said the library, so the library. **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Davis** said the PET, so PET, UG and KCKCC are all going revenue neutral and the Drainage District all going revenue neutral. None of our school districts are going revenue neutral, Bonner Springs and Edwardsville have exceeded revenue neutral. **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Davis** said so we don't know. I mean we did that whole process, so okay, right now they're not revenue neutral.

I think it's just very important for us to understand that even with us doing all of this work and trying to lower it, that most likely most property taxpayers, if not all of them, will not see a net decrease in their property taxes even after we have significantly decreased services. That is super important just for the public to understand that, that the expectations—I know notices are going out pretty soon here where people are going to get their updated bill and there's going to be this expectation, and I've said this publicly to a neighborhood group a few weeks ago, you're not going to get this substantial cut that you're looking for. That's important to know given how many people spoke to the media, how many people have personally targeted some of the commissioners that have voted to exceed revenue neutral because of the programs that we value and see, how many people have gone on social media and spread lies and rumors saying we have cars and we have salaries and things that are just not true. That behind what is on the property tax bill is not Commissioner Davis and his wish list, but it's you all. It's the jail, it's housing those folks, it's the DA in the work that he's doing, it's Public Works, it's Parks. So, I hope for our community that this a lesson that we learn. We are not Washington, DC. We don't get to make decisions and they kind of just go up in the ether and just like oh, okay, yeah we voted on that. No, these decisions are—it's real, it's people's lives, it's people's families.

I feel like throughout the process that got lost and now a real reality check is going to set in. I hope you all, and I wasn't even planning on saying this in my notes, but I'm here now. Tell your family members, tell your neighbors, tell your friends, tell your colleagues this is what revenue neutral looks like.

We didn't go to the last slide on here, but if we do this again we're not having conversations on saving jobs, we're cutting jobs, not vacancies, people are losing their jobs. For too long there has been a complacency of those that have benefited from these programs and have benefited from us not going revenue neutral and have said, you know what, well my property tax bill is really high. Okay, cool, we're going to cut it really, not really, we're going to try, but at what cost.

I'm going to save this. Again I'm going to save this for our public hearing just to remind people this is the reality of what we're asking for and this is where we are at. It's very, very important that our community knows the narratives that have been spread about our managing of finances and I'm not saying that we are perfect, but the narratives that have been spread about some of the commissioners, the majority that have voted to exceed revenue neutral have been false. That when we have said let's exceed revenue neutral we had the Sheriff's Department in mind, we had the DA in mind, we had Parks & Rec, and Public Works, why, because those services KCK PD, the Police and Fire; those services help improve the lives of our residents. If you have an issue with how the service is rendered, let's talk about that, but to sit and say you know what, forget it, I'm done, that's how we got to where we're at. Very unfortunate.

I want to talk quickly about economic development because that was an interesting banner there and I think one of the points that was missing is this, Commissioner Lopez, I know you're still kind of learning everything. You're on the Economic Development & Standing Committee and so you have the opportunity to vote no on any incentive you do not like. You have the opportunity—you have done for some, you haven't done for others, but I think you have a voice here, you're not a bystander. The other thing I will say is, when we go revenue neutral we do not realize any increase in property taxes, so we can talk about policy, but if the goal is revenue neutral, what's the point, what difference does it make. You don't realize any of the new property tax revenue because you have manipulated the rate to not realize it. We can go and track and get the list. It makes no difference, the revenue won't be there because we already adjusted the mill levy and that's very, very important for us to understand. There's no point of us talking about economic development or even, quite frankly, prioritizing economic development for property taxes if we're going to go revenue neutral because the revenue stays the same. It doesn't change. I'm done with my speech there.

I want to talk about health insurance costs. One of the things I've heard for our employees was regarding it being basically a wash. If you give me a 3 or 4% COLA, but you're not contributing as much to my health insurance, what is the net benefit for the employee. So, Dr. Kneuvean or Mr. Lindsey or whoever, we have a lot of smart people in the room, what is the cost for health insurance and what is that line item. What are we paying at 3% and then what is the cost for COLA? I think when we're talking about, at the very least, keeping the folks that we have, that should be priority as opposed to just saying you might end up paying more, but do you have any—yeah, please. **Ms. Kneuvean** said we can provide you the breakdown because there's individual and there's family coverage. The employer pays more, so when we talk about a 3% increase, it's 3% on what the employer pays and 3% on what the employee pays and that's what goes into our self-insurance. We're self-insured into a fund, but that is a much smaller number that the 3% is on. For individual it's very inexpensive. We're talking $20 a month, something like that. Family is more expensive as it is everywhere, $400 to $500 a month. We'll get you the actual breakdown so you can see. Then your pay increases are on your salary, so it's 3%. The percents are the same, but it's on a lot bigger number. It's not a wash. **Commissioner Davis** said so meaning—because I know originally we were going to do seven, but we were revenue neutral, now the proposal is three, but with the COLA increase there will be some sort of net increase month to month, paycheck to paycheck, all that stuff, okay.

I know we have our HR Director there. Did you want to add anything just on the health insurance piece as well?

Renee Ramirez, Human Resources Director, said the health insurance is a self-insured fund that we have to maintain a certain amount of reserves in that fund because when you're self-insured the premiums that we collect from both the Unified Government side and the employee side is how we pay all of the claims. So, in essence, we were projecting a 7% increase is what we were going to recommend to the Administrator because we need to maintain a health reserve of at least 30% in order to stay afloat because bad claims could come in and it's going to cost us money. So, we talked about what we could do and so we were looking at anywhere between 3 and 5% to reduce it from the 7 because we still have to make some sort of collection.

While the employees will be paying 3%, you have individual coverage where employees based on their salary—it's a tiered salary depending on what you make. Employees that would make over $60K are going to pay—people that—they're going to pay differently, so you're going to have individuals that actually pay depending on the insurance plan they have. You have a high deductible health plan with an HSA and you have a traditional plan, so the costs to those are going to be a little bit different. I'll give you an example of the traditional plan. The employee only for the traditional plan the Unified Government pays $949.59 for the premium. So, the employee's base salary, their annual salary for an individual who earns $30K and below, their monthly employee premium is $14.15. Individuals who earn $30K to $60K, the employee is going to pay $28.32 and anybody making over $60K the employee is going to pay $42.48, that is for the individual. For the family the Unified Government's premium on their traditional plan is going to be $2,292.45. Again, we have that tiered structure for the three, so employees monthly premiums for an individual making $30K and below, they're going to pay $447.62 a month. $30K to $60K, they are paying $461.80 and anyone making $60K and more, they're going to be paying $475.95. That is medical only. That does not include the expenses that's going to be coming out of their pocket to pay office visits.

If you're on the traditional plan, you're going to have a traditional co-pay plus 10% of the bill because we have a co-insurance on that. If you're in the high deductible health plan, you have a Health Savings Account that the Unified Government gives and funds a portion of that for employees. Those individuals are going to pay the full cost of the office visit until they reach their deductible and then it will kick in. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha. To kind of wrap this up because I do have some other questions, employees are not paying more necessarily in this next budget—or in what's proposed at 3%. We are contributing, we being the Unified Government, are contributing less than what was proposed. Do I have that correct? **Ms. Ramirez** said employees will be paying more in premiums just like the Unified Government will pay more in premiums. Both sides will pay 3% more in premiums if that's what it's going to increase. **Commissioner Davis** said if it was 7%, would it still have been 7% on both sides? **Ms. Ramirez** said correct. **Commissioner Davis** said it would have—okay gotcha.

Commissioner Davis said, Dr. Kneuvean, the personnel realignment, just remind me what that is one more time. **Ms. Kneuvean** said the Unified Government has had a practice for quite a while to account for turnover so that we know if we have 100 positions not all 100 are filled all the time. So, based on data there's been a personnel trend that's been tracked and we've been trending at 93% and the goal—or the way the budget is built historically is that then we fund 93%. We're basically pre-counting that turnover that's going to happen based on real data, based on what has occurred. The realignment is when we exceed what we budgeted, so we exceeded 93%. There was less turnover in or people who were hired in. It is a competitive employee market, might have been hired in slightly more, so out of 2,200-2,300 employees, that's a lot of moving parts and so it's very data informed. The Budget team tracks it every payroll. They're looking at it—the piece that we're looking at figuring out better ways to retool around is as that starts to get offline, then we need to act, we need to do something. So, working with the departments and that can be in a variety of ways. It can be that you slow down the hiring, it can be that if we're under, we try to speed it up because we need the employees, which as a note I just would share—and actually it was the Sheriff and I had a conversation. These cuts when we're doing these reductions that does not mean that we were perfectly staffed and we're making reductions. We're not perfectly staffed to start with. Even though we were—as the Administrator wanted and the Mayor and Commission we were not doing layoffs of people, reducing positions, it impacts the bigger picture too.

On the personnel alignment it will affect that mathematically and we'll be talking through ideas and strategies about how we closer monitor that so that we don't get a budget adjustment—that we're making adjustments through the year and working towards getting that percentage up in general so that we don't have these adjustments that we have to do because all that's doing is pushing now more expenses to the next year because personnel is ongoing expenses. We're doing work on that, but it's a past practice and that's what that alignment is. **Commissioner Davis** said I just want to make sure I'm following. So, someone gets hired for the Unified Government. Let's say we had offered them package deals, salary, benefits, all that stuff. We offered them $50K. It came out at $55K. Would that be an example in which something like this would be appropriate? **Ms. Kneuvean** said yes.

Commissioner Davis said okay. Did we account for vacancies in that $2.1M projection as well? Okay, I'm getting a nod from the Budget—okay, I was about to say found some money. Okay, I just wanted to make sure I'm following that.

In this budget do we have longstanding vacancies added? I know we removed some positions, but do we have other vacancies that have been here on the books for three, four years or more in this proposed budget? **Ms. Kneuvean** said we've come through and through efforts last year and then this year I will say by and large those positions have been eliminated. The challenge with that, that we ran into is that you would hope, hey, we eliminated 41 positions, you would hope there'd be a financial benefit to the fund. But if you didn't budget for all of them to start with because they weren't in the three-year trend, you don't get to count that expense reduction because you didn't budget for it, but it does help in the long run. It's not that it's like all for not. It helps in the long run because it reduces your risk and your exposure to overspend in the future, so we'll continue that work working with each department looking at those positions. There's been some departments and it's not unique to the Unified Government, there are just departments, Public Safety, Police, Sheriff, every department struggles with hiring people, so Dispatchers. I mean these are common struggles for all cities. It's not a reflection on the lack of trying or even the lack of need of those positions. When we go through that process, we are also looking at, yes, it may have been vacant, but why. Why is it vacant, is it needed, are we even staffed at the right size to start with and that's the work that we need to really do in partnership with the departments. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha.

Overtime is also mentioned here and as I read it, it is a—we're going to budget for it, but we're going to try it out. Do we have a strategy or anything in place for us to kind of track. It's one thing for us to say we're only going to spend $600K on overtime, I mean, just given the line of work for our law enforcement and how many requests they get and just things that happen—Chief is shaking his head, the Sheriff is shaking his head like I don't—I can only imagine. I know with the Fire Department back there and then even for our non-public safety UG employees—I mean do we have a strategy or has there been any thought on how we would even attempt to track over time? **Ms. Kneuvean** said we can track overtime by every payroll period. We can trend it by any anomalies that then needs to be a conversation. We just need to put in a process to really watch that. I know the departments work hard to keep overtime down.

I do want to emphasize again, because I don't want anybody to be surprised, that in particular on the county side, if you look at the budgets we had to choose from, there's not a lot that's funded in the county side to really look to. So, in working with the Sheriff, he offered us holding some positions and so the more people you have the less overtime, so there's a ying and a yang, but it is a goal. I do want to be clear about that because I don't want to surprise you if we do have to come back. There are things—he makes very good points. There are things that we've got two major criminal trials that will be multi-month trials and that's nothing but overtime. It is an aspirational goal, so I do want to be fair and on the county side the other one is looking at the Dispatch, we have a goal on there of reducing overtime.

I just did some quick math. I was just looking at—when we think about whether or not there's fat in the budget, things that I think tells stories is looking at Fire and Police the only thing that they're funded for over here out of the county side is the Dispatch. I took the 7.5M divided it by 12 because that seems like a lot of money, divided it by 12, divided by 4, divided by each day, you start doing that for a 24-hour operation, it is very little money. So, there's not a lot of room there and the overtime is related to vacancies. HR has done a great job of recruiting, hiring, bonuses, retention, looking at strategies and we will continue to do that because if we can hire people, that saves us some money. If not, then it's managing overtime and if not, if that's not possible, we will be back for conversations. We don't want you to be surprised.

Commissioner Davis said those conversations—if a scenario were to occur where we would have to amend the budget because what has been allocated is simply not sufficient, where would those dollars come from or what options do we have? **Ms. Kneuvean** said as CFO it pains me to answer this question, but it would be fund balance. That is all you've got unless as we're tracking the revenues if something comes in better. We'll get you the data on the sales tax. There's reasons why it was forecasted like it was. We'll get you trends what the forecast was, what the actuals were, but it is possible that things come in better and that helps us to adjust and make amendments as needed, but there is no other option. That's part of the challenge particularly with the County General Fund. There's just not a lot of options, not a lot of departments. You know it's 70 some percent is the Court, DA and the Sheriff which includes the jail and Detention.

We’re going to work together as far as we can and we will monitor it so that we will know well in advance if we’re off track. I do appreciate the work in particular for the county side. I’ll say the same for the Police. Mostly they’re on the city side, but they’ve been a willing partner to say we can try, but it’s—I want to be transparent. We need to be honest and say this is an aspirational goal, but we know this is happening, this trial is happening, and our population keeps going up. We’ll do things like bid contracts and that might have some savings in ‘25. Probably most of that would be ‘26, but we’re looking at different things to do to try to help amend where that comes from—but just to be very honest particularly with overtime.

Commissioner Davis said thank you. I really appreciate that. The last thing I’ll say and I appreciate the time. I think it’ll be super important for us to come up with an idea. We have the proposal, what changes or amendments do we want. We do have a week. I don’t know how many times we want to meet. It’s Wednesday and I’m seeing some of you all again tomorrow I’m sure and we’ll see each other quite a bit this month, but what we have is what we have. The numbers are the numbers unless we want to just zero out our savings which would not be advisable given any financial advising.

So, if we want to look at the trash collection fee—to those individuals that emailed us, I appreciate them. My response to them is you need to show up. Don’t just email me, don’t just call me. You need to show up because it’s just not enough to say I heard from someone down the street that this is a very useful program. We need to see real advocacy for these programs or they will be cut, period.

So, I’m open to more conversation on the Household Hazardous Waste. If we don’t want to cut it from eight to two, I like that idea of what if it’s a .50 cent or .75 cent increase and here’s the benefit of it, but those individuals that have been benefiting from it need to be active between now and next Thursday.

Commissioner Burns said, David, I would like to commend you for your presentation tonight. I just didn’t realize that you went to the same lecture school as my wife of 49 years, but anyway and seriously, I want to thank you and your staff very much. I want to really thank all of the department heads. I didn’t make that decision to go revenue neutral very lightly. I really didn’t. I understand. I was in the Courthouse 45 years and I realize what you’re going through and what we’re going to have to go through, but we’re going to make it through there.

What I saw last year when I ran for office, I don't want to speak for the other three commissioners that ran at the same time, all the people said on the lecture circuit was cut taxes. That's all I ever heard and I live in, obviously, in the eastern part here and they also said open the Central Avenue Bridge, but cut taxes. I have had people commend me for having the fortitude to go ahead and do it knowing that there'll be sacrifices in my district. I know it will be tough and we need to make some decisions. I don't think we need to continue to have budget meetings when David has laid out pretty much what we need to cut. You know we can talk and talk and whatever and I'm sure David and the staff has done a good job with the department heads telling you here are the ramifications or possible ramifications. But anymore continued budget meetings—what is this, our eighth that we've had, seven or eight, something like that and you know it, quite frankly, is getting a little repetitious when we know we don't have the money to fund what you all need.

Commissioner Lopez said a quick question for HR and I have a comment to make after that too. The employees health insurance, do they have to have that? **Ms. Ramirez** said employees that do not have Unified Government health insurance, we do give them a $150 waiver to be on another plan. **Commissioner Lopez** said for instance, there is a—he goes by Dr. G, he's a surgeon. I can't remember how to pronounce it, but he's just west of the Annex Building, 82nd & State through the next light. I can't remember what street that is, but he's right there on the corner. He has his own health insurance for anybody really and I have all my guys on it. It actually beats—it more cost effective than any other health insurance that I've seen. He's able to network with other doctors and practitioners to make the funding reasonable and it's just outstanding. Like if they wanted to amend their health insurance to have a—you know if it's just like an ER visit, if they need to go to the emergency room, but other than that to see a practitioner or anything, Dr. G is like—he's beat everybody in town that I could see for health insurance. He does all the bloodwork, he does everything. He stitched me up a few times, but that's what I was just getting at. Would that help if a lot of our employees knew about him?

Ms. Ramirez said well, Commissioner, I will tell you that the Unified Government, you as commissioners, have made a big investment in what we call today The Road to Wellness Employee Health Center. That was an investment that this Commission made to help lower the cost of health insurance for our employees. That is a great benefit to our employees where the benefits, the services are at a lower rate. We have our own internal pharmacy there where our employees can get their prescriptions filled at a much lower cost. We're not like the big box stores where they have a 300% markup on prescriptions. We have a zero percent markup on our prescriptions, so a lot of our employees that are getting scripts filled there are coming away with—they may have been paying like hundreds of dollars a month and they're coming away paying maybe $10. Some of them have even paid less than $1.00 for prescriptions. So, the Wellness Center is a full service clinic just like an outside provider. The reason why we did that Wellness Center was we wanted our employees to have more control over the decisions that they were making on their health.

Because we're a self-insured plan, it is better for our employees to know that going to the on-site Wellness Center is cheaper for the Unified Government and for them opposed to going to the emergency room that cost us more money. We do have a full presentation that we were prepared to give to Standing Committee on the UG Wellness Center because we wanted to show to this Commission what your initiative was about six years ago in building that Road to Wellness Employee Health Center and how it actually has curved the costs. I will say that I'm very proud to say that we were selected—the Unified Government was selected by United Health Care to showcase the Unified Government because of what we did in that Road to Wellness Center and we even made Forbes.com for what we did. So, that center is a jewel for our organization and our employees.

Commissioner Lopez said I know I'm on the—this is just in general, but I know I'm on the Economic Committee and I've been in economics since day one of my business starting with rubbing two pennies together. I want you to realize that revenue neutral economic growth—economic growth translates into greater savings for the taxpayer. When there is growth, the same mill levy rate generates more dollars that the taxpayers can benefit from.

Commissioner Townsend said I think it is time as several other of my fellow commissioners has said to either identify what they think may be swapped for cuts, but there is no more money. You know that's the bottom line of this. Again, I commend staff for biting the bullet, all staff that participated, not just the CFO and her staff, but everyone who had to look at their respective budgets and come to the table with an offering.

Commissioner Burroughs, I liked your points. I thought it was a million dollars that the casino was paying us each year for their failure not to build the hotel. That's the number that I recall.

Again, Mayor, last thing I would like to see how if at all any changes could be made with the work being done between the DA's Office and the Police to see if it's possible to fill the DA's request for two whether they stay under the guardianship at the Police Department or their move to the DA's Office, but with the knowledge that we just don't have any more money. I mean that's the bottom line of it, but if by some type of swap or work arrangement what the DA needs to have done could be done. I'd like to see that possibly worked over. I don't know what could be done, but the next time we meet just have some report of what possibly could be done without adding any more dollars. Thank you all.

Chief Oakman said, Commissioner Townsend, I just wanted to comment on that real quick. We have seven Advocates and they most likely cannot be moved. Three of them are 100% grant funded and the other four are 75% grant funded. **Commissioner Townsend** said thank you Chief. What I'm wondering though is it possible—I just go back to what I remember the DA saying about how long his Advocates once they got a case had to live with the case and it just didn't seem like the Advocates in the Police Department had to live with say the same case for as long. So, that's where I'm hoping maybe there can be some kind of swap. If I heard you correctly or understood, it sounds like some of the Advocates in the Police Department may do other things that help our citizens maybe not even related to them if they are a victim of crime, but other services. Maybe some of those could be redone, eliminated, I don't know, but I understand what you're saying about them moving, but I guess the goal is just to have that work done to eliminate some of the problems that the DA was saying that his current headcount presents as a problem. **Chief Oakman** said yeah, we can work with that and figure out something.

Commissioner Stites said I held off till the end. I didn't know if I was going to say anything or not. I've got a lot of notes. I don't have voter remorse for the night that we voted for revenue neutral. I too, like Commissioner Burns and I'm sure the other new commissioners, three years ago when I ran that was the number one issue, reduce our taxes, reduce our taxes, reduce our taxes. I voted consistently to reduce our taxes. The first opportunity that budget neutral rolled around I took advantage of it and I'm not ashamed. I'm not going to criticize others from other cities that came in to speak for us to go revenue neutral. Unfortunately we vote on a budget that encompasses both the city and the county. We don't take two separate votes. I don't think it's fair that citizens that live in Wyandotte County and they just happen to reside in Bonner Springs or Edwardsville that came here to express their concerns about the county budget should be criticized over that. I commend them actually for coming out and speaking up.

There's a couple things I—as you guys know I was a strong advocate for CIFI to be brought back. I do see that was one of the first things that got fully cut out of this budget. If you guys don't know, CIFI is spread out through all three cities of Wyandotte County and $500K went to, I believe, KCK—or 50% went to KCK and 25% to Bonner and 25% to Edwardsville. That's cut out. I wish there was a way we could—I know that we can't say that we're going to fully fund it, but I sure wish that we could continue at some level just to keep that program alive so it just doesn't die. That was a benefit that actually benefits every square inch of Wyandotte County with infrastructure needs and we could probably have our staff speak about it, about what it's done for us, but there's no need. I'm sure it did great things.

I'm hopeful that we're going to get the answers that Commissioner Burroughs spoke about. I think you mentioned the TIF coming on at Plaza at the Speedway. That's a million dollars. If where that's at, does that come in this year? I know that we had a conversation that might have been the wrong number that was out there a little bit and it was an amount over a period of time, but it really has about a million dollar a year impact to our budget if that's split. **Ms. Kneuvean** said between the city and the county. **Commissioner Stites** said right. **Ms. Kneuvean** said the sales tax—**Commissioner Stites** said and is that in this—**Ms. Kneuvean** said it's not. **Commissioner Stites** said that's not in this budget. **Ms. Kneuvean** said it's not. **Commissioner Stites** said so, and I'm not being critical, but why. I don't know why. I'm sure you have a good answer, but why? **Ms. Kneuvean** said it's a matter of it's just coming off and there's ongoing discussions about considering a redeployment of those dollars. That's why in those discussions here's how much the dollars would be and if that does not occur, then that would be an example of where, okay, there's going to be more revenue which helps to address some of these things that we're upfront expressing pretty serious concerns about being able to hit some of these numbers, not all of them, but some of them. You know that's a great example of one, but because there's ongoing policy discussion is why. **Commissioner Stites** said because that could be redeployed for another project, right? **Ms. Kneuvean** was exactly.

Commissioner Stites asked, when are we going to make that decision because I feel like we are under this crunch right now where we're trying to figure dollars out. There's a half million dollars, I'm just saying, that could go towards CIFI, a half million dollars that could go toward the Sheriff's Department, to the DA, you name it, the list goes on. It could be divided up equally, but there's money there. When are we going to make that decision whether that comes back, where that goes. I mean we're faced with this budget now. I hate to interrupt. **Mr. Johnston** said I was answering this question. **Commissioner Stites** said sorry. **Ms. Kneuvean** said I think the question is when do we anticipate a decision on the Plaza at the Speedway proposal that's being discussed because that would be revenue that could be available. The thing I would offer on that just for sake of discussion is that there is a known quantity dollar amount, and again, there is a process that we could bring back a budget amendment. So, whatever the decision is, full, partial, not at all, then as part of that decision then you're making an informed decision and here's how the recommended use would be. So, there's that opportunity.

Commissioner Stites said in addition to that $1M that is going to impact continually for the—that's one of those examples like Commissioner Lopez, there's one of those—a TIF used for sales tax that paid off early, right? It paid off early, three years I think early, which is a good thing. That's what we want, it paid off early, now it's coming back to us. But there's a pot of money that is already generated that's setting in a fund, right? **Ms. Kneuvean** said I'll confirm this, but there was excess being produced and that was coming into the General Fund. It's, you know, some of the details that we'll provide in terms of what revenue projections were, why they change because there's more that goes into it. But there was excess coming into the General Fund, so it's already been spent.

Commissioner Stites said I guess and I don't want to—you know line by line and go through and figure out. You guys have done a great job getting us together, but there's an easily identified half million dollars on the city side and half a million dollars on the county side where this could be deployed immediately if we just make a policy decision or a decision on, I guess, if it's going to be redeployed or not. I don't know when that can take place.

Mr. Johnston said a pot of money the way I understand it, and Wendy, correct me if I'm wrong, is that the amount of money that we have collected through the TIF also we would have—whatever comes in we're going to have to reimburse all taxing districts that would normally get that money.

Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel, said yes, that is correct. **Mr. Johnston** said and, therefore, we don't know, but also the other option—so we need to outline to you exactly what state law says about if you end a TIF early, what do you do with the funds that you've collected since the debt bond was paid off. We will get that to you tomorrow.

The other issue is, and I think Dr. Kneuvean was doing a very nuanced stance here, is that the reason why it hasn't been claimed yet it's part of an economic development negotiations and so we will have that before you as well, very soon on a yea or nay. You're giving us more information to share with the developer after the discussion tonight because it affects both county and city side on the sales tax revenue. That's why you haven't seen it in the budget that's it's guaranteed cash to put it in. It's been kept out on purpose because of these negotiations.

Commissioner Stites said I appreciate the answer, but I don't believe that 17 years ago when the TIF was approved that—I believe it was said that money would come back into the General Fund at the end, not be held back for a potential negotiating tool to go back in for future economic development. I think the people of Wyandotte County are owed that money that they were promised that they were said that would happen whenever they approved that TIF 17 years ago. That's all I have for tonight.

Mayor Garner said I want to thank staff for your hard work, especially our CFO and our Budget team for their hard work and really all the department heads that have worked hard to get to that 5 and 10%. I've been there. People forget I worked here for 32 years and eventually I got into management and for me this is nothing new. Maybe it's new to some people, but it's not new to me. As a matter of fact, a history lesson, in 1987 I got laid off. I lost my job here at the Unified Government because we were dealing with the same thing today that we were dealing with then. The exact same thing. People were leaving, taxes were going up, businesses where shuttering, our community was becoming blighted, crime took off as a result and there was not enough money to generate keeping employees. So, the Council at that time made the hard choice to lay employees off and I was one of them. I went to the military and came back. I joined the Police Department again and while I was in the academy we were in the same scenario. They told my class be prepared because of our financial situation, you're probably going to get laid off again Tyrone. I've lived that as an employee. That's my own personal experience.

What I can say is this Commission, your Administrator, and myself have made a commitment, I don't want that for any of our employees. So, what you see in this budget is a commitment to make sure that there's no layoffs, no furloughs, and you get your pay raise. Now let me go back, I was an employee, I can't tell you how many times that I went without a pay raise, for years, for years without pay raises. No new police cars to ride in, equipment that was old and outdated and I still came in here just like you all did and I provided the highest level of quality service to the citizens of this community because that's what I signed up to do and I know that's what you all are here to do as well.

I don't like this cloud that's over that really this is all impacted towards our employees because it's not. I made a statement that this is a shared sacrifice, a shared sacrifice that's probably going to impact our residents more than anything else, but we told them that. I told them that because just like some commissioners here tonight mentioned, when I ran for Mayor the consistent thing in all four corners of Wyandotte County and why people pushed me to run for Mayor, they said, Mayor, do everything you can to advocate to lower my tax burden and my BPU burden and also my user fees. I made a commitment, I don't play politics because I'm not a politician, I'm an elected official and when people know me by now when I stick to my guns, I stick to my guns. I don't lie to people, I don't play games. If I say this is what I'm going to do, I'm going to do it. It pisses a lot of people off, but if I don't stand for something, I've learned that over time. I don't want to be that person that's going to fall for anything.

Another commitment I made was to protect our employees because there are a lot of good hardworking employees here that deserve to be supported and protected and that was a commitment I also made, how do we streamline and cut within a revenue neutral budget responsibly. I applaud all of you all for getting us there. It's not what we like, it's not what we want. Everybody's going to feel something from it, but the question goes beyond that. How did we get here in the first place. How do we keep repeating the same scenario decade after decade, something is broken and it needs to be fixed. I always say face it, find it, or find it, face it and then we fix it, but something is broken here at the Unified Government. It's not just because I said it, but the 22 independent outside auditors that came in here said it too and it's not to criticize anyone, but it's to say how do we provide better services and become a better Unified Government. How does this body correct better policies that reflect quality services and enhance customer service to our residents and being community driven to give the people what they want. If they say lower our taxes, if they say we want BPU that's a real BPU bill, we should give the people what they want. They elect us to do these things.

I struggle sometimes when the unification came about because I didn't like the term Unified Government because I look at it as a unified community. We all live here, we all have kids here, we have to live here. We are a unified community. The whole terminology of Unified Government has been told to me by some residents it creates kind of a picture, especially those ones that are complaining about their taxes, that it's us against the government and that's not what I want. As the Mayor, that's not the things I want to hear coming from people.

I've been here before and I've had to cut my budget as a manager here many times. It was hard to do, but I did it. When I became Mayor one of the first things I did was you all voted and I brought to you benefits that the Mayor's Office got and I said I don't think I need that. I don't need to be paid out anything for volunteering to be the Mayor this time and you all voted to get rid of a lot of those benefits that were privy to the Mayor's Office. Now, I made a bad decision, I wanted a new car—and, Jeff, do you want to come talk about that and Jeff worked well because just like any other Mayor I ordered a car and he gave me two options. It wasn't my car, it wasn't titled to me, but he searched high and low, far and wide—do you want to talk about that real quick?

Jeff Miles, Director of Water Pollution Control, said details of the vehicle or—**Mayor Garner** said the challenge. **Mr. Miles** said I was previously Fleet Manager of the Unified Government. We did figure out a stipend to pay, the Doug Bach departure off of his contract, and that was offered to yourself and then later on Cheryl Harrison Lee that came in after that. We felt it was the right thing to do with a stipend versus a vehicle. If my memory serves right, you wanted a vehicle instead of the stipend and it was a very challenging time to buy a vehicle at that point and find vehicles at that point. We did not see eye to eye on the type or model of the vehicle and you instructed me to buy the model of the vehicle that you ended up with.

Mayor Garner said right. Based on that and then when I got pushed back because the community said, hey, you know what, we're talking about lowering our taxes and Mayor that seems a little excessive. You know I'm not perfect. I said okay, you know what, I'm not here for a vehicle or anything else. It's just every other Mayor I've known got a new vehicle. It just came with the position, but I said you know what, no longer will I take a new vehicle and so I got a used one and I gave it back to Fleet and you sold it, right? **Mr. Miles** said I sold it. Speaking of Cheryl Harrison Lee, I sold it and made $8,000-$9,000 profit off of it. We actually sold it for more than we bought it for. **Mayor Garner** said yes, so actually we made money and I gave the money back and from that point on I drove a used car and Jeff gave me another used car. **Mr. Miles** said when I became the Director of Water Pollution Control I do not believe in take-home vehicles within our Department of Public Works and to show the team that I as a leader was not taking a vehicle home, I offered that vehicle to you Mayor. **Mayor Garner** said I got a lot of flack in the community for giving that car back because some people thought it came with the position. They were like what's next, you're going to give up your office because it's the biggest one in the building. The bottom line is it takes leadership and where I'm going with this is I'm here to serve the people. I'm not here for anything, I don't want anything from anybody, I don't need anything other than trying to do what's best for this community like I'm sure a lot of this Commission and a lot of our staff are here to do and I want to make that clear to our residents. These are hard decisions, sacrifice is going to be made, but I do believe everyone sitting here tonight cares about this community. We may differ on priorities, values or even how we get to point A to point B, but the bottom line is we're here because we do care.

I say that because it took leadership for me to do that and say you know what, that was probably a wrong decision, let me make it right and I made it right. I moved on and made a commitment and I think tonight is one of those nights. I've heard from the DA. He needs about $200K, maybe a little bit more.

I'm challenging five commissioners to give $40K out of that money that we get every year from the casino to make that happen. I'll give mine. Now, I don't want to sound like a preacher because I know the DA is a preacher, but I need five commissioners to commit with me to do that and we can make that happen because it's about victims in this town that need that service. We already heard the Police Chief say that he's not able to bridge that gap, so I'm willing to do that.

Another leadership mindset should be I'm willing to take a pay freeze in 2025 as opposed to sharing in a pay increase with our employees. I challenge each one of our commissioners to do that as well. There's also a benefit fund, I'll call it that, I once had access to but certain commissioners voted me out of and I think there's about $100K there. That should go to services or to something that could be better suited for. I challenge our Commission to think of that. Since I've been Mayor I talked about that, I showed you two things I cut. I also, and it's no secret, I'm not afraid of anybody here in my community because I've lived here my entire adult life, I got rid of a security detail of about five officers. A cost savings there. I can tell you and you can check the books, but I've operated under budget ever since I've been Mayor. This year staff asked me for 15%, I gave them 30. I'm doing my part. Staff is doing their part. I'm challenging this Commission to help with that.

Commissioner Bynum, I applaud you. I do believe that we need to a deeper dive and look line by line what do these cuts look like and this Commission take a leadership role. I agree with Commissioner Ramirez in part that we're not here to administrate, but we are here to lead and I know what that means because I've done it in a variety of capacities like some at this table. This is that time where your leadership, every member of this Commission leadership is needed because hard decisions are here to be made. What I'm hearing from staff and our Administrator is it's not their job or their role to make our decisions for us. We're elected to be the leaders by people that voted us to make hard decisions and to lead in helping to run this Unified Government, so we'll get that meeting and the Administrator will have those options for you. Just be prepared to make those hard decisions because it's that time and everything should be on the table.

I heard Commissioner Lopez, he mentioned non-for-profits. Now, I love all my non-for-profits, we do, but we need to take a hard look and deep dive and really decide as a body, this Commission because I don't vote, and you all make that decision on what you can live with and what you can live without. I've always said basically you need to look at identifying essential services. I've already said what those should be, but ultimately, you all vote and you all need to really drill down and decide what are those essential services are going to be for our community.

One thing I can say, and you've heard me say it before, going back to how I started, we cannot continue to tax, spend, borrow, deplete our Reserve Fund, give irresponsible tax incentives or corporate welfare when we should be intentional with those things and strategic about economic development especially in those areas that have been disenfranchised, disinvested and racistly redline for decades. There's some areas that are prime properties that may not need incentives as maybe other portions of our town. We have to expand our tax base and one of the big problems that I'm hearing and I think I mentioned at the last meeting was a lot of the policies that are in place and the bureaucracy that is there really doesn't allow for a business friendly or entrepreneur friendly environment here at the Unified Government and we have to remove that. I applaud Commissioners Burroughs and Stites for taking the lead on that to hopefully get you some recommendations that you will accept that can really make this one of the most business friendly communities anywhere in the metropolitan area.

I believe that we're—I share in Commission Davis's notion that no there will not be any tax decreases. I don't think that's what revenue neutral ever indicated, but what I can tell you with almost half of the taxing industry going revenue neutral, with the Unified Government being the biggest, a lot of our residents are not going to experience as much as a tax increase as they otherwise would have experienced. We can only account for what we do here at the Unified Government and I think we should take the lead on that because we are the biggest taxing entity in Wyandotte County and the demand from residents was put a pressure point on it. The demand was also how do we streamline this government. How do we provide better services that fall within the realm of what you all deem is essential. How do we improve customer service and how do we operate more efficiently using innovation, technology, our best practices from around the country to get us there.

Again, there's a report that has shown that we've lost about 3,300 residents and people I talk to are telling me that if tax increases continue, we're going to lose even more. That's not a good trend especially when I'm the Mayor trying to promote this town as the top elected official and it hurts me when I see people such as Chester Owens tell me that one of his reasons he's leaving is because he can't afford to live here anymore and he's not the only one. I go around this town seven days a week and I challenge any of you to go with me into these neighborhoods and I don't know if you do because I'm not with all of you, but I see some of you out.

I share what Commissioner Stites said, I share with Commissioner Burns what he said, I still get hit Mayor, I cannot afford to live here, what am I paying for. I don't know where my money's going, I'm going to lose my house. Seniors shouldn't have to decide between putting food on the table or medicine. Working families shouldn't have to decide between paying their BPU bill or paying their rent or mortgage and the working poor shouldn't have to really decide on any of that. The bottom line is people are hurting and I think it's indicative of all of us at this Unified Government is to find out how we can do better and that's not an indictment on anyone because I know we're doing the best we can. The people I talk to every day around the community, they know that the Unified Government cannot solve all their problems. They don't expect us to, but they believe and they tell me that they think we can do better and that's all they're asking for. I have not found one person that tells me raise my taxes, raise my BPU bills, and raise my fees that struggling to make it. I have told people that make $150,000-$200,000 I hate paying it, but I'm okay. When people are losing their houses and we've got 4,600 Land Bank properties and I still haven't figured out how that happened, and people are continuing to lose their houses that are poor and can't make it, I'm more concerned about the residents here in this community than anything else.

That's the only reason I came back to Wyandotte County and that's the only reason I ran for Mayor is for the people of this community. I know I share that with you. How do we improve the quality of life and make this community a great and safe place to live, work and raise a family, a place where people want to come back and live providing the right amenities, the restaurants, the entertainment, the arts, the programs, all those things; hotels, venues and not just in one pocket of town, but throughout all of our town. People are begging for grocery stores in the northeast and they've been doing it for years. It's gone from a food desert to a third world—parts of it look like a third world country. That hurts me. I can't promote that. Homelessness is popping up. We've got to take a hard look at our policies and how we're doing business and not just look at who we are, but who we should be in the service to this community.

I want to thank this Commission and, again, I want to thank all our employees for your hard work and your dedication and your commitment. It doesn't go unnoticed. It's valued, it's appreciated. I was one of you. I know what this feels like, but just know that this Commission I think from what you've heard and from what I know is committed to making sure that we support you in your work every day and that your job and your livelihood and your families and everything that you're striving to do, because you have to live here too, that you have a good place to work and support your families and be a good member of this community, so thank you for that.

With that said, I believe, Administrator, if we could just look on another date and you've got my permission to go ahead and get with the Clerk and finalize that, another date, to where we can have a time to bring the Commission back to look at those, I guess, deep dives where we can look at some line item things maybe in all the departments so we can spend some time, at least this Commission can spend some time just going through that really seeing what are the things that are being cut, what are the things that haven't been cut and what opportunities we have.

Also, Commissioner Stites hit on it briefly, what businesses have had incentives, which ones are going to come back online and what's that timetable look like. I believe Commissioner Burroughs had some good questions about sales tax and I don't want to overlook Commissioner Lopez, his request to just make sure and I think the Administrator did a good job of hitting on that, but there is some concern about the CAFR, but I do believe that the Administrator said you all should have that new CAFR within the next 60 days or so. Is that correct? **Someone** was inaudible. **Mayor Garner** said end of August. That's even better.

I will be bringing to this Commission some other options to hopefully bridge the gap with financials to hopefully lessen our economic challenges and burdens. I'm looking at all things. I'm looking at federal and state partners. I'm really advocating for this community. There's a lot of opportunity. All is not lost. I think this pause is a good pause to just really see how we can tighten our belts and be a little more efficient in how we do business. One thing I can say is that revenue neutral we just cannot—I don't believe and I want to tell this to the public, I think politically, I don't know and I don't feel that revenue neutral is something that you're going to realize forever, but again, we cannot continue to just think that raising taxes year after year after year is a good policy. We're going to lose people and if we lose people, eventually like Detroit, Gary, Indiana, and some other cities, you're not going to have anybody to tax. You're going to dry up your tax base. We've got to expand our economic development and I think our Administrator is doing a good job of taking us there, but that is going to have to involve some policy changes and decisions. Maybe some innovative things are going to have to be brought forward by our new Economic Development Director and I just challenge this Commission to be open to those ideas and those thoughts and those recommendations to hopefully take us in a direction that's going to slowing, gradually get us out of this dilemma, so thank you. We are at the end of our time. I'll make a motion to adjourn.

Action: **Commissioner Burns made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Davis, to adjourn.** Roll call was taken and there were ten "Ayes," Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites.

MAYOR GARNER AJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 8:20 p.m.

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Monica L. Sparks
Interim Unified Government Clerk

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