

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

SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Meeting, Thursday, August 8, 2024, with ten members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; Burns, Commissioner Second 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. Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; Bridgette Cobbins and Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrators; Shelley Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer; Debbie Jonscher, Deputy Chief Financial Officer; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director; Michael Peterson, Assistant Budget Director; Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel; 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 so the public that is participating knows exactly who is speaking. This is critical given the number of remote participants and is also current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General's Office. Comments should always be limited to the topic and item of discussion. 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.

AMENDED NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building for a Budget

Workshop. Immediately following the conclusion of the workshop, an Executive Session will be held for consultation with Counsel on matters that would be deemed privileged in an attorney-client relationship such as Litigation. Roll call was taken and there were ten “Ayes,” Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, 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. Our County Administrator presented his budget proposal to this Commission last Thursday. Last night we discussed the county portion of financials for the Unified Government Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas. Tonight we’ll focus on the city side of the budget financials. At the conclusion of the workshop, as the Clerk indicated, we will have an Executive Session. I’ll now turn it over to our County Administrator, David Johnston, and he’ll run the meeting from this point.

David Johnston, County Administrator, said, commissioners, thank you for giving us the opportunity again to work with you to continue this march toward a passed balanced budget for fiscal year 2025. Today, this meeting, we are focusing on the City General Fund under the policy direction to craft it under revenue neutral. I made a long presentation last Thursday, but I think as we started like yesterday’s meeting, let’s have a quick primer of the city side of the budget and we have handouts like we had last night and Dr. Kneuvean will give you that general overview.



Shelley Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer, said as the County Administrator said, we're going to talk about the City General Fund tonight.

BUDGET WORKSHOP #9

CITY GENERAL FUND	2024 Revenue	2025 Projections with RNR	2025 Final Estimate	Change
Taxes	163,499,716	165,242,625	163,042,624	(\$2,200,001)
Property Tax	35,149,270	35,149,270	35,149,270	\$0
Sales & Use Tax	55,834,674	58,795,674	58,795,674	\$0
BPU PILOT	39,150,000	39,300,000	37,099,979	(\$2,200,021)
Other Franchise Tax	10,672,000	10,100,947	10,100,947	\$0
Other Taxes	22,693,772	21,896,734	21,896,734	\$0
Licenses, Permits and Fees	1,264,229	1,267,179	1,267,179	\$0
Intergovernmental	840,800	835,700	835,700	\$0
Charges for Services	3,623,630	5,130,551	5,130,551	\$0
Fines, Forfeitures and Penalties	1,958,200	2,044,390	2,044,390	\$0
Interest Income	800,000	800,000	800,000	\$0
Transfers In	3,280,000	3,680,000	3,680,000	\$0
Miscellaneous	3,929,053	4,078,588	4,205,309	\$0
Grand Total	179,195,628	183,079,033	181,005,753	

City General Fund Revenue Projections

- Original projected revenue for 2025 with RNR \$183,079,033
- Adjustments to BPU Payment to the City by (\$2,200,000)
- FINAL TOTAL REVENUE FOR 2025 \$181,005,753

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Just to give you some reminders about where this fund is in total, this is a comparison and you do have hard copies of this at your table. This is a comparison of the City General Fund Revenues. We went ahead and included this again. You've seen this chart before. It has not changed, but it just shows you where we had some changes. It illustrates the revenue neutral for the property tax and what that means is that then our revenue generated in '24 will be the revenue that's generated in '25.

You see the reductions that were made in the BPU payment that they make to the UG and that was a variety of things that was at the direction and consensus of the Commission to include an equivalent to a 1% reduction for residential customers. It also was a reduction related to the GM shutdown and then to fund the Senior Waiver Program I think is a good way to distinguish it. If they qualify, they basically get a waiver of that charge separate from the rebates for sales and

utility taxes, which are—or payments which are down on the expense side, so those are also funded.

That just gives you the total revenues. You can see in '24 when the budget was adopted, it was \$179,195M and with the reductions and changes it's \$181,005M.

BUDGET WORKSHOP #9

CITY GENERAL FUND	2024	2025 Proposed	Net Change	%
Total Revenue	179,195,628	181,005,753	1,810,125	1.0%
Personnel	133,020,000	133,930,000	910,000	0.7%
Contractual Services	19,924,745	19,595,721	(329,024)	-1.6%
Commodities	3,630,653	4,776,127	1,145,474	31.5%
Capital Outlay	3,287,950	2,254,568	(1,033,382)	-31.4%
Grants and Claims	6,984,836	6,707,608	(277,228)	-4.0%
Debt	10,723,433	10,972,296	248,863	2.3%
Transfers Out	2,492,050	2,152,050	(340,000)	-13.6%
Miscellaneous / Other	2,495	2,495	0	0%
Reserves & Contingencies	611,985	611,985	0	0%
Total Expense	180,678,147	181,002,850	324,703	0.2%
Net Change	(1,482,519)	2,902		

City General Fund Summary

- Flat Property Tax Revenue in 2025
- Original estimate expected \$3.88 million in revenue increase from other sources
- Revised revenue estimated due to revisions in BPU PILOT projections
- Increased Revenue for 2025 \$1,810,125
- Funded priority expenses with departmental reductions
- Balanced Budget for 2025

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When you look up at the very top, it's those same numbers, so the revenue is actually new revenue going up by \$1.8M, but our original projection on the other page was \$3.88M. The first thing we did was correct the structural balance. That's information we've shared before so that was the \$1.458M. I believe it's on your handout here. That's more detailed, but that came out of the 181—I'm sorry. It came out of the 183, then was the BPU payment reductions, then was the structural imbalance from '24. The net new revenue was 181,005.

On the expense side then, you can see that's an outline of the expenses totaled 181,002 and that's intended to communicate that this is a balanced budget that we've brought forward.

BUDGET WORKSHOP #9

REVENUE		INCREASED EXPENSES	
New Anticipated Revenues	\$1,810,125	Employee Contractual / COLA Pay Increases	\$4,250,000
2024 Structural Imbalance	(\$1,482,519)	Health Insurance Increase	\$525,000
Net New Anticipated Revenues	\$327,606	Personnel Trend Alignment	\$2,350,000
Total Ongoing Revenue	\$181,005,753	IT Software Agreements & Cyber Security	\$550,450
		Capital Cash Projects & Equipment & Fleet Transfer (Remaining 2025 Budget \$4,340,500)	\$1,190,000
		Litigation Fund (original target was \$1,000,000 more)	\$240,000
		DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING INCREASES	(\$9,105,450)
		LESS Net New Ongoing Revenue	\$327,606
		TOTAL REDUCTIONS TO CLOSE THE GAP IN CAO PROPOSED BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS	(\$8,777,844)
		TOTAL RECOMMENDED EXPENSES	\$181,002,850

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Similar to the slide that we showed yesterday, we wanted to kind of outline in a more simple way how the reductions and additions to the budget affected the net operating increases and reductions. On the left it's those same numbers. New revenue \$1.8M minus the imbalance, so the net new revenue was \$327K and then it's that 181,005, so that's the same number I just mentioned on the other page.

On the expense side, we incorporated the employee contractual pay as well as a COLA for all employees, so that was \$4.2M, the City General Fund's larger. More employees are on the City General Fund. The Health Insurance, again, this is at a 3% rate, not 7% and that's 525. The Personal Trend Alignment that we've talked about on the county side, same thing on the city side, so that was \$2.3M. We mentioned that we had software agreements that are contractual for our Enterprise systems and then cyber security improvements we felt were mission critical so that was built in at 550. The net adjustment on Capital Cash Projects was 1.19. This is a difference than on the county side. On the county side for the Cash Capital Projects and Equipment cash, not lease, we zeroed that out. We didn't have the capacity to take on more capital. On the city side we reduced it, but we were able to keep Capital in at 4.3M and if you can read the little, tiny handout, because the words are a little small, what's remaining in the budget for discussion and direction is listed out there for you.

In terms of the Litigation Fund, we originally targeted a million dollars, I believe we ended up at 240. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Kneuvean** said okay, I'm going to correct that. It ended up being 145 and I can explain where the difference is. Originally on Municipal Court we thought the difference for the Public Defender would be 35K and it actually ended up being 170K. Once we got the documents it actually looked at the increase and so we took the difference out of—sorry, the Legal Department, but out of the Litigation Fund that we were trying to replenish, so I apologize. We'll get that corrected and get that redistributed. The net bottom dollar though was then the list of those things above. It essentially would be—Litigation would be 145. We'd add in a line for the Public Defender so that you would have still the same bottom line numbers. Then, that new revenue is applied against that, so then the gap to close because we had a larger gap in the presentation that the County Administrator gave you that said we needed like \$10M. That was our aspirational goal, but we were not able to fund that just like on the county side. We were not able to close that gap, so we ended up proposing a budget that's 8.7M, almost 8.78M of reductions that then are spread throughout the departments and you've got a listing of those reductions at your

place. So, the net reduction brought the expenses for the City General Fund to 181,002, so that is a positive balanced budget with an extra, I think, \$2,900 to go to the fund balance, but it was a balanced budget.

Again, we'll put this back up when the discussions, questions, and comments start because it's a good reference point of if something comes out, we still have this as our target of where we need to land in terms of what money is available. This is what money's available, so anything that's changed, then there has to be an offset somewhere so it's a good reference point for you.

BUDGET WORKSHOP #9

City General Fund: Long Range Forecast

City General Fund	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 179,195,628	\$ 181,005,753	\$ 186,575,933	\$ 193,761,950	\$ 201,247,886	\$ 209,048,011	\$ 217,177,402
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 180,678,147	\$ 181,002,850	\$ 190,067,289	\$ 197,127,098	\$ 204,451,760	\$ 212,051,295	\$ 219,936,103
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (1,482,519)	\$ 2,903	\$ (3,491,355)	\$ (3,365,148)	\$ (3,203,874)	\$ (3,003,284)	\$ (2,758,702)
Cash Basis Ending Fund Balance	\$ 26,734,011	\$ 26,736,914	\$ 23,245,559	\$ 19,880,410	\$ 16,676,536	\$ 13,673,252	\$ 10,914,550
ACFR Ending Fund Balance	\$ 41,581,750	\$ 41,584,653	\$ 38,093,298	\$ 34,728,149	\$ 31,524,275	\$ 28,320,991	\$ 25,762,289
Reserve % of Expenditures	23.01%	22.97%	20.04%	17.62%	15.42%	13.45%	11.79%
Fund Balance 25% Target	\$45,169,537	\$45,250,713	\$47,516,822	\$49,281,774	\$51,112,940	\$53,012,824	\$54,984,026

Revenue Assumptions:

- 4% property tax revenue growth 2026 -2030
- 2% sales tax revenue growth in 2026, then 4% 2027 -2030
- 3% BPU payment growth 2026 -2030
- 6% water rate increase 2026 -2030

Expenditure Assumptions:

- 3% personnel cost increase 2026 -2030
- 4% contractual service/commodity increase 2026 -2030
- Resume capital schedule 2026-2030
- 3% other expenses increase 2026 -2030

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I don't know if Michael or Reggie want to talk about the Long Range Forecast. **Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director**, said this is a City General Fund Long Range Forecast for 2024 to 2030 some of the revenue assumptions and the expenditure assumption we have are starting with the revenue assumptions. We have a 4% property tax revenue growth built in from 2026 to 2030, 2% sales tax revenue growth in 2026 and then it picks up to 4% in 2027 to 2030. Then we have a 3% BPU payment growth for 2026 to 2030 and a 6% water increase from 2026 to 2030.

On the expenditure side for the assumption, we have 3% personnel cost increase built in from 2026 to 2030, 4% contractual services and commodity increase for 2026 to 2030 and then also resume the Capital schedule in 2026 to 2030 and what that means is in 2025 we did cut Capital back in the City General Fund. Then, 3% other expense increase in 2026 to 2030.

Some of the key things about this model is you see in the budget that we did approve last summer for 2024 we were structurally imbalanced at \$1.4M and what that means is we spent into the fund balance. We had more expenses in revenue, so we made that up using some of the fund balance. As we move over into 2025 this budget is structurally balanced and we did not have to spend into fund balance, but our fund balance is below our 25% fund balance target. We're at

about 23% and as we look out into future years going 2026 out to 2030 how the model is built right now we are spending into fund balance each of those years. So, starting in 2026 we're spending about \$3.5M of fund balance, then each year it kind of stays in the \$3M range until you get out to 2030 where it's about \$2.7M. When you get out to 2030 our fund balance percentage does drop to 11%, so as we work the budget every year, one of the things we will be working to do is decrease that structural imbalance and balance the budget each year. So, just kind of a view of what our work looks like out into the future.

BUDGET WORKSHOP #9

City General Fund: Long Range Forecast Revenue Neutral

City General Fund	2024 Budget	2025 Forecast	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 179,195,628	\$ 181,005,753	\$ 185,169,943	\$ 190,893,789	\$ 196,859,008	\$ 203,077,606	\$ 209,562,210
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 180,678,147	\$ 181,002,850	\$ 190,044,789	\$ 195,146,787	\$ 202,556,574	\$ 210,174,535	\$ 217,874,879
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (1,482,519)	\$ 2,903	\$ (4,874,826)	\$ (4,253,077)	\$ (5,697,566)	\$ (7,096,929)	\$ (8,312,669)
Cash Basis Ending Fund Balance	\$ 26,734,011	\$ 26,736,914	\$ 21,862,088	\$ 17,607,070	\$ 11,909,504	\$ 4,812,575	\$ (3,500,094)
ACTR Ending Fund Balance	\$ 41,581,750	\$ 41,584,633	\$ 36,709,827	\$ 32,454,809	\$ 26,757,243	\$ 19,660,314	\$ 11,347,643
Reserve % of Expenditures	23.01%	22.97%	19.32%	16.63%	13.21%	9.35%	5.21%
Fund Balance 25% Target	\$45,169,337	\$45,250,713	\$47,511,197	\$48,787,197	\$50,638,143	\$52,543,634	\$54,468,720

Revenue Assumptions:

- NO property tax revenue growth 2026 -2030
- 2% sales tax revenue growth in 2026, then 4% 2027 -2030
- 3% BPU payment growth 2026 -2030
- 6% water rate increase 2026 -2030

Expenditure Assumptions:

- 3% personnel cost increase 2026 -2030
- 4% contractual service/commodity increase 2026 -2030
- Resume capital schedule 2026 -2030
- 3% other expenses increase 2026 -2030

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The current slide is a view of if we decided to go revenue neutral again. Assumptions are pretty much the same except with property tax we're assuming that there's no property tax growth and again we can see in 2025 we have a structurally balanced budget. As we get out to 2026 and going out to 2030 we can see that the structural imbalance does grow where we're in a range of like \$3M. On the other slide where we have 4% revenue growth for property tax, we can see this jumps up to \$4.8M and then as you get out into 2030 we can see it jumps up to about \$8.3M and actually our cash basis fund balance is in red and what that means is we wouldn't be able to approve a budget because we wouldn't have fund balance to spend into it. We would definitely need to do some work before we got to that point. Any questions about the Long Range slides?

Commissioner Townsend said just point of clarification. I'm on slide 7. This is the revenue neutral forecast and on 6 Long Range. That was not the assumption. **Mr. Lindsey** said the one slide is assuming no property tax increase and then the first slide was assuming like a 4% property increase each year. What that would allow us to do is—I mean if we did want to cut some mills

and we did have like a certain growth in property tax assessment, we could still cut mills and have like a 4% growth, so it's a conservative estimate.

Mayor Garner said while the commissioners are kind of gathering their thoughts in regards to questions, quick intermission here. I'd like to welcome the Chair of the Kansas Senate Tax Committee, Kansas Senator Tyson. She's here and I think she had a little bit of clarity. Last night I took note that there was a question that kind of went back and forth between some of our commissioners of what revenue neutral is and what it isn't. Commissioner Davis had an idea of what it was and I believe that Commissioner Lopez read something that related to revenue neutral. I thought it would be fitting to have the individual from the state of Kansas that actually was a part of orchestrating revenue neutral from its inception to talk about how we got there, so Senator Tyson welcome and the floor is yours.

Senator Tyson said I'm glad to be here this evening. I had the pleasure of serving with the Honorable Tom Burroughs and it's great to see you in this capacity. He was part of that legislation and definitely helped get it across the line. What happened, I'll give you a little bit of history on it. We keep hearing about property taxes as you guys are too. That's one of the biggest issues that our constituents bring up to us and so I am a software engineer. That's what I do for trade. I think very logically math degree, computer science and it wasn't happening. There was nothing going on at the state level with property taxes that we could see, so I formed a group of stakeholders across the state of Kansas and we literally had meetings across the state trying to decide different ideas to work on property taxes. What quickly rose to the top in that process was transparency. Most people didn't understand who was raising their property taxes and why they were increasing and so that was one of the biggest issues.

If you'll remember at the time, we had the property tax lid on there and all that lid was doing was guaranteeing that every year we would get that 2% increase because they were socking the money away so that they wouldn't have to go to a vote of the people at a later date. Understandable.

So, revenue neutral, I started looking around at different states and saw model legislation that we could have used, that we used from Tennessee and Utah and I later found out that Minnesota actually uses a very similar model. So, there's different states and what it is, is that the

idea is that valuations go up and we all know this and in the past—I'll give you a quick example. I was at a meeting, one of my County Commissioners, it's my neighbor, good friends, good people, very honest people, but he sits there and he goes we didn't raise your property taxes this year. I said okay, I leaned back and kind of crossed by arms and he knew I was going to say something and I didn't say a word. Instead he said we lowered the mill levy and then somebody yelled out in the audience, but I wrote a bigger check and that's the bottom line here. That's where revenue neutral came about.

So, what it is, is local governments and we did—I made the motion to remove the lid when it went into effect. We completely removed the lid in this legislation, but it did a few things. It created the revenue neutral process, so in order for a governing body to increase property taxes, to collect a dollar more than the previous year, they have to go through a specific process which allows the public to comment at the meetings and then they vote at a public meeting and that vote is a recorded vote. There's also a letter involved, a notification, and on that letter it tells you the time, the date, and the location of the meeting, which you guys are familiar with. Most of you have done that, have participated in the process.

People say that it's not working. There's over 4,000 property taxing authorities in the state of Kansas. I don't know if you're aware of that or not, over 4,000 property taxing authorities in the state of Kansas. Last year it was reported 55% of those stayed revenue neutral, so it is working. It is working. Government is taking a deeper dive with their budgets and deciding whether to increase their property taxes on their constituents or not. It is working.

The county that I'm from, Linn County, they have stayed revenue neutral three years in a row and nobody showed up at the meetings to speak. It wasn't because of an outcry of the public, but they knew that at the ballot box there would be an outcry if they didn't listen to their constituents. Other counties, there's been different scenarios, Shawnee County, actually a prime example, last year I was at their meeting. I go around the state and actually watch these meetings because with my software background when you put a system online, it's not a perfect system, so you try to tweak the system and make it as good as possible. So I'm watching it. I'm watching how it works. Shawnee County last year did not follow the law and because of that when they exceeded revenue neutral one of their constituents took them to BOTA, which the law says you can, it was challenged in BOTA and BOTA ruled that they did not follow the law. They did not vote the day that they called the meeting. So, instead of returning the money to their constituents

they've hired a high dollar lawyer in taking it to court, which is disappointing. I think it's going to hold up in court. We were very diligent in the law and methodical on passing this.

I would stand for any questions or any other history that you want. We did tweak it again this year. I do know the issue came up. When you do revenue neutral it was based on estimated valuations because that's what you have at the time of the budget process. We were fully aware that there could be scenarios where actual valuations for a county are different than what the estimated was. So, if your actual valuations come in lower than what your—and you decided to stay revenue neutral, the Clerk can adjust that mill levy to where you collect the same dollar amount as the previous year. So, it does allow a little bit of wiggle room to increase in that scenario and that way we had a community college—a previous Senator was on the board and he asked for that provision to help.

Another thing we did do is the letters will not be sent to any property that does not pay property taxes so churches, non-profits, IRB abatements; none of those would be receiving a letter this year for notice because they're not paying property tax. It was a County Clerk's idea to help save money on the mailing. So far the state has paid the mailing every year and they will pay it again this year, but there will come a time when local governments are most likely paying for that mailing. You could ask your constituents too. I ask my constituents how many of you want to pay for this mailing to receive this information and almost always I get 100% hands raised. They want this information. They may not show up to the meetings, but they want to know, they want the opportunity. What's really nice about this is a couple of things. The Appraisers didn't come forward, but quietly they really appreciate this legislation because they were getting blamed for property tax increases all the time and now it's not. It's the governing body that's elected or appointed is who makes the vote to increase the property taxes. I know that puts a burden on you, but we just want transparency with government and I know you guys all want that too.

The other thing that we do is—well, I'll just wait for your questions because I could talk about this—it's really good legislation. We had another piece of legislation in there that for your community it would be important I think. In Concordia, Kansas, she was really excited about it, the City Manager. If somebody does normal maintenance on their home, like if you have to replace a roof because of a storm or paint or windows, your valuation would not increase as a result of normal maintenance. That was in that same legislation, so we did quite a bit.

The other thing we did was we allowed County Treasurer's in that same piece of legislation to set up payment plans. We made it a formal—giving them the approval. Some of them were already doing it, but they can set up—it's up to the County Treasurer if they want to or not a payment process for individuals on their property taxes.

We're trying and if you guys have any ideas on improving the processing even more, I am all ears because that's how we're going to get this thing solved is by working together on it.

Commissioner Stites said, Senator, thank you for the presentation. Really the question that I have that sticks out the most is the thought process behind the reduced time that we have to have a budget approved. I mean it really puts us in a pickle to get a budget approved in the reduce—what is it about six weeks quicker. **Senator Tyson** said you actually don't have to approve your budget at the same time you do the revenue neutral. Most governing bodies are choosing to. Those dates did not change. We actually laid the calendar out and aligned it as much as we possibly could with the budget process. We had PVD—well actually a former PVD employee and we took the budget calendar from Clerks. We talked to County Clerks and I understand for the Clerks it is a burden especially on years with the even year on elections, odd year elections aren't as cumbersome, but they do have a lot of work going on at the same time. That's why the dates August 20th to September 20th I think it allows for the meetings. Most people are pushing them to the beginning. I'm not sure why, but there is—I think it's about a month period that you can—don't quote me on that. I haven't looked at that for a couple years—oh you do have it, but there is a pretty extensive timeframe.

So, there's two different dates. If you stay revenue neutral, there's one date that the budget process is due and if you do not stay revenue neutral, then it's the other date, October. **Commissioner Stites** said so it is about six weeks shorter timeframe, right, if you decide to go and what I'm saying is with that reduced amount of time, it makes a budget tougher to work, to massage the numbers and to get where we need to be. With that being said, we're doing that now, a reduced time, so I'm not sure if there's something that we might be able to—if there's a real reason they can't marry up and be the same time. **Senator Tyson** said it was mainly because of the notices and the meetings, to be able to have that schedule within the meetings and the notices. Like I said, if you have suggestions on that, please email them to me or call me. I'm more than happy to look at it.

As with any system, you guys have all—we're all software users at some point, but as a developer and engineer, those types of applications, I do know that every system can be improved.

Commissioner Kane said you said there's 55% going revenue neutral? **Senator Tyson** said last year. **Commissioner Kane** said last year. Can I get a copy of that because—**Senator Tyson** said I don't have it. It was put out by another organization and that's why I said it was reported 55%, but what we can do is—every revenue neutral budget and vote is posted on the Department of Administration's website and I would love for them to put together a summary or what's going on with the state. Instead what I do is I go out and I just pick random counties and cities and it's not like I have anything else—no I'm kidding, I do check this to see that it's being reported. **Commissioner Kane** said the reason I said that is the only one around here that went revenue neutral last year was Louisburg and the rest—**Senator Tyson** said I actually have that on my presentation. I apologize that I wasn't here early enough to get that up. You can go out to the Department of Administration's website and you can see all the governing bodies for Wyandotte County and you can see which ones held a revenue neutral hearing and which ones didn't. It tells you who stayed. You know there are some situations where they go ahead and send the notice and then they actually decide not to go above revenue neutral, but if you do that, your vote is recorded as a yes vote to exceed revenue neutral.

Commissioner Kane said I would like staff to come up with some answers and specifically the municipalities our size because Louisburg is not our size. It's a lot smaller. I think some of these other places are a lot smaller and I want us to compare to the municipalities that are our same size.

Senator Tyson said I think 55% is an interesting number and also there's school districts that remained revenue neutral. I know that's controversial to some school districts, but there were some. I think it was 2022, either 2022 or 2023 it was a smaller county out west and every taxing authority in that county stayed neutral.

Commissioner Burroughs said, Senator, thank you for being here this evening and sharing with us the history of revenue neutral. Before revenue neutral it was a tax lid and the tax lid had had policy changes made in it that allow local unit government kind of work around that tax lid than work with it, but it got dismissed and replaced with revenue neutral. When those policies go into

place, and I appreciate the fact that you've taken the time to see how you can tweak it and want to listen to what helps us.

I might suggest following Commissioners Stites comment that if a county chooses to go revenue neutral and it's the first time they go revenue neutral, it's a challenge for them to understand the whole process. I might ask that we find a way to extend that timeframe under the revenue neutral guideline that if it's the first time going revenue neutral, maybe the county has an additional timeframe. Even a couple of weeks or a month can be a benefit to allow new commissioners to understand the budget process, but also allow the local governments to work on the budget and get it a more compact deep dive budget. That would be one of the suggestions and I know how difficult it is to meet timelines.

I'd like to publicly say thank you for taking my call last night. I know how busy the legislature can be and how committed many legislators are, so I truly appreciate the fact that you took my call, addressed my questions, got me the resources I needed, but more importantly, I appreciate you being here in person to share with us the history and workings of revenue neutral. **Senator Tyson** said thank you and you know I'll always take your calls.

Mayor Garner said there are some misconceptions or maybe questions as to does revenue neutral as it's written under the law, and I know there were some modifications that you indicated made—does it lock a municipality into—you know there's no secret I've been trying to roll the red carpet out for the Chiefs and the Royals to come to Wyandotte County that could be a potential for added revenues or it may be the individuals that just says I love Wyandotte County and I want to build that house. How does additional revenues impact that and does the legislation account for those types of factors? **Senator Tyson** said that is a great question and it does because of the way the current property tax process is. Property taxes do not come on the roll in the middle of the year. It's January 1st when they come on the roll. So, if you decide to stay revenue neutral for this year and then the property taxes that would be on the roll January 1st, so any of those would come on and you would be discussing revenue neutral for the 2025 with those on there. I don't see it as a problem. I doubled checked with the revisers and with research and I think that's an excellent question and they said that the timing should not be an issue at all for when property actually comes on the roll and starts paying taxes. So, you would be able to collect taxes from those outfits if you decided so.

I was told during debate on the Chiefs stadium that if they do come to Kansas, they will never pay property taxes so I can't—that's more up to Wyandotte County. I do know that's a whole other issue if you guys would like to get involved at some point. IRB and property tax abatements does impact the rest of the county and there's some counties that use those quite frequently, other's just don't have any. It does impact the community because as you give—we did have legislation this year that if you—if a business or somebody was given a property tax relief, no exempted, then the county or whomever that governing body was would remain revenue neutral for one year so that everybody in the community could reap the benefit that that business was getting too. I mean they wouldn't get an exemption, but they would not see a property tax increase for that year.

I'll pick on Johnson County a little bit. I think it was last year they gave a \$34M tax abatement. It turned out to be a Chinese company, but if you look, they did increase their mill levies, they did not stay revenue neutral, so as they were giving one company an abatement, their residents and long time constituents suffered a property tax increase.

To me it's not something that should be micromanaged at the state level. I think the local level makes those decisions better, but it is something for conversation and if you do get the Chiefs and the Royals, bravo. I don't know what's going to happen. Maybe you have some inside baseball on that. **Mayor Garner** said I don't.

Commissioner Davis said thank you Senator for attending. My apologies for not being there in person colleagues. I do want to get some clarification, and I do appreciate you being here and just providing your perspective, so you said that new businesses that are developed or their incentive is no longer active would pay property taxes. For the governing entity would they see a net positive or a net increase in property tax revenue if they went revenue neutral after those businesses that received incentives or those new businesses have paid property taxes? **Senator Tyson** said I'm not sure I understand the timing of the question. **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Davis** said yeah. **Senator Tyson** said new growth is not excluded in revenue neutral. **Commissioner Davis** said you were saying that even with us adjusting the mill to arrive at the same amount of property tax revenue as the previous year, that will still allow for economic growth through property taxes. **Senator Tyson** said I think an example might be a better way to answer this. So, January 1st would that business be online or would they be in part of the assessment that the

Appraisers put together for the county? **Commissioner Davis** said it would really depend, but for this scenario let's say yes. **Senator Tyson** said then the mill levy would be calculated off that with those values and so the mill levy established—the revenue neutral mill levy would already be established and yes, you would be collecting those dollars. **Commissioner Davis** said so we would be collecting those dollars, would there be a net increase in property tax revenue? **Senator Tyson** said not if you vote to stay revenue neutral. It would be the same dollar amount as the previous year. **Commissioner Davis** said thank you. I think that—**Senator Tyson** said it's not—I think you're trying—it's convoluted is what—the new growth is already established in that equation because it is part of the valuation. Is the Appraiser here by any chance? No. The Appraiser, and I had that as part of my slides, I apologize, but it shows the valuation for the county and the appraised value and the Appraiser turns over that number to the Clerk and the Clerk does the calculation to come up with the mill levy. So, those new dollars that you're saying are part of that equation and they are being collected so you're not losing that money. It's part of the equation. What that new money does is it actually helps your homeowners and your businesses that have been here for years and they keep saying they're going to see reductions in their property taxes as a result of new growth and they never see that.

Now since you're collecting more money from different resources—or the same amount of money from different resources, they are going to see a decrease in their property taxes. Did I explain that well enough? **Commissioner Davis** said yeah. My question was not necessarily whether or not there would be a decrease in the property tax bill.

My question is if there would be a net increase in the revenue and I think what you're saying is there would be more players in the game, more people to contribute to the property tax coffers and, therefore, that would be the growth. That would be the increase. It would be in the decrease for the other property tax owners. Is that what you're saying? **Senator Tyson** said yes, because revenue neutral means the same amount as the previous year, the same amount of dollars, yes, as the previous year. **Commissioner Davis** said but the arrival at that would be different if you added additional property taxpayers. Is that what you're saying? **Senator Tyson** said yes, I'm saying that because you have more people paying into the pool, then some people that had been paying in for years, they won't see the increase that they would have seen if that new property wouldn't have come online. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha, but for our sake on the municipality side, there wouldn't be additional revenue that we would see. We wouldn't have a

funding for our Police, we wouldn't have funding for our Sheriff, we wouldn't have funding for our Fire Department, what have you. We would still have the same amount of revenue.

Senator Tyson said no. You would have the same amount of dollars from property taxes. It does not impact sales tax, it does not impact other money revenues that are coming in. It's only property taxes that your remaining revenue neutral on and sales taxes, we all know it, the coffers have gone up considerably the last few years. It's a result of inflation. I give a very simple example. I mean the state coffers, we've seen this benefit. You know five years ago you would buy a gallon of paint and you would pay \$30 for that gallon of paint and for simplicity we'll say 10% sales tax, so \$3 and so you paid \$33 for the gallon of paint. Well, local government didn't increase the sales tax, state didn't increase the sales tax, but that gallon of paint is now \$40. You go to the store to buy it and instead of \$33, you're paying \$44 with a 10% sales tax, so your sales tax went up \$1 without anybody increasing taxes. That's why they call it the hidden tax on inflation and we have seen inflation a few years and we're going to see it again this year and so the coffers continue to grow with the sales tax increases. So, it does allow you the flexibility to stay revenue neutral with your property taxes when we are looking at certain inflation scenarios. **Commissioner Davis** said thank you.

Mr. Johnston said thank you Senator for coming tonight. I guess to really make sure we understand the answer to Commissioner Davis's question, you do get to capture the assess valuation of new growth but it's in the—it's when you're doing all the appraisals and even if that increases, still property tax revenue is capped. **Senator Tyson** said it's neutral from the previous year. **Mr. Johnston** said so you do experience it, but then the benefit to the taxpayer is you see that reduced mill rate and their tax bill goes down because you now threw this extra in there. **Senator Tyson** said it's very confusing and I don't want to mislead people because you may have a property that your valuation increased and your neighbors went down for some reason. So, based off the mill levy, the math, you personally may see an increase in your property taxes, but overall, the county will not collect a dollar more than they did the previous year. So, a majority of people it will be a tax, it will be neutral, not a tax increase, hopefully, a tax cut. If you bring the Chiefs on, I think it would be a major tax cut for some.

Mr. Johnston said it's also great for you to be here today because as we've done the last two budget processes, we've had a reeducation of the whole tax system at the local level. As you

are probably aware, we are very strong participants with the state on STAR Bonds and so when you say we would see an increase in sales tax revenue, that's one of the frustrations we hear from our public is because we have so many STAR Bond projects that growth in sales tax goes to pay the STAR Bond, not come into our coffers. So, it's good to hear what you're talking about revenue neutral and we're going to have talks after we finish the budget as we look at our economic development approach in the future and how do we use incentives, how do we partner with the state and STAR Bonds is that, you know, that's our investment to that project for jobs and economic activity and all that. That's our investment to start that business or business activity. Hopefully, it's generating the return to pay off those bonds hopefully earlier than 20 years, but we're strong participants in that and that's, I think, another frustration that we hear from our folks is all the growth out west, all that growth out west is in a STAR Bond and so we don't really see it in our coffers till after those bonds will be paid off. It's good laboratory.

Senator Tyson said I'm from a small rural county and it's kind of a habit for us. We really like having the county on the license plates and one of the things when we're up here spending our money in Wyandotte County, which we do and Johnson County, I look at the license plates to see. What was interesting—one of the slides I had for this evening, it was a little bit of trivia, but your sales tax poll factor is not as high as I thought it would be for Wyandotte County. Johnson County is extremely high. Wyandotte, it tells you that people are not staying in the county to make most of their purchases. I was raised by local, shop local, and there really is something to that and I don't know, maybe you want to start a campaign to educate people when they shop in Wyandotte County it does help your property taxes. **Mr. Johnston** said thank you for that.

Commissioner Bynum said thank you Senator for taking time to come and visit with us and I'm appreciative that you've done that because in my mind you've confirmed my understanding of what revenue neutral is which is—and the example I use when I discuss it with other people is very simple. We collected \$100M last year in property tax, so by voting to be revenue neutral we're going to collect \$100M this year. Potentially, philosophically, and this is where I'd be curious of your philosophy potentially \$100M next year and \$100M the year after that and \$100M the year after that. **Senator Tyson** said you're not locked in. **Commissioner Bynum** said I understand we're not locked in, but I'm curious about the philosophy of the revenue neutral rule, but I'll let you circle back around to that. What I understand you to have said and I want to say it

back to make sure I'm right. We have an Amazon Logistics Center here that potentially is coming back onto our tax roll in a year or two at whatever amount that would be and let's assume it doesn't leave and it pays its fair share of property tax in a year or two. It just gets added to the total of \$100M, which means when you have 20 people paying \$100M rather than just 10, everybody gets to pay less, so I really appreciate that concept.

Where we have frustration is, as you've already expressed, it leaves whatever other revenue sources we have available to us to make up whatever growth for our community we're trying to create whether that's parks, sidewalks, sewers, paving roads, paying firefighters, whatever it is we will not see growth in the property tax amount which means for us we're looking—our three-legged stool is property tax, sales tax, and a Payment-in-lieu-of-Taxes. What have you seen other taxing entities do. Our projections tonight—**Senator Tyson** said you actually have other resources. I didn't mean to interrupt. I'm sorry, but you do have other revenue sources. **Commissioner Bynum** said correct, a variety of licensing and permits and things like that, that really contribute. It looks like a rough calculation of those additional revenues based on our documents for tonight are 2, 5, 7, 10, 14 million. So, the sales tax growth that our CFO is bringing us as an estimate appears to be from '24 to '25 right under \$3M. I'm curious what you have seen other local taxing entities do with their other revenue sources for the growth that they need in their local communities. I'm just curious what you've seen.

Senator Tyson said I'm going to have to research. I didn't realize that PILOT programs were more than just wind turbines. **Commissioner Bynum** said I'm sorry. **Senator Tyson** said I know what payment in lieu of—**Commissioner Bynum** said I threw that jargon around. For us it—**Senator Tyson** said I know what it is. I just didn't know that you had the ability to negotiate exempting property taxes for a Payment-in-lieu-of Taxes. **Commissioner Bynum** said the particular PILOT that I was referencing is something that we talk about a lot here, it's a Payment-in-lieu-of Taxes that our utility ratepayers pay on their water and their electricity and that comes over to the Unified Government to fund our services. So, those are the three main revenue sources that we manage here at the local level. **Senator Tyson** said that's good to know and what's interesting is I've seen it run the gamut. People are very frustrated and upset about their property taxes and the local governments, many of them are listening and trying to address that issue. One of the—probably I would say the most innovative ideas that I have seen in the state so far is Chanute, KS. Are you guys aware of this? Chanute has their own utility and so they removed all

mill levy for their city, zero mill. They do not collect property taxes anymore. Instead of doing that they put a slight increase on the usage—or sales tax for their utility. I'm anxious—it's been I think one, one and a half years now and the City Manager I told him I would be coming back because I called him when he implemented this. It was extremely innovative and I want to see how it's working down there, so I will be visiting with him on that. But there are people that are thinking, I guess, the terminology outside the box.

We are trying to be very innovative. In fact, myself, I've got a spreadsheet that I'm putting together, you know, if we move this over here, how does this impact. We've got to start getting innovative and really asking ourselves what government is for. You know we've—there's a Senator Shallenburger that throws out a number. I haven't seen it yet. I need to look up the resource, but Kansas is very high for government compared to other states. I choose to live here. Most of us do. I love Kansas and it's home. I'm proud to be back. We did live out of state for a while and I just want to make this the best possible state for all of us to be able to have the opportunity to thrive. The more people have in their pockets for disposable spending—they are to the limit. I mean you guys may have seen it, but going door-to-door they are literally to the limit. Individuals are being taxed out of their homes. They're trying to decide whether they pay their property taxes, buy food, or pay for medicine. I mean these are people that have their homes paid for. It's heartbreaking, it's heart-wrenching, so that's why I'm spending so much time and effort on this. We really do need to figure out the best possible system to run our governments and to be able to allow our constituents to thrive. I don't know if that answered your question or not.

Commissioner Bynum said I don't think anybody here needs to be convinced. We had a unanimous vote to go revenue neutral. **Senator Tyson** said congratulations you guys. I applaud you. I mean that is a massive undertaking. It's not easy. That tells me that you dug into your budget and you worked hard for your constituents. **Commissioner Bynum** said we're trying. It's not easy and that's why I was asking. **Senator Tyson** said and you said about staying every year revenue neutral. I don't think anybody has that expectation.

Part of the history I didn't give on this, this program that I modeled this legislation after in Tennessee and Utah, it had been in place for over 25 years in both states. One of them was over 30 and the other was in 25. I didn't take this lightly. It's easier to take a wheel that's working and improve on it than to try and reinvent, so that's what I did through this process. **Commissioner Bynum** said I hope you take the questions in the spirit they're asked. **Senator Tyson** said oh,

absolutely. **Commissioner Bynum** said I constantly find myself—you know we might have a side conversation with someone who says well Texas doesn't have taxes and I always think how do they pay for their roads. You know there's got to be revenue from somewhere to pay for certain things that we may all agree a government should do like build roads. That's why I was asking the earlier question. I'll be interested in Chanute for example. I'll be interested in what other Kansas specifically, local entities, have done when we're holding our property tax at a steady dollar amount possibly year over year, possibly not, but at least for two years in a row. So, that's why I was asking that question.

Senator Tyson said I think it's up to each community and each governing body. Like I said, the county that I live in, they have been revenue neutral for three years now. My husband just told me on the phone when I was driving up here we got our revenue neutral letter, they are not remaining revenue neutral for the fourth year. **Someone** was inaudible. **Senator Tyson** said Linn County is not. So what happened, Linn County was revenue neutral for two years and last year I think it was a mistake, but it happened and it wasn't a big deal. They sent out the letter to exceed revenue neutral, but they had stayed neutral two years in a row, the county, not one person showed up to the revenue neutral meeting, even me. I did watch it online, but we thought you know they've worked hard to stay neutral. Well, during the meeting they did vote to exceed, but when they came in with their actual budget, they ended up staying neutral. Now, the vote is recorded as they voted to increase, but they did stay neutral three years in a row. Now, this year they sent out the letter to exceed, so I have a feeling they will exceed this year.

To me I think Kansans are very reasonable. I was born in the northwest, Norton. I was raised in Glasgow, went to school in Lawrence a couple years, Dodge City, all over the state and live in the eastern part of the state now and to me Kansans are very reasonable people. They understand it takes money to run government. What they don't want to see is the waste, especially when they're trying to make ends meet and right now it's pretty tough on our constituents.

Commissioner Kane asked, do you think the state is going to go revenue neutral this year? **Senator Tyson** said the state is not under revenue neutral obligation which we tried to change that and we tried to—the state property taxes, that was another chart I had, so the state collects 1.5 mills in property tax that we actually use. It's one mill for regions and a half mill for building facilities such as Osawatimie State Hospital and School of the Deaf, so it's increased and we

tried—I actually tried to get rid of it. There’s no sense that should be on the books because it’s 1.5 mill. It could come out of the State General Fund easily and it would be a property tax cut for all of your constituents including on vehicles, 1.5 mills if we would get rid of that, so you will see that legislation again. I will continue to try to get rid of that.

The other one is the 20 mill. That’s a bookkeeping number. It’s for the K through 12 schools. That money goes to the state and then every penny of it is returned to the school district that it came from, so that 20 mill currently does not stay revenue neutral and Representative Smith, the Chairman for the Tax Committee and Representative Jennings, whom I miss, he had a really good idea on this. As the valuations increase that 20 mill should decrease and so there was an attempt to do that. We passed that in at least two, possibly three bills this year they were all vetoed. The final bill did not include that language to decrease it, but I do know that will be worked on next year too. So, we’re not trying to hold you to a different standard by any means. The state doesn’t really function off property taxes. It’s mainly a function of local government and K through 12.

I noticed you guys, when I was looking at this, the library budget, not to pick on libraries, I love libraries. They serve a great purpose, but if you look at Shawnee County—Topeka, last time I looked, their budget’s \$24M, so that’s a substantial property—I think they get about—last time I looked it was \$16M from property taxes. You know we just have to look at what we’re doing for our resources and our community and where our priorities are. I’m not picking on the libraries. My mom was on a library board. My mother-in-law, we love libraries, but it is a number that you can see easily on that letter that most people didn’t even realize that is a portion of their property taxes.

That’s another thing I started to mention. The revenue neutral letter, the nice thing about it is that they see that the county isn’t the biggest portion of their property taxes. They do see that it is the schools and other taxing authorities that are making up that number and the states portion we did put that on the letter too so that would be obvious also, how much you’re paying into the state on the 1.5 mill.

Commissioner Lopez said comparing our city to other cities in Kansas especially smaller cities like Chanute and other things like that, is it fair to compare our ratios, not our size, but our ratios? **Senator Tyson** said comparing what. I was just giving you—**Commissioner Lopez** said

expenditures, revenues, things like that. There might be—I'm a small businessowner. There's other companies that are a lot bigger than me. A lot bigger than me, but at the end of the day we pretty much have the same ratios. **Senator Tyson** said it depends on what you're comparing. Numbers are intriguing. That's obviously where I like to concentrate and you know I made a comment about Amazon. They may stay here. I just watched what went on in southeast Kansas. As soon as those abatements—property tax abatements were up, they left. **Commissioner Lopez** said yeah, that's what they do and then we bring in somebody else and start the whole thing over again and we're stuck with flipping the bill. That's what I'm trying to—like if we brought in a big outfit with a lot of paying, high paying or even above average, high paying jobs with no tax abatement, that would bring the mill levy down. Wouldn't you agree? **Senator Tyson** said yes and in another way, since I'm in technology, telecommuting, you know, if we make our communities the great places that they are to raise families and to bring people back onshore development instead of offshore development, I've been talking about that for years.

You know that's a whole other issue, but we do need to be competitive in those ways. You know I think you guys are with me. I love Kansas, I really do. We all choose to be here. We all could live elsewhere and working together, you know, what I suggest—I just spoke to a group this afternoon, let's form some pocket groups and brainstorm. Put everything out on the table, come up with some ideas that are innovative and that's what we did for the property taxes in order to get the—we had 80 provisions in our brainstorming sessions a result of and we did a weighted matrix. We actually put logistics to deciding what we would try to pass into law. We actually got over 30 provisions passed. Most people wouldn't realize it, but simple things like trying to improve your appeals process. I mean there are so many ways the system can be improved, so we're going to continue those meetings. If you guys, like I said, have any ideas or input to help improve the process, we need to do that and maybe we do that for K through 12 education, for local governments. I mean, you know, dream big. We can do it. We can achieve it.

Commissioner Hill said thank you Senator for being with us and answering all of our questions. I just want to know when it comes back to an extension for turning in the revenue neutral budget, is it an opportunity in other communities that have approached the state as far as an extension? **Senator Tyson** said that's a good question. I have not heard any, but I will look into it and do some research on it. I know the schedule is not easy. One of the major inputs on that schedule

was the County Clerks and we did talk to the Appraisers and then the budget process and I can't remember but there was—it's the school budgets. That's what it is. The school is on a different schedule than the local governments, the county and the city, so we had to accommodate all of that, not just one group, so that's what lies—there was the issue trying to come up with a better schedule. We will definitely take a look at it.

Mayor Garner asked, any more questions from our commissioners? Thank you Senator Tyson for your time. It was valued and appreciated. I know you traveled far to get here, so we really appreciate you coming and answering questions. Hopefully, our commissioners and our public and our staff may have gotten a little bit more clarity with revenue neutral through this Q&A, so thank you so much. I know that you can reach my office and commissioners, we've got a direct connect and Commissioner Burroughs as well. **Senator Tyson** said and thank you, Mayor, for the invitation. I appreciate it. Don't hesitate. Good luck you guys. I really do applaud you. I'm going to be singing your praises. In fact, I'm going to reach out to a few people. This needs to be known statewide how hard you guys worked to remain revenue neutral. That's a major win for the state, so thank you.

Mayor Garner said that takes us back to our CFO and our Budget Director gave us a presentation on kind of just where we're at on the dynamics of the city financials of the Unified Government budget projections for 2025. I know we're involved in questioning and really intently listening to the revenue neutral ordinance or statute from the state, but getting back on track I guess Reggie left it open for questions and I know our CFO has questions as well as our Administrator, so this is that time.

Commissioner Stites said there were some things we asked for last night to be brought forward tonight. Did we get those and one of them I know was the question, and I can go through my notes, was regarding the Plaza at the Speedway TIF and also the other taxing—did we get those? **Ms. Kneuvean** said we'll have those—the answers to those questions will be short following. We do have some, I guess, takeaway homework for you. These are the questions that were asked throughout the process by commissioners. You've been asking for different kinds of information. There were questions asked about why are the sales taxes different, so it's organized in a way—

the Budget team worked really hard to put this together. It asks a question and gives you some background and information, so you'll get something just like this. We went over the list of questions today, but because we were preparing for the county discussion, just a general discussion, that'll be forthcoming. It'll be probably tomorrow. Tomorrow is Friday, so tomorrow we'll get that to you. **Commissioner Stites** said thank you for that answer to that question, but the TIF, what's the plan—there will also be an answer on that, regarding that one? **Ms. Kneuvean** said yes. **Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel**, said I think Wendy can answer that now if you would like. **Ms. Kneuvean** said if the questions on the distribution on the Plaza at the Speedway—well, let me get to your specific question because I do actually have that specific answer. On Plaza at the Speedway, the question was what happens to any excess funds that are remaining when the TIF closes. **Commissioner Stites** said that's correct. Could we start with what's that number? **Ms. Kneuvean** said I didn't bring that. **Commissioner Stites** said ballpark. **Ms. Kneuvean** said I really don't know. **Commissioner Stites** said \$2.4M. **Ms. Kneuvean** said that's the average over a period of years, but next year it'll be closer to \$1M for the city and the county, but that doesn't include the state number. So, with the state number, and that's bigger, but we'll get you the whole Performa, but in terms of any excess, Edwardsville and Bonner Springs did not participate. They opted out of Plaza at the Speedway, so any excess that would be remaining in that fund would come back to the taxing districts that participated and we can provide that information to you too. I know there was some questions about that one in particular, but Wendy might—**Commissioner Stites** said and to be clear on that, you know, I'm not—I do represent three cities, so I wasn't asking for Bonner and Edwardsville. I also represent KCK. So, it's important for KCK also. I appreciate that and look forward to getting those numbers back.

Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel, said the only thing I was going to add to it is when the actual obligations of that district are paid off, it's business as usual. Any tax that is collected, goes right back to the city to use as it sees fit.

Commissioner Kane said you know in Topeka when you testify you have somebody for and somebody against. It would have been nice to have somebody that didn't necessarily like the STAR Bonds to come talk so we'd have both sides instead of—not STAR Bonds, I'm sorry, revenue neutral. Anyway, it would have been nice to have somebody that didn't necessarily like revenue neutral so we could get both sides of the issue instead of just one side. **Mayor Garner**

said I think that was you. I agree. Her comments wasn't so much to be a proponent as to just bring clarity of the law as it is now. I think we kind of went along that route because she did craft it. Obviously, she supports it, but it was just to bring clarity as to what's in the law so there's no confusion. It wasn't so much to say, at least for me, revenue is a great thing and you got to do it, there's no other option. It was basically just to say here's the law, here's what's in it and then answer you all's questions. **Commissioner Kane** said thank you Mayor. I appreciate that, but I would like to see Wichita, Topeka, Lawrence, what they're doing because, like I said, the only municipality around here last year was Louisburg that went revenue neutral.

You can say that 55% did it, but are they this size municipality and I know that, I guess, the community college went revenue neutral, so there were some other folks that did it. I had one of them shoot me a comment about he didn't necessarily like it, but anyway, there's two sides to everything and I just want to make sure everyone knows there's this side and that side and we'll meet in the middle somewhere. **Mayor Garner** said I can play the devil's advocate. I mean everybody knows I've been a proponent of it, but I'm not a proponent of it to take away or harm the Unified Government. Me being a proponent is just being community-driven, listening to the community and saying, hey, this is our priority. That's what community-driven means to me, that's what I ran on, that's why I'm here and the number one issue everywhere I go to this day is lower my property taxes, do something with my BPU. That's what I've been working on predominantly most of the time, me and my team with you all.

There is an adverse side of that and we're seeing that. Revenue neutral is forcing communities to streamline, to cut and that can have an adverse impact on services as we know and we're seeing it could have an adverse impact depending on how deep you cut or you have to cut on employees. So, I applaud this Commission for making the standard of no layoffs, COLA increases, so our employees are protected and not adversely affected like I was over the years. 2008, I didn't mention that last night, was another year I went through that all over again and I know that Dennis Hays, the Administrator at that time, had to do some innovative things. I know that there were a lot of employees, top level, that were given early out packages that were cost-saving measures, but our Administrator has told us because of the timeline that has been put on us that just really wasn't an option this year to get something to you all that really outlined probably some innovative things. But, what I can say, it can—you got to run governments and you run governments in our country through revenues and, unfortunately, a lot of that comes through taxes

in some form one way or another. That's just the reality, but I think it's incumbent and I take the revenue neutral law is you can put a pause because you don't get a tax decrease, but you can put a pause and you can say, hey, we're asking our residents to tighten their belt because of the bad economy. Let's see what we can do and put a pressure point on that and maybe not give them a tax cut, but this year prevent a burdensome tax increase and see how we can streamline government. See what innovative ideas are out there like Senator Tyson talked about and see how we can apply that moving forward so maybe in years to come we don't have to have extreme property tax increases.

I can say for our town just based on my experience, and I mentioned it last night, year after year a property tax increase is not sustainable. You can look at the distress zip codes in our town, you can look at—you can go back historically and history is starting to repeat itself with individuals leaving our town. I went to Detroit year before last and I talked to their city leaders and talked to a lot of their community activists and they have not fully recovered from bankruptcy, but I can tell you what happened as a result. The employees suffered the most, employees and not just the current employees, but the retired employees as well. Their pensions were gutted. I've never seen anything like it. The state had to come in and do some really drastic things. I think what revenue neutral is saying, especially for our county, I see it as an opportunity for us to avoid falling over that cliff and we know we have those financial challenges and just trying to be a leaner government that provides the optimum level of services that we can.

I'm not saying that revenue neutral is a fix all, but what I can say when our residents say and demand this from us, this is just my opinion and my position and where I stand as an elected official, is we try and meet reasonable, and I like to say reasonable and responsible expectations, because we can't give our community everything just because they say they want it. We still have a government to run. We've got to look at the entirety of our community and we got to make sure that we're a community for the long game can be a community that people want to live, work, play and raise families. Sometimes everybody's not going to be happy with the decision this body makes, but I do believe and I appreciate the Senator and what she said, at least this year we're making hard decisions and it's showing our constituents that we did listen and I think that's all they want. They just want to know we tried and whatever this body does and other Commissions and Mayors doing think, that's really their purview, but I'm proud of the fact that our staff, our CFO, our Budget Director, and our Administrator under his leadership in a short period of time

protected our employees and really without a lot of input from us. I know we had little work groups and things like that, but not a deep dive and I know we're going to get to that because that was a request from Commissioner Bynum last night, really presented something to us that is going to sustain a certain level of essential services that's not going to diminish the quality of life of our residents. To me that's what's most important.

So, on the flip side, yeah, there are pros and cons to this, but I've said it, I don't believe revenue neutral, and the Senator said it, it is not something that is sustainable over time. I think what it allows is it gives local municipalities the option to maybe do revenue neutral, do not do revenue neutral, but what I can say and I said it last night, and I've heard Mayors my entire career here say it and we've really got to take this seriously, we've got to expand the tax base here in Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas. We can't continue to give away the farm with incentives. We've got to have responsible incentives where these individuals that want to be good neighbors pay their fair share of taxes to broaden that tax base. That has to happen or we're going to keep having these problems and we've got to have a hook. I know Commissioner Lopez mentioned it and I propose to this body to think about it. If someone wants a huge—I don't care if we give somebody a 100% tax abatement, but guess what you're going to do, if you want 100% tax abatement, you got a guarantee based on your business in that proposal, we want you to stay five or 10 years, so our community can recoup something and that shows that you want to be a good neighbor and you're not going to be hopping around city to city looking for best corporate welfare deals and you're not committed to these communities at all. As soon as you get your deal and the sands runs through and the clock runs out, then you run into another city asking for the exact same thing. It hurts communities, it hurts our hardworking residents and I say we do a better job of not just holding those individuals that want to be here accountable, but these individuals that are delinquent on their taxes hold them accountable. We have a high tax delinquency rate. We need to go after these folks. They've got to pay their fair share especially those individuals that can pay it.

Those are just some of the ideas that I'm throwing out at you, but I think I'm here to work I've said it from day one, I'm a collaborator, I want to work, politics aside. I know we're elected officials, we're in politics, politics comes into play in this, but I think now especially where we're at today I challenge this Commission, throw the politics aside. Let's work together and get the job done for the people of Wyandotte County because that's what they want us to do. They're going

to appreciate the fact that we at least tried and I've seen that because there was a 9/0 vote, and nothing against you Mike, you probably would have voted too if you had been here that night and held the—at least heard those stories because they're heart-wrenching. It does make you feel bad because we're here because we care about people. We're not here to hurt people. We're here to improve people's lives and I know our employees, because I was one of them, are here because they care, they signed up to be public servants because they want to improve the quality of life because they have to live here too.

I say all that to mean that I think our residents know, like I said it last night, they know we can't solve all their problems, but they know that with this little change in direction or priorities that we can do better and that's all they want us to do.

Commissioner Burns said with that being said, can someone tell me in this budget process if it's a nine inning game, what inning are we in? It seems like we're running around in circles and talking the same thing to each other when we know exactly, everybody agrees with the problem. We need to get down to the nuts and bolts and give our staff and so they can pursue and get this thing done quicker and especially for the citizens. They deserve better too, so if someone can tell me about what inning we're in, let's start addressing the tough questions if that's what we need to do and let's get answers. If we need to vote on each individual thing, I think we can get it done a little bit quicker. So, if anybody can tell me what inning we're in, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Johnston said we're scheduled to have you vote on a budget next Thursday and that tells you what inning you're in driven by the calendar that revenue neutral gave us. So, times not a luxury, but if we're going to do other things, we've got to do it smarter and very, very, very focused. I commend the departments for the work that they did to get to me the information to craft a recommended budget for you that meets the rules of revenue neutral. I know that last night we heard a couple of departments. The Mayor read from the DA, the Sheriff voiced his frustration basically because most of his budget is variable costs, how can I predict. It depends on the customers, the amount of customers he has to deal with and things like that.

I am going to say here a budget is a policy guide that you pass. Yes, we treat it very strictly to meet certain statutory requirements, but every year we do budget amendments to deal with emergencies, things that come up that we never thought about when we crafted the budget the year before. So, understand that a budget, even though it's passed is more or less a fluid document.

Any formal changes still have to come here and the only thing that revenue neutral said is we can't get more property tax revenue. If we get more revenue during the year, it opens the door for other things for us to do if you see fit.

Also, as we commit to a budget guide, one thing that has been missing in my time here is regular financial reporting to you and Dr. Kneuvean is committed to get back to monthly variance reports to the ED&F Committee and quarterly reports at a commission meeting, so that's going to be starting very, very soon. We're done with this transfer from Cayenta to the new system. We're in the new system now and; therefore, we don't have an excuse, so we will be getting that out to you.

I also want to thank you for listening to our presentations because over the years since the recession back in late 2000s, we started a habit by balancing the budget by dipping into reserves every single year. We got those reserves because we weren't fully hired and; therefore, we continually balance the budget and when you dip into reserves and make it regular you enjoy that increased appetite to provide more services to the public or different higher quality services, whatever that extra money can provide to the community. As we've seen in both presentations, to remind us last night and tonight, we're looking at a 20-ish level at the city, 7 to 12% depending on what we're looking at, at the county level and the county level is abysmally low. And you need to get those reserves not just for a rainy day fund so we can deal with something that's unexpected, but it's also looked at from the bond market on how risky you are. The more risky you are, the more expensive it is to borrow money to provide public services or infrastructure that we would use those monies for.

It's good to continually have that discussion on the importance of reserves and we do have a lot more homework to do. That's one of the reasons why we appreciate your support of our effort to do priority based budgeting because some of the stuff that you heard the Senator say today, that revenue neutral does open the door to reinforce the need for governments to reexamine itself and what services are really important to the residents. When you look at prioritizing all the services that the departments provide and monetizing them, when you are looking it provides a better context when we are going to be discussing with you how do we reallocate resources without necessarily going back to the taxpayers. So, that's where priority based budgeting is going to kick in right after we get in more energetic approach after we finish this budget because that's the benefit that's going to have. It never goes away. We always have to do annual budgets, we have

to be the best public stewards possible which means we have to continually reexamine the priorities and funding levels and the investment asked from our public.

I know there's a lot of frustration that revenue neutral had foisted on us, rarely do I use that word in public, foist, it came out. It does provide us a benefit. I said last night a possible reset, relook at what's important of the services. It means we may have to take a different viewpoint on how we provide services, what services we actually do provide and at what level, but we didn't have these contexts before. We didn't have these deep discussions about reserves, the need for a debt management policy. This idea that refocusing on what revenue that we get from our public is, they're giving us that money to provide services for them. It's not us to do our work only. We need to keep that focus as the primary focus and they're asking what we hear from the private sector, what's the return on investment, what's the value I get for my tax dollar and that's what a budget does. This is what we're doing for you public, so it's a guide. There will be probably asks during the year about amendments, but it's about using revenue that's not from property taxes because we can't do that.

To Commissioner Burn's question, this is the question for him and his colleagues to talk about what do you need. The Mayor talked about last night doing a deeper dive. Can you do that in a week? I think you've got to think realistically on that. We'll do what we can for you to help craft a budget that you're comfortable with under revenue neutral, but we've got to get realistic about time. That's another part of Commissioner Burn's question, where are we in the game. We're toward the end and the 15th there's no extra innings after the 15th, so help us help you. What do you need from us, more than what you have before you in your binder.

Commissioner Hill said I'm kind of where Commissioner Burns is. You said what do we need. I have a couple of questions, so I'm just going to throw them out there and then if it's going to be scheduled another time, another day to answer it, that's fine. Here's the first one. We have some long-term interim positions and I'm just wondering when will those positions be solidified or when will that person be replaced with a permanent person or when will they become solidified in that position and will that include full benefits? That's one question.

Another question has to do—I talked to the Director of Public Works today on some of the roads here in Wyandotte County and he listed out there was a schedule on the website that kind of tells when and what roads would be redone. Then, another question I asked was what's the product

that we use for these roads. Is it cheaper, why does it—just why do the roads look and feel so bumpy. Why aren't they smooth. I didn't ask those specific questions, but he was nice enough and kind enough to kind of give me the wherewithal on that question. I'd like to know where that is in the budget and how do we handle that and then my third—I'm sure there's many, many more, but I saw where Willa Gill was going to get \$68K from the UG budget to relocate and so I would love to hear more about that whole discussion also.

Mr. Johnston said very quickly on the Willa Gill thing, we normally have provided Willa Gill an annual stipend to provide the services that they provide. What you see, the \$68K, that comes from the General Fund and what you see on there at \$68K is the \$68K remaining from the General Fund. It's not new, but we've realized that they are eligible to receive CDBG funding, so they'll get the same stipend, but from two different funds instead of one separate fund. It's not for the move. It just what we've given them every year.

Commissioner Hill said okay. The other two questions will be answered eventually. **Mr. Johnston** said you know those are in the—the quality of the asphalt and all, that's all part of the discussion that Public Works has with their staff and with their engineering consultants on what's best for the road, what category of the road, how much traffic does it have. It's all included in their decisions on what type of material that they use there, so that's incorporated in the cost on your CIP portion of the budget. **Commissioner Hill** said I saw that and I saw the street maintenance piece on there.

Mr. Johnston said and the first question was—**Commissioner Hill** said the long-term interim positions. **Mr. Johnston** said that's one of the things that we're having trouble with is filling positions. We've talked with this body before about some of the challenges that we've heard with applicants we'd love to hire. One is residency requirement, others that they're seeing is that we are a victim of the labor market and neighboring communities within the region are offering more salary than we are. So, they accept those positions instead of working for us, so that's one of the biggest challenges that we have in filling our vacancies, but we're still trying to recruit. Right now we do have a hiring freeze as we get an understanding of what comes out of this budget process and we can hopefully, strategically unfreeze those that we've frozen in the process. **Commissioner Hill** said the reason I asked about the interim positions is some of them are long-term folks who are working right now in those positions, so they already live here, you know, a lot of that is not the problem, so that's the reason I was just trying to get some clarity as

when will those positions be solidified. **Mr. Johnston** said we have a few that are actively in the recruiting mode and we'll see what those recruitments provide us. We hope that we do that. Interims are always invited to apply.

Commissioner Townsend said we've already made the decision to go revenue neutral. My overall thought is we've been presented a budget that takes into account the negative deficit we were, the structural imbalance, which is a great thing and we just need to go ahead I think and move forward with what's been presented with a couple of things I'd like clarity on though. Last night the Mayor made some suggestions with regard to possible dollars from other sources, correct me if I'm wrong Mayor. You talked about possibly a freeze of commissioners salaries and if you needed something, so count me in on that one for whatever that would make—benefit that would make.

I think I would like to see a ruling from Legal, there was another pot of money you suggested could be a possible contribution of dollars and I would like to have them—we consider a particular use of them maybe. Were you talking about the Casino Grant Fund? So, that started before I came. I know a lot of small 501(c)3s look forward to that. That is not supposed to be their only source of income, but can that legally be done, I don't know if it has to be used that way or it's totally up to us and what that means. **Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Legal Counsel**, said for the casino grants? **Commissioner Townsend** said right. **Ms. Lawson** said yes, those have to be used for—based on the agreement they have to be used for charitable organizations, not government. **Commissioner Townsend** said thank you for that clarity. So, good try, but now we know that's not doable.

The other thing I would just ask for more information on, doesn't have to be given tonight. I'll follow up with an email is about the difference in bus schedules that will impact that was proposed, so I want to be able to talk to constituents who have questions on a very personal level, what does that mean to me if I rely on that bus schedule. What options are we talking about, so in our more high level discussion, you know, I heard that, but I just need to get more information on that to be prepared.

The other thing that will have a big impact on District One would be the frequency of mowing vacant lots. We were talking about going to maybe a month I think with that, but there was some discussion about revamping the contracts maybe three, so just where we are on that. I

realize that's just part of the pain and we need to give, in my opinion, this budget a chance to work for revenue neutral, a concept to work. We may not like it, looking at red next year, may not go that way, you know, next year, but I think we need to go ahead and commit with clarity.

I trust our staff has looked at a lot of things that they had to give up we're not liking, but this is what it is.

Mayor Garner said I can say one thing just real quick just to add to what Commissioner Townsend said, just something for staff to think about and our Administrator. I brought this up a while ago, probably a couple years ago, looking at our contracts. I know that Commissioner Townsend talked about mowing and that's just one example. I don't know if our department heads have talked about renegotiating contracts and then looking at how much we're spending on outsourcing and contractual agreements that we may have. I know that there's certain departments that—I know for a fact that there's certain vendors that we consistently outsource to and they're like forever. I mean I can name a handful that's been on the Police Department that have had contracts with this government since I've been here and I don't know why that is, but just making sure we look at our RFP process to make sure that we open that up and not just to big businesses. I think there's something lacking here at the Unified Government. You talk about MWBE contracts and the teeth in that and making sure that our women and our minority contractors, entrepreneurs and stakeholders have an opportunity to adequately do business and that's enforced, valued, cultivated, appreciated and encouraged. That has been lacking at least for as long as I've been Mayor and just something we could look into that as well.

Just really looking at also—I don't want to get into the particulars, but I mentioned this I believe to our last Interim County Administrator, our lawsuits. How much are we spending, how much are we setting aside for that and looking at just little things like that. Maybe some of this stuff is processes to cut down on things that get us caught up in litigation and having a deep dive into our systems, our management practices, things of that nature. There were some suggestions from the Auditor that came in in 2022 that were on the book. I'm not saying all of them should be embraced, but I think they should be looked at and considered as well. I don't know if our CFO or our Budget Director has looked at some of those opportunities from recommendations from that audit that was done from that outside organization. Those are just some of things that caught my mind and I didn't want to forget it when I heard Commissioner Townsend talking about mowing

because I do know that we might be able to get a reduced cost on some of these services just by going out renegotiating contracts.

Commissioner Bynum said just a couple of cleanup items for me. When Senator Tyson was here and I used Amazon as an example, for example, we do have one Amazon—we have two located here. One of which is on an abatement and the other one is not, so we actually do have an Amazon if we're going to pick on Amazon, that's here fully on the tax rolls with no incentives, just for the record.

The second item is that as she and I were kind of talking back and forth about other sources of revenue, one of our line items on the document tonight is the Other Taxes for the '25 projections of \$21M. Can you just remind us—so it's above the Licenses, Permits, Charges, Fines, Forfeitures, etc. and it's below the property tax and the sales tax and the PILOT, so can you just remind us what's in that \$21M and if it includes motor vehicle taxes, which it might. Those apparently do not fall under the revenue neutral rule and I would like clarification. So, motor vehicle taxes are completely separate from property taxes. Okay. Are there other taxes, other than motor vehicle taxes, in the Other Taxes line of \$21M?

Michael Peterson, Assistant Budget Manager, said yes. The largest item in Other Taxes of that \$20M is a \$10M annual appropriation that's done for the STAR Bonds and so half of it is an annual appropriation that's budgeted on both the expense and the revenue side in the City General Fund. So, that's about \$10M that's not revenue that we receive and it's also not expense that we pay out. I know Debbie might be more familiar about that than me. Motor Vehicle is a big one. Occupation Business Tax is one of the Other Taxes. Another few big ones is the Casino Tax, so that's the 3% gaming revenue that we were talking about the other day—last night and then any delinquent taxes that are collected and a Liquor Alcohol Tax would be several other big ones. **Commissioner Bynum** said thank you. I really appreciate it because it's just one of those items that I need to be reminded of fairly regularly.

I'm trying to read the room with my fellow commissioners and I have a little bit of a sense that we sort of feel like we've done everything we can do, sort of, and let's just get to it. The reason why I was kind of asking last night for the walk through was because Tuesday is a public hearing when the public will come and talk to us about what they want. I don't know, maybe they will come say you've done everything you can do, we're not asking for anything, I don't know.

Reality might be that is what they will come and say, we understand, it's difficult, we're not asking for anything, but I'd like to be a little bit more prepared than I am right now for the public hearing portion of this budget process. So, that's part of why I was making that comment yesterday and I'm really willing to go either way. I really am. If we've done—because you've done the work, if we've done all we can do and we're not really interested in looking at can we move this here, which is all we would be able to do, then I'm good with that too.

Mayor, I'm just trying to read the room, if you will, with the commissioners, but also at the same time have a better feel for myself. Like to Commissioner Townsend's point, when one of the details of this budget is how frequently we would mow either the right-of-way or a Land Bank property and what the public might come and ask us for, so that's part of why I was looking for just a little bit more detail.

I know we have other issues in this big budget that we all know we're going to have to grapple with and I know down the road we'll have to grapple with those, some of which we may not even know what they are just yet. But, anyway, that's all I'm saying.

Mayor Garner said I'll follow up real quick. I guess my question along the lines of Commissioner Bynum's insight was, are we at a balanced budget what you all have now because I really wasn't clear last night if we were, but I mean between the county and the city are the proposals you have given us or the Administrator has given us, that's it's, is that reflective of a balanced budget for revenue neutral for 2025? **Ms. Kneuvean** said it is. It's a balanced budget for all funds.

Mayor Garner said here's my other question. Commissioner Bynum yesterday asked for a deeper dive and I know we're just shuffling things around to maybe okay we like this, we don't like that, okay maybe we don't cut this or oh, we forgot about this. Talking to the Administrator because of the condensed timeline, he said it, he said he's going to do what he can, but he cannot get you that deep dive, line by line, down to the penny that I'm sure we all want to see for every department, there's not enough time to get that done. That would be asking too much of our staff. I mean they've worked hard beyond probably what they expected they would be working this year as it is, so that's a question, but I say that to say that maybe, and just maybe, the budget is 467 right, it's the same budget from last year, about \$467M. **Mr. Lindsey** said it's a \$473M budget and it grew like 1.5% which is the lowest that we've ever had that it has grown. **Mayor Garner** said yes, but I say that to say out of a budget that large, I know RDA was wanting a couple hundred

thousand and also our Sheriff—also, he called me this morning basically saying, Mayor, I’m telling you now I’m going to come back to this body. He said I’ve crunched. There is nothing, I can’t operate statutorily my jail with this deficit. He said there’s no way. He said bills are not going to get paid basically and he called me just really imploring me to have this body at least take note of that because it’s not just the safety of his officers, but it’s also the safety of the inmates and then it’s also the statutory services that he’s supposed to provide. And our District Attorney as well and I mentioned that and I came up with some ideas, so I don’t know if you all can find \$1.2M somewhere out of a \$470M budget somehow, someway, I don’t know.

I’m kind of following Commissioner Bynum’s saying that she’s good at where we’re at. Commissioner Townsend saying she is good where we’re at. We may not need to come back to the table to have a brief deep dive on what we can shuffle around. I guess the ask is that maybe you all take a harder look and see if you can squeeze any more juice out of that turnip that maybe meet, or at least come halfway, to try to meet the needs of our Public Safety officials because—I’m not saying that just because I came from Public Safety, but those are huge concerns when you talk about lives and safety situations.

Administrator Johnston said I think that’s a fair thing. We’ll take a hard look tomorrow in our budgets that we’ve presented and see if there may be other offerings that operationally we feel that we can make with some tradeoffs and things like that to give you options to choose from. I appreciate, Mayor, you backing off on the line item approach, but I think we’ll take a hard look to meet you and your fellow commissioners request for some options to consider. Again, I just do have to remind you we’re constrained just like you are. There will not be more property tax revenue available and I think we all know that particularly reinforced with our state—with the State Senator’s presentation today.

As I said when we started this a month ago, we’re going to make this work one way or the other and you have to pass a budget that you’re comfortable with as our policy guide, so we’ll get a policy guide before you with options and so if you want, we’ll see what we come up with tomorrow. Can we reserve a Monday meeting if we need it? **Mayor Garner** said yes. **Mr. Johnston** said if we need it. If we can do it via email, we’ll do it via email, but we have some work to do tomorrow.

Commissioner Townsend said just a couple of other things we talked about—that were talked about yesterday and again tonight and I appreciate Commissioner Bynum reading the room and I think what we’re looking for—she was and I mentioned more clarity on specific things, but I don’t know we need to do the line by line thing because it is quite significant that we have a balanced budget right now. If there’s more money to be found, going to squeeze that lemon again, I don’t know, but that would be the main thing to keep in mind.

The other thing that our Administrator said tonight we have to take action by Thursday, but this will be a living document. So, as you mentioned, about the concerns for the Sheriff’s Department, I see a little bit of a difference between what those needs might be. The required versus the DA and the DA knows my name for him is Rumpelstiltskin because I tell him we can’t spin straw into gold and I appreciate what his need is for more people. But something you said last night, Mayor, about how do we end up in the same situation and part of that is we get to meetings like this and we’re shown what we need to do, but we want to push it still. So, sometimes we just need to say we have been brought a balanced budget, let’s go with that. This is a living document.

We probably will have to make some amendments, but we’re going to know more about this four months from now, six months from now, than we know right now. To do that we will have to make arrangements and accommodations for those people in our custody already compared to say what the DA’s request is. I would like to see that, but I was encouraged last night by Chief Oakman’s willingness to work with the DA to see what could be done that does not add another dollar, but adds service, so if that can be done. Those were just some of things I wanted to comment on again.

Commissioner Lopez said August 14th we have a tax sale coming up. We got all these Land Bank items, Land Bank issues, put those on the tax sale, sell them. We make our money. We’re going to make our property tax money. We’re not jacking around with all this low income whatever, whatever that’s owned by a bunch of hedge funds and we’re losing out. We’re getting ran over left and right. Just sell them. That solves the whole mowing issue, make the new property owners liable to mow them and just be done. We’ll save a ton of money that way already.

Then, the Casino Charitable revenue, when we just transfer it all over to Parks, the Parks Foundation, these nonprofits they have their—they go get their own money. They have their own

charity auctions. They raise their money. What's wrong with that. Why don't we just do that, but the Land Bank properties, put them on the tax sale, get rid of them, just get rid of them and now we don't have to mow them. The new land owners, I don't care if they build anything or not, who cares, just get rid of them, it's costing us more money. This is just asinine.

Commissioner Burroughs said in listening to the charge that all of us at the table here are being dealt, I'm pleased to hear that there's a commitment to continue to do the deep dive. I thought maybe this might just end it, but there seems to be a commitment to continue to dig deeper and I think that's where we will really find the efficiencies and the savings.

Mayor, I want to go back to your comment that when you were an employee here you had a layoff to help balance the budget that the Unified Government had and they still raised taxes. We're not raising taxes and we're not impacting employees. That's the difference today than what it was in your particular situation, so I hope the employees do respect and understand that we have worked hard along with staff to ensure that we didn't impact an employee that was going to be laid off.

Moving forward, new monies, I don't disagree with what was stated by my colleague Commissioner Lopez in reference to getting rid of excess property or vacated property that we have. We can get rid of it. That's new money for us and those address some of the concerns that we have in reference to the DA and the Sheriff and other things that come up. What we have done with this, is we haven't talked about the efficiencies that this may very well lead to. We have a new IT system that is up and running now is my understanding and we haven't identified the efficiencies yet, so I'm hoping to see some efficiencies come forward and let's hope that—in the first place those efficiencies come in is the Motor Vehicle Department in our Treasury so that we don't continue to be so frustrating to our citizens.

The restructure of departments in reference to some of the services, the restructure and reorganization. I know the Administrator talked about doing that when he came in. He was going to take a high level look and possibly restructure. I'm looking forward to that restructure within the Economic Development Committee and the Economic Development Office because now we actually have an Economic Development person so, hopefully, we'll be able to address some of the financial issues as we provide ourselves new avenues in which to negotiate economic

development incentives. I think putting those back on the table can send a strong message in future development.

One of the suggestions that I proposed to Reggie and staff was an amnesty program for fees and fines to help us this year while we're in a tight budget process in the revenue neutral that we go after fees and fines and if there's interest associated to it anything less than a year, that interest is forgiven if they pay the base fine within a certain timeframe and get it off the books. It cleans up the books, it helps us get additional revenue and gives everybody a clean start and a clean slate. The only thing about an amnesty program is they shouldn't come around very often, so we should be time specific and adamant about making those funds come back to us in an expedient manner so that we can clean up the books and that helps with efficiency. I think that's a great way to get additional dollars in a manner that allows us to address some of the concerns that have been here.

I do like the aspect of the quarterly report to kind of keep us on track as to where we are and I'm sure there's a lot of wise people around this table and I'm sure that they will have questions and opportunities to have more input into this process. I don't want to just lay it all on the Administrators and staff shoulders. We are an elected body, we have some responsibilities too and even though we may not agree with some of the comments each other's make, but it's very important that we continue to have that dialogue because nobody has all the answers, but collectively we're smarter as a bunch and I respect and appreciate that. I think the public will appreciate that also.

The balancing of budget, not all funds are going to be impacted by revenue neutral and I think that's some of the confusion and I'm really pleased that Senator Tyson brought that up. There are additional funds and fees that we can bring in that aren't tied to property tax. Revenue neutral will allow us to bring in more revenue if we go out and seek it in ways to find the additional new revenue. I'm not saying raising fees, I'm not saying raise additional costs for certain things, but it does help us go back and look at are we getting—are we properly pricing our products and services to the public. If we're not, we may want to sit down and recalibrate those.

One thing I really liked about the budget, as I stated last evening, Administrator and staff, I'm really pleased on the county side the additional funds that had excess savings accounts in them, I call them reserves, the excess reserves were brought more into uniform in with policy. As Chair of the Audit Committee, it concerns me greatly when I see it's not following policy and when I

bring it up it sounds like I'm picking on somebody, but our Auditors point that out to us and that is one way that we can go back and be more efficient and deal with some of things we're dealing with. These audits are conducted, we ought to follow the recommendations of our audits. Audits are given, we review them, then they're shelved and forgot about. We should take action on these audits because they are mandated or requested by us to be done and not to take those recommendations is not only a disservice to the Auditors that spend the time, but the time that's given by staff to answer the questions in those audits. I think we should review some of our audits as to how we can be more competitive and be more responsive to the recommendations that come out of our own audits.

Mayor, that's just some. I know one of the discussions today and the public forum I was at I think the public needs clarification on the BPU PILOT and the fact that it's not going to be on the bill, so I would hope as we move forward that we can have some distinct clarity as to how that is going to not only affect the public, but possibly have it overshadow in our budget. So, I do hope collectively we are able to put together a community messaging process that educates our public so that we don't create another fervor by not having clear communication. I thought that came out quite considerably today from the forum that we were at.

The competitive bid process, I like a competitive bid. I don't like to take the lowest bid. I think the lowest qualified bid is what a lot of people operate on, but a competitive bidding process. There is many more that I'm willing to discuss, but this is a start. It's not everything we need. I think this allows us to at least start the process and I do sincerely respect and appreciate the commitment that staff has made and I think through all of this communication some education has occurred that it's not as onerous to do what we are doing. It is more the fiscally responsible thing to do as a governing body and, Administrator, you were brought onboard to do just this and if we helped you in accomplishing that, I'll be more than happy to accept that as part of the revenue neutral vote, but it's long been needed. I'm not pointing the fingers at anybody. I'm just stating that we are an elected body. The comment was made about kicking the can down the road. I'm not willing to kick the can down the road, I'm willing to go to work and try to find a remedy here and I believe my colleagues are doing the same, so thank you Mayor. Thank you body, I appreciate it and that's all I have for tonight.

Commissioner Townsend said that's why there's more than one of us here to have a lot of ideas exchanged; however, I have to respond to the question about who cares about the Land Bank lots because a lot of them are in my district and other districts and so people do care. I care. My constituents care and to have just a wholesale fire sale of property would not be something that I would ever support or I would think that my constituents support. I would much rather deal with lawns to be mowed because what we're talking about is giving away opportunity for growth and development and I'm encouraged that now we have an economic development individual to fill that role. I'm encouraged that we can continue to plan. That's what we do in the economic development meetings. You know we hear plans for development, so this is not land just to be thrown away, given away. I give you kudos for trying to come up with a workable plan but I don't see that as workable. People do care, I care, my constituents care and as we talk about revitalizing the northeast area, having land, a commodity that there would be no more of is very important.

Mayor Garner said for the record I guess—thank you Commissioner Townsend for the call to action. Our HR Director and her Assistant there, now that I have someone to join me, just for the record, please make it a note to freeze my pay increase for next year as well as Commissioner Townsend, as well as Commissioner Burroughs, I got another one, oh wow, okay. I have a fifth. **Commissioner Lopez** said you can freeze mine too. **Mayor Garner** said how many is that. Raise your hand. Okay, we've got—I didn't see Commissioner Davis hand up there, but I don't want to leave that opportunity out for him, oh, his hand went up. All right, I'm sure the commissioners that aren't here tonight will think about it, so you've got, I believe, seven commissioners and the Mayor that have chosen to take the lead and freeze our salaries. That's money—I'd like for you to let us know how much money that would be and then this body can talk about maybe we—I believe Commissioner Lopez gave a great idea. Maybe we donate to the parks or something that can be reinvested in and something that could be valued for our community, so I'd like to know what that figure would be and that's a commitment for me to this community that none of us will take a pay increase.

Commissioner Burroughs said, Mayor if I may, excuse me for interrupting, I would also be willing to give up my portion of the constituents fund money that each commissioner was given. I would be more than happy to surrender that. I haven't spent a dime yet. It's not my intent. I

feel as an elected official I will be there, but I would be more than happy to submit that. I know it's not a large amount of money, but it may help a person in a program or something like that, so I'm willing to give the full amount back to the budget. **Mayor Garnder** said I sound like an Auctioneer, I've got 5,000, do I have 10. **Commissioner Lopez** said how about you give me 100, 100 and a half. **Mayor Garner** said Commissioner Davis, he's agreed to donate his as well, so we've got—**Commissioner Davis** said I've got a question, sorry. **Mayor Garner** said oh, a question, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Commissioner Davis said I was just trying to get a word in Mayor. I'm for having the discussion about both. I think it just depends on what is the intent. I've used my district—which I know that District funding is going to be cut and will be cut and I agree with that to pour back into my district and so if we're just going to take the money and put it towards another nonprofit, I would rather just be more strategic and make sure that it goes in my district. Same with the pay freeze, so I'm open to that conversation, but I would love for us to have more conversation on what are we going to do because it is not it is not going to be—it's not going to solve the millions of dollars that's needed across the board to meet the needs. So, I'm for the conversation, but I just want to make sure I'm not being abundant.

Mayor Garner said to the commissioner's concern, those of us that did step up and say that those monies could be frozen for us and be allocated to something else, Administrator, just make sure we get a total amount and which commissioners and you already got my commitment and then we'd have another conversation at a future date. Then this Commission can decide where to allocate those funds. **Mr. Johnston** said will do.

Commissioner Bynum said I just wanted to make two clarifications. First of all, thank you to the person who sent me the link to the story about the city of Chanute eliminating their city mill levy. It equals \$2M and the alternative that they adopted since they also own their municipal utility is that they did just slightly under 16% increase, so they had to go look for that revenue elsewhere and they did through raising their utility rates. I'm just sharing that with you since that was brought to us earlier as a story of being creative.

Secondarily Mayor, just for clarity, to circle back to the Sheriff and we know that he's going to have bills due and payable and we think we might be looking for \$1.2M-ish, I just need, Reggie, the county information from yesterday, you tell me if I'm reading it right. It's a budget of about \$84.9M. Personnel is about 57 point—so because we can only find that money on the county side is my point. **Mr. Lindsey** said that is correct. **Commissioner Bynum** said so 84M, 57M of which is people and we've held them harmless, so now the pool of money we've got left to find—the money for the Sheriff is now \$27.6M. Is that your—yes ma'am, please. **Ms. Kneuvean** said included in the total number is the 1.75M that's transferring fund balances because you have to put it in and then you offset it with an equal expense basically so it goes into the fund balance. You would really reduce that by that 1.7 or so million. At least in the proposed budget it's designated for fund balance. **Commissioner Bynum** said I just wanted to bring clarity to the dollar amount that we were starting with from which we can find possibly 1.2M. It isn't hundreds of millions of dollars, it's tens of millions of dollars. I'm open to continuing to look for that maybe even after we have to pass the budget.

I have one more request for Legal. When the Mayor of Edwardsville was talking to us during the budget process, she indicated we took one vote and passed both the city and the county budgets. My question is, can we separate them and do two separate votes when we adopt? I would like to know and if you don't know right now, that's fine, but I'd like to know and my preference would be adopt a county budget with a vote and then adopt a city budget with a vote. **Ms. Lawson** said we will check.

Mayor Garner said I just want to let our staff and public that may be watching know that the vast majority of our commissioners agreed to go revenue neutral on our salaries as well as some of our other funding streams. So, I just ask that our employees who we do value and going to be taken care of, I encourage you to continue to innovate once this budget is passed because the budget will be passed, continue to help this government find ways to streamline operations and operate a little more efficiently. Continue to, especially department heads, to hold staff accountable to providing the best level of customer service that I know we all expect folks to provide and to continue to do those things. Not just this year because of revenue neutral, but every year because it does make a difference.

I can say as the Mayor, part of my job is to sell our community, to promote it in a positive light, to try to attract business and jobs and all those great things and let folks know this is a great place to live, work and raise a family and not just those folks, but also to make sure that we keep folks here. One thing that I've learned is that through this process is that going revenue neutral every year is not sustainable so that is in line with Commissioner Burroughs that continuing of innovating, streamlining, finding best practices across the country, to at least mitigate any tax increases or burdens to our residents is key. We also have to know, and I've said this, in me being supportive of our residents and being community-driven, we can't keep doing the same things and expect a different result. We can't keep taxing, spending, borrowing and depleting our reserve funds and giving away the farm to our corporate welfare to folks and think that the dynamic here is going to change.

I'll be bringing forth, with our Administrator, hopefully some other options that could be of value for you all to consider. I just ask that you please just work with me and keep an open mind to that. I always respect the vote of this Commission. I may not agree with it all the time, but I do respect it, but I think there are some huge opportunities for us to expand economic development and do so in a way that's responsible that'll provide the good services and resources that I just talked about that can attract those individuals that want to stay anchored in Wyandotte County. And not just in a certain pocket of this community because what hurts me is when I look at Commissioner Townsend and Commissioner Hill's districts and Commissioner Burns' district, these areas east of 635, a lot of those folks are suffering and they're without basic necessities and goods and services and resources that they deserve. It doesn't matter that they're at the lower socioeconomic ladder, we still have an obligation to these people because they live here too. They have families and they love this place.

As a Unified Government I am encouraged to see, and I hold a lot back to Commissioner Stites of really fighting hard for Bonner and Edwardsville as well as Commissioner Burroughs, that we do have two cities or actually three when you talk about Lake Quivira and they are part of our county and I want—that's the whole Dotte proud thing that we brought forward is I want us to get to a point to where we feel good about ourselves, where we live in our community and not let outside forces change our perception of who we are. We are Dotte proud. We're going to get through this. We've got through it before. I've lived through it like I was laid off, came back, almost got laid off again. I've seen several downturns throughout the career as my employee here

and we got through it. This is a resilient community of Dottes and this is a government of great people that don't have to work here. We work here not because we need to or have to, but because we want to be good public servants and we care about folks too and let's just remember that and let's just share that message into our constituents that, yes, there is going to be shared sacrifices. Everything that you've come to expect you may not get in this coming year, but police cars are still going to run, ambulances are still going to be there, things are still going to be cut, maybe not as often, trash is still going to get picked up, someone is still going to pick up the phone here, that young man or woman is still going to be at that window to answer any questions that you may have. This government is going to continue to run and the good people that I know work here and this governing body is going to continue to do everything we can to make sure that this is a great and safe place to live, work and raise a family.

I just want to end with that and say thank you. I do believe that the Administrator is going to try and squeeze some more juice out of the turnip for our Sheriff and our DA. I don't believe, Commission, that we would need to have another meeting. Administrator, I don't know your thoughts. You would share that information with us. I believe what you're going to get on the 15th will be a balanced budget with the best possible financials that our staff could find to make sure that our staff's protected, essential services are still being done and that the request of our residents have been met. They were simple, put a pressure point on BPU with the PILOT. The PILOT's coming off. Number two, do something about property taxes. Revenue neutral is here, so I think we've met and exceeded the expectations of our residents within an already challenged budget and I applaud our staff and I applaud this Commission for having the courage to do that. Not for me, not for any proponents, like Commissioner Kane said, revenue neutral, but for the people that have said year after year said, hey, just give it a try and put a pressure point on things, tighten your belt a little bit and I think we'll all share in the success of this. Thank you.

I'll now take a motion for an Executive Session.

Ms. Lawson said if I may, to answer the question from earlier, yes, it can be done in two votes. **Commissioner Bynum** said thank you.

Action: **Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs, to go into Executive Session until 7:50 p.m. in the 5th floor conference room to**

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consult with our attorneys and to discuss confidential matters related to potential claims and litigation, as permitted under the Kansas Open Meetings Act; and that David Johnston, County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Acting Chief Counsel; Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel; be present to participate in the discussion and that we reconvene in open session at 7:50 p.m. here in the 5th floor conference room.

Mayor Garner said that will in effect take us out of our Special Session and a motion has been made to go into Executive Session. There's a motion and second. Clerk, roll call. Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites.

Present for the Executive Session: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; Burns, Commissioner Second 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. **Staff present:** David Johnston, County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; and Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel.

Mayor Garner reconvened into Special Session at 7:50 p.m.

Action: **Commissioner Bynum made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs, to extend the Executive Session until 8:00 p.m.** Roll call was taken and there were nine "Ayes," Davis, Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites.

Mayor Garner reconvened into Special Session at 8:00 p.m.

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

**MAYOR GARNER AJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 8:01 p.m.**

Monica L. Sparks
Interim Unified Government Clerk

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