

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

SPECIAL MEETING, WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Meeting, Wednesday, July 16, 2025, with eleven members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District (arrived at 5:09 p.m.); Burns, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Hill, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Lopez, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO presiding. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Wendy Green, Deputy Chief Counsel; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director; Michael Peterson, Deputy Budget Director; Shelley Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer; Deasiray Bush, Director of Public Transportation; and Monica L. Sparks, Unified Government Clerk.

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

**Mayor Garner** called the meeting to order.

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING** of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, is scheduled to be conducted on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building for determination of the governing body’s intent to exceed the revenue neutral rate, setting the public hearing regarding the intention to exceed the revenue neutral rate as required by state law, and setting the maximum mill levies for the city of Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County, followed by an executive session relating

to consultation with counsel on matters that would be deemed privileged attorney-client communications, such as conversations regarding litigation or claims against the city. The executive session portion of the meeting is closed to the public under the Kansas Open Meetings Act. Roll call was taken and there were ten “Ayes,” Bynum, Burroughs, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, 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 this meeting was called at the request of four commissioners for the determination of the governing body’s intent to exceed the revenue neutral rate, set the public hearing to exceed the revenue neutral rate, and to set the maximum mill levy for both the city and the county. I’m going to turn this meeting over to our County Administrator, David Johnston, and he’ll take it from there.

**David Johnston, County Administrator**, said as the Mayor indicated, this is a continuation of the discussion from last week’s meeting and at last week’s meeting, we extended a recommendation for a mill rate increase of 5 mills. We were instructed to reexamine that recommendation and we did with our Budget team to look at it. I just want to remind what you’re asked to do tonight is to set the mill rate cap. We’re not asking anything about passing any budget. That comes next month. I will be presenting to the Commission on August 7<sup>th</sup> a recommended balanced budget as required by our ordinance and state law and then later in the month the Commission will do important work, pass the budget, and set the final mill rate for the budget.

We are still working on our final budget recommendation, so this is not anything to do with the budget, but it does—setting the mill rate, sets an important direction for us on the maximum revenue from property taxes that you’re setting a limit—asking the Commission to set a limit to give us a guideline not to exceed. We have no intention to reach that limit in our budget preparation. What we were asked to do last week was continue to take pencil to our budget, which we have done. There was a recommendation by a couple of the commissioners to look at a 3 mill

increase. I believe we are comfortable with that and we could use that as the limit. Again, it doesn't mean we're going to go that high. We actually don't intend to go that high. It's just sending a strong signal to all the departments that there are limits on how much revenue we have available to provide our services and we take that message very seriously in crafting our final budget.

What we want to put on the screen, we will have two pages. One for the county and one for the city, which are the options that we've talked about, which is the revenue neutral rate, the no mill increase, the 3 mill increase, and the 5 mill increase for the county. Then we will have a similar page for the city. Clerk, can you find those. That is slides 9 and 10, I believe. Commission, you've had this information. All the other information was in the agenda packet was information that has been shared with all of you during the budget meetings that we've held with you since February, enough to give you—refresh your memories and peak your information. Me and the Budget team are available to ask questions. We'll get these two pages up and Reggie and Michael can be available to explain what those say. There you go, so Reggie.

Revenue Neutral Rate Decision

Revenue Generated for 1 Mill - \$2.21M

### Wyandotte County General Fund

Scenario	Total Revenue	Total Expense	Net Change (Structural Balance or Imbalance)	Projected Fund Balance %	Total County Mill Rate
Revenue Neutral	\$84.3M	\$93.6M	-\$9.3M	-4.7%	31.156
Current Mill rate full valuation	\$88.1M	\$93.6M	-\$5.5M	-0.6%	33.459
Alternate Max – 3 Mills	\$94.8M	\$93.6M	\$1.2M	6.5%	36.459
Proposed Max – 5 Mills	\$99.2M	\$93.6M	\$5.6M	11.2%	38.459

- Maximum Mill Levy Cap Proposal preserves commission flexibility prior to final mill rate set
- on budget adoption
- Does not include World Cup expenses

Forecast will change with proposed budget on August 7<sup>th</sup> based on specific recommendations and Final Commission Budget Adoption – August 28<sup>th</sup>

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**Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director**, said the current slide displays scenarios for a property tax cap. Again, this is not the budget that we're proposing, but just scenarios of where we're setting the cap at. We're looking at the Wyandotte County General Fund.

First, we have revenue neutral scenario, which would bring in a total revenue of \$84.3M. What we're estimating is we have total expenses of \$93.6M. With that \$93.6M expenses going out and total revenues coming in of \$84.3M, we would have a negative structural imbalance of

negative \$9.3M, so that is what we would need to solve for to have a structurally balanced budget. At that scenario, we'd also have a negative 4.7% fund balance. One thing that the Commission did pre-commit to a couple years ago is that they set a fund balance policy at 25%. We would not be meeting that. Our total county mill rate at that level would be 31.156.

Our next scenario is current mill rate at full valuation and that would include keeping the same mill rates. Full valuation would be increasing 7% to access values. Total revenues coming in would be \$88.1M. Total expenses, again, would be \$93.6M. We would have a net change in fund balance of a negative \$5.5M. So, not going revenue neutral, exceeding revenue neutral, at the base mill rate, we would still have to solve a \$5.5M structural imbalance. Our fund balance would be a negative 6% and we'd have a total county mill rate of 33.5.

The next scenario is our alternative max 3 mills, which was recommended last week by members of the Commission. We'd have a total revenue coming in of \$94.8M, total expenses of \$93.6M going out and with that scenario, we'd have a \$1.2M to the positive of more revenues coming in and expenditures and we'd be back up to a 6.5% fund balance and the mill rate would be 36.459.

The next scenario would be the 5 mills that we originally came with last week. That'll be a proposed 5 mills, have total revenue of \$99M, and we'd have total expenses of \$93M. We'd have \$5.6M more of revenue coming in than expenditures going out and we'd be back up to a projected fund balance of 11.2% and about 38.5 mill levy rate.

Again, this maximum mill levy cap proposes—preserves the Commission's flexibility prior to final mill set and the final mill set would not be until we adopt the budget, which would be August 28<sup>th</sup>.

Just one thing, all the budgets that we've been doing, like for the last 10 years, even though some of them may increase, we do end up having to cut things out of the budget because expenses constantly grow. So, there's always budget cuts going on each and every year.

**Mr. Johnston** said go to the next page, please.

Revenue Neutral Rate Decision

Revenue  
Generated for  
1 Mill - \$1.96M

## Kansas City, KS General Fund

Scenario	Total Revenue	Total Expense	Net Change	Projected Fund Balance %	Total City Mill Rate
Revenue Neutral	\$176.7M	\$183.8M	\$-7.1M	13.1%	32.175
Current Mill rate full valuation	\$179.1M	\$183.8M	\$-4.6M	14.5%	34.462
Alternate Max – 3 Mills	\$185.0M	\$183.8M	\$1.3M	17.7%	37.462
Proposed Max – 5 Mills	\$189.0M	\$183.8M	\$5.2M	19.8%	39.462

- Maximum Proposal preserves commission flexibility prior to final mill rate set on budget adoption

- Expenditures do not include additional funding for Transit to continue current service levels
- Does not include World Cup expenses



Forecast will change with proposed budget on August 7<sup>th</sup> and Final Commission Budget Adoption – August 28<sup>th</sup>

July 2025



**Mr. Lindsey** said this is a view of the Kansas City, Kansas City General Fund and again, we have four scenarios here. Revenue neutral is total revenues of \$176M, total expenses of \$183M. We’d have a net change in fund balance of \$7.1M. Our projected fund balance would be at 13.1%, and total mill rate for the city would be 32 mills.

Second scenario, if we were to exceed revenue neutral and keep the base mill levy rate, we’d have \$179M coming in with \$183M of expenses going out and we’d have negative revenues over \$4.6M. That change to our fund balance and we’d have a 14.5% fund balance.

Our next scenario is the alternate max, which was recommended by some members of the Commission last week at 3 mills. We’d have \$185M coming in with total expenses being \$183M. Net change in fund balance would be a positive \$1.3M and we’d be up to a 17% fund balance and the total city mill rate would be 37.

Proposed max mill rate, which was what we proposed last week, would be \$189M of revenues coming in. Total expenses would be \$183M. We’d have a positive net change between revenues and expenditures of \$5.2M and our projected fund balance will be 19.8%.

**Mr. Johnston** said I said before Reggie explained these two pages, we’re still crafting our final budget as we will be presenting my recommendation on August 7<sup>th</sup>. I expect that total expense number to change downward, but we are, like I said, still putting the pencil to the paper. We are looking at all the Capital expenditures that the departments have asked for. Those tend to be some larger ticket items. We’re are looking at—we’re working close with HR who have been working with all our departments over the last two months on personnel requests and meeting the adequate

personnel levels to the needs of the departments. As we've talked to you commissioners about a month ago or so, you know personnel is the largest expense for the UG, so we're trying to get that right-sized and get it to where it should be and get the departments to get budget adequately. Then, the Operation costs, which have been always looked at over the last 10 years in our budget process, they're close to the bone and there's really not much you can do to the Operating side of the budget without really affecting the service levels and the quality of the services you can get without if you go much, much, much deeper on those. That's been explained during our budget meetings on those. Those are the three large categories that make up the budget of our departments and we're still looking at all those things, so I expect the total expense column here to be lower and you'll see those on August 7<sup>th</sup>. But we have to start with a number to discuss the cap and that's what we're talking about today and if we don't intend to get to the cap, but we have to have something to help you make that decision about a cap, which is required by Kansas State Law at this time.

I guess we will open up to questions from the Commission.

**Commissioner Lopez** said, Administrator, how many department heads took their budget down 5% like you asked? **Mr. Johnston** said repeat that, please. **Commissioner Lopez** said how many actually department heads were there that when you asked them to take—you know we need to cut your budget 5%, how many did that? All the departments? **Mr. Lindsey** said about 95% of the departments that were able to. **Commissioner Lopez** said how many department heads spent more than you had to dip into the General Fund. Just asking. **Mr. Lindsey** said in 2024, is that what you're—**Commissioner Lopez** said 2024-2025. **Mr. Lindsey** said with the 2025 year still going on, no one is over. **Commissioner Lopez** said 2024. **Mr. Lindsey** said we have a sophisticated ERP system, Workday, which doesn't allow departments to spend over on their budgets, so in 2024 there was no overspending. **Commissioner Lopez** said that's interesting. **Mr. Lindsey** said there was some personnel over expenditures, but like out of the Operating budget, there was no overspending. There was overspending like in personnel just based on the trend that the Budget Office sets.

**Commissioner Kane** said there's been a lot of thought process in what we're doing and it's not pleasing to do certain things, but there are sometimes that you got to make decisions. You know we're not voting on the budget tonight. We're voting on exceeding revenue neutral and then staff

will come back, we give them a number, they'll come back and like the Administrator said, we're not going to—they're not going to go that high, but we need to give them some guidelines so they can come back. Here's another thing, it's not things that we want. We want to support things that we need and a lot of times people say, well, we did this spending, we did that spending, we've done a much better job of doing that.

What I'm asking for is an additional 3 mills.

**Action: Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve the resolution regarding the governing body's intent to levy a property tax exceeding the revenue neutral rate with the following additions: The hearing date set out in Section 1 shall be August 26, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The proposed tax rate and maximum mill levy for the city of Kansas City, Kansas set out in Section 2 shall be set at 37.462 mills. The proposed tax rated and maximum mill levy for Wyandotte County, Kansas set out in Section 2 shall be set at 36.459 mills and this vote constitutes notice to the UG Clerk of the intent of the governing body to exceed the revenue neutral rate, set the public hearing date for August 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. and the maximum mill levies for the city and county to the amounts previously mentioned.**

**Mayor Garner** said I'll hold off on accepting those motions.

**Commissioner Townsend** said thank you for the motion and the second. Is it appropriate to make comment at this point and that's what I wanted to do. Commissioner Kane has already said that this is not something that I don't think any of us desire. I'm just looking at the numbers here and I'm starting with the Kansas City, Kansas General Fund. If we wanted to remain revenue neutral, I guess the estimate of what that would bring in is \$176.7M, but we have estimated total expenses—and this is for next year, is that right Mr. Budget Director, of \$183.8M. So we would have to—oh, the other thing, and I'm glad you all put this on there, correct me if I'm wrong, this \$183.8M does not include what I recall about \$3M that we would need to keep certain basic transit systems going. That would definitely affect District 1. I don't know if our Transportation person

is here or not. Oh, here she is. I just wanted to get if that is about right, another \$3M just to maintain.

**Someone** was inaudible. **Mayor Garner** said any commissioners can inquire comments from anybody that they would like. **Commissioner Townsend** said is that about \$3M, the estimate, to maintain the bus service at the rate we have now because I know ARPA is no more.

**Deasiray Bush, Director of Public Transportation**, said, Commissioner Townsend, you are correct. We would need roughly \$3M to continue our services. **Commissioner Townsend** said and that would primarily, if you can recall, impact which lines particularly? I know I'm catching—**Ms. Bush** said if we do not receive the funding, we would now cut the 101 State Avenue and the 107 7th Street. We've already eliminated the 113 Leavenworth Road and the 118 18<sup>th</sup> Street route. We've already cut two routes. The only other routes I can cut right now would be the 101 State Avenue and the ridership for that route is roughly 800,000 annually. The 107 7th Street is roughly 600,000 annually. **Commissioner Townsend** said thank you. I know I'm catching you cold, but I know I've heard you talk about this a couple of times and I try to remember the numbers, the particular dollars that would make a difference. So, that does not include anything for World Cup expenses. I know there was a transportation request for that, but I'm not even considering that. So, this \$183.8M add about another 3 to that, so we've got over \$10M we would have to find somewhere.

What I want to see is a thorough look at, and it probably won't take much after this meeting, if there's anything in contractually that we can cut in Fire, in Police, in Sheriff. The reason I'm asking that is because so much of the personnel cost is tied up in those three. I love all three. Those people put their lives on the line every day, but if we're going to talk dollars and cents, let's talk dollars and cents about all the—**Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Townsend** that okay, that kind of threw me off, but let's talk dollars and cents about where a lot of our personnel money lies. I don't expect an answer tonight.

Going on to county, same analysis if I understand this right, at revenue neutral we would expect around \$84.3M, but total expenses would be 93.6M, so we're looking for almost \$10.93M there. So, we just have to be real about where our biggest buckets of expenses are. Maybe we can public cut there, maybe we can't. That's why I'm going to support the motion tonight, the motion

that was just made, but to give you some more insight into what I'm looking at and what I'm considering in behalf of those that I serve, not just District 1, but the rest of this city/county. That's just the hard cold facts of it as I see it.

One other thing and I didn't address this the last time this came up, it's great that we will be, I guess, entertaining World Cup. My thought on that is I'd like the Mary J. Blige approach. She has a song that says take me as I am, and what that means is I am not looking at these dollars for World Cup, not that we may not need them, but I'm just saying come here World Cup, we will be gracious. I know Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas will be gracious, but just take us as we are. Go to our taco trail, get on our taco trail, go to Quindaro, go to the Lewis & Clark Park, go out west, but if we were going to spend any money, I would want money spent on things that will survive that particularly our infrastructure. I think everybody agrees with that. The issue is where are you going to get the money. So, before we're clapping, I'm just saying but thank you for the opportunity to ask staff that question. I wanted that clarified. I appreciate everything that our Budget staff has done. They took a lot of hits last week unnecessarily so. The numbers are what they are and we need people who can put these numbers together and present them and make sense, so I appreciate you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**Commissioner Bynum** said I have a couple of questions just to see if my math is right. On these slides that we're looking at, if you look at a one mill increase, I just did the math, you would add 2.21M to the revenue bringing it to 90.3 and your structural imbalance would be a negative 3.3M. On the county side of the budget, since you can't adopt a budget that is structurally imbalanced, we wouldn't have a negative fund balance in any of those scenarios. We would make those cuts, correct? **Mr. Lindsey** said yes, that is correct. **Commissioner Bynum** said so at the revenue neutral rate, we would make 9.3M in county cuts. **Mr. Lindsey** said yes. **Commissioner Bynum** said okay. So, at the one mill rate, and I just did the math just to see how it would come out, we would make 3.3M in county side cuts. I mean that's my math.

On the city side, one mill generating 1.96M then would bring the revenue to 181.06, you would still have an imbalance, if you will, of 2.74M. You wouldn't be structurally imbalanced because there's still some fund balance there left to deal with, but it would, if I'm not mistaken, go against what we've said we desire, which is to not use fund balance to balance the budget. So, in that scenario, maybe we would make 2.74M in cuts rather than fund balance use. At least that

may be what you would recommend to us. **Mr. Lindsey** said that would be the case where we'd be cutting about 2.76M.

**Commissioner Bynum** said I would just say this. Regardless of how this Commission votes tonight or on the budget in general, if we vote as a Commission for anything that creates the need for 9.3M in cuts, 5.5M in cuts, 3.3M in cuts on the county side and if we vote for a budget on the city side that requires 7.1M in cuts, or 4.6M in cuts, or at the one mill rate 2.74M in cuts, my request of this Commission will be that we, the governing body, be the entity that is required to work with you to find those cuts. Not ask you to go find them and come back, but we work every night for however long it takes, every night that we're here and that the commissioners take full responsibility and accountability for any and all cuts to this budget. And that's just a request, Mayor, that I am making public. I don't think it would be fair for us to adopt a budget that requires millions in cuts on the city side and millions in cuts on the county side and then not take responsibility for where those cuts come from. So, my request would be that this Commission sit every night that it takes until budget adoption time to bring the cuts that would be needed to make that a balanced budget.

**Commissioner Ramirez** said I just want to make a statement, put facts out, the reason why I put on social media that I had a personal matter tomorrow night to deal with, I wanted to keep it personal, but I will say I have to take care of a family member. That is why. I had no nefarious act, no backdoor deals, nothing in my pocket making to stir up controversy. Those are the facts and nothing more, nothing less and to think otherwise, that is false and fake news. I take my job seriously, I love this community, I love my district. Now, it's all been said.

Even with revenue neutral, as I've said from the beginning, revenue neutral is not a property tax cut, it is a budget cut. As many people have already said, with revenue neutral their taxes still went up, so I don't see where the relief is if their taxes continue to go up and we continue to cut our budget. We don't have a spending problem, we have a revenue problem. We don't have enough revenue coming in because we need more houses, we need more people to be here to provide the sales tax, to provide the property tax. We have tried to bring in housing developments, but this Commission continues to thwart those efforts, especially low-income housing. How are we going to grow our tax base when we continue to shutout people. We have good development coming. We have the World Cup who can help us change how we do things, bring in additional

revenue. Again, we don't have a spending problem, we have a revenue problem. Not everyone is going to agree with me on that and that is okay. We're all adults. We can come to a compromise.

I agree with Commissioner Bynum. If we are going to go down the route and do budget cuts, each and every one of us need to take the accountability and responsibility for each and every individual cut. And I say, I'm going to go further and say we need to vote on each individual cut. We go out and we campaign and we say we want to do this and we want to do that. I'm going to be very blunt, I respect every single one of you, but let's put our money where our mouth is. If we want to do this, then let's go. Let's find the cuts, let's do it and move on.

But I had no ill will, Mayor, I had no ill will of going behind your back. I didn't. I knew you were out with family. I did not want to disturb you. That is why I went to David. I had no ill will, I didn't, and if you continue to think I do, then that is on you, sir, but I did not.

**Commissioner Lopez** said Commissioner Ramirez did say, you know, our property values did go up on revenue neutral. That's because assessments went up. Exceeding revenue neutral, what's the assessment going to look like next year. They're going to go up even more. That's just whatever. Anyway, what does—how about we carryover the cash from departments from their budgets. Have we done that already? **Mr. Lindsey** said we do that every year. Any money that's not spent goes to fund balance. **Commissioner Lopez** said okay.

Then, American Royal, what's their payout per the bonds, when that happens. It's supposed to happen this year, right? **Shelley Kneuvean, Chief Financial Officer**, said yes, the bonds are supposed to be issued this year. **Commissioner Lopez** said what's their payout to us this year. **Ms. Kneuvean** said there's an agreement, as I recall, of a \$5M upfront fee that they would pay. **Commissioner Lopez** said and a 1.5 on top of that too or just 5M flat for this year. **Ms. Kneuvean** said I think it's just the 5M this year based on when the timing is of when we would get that revenue and I'm going from memory, but I think those annual payments were like 1.3 as opposed to 1.5. So, that's correct, Commissioner Lopez. It's 1.5. **Commissioner Lopez** said why don't we—looks like Willa Gill, it has about 6.4M and just take that and since the college only gave us \$10 for that building, we'll take that money plus the American Royal money, that's 9—that's 11.4. Why don't we just cash out some of our investments for right now to carry us until that happens. Once we get the American Royal money and all that, then we can just put back and invest. I know we're going to take a hit, but cash them out, but why should our people take a hit.

Why should the residents take a hit when we already promised them they were going to see tax relief when the TIF paid off. Now, we jived them. Now, why don't we just take the 6.4 from Willa Gill that's leftover from the 7M and we take the American Royal 5M, you know, that's a little over 11 and we put that back, you know, we utilize that.

**Ms. Kneuvean** said so for clarification, the funding that's available for Willa Gill, there's 2M that was ARPA money and cannot be reallocated to a new initiative. It would have to be allocated to another existing project, which we do have some infrastructure projects that it could be allocated to. Then, the other \$2M is money that was in an agreement negotiated by the UG and the Department of Commerce that earmarked that money from Cerner for Willa Gill, so there would have to be some additional steps taken there as to freeing up the use of those dollars. So, that's the four. Are you suggesting the additional debt that could be issued or the other—help me understand what you're talking about. **Commissioner Lopez** said well, I mean, according to other meetings, when that 2M—there's 2M plus we had allocated other from General Fund and whatnot and it added up to 7M. Now we're 600K that we spent already and now that leaves us, you know—but from the 11.4, now we're down to 7.4 and that's adding the American Royal 5M.

**Ms. Kneuvean** said I understand what you're saying. Again, for Willa Gill, to get to the full amount that originally was contemplated, but not yet approved, there was 3M additional that would be a new debt, which has not been presented to this Commission, has not been an approval. But in terms of real cash, there is 4M minus to your point, in round numbers is 700 that was used to acquire the land and do some basic site improvements. But we would have an issue with 2M of it with ARPA money. We don't have a lot of options in terms of the federal rules, but the other two we'd have to get consent by the Department of Commerce for the Cerner funding. There's no General Fund dollars that would help in terms of that building. It was additional debt that would be issued, which again, hasn't even proceeded ahead.

But the 5M for American Royal, to your point, on that is assuming bonds are issued this year and then they would make that payment at that time and that would provide some reprieve for one year only and I would encourage you to look back past presentations. I think you have some reference materials about that five-year trend. It might provide a one-year reprieve for part of what Commission Bynum kind of talked through, but it wouldn't solve the problem because our Operating budget is ongoing expenses. American Royal is a one-time infusion.

**Commissioner Lopez** said I get that. Now, what's the Data Centers going to be paying up front? **Ms. Kneuvean** said not sure. I don't think that we have a development agreement that's been negotiated or presented. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Kneuvean** said he wanted to know what are they going to pay upfront. **Mr. Johnston** said the Data Center development agreement hasn't been before you, so we do not know what that is. **Commissioner Lopez** said okay. So, that's kind of in limbo.

What I was getting at with the Willa Gill was since the college only gave us 10 bucks and say, "hey, college, this is your baby now." You take care of Willa Gill. Don't put it on our hands. We gave them a heck of a deal, let them take care of it now. They have high cash reserves, they can do it.

**Commissioner Burroughs** said I just want to commend staff for presenting this chart of the budget cuts that were made. This is something that we've been asking for to see what cuts were made last year, so I appreciate that work. It's something that we've been asking for, for quite a while. I do want to address the motion that—or the comment that was made earlier. If I understood the motion, it was 3 mills on the city and 3 mills on the county. I don't believe that's inclusive of the natural growth in appraised value of the additional 2.3. So basically, we're looking at 3 mills plus the 2.3 in growth in valuation. Instead of being a \$10M increase in just the county alone, it's nearly 15M. So, if we go with the 3 mill increase in the city, it generates roughly \$9M plus the 2.3, which is 4.6M. That's 13.6M for a total tax increase of about 23, almost \$24M and if I'm wrong with that—I'm going—I think, Reggie, the numbers you gave us the other day was the new appraised value on not revenue neutral, but just taking the new valuation was 2.3% in the county and 2.3 in the city. Was that correct? **Mr. Lindsey** said in the County General Fund it's an additional 2.3 mills and an additional \$3.8M. **Commissioner Burroughs** said yeah, roughly 4M, \$2M—we're basically looking at \$2M a mill, so I'm just doing rough numbers, but I'm looking at a tax increase of well over \$20M. **Mr. Lindsey** said if we were to do 3 mills, the tax increase is \$10.5M and the mill rate increase from the base of going revenue neutral would be 5.3 mills.

**Commissioner Burroughs** said maybe I'm confused and if that's the case, please correct me. I'm just going off the materials I had the other night that if we went—and I don't have it with me, I apologize, I left it on my desk. The 2.3 in the city and the 2.3 in the county were the growth in new assessed valuation for a 4.6% growth in valuation. If that's not true, then the information

that we've been working on, some of us, is not accurate information. Are we looking at a 4.6 growth if we chose to not raise any mills, but just take the new valuation, how many mills would that be? **Ms. Kneuvean** said that's the second option that's up there, just for clarification. So, the current mill rate taking the full valuation, that's what the mill rate would change to, which is roughly the two that you just said is what. **Commissioner Burroughs** said it's roughly what? It's hard to hear here. You got to speak up. **Ms. Kneuvean** said I'm sorry. It's roughly the 2.3 mills, not percent, but mills. **Commissioner Burroughs** said 2.3 mills equals how much money? **Ms. Kneuvean** said that's approximately \$4M. It's about \$2M per—**Commissioner Burroughs** said that's what I just stated. It's a little over \$4M. That's the new assessed valuation taking no mill increase. If you add a 3 mill increase on that, what do we get? Nearly I'll just say \$2M times 3 is—**Mr. Lindsey** said \$10.5M. **Commissioner Burroughs** said \$10.5M total. That's a 3%. That's the mills. The 5% would have generated the 15M plus the—the 2.3M or the 2.3 mills in growth is basically a little over \$4M both city and county. We can argue over the split on the .3 as to what that gets us in the 1.9 versus 2.21, but basically we're talking about \$2M a mill.

If we look at the 3 mills for the city, which is \$9M—or \$6M, sorry \$6M plus the four, that's 10M and with the 10M on top, that's a \$20M increase. That's more of an increase than we've seen in the past years when rates jumped up to the extent they did when we had the 12% increase in some areas and 8% increase. The reason why I bring this up, and I'm not trying to criticize staff, I'm just stating that—and it's no secret, many of us are out campaigning going door-to-door. I've been to every corner of this community and the number one issue is property tax relief and in good conscience—it's not property tax relief. Three mills is \$6M plus—**Mr. Lindsey** said if we did a 5 mill increase, which is the largest one we're talking about, it'd be 14.9. **Commissioner Burroughs** said if we do 3 mills, that's \$6M plus the 2.3, which is 4, that's \$10M.

**Ms. Kneuvean** said on this chart, an easy way to get what the difference would be is look at your revenue neutral, revenue versus the alternative of the 3 mills and that will tell you your total differential just for a good reference. On the county side it's 10.5, which is what Reggie said. As it goes from revenue neutral on 84.3 and then with 3 mills it goes up to 94.8. The difference in revenue is the 10 that you just said. **Mr. Lindsey** said, Commissioner, are you including both funds? **Commissioner Burroughs** said yes, that's what I've been getting at. We may be talking the same numbers, but we must be talking a different language. I just know that the taxpayer is going to see a tremendous increase in property tax. If I remember your example

the other day, it was \$120 increase in the city and 120 increase in the county and I think it was either \$180,000 home or a \$200,000 home. **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Burroughs** said \$200,000, so that's a \$240 a year increase on a \$200,000 home.

As I stated, I've been to every corner of this community recently and the number one issue is property tax. I disagree with the fellow commissioner that we have a revenue problem. I totally disagree. We have a systemic fiscal problem. It's a combination of everything. We have a lot of debt. We've been borrowing money to pay our bills. That debt has come due and we can't continue to go to those that are on the brink of losing their home, that have been before us on a continual basis advocating for relief and ignore their pleas.

In my opinion, it's quite insensitive. Do I like the fact that we have to sit back here and look at making serious cuts. What concerns me greatly is that we haven't identified all of the revenue streams that we have and used them responsibly. We have more sales tax coming in than we've ever had and yet we're still having to go out and raise property tax. Revenue neutral only affected property tax. It did not affect the other fees that were increased, the fines that were increased. It didn't affect the sales tax that we are receiving, it didn't affect the monies that we get from the casinos, and the other revenue stream, the increased interest that we're receiving that we haven't been receiving in the last four or five years because of the downturn.

I'm seeing things cut in here that was one-time money from ARPA. It was a backfill from ARPA. People should know that was one-time money and now we're being asked to be considerate of the fact that that one-time money filled the budget and we're going back to the very people that are struggling in their homes to pay the property tax and saying we need more money because we're going to have to supplant one-time money that was guaranteed by the federal government. We can't print money as much as I'd like to think that we could because I think it would behoove us to print bigger bills than what we're probably dealing with here.

But in good conscience, a \$20M increase is quite astounding and if there was an opportunity for us as a body that had this discussion early on in the year, you went through the budget scenarios, which I sincerely appreciate us walking through that because I was hoping that we would come to terms as to identifying how much new revenue we have from sales tax. What are we going to do with that new revenue, the additional revenue from what we got last year? We're going to supplant it into the General Fund where it gets lost and we have no way of knowing was it of benefit. We have legacy programs within our system that need to be analyzed. Are they

providing the services that they were promised to provide. Is our reserves too high, is our reserves too low, what's our cash balance moving into this year? I had the exit audit today. You all will see the rest of it coming up here in the next week or so. Ms. Kneuvean and I sit in on it and I will share with you that I asked about the cash balance and that number was not given to me. So, here we are jumping into requesting of the taxpayer more money and we really don't know what the budget needs. We have a projection of wants and what some people say we need, but I just heard the KCATA 2.4M, that was ARPA money that we put in there to save that route. That money is now gone. We need to find an alternative. Free fairs isn't cutting it. If you use it, you pay for it. That should be what our moniker should be. We're all in this together.

I just have concerns about 3 mills, plus 2.3, that's 5 mills each. That's a significant increase. Now, if the 3% was a total, just taking the new growth, the 2.3 and adding a half mill on it, or 7 tenths of a mill, now we're at a point of discussion. It's not an onerous tax increase. They could have put a 4% cap on in the state and they chose not to do it. So, I think the public understands that, but it still may not meet our financial needs so that tells me if we didn't have an opportunity to go back to the public and get this money, what would be our alternative to fund a budget that shows it's underwater because we only have 83.4M, but we're looking at spending 93.6. We would have to make a tough decision and all I'm asking is let's find a way to make it not so onerous on the taxpayers of this community especially, those on limited income and income that is stationary. Let's find a way to address the widow, the orphan, the unemployed, uninsured that come to us for services. Let's find a way to help them and not continue to go back to the well that is dry.

I love this community, and Mr. Administrator, you're going to have to wait a minute. I have the floor. **Mr. Johnston** said yes, sir. **Commissioner Burroughs** said I have been pretty quiet through this whole process because I want to build the trust within this community that the community has asked from this body. This meeting being called tonight contrary to what is being said, there is an impression in this community of what is going on. That is not a good look for this body, it is not a good look for this community. We want people to move in here, we want people to trust us and here we are talking once again about raising taxes and not giving the public a chance to weigh in. Maybe I'm wrong, and if I am, the public will let me know. We have an election coming up, but I'm staying true to what I'm hearing from the constituents out in the community, help me with my property taxes. Some of us are trying to do that.

This 3%, if you want to go 3% total, I think we're at a good starting point to talk and have a discussion, but if you're talking about going 3 on top of the natural growth we have and still be short, not fix our reserves, that tells me we've got a systemic problem because we're going to have to come back and raise more money and that's not inclusive of the FIFA funds that are going to be asked of us.

I do want to share with the public, we held our votes on revenue neutral last year united, except for one, so I can't say unanimous, but I will state this, that the same individuals supported a bond issue for the school district. You chose to go with a tax increase and then come to us and ask us again to hold the line on revenue neutral. I'm not so sure that this is where you need to be asking for revenue neutral. I think you need to be in front of the other taxing entities that chose to accept additional tax dollars by not addressing their issues that you requested. Maybe you didn't request them, I don't know, I can only be held accountable for what we're doing here and in good conscience, as a member of this community, a lifelong resident, I cannot continue to tax people out of their homes without having a better plan to reduce our expenses, reduce the overall cost of this government and the excuses that we're going to cut services, we're going to cut personnel is fear-mongering. Thank you, Mayor. I need to stop and yield the podium.

**Mr. Johnston** said it's refreshing to hear all these discussions coming from the Commission and we have a lot of invitations for further discussions from Commissioner Bynum, Commissioner Burroughs, Commissioner Ramirez, and a few of the others, so we're going to have some very lively discussions over the next six, seven weeks before the Commission votes on a final budget. So, it's going to be a very good budget process, I think, by the end of August. I've got to go back to what I said at the beginning of this meeting. We're not here to set the tax levy today. Some of the discussions that we've heard tonight from the Commission is we're here to set the tax levy and raise taxes. We're not making that decision tonight. We're setting the limit to give us the guide for the rest of the budget process. That's all it is tonight and that's all we're asking for because that's what state law says we must set tonight and then that guides the discussion that you want to have for the next seven weeks.

In the two years, two budget processes that I've been part of with you, you all have what you want to fund. You don't all agree. I've seen that, but you want to fund certain things in this community that it takes funds. That means we have to include it in the budget. We have to have

that discussion but we have to have a balanced budget, but we also have to have limits and the state says we have to have limits. In this case it's the property tax levy limit that we're asking you to set. I said we're not going to budget to this limit, but I need a guideline and that's what I'm asking you to approve and that's what I'm asking for your decision tonight. It's not setting the rate, the absolute rate. That will be done at the end of August when the budget is passed, but I need that limit to use as the—that we will all use as the guide till a final budget is passed, so that's what we're looking for.

**Mayor Garner** said thank you to our staff. I know our staff has put in, our CFO and her team and our Budget Director and his team, they've really spent a lot of work working late at times. I've seen them trying to get facts, figures, and numbers trying to accommodate the direction from the Commission. There's ten commissioners, and again, they all have different visions and ideas, but the goal is to try and get everybody to that happy medium. I don't know what that looks like. I know that our CFO, and if you missed it, gave a presentation and I asked her and she did as best of a job that she could do because I asked, how did we get here because the can had been kicked and kicked down the road and the can has stopped at us and we've been left with a huge mess to fix. When you talk about deferred maintenance, pockets of poverty that exist throughout our community, disinvested areas, red line areas, food deserts, residents saying that they're over taxed because they've experienced compounding year after year after year outside of last year property tax increases.

Some residents that I've known said they've moved. Others are saying they're planning on moving if we don't get a handle on this. Some residents have told us since I've been Mayor that they would lose their homes. They don't know how they're going to make ends meet and we're not just talking about seniors. We're talking about individuals that live in apartments where rents continue to skyrocket, trying to figure out how to pay their BPU bills that have increased from rate increases that cause PILOT increases, fees that have been tacked on from this body.

I do want to thank staff and I encourage everyone to—I don't know, Ms. Kneuvean, when that presentation was in the spring you gave, you can go back and watch that. It's a really good presentation on what she could find as to how we got here and that was at my request. I can say for certainty, all of us in this room inherited this problem and I don't mean that disrespectfully to any past decisions. I don't know what they faced decades or years ago to where they had to make

the decisions that we've all inherited today, but the goal that I have and the message that I've sent, I don't want us to keep kicking that can down the road so two, three, four generations and probably generations of Wyandotte countians that haven't even been born yet are going to be dealing with these same issues. We've got to get a handle on our budget.

What I do know is that we cannot tax, spend, borrow, deplete the reserve funds on the backs of our hardworking residents and expect them to keep paying more when we have a pattern historically of giving huge corporate welfare tax incentive breaks to big corporates who should be paying their fair share and haven't. When you look at Village West and the promise that was made, I believe most of that went into the General Fund when those bonds were paid off. We've got a lot of revenue sources streams. I've talked to other Mayors, the Unified Government has probably more revenue streams than a lot of other cities in the great state of Kansas. When you talk about dedicated sales taxes passed by the voters that deal with public safety and infrastructure, just our general sales taxes, our PILOT from the BPU along with all those fees that are taxed on there, a lot of cities don't have a public utility and I've asked that question and I've posed it and I'm still willing to work with this Commission for as long as I'm Mayor, is BPU a burden or a benefit. It should be a benefit to our residents because it's owned by the people. It should not be a burden, but it is very burdensome to a lot of folks and when you tack that on to high property taxes, yes, it stifles growth, it makes people want to move out of this town to find cheaper places to live and raise their families. Businesses don't want to come here and invest unless they get huge tax breaks and other businesses that are here are going to close up shop.

I think we've seen that narrative. I went to Detroit and we talked to their city leaders. I think I went there a couple years ago and they're still digging out of their financial challenge of going bankrupt. East St. Louis, I mean I could go on. I don't want that for this community. When we talk about spending and revenues, I'm just going to go back to 2019. I think the budget was approximately 376M, in 2020 it was about 394M, 2021 about 381M, 2022 420M, 2023 432M, 2024 466M and we're at a revenue neutral budget with \$473M. We're on our way to a half a billion dollars. When you talk about revenues and you can go to WYEDC and they'll tell you all the growth and all the jobs that have been brought in in certain parts of our community that are bringing in investments, the millions, I think, one time over a billion dollars' worth of investment in Wyandotte County and the growth that comes from that. Some of the incentives that have fallen off that hopefully those businesses pay and will pay their share, the increase in sales taxes. We

have great housing starts that this Commission has approved since I've been Mayor. So, I don't know if we have—if the revenue is the problem. I don't know if spending is the problem, but I know looking at those numbers every year we ask for more from our residents, so I think we really need to look at our spending and make sure that we're being as fiscally responsible as we can to continue our balanced budgets.

I appreciate Commissioner Bynum making that recommendation. I'm willing to work up—roll up sleeves as I've always done to help all of you, line item, find those—I don't like the word cuts, but cost savings because I know they exist. This is a government. You can always find fraud, waste, and abuse in any government. It's just the reality of government. It's just getting in there and digging and finding where those cost savings can be found and it's hard work. I've also said that this Commission needs to decide, and I've been saying it for years, what are the essential services that we want our Administrator and our staff to look at. What should that be, what's that starting point? Again, I would say Public Safety number one, because if you don't have a safe community nothing else matters, infrastructure, administrative services, parks, and debt reduction. Then we work our way up and then what are those wants and our needs as we line item through department by department budget. I've asked where the money is going since I've been Mayor and unfortunately I've never got a clear answer on how we spend our money down to the penny in every department. That would be nice to have, not just for myself, for this Commission, and I think it would be important for our community to see or at least point us in that direction so we can look it up ourselves, so we can go down to the penny and then when we make these projections, what are these projections in these estimates based off of. That's not really clear to some of the people that I've talked to.

When you say 5% reduction, what's that dollar amount. When you talk across the board in each department and then what does that impact specifically. It would be nice to know what are some of the wants and the essentials for each department to help Commissioner Bynum and some of these other commissioners that said they want to take a deep dive and that's what we need is a deep dive.

I'll also say that I believe in audits. The 2022 audit was very eye-opening for me and a lot of people. When you talk about our financials and some of the other challenges that we face and we need to look at some of those recommendations and see how we can implement those in a way that could be beneficial to the Unified Government and our taxpayers. The biggest

recommendation that we haven't followed through on is we need more audits, forensic audits, performance audits, and deep dive audits to help us find and get recommendations on where cost savings can be found and so that's my recommendation.

As we go through this budget process, yes, we care about our good employees because there are a lot of good employees here and I don't want that to get lost. They work hard, some don't make very much money at all whatsoever and they still show up. Others make a lot of money. Maybe we need to do a cost to benefit analysis, a personnel performance analysis to see how everybody is measuring up and see what positions are needed and what aren't needed. Consolidating departments, maybe there's duplication of services that can be found. Those are just ideas, but let's think about our good employees that are working hard, but then let's also think about and never forget that this government exists to serve the people. And everywhere I go, like Commissioner Burroughs had mentioned, it's a constant, Mayor, please do whatever you can, and this is since before I became Mayor, property taxes, property taxes, property taxes. It doesn't matter if it's your vehicle, if you rent and your rent goes up because your landlord's paying more or if you own a home. If you're paying more, it's hard to keep up your home and if you don't keep up your home, then Codes wants to come out and tag your home, so now it's a double whammy because now you can lose your home two ways. Oh, and then if you're trying to decide whether to pay your utilities or pay your property taxes, don't pay your utilities, well, there's an ordinance that says you cannot have utilities, so we force you to have utilities or we put you out that way too. What I'm saying is maybe we need to look at our policies as well.

I agree with everyone, and I've been saying this, we've got to grow our tax base, but to grow our tax base—and again, I appreciate Commissioner Burroughs and Commissioner Stites for volunteering to take on that task of working on the committee to look at how do we streamline our policies to make doing business here in Wyandotte County not as burdensome, more attractive, remove the bureaucratic barriers and some of the challenges that a lot of our developers said that they run into to do business here. We remove those and that might spur some of the economic development opportunities that I know exist.

So, just some ideas, but I ask our Commission to join me in always putting the people of this great county first and that means being community-driven and putting the service of this community above ourselves. I've said it before, you've heard me say it, this Unified Government should never be perceived as being unified within itself. It should always be perceived as being

unified with this community and to be unified with this community, sometimes we got to make hard decisions to meet the responsible and reasonable expectations that our residents have for us.

My ask is, I don't know where this vote's going to go with revenue neutral, but I ask this Commission, let's work to get as close to having a revenue neutral budget without having one in a way to balance the needs we have as a government and the demands of our residents for responsible tax relief.

**Commissioner Davis** said very quickly, if we could also have in addition to what Commissioner Bynum has said, what Mayor has said, I would like to hear from departments as we continue throughout this budget process, particularly departments that require the most revenue. I want to hear from our Fire Chief, Police Chief, Sheriff. We talk a lot about infrastructure, Public Works, Transit. I don't think we talk enough about the NRC and the work that they do, our Health Department, our DA, and our Parks. Those are some of the most expensive departments. They also cover a lot of services, but it would be great for not just us, but for the community to hear from them in real time what they are seeing and what the impact of cuts will be to their department so that the community can weigh the pros and cons of that.

**Mayor Garner** said I'll take it a step further. The boots on the ground folks, I'm not talking the high paid decisionmakers, the boots on the ground folks that do their job every day. You would be surprised the information you get from them that can tell you ways to save money and how they can do their job, not just better, but more efficiently. Sometimes we need to reach down. The Fire Union, they brought forth a proposal, I believe, one year that could have potentially saved us \$6M. I don't know if we captured any of that recommendation, but have we talked to the other unions, have we talked to these other rank and file boots on the ground employees that are actually in the trenches doing the work? I think we need to include them in this conversation because we're at a point where it's all hands on deck. It is all hands on deck and if we're serious about continue to balance our budget and not do those things of tax, spend, borrow, deplete the reserve fund, we've got to make sure that we involve anybody that has a stake in this, our residents and I know we've got DOTTE Talks. I haven't heard that brought up in any of this conversation. Hopefully that's brought up during the budget, the remainder of the budget meetings, and we continue to have those

surveys and that interaction with our residents on what their needs are and not just what we want, but what do they want, what can they live with, what can they live without.

As we go through the budget, I challenge this Commission to highly consider looking at a sales tax initiative and using that as a potential option and give our residents some skin in the game and let them vote to decide if they want the additional investment, not just themselves, but those that come and shop here in our town to share in some of the burdens we have with our finances. I think you might be surprised. They might say yes or no depending on those options we put in front of them. We've got fire stations, we've got police stations, we've got parks, we've got infrastructure needs. I mean take your pick, but sometimes our voters are a lot smarter—our residents are a lot smarter than we give them credit for. There's a lot of smart, intelligent people out here and they look at us and they tell me, Mayor, you guys can do a lot better than what you're doing if you just—it's not so much if you change the way you look at things, it'll change the way you see things.

I think we're at that moment now looking at some of the projections going out and I believe it's the 2030 we still got a lot of red and I believe if we work hard now, and I really want to thank our staff because we were projected to be in complete red, am I right, in 2026 and they worked really hard to push that out as far as they can to about 2030. That just shows the level of work, dedication, and expertise from our staff that they put in to keep us from going over that financial red cliff. So, with that being said, there is a motion...

**Commissioner Bynum** said I agree with you in the sales tax arena and I'm curious Legal, is it too late calendar wise to place a referendum on a November ballot? **Ms. Green** said actually we did look at that. I've got three memos on my desk right now. I'm going to finish them up and I will have them to the County Administrator tomorrow so we will have that answer. **Commissioner Bynum** said thank you. Mayor, to your point, I think the EMS tax averages like 10M annual, maybe a little bit more now, but you know that could supplant 10M in these property taxes that we're dealing with and I think it's valid to look at that. And I think it's valid to contemplate a sales tax that, as you say, is shared by way more than just our property taxpayers. So, I will look forward to seeing that. Are you also looking at—we discussed several meetings ago the Transient Guest Tax, are you looking at that as well? **Ms. Green** said right. We've looked at three different

things. We looked at the Transient Guest Tax, the City Sales Tax, and we've also looked at possibly a Dedicated County Sales Tax.

**Mayor Garner** said the County Dedicated Sales Tax, I believe that came about—I talked to the Administrator and in our conversations there's a Dedicated Sales Tax for Fire, EMS, Infrastructure and I believe Police. The Sheriff is the biggest need on the county side along with some other administrative services and they don't have a Dedicated Sales Tax. I believe that's what we're looking at. I know in '22 I brought that up and this Commission really they didn't have an appetite for a sales tax initiative, but I believe we do have time and I believe that a lot of the department heads that presented back in 2022 they still might have some of those recommendations available that they can brush off and bring back. I know that there were several and there were some really good recommendations. My ask at that time was that when they brought those recommendations that we create a nexus where no part of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas be left behind with the sales tax initiative. Every area of this county was touched with something of value from that proposal, so it would be great to have that brought forward.

**Commissioner Hill** said I have a couple of comments and then just one quick question. First of all, I really like that sales tax idea. I think that would really help us as we constantly look for ways to get more revenue and decrease the tax burden on our constituents. Also, I want to thank Dr. Shelly Kneuvean for helping us to understand what's going on with Willa Gill, what's available and what is not. Thirdly, my last comment/question, if the Commission, and I know this is not the final say on tonight, but if we went revenue neutral, would that mean that our constituents would pay less taxes? **Mayor Garner** said, Commissioner, on that last question, revenue neutral would only be of value to our residents as a benefit from the Unified Government. It's not a tax decrease as we know. It just holds a line on property tax increases, but then it also holds us to operating within the same revenue, it would be for the last two years, but you still have those other taxing entities. That's part of the concern is we have no control. My biggest concern is I've seen it done in the past where mill levies were lowered and other taxing entities took advantage of that and they raised their mill levies because they saw that additional leverage and so that's always a challenge. I can tell you if we lowered ours as far as revenue neutral, no—depending on if all the other taxing

entities raise theirs, there still could be a tax increase. It just wouldn't be as much if we took full advantage of the appraisal and valuation increases that would translate to property taxes.

**Commissioner Hill** said what you're saying is—because I've had several constituents reach out to me that revenue neutral would absolutely mean that if we are in favor of not increasing taxes and if we did go for revenue neutral that then would go for exceeding revenue neutral then that means we are not pro the constituents, we are not wanting to reduce taxes, so that's why I asked that question and I thank you for your answer that even if we went revenue neutral, and I understand Mr. Johnston said, that's not what we're really saying today, this is not the final budget, but my comment is even if this Commission went revenue neutral, like we did last year, that our county could still experience some tax increase. Is that correct, yes or no. **Mr. Johnston** said the total tax bill for the consumer—for the taxpayer can go up based on what other taxing districts do.

**Mr. Lindsey** said I was going to offer Clerk Sparks has who has been revenue neutral so far if we want to see that or who has exceeded or who plans to exceed. **Mayor Garner** said if you want to have her show that, that's fine and while we're waiting on that I believe Commissioner Davis has some comments.

**Commissioner Davis** said I just want to echo I think on the TGT 4% would be my request. It would yield, I believe, about 2.3-2.4M and it can help offset some of the costs that property taxes or some of the things in the General Fund is used to pay for. Absolutely on the sales tax. Actually in 2022 I was with you, Mayor, on that. I think we need a proposal, we need language in order for us to move that forward, so I'm hoping that memo is favorable to those efforts.

The last idea, it's something that the Administrator and I have been talking about and it's still getting vetted, is claims to public property that often takes place across cities and a lot of cities really don't do anything. If there's kind of a nasty car accident or some other company, their truck, they damage our roads, our streets, our gutter, we usually put that cost of repair back on the taxpayer instead of going after insurance companies. So, I think that's another option for revenue that we should pursue and there are already some folks that do that work really well. I look forward to hearing from the Administrator and staff on what that other revenue option is.

**Mayor Garner** said I believe that the Administrator's staff is also working on looking at our Unified Government assets and hard facilities and looking at getting something to the Commission to possibly see if it's of value to unload some of those properties in a sale.

**Commissioner Burns** said I don't want to be left out, but I think it's high time that we get on with the vote one way or another for revenue neutral or not. There's been a motion and a second on the floor for a while and all the comments are very well intended. I get that, but let's move on.

Entity	Exceeding ? (yes/no)	Notified	Date of Hearing
City of Kansas City, KS			
Wyandotte County			
SSMID	NO	7.9.25	NONE
County Library			
City of Bonner Springs	YES	7.15.25	9/8/2025 7:30
Bonner Springs School USD 204			
City of Edwardsville	YES	7.15.25	9/8/2025 6:00
Piper School USD 203			
KC School USD 500	YES	7.7.25	9/9/2025 5:00
Library USD 500	YES	7.7.25	9/9/2025 5:00
Turner School USD 202			
Rcc Commission Turner USD 20	YES	7.3.25	9/11/2025 5:30
KCK Community College	YES	7.16.25	9/16/2025 5:00
Fairfax Drainage	YES	7.11.25	8/26/2025 8:00
Kaw Valley Drainage	NO	7.3.25	NONE
Wolcott Drainage			
City of Lake Quivira			

**Mr. Lindsey** said on the screen what we have are the entities that have made a decision to exceed revenue neutral or not. Out of the list only two so far has decided not to exceed revenue neutral and that is the Kaw Valley Drainage District and also our Downtown SSMID.

**Mayor Garner** said I believe that we've come to that point, we do have a motion. Who gave that and do you want to repeat that?

**Action: Resolution No. R-58-25**, “Approving the resolution regarding the governing body’s intent to levy a property tax exceeding the revenue neutral rate with the following additions: The hearing date set out in Section 1 shall be August 26, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The proposed tax rate and maximum mill levy for the city of Kansas City, Kansas set out in Section 2 shall be set at 37.462 mills. The proposed tax rate and maximum mill levy for Wyandotte County, Kansas set out in Section 2 shall be set at 36.459 mills and this vote constitutes notice to the UG Clerk of the intent of the governing body to exceed the revenue neutral rate, set the public hearing date to August 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. and the maximum mill levies for the city and county to the amounts previously mentioned. **Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, to approve.** Roll call was taken and there were seven “Ayes,” Bynum, Townsend, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Davis and three “no’s,” Burroughs, Lopez, Stites.

**Commissioner Stites** said in light of the meeting tonight, is there—because I’ve kind of been hard to track to find out, do we have a meeting or do we not have a meeting tomorrow night? **Mayor Garner** said I believe and I’ll refer back to Commissioner Ramirez, that I believe that the intent, correct me if I’m wrong, was to supplant last night’s meeting with this meeting and to take up this act. Is that correct? **Someone** was inaudible. **Mayor Garner** said well with that being said, the Commission on the 10<sup>th</sup> I believe voted to have the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>, but I believe this meeting occurred in lieu of. Administrator, if you can have—**Mr. Johnston** said vote to cancel it since it. **Ms. Green** said there doesn’t need to be a vote for that. There’s no need for the vote if you don’t have anything else scheduled for tomorrow night that wasn’t already taken care of there would be no need. **Commissioner Stites** said we didn’t need a vote to change it to tonight.

**Commissioner Bynum** said I apologize. The mill levy rates or the exceed revenue neutral that was posted, did the Wyandotte County Library Board just vote yesterday to exceed? That was blank. **Ms. Sparks** said we haven’t received official notice yet. **Commissioner Bynum** said so the meeting that was placed on our schedules this afternoon for tomorrow is cancelled. **Mayor Garner** said yes. I’ve given direction to the Administrator to cancel the meeting. The Clerk should be able to post that or remove that, so there will be no meeting, for the record, tomorrow

that was scheduled I believe for 5:00 p.m. **Ms. Sparks** said, Mayor, a Notice of Cancellation will be in.

**Mayor Garner** said we have no further business for this portion of our meeting. We need to go into Executive Session. I'm going to make a motion to take us out of this meeting—**Ms. Green** said I don't know that anybody will be really upset with this, but unfortunately, our Counsel that was going to do the Executive Session had something come up because of the length of this meeting, so we don't have anybody to present that now. So, we will not have anything to present for an Executive Session.

**Mayor Garner** said there's no further business tonight and I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

**Action: Commissioner Kane made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Davis, to adjourn.**

Roll call was taken and there were ten "Ayes," Bynum, Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Ramirez, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis.

**MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED  
THE MEETING AT 6:39 p.m.**

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Monica L. Sparks  
Unified Government Clerk

dt

July 16, 2025