CONSENT AGENDA ITEM NO. ____

STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS **SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2025**
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Meeting, Thursday, August 14, 2025, with ten members present: Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; Townsend, Commissioner First District; Burns, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Hill, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Lopez, Commissioner Sixth District; Stites, Commissioner Seventh District; Davis, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO presiding. Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: David Johnston, County Administrator; Angela Lawson, Interim Chief Counsel; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director; Michael Peterson, Deputy Budget Director; Samuel Her, Lead Analyst in the Budget Office; Meaghan Shultz, Municipal Court Administrative Judge; Daniel Soptic, Sheriff; Michael Abbott, Election Commissioner; Angel Ferrara, Director of Parks & Recreation; Mark Dupree, District Attorney; Susie Nelson, Register of Deeds; Reed Partridge, Legislative Auditor; 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 in a hybrid format on Thursday, August 14, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the fifth floor conference of the Municipal Office Building for a Budget Workshop.

Roll call was taken and there were ten "Ayes," Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Hill, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum, 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 is our ongoing series of workshops as we navigate to getting towards a budget that your Unified Government Board of Commissioners feels comfortable with. This aids them in making an informed decision for the 2026 Budget. I'll turn the meeting over to our County Administrator, David Johnston, and he'll take the meeting from here.

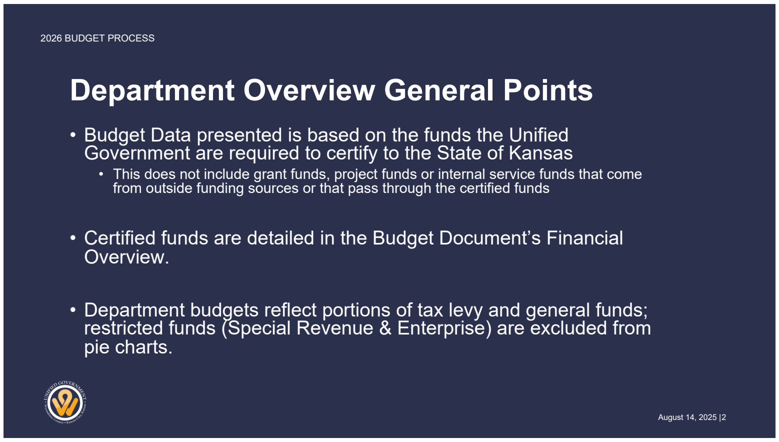
David Johnston, County Administrator, said last week I presented my recommended balanced budget as required by the Charter and handed the budget to you. You've made certain requests. We presented to you earlier this week the line item budgets of a number of our departments that we will be reviewing today and our Budget Director will be working with you tonight to review those budgets. We'll be having similar information given to you for next week's budget sessions, line item budgets, to have those discussions with our department heads as well.

It's an interesting budget season because in the middle of this year's budget season normally we have normal budget amendments for the current budget year, but it makes it challenging to make amendments for the current budget year because we are in a revenue neutral budget year and therefore our ability to make normal budget amendments for the current year is limited just basically because we are limited by state statute on how we approach this year's budget. There are some budget amendments we will be making in this year's budget, but it's not the same because we don't have the latitude to make the budget amendments that we have in the past normally and so we are kind of limited in that regard.

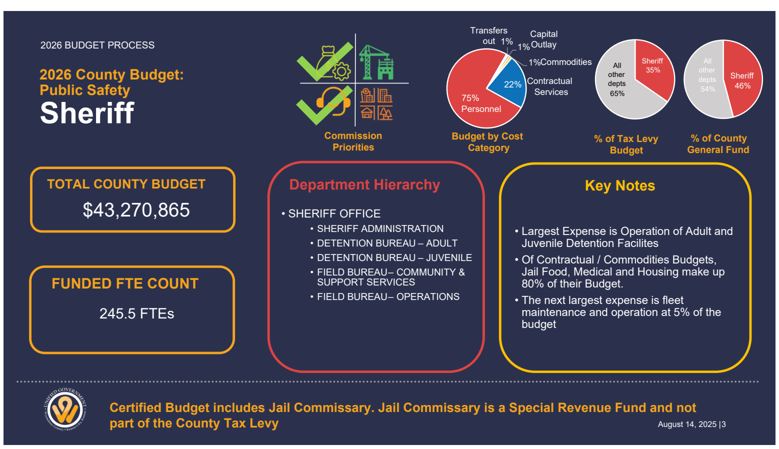
We also, with Commission direction, have instituted a guardrail for the '26 Budget with a revenue limit on property tax levy of not exceeding a 3 mill increase above our mill rate, so we are limited in that regard as well. But regardless, there is a commitment I think from staff and from the Commission whatever decisions are made at the end we will all work to make it work. That's why we have these budget sessions and that is to have open, honest and transparent discussions to help this Commission make the best most informed decision for our public on the services that we can provide them for fiscal year '26.

What we have packaged for, at the very least, the next three budget workshops and there very well may be more, bring in the department heads for our departments to have open, honest discussions about their budgets in a manageable way. We're starting with seven departments tonight and see how this proceeds. We'll have opening remarks from our Budget Department led by Mr. Lindsey and then it will be directed by the Commission because this is now a budget process led by them now. It's their budget, I passed it on to them last week and this process will lead toward a budget that will be before them for a vote eventually.

Reginald Lindsey, Budget Director, said I have joining me Michael Peterson, Deputy Budget Director, and also Samuel Her, Lead Analyst in the Budget Office. Tonight joining us we have the Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, Register of Deeds, Election Office, Legislative Auditor, Parks & Recreation, and Municipal Court. They're all here to discuss their budgets if need be. What we're going to do tonight is start with a budget overview for each department. Then there will be the opportunity for the departments to come up and talk about the detail of their operations. Also, the department information that we'll be going over tonight is also in your budget document starting on page 141 where there's an overview of departments, strategic goals, along with their accomplishments in the prior year. Along with that is also department financials.

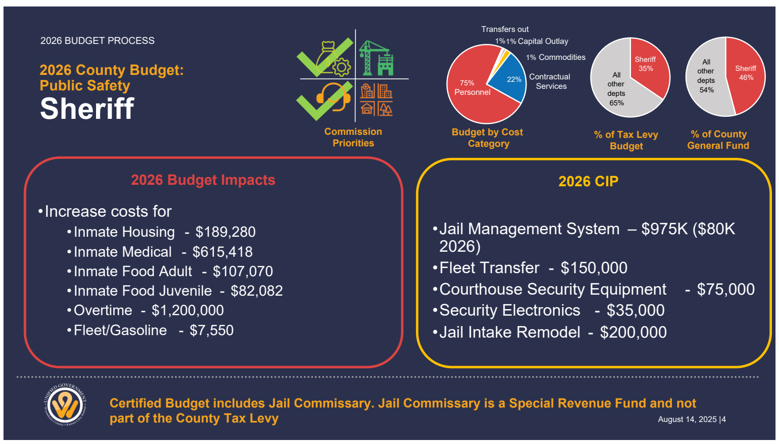


The premise of the information that we're going to be going over tonight, the budget data will be presented based on the funds in the Unified Government's certified funds that go to the state of Kansas. This does not include grant funds, project funds or internal service funds that come from outside funding sources or that pass through the certified funds. Certified funds are detailed in the Budget Document's Financial Overview which can be found on page 53 within the budget document. Department budgets reflect portions of the Tax Levy and General Funds and Restricted Funds. Special Revenue & Enterprise Funds will be excluded from the pie charts that we go through in this presentation.



The first department that we're going to do an overview of is the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department does represent two of the goals that the Commission has set out. That would be uphold fiscal sustainability and it also focuses on service and communication. The Sheriff's budget is 75% personnel shown by the pie chart, 22% of their budget is from contractual services as a percent of Tax Levy Funds on the county side. The Sheriff makes up 35% of that cost. Of costs that are in the County General Fund, the Sheriff makes up 46% of that cost. Total County Budget for the Sheriff's Department is $43M. Funded FTE includes 245 FTEs. Department hierarchy includes Sheriff Administration, Detention Bureau for Adult, Detention Bureau for Juveniles, Field Bureau Community & Support Services, and Field Bureau Operations.

Some of the key notes about the expenses within their budgets or the largest expense is the operation of Adult and Juvenile Detention Facilities. Contractual/Commodities Budgets include jail food, medical and housing and those make up 80% of the budget. The next largest expense is Maintenance and Operations at 5% of the Sheriff's budget.



Also, as part of this, some of their 2026 Budget impacts include increased costs for Inmate Housing, which is an incremental $189K and then also Inmate Medical which is an incremental $615K and Inmate Food Adult is an incremental $107K and Inmate Food Juvenile for juveniles is $82K. Then overtime, we have built in an additional $1.2M which we did cut from the budget in 2025 and realize that we needed to build it back in. Also, there's additional fleet gasoline of $7,500 that is added in. Then for the 2026 Capital Improvement Projects the Sheriff will be getting a new jail management system that totals $975K. Also, we have a Fleet Transfer going to our Transfer Internal Service Fund for vehicles and to service the vehicles of $150K. Courthouse Security Equipment of $75K and then Security Electronics of $35K and the Jail Intake Remodel of $200K.

At this point in time, I'll turn it over to you or defer to you, Mayor, to allow you to invite the Sheriff up if you would like to.

Mayor Garner said Mr. Lindsey, was there anything in particular you want from the Sheriff? **Mr. Lindsey** said if there are any questions that any fellow commissioners and you, yourself, Mayor have of Sheriff Soptic, I think you are free to ask those. I guess Sheriff Soptic may have some things he wants to share also. **Mayor Garner** said before we take Commission questions, Sheriff Soptic, since you're here we'll give you the floor if you want to make a brief presentation.

Daniel Soptic, Sheriff, said I'm not going to go through any slides or anything like that. I think you know things that we've talked about prior which isn't going to be a surprise, and the slide depicts that our biggest cost being the Detention Center, which at the end of the day we have very little control over in the sense of how many people are there and what some of these things cost the county. When we looked at the budget that was presented to you versus the budget that we asked for, there are definitely some areas like Inmate Housing, for instance, that have been shorted and it's the same conversation we've had many, many times before, which is at the end of the day that bill is going to come because we have to have those people. So, that's something that would just have to be dealt with at a later date should there be a shortage.

Probably my biggest concern is the positions that have been proposed to be frozen, 47 positions total are proposed to be frozen within the Sheriff's Office and 29 of those are deputies and we currently have a shortage of 34. If my math is correct, I'm being told I can hire five deputies in the next year and that's not going to work. I was very willing to work with the Administrator and Budget this year in freezing 10 spots, but to think that we can freeze 29 and that not trigger a failure to adequately fund concern, then we're kidding ourselves because it's going to. I think a misconception is that when the Sheriff's Office—if the Sheriff's Office was full staffed, that we now have these extra people and we have a relief. We really have very little relief even at fully staffed. When you're talking 34 short, that's beyond understaffed. We were moving in a good direction and we still are with our hiring and recruiting. We've got 14 or 15 that test I think next Thursday and so those numbers are still moving in the right direction, but what we didn't forecast was the large amount of retirements that came to us over this last year. Great for those folks. That's what you work your life for is to be able to do it. It's something that the Police Department has experienced from time to time which is a large number of retirements at once. We've never had that and unfortunately we did at this point. It's left us in a spot where five funded deputy positions isn't going to cut it.

I've told the Commission I want to work with you guys. I want to be that partner. I understand the issues you're having, but at the end of the day my responsibility is to the Sheriff's

Office and the community to do what statutorily I'm required to do and that takes people. To avoid a claim of failure to fund, we're going to have to have a discussion about those frozen positions. Outside of that, we can work through some of this. It will result in deferred maintenance and throwing off some replacement schedules and stuff that we've worked hard to establish, but we'll deal with that the best we can. But Housing, those types of expenditures, and the staffing are the two things I need you guys to understand. That's really all I've got. I can take any questions.

Commissioner Burns said, Sheriff, I want to commend you on the professionalism that you portrayed for your department this past month. We all know it was difficult, but I think we all agree that you did the right thing for Deputy Ming and I appreciate it and I think the whole community does.

My question is, you're asking for almost a million dollars in the Jail Management System. How old is the one you have now? **Sheriff Soptic** said I'd have to go back and look, 2012 I think. I would have to go back and look for sure. What we've run into is things change, technology needs change. As other software has started to be used either by the Police Department or other folks, there's been limitations to this software. Over the years we've had some not the best customer service stuff we've worked through, but it's just becoming antiquated and there's other things that we need to address, other needs and it all ties into the Jail Management System, so instead of doing it piece by piece, we're trying to do it as a whole. But we're also in a little bit of a holding pattern on that because we're working with the Police Department on whatever they're going to end up doing for their system so that we can ensure we're only doing it once. They're either going to be compatible or maybe even the same product, but there are just some things and, you know, requests of the system that we're now trying to get it to do that's it's just not capable of.

Commissioner Burns said I think that leads to my next question about that. Is it going to be compatible with the Police Department and the DA? **Sheriff Soptic** said the Police Department for sure is the part we're trying to ensure that it's compatible with or even the same vendor that they might go with that would offer both. As far as the DA's Office, and DA Dupree could speak more to that, I don't know that there's an integration with his system that's even possible. I don't know, so I don't know that that's a need or a concern at the moment. **Commissioner Burns** said I know you're not—it wouldn't be tied into the District Court. They've gone on their own different system with the state, but I was just concerned if the DA and the Police

Department, if the three of you could have the same one, it would be very beneficial. **Sheriff Soptic** said our biggest connection is with the Police Department because as they bring folks in and arrests are completed, it's done electronically and to get their system and this system to work, some years ago we had to pay for an interface to be built just to make that happen and it's been a struggle ever since.

Like I said, technology has just advanced. The needs of the jail has advanced. For anyone that doesn't know, one of the requirements of the office also is that we are the official record of the Detention Center and so every person that is in and out and all the information that goes along with that, we're required to keep, which is what this system does. So accessibility issues, you name it, we've got to the point we've got to do something and so yes, we're trying to be as compatible as we can. **Commissioner Burns** said thank you for all you do.

Commissioner Bynum said in looking at the budget documents we've been given budget line item detail, I'm showing your '25 Amended Budget was $41.9M and your '26 Proposed is $43.2. Is that sounding right to you? So of 1.3M—**Sheriff Soptic** said probably, yeah, I don't have those two numbers in front of me. **Commissioner Bynum** said so in terms of '26 Proposed, at 43.2, do you know what you requested as far as the '26 Proposed? **Sheriff Soptic** said I don't have that.

Commissioner Bynum said what I was wanting you to do is walk us through the Inmate Housing piece again. We need to be refreshed on that. It's very expensive. I noticed this increase of 189, but that seems a drop in the bucket compared to the overall cost. If you would just talk with us again. You've brought this to us multiple times in the past budget cycles where you are telling us it costs what it costs. **Sheriff Soptic** said absolutely. What it boils down to is the Detention Center is designed and has been retrofitted over the years, but at this point designed to house a certain amount of people. When we reach that point, we have to house them somewhere, which is where our housing costs come in when we have to farm them out. We have contracts with several different counties where we do that. We always shop for the best rate for those contracts, but the amount of people that we have in custody isn't something that I control at all. I know there are some people out there, not saying in this room, but there are people out there that believe I can release people at my will and that's not the case. Short of charges being dropped or a disposition on a case, they're going to be released either by the DA's Office or a judge. I can't do that and so the more people that are arrested in our county, and you have to keep in mind, that is all the cities, that's any trooper that arrests somebody in the county, KU Police, Community College, they all come here and I don't control that. Historically, we have been good at estimating our housing costs and every year there has been an increase, but I was told today that this year we over estimated a little bit, so we're in a better position. But, yeah, that's the bill that I talk about. It's just like with medical and food where we have to feed them. We have to provide medical per state law and medical costs increase every single year. We negotiate that the best we can, but we have to have it and medical can be one of those pay now or pay later situations because if you don't get quality, then you end up in a bad position or could be in a bad position in the future. So, that's the problem with those costs. I wish I could control those more. Like I said, we search for the best rates in those things. When it comes to medical in Detention Centers specifically, there are not a lot of companies that do that. That's pretty specialized. So even in that, you know, you're kind of stuck by what your options are, so I hope that answers your question.

Commissioner Bynum said it does and then I was going to go to the medical next because again '25 Amended at 5.8M and Proposed '26 at 6.1, which is about the difference there. Again, you discussing the fact that you can't really control those costs and the last thing is the overtime at 1.2M, is about the difference between last year's and this year's proposed budgets. **Sheriff Soptic** said that goes back to my previous statement. If us being fully staffed meant—well, there's fluff or there's extra, then you would see a quick return on you hire more deputies and the overtime rate drops. The problem is, like I said, even when we get closer to that fully staffed number, we still run pretty thin and there's lots of reasons for that. Over the years pins have been moved for different things. At one point, in a previous administration, a Correctional Specialist position was created. You may remember that. There were some deputy pins used to create those and so our deputy pins, you know, really we've got to a point where even at a fully staffed number, there's not extra, there's not a big relief factor. So in order to see the overtime come down, we have to get closer to that field number before we really see any effect on that. An example I use is, if we're looking for six people to fill a shift, six overtime positions to fill a shift and we only have two, then we're still running that shift short and the overtime is there and still not being filled. That's the only way to really reduce that number and to think that filling five deputies only is going to do anything, it's not. **Commissioner Bynum** said I just feel like in general, you know, when we do freeze positions, which I completely understand the rationale, we drive overtime in your department and other departments and so it's a balancing act of determining that cost money too. In fact it possibly cost more than filling the positions. **Sheriff Soptic** said one thing I've talked about and we haven't talked about it in a public setting because there is safety and security concerns surrounding it, we've talked about staffing, what those levels look like and that conversation hasn't changed. It's the same and so we're, like I said, we're moving in a good direction but we have definitely been affected by the retirement bug.

Commissioner Hill said the number of employee positions frozen, 47. **Sheriff Soptic** said 47 is the proposed number, correct. **Commissioner Hill** said and you also mentioned the number 39. **Sheriff Soptic** said 29. Out of the 47, 29 of those would be deputies. **Commissioner Hill** said okay, thank you.

Commissioner Davis said Sheriff, I just want to echo what my colleague Commissioner Burns said. You have led with integrity and excellence and poise during a very difficult time and so I thank you for your work in our community. I have a lot of questions, so I'm going to try to shrink them because I know we have a lot of other departments to go through, but just want to make note out of the County General Fund, 46% is your department and we've had a lot of conversations about the county, what the county does, and kind of what it's offering, but I do want to make note of that of just a significant portion of our property tax dollars goes to supporting the operations of your department. I'm sure you're very aware and understand the gravity and weight of that.

A few years ago we decided to go with you on the journey of providing pay parity between KCKPD and your Sheriffs. Can you just tell us just a quick overview what the impact that has been on the department and have you seen any progress in your recruiting efforts? **Sheriff Soptic** said yeah, absolutely. So 100% it's been a positive move for the Sheriff's Office. I can tell you that number of 34 would be a whole lot higher than 34 had that not been done. If I remember right, it was in the 40s when I came into office, middle 40s, and so that right there is a testament to what it has done. As far as our recruiting numbers, like I said, and actually I had a note, 15 set to test next week. We weren't getting 15, we weren't getting 10, we were getting two or three to test, so that has definitely been a positive and then I would say for the staff that was already employed, it's been a retention mechanism that we thought it would be and has kept them around. In fact we've had several deputies that have left for, as they say, greener pastures and have come back. That happens more times then not and ask to go back through the process to be rehired. It's definitely been a positive.

Commissioner Davis said with the amount of positions that are open that we would budget for, you're saying five doesn't work, 34 is pretty expensive. Is there a number in between that would help and keeping in mind, we're talking about one year's worth of a budget, considering you all were able to hire—I'm just estimating a net maybe 10 to 12 new sheriffs since pay parity. **Sheriff Soptic** said if we had the ability to hire up to 15, then that would be a number that I would be comfortable with. The reason I was willing to freeze the 10 this time, and I talked to the County Administrator about this before, is I was very confident those 10 wouldn't be filled and so that makes sense. If we had the ability to hire the 15, I think that would keep us all moving in the right direction and give us that ability because one thing we don't want to do is get into a spot of having 15 applicants, 20 applicants showing up and then having to turn people away because we run out of pins because those people don't come back. We're trying to make that positive headway and sometimes you only get one shot at that.

Commissioner Davis said my last question, can you just generally speak to the services that you provide particularly to cities outside of Kansas City, Kansas, but are within Wyandotte County. **Sheriff Soptic** said obviously, like I said, the Detention Center, we hold for every single city. We do bill those cities and they pay a daily rate. That daily rate is something we're currently looking at. It hasn't been upgraded or updated in a while, but for this body, you know, that's kind of tricky because an increase in that fee just hits you guys on the other side of the budget, but that is something we're looking at. That's the Detention piece.

Serving the courts, you know, it can be a case from any city that is being tried in District Court or going through the District Court process, which is going to be the court transport element. Anything in the Courthouse obviously is a countywide function. Then, the actual paper service, we're serving civil papers, Replevin, PFAs, evictions in every single city in the county. Again, that's a function that the whole county is getting.

Third, ORU, Offender Registration, which is required by state law to be run through the Sheriff's Office. That is another countywide function that everybody has that ability to look up in their neighborhoods to see who's living by them regardless of what city they're in.

Commissioner Kane said did you come up with the number, Sheriff, of how many you were able to hire or did staff tell you that's what you should hire or how did that work? **Sheriff Soptic** said no. I was presented with the numbers that they were recommending to freeze for the budget that they presented to you guys. **Commissioner Kane** said okay. What my suggestion is you guys sit down and go at it one more time and come up with something in the middle. More than five, less that 15 or whatever it is, but you can't operate with just the five, correct? **Sheriff Soptic** said correct.

Commissioner Kane said the last time we were in a situation like that, Sheriff Green was able to sue us. Is that correct? **Sheriff Soptic** said correct. **Commissioner Kane** said if you don't get what you need, then you could force us to do it. **Sheriff Soptic** said there's a process for that and that's the failure to fund the process and so in short, yeah, there is a process through the courts that we would have to be involved in, if you will, and then the courts would decide what that funding level—whether that funding level is adequate or not. **Commissioner Kane** said and that's why I bring it up. I think you guys need to sit down, come together, I don't care how—you can beat the hell out of each other for all I care, but come up with a better number for you or a bigger number for you and a lesser number for him.

Mr. Johnston said I'm glad Commissioner Kane brought that up. I think it's important for all of us to understand how we got to that number frozen. I think it's important for all of us to understand how we got to that number and I think when we were discussing it with the Sheriff, when we were talking internally, Michael Peterson had a good summary of how we got to the frozen number. Michael, are you prepared to talk how we got to the frozen number?

Michael Peterson, Deputy Budget Director, said just the process that we went through during this budget cycle with positions across the board, not just Sheriff, we were trying to eliminate the vacancy trend that we've talked a lot about. If I remember correctly when we get back to this, I think it's roughly $8M of personnel that wasn't funded in the County General Fund with our normal budget. So basically, what we were doing is we were freezing positions that we would not anticipate being able to fill without adding more funding to the budget. We were making sure that we could fund every position that was posted and filled across the Unified Government departments. The process we went through was looking at what departments had been staffed at for the last few years and so the number I believe that we ended up with for the Sheriff's Department was roughly 340 positions plus I think some additional for cadets. That was a number that we had not hit over the past five years with the exception during COVID. That was a number that we had never gotten to in the last five years of normal hiring and that's what why that number was used and that was actually a more generous number of positions than what we gave for most of our county departments. We ended up freezing almost all vacancies to get to the budget that we have right now.

Commissioner Townsend said, Sheriff, I have to echo what's already been said by my colleagues Davis and Burns, concerning your demeanor and presentation as well as that of your entire department during the last couple of weeks and the excellent, though sad manner, in which we all said goodbye to Deputy Ming. Not only Deputy Ming, but there was also such a presence with the other Sheriff's homegoing as well, so I had to say that.

My question since we're in a budget setting, please do not take this as disrespect for any in your department or you, we've been talking about positions, but I want to go back to a subject that Commissioner Davis talked about. That a couple of years we moved forward with a request for parity, but again, since we're in budget, I've got to ask this budget question. Can anyone tell me what the impact in these numbers is with regard to the parity aspect and if we can't do that tonight, I'd like to know what that number is. If we're not looking at cutting heads, we're looking at everything, but can someone tell me what the personnel numbers would look like for staff if we were not at the parity situation?

Mr. Lindsey said right now, Commissioner Townsend, we do not have that number. It's something we can bring back to you. **Commissioner Townsend** said I would appreciate that. That was the only inquiry I had.

Mayor Garner said some clarity for me, Sheriff. I know that you said there were retirees and I guess I'm a little confused. Mr. Peterson talked about averaging out basically on what you had been able to fill in the past. You were talking about retirements and academy classes. I guess for clarity, the positions of those individuals that have retired are those being cut. What are we actually looking at? The positions that Mr. Peterson is talking about that hadn't been filled I guess are you looking to fill those and you just want those funded. Just a little more clarity on where we're at. I mean, are we cutting positions that were filled and now we're eliminating those or we're cutting positions that weren't filled, but you're trying to get those filled. **Sheriff Soptic** said both. Yes to both. There's a couple retirements that those people aren't off the books yet. They're happening in the next couple of months. If they were off the books now, that number of 34 would be 36 and so instead of filling five, we would be able to fill seven, but the ones that have come before them that are already off the books, yes, those are—those would be and I'd have to get the total number for you, but there are going to be some that are not being refilled if we're only able to hire five. We're going to be at that bubble. We've probably had four retirements I think. I would have to go back and look and so we're almost at the breakeven point. My bigger concern is just because we've been making it to this point doesn't mean that we're not still creating a problem for us and for our people with the shortage. So if we had none of those retirements and we were being told we could fill five or seven positions, I don't know that it would be as big of a deal. But since those people are already off the books, they're coming out of this total number. Like I said, we're probably pretty close to breaking even with that. I hope that answers your question.

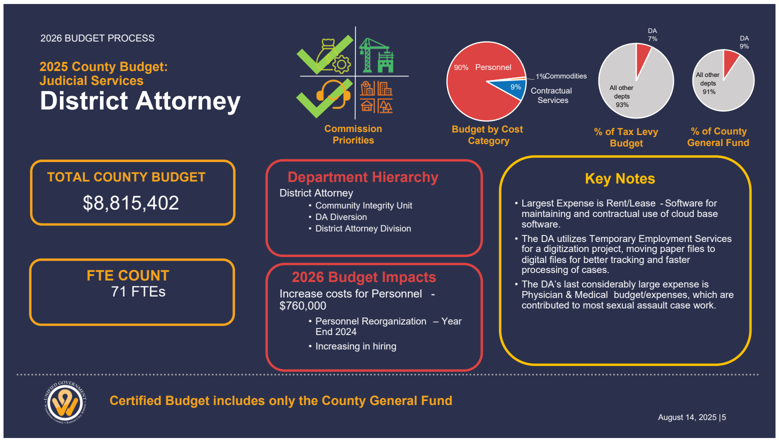
Mayor Garner said a little bit. I guess just a little more clarity. The five positions that the Sheriff is talking about, does that include the positions that have already been funded historically? Are we talking about cutting positions that had been funded but hadn't been filled and so you're cutting them? **Mr. Peterson** said yes. So, again, according to the data that we were looking at when we went through the budget process, we are not freezing below a point that we were ever staffed at in the last few years. The goal for us for each department was to try to get to a personnel number, not necessarily an exact type of position, so basically, let's just say for the Sheriff, if they had $40M in personnel, they would be able to fill $40M worth of whatever positions that they needed to fill as long as they didn't exceed that dollar amount. That's what we were trying to do in this budget. The budget position inventory represents what is currently in those numbers that we've prepared as part of the proposed budget, but it can be flexible. The goal is for it to be flexible and for them to be able to use the full amount of that budget authority without worrying about a personnel trend going forward. So if a position has rolled off during this year, we would anticipate that there would be funding for that position to go back on because we did not cut below the max staffing level that we've had the past several years for the Sheriff's Department. We just could not fill much above where we've been in recent history.

Mayor Garner said would it be safe to say you want funding to be at all your allocated staffing numbers whereas I think staff is looking at just what you've been able to fill historically over the course of some years, but you want the funding to be able to—if you can fill all the positions that you're allocated, you want to have that money available. Is that safe to say? **Sheriff Soptic** said well, I would like to sure have the ability to fill everything should we get to that point, but that's not even what I'm asking for today. To your question, yes. Some of these that are proposed to be frozen were previously funded, just not filled. While the number that they're using may not be below a number that we had been at before, still doesn't mean that number was an adequate staffing number and that's what we can't lose sight of. So, yeah, we may not be dropping below a number that we've been at over what you—five years you said, but that doesn't mean that number was adequate. I'll tell you right now it's not. It never was and so that's why we've worked so hard in our recruiting efforts and to take advantage of the pay parity to get us to a better spot. I'm not sitting here and asking you to fund all 34 of what I have open, but what I'm telling or what I guess I'm trying to get across is that five just doesn't cut it.

Mayor Garner said I'd like to just piggyback again, condolences. Everything went really well as far as the homegoing for Deputy Ming and just the professionalism of you and your team and just have you all navigating, you all should be commended. I just wanted to share that with you. **Sheriff Soptic** said thank you for all the kind words and all the support.

Mayor Garner said before you leave, I think there was a request and I just want to get clarity from the Commission—and just so you'll know staff did do a good job. They did follow through—each one of the commissioners should have got line items of each department budget as requested. I know some of the commissioners have been going through those as Commissioner Bynum. I see she's got some of them in front of her along with some other commissioners. They got those out, so thank you staff. I know it was a lot of work, but it really allows in these challenging budgetary times this Commission to look at the budgets of each department and that helps them get to where they need to be when you talk about an informed decision.

Commissioner Kane made a request and I just want to make sure that the Commission is in alignment with that request for the Sheriff to go back with staff and to try and come to a happy median. Are we good? I'll take that as a yes.



Mr. Lindsey said the next department that we're going to do a budget overview over is the District Attorney. The District Attorney has a total county budget of $8.8M. He also has 71 FTE full-time equivalent positions. Then as far as Commission priorities, he upholds fiscal sustainability and also focuses on service and communication for the community. As far as his budget, 90% of his budget is personnel and 9% of it is contractual services. Out of the County Tax Levy Funds he is 7% of that budget and then of the total County General Fund he is 9% of that budget. His department hierarchy includes his Community Integrity Unit, DA Diversion Program, and then also the District Attorney Division.

His 2026 Budget impact includes $760K for increased personnel costs, which are related to a personnel reorganization that happened at the end of 2024 that relates to increasing hiring. Some of the key notes for the DA's budget, the largest expense is rent/lease software for maintaining and contractual use of a cloud based software system and also the DA utilized a temporary employment service for a digitizing project. Last, and his largest expense is Physician and Medical budget, which is an expense that is contributed to most sexual assault case work within his budget.

Mark Dupree, District Attorney, said I appreciate the opportunity always to come before the Commission and so I appreciate all of you commissioners, County Administrator, and all of the Assistant County Administrators, Budget, and all the folks who have been working diligently on our behalf. I will say at the beginning of this my staff, both Brandy Wells who's over my finances in my office and manages the operations along with my Chief Deputy, Damon Mitchell, who's along with us and a Public Information Officer, Jonathan Carter. We have met multiple times and I say that at the forefront of this to make sure that we all kind of know where we are.

This budget team under the direction of Reginald Lindsey and the ACA's who have been working with us and Mr. Johnston have met with us multiple times and we have sat around the table multiple times and had some very clear and direct conversations. What you are seeing came from—I'll utilize Commissioner Kane's terminology, some knockout, drag out conversations, not fights. I want to lay that out at the beginning because where we are did not come lightly and I appreciate the folks for meeting with us.

I think that I should state just a couple things that you all may not know and I'm going to speak just for a few moments and then I'm going to be quiet so that you all can ask me any questions that you have. The role of the District Attorney's Office is to prosecute according to the state law any felony cases and misdemeanors that fall under the Kansas Statute and that is our mandate and we are the representation of the state and so we must prosecute those cases. There's no other way that they are prosecuted in Wyandotte County but by and through this office. This office, according to the budget numbers, make up 9% of the County budget, 9%, and I say that because we deal with nine different policing agencies. Every case that's on a felony level or misdemeanor via the state statutes that come through Wyandotte County comes through our office which means we are the main prosecuting office for Kansas City, Kansas Police Department, Sheriff's Department, Bonner Springs Police Department, Edwardsville Police Department, State Troopers, KU Police Department, Kansas City, Kansas Community College Police Department, District 500 Police Department, Lake Quivira Police Department, and that doesn't include our wonderful federal partners and task force that we often see cases as they partner with us via the FBI, the DEA, and others. But the point is we make up 9%, but we deal with three and dealing with Lake Quivira, sometimes four different cities and they make upper part of 40 and 50 and 60% of their budgets, but we're 9% and we deal with all of the cases that they bring in.

What we have presented today is something that is, I believe, amazing and what is it that is amazing that just five years ago this District Attorney's Office was down about nine attorneys and we were struggling and we were drowning. That happened and continued to happen up until about two years, maybe about 18 months and things changed and we were able to recruit, to hire, and quite frankly, to compete. In the last 18 months we have held attorneys in nearly every position and held on to them for quite some time. What we found was that the experience that they get here in this office is not comparable to any in our region. Now, that is unfortunate, but it is the very thing that folks come to our office for. They're going to get a high volume of cases, a high volume of violent crimes. They're going to get trial work and litigation and they are going to deal with nine different agencies of cases that are coming and with that we need prosecutors to prosecute them and we had to pay them accordingly to keep them. In the last two weeks, I've had two different District Attorneys Office give three of my leading Senior District Attorneys over $30K more than what I can pay them. They did this because in their time here with our office, they've got more experience in the three years here than they would get in 10 years in any of our regional prosecutor's offices. Not concerned. I have interviews set up next week and because we are in a position where we can compete, I did not go back and ask to get $30K more for each of those individuals. I said your time has come to an end because we understand the situation we are in.

I want to make sure that you all know that we have to have our positions. We have to prosecute our cases and we have to have attorneys who are experienced so that we can deal with cases that we have to deal with and, unfortunately, as I hear the continuous condolences, that means cases like the individual who put this county in yet another situation concerning our law enforcement. And now all eyes is on this office who makes up only 9%. What I would bid all of you is to keep all of that in mind and to consider the reality of the task and the duties that this office has and that the attorneys in my office have to deal with along with our staff. You have the floor for any questions.

Commissioner Burns said thank you Mark for all you do. I see here and I'm looking at a budget printout here for the District Attorney's Office and I see at the bottom of the '24 Amended Budget it says $7,852,609, but your request for '25 is $8,815,402. That's about a million dollars. **Mr. Dupree** said do you want me to explain this or do you want to explain what those numbers mean? **Someone** was inaudible. **Mr. Dupree** said okay, I'll give it a shot. So, what we had and where we are that includes I believe the 3% COLA as well as—one of the things that I tried to kind of indicate at the beginning of this is we had positions that were not filled. We had spaces that were open and that has changed. What changed is that with those positions being filled, now we pay that money out and so with the numbers that we have now it makes up the full attorney positions being full as well as our staff, also including our COLA. Did I kind of clear that up just a little? **Commissioner Burns** said so you don't have any vacancies except for the two that you mentioned. **Mr. Dupree** said the three that I mentioned. **Commissioner Burns** said you don't have any other vacancies. **Mr. Dupree** said nope, and those three will be filled if I'm—**Commissioner Burns** said maybe Reggie can explain this to me. The '25 remaining budget, the next to the last column there on page 3, you have a million forty thousand dollars left right now. Is that right, Reggie? **Mr. Lindsey** said I do see where he has $3.6M left, but $1.3 I'm not seeing. **Commissioner Burns** said I don't know if we have the same thing. I think we do. You see the '25 remaining. **Mr. Lindsey** said I do see it. What was your question again? **Commissioner Burns** said is that how much money he has left in his budget presently? **Mr. Lindsey** said yeah, that is correct as of August 7th. **Commissioner Burns** said we only have four more months to go. **Mr. Lindsey** said that is just for that particular category for expenses, not the total budget. **Commissioner Burns** said I understand that. **Mr. Dupree** said that doesn't include salaries. That's a different category. But let me assure you, Commissioner, a lot can happen by December to make sure and it has been seen in every year before that those funds are utilized. The vast majority in salaries, but also in contractual obligations. As Mr. Lindsey indicated, a huge amount of what we deal with is outside of just salary. We have to deal with, for instance, our experts, we have to deal with getting our sexual assault kits tested and I know who I'm speaking with and so I know you know all of this, Commissioner Burns, having spent a few decades across the street—oh, four decades okay, three okay. The point being is—the other part that I think you also need to take into consideration with us is we don't have the luxury of looking at a pattern in saying that this is the way it's going to be. **Commissioner Burns** said you can't project what's going to happen in five months. **Mr. Dupree** said and that's not only in our positions, but that's also in our crime. **Commissioner Burns** said right.

Mr. Dupree said, Commissioner Burns, are you done. I think everyone is waiting to make sure that they don't step on your toes from speaking. **Commissioner Burns** said I'm done.

Commissioner Hill said one of the key notes, the last one on this presentation, the DA's last considerably large expenses Physician and Medical Expenses, which are contributed to most sexual assault case work. Can you give me kind of a guesstimation or estimation of those costs? **Mr. Dupree** said I can tell you that we have—the cost of a sexual assault is about a thousand dollars, $782 and then it continues to go up and down depending on who we utilize. In the last couple of years I believe we ended up switching and going to someone else, but I will tell you it's over a couple hundred of those every year and when we got into office there was a backlog of those sexual assault cases that we had to go through to get tested. I don't see that slowing down past 102 every year and that's at a thousand each. **Commissioner Hill** said a thousand dollars— **Mr. Dupree** said per test kit give or take $150 to $200 depending on the contract or who we're utilizing. **Commissioner Hill** said okay.

Commissioner Davis said I want to ask Mr. Lindsey or Mr. Peterson to reconcile something for me because maybe I'm kind of missing this. On our budget when we are talking about the DA, there are two pages that I just need to reconcile. One is kind of the general District Attorney page. This is page 253 and it has the expenditure by fund and for 2025 Amended it's $8,194,794 and then for the 2026 Budget it says $8,476,462, so there's that and then there's also the District Attorney Division under the District Attorney Department and that's where we see the 2025 Amended Budget say $7.5M for the expenditure by fund and then a 2026 Budget of $8.5M. Can you help me kind of understand the discrepancy and that is on page 255. **Mr. Peterson** said that is one of the things that we discovered when we were prepping for these meetings. We were, as the District Attorney mentioned, we were in communication with him up through the last weeks of the budget to try to work through his personnel numbers. So the numbers that made it into the Proposed Budget document do not reflect the final number that we had worked through with him and so we just had missed that when we were putting together our department pages. You will get an updated department page. The number that's on the slide here is the number that should be on the department page for the County General Fund for the District Attorney's Office. We will be sending that out to you all, the updated corrected page.

Commissioner Davis said okay. So this 8.8M that we're looking at on the screen is the 2026 Proposed Budget or expense budget. **Mr. Peterson** said work tag detail reports that you received as well as the slideshow PowerPoint will match the updated page that we will get to you for the District Attorney's Office. **Commissioner Davis** said for the 2025 Amended Budget, because there are two numbers currently, which one is the most accurate? **Mr. Peterson** said for the department as a whole, the 2025 Amended Budget, we're recommending—or it's being recommended a 7.88M budget. **Commissioner Davis** said 7.88 and then you have the 8.—**Mr. Peterson** said yeah, which is at the top of the budget line item detail report, last line as well, grant total. **Commissioner Davis** said can you say that again, I'm sorry, I couldn't hear that last part. **Mr. Peterson** said it's the first number and the last number on the Budget Department line item detail report that the commissioners received for the 2025 Amended Budget column. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha. The 7.8 okay. I just wanted to make sure because I saw that and it did not completely make sense to me as to how a Division within a Department can have a larger budget than the entire department, so thank you for that clarity. I look forward to that update.

DA Dupree, thank you so much and Ms. Wells, thank you so much for all the work that you all do for our community. I do want to say congratulations. I believe one of your staff members earned an award for the Victims Advocate Award in 2024. Briefly, if you can talk about that as well and then I'll end off with just two more questions.

Mr. Dupree said the state of Kansas did award Adriana, which is one of our Victim Advocates in our office a statewide award for her advocacy and compassion and care that she has for and takes with victims, especially with high volume and high level of cases. This Commission knows that our office has—our Victims Advocates have a higher rate of cases than most around the state and for her to, despite that, still be given this statewide award is amazing, so we are very grateful that they don't allow things to fall through the gap there.

Commissioner Davis said I know we've had some discussion over the years about this. On average, how many cases are the Victim Advocates assisting in? **Mr. Dupree** said on average, I'll tell you that because of this Commission's work and helping us, it is now around 300 or so, but it was when we came here a year or two back anywhere from 800 to 950. We were able not just through—if you don't mind, this Commission's work, but also through the work of Ms. Wells and others in our office was able to secure a VOCA Grant that allowed us to hire a Victim's Advocate as well as a Sex Crimes Prosecutor and that's something again knowing that our budget is where it is, we went out and found those funds.

And likewise, as I'm sure you all have heard, and I see Shelley in the building, with our Opioid funding we were able to likewise hire an additional Victim's Advocate Coordinator. Again, funds that are not in these budgets that you're looking at now. I'm stating that because all of those things had to happen to try to help deal with the many cases and the many victims that we deal with from these nine different plus agencies. Thank you for bringing that up and thank you all for all your work including you, Shelley, and concern of the Opioid funding and really starting to make that move to help take care of the victims in our community.

Commissioner Davis said the 760K that we have here on screen for personnel, is that going towards additional personnel or is it just for kind of the salary, benefits. What do we mean we say personnel? **Mr. Lindsey** said there was also a reorganization that was done at the end of 2024 and so some of that cost is that also. **Commissioner Davis** said reorganization, what do you mean? **Mr. Dupree** said I can give a rundown on that and I'll try to make it analogous. Our attorneys, we have Attorney 1's who are fresh out of law school. Attorney 2's who've got a little bit of experience, Attorney 3's and so on and so forth to our deputies. Well, these non-attorney staff did not have, if you will, that letter. Everyone was considered the same level, same Administrative Assistant and prior to 2023—in fact March of '24 we had 31 different employees of non-attorneys who left. That was a 90% turnover and they left because there was no room to grow and they did not have any ability to learn more or to get more pay. Since this restructure, which was on the non-attorney side and in essence it made it the same as the attorneys, so you have your levels for our non-staff legal support specialist, level 1, level 2, so on and so forth and it gives them the ability to reach for something higher, potentially more funds, potentially more experience. And now we only have had two individuals who have left since that restructure and they left to judges because of their experience and again for more money. So that restructure happened because we had to compete with our region who were stealing not only our attorneys, but our staff.

Commissioner Davis said my last question, the Community Integrity Unit, you all have four budgeted for your staff. Are you fully staffed up it or just where are you at right now with that team? **Mr. Dupree** said we are. We're fully staffed and they are fully working.

Commissioner Kane said aren't you glad that this is yours and my last budget? **Mr. Dupree** said I will not answer at this point. I'm going to wait. **Commissioner Kane** said did you ask for the 760 or did you guys come up with this number together, $760K for the cost for personnel? **Mr. Dupree** said yes. This is a number from our multiple meetings that we did discuss that they came up with and presented to us and we ultimately came to a point where we were in agreement with it. **Commissioner Kane** said well, I would have been too if I got what I was asking for and if I was one of your employees, I'd be happy and that's no joke because I think it's great you want to pay them. I just don't know how much money we got. We're on thin ice right now and it's hard to come up with a budget when we have things—because every year you've come in with a big ask and every year that I know of you got it. I just think we need to be mindful that we have employees across the board that would like to make more money as well and I think you guys to a great job and that the lady that got that award is fantastic, but it seems—I would have thought you guys would have had to fight to get to that number instead of just coming up with it right out of the gate is my only concern. You know we got the Sheriff asking for this and they're telling him he can't get it and then the DA comes in and said well, he can get what he wants. That's just a thought for me and I'm not giving you a hard time. You know, you and I, we love each other like brothers, step-brothers.

Mr. Dupree said may I respond? **Commissioner Kane** said absolutely. **Mr. Dupree** said I think this is the term that they use before they say something that you may not like. With all due respect, it wasn't just given and with all due respect, I know you got me by a little bit of age, but my memory is a little bit clearer. In my nine years of doing this, I know I did not just get what I wanted when I asked for it. I had to fight, Commissioner, and so to answer your question, yes, I'm very happy this is your last time, but more to the point, I think it's important to note that it takes $1.2M to try a capital murder case. It takes $730K for trial prep and trial work for a capital murder case. What I am not asking for is for this body to give me $1.26M because of the crap we just got unloaded on us 30 days ago and I'm not asking for that because I respect and I understand that this Commission is in a position where they have to provide funds for everyone. So what I've done in that fight is say what we're willing to do is figure it out because this community deserves for me to figure it out. It's not fair for me to come in and say unless you give me what I know I need according to the data, I can't do right by Deputy Mings family. So, no, it wasn't just given to me. Was there negotiations? Yes. And was there a sacrifice for my office? Yes. Do I need more funds than what the heck I'm getting right now, which is simply budgeting me for my positions that are full, because I want to be clear, I'm not asking for more money. I'm asking you to give me the money to deal with the folks that I got. If I was coming in here and asking for more money, it would be for an additional 1.2 because what happened, now, we have to resolve and we have to fight, but we got attorneys in this office who's going to figure it out and stay the late hours and do the hard work and not ask you for another dime despite getting a surprise case. So, sir, Commissioner, they did fight me on multiple occasions and Rodney did a tremendous job leading the crew and then I had to sit in front of your awesome County Attorney and let—excuse me, County Administrator and let him know the reality of what it takes to do this job, the statutory obligation of doing this job.

I understand the Sheriff has to fight. I understand others may have to fight, but for nine years, commissioners, I've had to fight and as I begin this conversation for those nine years, I've been less than 9% of the budget. So if there is a fight to be had, let's put it in context and I'm a super fan of Sheriff Soptic, but Sheriff Soptic's department makes up 46% of the County budget. I make up nine and I deal with the cases from Sheriff Soptic. I dare not guess how much the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department make up of their budget, but I'm assuming it's over 40 something percent. I make up 9 and what they do, they then send to me and you all expect for me to do right by it. So what I got, I need to do my job and to make sure that all of our law enforcement agencies, their job is not in vain because we're not just arresting and then the DA is releasing them, but the DA is doing his darn job, but I am going to miss you, Commissioner.

Commissioner Burroughs said the question I have is the digitization project that we have continued to fund for the last, I think, four years now. Where are we on that? How far along are we on that because that is continued to be funded, but at the same time we know that once it become fully implemented, it should streamline some of the process. **Mr. Dupree** said I will tell you thank you for that question, Commissioner. We have come a very long way. As far as the digitization of our past cases, we are complete. We are done and maybe I should be a little bit more careful with that. From 2013 on back, so for about 60 years past that we got it all done. So, for those 4,000 some odd boxes that this Commission approved four years ago, those are done. What you have are ongoing costs for—excuse me, some of those cases the law says concerning murder specifically and others we have to keep the physical file and so those files are being stored in a storage place locally. So we have those ongoing costs and then you have your ongoing cost for the software that we put all of those cases into.

So that software cost is there, but then you have the 2013 cases up until where we are that the individuals are still continuing to scan in that were not a part of that 4,000 boxes that came under this Commission or in front of this Commission years ago. That is ongoing. They are moving forward. We have an entire process that's set up. At this point I know that we still need those. If we don't have those folks, then my staff who's doing the legal work will have to do that stuff and that would pull them away from the many cases that they are at. I can't give you an exact how long it's going to take to get it done, but I do know that before this Commission approved for the digitization process to happen, they were going all the way back into the 90's and so we were able to stop them at 2013 and send everything else to the company who was able to do those things. **Commissioner Burroughs** said so the storage is no longer in our public buildings, right? **Mr. Dupree** said correct.

Commissioner Burns said real quick, Mark, entry level attorney right out of law school coming to work for us, what is the entry salary? I'm just curious. **Mr. Dupree** said $83K, I believe. **Commissioner Burns** said you would start someone right out of law school at 83K. **Mr. Dupree** said yes and our partnering DA's Office is starting them at 120 right out of law school, meaning other DA offices within the region. Yeah, compared to others and that 83K to 86K again is because this Commission saw that eight years ago we were the lowest paid District Attorney's Office in the state of Kansas bringing our new ADAs in at $48K and that's why we had such a high rate of turnover. But at that 83 to 86K, I tied that into the experience that you're going to get. You may go up the road to make an extra $20 or $30K, but it'll take 10 years to get the experience you'll get here for three years. **Commissioner Burns** said thank you Commissioner Kane for getting that reason for him, the years. **Mr. Dupree** said thank you, Commissioner Kane. **Commissioner Kane** said we actually get along. **Mr. Dupree** said we do.

Mayor Garner said I have one last question. Sheriff, if you can come back up. This hit me. Have we looked and this is for each of you. Have we looked at any innovations, any best practices, any type of streamlining, any type of things that maybe other agencies are doing around the country that could bring about cost savings. For example, when I was on the Police Department, and I like to reflect back, when we were trying to cut costs, we just looked at how we did business, not just who we are, and some of you heard that, but who can we be and how can we improve the efficiency while also providing the quality and the level of service that our residents have come to demand and expect. One of the things we looked at is call taking. You know, do we want to take the lawnmower call or do we want to have those people walk that in. Should that be a priority call that we tie an officer up for a half hour to 45 minutes on or can they walk those types of calls in as far as savings that may be there. There were other things that we did that brought about efficiencies, streamlining our bureaus. We went from having a major over one of each of the four bureaus to cut it down to we had a major over two bureaus. Instead of having a Captain on each shift, we had a Captain that covered two patrol stations to save money. I mean we really dug deep and looked at our vehicle purchases and leasing options and things like that to really just streamline our operations in a way that brought about efficiencies that resulted in cost savings to the taxpayer ultimately, but also didn't degrade or diminish the quality and level of service that our residents—you know, that we were required to provide.

Is there anything when you talk about—I know that we're digitizing things, we're updating computers, programs, and licensings and things. Are there any efficiencies that can be had from any of these new technologies that can maybe require less personnel or just bring about efficiencies where you can divert personnel that you have to other areas to maybe mitigate the need for increased staffing. I don't know. That's a question. I know a lot of corporates are doing those types of things and they're looking at a lot of ways to operate more efficiently. I'm just not—I've been out of the law enforcement career for about going on seven years now. I just don't know. I haven't kept track of what new technology innovations or best practices that other agencies may be doing across the country.

Sheriff Soptic said the biggest thing we look at is our processes that affect other agencies specifically. We always look at detention. The faster we can get officers out and back on the street, they're being more effective to those cities or jurisdictions. As far as reducing of people, you know, we historically have never been an agency that had an overabundance of either administrative or clerk type jobs and so that was never something we could ever reduce anyway.

As far as technology goes, we always look for technology that can make it better, faster and cheaper. The unfortunate part, and I should have brought this up when Commissioner Burns was asking about the software for the jail, technology has gotten expensive and that number actually has got to what it's got because that's a purchase that's been put off for a couple of years and it just keeps growing in cost. Even if we did that today though, that doesn't reduce the need for any of our people. It doesn't—it's not really a cost savings. It may be a little bit of a time savings, but that's really about it.

As far as vehicle purchases and stuff like that, we look high and low. Obviously, we go with the contractual prices that we're able to get. We've leased a few vehicles in a division that it makes sense. It doesn't make sense for us to lease the entire fleet, but yes, to your question. Anywhere that we can save, we have worked to save, but our personnel, we just have never had the extras to begin with. Unfortunately, they've always done more with less as far as people.

Mayor Garner said and DA, same question, but maybe you can help me—both of you. I know there was a fund we recovered so much drugs, contraband, those types of things, once it was released, some of that money went back to the law enforcement agencies. I don't know if that program is still in effect and what that dollar amount may look like. **Sheriff Soptic** said are you talking about the Law Enforcement Trust Fund? **Mayor Garner** said that and there's another fund as well that, but yes. **Sheriff Soptic** said historically our agency hasn't gotten involved in a lot of situations where we've been able to get money off of cases. We've had a few. We do have a deputy assigned to a task force now that eventually will recover some drug money, but that hasn't come to fruition for us just yet. Our Law Enforcement Trust Fund is pretty bare. Historically it has been and so that's not something for us that is a windfall by any means. **Mayor Garner** said so that goes—the CERT Team, is that just for jail or is that—**Sheriff Soptic** said just for jail.

Mr. Dupree said the only drug funding situation the DA's Office is a part of is concerning the one that I spoke of with the Opioid and the lawsuit and things of that sort. Beyond that the other process that we have is forfeitures and that is something that is brought by the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department mostly. Because we handle the case we'll get a certain percentage of that and so it's a smaller amount versus the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department and I can respect the reasoning why. I mean they bring it and then that falls under a lot of statutory restraints on what can be done with it, what can't be done with it, where it can go and how it can go, so many times those funds, whatever we get in we usually just end up sitting somewhere because we're either forbidden by statutory to do it or I haven't been confident enough to spend it without feeling like I may not be able to withstand some issues in the future, so that's it.

I would like to say because the Sheriff is up here concerning the technology, there was a question asked whether or not the equipment or the software that he's getting will work with the DA's Office. If the Sheriff's Department is looking at the same equipment or software that the Police Department has, then the answer is yes. Right now what they have and all of the agencies, the way that they submit cases to our office is through a software, a portal that comes into our software system and with that, when we purchased our software a couple years back we purchased every law enforcement a portal so that they can upload things directly into our software specifically for so many cases. I know that the Sheriff's Office already does that and so whatever software he gets, as long as it's in the same vein as the Police Department, who also does it, I don't foresee any problem with that.

Mayor Garner said thank you and that's what I was looking for was asset forfeitures and as the Law Enforcement Trust Fund. I wanted you all to speak to that. That's what my memory brought, but then also grants. I know there's grants out there. I don't know how active your agencies are in going after grants and I know it's probably going to dry up here a little bit, but just historically going back I just didn't know. I didn't see any of those numbers here reflected in anything as far as asset forfeitures. Those dollars are what—that reflect in the dollars as well as in the Law Enforcement Trust Fund. I know that's out there somewhere, so I wanted to basically ask that, but then our Budget Director, do we have somewhere that reflects those dollars in the budget that may be set aside for general purpose for our Public Safety professionals? **Mr. Lindsey** said we do have a whole section within the budget document that does cover grants that the Unified Government covers and then in District Attorney Dupree's budget and Sheriff Soptic's budget, on their department page it does show funding that they also do get from grants.

Mayor Garner said I'm talking about asset forfeitures and the Law Enforcement Trust Fund. I mean even with the Police Department, I apologize if I overlooked it, I just didn't see it. I just want—is that part of the budget document? **Mr. Lindsey** said yeah, it would be within the budget document also. **Mayor Garner** said I'll get with Special Law Enforcement Trust Fund portions that both of them receive. **Mr. Dupree** said I would also say just specifically in concern of that, whatever is there concerning us, I would make sure that you all attach my description of the statutory mandates concerning those types of spendings and what's there, so it's not something that we can just say okay, we can use this to do something with. It has to be based off of what the law says.

I would say specifically concerning grants, since you brought it up, and I think my colleague to the left, Commissioner Kane, was going to ask this question, so the DA's Office did go after, as I stated earlier, some VOCA grants that was able to bring in a Sex Crime Prosecutor as well as a Victim's Advocate and that grant brought in $166K for us to deal with those two individuals. We also were able through the Opioid, and we'll just call that a grant, to receive $180K that also allowed us to bring in a Coordinator as well as an additional Victim's Advocate. Again, these funds are not a part of your General Budget.

Lastly, we were able in connection with Ad Hoc Against Crime to receive a $680K grant that allowed us to pay for victims of crime in our community to get assistance. One of the biggest costs that we deal with are not our office, but in our community is when the police are called out, say someone's car has been broken into or a house has been kicked in, once the police do their thing, they try to find the suspect and they go on about their day. Well, that mom, that dad, has to take their children back inside that house. The door is broken, the window is shot out, the car is shot to pieces and there is no fund to help these individuals or to help with medical bills and so on and so forth. This $680K has helped us be able to provide immediate funds to send contractors out immediately in the middle of the night through Ad Hoc Against Crime to board up that window, to take that car to the shop, to get those bullet holes out of the house, and to help these people to change the lock so that these families can be safe. So these grants are ways that this administration has went above and beyond just coming to you all and asking for funds, but trying to find additional ways. With that $680K we were able to work with the Ad Hoc Against Crime, Governor Kelly's Office, along with the Department of Justice to make that happen and so we continue to advocate for grants and look for grants and try to find those ways to fill in gaps so that I don't have to ask for any more money than necessary based off of our personnel.

Mayor Garner said that's really good to hear. I know me coming from Public Safety, a lot of initiatives that we had on the Police Department, positions, things of that nature, we actually saved the UG money by just going after grants that funded a lot of those. So, it's encouraging to hear you say that. Sheriff, I don't really know if that's part of your initiative, but I know DOJ, COPS grants, there's a lot of state, federal, as well as some private grants to really help law enforcement with a lot of initiatives. Community Policing grants. I know there's a lot of social service grants that it appears may be cut, but it appears that law enforcement and public safety in effect may not be on the chopping block, but I don't know. That's just something for consideration.

Sheriff Soptic said same thing for us. Probably the biggest struggle we have with the grant topic is a lot of them, and I can't speak for the DA's world, but a lot of them tend to be the matching grant. So you got to be prepared and have the budget there existing to match that. In the occasion we find ones that are full, those are even better, but as you very well know, there's a whole lot of people trying to get that money. But yeah, absolutely, we go after everything we can.

Commissioner Kane said you brought up what I wanted to bring up, which was the grants. I appreciate that.

Commissioner Bynum said Mr. DA, thank you for being here and answering all of our questions. I have questions about the document we were given and so I'm going to need help from your finance team and our Budget folks. If we start at the top, I'm looking at what I think is the first entire page being the Community Integrity Unit. Am I reading that correctly? The very first line is Community Integrity Unit $437K and then when you get to the very bottom of that page, those numbers add down to total $437K. Am I reading that first page correctly, that entire first page is the Community Integrity Unit? **Mr. Lindsey** said that is correct. The first line is the total budget for the Unified Government. **Commissioner Bynum** said the very first line is the total budget and then the next itemized line is the Community Integrity at $437K and then that adds down to the total at the bottom $437K. So I'm guessing that entire section is all Community Integrity Unit. I just want to make sure I'm reading through this correctly because if that's true, that makes sense to me. That whole section separated out Community Integrity Unit and then within it, Operations, Fringe, Contractual, Commodities. **Mr. Lindsey** said that is correct. **Commissioner Bynum** said it rolls up to the 437, okay.

Then the next page the first topic line says DA Diversion and its total is $290,909 and then it rolls down to Operations total a little bit below the middle of the page that matches 290,909, so that's another chunk of your budget that we are calling DA Diversion. So I either don't know what that is or there's maybe a typo. I don't know what's DA Diversion. **Mr. Dupree** said two things. One, the way that Budget puts their thing together is not the way that my inner office accounting operates. As you're learning how they're putting it together and in their software that's how they have it set up and we try to comply as much as we can, but our inner office accounting is different. Now, Diversion is the ability for an individual who has committed a crime, who has low criminal history or no criminal history to rather than being convicted of the crime, they are given a contract—I'm just trying to make it real clear, between the DA's Office and that individual for a certain amount of time, let's say 18 months. If they stay out of trouble and don't commit a crime for that 18 months, then that case is dismissed, but my office monitors them. So, they're put on, for lack of better terms, a probation before a conviction and if they do that, then the case goes away, but our office still had to handle that entire diversion. So that diversion, what we're calling Diversion Unit, is literally just a part of my personnel. I have multiple people in my office who deal with via the non-attorneys who deal with those contracts, but then I have all of my attorneys who have the ability and authority to put a defendant who fits those guidelines on a diversion. So it's not a per se Diversion Unit, but it is something that we do that multiple people handle and the non-attorney staff—I have personnel that deal strictly with that whereas attorneys go more broadly. So those fundings that are there are being utilized for that as well as dealing with the attorneys and what comes with it.

Commissioner Bynum said I appreciate that. The way I'm reading these budget pages for your division is kind of in those chunks, that I'm calling chunks because the next one, if you go—after you see the Operations total for DA Diversion at 290K, the next big one is the District Attorney Division at 8M, so that's the bulk of your budget. I'm so sorry if you're not seeing what I'm seeing. **Mr. Dupree** said yeah, but I'm going to catch up with you. No need to apologize. Are you on the second page still? **Commissioner Bynum** said still on the second page. Just a little below the middle. So, District Attorney Division and it's coming in at 8M. **Mr. Dupree** said that's the total amount for the office. **Commissioner Bynum** said okay. I'm looking and I just kind of keep trying to roll down to the bottom. Actually what I'm trying to do is figure out the subtotals that total the total. **Mr. Dupree** said, Commissioner, I'm going to ask Budget to explain where they're putting this at because I think the majority of my attorneys, they've put in what's been labeled as that chunk, District Attorney Division. **Commissioner Bynum** said I am seeing that as the salaries there are 5.2M, so that makes sense to me what you're saying, that's the bulk of your department.

What I'm trying to get at is, if you go to the very bottom Operations total, right above the grand total page, Reggie, the line directly above it, Operations total at 7.9M, that must be your District Attorney Division and if I add the 7.9 plus the 290 for the Diversion category, plus the 437 for the Community Integrity Unit, is that how I get to 8.8M? **Mr. Peterson** said I helped put these together. I'll just kind of explain how they work. We did try to attach it like just a very generic sheet to the notice that went out. Basically these are organized by department at the highest level. The next level that you're seeing, which would be DA Diversion, Conviction, Integrity Unit, and the District Attorney's Division, those are divisions. So those are the highest sub-operating unit with the District Attorney's Office and then we have funds within that.

So if a department has multiple funds that they are operating within those divisions, then those are subtotaled and then within each fund we have the cost centers, which the cost center is kind of the smallest personnel operating unit in Workday or in our Enterprise Resource Planning System. Basically the cost center is the smallest level that is staffed at the Unified Government and that would be where you see like a CC00038 District Attorney. So that would be one of our cost centers and then within each cost center we can have multiple programs. Those programs are not department specific. You'll see Operations a lot. Operations is just a catchall for basic Operations, but within the District Attorney's cost center the first subgroup there is Program 132, Medical Exam Sex Offenders. So, Commissioner Hill, when you were talking about the sex offenders budget, that $135K there, that would be the number that you were asking about.

Where we have specific items that we want to track within a cost center that are not personnel specific necessarily or across the Unified Government, then we have programs identified for those. For instance, for the DA Division, you see the $8M and that is made up of the District Attorney cost center, which is again the 8.09 and then within that you have the Medical Exam Sex Offenders Program at 135 and then the Operations Program at 7.95 and that adds up to the District Attorney's cost center. It adds up to the County General Fund portion of the division, then the DA Diversion, the Community Conviction Integrity or Integrity Unit and the DA Division, all add up to the—**Commissioner Bynum** said that is very helpful and DA Dupree, just a question.

Within the District Attorney Division part, that last part, that's the big 8M part, a couple—and again, I recognize that it's the way we put your budget together, if you will. You've got a line on page 3, middle, under 52000 Contractual Services, SC043 is Rent/Lease Software for 242K and so I have that one and then below it is SC067 Temporary Employment Services for 145K. My question is, the software, that must be something entirely different than your digitization stuff because it's in a different part of your budget as well as the Temporary Employment Services must not be referencing what this slide says, which is that you've used a lot of temporary employment for the digitization because it's sitting in the general DA Division part of the budget. Again, it might be the way we've put your budget together, but I'm just curious.

Mr. Dupree said thank you for the question. I will tell you that I believe the confusion is coming in slightly because of the way it's put together, but in concern of the actual contractual aspect, let's start there. The software that I spoke about earlier in concern of the digitalization that occurred, well, we had to purchase a software to store all of those things in the cloud and then we had to purchase another software to be able to go through that software to connect with our office software. For instance, Carpel is our management system and that falls into that contractual line and that's $102K and then we also have Lexus, which is the legal software that we utilize to look up the law concerning our cases and that's an additional $20K. Then for the storage that we have to purchase, you know, to put all of our stuff in the cloud is an additional $9K and then the system that imported all of those 50-60 years of files is called Laserfiche and that's an additional $60K--$16K. Then we have what's called REGIS, which is utilized by Unified Government, the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department, and Sheriff. There are multiple other things that are on, but I won't go on, but these are all of those contractual obligations and it's more than that. Oftentimes what we find at the end of the year is we have to move money to take care of some of these contractual obligations that we need to move forward.

Going to the second line that you discussed is the Temporary Employment. That falls into, if you recall Commissioner, before we did the digitalization project at one point whatever million it was, this Commission had given us four temporary employees to be able to start scanning and those are the employees that I was speaking about earlier with Commissioner Burrough's comment of what are we doing now. So the 50-60 years prior to 2013 are taken care of, but we are now down from four or five to three, that 145 are three employees that we're saying are temporary because they don't get benefits at all, but they are there 40 hours of the week and their job is to continue to digitize from 2013 all the way up until where we are in 2025. So that 145 is that temporary aspect. It's separate and apart from the digitalization project, but it was birthed before. **Commissioner Bynum** said okay, thank you. I really appreciate that. I was really working hard to make this math work for me and I appreciate you can give me that specificity given that we've presented your budget in a way that's different than you do. I know that these software contracts are outrageously expensive. **Mr. Dupree** said they are and they continue to go up it's horrible, but we make do with what we have to.

Commissioner Davis said, DA Dupree, I do appreciate the advocacy for your people, which I would expect out of any department head to do that. It's a very difficult position to be in. The 760K you are asking for an increase in personnel costs, is that a hard fast number that is absolutely that is what's needed or is there possibility to negotiate and go a little bit lower for this year? **Mr. Dupree** said yes, that is a hard number and in fact I needed more, but we were able to get to that number. Again, this number comes after being able to have filled our positions. As I stated earlier, I have my dear colleagues who are paying $20K more to take my folks. This number does not put my folks at the highest number that I can pay them according to my scale, but it is at a number that still keeps us competing. Without this minimally, we wouldn't be able to handle the cases that we handle, so there is no room. Now, I will tell you that what I did do is we took away two full-time Assistant District Attorney positions and we replaced them with four intern positions because we needed to put the bodies in place. Interns are able to get their temporary attorney's license and so with that funding that was only for two, we made four and we continued to have those four to continue to handle those cases. So that number that we are at is the bottom line that I could operate effectively with and again, having already done all that I could to ask for just that. **Commissioner Davis** said understood. It's to remain competitive throughout the metro and quite frankly throughout the nation there's not just the metro wide, but really kind of a national shortage of lawyers that I'm sure you all are not immune to.

Last thing I'll just ask and I will just say this, we have a lot of folks that have said, you know, we're talking between the DA's Office and the Sheriff's Office, we're talking about over half of the County budget. There have been a lot of claims made about people not getting value for their tax dollar and people feeling as though we are just frivolously spending dollars, we are irresponsibly spending dollars. Not my comments, not my words, but those words were said. I say that to say between you, DA Dupree, and Sheriff Soptic, please work with us and I know you all are already doing this. Work with us to tell the story of the value that folks are getting for their taxpayer dollar because I think when people see behind the vote, behind revenue neutral, behind all those things, we are seeing what I would consider to be impactful work that is keeping our community safe and improving the quality of life.

Mr. Dupree said thank you, Commissioner, for that and if you would allow me, I will paint a quick picture and that quick picture is safety of our community should be paramount. The safety of every human being that lives in this community, of everything that we hope compels people to come to this community to live, to invest, to build up, whether it's a big company or mom and pop who wants to retire here, they're looking at two things. One, the crime. Two, the schools. When we're looking at this thing, the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department, law enforcement, the court, and yes, the District Attorney's Office, the one who carries the ball to the finish line are paramount and it is different than every other agencies and every other organization, and every other department because safety affects all of us. It's not a choice, it's not something that we get to choose to dibble in or not and in the last three years we have had a decrease in crime with over 27% concerning our violent crime and over a 60% decrease concerning our murders in the last 10 years. So, what picture do I need to paint. I need to paint that in collaboration with our

Sheriff's Department and our Kansas City, Kansas Police Department and the DA's Office and the court, crime is decreasing. That makes this community more effective, more desirable, and quite frankly for me and my beautiful wife and four children, more pleasant and safe for us to live in and make us want to stay here.

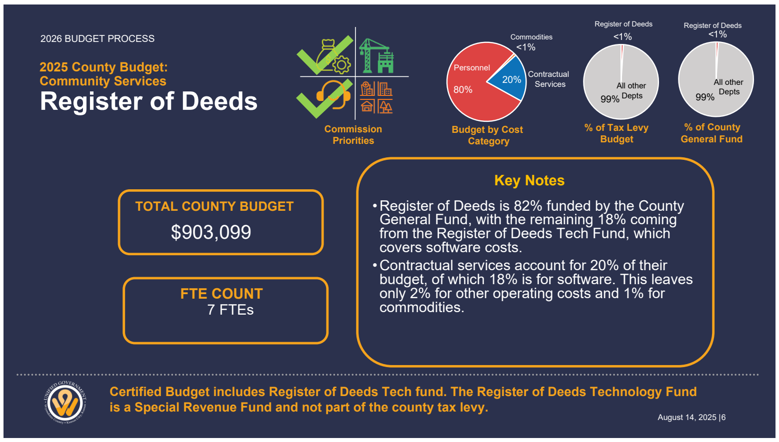
So, as you do your job and handle all of the many citizens who have things to say, it is important that you know that no one wants to start a business in a crime ridden location. No one wants to invest millions of dollars where the murder rate continues to go higher and higher, but because of the effectiveness of your law enforcement here, that is not the case and it continues to—I've heard the word multiple times, trend downward. There needs to be a picture painted, paint the picture of crime and murder trending down because that is what we're doing and that is why we need to continue to fund this office, the court, the Sheriff's Department, and the Police Department. Thank you so much, Commissioners, Mayor, and if you have nothing else for me I would love to get out of this seat.

Mayor Garner said I know you would. I've got a question. To hit on what you said and I'll end it with this. You said $48K for an attorney is what you start them at. **Mr. Dupree** said 83K. It used to be 48K. **Mayor Garner** said 83K. How does that compare nationally with the average attorney? **Mr. Dupree** said average attorneys are coming out on average at 95K. **Mayor Garner** said 95K. To go to law school today as a young person and the cost, what's that average depending on the law school? **Mr. Dupree** said we're not paying them enough to pay their student loans if that's what you're asking. **Mayor Garner** said that's pretty much where I'm going. It's over $100K. **Mr. Dupree** said yes, it was over $100K when I went and that was nearly two decades ago. **Mayor Garner** said wow. So you're asking young people to come out at 85K, but they're still burdened, shackled with student loans. I'm sure that they're going to be hanging out for probably a couple decades, am I correct? **Mr. Dupree** said that's correct. **Mayor Garner** said so when you talk about being competitive and trying to get the best folks out of these law schools to do this type of work, which is a lot of work when you talk about what you all do day in and day out, an attorney can go do corporate, they can do injury law where they can make a lot of money. This is something that really people have to want to do and are passionate about. And I think that is an added challenge for you as well, wouldn't you say? **Mr. Dupree** said I would say.

Mayor Garner said I just go in line. I've always said that a safe Kansas City, Kansas makes for a great Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County for that effect. A lot of people may wonder why public safety, the majority, and help me out Budget Director, how much of the Unified Government budget goes toward public safety when you talk about the courts, the DA, the Sheriff, and the Police Department? **Mr. Lindsey** said I would say maybe somewhere between a 60 to 70% range. **Mayor Garner** said I think the DA hit on something really profound. I used to say this when I was on the Police Department. Folks that I dealt with when I was on the Police Department—I mean they'll deal with bad politicians that they don't like, they'll deal with potholes, they'll deal with swings that don't work. What they're not going to deal with is an unsafe community, homicides, robberies, all the things that come with that. Our Fire Department that they call and the response times are low. They're going to take their tax dollars and going to move somewhere else. People will not tolerate an unsafe community and I believe if you look nationally, that cost, that 60% and maybe plus depending on the city or county or community—Budget Director, I think we're in line with most communities when you talk about public safety being the major cost for most municipal governments. **Mr. Lindsey** said that is correct.

Mayor Garner said so we're not out of alignment. I know a lot of folks talk about why we spend so much on safety. Well, that's why. Safety is the backbone of our society and again, if people don't feel safe in a community, they will take their families and they will leave. Businesses will shutter and people that may even consider about doing business in a community will say no, not there. You can just look at some communities across this nation that suffer with that, so I've continue to be a strong advocate and supporter of public safety and the investment in public safety and the great men and women throughout that apparatus and ecosystem here of public safety professionals that do a great job. It is valued and when you talk about the DA only making up 9%, I think we need to take a pause and really look at that and look at what we are paying the attorneys, look at his staffing, look at his willingness to work with this Unified Government to get to that budget. Again, I'm sure the DA could use a lot more, but the work is a necessary need that we have in this community and there's a national discourse going on now about the National Guard coming to this community and I told someone earlier that it's safe to say with the violent crime drop here, with the relationship between our Sheriff, our DA, our Police Department and our national and state partners, historic lows here in violent crime. So, the only National Guard or any troops that would come in here would be on Veterans Day in a parade and I would welcome them to do just that. Thank you brother DA. I appreciate your presentation.

Mr. Dupree said thank you Mayor and thank you all you commissioners for allowing me to be here.



Mr. Lindsey said the next department we're going to have an overview for is the Register of Deeds. Of the total County budget the Register of Deeds is $903K of that. They have seven employees. Their budget is 80% Personnel and 20% Contractual Services. Also, they make up less than 1% of the tax levy on the county side and then they also make up less than 1% in the County General Fund. Some key things about the Register of Deeds is 82% is funded by the County General Fund with the remaining 18% coming from the Register of Deeds Technology Fund, which covers most of their software costs. Also, Contractual Services account for 20% of their budget of which 18% is software. This leaves only 2% for other operating costs and 1% for commodities. We have our Register of Deeds who just joined us.

Susie Nelson, Register of Deeds, said our office is a revenue generating office and our revenue goes into the General Fund. All of our fees are dictated by state statute. We did in the last four years we have a Search Program that the public uses when they come in. It's free. We use it and then a lot of our departments use it and then we have subscriptions to title companies and attorneys and we pushed 1.3M—excuse me, documents in our Search Program. Since we did that in the last four years, I took a look at our fees that we're charging for the subscription and our searchers can go back now to 1955. They don't have to come into the office if they have that subscription and I increased the subscription from $200 a month to $400 a month, so that's generating more revenue. Any questions?

Commissioner Bynum said, Susie, thank you for your office and what you do. You've been particularly helpful to me personally in the last few months as we work through these losses I've experienced and you've answered my questions very promptly. I do want to express to you how much I appreciate that. And by the way, your predecessor also was excellent. I have to say that. **Ms. Nelson** said I'm happy to help.

Commissioner Bynum said I did want to say thank you, but I had a question. I think you may have just answered because when I've been in your office transacting business over the last few months, I've paid fees. **Ms. Nelson** said yes. **Commissioner Bynum** said are those fees also what you're referencing that go into the County General Fund? **Ms. Nelson** said yes. **Commissioner Bynum** said when we look at our line item detail of the budgets, I don't unless, Reggie, maybe you can tell me, I don't really see revenue. It's more of an expense budget and so I don't know if you know by chance. **Ms. Nelson** said off the top of my head, last year I think we collected $1.2M, a little over that. **Commissioner Bynum** said you're generating more than your department is expending. **Ms. Nelson** said yes. **Commissioner Bynum** said that's it.

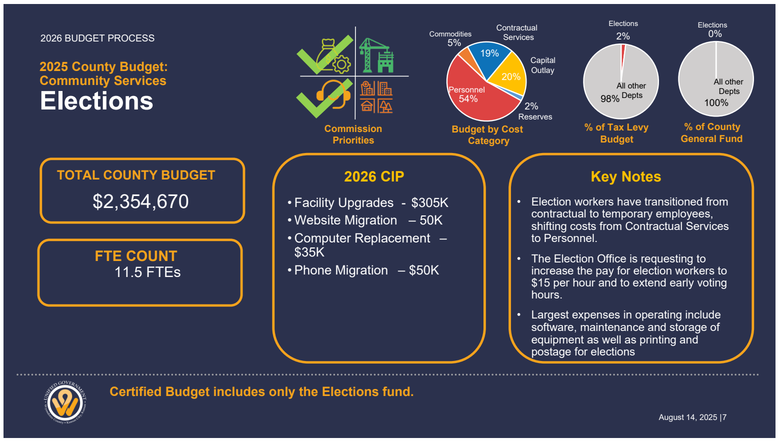
Commissioner Davis said very quickly I just want to say thank you. We do have what I'm hoping everything goes well, the KCK Homes For Generations Program. I hope you work with our Clerk's Office together. Okay, Monica is shaking her head, because that program will help particularly our seniors that are lower income with title issues and some other issues that can lead to Probate Court. I just want to thank you so much for your willingness to help us and launch that pilot hopefully in 2026, fingers crossed and thank you for attending our Senior Resource Fair that we had in my district. I heard from a lot of folks just regarding particularly the property fraud alert that you're doing for awareness. So thank you. **Ms. Nelson** said we're happy to do it.

Commissioner Burns said, Susie, I continue to get compliments about how customer friendly your office is and willing to help someone come in. You can't tell them what to do, you can't give them legal advice, but you sure can guide them in the right direction and I get compliments all the time about that. **Ms. Nelson** said thank you. I appreciate that.

Commissioner Burns said if there was a mortgage registration fee now, and I know there isn't now because the bankers took it over, how much money do you think it would generate here in Wyandotte County? **Ms. Nelson** said I believe we lost like a million dollars when that was taken away. **Commissioner Burns** said so Wyandotte County lost a million dollars when that statute got passed. **Ms. Nelson** said yes.

Mayor Garner said maybe you could tell me you said you generate funds. What does that look like? **Ms. Nelson** said when somebody comes in to record a document. **Mayor Garner** said I mean what's the total? **Ms. Nelson** said it varies per document. **Mayor Garner** said I mean a year. If you were to correlate how much revenue you bring in annually, what would that look like? **Ms. Nelson** said approximately I'd say about $800K. **Mayor Garner** said if you look at the total County Budget, it's always good to have a department that pretty much pays for itself. I share with what our commissioners say, you all do excellent work. The feedback I get from the community is the high level of customer service that the Register of Deeds Office provides to residents. I have yet to have anyone tell me or complain about customer service in the Register of Deeds Office. It is unparalleled and one of those departments—several in this Unified Government where you know if you go to the Register of Deeds, you're going to get high quality customer service from some great staff members.

I just want to commend you and your staff for just being that department that really exemplifies excellence in customer service because that is one of the high points that when people talk about departments and people talk about your department and just how warm and welcoming and that all their answers are met to their satisfaction. I want to commend also the work that you all do and I know some of its driven by this Commission, but it's always good to have a department that really pretty much funds itself, so thank you. **Ms. Nelson** said thank you.



Mr. Lindsey said the next department we're going to have a budget overview for is our Election Office. Total county budget for the Election Office is $2.3M. They have 11.5 employees. Their budget is 54% personnel, 20% of that is Capital Outlay, 19% of that is Contractual Services of percent of tax levy on the county side, they do make up 2%. They don't get any funding from the County General Fund. Some of the highlights with their 2026 CIP is they're going to have facility upgrades in the amount of $305K. They're going to have website migration and phone migration both totaling $100K and then they'll have a Computer Replacement Program of $35K. Some of the key things to think about with the Election Office is election workers have transitioned from contractual to temporary employees that have shifted the cost from Contractual Services to Personnel. The Election Office would like to increase employee pay for election workers to $15 per hour and extend early voting. Largest expenses in their Operating Budget include software, maintenance and storage of equipment as well as printing and postage for elections. The Election Commissioner is here to field any questions and to tell you about their operation.

Mayor Garner said before we go to that, if my memory serves me correct, maybe excuse my ignorance, the Election Office employees, are those UG employees?

Michael Abbott, Election Commissioner, said we have 10 full-time employees and about 350 election workers. **Mayor Garner** said I believe that this Commission passed something I believe in my first year as a Mayor off my recommendation to move everyone up to $15 an hour. Did you miss the boat on that or what happened? **Mr. Abbott** said no. The election workers were paid as contractors and that changed to hourly employees and so with that we're asking them to be changed at the $15. I think there's confusion on a lot of people's parts and I'll take responsibility too. We were told that they weren't eligible to do that $15 an hour and so I think there is some confusion with it, but I want to get them at the $15 an hour now because it's really going to help us with recruiting. It's going to help keep the election workers that we have now and without them we simply can't run elections. **Mayor Garner** said I believe that's correct, somebody from staff—I believe that was something this Commission advocated and approved. I don't know, but any UG employee I know that's something I advocated for and this Commission agreed and actually they wanted more, but I think they did set the minimum salary for any UG employee to be $15 an hour. You've got folks working at fast food restaurants making more than that and I just thought it was deplorable when I came in as Mayor that we had people making the federal minimum wage, when you've got kids making a lot more than that and we're asking professionals to do work every day. The minimum should have been $15 an hour. I just need clarity for that question before I turn it over to our Election Commissioner. Is that factual or something changed or is that something that he needs to worry about when you talk about that $15 an hour?

Mr. Lindsey said one of the things that Mr. Abbott did mention was that when that $15 was granted, their employees were contract employees at that point in time and then when they came over as actual employees of the Unified Government went into their pay scale. That particular pay scale hadn't been adjusted to the $15 an hour because it didn't exist at that point in time, so now it needs to be adjusted to that to bring it up to that amount. **Mayor Garner** said so we're not asking for—we're just asking for a pay adjustment to reflect them being full-time employees as opposed to we want $15 an hour. Okay, that makes it clear. I'm sorry, Mr. Abbott, I'll let you make your opening remarks.

Mr. Abbott said that's all there is really. What I was going to say is that we were just trying to get them to $15 an hour. We're having a difficult time trying to retain some of the election workers and I think this would really help, not to mention when it was talked about on the news when this first got approved for the $15 an hour, we had a lot of workers coming to us saying where's our $15 an hour at and we had a lot of them drop out because of it. With that, I'll answer any questions you have.

Mayor Garner said well, let's circle back on that question. I believe this Commission approved any employee to be $15 an hour irrespective of part-time, full-time, whatever. That's why I asked you were these UG employees because I believe this Commission, and correct me if I'm wrong commissioners, we approved any worker of this Unified Government, the minimum salary would be $15 an hour. I hate to hear maybe, and I don't know, I would hate to hear that some employees may have been left behind or left the organization because they weren't getting what this Commission approved them to be entitled to, but I don't know. That's a question. **Mr. Abbott** said yeah, there were several election workers that did not return and stated that they were leaving because they thought they were going to get that pay increase and they did not. Just to be clear, when that did get passed, I didn't have the budget to even cover it.

Commissioner Kane said well, obviously, we need to adjust to the $15 because that's what we talked about, voted on and all that. Another thing, the election results, we're getting them so fast. We've never got them as fast as we're getting them now and we appreciate the work that you two guys do and the folks that work for you.

Commissioner Bynum said thank you for the very recent past election and the great job that you and all the team did. I just want to clarify, Reggie, when we talk about the Election Office is not funded out of the County General Fund, which I think I heard you say. It's funded because it's got its own tax levy. I want you to say that back to me correctly. **Mr. Lindsey** said that is correct. It does have its own tax levy and it's fully funded. **Commissioner Bynum** said so for the public, what that means is that it's mandated by state law that we fund our local Election Office and everything they need to conduct elections, but it's a fraction of a mill basically. It's a portion of a mill that gets directed directly to elections. And you can say that back to me correctly. **Mr. Lindsey** said that is correct, yes. **Commissioner Bynum** said thank you and that's all I had.

Commissioner Burroughs said did we get the issue resolved about the funding from last year? I know some of that may have been some concern about it being HAVA dollars and did we get that issue resolved to satisfaction so we're not going to find ourselves in a point of penalty? **Mr. Abbott** said thank you for the question. Yes, we did. We got that money back in our fund just a few weeks ago.

Commissioner Hill said I just wanted to ask what are the Capital Improvements. **Mr. Abbott** said right now we have air-conditioners at the Election Office that the team is having a hard time to get parts for them. They're saying they need replaced, so some of that is for replacement of air-conditioning units, but also the main thing is the training room that we need down in the basement. Right now, we're doing training in the warehouse where our equipment is at. We have to have makeshift little walls for our little training area and it's interrupting our early voting. So most of that is for a training room where the election workers actually have a room where we can train them and keep them away from the public.

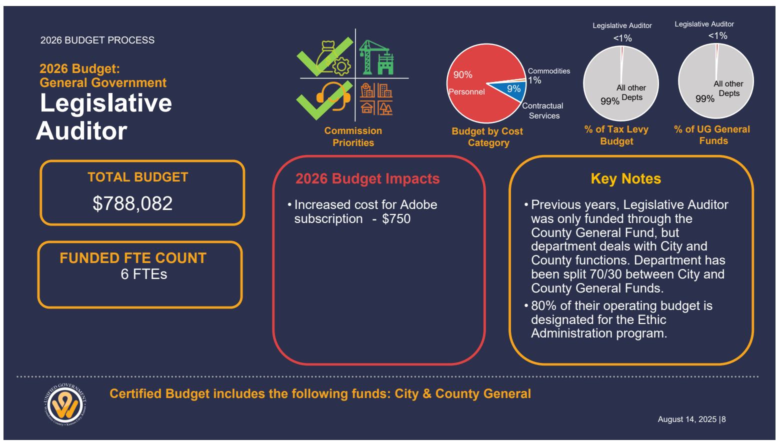
Commissioner Burns said I would just like to tell both of you just like the Register of Deeds Office, I get compliments about the courtesy that anyone that comes in there and you give them good advice and you tell them what they can or what they can't do. It's just a good PR thing and I want to commend both of you and your staff for doing that. It's always a friendly atmosphere when you go in there. **Mr. Abbott** said thank you.

Mayor Garner said I've got two questions and a request. I know, I believe it's Commissioner Davis Standing Committee, shortly will be looking at two sales tax initiatives to go on the ballot. What does that cost for anybody to be able to do that. **Mr. Abbott** said as long as it's on the General Election or on an election where there's a countywide race, there is no cost to the county. **Mayor Garner** said okay. I'm sure people want to know and so thank you for that answer.

The other comment I would like to make is just this Commission has spoken, they voted, they passed, I would just, Administrator, ask that we make sure if you can direct staff, who's ever assigned, there should never be a situation where any employee is underpaid, not paid, what this Commission has authorized for them to be paid. So we just need to make sure that is budgeted appropriately moving forward. I just hate to hear stuff like that and hear employees leave or them say, you're not paying me what this Commission said and authorize them to be paid.

Commissioner Lopez said I just wondered, did the mapping issue get resolved as far as being updated? I know there were some serious questions and then everybody's pointing their crosshairs at you when I think it was mapping that was needing updated. And kind of explain, you know, like would you say every 10 years I think some districts are changed around. **Mr. Abbott** said yeah, thank you for the question. It's every 10 years. There's a census and in 2022 we had redistricting, so there were some folks that got a little confused because their district was no longer in District 5 and in District 8, but when they went on to the Unified Government's website to check the maps to see where they were at, it was still showing them in District 5 when in fact they were in District 8. Those maps did get updated. I think they were updated a few days ago.

Mayor Garner said thank you Mr. Abbott, appreciate you.



Mr. Peterson said I'm going to go through the next department's summary, Legislative Auditor. Total budget for Legislative Auditor is $788K for 2026. Six positions funded within that budget. The largest cost category is personnel 90% followed by Contractual and Commodities, which makes up the rest of the budget. Of the budget the Legislative Auditor makes up less than 1% of the whole UG Tax Levy. We did combine City and County Fund since it's a cross-funded department and less than 1% of the UG General Funds. The only change that we made to their budget this year outside of the position realignment was increased costs for Adobe subscriptions just because of the way the software companies are changing their costing practices. We've seen that across the UG. Previous years the Legislative Auditor was only funded through the County General Fund, but since the department deals with both city and county functions, we've split it 70% city, 30% county for the most recent budgets and 80% of their Operating Budget is designated for the Ethic Administration Program.

Reed Partridge, Legislative Auditor, said the Legislative Auditor's Office is authorized under the Charter and under the direction of—I'm appointed by Chief Judge Burns and a majority of the

District Court judges. We perform internal performance audit functions as well as the Ethics Administration Program. As Michael mentioned, our budget is at $788K. This time last year it was $860K and we're down one FTE for this 2026 Budget. The Ethics Program, you see the blue slice and almost all of that blue slice there is the Ethics Program, so our Operating costs if you consider that, goes down to about 2%.

Commissioner Burroughs said I just want to state that when I was first elected, I had requested six month prior audits before I took office. I think I've read every audit that has come out of your department in eight years and some of them are very well done. They're to the point very succinct and anytime I've ever called over with questions, your staff has been not only expedient in getting the response back, but was also very good at getting the answers that I was seeking at the time. When I go to pitch them out of my thing, there's a lot of yellow notes and Stickums to all the pages that I had questions and concerns about, but I just really wanted to say thank you to your staff for the expediency, the thoroughness, and the transparency you've provided me as a commissioner here at the Unified Government. **Mr. Partridge** said thank you. I would also say that an Internal Performance Audit function as well as the Ethics Program is relatively rare in Kansas or in the metro. I don't know exactly how many cities and counties in Kansas have a program like ours, but what I can tell you is that when we go to any kind of regional trainings, we have a training in Johnson County that they hold every year and there are a few other representatives. I know Johnson County has a program like ours and I know that Kansas City, Missouri does, but I am not aware of any other program, Lawrence, Douglas County, Leavenworth. Similarly our Ethics Program is very progressive compared to any other program in Kansas. Most counties and cities don't have an Ethics Program like we have or a Performance Audit Program, an Internal Performance Audit Program like we have, so in that respect it's very progressive.

Mayor Garner said I'd also like to commend you. You've taken on a heavy load on Ruth not being here and just taking on that. You've done an awesome job, so I just wanted to commend you on that. I know that workload is varying. Have we filled Ruth's position yet? **Mr. Partridge** said yes. Our previous Ethics Administrator, Ruth Benien, she was part of the team for over 12 years. She passed away in January. In July, just last month, we appointed an Ethics Administrator and she's on board and in fact, I left an Ethics meeting just a few minutes ago to come here. **Mayor**

Garner said thank you for that and I know one of the biggest things Ruth worked on and thank you for pushing that through, was for several years, numerous years, I think it was almost a decade or close or over a decade she told me she'd been trying to get the Ethics Policy renewed. So I know you carrying that out for her and I know she would have been happy. She just grilled me constantly when I was Mayor to get it done and this Commission finally passed it, but it was really after she passed you carried that work on, so thank you.

Mr. Partridge said we'd like to do that more continuously, maybe not. It should probably be done annually at least instead of waiting to accumulate all those amendments. **Mayor Garner** said what type of audits when you—just for anybody that doesn't know, the Legislative Auditor, what does that mean, what type of audits do you do and how often do you do those? I know I get packets from you. Are those forensic, are those performance. What level of audit, are they deep dives, are you looking for fraud, waste, and abuse. I mean what are you actually doing because, you know, there are three branches of government under our Unified Government system. There's the Executive Branch which is the Mayor. The Legislative Branch, which is all of our commissioners, but then not often talked about, is the Judicial Branch, which is the Legislative Auditor. **Mr. Partridge** said the Legislative Auditor's Office is generally described as a performance audit function. At the end of the year you all get an annual report from the Finance Department and that's a financial statement audit. We're different as we audit performance and it can be financial transactions, but it can be something completely unrelated to financial transactions. We've audited, most recently, would be like building usage or we may audit training, compliance with any department's particular SOPs. We're currently in an audit of auditing the injury on duty process, work related injuries, and how that process is in compliance with our own policies or state statutes or whatever the case may be and you get reports on those.

We also do some what I call Transactional Audits. We keep an eye on fee reports from different departments. We review procurement card purchases and sometimes you get a report on that, but if it's a specific transaction that we have a question about, that's an audit, but you may not get an audit report. We just contact the department directly if we find an anomaly on fees or procurement card usage. As far as audits go, it should be described as performance and then the other, as I said, transactional, our day-to-day.

We also serve on a lot of RFPs as a non-voting member to give some kind of independent or unbiased opinion and also just to monitor the procurement process because procurement can at times be a high risk area. **Mayor Garner** said that's good information.

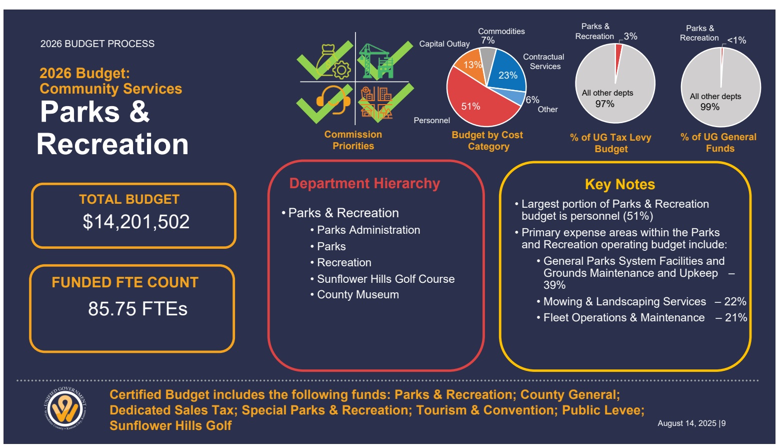
I know one of the things that I ran on and became Mayor, was independent outside unaffiliated audits and I know the Robert Bob group came in and they gave some awesome recommendations that I know staff is still looking over now. One of those things that came out of that was P-Cards and the $23M plus of unaccounted monies over three years. I know that our staff and our Administrator have done a good job, especially our CFO, she's working actively to conduct performance as well as some forensic audits, I believe, as well as some historical audits. Are you working in partnership with our CFO in that regard to just kind of maybe make sure that there's guardrails in place and some early warning systems so we don't recreate those types of issues. Then, what's that level of accountability from the Legislative Auditor's Office as far as questionable activity either that may be the Ethics Commission could look at or consultation, I'm sure you would have with the DA or the Chief Judge. How does that work?

Mr. Partridge said procurement card usage is something that we look at pretty routinely and pretty frequently and we always have since procurement cards became commonplace. Last year we put an additional focus on it and reported quarterly. A lot of the time, most of the time, that analysis and that audit was done behind the scenes. As I said, transactionally because we had the ability to look at everybody's credit card statement, line by line, transaction by transaction. A really good example is, one of the audits that we're required to do by ordinance is the Commission travel and training community event. I can tell you that I've seen every restaurant slip, every parking, every hotel that the commissioners have done over the last 10 or 15 years, but that procurement card usage is something that we look at pretty routinely. Last year the Finance Department—we have worked together and with the implementation of Workday there was a lot of—because it's a new system and there were a lot of kinks in the system and a lot of things weren't happening that should have happened and I think between our department and the Finance Department most of those procedural and approvals have been corrected. I think the system is working a lot better now.

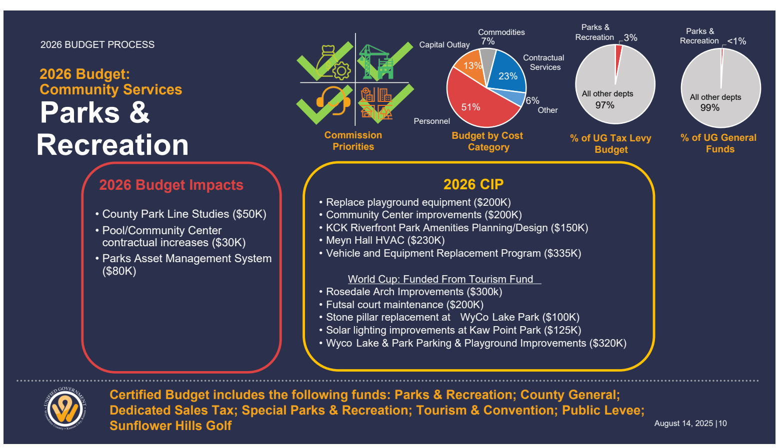
In addition to that, the Finance Department has taken on the initiative of having a—I guess you would call it a forensic audit or more of a databased analysis and they share those results with us, so we get the same results that they get and we meet on it. In fact, I think we have another meeting next week or very soon and it looks like it's going to be a quarterly review of things that are based on algorithms that they can identify, that you may not be able to identify with the naked eye by taking data from other databases. You have your procurement card data over here and you may have address data or personnel data and you can marry those and see if any anomalies exist and so that's the initiative that the Finance Department has taken on, but they have shared the results with us and so we're grateful for that.

Mayor Garner said that's what I was looking for. I just want to reassure the public that the leadership that we have in place with our CFO, with our Legislative Auditor, I wanted them to know that these early warning systems, looking at the algorithms and all that, that staff is taking that extra step to ensure compliance and to really fed out any instances that may be out there, fraud, waste, and abuse and taking the appropriate actions.

On the other side of that, I'm glad that relationship is there. We've really honed in on auditing what we do here at the Unified Government and heightened that level of awareness. As far at that branch, the judicial branch, if you had an employee where there was the alarm goes off, the red flag, or whatever the case may be where some inappropriate conduct, purchases, whatever the case may be, be it an Ethics Code violation or something that may rise to the level of reasonable suspicion of criminality, what would the judicial branch of this government do? Is that something you take to the DA, you have that conversation with the Chief Judge, what does that look like as far as accountability? **Mr. Partridge** said if we come across something that's fraudulent or a fraudulent transaction, that would go to the District Attorney. Probably we wouldn't go the Chief Judge. I would take that to law enforcement. **Mayor Garner** said okay, thank you. Appreciate you.



Mr. Peterson said the next department we're going to go through is Parks & Recreation. Parks & Recreation has a total certified proposed budget of $14.2M. That crosses a variety of funds including the Consolidated Parks Fund, County General Fund, Dedicated Sales Tax, Special Parks & Rec Fund, Tourism, Convention, Public Levee, and Sunflower Hills Golf Fund. Of that funding, there's 85.75 full-time equivalent positions that are included within the departments. We have an Administrative function, a Parks Division, Recreation Division. Sunflower Hills Golf Course is an independently operated entity within the Parks Department and then the County Museum which makes up the County General Fund portion of the Parks & Rec Department. Within the department 51% is Personnel, 6% is Other, 23% Contractual Services, 7% Commodities, and 13% Capital. Of the total UG Tax Levy they make up about 3% and then of the General Funds only, less than 1% because they have their own separate funding source with an independent levy. The largest portion of the budget is Personnel at 51%. Primary expenses within the Parks & Rec Operating Budget include just maintenance, general maintenance of facilities, and upkeep of grounds across the Park system at roughly 40%. That would include things like insurance costs, natural gas, repair of maintenance budgets, mowing and landscaping services is another large item at 22% and then just maintenance and operation of their fleet comes in at about 21%. That would be repair and maintenance of equipment, gasoline, and diesel expenses.



Some items that were changed within this year's 2026 Proposed Budget. We're putting in funding for County Park Waterline Studies to identify what needs to happen in the County Parks, in Wyandotte County Park, Pool/Community Center contractual increases about $30K to continue operations and then Parks Asset Management System Maintenance of $80K going forward. Then there's a variety of Capital items that are in the budget. The top set of items, Playground

Equipment, Community Center Improvements, Riverfront Park Planning & Design, Meyn Hall HVAC, and Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Program. Those are typical items that you see throughout the certified budget and then we do have a subset of roughly a million dollars of items that we've identified for the potential Tourism Tax increase for the World Cup. That would include funding for Futsal Court Maintenance, Stone Pillar Replacement at Wyandotte County Park, Solar Lighting Improvements at Kaw Point, and then various Parking and Playground Improvements across Wyandotte County Lake and Park.

Angel Ferrara, Director of Parks & Recreation, said tonight I have with me Matthew Zayas, our Fiscal Analyst; Vincent Billaci, Park Management; and Shaya Lockett, our Recreation Division Manager, could not be with us tonight, but I'll start off by saying thank you for allowing us the opportunity tonight to come before you. We are really appreciative of the support of this Commission, our leadership, and our Mayor for Parks & Recreation. We've had several improvements over the last few years supported with grants and we're really starting to get a lot of good feedback on that. Parks & Recreation, we oversee 54 parks, roughly 2,500 acres of parkland. We have six community centers, three halls, one public swimming pool, four splash pads, and so we oversee a variety of assets, land, facilities, if you will. Then, on top of that our Recreation Division does their best to deliver programs such as summer camp programs, youth sports, community events, and so on.

I know that it was mentioned tonight by our DA that when people are looking to move into counties, they're looking first and foremost for safety and then they look at schools and then I believe thirdly, they look at parks because families want to have nice parks for their kids to come play at and enjoy some free amenities.

I do want to talk a little bit about what we have on here and then I'll be happy to answer any questions and I promise to keep it short. So, just talking a little bit about the FTE count. That 85.75 number going into 2026 does account for four positions that we would be freezing, so currently our FTE count is 89.75. Then also just wanting to not forget that in the revenue neutral process, our department did cut seven positions. Going into 2026, we would have 11 less positions than we did in 2024. Also, just taking a look, this year we've kept a pretty steady vacancy rate anywhere from 20 to 25% just depending on the time of year and currently we have 17 vacancies with 12 of those in Parks. I say that just to reiterate what an amazing job our team has done adjusting to the changes. We've had to scale back on mowing in some areas and I know that some of you have probably received some phone calls and we've received those too. I will say that our community has been really patient and understanding with the strategy that we've utilized this year just with having lower staffing levels and adjusting the way that we mow our parks. So, I can't thank them enough for being really understanding. It's helped taking the hard calls a little easy. With that being said, again, with those 17 vacancies, 12 of those are in Parks and I do think it's really important to know that the Parks team does support Public Works, especially when it comes to snow operations.

Moving on and just speaking a little bit about the Capital Improvement Projects, a lot of what you see up here is really deferred maintenance. There's really no new projects and I will point out that the Riverfront Park Amenities Planning & Design mainly is for design dollars, but everything else you see up here are really requests for just a lot of the deferred maintenance that our department is working to address. A lot of these are in the form of annual programs and, for example, the Playground Replacement Program is an annual program. Community Center, a few that aren't on here would be the Aquatics Program and then also our annual Shelter Repair Program.

I think we submitted roughly $4.1M in requests for the department and I think probably roughly what's currently in, and I know this can change, the proposed approved request is roughly 2.3. We do our best to leverage the dollars when we can when we get those maximize grants just to maybe get like a two for one deal if we can to get two projects done maybe for the price of one. We'll continue to explore opportunities to do that in here. I will say too, some of the unfunded things that aren't on here are more annual programs that our department has identified like, for example, a lighting program. Just to kind of put that into perspective, last year we had 1,876 baseball fields, just baseball field reservations and all of our parks, streets in our parks are our department's responsibility to manage and maintain. So, a lot of our infrastructure, especially lighting is original infrastructure and we are seeing a lot of safety issues with a lot of light poles getting blown over in storms and needing to be replaced and as you can imagine sport lighting is not as cost-friendly as maybe some regular lighting, which lighting in general is expensive.

Other Annual Programs, Parking Lot Maintenance Programs, Dock Replacement, some maintenance work out at the lake and then also you'll see up here Waterline Study work. If you recall, over the last probably five to seven years, our department did a five-phase Water Line

Replacement at Wyandotte County Lake. It's pretty expensive and so it's been really good to have that project done, but we still have two other county parks that also are in need of having the same type of work done, again, dealing with some original infrastructure. I'll stop there and happy to answer any questions you might have. I could talk forever, but I'll keep it short.

Commissioner Kane said a few years ago, I was excited one day about the Korean Memorial and the Vietnam Memorial out there at the lake and with the Mayor and the commissioner's help, Parks & Rec was able to come up with some funding for it. It's probably one of the nicest events that I've attended in the 20 years I've been here. It was awesome, it looks great. Keep it up and in fact, all the parks look great with the manpower that you don't have. I can't imagine what it would look like if you had more.

Commissioner Davis said Angel and Matt, you all know I'm a big fan of parks. I think one of the hard things to really look at is we're looking at a much slimmer year when it comes to some of those projects that we have seen in previous years. After reading the report and we understand ARPA has come to an end and we've kind of shifted priorities on Community Development dollars. Are there any other CIP projects, major CIP projects that is not on the screen that would be good for us to know that's coming next year? **Ms. Ferrara** said yeah, that's a great question. I would say as far as next year, this is probably a good snapshot of that, but I think looking ahead into '27, and I know I've mentioned this, I think in April when we gave an update, but similarly to the rock wall at the lake, which I'm happy to provide an update, I'm shocked no one's asked me yet, so thank you, Marshall Creek Bridge is going to need to be looked at and we are actively proactively looking at a report to make sure we have some really solid information. So, we are hoping to, like I said, be proactive so we can address that before it becomes a catastrophic failure and then, you know, we're not in the best position. I would say that is a big one on the horizon. That isn't necessarily built into '26, but hopefully we can do some proactive work, maybe some design work to be in a better position in '27.

A big one on here is the George Meyn HVAC at 230K. Again, George Meyn was rented 116 times last year so it is a very popular venue for the community. It provides a space for them to reserve for weddings and other things, but similar to George Meyn, Pierson Park is in the same boat. It has an original boiler and chiller system that's 40-50 years old, 40, and that's probably on the horizon. We're going to try to push it to '27, but you know, we're doing the best we can there on that. So, those are some bigger ones that didn't maybe necessarily make it into '26, but it's high on our radar and just trying to be proactive on that work.

Commissioner Davis said I bring up these things because—and I know for Public Safety there's kind of a lion's share that they take up of the budget, usually something has to go wrong for you to see that response from our Public Safety folks. With parks it's things people are celebrating. They're celebrating key points in their lives. They're going out, they're having fun and I would just like to see a more robust investment as much as we can. I know we are in a tight budget, but it's going to be tough to really sell what we are doing with the taxpayer dollars if we can't keep the momentum going for investment. There are some ideas that I have for other revenue sources and I know that there's some discussion on TGT dollars and what we can do there to increase that investment as well, but I'll just let that sit there.

The other thing I wanted to ask, is it your department that oversees the maintenance and mowing of the medians or where do you all fall within that? **Ms. Ferrara** said our department is over the, we call them the hardscape median, so grass medians if it's—the grass medians, not the hardscape because there's no grass on that normally, that's Public Works, so yes we're over that. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha. I know in my district and really kind of all over town that has been kind of a constant concern, which is kind of the maintenance and mowing and I know you all alone do not oversee mowing, but I do think it's time that we make the maintenance of our community a high priority. What is your current budget, if you know, for kind of maintenance and mowing for the 2026 Budget? **Matthew Zayas, Fiscal Analyst,** said contractually including the cemeteries, the medians, the parks, the ball fields, and then beautifying those grass scape medians, we have a little over $700K and that doesn't account for all of our groundskeeping staff and everybody else who does mowing and maintenance work. **Commissioner Davis** said and is that the same amount from last year or was that an increase? **Mr. Zayas** said that was the same amount as last year. **Commissioner Davis** said gotcha.

I've been hearing a lot from folks in my district and, again, it's the physical manifestation of their tax dollars. I understand we cannot do everything, but I would like to see just a more aggressive approach to the maintenance and the mowing of our community. I know particularly on the east side of town, if you live next to more Land Bank lots, that is honestly one of the main issues that you hear, but even in my district, I hear it quite a bit and there's just a lot of work that needs to be done there. So, I can imagine if you're receiving the same amount from the previous year, that dollar is being stretched thin. I want to make sure you all are well resourced, within reason of course, to make sure that you have those particular resources available.

The last thing I'll ask, the museum is, let me just make sure I understand, it's now under Parks. **Ms. Ferrara** said yes. **Commissioner Davis** said okay, because I saw that within the budget and I was like that's a little new since I've been here and so I'm glad that you all are able to collaborate on the museum as well.

Mayor Garner said I'd just like to let the Commission know myself and Commissioner Townsend have been working with the Administrator and I've had numerous conversations with him. He is looking at reorganizing some of the departments in a way to make mowing and blight mitigation more efficient. There are several departments that currently do those types of things. Having a streamline operation we believe could be a little more efficient and you have one point of contact that could handle the mowing and blight mitigation throughout our community. So, I just want the community to know, let staff know, but more importantly, let the Commission know that the Administrator is looking at options on how to better address blight and mowing in a way that could be more efficient and hit the areas that are most visible to the public.

Commissioner Townsend said thank you, Commissioner Davis, for the lead in to just where I'm going. But first of all, I have to say that I have appreciated working with Parks & Rec staff and everyone seated at the table tonight. They've done the best great job that they can do with the reductions that the 2025 Budget restraints placed upon them, so I have to acknowledge that. But as the Mayor said, and as Commissioner Davis alluded to and I've said before, it's one thing to live the budget and we absolutely, in my opinion, have to find some way to fund more cuttings in the year 2026, especially as we look at international coming to our city. This would be the minimum. I know infrastructure is a big thing, safety will be a big thing. This would be one of the most dollar productive things we could do at the lower end of the dollar scale.

I would like to ask for clarity a couple of questions so I know again just where we are on this. Ms. Ferrara, with regard to Land Bank, are those lots cut out of budget funds for Parks & Rec or another budget? I know there was a loss of people, not that they left the UG, but maybe a reorganization is a better way to say that, so if you could talk about are Land Banks cut from under this budget, from the Parks and Rec budget? **Ms. Ferrara** said just a little bit of recap and history on that. Historically, the Parks & Rec Department did oversee the abatement team and that team was always kept separate, so it didn't have any Parks & Rec funding tied to that program. Last year through the budget process to find efficiencies cutting that team, which was two teams, down to one was part of one of the strategies and then also the mowing budget for Land Bank did get reduced as well and that's why the Land Bank mowing went from a 14-day rotation to about a 28-day rotation. **Commissioner Townsend** said the Land Bank you said it went from a 14-day to 28, yes, and let me edit that a little bit, at least a 28-day. It may have been a little bit more than that in some cases, but that is one of the things it would be urgent for us to address in a better way so that Parks & Rec receives more funds to do that on a cycle that is going to make our city all over look better. The eastern section, as Commissioner Davis said, does take a hit.

The other thing that I noticed is with, and maybe this was the remediation team that was under your control, is that correct under 2024?

Mr. Peterson said I'm not sure that I caught the last part of your question, so we might have to hear that again. I just wanted to clarify, I guess, the changes that we made in the budget for this year going into next year, Buildings & Logistics now oversees the abatement team and they currently have the funding for that within their budget. We're going to hear from them at a future workshop. Economic Development now has the Coordinator position for the Land Bank mowing, and they also have the budget for the Land Bank mowing and that's new this year and they're also scheduled to come back in a future meeting. Parks & Rec, I guess, can explain more, but I believe you're mostly in charge of mowing ballfields, parks, cemeteries, and medians.

Commissioner Townsend said okay, I'm a bit more confused now. Let me go back to how it was before the 2025 Budget and I can follow it a little bit better. In 2024 under Parks & Rec you had Land Bank, is that correct? **Ms. Ferrara** said yes. **Commissioner Townsend** said and that was things—and things that were mowed under Land Bank were mowed on a 28-day cycle, basically twice a month. **Ms. Ferrara** said let me clarify. We had Land Bank mowing in 2024 and that original rotation was at least to meet a 14-day rotation on mowing. **Commissioner Townsend** said right, but under revenue neutral, this year's scheme that we're living now, it's down to about once a month, correct? **Mr. Ferrara** said yes, and that program has moved to Buildings & Logistics—or Economic Development. **Commissioner Townsend** said under Economic Development. Okay, so we've yet to see them. Then, under the 2024 Budget, you also had a remediation team. **Ms. Ferrara** said yes, the abatement team. **Commissioner Townsend** said the abatement team and is that still with you or that is under the auspices of another department now? **Ms. Ferrara** said yes, the abatement team is under Buildings & Logistics. **Commissioner Townsend** said okay, so who do you have that's responsible for mowing just parks? Is that the only mowing responsibility that you have now? **Ms. Ferrara** said our mowing is parks, cemeteries, medians, ball fields and I think we might still do a couple WPC sites. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. Ferrara** said oh no, yep, so just medians, ball fields, parks, and cemeteries. **Commissioner Townsend** said okay, and your proposal for 2026 is that same scheme, correct? **Ms. Ferrara** said yes. **Commissioner Townsend** said all right. Well, that's helpful because this year it did become, to me at least, a bit confusing. If you can recall for me, it seemed as though there were two remediation teams in 2024? **Ms. Ferrara** said that's correct. **Commissioner Townsend** said and so these people didn't leave the UG as employees, but what happened to one of those abatement teams. Only one remained, what happened to those other persons? **Ms. Ferrara** said we didn't cut any warm bodies. Some members on that team did take another position, whether that was somewhere else in the organization or outside of the organization. They chose that themselves.

Commissioner Townsend said okay. Well, I have to commend under the 2024 scheme, and I know the 2025 scheme is doing the best that they could do through no fault of their own. There was never a time when I didn't put in a request for extreme vegetation or dumping, the clearance of dumping, from a constituent that those abatement teams, when we had two, didn't move immediately under Parks & Rec. I have to thank them again. Some of them, as you said, may still be UG employees, but doing other jobs, but I have to recognize the job they did and it made it all the more apparent what we were losing in this year and how the area looked. These questions are going to help me better analyze the numbers. It was more the schematic and more the plea for us to—with respect to this mowing and how things are mowed particularly Land Bank, remediation that could be dumping, it could be overgrown weeds of people who own the property. It's privately owned, but they are not subscribing to code and that is a problem for their neighbors and the way this community looks.

Again, I have to thank you, Ms. Ferrara, and all of the people there, Mr. Billaci, everyone there for Parks & Rec, for the great job that you do with what you have and thank you again for a great season at Parkwood Pool and to our partners with Midwest and the good job that they did and those lifeguards did this year, appreciate them.

Mayor Garner said I applaud the work of you all too. I know I've said it time and time again that Angel and her team and the Parks Department, they've touched just about every park in this county, particularly those areas that have been disinvested and disenfranchised, really east of 78th Street. If you look at the parks downtown, new parks were created. Strawberry Hill has a new park. I mean parks that hadn't been touched for years, so thank you and your team for really just making sure that those types of amenities were available to our residents, particularly in those areas that had been long forgotten and now those parks look really nice and they're being utilized. I go to these parks a lot and families and these young people are using the pickleball courts, the basketball courts, they're walking. And when you talk about a community that historically has been unhealthy, parks is really key to that because now people are out of their houses, they're exercising, they're enjoying the amenities, getting fresh air, and becoming healthier and parks is taking the lead in that, so thank you all so much. You all have done a phenomenal job.

Question. You have six rec centers, I think, is that what you said? **Ms. Ferrara** said yes. **Mayor Garner** said what does that utilization look like. Which one is used the most and which one is used the least? **Ms. Ferrara** said that's tough. Well, as you all know, we've had Earl Watson Community Center closed for a little over a year and a lot of that is predominantly due to staffing and safety issues. We were able to get some programming in there this summer, but it was temporary. As far as utilization goes, it really depends on the season. Some centers are used more than others. The usage varies. What we've started to do is every month at Park Board, we do give a report on the numbers and usage for each center and so we do have that information to share. It could be anywhere from 900 visitors, 500 visitors to 2,000-3,000 plus. I know like last year, for example, our centers saw an influx of people because of the record turnout and voter registration, so it really just depends. They are actively being used and there's a lot of desire for community groups to come in and use the spaces as well. I'd be happy to share that information. It's just hard to say and then I'd also just put a plug in for the department's annual report. We do cover a lot of numbers and data in there as far as usage for fields, shelters, halls, community centers, and things like that. I'd be happy to share that detailed information if you would like that.

Mayor Garner said yeah, that would be great and then on that same line, what about parks. I mean are there certain parks—I know there's like these outlaying parks that really nobody uses. Have we identified those parks as a way to free up maintenance costs that may be associated with those? **Ms. Ferrara** said yeah, so that's an interesting question. There's a couple ways that our department currently tracks some of that. This sounds silly. Some of it is by the volume of trash that we have in those parks or by the number of shelter reservations. There's some pretty savvy technology out there right now like Placer AI that can give us more detailed information and hopefully one day we can get there. What we actually kind of started to take a look at this year, going back to the mowing strategy, is we have roughly 1,100 mobile acres in-house that we mow and so knowing that there were some days where we only had two groundskeepers or four groundskeepers that does the mowing, we went into the season with a strategy. We knew we couldn't mow everything down, so we worked to determine a list of three tiers essentially and trying to take a look at our parks off usage and maintenance and then really taking a look at what does it look like to implement a strategy to where tier one is maybe used more, these parks get a higher level of care and maintenance and then tier two and tier three and so on.

We're still working through that process, but we did implement that a little bit in our parks and I think out of the 1,100 mobile acres, we scaled back on about 17%. So, what does that mean? That means, you know, we try to meet a 7 to 10 day rotation with mowing our parks. The areas we scaled back were more on like a 15 to 21 day rotation for mowing, so not mowing everything down, which some people do view that as a strategy to be more efficient and to just be more intentional and conscious about keeping some of our areas more of a nature and natural place.

Mayor Garner said I know when I was on the Police Department, and this goes back to the 90s when Community Policing first kicked off, probably early 90s, I know a lot of our neighborhood groups, and there were obviously a lot more, there were over 180 at that time, I believe, at the height. I believe there was like Adopt-A-Park where a lot of neighborhood groups would adopt parks they would mow, they would pick up trash, they would do those things to help the city. Do we still have any programs like that in place. Are we working with Livable Neighborhoods at all—our neighborhood groups to try and look at maybe reinstituting things like that to really get our community involved in taking care of the very amenities that they say they want to help keep them, you know, with the beautification. **Ms. Ferrara** said that's a great idea. I know that a few years ago I think Public Works did try to implement a program called Adopt-A-

Spot and then within that Adopt-A-Spot program there was an Adopt-A-Park program. I'd have to check with them because they managed that program to see if they still have a staff member overseeing that, but I think it's still in use because some parks did get adopted and occasionally we'll have groups come in to get trash bags and clean the park. It could probably be a lot more of a robust program as well. **Mayor Garner** said you'd be surprised of what a $20 trophy would do in a neighborhood for folks and you challenge them if you keep this park up, you know, your neighborhood or your group will be that group to be recognized by Parks. I mean I'm just trying to help think of things to help with that.

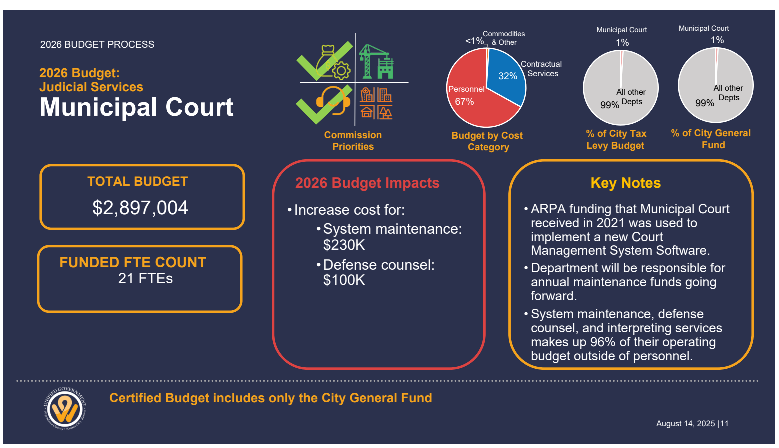
I challenge our future Commissions and future Mayors. When I was on the Police Department working with Community Policing, what was really valuable when you talk about blight, going back to what we called the broken windows theory, that really addressed those things that brought the decrease in crime at that was blight and blight mitigation. We had Operation Brightside. We'd call them and we would work with them everything from graffiti, picking up trash, cops would work with the neighborhood groups to do cleanup blitzes as well as in parks, things of that nature. I don't know how often we do those things anymore, but it really would be great. I believe Operation Brightside eventually morphed into SOAR before I left and I just don't hear a lot of dedicated blight mitigation apparatus or an ecosystem with the Unified Government. I think maybe it's past time we get back to that because when you talk about weeds and trash blowing down the street, you know, the blight and I know we talked about public safety, we talked about parks, and we talked about schools, but one of the other biggest concerns that we get from residents is blight, weeds, and trash. It really makes our community look very unsightly. Even if you solve crime and all those things, if you roll into a neighborhood and you see trash everywhere and weeds, you know, and you can call them whatever you want, some folks like to say oh, take it back to its natural state. Well, that doesn't sit well for some communities. I've gone to other cities and I can tell you, I went to Detroit and I was shocked walking down the street and I was with the Greater Kansas City Chamber and one of the things that stood out to us walking in downtown Detroit, and they were recovering from their bankruptcy, we were hard-pressed to find a cigarette butt on the street and we looked. It was that well-maintained and so I just challenge this Commission and our staff and administration and future elected officials that may be looking to really put some attention and maybe get back to having some type of apparatus, department or streamline system in place to really hone in on blight and mowing and all those things that you're hearing from our Commission. But the reason you hear from our commissioners is because we're hearing from the community and that tends to be a huge problem.

Also, the policies and, again, I go back to when I was on the Police Department, Public Works used to—if there were tree limbs down, things like that, they would actually go with a dump truck, saw it, pick it up, and take it to the dump. I don't know where we got away from doing those types of things as well as having rovers and trucks that would go and pick up mattresses and kitchen sinks along the roadway. I'm just coming up with a better strategy as well as our policies and this is more for the Commission, looking at maybe getting back to as we can increase funding and staffing and maybe streamline the process to have it more dedicated to blight. Look at the right-of-ways—there are a lot of—I know there was—I believe Commissioner Kane, I think he was contacted. There was an elderly gentleman a couple years ago that was trying to mow his right-of-way and I think he was in his 80s and his mower fell over on him because he didn't have the appropriate equipment to do those types of things. I just think we need to take a hard look. We're asking our residents to pay more, but we're giving them a lot less. I just think if you talk to some of the staff members that I know that have worked here for years, that I worked with for years that are still here, that's why I say we need to talk to the boots on the ground that where the rubber hits the road, they're saying they can do those things, but sometimes the directives and the policies that have come down have changed and they're not allowed to do those things or they're being directed to do other things. They're saying that they can still do those types of things if they're directed to. We've got great employees here that actually do the work in the field and they're willing to do the work. It's just you have to have the type of leadership in place, and I'm not talking about you, but the will to direct employees to do those types of things that we know, we've shown before that can be done. So, thank you to your entire team. You all have done—I can't praise you enough and the reason I praise you so much is because I get the praise from the community on just the outstanding job and they're so happy to be able to have parks they can be proud of, so thank you for your team's work.

Commissioner Bynum said I just wanted to say that first of all, thank you for all that you all do. I really appreciate everything about your department, but Mayor, I just wanted to address the Adopt-A-Spot Cleanup Program. That program exists, at least in part, because my Kiwanis Club of KCK West, we adopted 126th Street by Wyandotte County Park pre-COVID. We still clean it to this day. We just discussed a cleanup date this morning at our meeting. We still clean 126th Street from State to pass the Ag Hall and so we are participating and I think that Public Works even put us up a little sign to denote that area is adopted by us. As far as I know that program is operating and I encourage other groups to adopt parks and places around parks to help keep clean.

Commissioner Townsend said I wanted to mention while I had the opportunity that whether contracts or it's our employees cutting Land Bank, they'll know with the park, so I know it won't be our employees, but anywhere we're having to contract people to cut these lots, we need to make sure that the scope of the work to be done is clear. And they should not only cut the lot assigned, but also the neutral ground, as they used to say in New Orleans, in front of them. Unfortunately, I've run across situations this year where I don't know if we did not adequately define the scope of what was to be done, but that should never be the case where they're cutting a lot and the strip in front of it is left with weeds and grass and gone uncut. So, wherever the responsibilities of these contractors end up next year or the end of this year, that is something that should be addressed and made plain of the entire scope of the job they are to do.

Mayor Garner said thank you Parks Department. **Ms. Ferrara** said thank you.



Mr. Peterson said we're going to move on to Municipal Court, which is the last department on our meeting agenda for tonight. So, 2026 Budget for Municipal Court was $2.9M. They have 21 FTEs that are part of their budget, 67% is Personnel, 32% Contractual Services and in the City Tax Levy Budget, they make up about 1% of the City General Fund, again about 1%. We did increase costs for Systems Maintenance since they had a new software system that they recently implemented as well as additional funding for the Defense Counsel, which we did have to identify in 2024. We discovered that funding wasn't adequate to fund those contracts. Some key notes, there was some COVID funding that was used in Municipal Court in 2021 to implement a new Court Management System. That is what we're identifying maintenance funding for in this 2026 Budget and then System Maintenance, Defense Counsel and Interpreting Services make up 96% of their Operating Budget outside of personnel, so really they have a very small discretionary Operating Budget within their department.

Meaghan Shultz, Municipal Court Administrative Judge, said we are happy to be here with you tonight. We know we're at the end, so we will make this short. We have done everything that we can to try to trim and streamline and make our budget more efficient. We do constantly have as part of our interpreter contract an interpreter in-person for Spanish interpretation at every docket. That is the highest number of people that we have that speak another language, but as far as every other language that we encounter, we use Proprio. It is a video and/or audio service depending on who, how our connection is and that is 75 cents a minute, which is a heck of a lot cheaper than paying for an interpreter in person because you have to pay a two hour minimum even if they're only interpreting for one person. We deal with several different languages ranging from languages that only have 200K people in the world that speak it, but yet constitutionally we have to provide an interpreter for defendants that are in our court, at court hearings whether or not it is easy to obtain an interpreter.

The Court Management Software that we are continuing to transition to is allowing us to ultimately reduce the—we are not eliminating any employees, but as employees move on from the Court Clerk 1 position, we are going to be able to eliminate some of those positions because we will not need as much data entry because this court software system will integrate or does integrate with the E-Ticket System that KCKPD currently uses. That will eliminate the need for the data entry. Unfortunately, during the transition period, we still have to pay for our current court software, so that's kind of why the cost is a little weird next year because we're going to have to be paying for both for a certain amount of time until the transition is fully complete. I'm happy to hear any questions or comments.

Commissioner Davis said very quickly, Judge, thank you so much. I just want to give credit and congratulations where it's due. You are the President of the Kansas Municipal—**Judge Shultz** said yes, I was elected the President of the Kansas Municipal Judges Association this year. **Commissioner Davis** said congratulations, that's amazing. And your colleague was also—Judge Wittman was also awarded for her work on traffic law. Can you also talk very briefly about that as well? **Judge Shultz** said I'm trying to remember the name of the position that it is. It's something to do with the American Bar Association and she will be helping educate traffic law judges across the US. So, that is phenomenal for us. **Commissioner Davis** said it's very, very important and we already did a whole release and everything, but I just wanted to say congratulations.

I do see the Defense Counsel cost for $100K. We did have a discussion with DA Dupree. We understand lawyers are expensive. Can you speak to what that dynamic has been and why that increase for cost? **Judge Shultz** said our old contract with previous appointed defense counsel was set up differently than this one is. Previous contracts, defense counsel never met with defendants outside of court. They would spend only time within the courtroom with their clients, so that caused them to have to attempt to hurriedly review discovery, give them their plea offer, talk about their options. This contract that we have now, we believe better serves not only the court as a whole, but it also serves defendants better and it ensures that there will be no issues with appeals as far as effective assistance of counsel. People have the opportunity to make an appointment with their attorney outside of our court dockets. Those attorneys are present in our court every Thursday and Friday except for the fifth week of the month. We just have it set up for the first four weeks of the month, so not only are they handling in-person dockets, video dockets during that time, but they're also having outside hours where they meet with their clients. That of course costs more, but constitutionally, we do have to provide people with an appointed attorney.

If jail is sought, that of course is in part dictated by ordinance, but also dictated by what the Prosecutor's Office is requesting, which is of course under Ms. Lawson's purview because she is their boss. They work for her department, not for our department. I think that's really important for people to understand because I think there is sometimes confusion about whether or not the prosecutors work for Municipal Court. They do not. Then the appointed defense counsel is an hourly rate that we pay them and so that fluctuates depending on the number of people that have been appointed.

We have also streamlined our appointment process. We have people get an affidavit. They gather their documents, they present that affidavit to one of our employees, our real Risk Engagement Assessment Liaison. He reviews the documentation that they provide to him. He is a notary, so they're able to notarize and sign that affidavit in front of him. It is distributed to the judges, we review that and make a determination as to whether or not someone qualifies. We use 125% of the federal poverty guideline as our—what we use to determine if somebody qualifies and, of course, that's affected by the number of dependents you have and when 2025 started, we adjusted it based on the 2025 numbers given by the federal government. **Commissioner Davis** said thank you.

Mayor Garner said does Dispute Resolutions still exist? **Judge Shultz** said yes it does. It's not under our department. **Mr. Lindsey** said it's under Human Services. **Mayor Garner** said thank you so much. Awesome feedback on your leadership, the things that you're trying to do to innovate as well. I've gotten positive feedback from people that have interacted with you in the court and so they're really pleased both with attorneys and people that have just paid their tickets, doing those types of things that come before you. They may not always like the outcome, but they appreciate the professionalism of what Municipal Court does including a lot of attorneys that come before you as well. Thank you so much for that.

I know you're trying to innovate and quickly, are there any other best practice, and I asked this earlier to the DA and to the Sheriff, best practice innovations. I see programs that allow you—any other things out there that maybe in the future Mayors and Commissions can look at to streamline operations that maybe other Municipal Courts are doing in the nation that can hopefully save our taxpayers some money. I don't know what that would look like.

Judge Shultz said one of the most innovative Municipal Courts in the United States is in Akron, Ohio. We carefully follow what they put out, what they're doing just to see if we're able to adapt any of it to our courts. We have done several things. We allow people to have an ability to pay hearing—because of COVID we had stopped community service. That has restarted and that is actually handled through our Community Policing Department. One of the issues that we had previously with community service was—at one point it was done through MCSP, which required people to pay a fee to be monitored by MCSP and until you could pay the fee, you couldn't start your hours so that kind of defeated, in my mind, the point of community service. Then we had kind of gone to a point where we were trying to have our Probation Officers monitor that. We have two Probation Officers to monitor all the people that are on probation, so that didn't really work out that great. So, when COVID happened, we kind of just stopped community service and we have restarted it with Community Policing and we also have our real officer who receives all the information from Community Policing regarding hours and he kind of monitors that for us.

We had a program that was helping us get people their driver's license back. The funding, of course, ran out for that. So what we try to do is if it's a Kansas driver's license, we definitely try to look up their driving record for them. We direct them to the employee that's actually from Driver Solutions in Mission. We do as much as we can to try to get them reinstated because people who have driver's licenses have better economic opportunities. They have better options to get a job. They have better health outcomes overall. So, those kinds of programs are programs that were started in courts like the Akron court. We do try to, when we can. We have to obviously deal with what funding constraints that we do have.

Mayor Garner said no disrespect, I'm not going to let you give Akron too much credit because Commissioner Stites can attest to it. We were doing—Commissioner Stites was in Community Policing at one time and we were—and it was a really robust program where we had those people out picking up trash, mowing, painting, doing a lot of those things. So, it's good to hear you all getting back to that. I just challenge—even with our downtown, I mean there's dedicated officers working with the Downtown Shareholders. There is an opportunity there to help pick up trash and beautify our downtown along that area, working with those officers that we know will be there. I don't know what that would look like as far as our parks, you know, some of the non-violent offenders that maybe work with some of our departments to help do those things in those areas where the need is the greatest. But that's awesome to hear that. I know Judge Myers on the District side, she also does that. She assigns, so I don't know if there's some room for collaboration with the District Court as well to get the bodies we need to be able to go out and do some things to help with some of the challenges that I know that our staff has here at the Unified Government just when you talk about blight, trash, beautification or other things that you as a judge may see of value.

Last thing, this question has always come up even when I was on the Police Department, and I don't know, it's probably logistical personnel deal. I know other cities have it. They have weekend court and they have night courts. I don't know if that's ever been considered here as an option for our working families. Sometimes it's hard for people to get off work, and if they can't get off work and they have to choose between going to court or going to work to feed their families, sometimes they'll choose to go to work to feed their families and they end up with a warrant. They're stopped by the police, their car is towed, they're incarcerated and it's just a downhill spiral. If we had weekend court or court to where maybe they could come in for a couple hours after hours, I don't know what that would look like as far as flexing hours. I know you all bring in judges contractually. I just don't know what that would look like to have that opportunity. If you can't do it like regularly, maybe once a quarter, once a month, or whatever the case may be to allow those families and those working individuals that probably want to take care of their legal challenges, but just can't afford to take off work because maybe their boss won't let them or financially they can't.

I think that would go a long way of helping a lot of working families and helping some of those individuals take care of their legal obligations while also maintaining their ability to go to work and do those types of things. I do know for a lot of working families some of their employers just won't let them off and I dealt with—I can't tell you how many people I've arrested over the 32 years because they had a warrant and I had to tow their car, they were incarcerated and I'd see them out, they lost their job. Now that hole is even deeper for them to dig out of. Now you're talking broken families and a lot of other things that I saw some individuals do and I'm not saying it's right and I'm not condoning it, but they ended up just spiraling out of control and going down a road that really doesn't reflect what we want our residents to do to live productive lifestyles. So, I didn't know if that was ever a thought or an option or that we've even thought about here at the Unified Government.

Judge Shultz said we have discussed it before. It is largely a funding matter. You have to have people from Steve Owen's department available because you have to have security. We have to abide by our union contract and I know that there are some restrictions as far as what we can do with employees hours and then we have to be able to pay whoever it is, whether it's Judge Wittman and I or if it is a series of pro tem judges and I know that every time we have looked at it, it has just not been financially feasible.

What we have done for someone who receives a traffic ticket, if they cannot make their first court date, we have a link on our Unified Government website on the Municipal Court page that allows them to request a one-time continuance. If they can't make that first appearance, they're not automatically getting a warrant as long as they request that continuance at least 24 hours in advance. Now, with misdemeanor cases, it's different. It is important for people to—it's important for people to appear for traffic tickets too, but with misdemeanor cases in particularly, complaining witnesses appear, it's not really easy to monitor that like it is with the traffic. One of our Clerks just automatically issues those continuances to people if they are requested, so we do have avenues that we do try to leave open for people. We do get emails on our—you know we have an email address, kckmunicourt@wycokck.org, and our Clerks are good about answering those emails, about giving people options. I know if, for example, if people are ill or in the hospital, we are really good about accommodating without having to post a bond.

We also have a very generous bonding policy compared to a lot of places in the metro area. If defendants have never had to post bond on the case before, it is $100 and then it goes up by $50 each time. We also have a policy that if you owe fines and fees and the bond that you posted yourself is forfeited, we apply it to those fines and fees first, which we didn't historically used to do. We just figure it's more fair that way. We aren't comfortable doing that when, for example, your mom or your sister or friend has posted that bond for you like a surety bond. **Mayor Garner** said thank you, Judge.

Mayor Garner said thank you to our staff for the budget presentation, our Administrator. I know it's a long meeting. Thank you commissioners and those that may be watching and staff for bearing with us. I want to thank staff again for getting the line items to the commissioners. They're not down to the penny, but I know if we want it down to the penny, staff has assured the commissioners that they can get it down to the penny, but these line items are a lot more than what we usually see on these PowerPoints and you've heard some of our commissioners weigh in on that tonight. We have no further business. I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

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

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 8:49 p.m.

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Monica L. Sparks
Unified Government Clerk

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