

Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commission Chambers

701 N. 7th Street Trafficway, Kansas City, KS 66101

Mayor Tyrone Garner

Commissioner At-Large Dist. 1 Melissa Bynum – Commissioner At-Large Dist. 2 Tom Burroughs –

Commissioner Dist. 1 Gayle E. Townsend – Commissioner Dist. 2 Bill Burns –

Commissioner Dist. 3 Christian Ramirez – Commissioner Dist. 4 Dr. Evelyn Hill –

Commissioner Dist. 5 Mike Kane – Commissioner Dist. 6 Phil Lopez –

Commissioner Dist. 7 Chuck Stites – Commissioner Dist. 8 Andrew Davis

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

5:05 PM – 8:20 PM

Attendance:

Commissioners Present:

- Mayor Tyrone Garner
- Commissioner Burroughs
- Commissioner Bynum
- Commissioner Burns
- Commissioner Lopez
- Commissioner Townsend
- Commissioner Kane
- Commissioner Hill (Left meeting at 8:10 p.m.)
- Commissioner Stites
- Commissioner Davis

Commissioners Absent:

- Commissioner Ramirez

Staff Present:

- Monica L. Sparks (Unified Government Clerk)
- David Johnston (County Administrator)
- Angela Lawson (Interim Chief Legal Counsel)
- Reginald Lindsey (Budget Director)
- Michael Peterson (Deputy Budget Director)
- Alan Howze (Assistant County Administrator)
- Deasiray Bush (Director of Transportation)
- Debbie Jonscher (Deputy Chief Financial Officer)

Call to Order:

Mayor Tyrone Garner called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Notice and Consent to Meeting:

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, is scheduled to be conducted in a hybrid format on Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. for a budget workshop in the Fifth-floor conference room of the Municipal Office Building, 701 N. 7th Street, Kansas City, Kansas.

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.

County Administrator David Johnston turned the meeting over to Budget Director Reginald Lindsey, who introduced Deputy Budget Director Michael Peterson to present budget information.

Top Contracts Overview

Mr. Peterson presented a summary of the Unified Government's top contracts totaling \$46.6 million paid out in 2024. He noted that many of the contracts are not funded by the General Fund.

City and County General Fund Contractual Services

Mr. Peterson presented the top contractual service costs for city and county general funds, totaling roughly \$22 million and representing 80% of contractual services budgets.

- City General Fund Top Expenses:
 - A. Software maintenance agreements: \$4.3 million
 - B. ATA transit fees: \$3.9 million
 - C. Fleet costs: \$2 million
 - D. Insurance costs: \$1.8 million
 - E. Attorney and legal fees: \$1 million
 - F. Telephone services: \$900,000
- County General Fund Top Expenses:
 - A. Inmate medical: Over \$6 million
 - B. Housing of inmates: \$1.3 million
 - C. Jail food service: \$1 million
 - D. Software maintenance: \$2 million

Questions and Discussion on Contracts

Commissioner Burroughs requested clarification on how numbers between the top contracts list and contractual services budgets correlate. Mr. Peterson explained that the first slide shows specific vendor contracts while the second shows budget categories that may include multiple vendors.

Commissioner Stites asked about potential consolidation of phone services to achieve savings. Assistant County Administrator Alan Howze explained that efforts have been made to consolidate services, though some departments have specific operational needs requiring separate contracts.

Commissioner Stites inquired about the total number of contracts and suggested analysis by department to identify potential redundancies and cost savings.

Blight and Beautification Responsibilities

Mr. Peterson presented departmental responsibilities for blight and beautification efforts:

- Buildings and Logistics (Lead Department - John Kelly):
 - A. Trash removal from land bank lots
 - B. Critical quick response trash tickets
 - C. Code enforcement and abatements
 - D. UG facility mowing

- Other Departments:
 - A. Parks and Recreation: Park trash pickup, greenscape medians
 - B. Public Works: Hardscape medians, street dumping
 - C. Neighborhood Resource Center: Property boarding and demolition
 - D. Economic Development: Land bank mowing
 - E. Public Safety: Camera monitoring and enforcement

County Administrator Johnston noted that starting September 8, John Kelly will coordinate a multi-department team that will meet every Monday to address blight in different community areas.

Optional Budget Additions

Mr. Peterson presented potential budget additions totaling several million dollars:

- Blight and Illegal Dumping:
 - A. Quick response trash team: \$270,000 personnel, \$475,000 equipment from the city general fund
 - B. Bi-weekly land bank mowing: \$625,000 from the County General Fund
 - C. Parks positions (5 frozen): \$180,000
 - D. Transit route cleaning (4 positions): \$210,000
 - E. Street maintenance (17 frozen positions): \$1 million
 - F. Camera/license plate readers: \$100,000
- Public Safety:
 - A. Police officers: \$107,000 each from the City General Fund
 - B. Sheriff's deputies: \$107,000 each from the County General Fund
- Other Items:
 - A. Infrastructure/pavement preservation: \$5.7 million currently budgeted
 - B. Transit: \$890,000 for Iris service, \$950,000 for main routes
 - C. Grant writing capacity: \$140,000
 - D. 311 enhancements: \$250,000

Discretionary Programs Discussion

Staff presented discretionary programs totaling approximately \$41.7 million across combined city/county funds that could potentially be reduced or eliminated:

- Combined City/County Programs: \$18.6 million

- City-Only Programs: \$20.5 million
- County-Only Programs: \$2.5 million

Commissioner Bynum questioned why certain items like Wyandotte Economic Development Council funding were labeled "discretionary," noting it provides contractual economic development services.

Financial Projections Discussion

Mr. Peterson presented financial scenarios for both city and county general funds through 2030:

County General Fund Options:

- Revenue neutral: Would require personnel cuts
- No mill adjustment (7% assessed value increase): Still would require cuts
- Two mill increase (Administrator's recommendation): Maintains services with \$2.8 million fund balance

City General Fund Options:

- Revenue neutral: Negative fund balance by 2029
- No mill adjustment: Negative fund balance by 2030
- Two mill increase: Maintains positive fund balance but declining reserves

Administrator Johnston cautioned against touching the county budget due to precarious financial condition, noting reserves would be just under 3% with the two mill increase.

Commissioner Positions and Direction

Commissioner Kane initially asked about one mill options but ultimately supported the Administrator's two mill recommendations after hearing the presentation.

Commissioner Stites advocated for no mill increase, suggesting using the 2.3 mill equivalent from assessed value growth only.

Commissioner Bynum requested a straw poll on the flat mill levy budget and suggested looking at discretionary program cuts.

Commissioner Davis supported no mill increase on the city side due to healthy reserves but recognized the county side needs an increase. It is requested to do a CIP presentation.

Commissioner Burns supported the Administrator's recommendation, criticizing lengthy budget process and meetings.

Commissioner Burroughs wanted information on 2025 amended budget funding sources and analysis of federal COVID/ARPA fund impacts.

Commissioner Townsend was open to trimming and cuts, requested time to analyze information. Commissioner Lopez advocated for deep dive into departmental expenditures to identify waste.

MEETING SCHEDULE DISCUSSION

Administrator Johnston explained that the budget action item was moved from the original August 28 agenda to September due to the candlelight vigil for the fallen officer. He outlined the timeline:

- Earliest budget adoption: September 4
- Latest budget adoption: September 25 (to avoid veto issues)
- Commission has flexibility to schedule additional meetings as needed

BUDGET POLLING AND CONSENSUS

The Mayor summarized commissioner positions:

- Administrator's Recommendation (2 mills): Commissioners Kane, Burns
- No Mill Increase with Cuts: Commissioners Bynum, Burroughs, Davis (city only), Townsend
- Revenue Neutral with Cuts: Commissioner Stites
- Deep Dive Analysis: Commissioner Lopez

The majority appeared to favor exploring a no mill increase option with corresponding budget cuts.

Adjournment (Discussion Begins: 3:16:50)

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis.

Vote: Motion carries 8/0

- Ayes: Burroughs, Townsend, Burns, Kane, Lopez, Stites, Davis, Bynum
- Nays: None
- Absent: Ramirez, Hill

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED

THE MEETING AT 8:20 P.M.

Monica L. Sparks, CMC
Unified Government Clerk

mls