STATE OF KANSAS)
WYANDOTTE COUNTY)) SS **SPECIAL SESSION, THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022**
CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KS)

The Unified Government Commission of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, met in Special Session, Thursday, March 24, 2022, with ten members attending remotely and on-site. Bynum, Commissioner At-Large First District; Burroughs, Commissioner At-Large Second District; McKiernan, Commissioner Second District; Ramirez, Commissioner Third District; Johnson, Commissioner Fourth District; Kane, Commissioner Fifth District; Markley, Commissioner Sixth District; Davis, Commissioner Seventh District; Stites, Commissioner Eighth District; and Garner, Mayor/CEO presiding. Townsend, Commissioner First District; was absent. The following officials were also in attendance: Cheryl Harrison-Lee, Interim County Administrator; Emerick Cross, Melissa Sieben, Bridgette Cobbins, and Alan Howze, Assistant County Administrator's; Brett Deichler, Unified Government Clerk; Misty Brown, Chief Counsel; Jeff Fisher, Executive Director of Public Works; Kathleen VonAchen, Chief Financial Officer; Debbie Jonscher, Deputy Chief Financial Officer; Reginald Lindsey, Budget Manager; LaVert Murray, Economic Development Advisor in Mayor's Office; Dr. Mildred Edwards, Chief of Staff in Mayor's Office; and John Kelly, Director of Buildings & Logistics.

MAYOR GARNER said before I call the meeting to order, I want to announce that due to COVID-19, we have some commissioners, staff, and public that are attending remotely via Zoom, 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 that 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 in his current guidance from the Kansas Attorney General.

MAYOR GARNER called the meeting to order.

MAYOR GARNER said I would ask the Clerk to announce the meeting and call the roll.

ROLL CALL: Bynum, Burroughs, McKiernan, Ramirez, Johnson, Kane, Markley, Stites, Davis, Garner.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL SESSION of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, to be conducted in a hybrid format on Thursday, March 24, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. for a Budget Strategy Session and a presentation regarding a Sales Tax Initiative to be conducted in the fifth floor conference of the Municipal Office Building.

Due to COVID-19, the public will be able to observe or listen to the meeting live on YouTube or UGTV, or through Zoom. The public may also view the special session from the lobby of the Municipal Office Building.

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.

Invocation was given by Commissioner Harold Johnson, Faith Deliverance Church.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Garner said I would like to thank the public, anybody that's viewing; that's really showing interest. We're excited. This meeting is being recorded and in full transparency. That's one of the things that this Commission and your Administration is committed to is making sure that the public is aware of where we stand on the issues, most important to the people in this community. So, transparency and open communication is key to that. Tonight is informational for this Commission. Public comments will not be taken at this time, but I would encourage the public to take note that on March 31st, the general commission meeting coming up, there will be an opportunity for you to make public comments, three minutes, on any issues of Unified Government concern, so I encourage you to take that opportunity.

Tonight we will engage in a discussion that will play a critical role in the development of our upcoming budget with the Unified Government. The Unified Government of Wyandotte

County is in a moment of key transition as well as some change. The newly elected Mayor and Commission members as well as an Interim County Administrator embrace the opportunity to assess the current challenges facing the Unified Government and to define the strategies to create more progressive opportunities related to those challenges.

This session is to provide a forum to discuss the desired goals of your elected body in concert with your Administration as well as the concerns that the Mayor and the Commission may have for our unified community of Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas. Prior to the actual session, our strategy session, I'm going to have our CFO, Ms. VonAchen, briefly talk about our budgetary status of the Unified Government as well as some budgetary considerations, opportunities, that the Commission is going to have to take into debate coming forward as well as a presentation on a sales tax recommendation that will at some point be brought forward for our Commission for review, debate, and vote.

Kathleen VonAchen, Chief Financial Officer, said I'm going to pass it on to our Budget Manager Reginald Lindsey who will be presenting the Fourth Quarter Budget versus actual report to start off.

Reginald Lindsey, Budget Manager, said Debbie Jonscher, Deputy CFO, and I are going to talk about the 2021 Fourth Quarter Budget to Actuals. Debbie is going to start off with the revenue and I'm going to pick up with the expenditures.

Debbie Jonscher, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, said you all just received the Fourth Quarter Budget to Actual Report and I'll just briefly explain what that is for those that have not seen this report before. This is a report on our quarterly financials. We present this report to the Economic Development & Finance Committee on a quarterly basis, so this is the yearend Fourth Quarter 2021 Budget to Actuals. Included in the report, we have some narrative, but we've also got a summary of the Consolidated General Fund which includes three funds; the City General Fund, the County General Fund, and the Parks & Recreation General Fund. We've got several tables in there. I'll talk briefly about those, but we present the consolidated information and then we go into a little bit of detail on the City, County and Parks Funds and then on the final page of the report, it lists out all the funds first at the top half of the page is the Tax Levy Funds and then all the other funds which include Enterprise and Special Revenue Funds. For the back page; it simply shows the 2021 Amended and Actuals for Revenues are in blue and then the Expenditures Budget and Actual are in the orange column.

I'll just start out and talk briefly, on the second page of the report it shows the Consolidated General Fund and you'll see that the first table at the bottom of the page shows revenues as a percentage of budget and you'll see that we ended the year at 103%. That's the Fourth Quarter year-to-date. It shows revenues, expenditures, and then the fund balance from the start of the year to year-to-date.

On the next page it shows the City General Fund and I will just note there are a couple of tables there. The first one at the top of the page shows the 2021 Amended along with Fourth Quarter Actuals, so this is for the entire year and you see the breakdown of all the different types of revenues. Property Tax and Sales Tax were both at or over 100% and then we've got all the other funds listed there with what the budgeted amount was and what the year-to-date total was, so you can see for all revenues we ended the year at 98.2% collective of budget.

The next table just shows a comparison of Fourth Quarter Actuals for 2021 with Fourth Quarter Actuals for 2020 and it breaks down the same information just comparing the fourth quarter only. We have that same information for the County General Fund as well as the Parks. I didn't know if we wanted to get into the details. This will be presented to the ED&F Committee on April 4th, but that's the information that's contained in the report and then I can let Reggie talk about what information is included for the expenditures.

Mr. Lindsey said on page 3 we have view of the City General Fund Expenditures. We've got two views there that are very similar with what Debbie covered with revenues. The top right-hand of the page we have—can you hear me now? On the top left-hand of the page we have expenditure comparisons for the 2021 Amended Budget versus Actuals. At the bottom left of the page, we have year-over-year comparison where we're comparing 2020 to 2021 and then within those tables we're comparing six expenditure categories which includes our Personnel services, supplies, grants, and miscellaneous transfers out and as you can see with total there, drilling down into it, we spent $157M in 2021 if you're looking at the top chart. Then, we had $159M budget, so we had like around $2M left in expenditures which equates to about 1% and just kind of drilling down into those Personnel categories. Personnel is salaries, pensions, benefits and overtime and then

Services equate to transit, which is a city function that we pay out to KCATA and then also to trash contract, which is a city function. We also have a vast amount of software and legal expenses that are paid from there and that's something that goes on both the city and county side, and then we have supplies, which includes like utility and fuel and vehicle parts and then as we go down into the bottom right chart, this is where we're comparing 2020 verses 2021 Actuals and we can see we spent $17M more dollars in 2021 than we spent in 2020. Any questions on that?

What I'll do now is jump over to the County General Fund and that is on page four and again we got two views. The upper left-hand chart is looking at a budget year comparison for 2021 for the fourth quarter and the key thing we want to look at is we just want to make sure that we're on 100% for our budget comparison. As you see, the percentage is over in the chart and, again, we're comparing six expenditure categories and our Personnel as we drill down and that is made up of salaries, pensions, overtime, and benefits. Then, again, we have Services and on the county side of Services, we pay out some of our largest expenses for inmate medical and inmate farmout.

Then, as we look at the total, we spent $68M in the County General Fund. We had a $72M budget which leaves over $4.3M and we have like 6% of that budget left. Then, as we look down in the lower right-hand corner at that table, the theme here is we're looking at the 2020 verses 2021 Actuals and we can see we only spent like 1% more so we had like $840K more than we spent in 2021 and 2020. Any questions on the information on the County General Fund?

Then over on page eight in the report, Debbie kind of talked about the table that shows we have a view of our 29 different funds and the top section includes all our Tax Levy Funds and these are funds—there's 10 funds that have a mill levy associated with them and then the bottom 19 funds are Special Revenue Funds or Enterprise Funds. Looking at revenues on the left-hand side of the page, it's a good thing if we're around 100% or over 100% and you can see most of the funds there are around or over 100%. Then Expenditure wise, it's a good thing when we're under 100% and you see, most of the funds are either at 100% or below 100%. Looking at Expenditures, looking at all the funds, we see we spent $369M and that number is on the right-hand side of the page in the orange boxes with expenditures, so we ended up having like $20M left in what we budgeted which is like 5% of the budget. Any questions over any of that information?

Commissioner Bynum said looking at Budget to Actual, it looks to me like our projections came very, very close to being correct and accurate. Is that a fair statement? **Mr. Lindsey** said yeah, I think that's fair for the whole finance team on revenue side and expenditure side, we did come in very close.

Commissioner Davis said yeah, thank you for going through this as our finance team. I know this is all kind of short notice, from what I understand. Where does our ARPA money and kind of some of that one-time money that won't be here, you know, in a few years, where does that show up in this budget, particularly on the revenue side? **Mr. Lindsey** asked, Kathleen or Debbie, do you want to answer that?

Ms. VonAchen said the ARPA revenue that was allocated to us from the federal government is a grant and it's in a Grant Fund and the state does not require us to certify budgets for Grant Funds, so the Grant Funds are not included here, that's why. The amount that was calculated as revenue replacement, that is included and it's included throughout all of the funds, depending on how much revenue they lost during 2020 and 2021, so it's spread out across all these funds.

Commissioner Davis said so then, if I may, Mayor, it may be fair to say that the numbers that we're looking at right now, when it says over 100% collected, that could be also right—a part of that percentage could be ARPA funding that is there from revenue replacement, that would not normally be there if that money was not there. Is that fair? **Ms. VonAchen** said yes, that's correct. **Commissioner Davis** said okay, thank you.

Mayor Garner said, Ms. VonAchen, I would like for you to please get a copy just in relation to Commissioner Davis request, what those ARPA funds, those expenditures look like, how they played into this overall budget, and just make—if you can update this presentation that you've given our commissioners in a way that better reflects that, that breakdown, when you say that ARPA funds are pretty much throughout, what we're looking at. It would be good if we had kind of an idea of what that looked like and how that played into the overall budget. **Ms. VonAchen** said yeah, I've presented that in the past and I'm happy to present it again.

Mayor Garner said as of the end of fourth quarter, what is our—what's our balance sheet look like? Do we have a budget surplus, what does that look like? How much does the Unified Government have in its bank today as far as cash on hand? **Ms. VonAchen** said if you go to page one of the report, that is the Consolidated General Fund table. Debbie mentioned earlier that the Consolidated General Fund, sometimes we call it Combined General Fund, it's the addition of three General Funds, one is the City General Fund, one is the County General Fund, and then there's what we call Consolidated City/County Parks General Fund and the combination of those three is the Combined General Fund. General Funds, you know, from an accounting standpoint, all the revenues that go into the General Fund are not restricted, and so they can be spent as the Board of Commissioners decide. Any other revenues that have restrictions are in those Special Revenue Funds so if you, you know, if you go to the very last page, you'll see all kinds of funds here, most of those have restrictions. The only one that isn't restricted is the City, the County and the Consolidated Parks General Fund. Those don't have statutory restrictions just so you know.

We were talking about where we are with the General Fund, oh, do you have any more questions about that? Okay.

If you go to the table on the first page, it has kind of a blue banner on it there, you can see a navy blue; that's the Combined General Fund and it shows what the budget was in 2020 and then how much was spent and that just provides some context. Then over to the columns, farther to the right, are the 2021 figures for how much was budgeted and it's very summary nature, so it has all the revenues and then expenditures and then it kind of has a net of transfers in and out, kind of nets them together.

The revenues for the Consolidated City General Fund, we're budgeted at $246M and what actually came in was $245M, so we were just short about half a percent from what the budget was expected. Then on the Expenditure side, we budgeted $235M and we received or we spent, sorry, $225M or $226M, and so we basically spent about 4% of the budget or 4% less than we budgeted. Now, I do want to just point out one thing, is that—and not to confuse everyone, but the bond documents require that we have a $10M debt reserve. They're in the bond documents that's called the Annual Appropriation clause. It's a little confusing and we never have to use that $10M reserve because all of the economic development projects are generating enough revenue to pay for their own debt service so as a result, we take out that $10M in the budget column in order to make it more easy for you all. So, just so you know, if you were going to match it up with the budget document, it's about $10M less than what you see in the budget document.

Commissioner Stites said you said that it was 246 budgeted, actual came in was to 245 which results in half a percent or equivalent to about $1M, but when I dropped down to bullet point number two, that includes $21M of ARPA money. Is that correct? **Ms. VonAchen** said both numbers include ARPA money. **Commissioner Stites** said both numbers. **Ms. VonAchen** said yeah, both the budget and the allocation. **Commissioner Stites** said we budgeted ARPA dollars at that amount. **Ms. VonAchen** said yes and they all came in as we budgeted for the most part.

Ms. VonAchen said so dropping down to the row that's called Net Change, that changes the difference between the revenues and the expenditures, so revenues come in and then you spend them going out and so, one is a positive, one is a negative because it goes out and the difference between the two is what net change is. We budgeted that we were going to bring in $10M more in revenue than we were going to spend. You can see that column there, $10.4M and that is because, frankly, that is because of ARPA. ARPA Revenue Replacement, because the Commission decided to hold off on deciding how to spend the ARPA Revenue Replacement until there was more time to discuss that as part of this upcoming budget. But instead, over in the Actuals column, you can see that the difference between revenues and expenditures was $15.7M so that was roughly about $5M more than we expected and that extra money goes into the fund balance. So, what does that mean? It's sort of like your ending checking account, at the end of the month, that's what fund balance is. So, as you can see, we started the year with $31M in fund balance and we're ending—we expected to end the year with $41M, but because of the underspending, we ended the year with $46M in fund balance in the City, County and Parks General Fund, just those three funds.

The reason we only show the fund balance amounts for just the General Fund in this report is because we don't—it’s too much information to provide all the information for all the other funds. So this is the fund that we often really focus on, and so that's why it's just this one here.

I did want to point out just one more thing, I'm sorry, given the $46M that—this is cash, by the way, it's cash basis called Budgetary Basis from an accounting standpoint, it is not modified accrual. Modified Accrual Basis accounting will be completed in May or June, when we present the CAFR or the Annual Financial Report to you, these are just cash budgetary basis numbers. All of you are used to talking about the fund balance as a percentage of expenditures, and if I adjust this number for modified accrual, it equates to 27% of total expenditures, whereas our targets around 16 or 17% because we're trying to target two-thirds or, I'm sorry, two months of operating expenditures.

Now, you understand, this is sort of a one-time blip or increase in the percentage because we brought in all that ARPA Revenue Replacement, and so, you know, those funds will be under your purview to allocate as part of the 2023 or 2022 and ‘23 budgets, so in the coming months you'll be deciding how to spend those one-time funds and then the fund balance percentage will go down.

Commissioner Johnson said you had asked for the balance sheet for this period of time and even what has been explained to us, is only a small part of the balance—our overall balance sheet. So, is it that you want to see how much cash, or do you want to see the entire balance sheet, the current assets, current liabilities, current long-term liabilities? I'm talking about just from a general gap standing and then our net worth. Are you wanting the full balance sheet, or just the cash portion?

Mayor Garner said I'd like to be provided to the Commission, the full balance sheet. I would like to know where are we at exactly with everything. If you're going to talk budgets, I think it's appropriate that you give this Commission all the information so as we move forward through the budget cycle, they can make informed decisions, including the ARPA funds, what that looks like and the appropriate breakdowns so it provides more clarity on this budget.

Help me out and walk me through this, I know that the Commission last year approved a $420M budget or close to it. How does that play into the conversation we're having now when you're talking about the Consolidated General Fund balance and in the budget. I don't see $420M reflected here, but maybe I'm overlooking something and you can just walk me through that.

Ms. VonAchen said yeah. If you go to the last page, the last page is a listing of all the 29 funds and, at the very bottom you'll see $393M, which is the total budget and that does not include, again, the $10M Annual Debt Appropriation clause, so if you add in another $10M, you'll get to over the $400M that you're referring to. All of these funds are restricted, except for the City, County and Parks Consolidated General Funds.

Mayor Garner said that was for 420 right, am I off on that number that was approved in last year's budget? **Commissioner Bynum** said two different budget years. The budget we adopted last summer is the budget year we're in right now and we're looking here at ‘21. That's why I think those numbers are different. **Ms. VonAchen** said yeah, that could be too. **Someone** was inaudible. **Ms. VonAchen** said yeah oh yeah, yeah but this is the whole budget right here.

I did want to follow up on Commissioner Johnson's comment about the balance sheet. The balance sheet is a statement that reflects all the assets of an entity less all the liabilities of the entity and then the difference between the assets and the liabilities is the fund balance. So, then there's the income statement, which is the one you all look at, that's what this is and it matches revenues, minus expenditures, with fund balance and those two fund balances are the same. So the balance sheet is something that's done on a modified accrual basis, not on a cash basis, and so that is being prepared as part of the external audit that we're currently doing and won't be available for another few months.

Commissioner Johnson asked, don’t you all produce—if you produce quarterly income statements, you can't produce a quarterly balance sheet? **Ms. VonAchen** said our current financial system does not allow us to prepare balance sheets in the middle of the year, but with the new financial system that we're currently putting in place, we will be able to produce those and we're very excited about that.

Commissioner Stites said what you guys were saying, clarifying that we're at the $403M, so it sounded like $403M included the $10M. The previous year was 2020, right, and that was at $420M and that included the $10M also so—**Ms. VonAchen** said no. I think they're saying that the current fiscal year we’re in right now, which is 2022, may have been for $420M, I don't know offhand. **Someone** was inaudible. **Commissioner Stites** asked, so was there one year a budget that was reduced in approval, overall budget number? **Ms. VonAchen** said no, so are you talking about that the Annual Debt Appropriation clause? **Commissioner Stites** said no.

Commissioner Bynum said I'm sorry, I believe that Commissioner Stites is saying the Mayor referenced a budget that we passed that was $420M and we passed that budget last summer. You are absolutely correct, but these numbers do not reflect that at all in any way, because we are looking at the 2021 Budget numbers here and that number, the $420M is for the 2022 Budget, the year that we're currently in. Does that make sense?

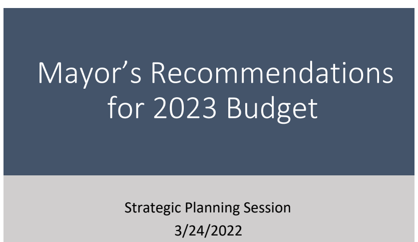
Commissioner Markley said I appreciate this information and I also appreciate the balance sheets when we get to them, but to be honest, we were told we didn't need to worry about pre-reviewing any budget documents. That we were not going to have that level of discussion today, that we were having a visioning session. So, I'm here to have a visioning session. This is great information. I'm sure we would have gotten it eventually but this is a lot for us to take in while we're sitting here, and while the folks that are here for the visioning session are sitting in the audience so, again I'm just—it's great information, but that's not what we were told we were doing here today. And if we were going to do this today, we should have had this information in advance so that we could review it so we could kind of figure out these numbers.

Mayor Garner said this is just precursor and trying to answer some questions as well, so as we move through the budget cycle, the whole point is to get as much detailed information based on the questions today, so we can be better prepared to have those conversations.

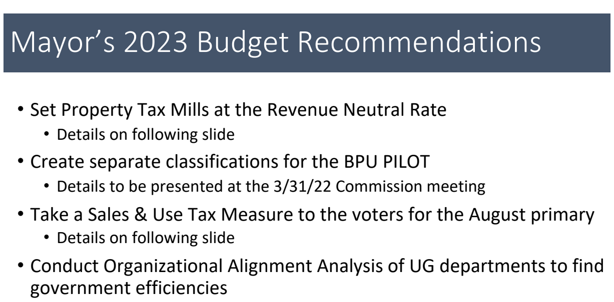
Commissioner McKiernan said, Kathleen, this report was going to be presented as a function of the April 4th Economic Development Standing Committee meeting, so we're getting it 10 days earlier than we would otherwise have gotten it. **Ms. VonAchen** said that's correct, yeah. It was going to be available tomorrow when it gets published. **Commissioner McKiernan** said correct, but we were going to actually go through it in the manner that we did here tonight at the April 4th Economic Development & Finance Standing Committee. For the benefit of those people who aren't on that committee, which I know is half of us, the way our committee structure is, and that may be something strategically we want to think about in the future is the structure of those committees. But Kathleen and her staff bring a report very much like this. The only thing that changes really is the numbers every quarter, so we get a quarterly report first, second, third and final. Those of us, you know, who've been on the committee for a while just generally turn to the back because it is a beautiful summary of how we're doing up or down and they color code income, if we’re green, if we're over budget, and expense green if we're under budget, so they even color code for us, so I do appreciate the fact that they bring these materials to us on a routine basis for our consideration. **Ms. VonAchen** said it's also on the Finance Department website, along with our investment reports, we tried to be very transparent.

Commissioner Johnson said my colleague, Commissioner McKiernan, kneew exactly where I was going with this so I yield the floor.

Mayor Garner said the next part of the presentation, Ms. VonAchen.



Ms. VonAchen said I've been asked to put together the Mayor's recommendations for the 2023 Budget and there's a variety of items that he would like to share with all of you. We want to just talk about those briefly. We have been working with Cheryl—or the Interim County Administrator and I have been working with the Mayor's office on developing these items.



The first bullet that—most importantly, is that the proposal is to set the property tax mills at the revenue neutral rate which means we would not hold a hearing to exceed it and I have provided amongst all of you several weeks ago details of how that impacts various funds that are Tax Levy Funds, but I also have a slide that summarizes that so we'll get to that in a minute.

The second item is an idea to create separate classifications for the BPU PILOT, which is for water and for electric utility. The PILOT which is a Payment In Lieu Of Taxes is determined based on the gross revenues that BPU generates for their respective utilities and right now, the percentage, as you all know, is 11.9% of the gross revenues and so the thought is that if we were to create separate classifications where one classification would be residential and the other would be non-residential or commercial and industrial, then there would be more flexibility with the Board of Commissioners for all of you to decide how much of a percentage of the gross revenues you would like to charge for the franchise tax, so this is actually a franchise tax. We should talk about it as if it's a franchise tax. Just determine whether you want to differentiate the rate in which you charge for those two respective classifications. We are going to be providing a lot more detail on that, or this idea, at the next Commission meeting on March 31st, so next Thursday.

The third item is to take a Sales and Use Tax Measure to the voters for the August primary and I do have more details on that for sure on this slide or the following slide, so give me a chance to go through that and then we can answer questions about that in a moment. Then, the next is an area that our Interim County Administrator is leading the effort which is to conduct organizational and alignment analysis of UG Departments to find government efficiencies. So, this is the piece where we're going to identify what expenditures or service levels that we're providing throughout the UG in order to match—cuts in our current budget to match the drop in revenues that are proposed in the first two items.

These are really the biggest recommendations that will impact our budget discussions in the coming months, and so let me take you through a little bit more of the details, and then we can come back to the slide if you have any comments.

Revenue Neutral Rate Calculation

UG TAX LEVY FUND	2022 Budget Property Taxes Levied	2022 Budget Mill Rate	2023 Estimated Property Tax Levied @ 12% est. AV+	2023 "Revenue-Neutral" Mill Rate	Levied Revenue Reduction at "Revenue-Neutral"	Mill Reduction at "Revenue-Neutral" Rate
County General Fund	$47,230,114	31.4488	$53,036,798	28.0057	($5,806,684)	(3.4431)
Elections	1,322,729	0.8808	1,485,351	0.7843	($162,622)	(0.0964)
Parks General Fund	2,106,625	1.4027	2,365,624	1.2491	($258,998)	(0.1536)
Aging	1,555,615	1.0358	1,746,869	0.9224	($191,254)	(0.1134)
Mental Health	643,860	0.4287	723,019	0.3818	($79,159)	(0.0469)
Health Department	2,362,526	1.5731	2,652,986	1.4009	($290,460)	(0.1722)
Developmental Disabilities	521,906	0.3475	586,071	0.3095	($64,165)	(0.0380)
County Bond & Interest	3,334,982	2.2206	3,745,000	1.9775	($410,018)	(0.2431)
Subtotal – Wyandotte County	$59,078,357	39.3381	$66,341,718	35.0312	($7,263,361)	(4.3069)
City General Fund	28,489,680	21.4340	32,031,818	19.0638	(3,542,138)	(2.3702)
City Bond & Interest	22,660,057	17.0482	25,477,395	15.1629	(2,817,338)	(1.8852)
Subtotal – City of Kansas City, KS	$51,149,736	38.4822	$57,509,213	34.2268	($6,359,476)	(4.2554)
Grand Total – Unified Govt	$110,228,094	77,8203	$123,850,931	69.2580	($13,622,837)	(8.5623)

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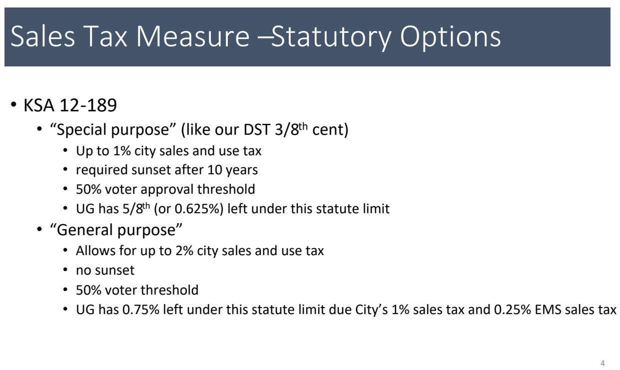
The Revenue Neutral Rate Calculation, this is a slide that shows how it's determined, how much of a reduction in the mill would result in order to collect the same amount of property tax revenue that we collected in this current fiscal year. So, of course, we're talking about next year's budget, so this year's current property tax levy is that first column and it totals $110M and those are the mill rates that we currently have in place, 2022. Given the fact that Matt Willard, our County Appraiser, has provided some preliminary estimates and through our review we've determined that the assessed value—so, the assessed value for the County is increasing by 12% for the next budget year and so that's going to result in quite a bit more revenue to us.

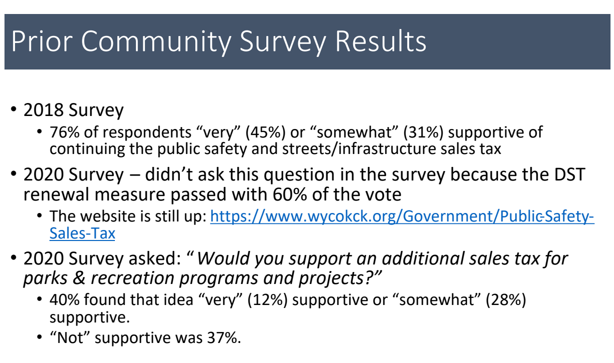
In fact, you can see at the bottom, that we're anticipating it will be $123.8M instead of what we're anticipating collecting today, which is $110M. So, that's a difference of roughly $13M, and so, if we were to collect the same amount that we're currently collecting today, then we would have to reduce all these mills by a certain amount, which is what that fourth column is. Those are all the reduced mills for each of the levy funds and you see there's quite a few funds that are dependent on this property tax. There's the County General Fund, Elections, Parks, Aging, Mental Health, Health Department, Developmental Disabilities, and then the two Debt Service Funds.

That fifth column is the amount of revenue reduction in order to stay at the same level as what we're currently collecting and then the last column is just the number of mills. So the result is that we would not collect roughly $13.6M, that we would have if we'd not changed the mills, and the mill reduction would be about 8.5 across all these levy funds.

Commissioner McKiernan said these are important discussions, these are discussions that need to be had, but what we're looking at here is a strategy level discussion and I'm going to piggyback on what Commissioner Markley had said earlier, I thought that our purpose here tonight was to set a vision, to set the strategic vision for where we're going, that then informs our strategy discussions and we ask ourselves how do these tools help us achieve our strategic vision. So I feel, in some ways, as if while this is very important information, we've gotten the cart ahead of the horse here because we haven't talked about our vision for what we want to accomplish in, for, and by our community, which then informs how we execute these strategies.



Ms. VonAchen said I just wanted to briefly go over the next four or five slides to talk a little bit about the Sales Tax Measure. As you all probably know, there are two options available to us. There's a Special Purpose Sales Tax which has a sunset of 10 years and then a General Purpose which can go indefinitely, so those are, you know, two sets of options and each of those options have a certain amount of room for increasing the sales tax.



What we're considering or what we're recommending is…

Sales Tax Measure – Mayor's Recommendation

- "*Temporary ½ Penny*" for *Safety & Quality of Life – Name of Measure TBD*
  - 0.5% cent for 10 years (2023-2032)
- Generates estimated $196 million in Sales and Use tax revenue
  - an average of $19.6 M p/yr with $17 million beginning in 2023
- Bond Issue (GO-backed but use sales taxes to pay debt service)
  - Get most of the funds up front to start the projects quickly
  - Do one bond issue in 2023 OR a series of bond measures in 2023 -2025
  - Use temp notes and pay for some with cash at the beginning before debt service starts
  - Interest costs $16 M or averages $1.6 million p/yr
- Draft Pro Forma Model developed
- Requested departments for project recommendations focusing on facilities, with some road improvements and equipment

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I'll go real quickly here, is a temporary half penny, which is a Special Dedicated Sales Tax of half a cent for 10 years and the purpose of this is to generate roughly $196M, that's an estimate, of course, in sales tax in order to pay for a variety of facility and some road improvement projects.

Sales Tax Measure – Timeline

- Special Election on August 2, 2022 (for the primaries)
  - May 9 – ED&F Committee ordinance approval (must specify purpose of proposed sales tax)
  - May 26th - UG Commission ordinance approval
  - June 1st – Deadline to give ballot language to Election Commissioner
  - June 17th – Give the Echo the Notice of the Election (one week prior); Notice must be signed by Election Commissioner
  - June 23rd – First Echo publication
  - June 30th – Second Echo publication
  - August 2nd – Election Day
  - August 11th – if measure passes, UG approves ordinance levying the tax
  - September 9th – deadline to submit ordinance to State
  - January 1, 2023 – State begins collection of new sales tax

7

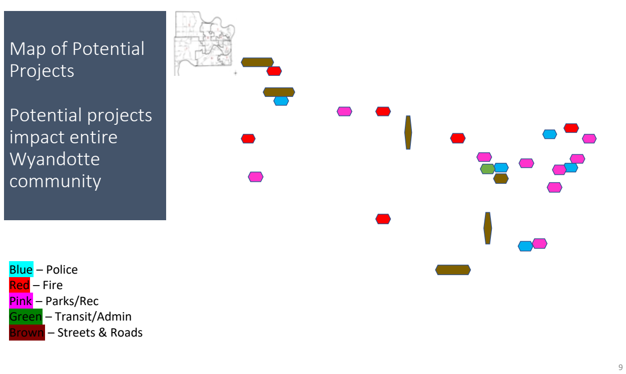
I'm not going to really go over this in detail, but I did want to give you..

Example of Projects Being Considered

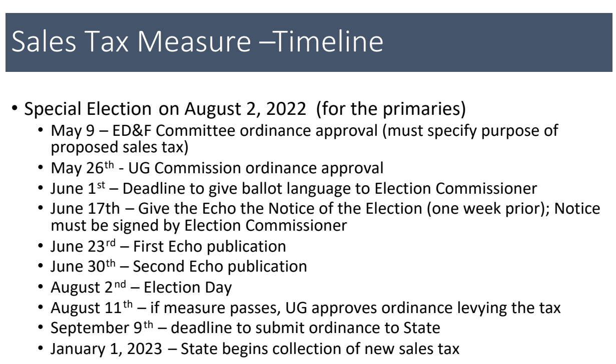
- Fire Station Reconstructions
- Fire & Police (joint) Training Facility
- Police Patrol Stations (new) and existing facility improvements
- Police equipment and technology enhancements
- Parks and Recreation spray parks, new recreation center, and recreation facility improvements
- New Transit & UG services building in mid-town
- Street & Road reconstructions projects throughout KCK

8

I'm going to quickly show you, these are some of the examples of projects that are being considered. For example, reconstruction of fire stations across the Kansas City, Kansas Fire and Police joint Training Center, fire patrol stations, I'm sorry, police patrol stations, fire equipment and technology enhancements, Parks and Recreation spray parks, recreation center and a recreation facility, a new Transit Center as well as essential UG services building in midtown and then a variety of street and road reconstruction projects.



The key point is up here, I want to go this way, the key point is that these projects would cover up across the entire Kansas City, Kansas area.



Of course, we're going to bring this forward, as I mentioned to you at a future date for you all to consider more in-depth, but this is very preliminary what we're presenting. But if we were to go with this sales tax measure for the August primary, we would need—we talked with the Election Commissioner, and we would need to introduce the idea at the ED&F Committee on May 9th, so we only have about a month and a half or so to really get going on this, and that's the sales tax measure details that I wanted to provide.

Commissioner Stites said I was just looking at that 7, it kind of stands out there all by itself like there's nothing for District 7. I don't see anything in Edwardsville. **Ms. VonAchen** said this is a Kansas City, Kansas sales tax. I mean that's what we're thinking, contemplating, is a Kansas City, Kansas sales tax. **Commissioner Stites** asked is that a (inaudible) number that's above the 7, that's not in Kansas City, Kansas. **Ms. VonAchen** said yeah I know, so that is in the county and actually our legal counsel is kind of looking at that to see whether we can spend money in the county with the city sales tax, so that is a question that we're still exploring, so this is all very preliminary. **Commissioner Stites** said okay, thank you.

Commissioner Kane asked, could you go back to the very first slide please. The one where it says that—wasn't there one saying this is what the Mayor wanted. Mayor's recommendation or something like that, the Mayor's budget.

This will be my 18th budget and I've never ever seen anything like that, anything close to that, because I thought we were, as a Commission, supposed to sit here tonight and talk about what's personal to you and you and you and you and you and you and you and you and me and not have the Mayor tell us on the very first meeting that we have what he wants because we didn't get to say what we want. You know, our conversation last year was, and you remember this, I said, we need to tell the staff to lower the mill at least one mill and all of us remember that were on the Commission at the time.

I want to be able to throw my thoughts in on what's important to me and, Mayor, I'm frustrated. I'm frustrated because this isn't what I want. I want all of us to take a piece of the pie and spread that money out in our districts where we think is most necessary, but when it comes in like that, that doesn't work for me, it'll never work for me. I've already talked to people about the sales tax and stuff like that, and some of the conversations that have been going around town, you've given this presentation to people, but you didn't give us the opportunity to share our opinion. I represent District 5 and I'm going to represent District 5 until I'm completely done running and they say they don't want me, and this does not represent District 5 and I hope some of you fellow commissioners agree with me. This isn't what we need. I don't like it and I better shut up before I say something stupid.

Commissioner Ramirez said I will have to agree with Commissioner Kane. These proposals are, in my mind, aggressive and fast. If we put a sales tax initiative on the August ballot, it won't pass because on the last Community Survey, we asked a question about a sales tax for Parks and Rec and we got an overwhelming no. I agree that it's something that we can look into, but I think we need to have that education piece for the community. Go out and talk to the community about it, get their input, get their thoughts, because if we just put it on the ballot, it's not going to pass.

We're still going through the effects of the pandemic, there are dire situations going on right now across the world, a war that was unsanctioned; we don't know how that's going to turn out. We need to be mindful of that.

Now, can you go to the mill slide please. That 8.5 across all the funds, that is crazy. What my question—automatically, what gets cut, what services are we going to lose. I think from our last budget cycle, we, as a Commission, we had a strong conversation are—three—remember two most important things that we have right now on our plate, reinforcement of our workforce and maintenance of our infrastructure. Those were the two big things that we were talking about last year and I figured that would be the two things we would talk about this year as well because if we can have all the services, initiatives and programs we want, but we need the people to run them and be out in the community and provide those services.

We have a lot of staff, we have a lot of turnover, especially in certain departments, we need to stabilize that. We have a lot of infrastructure problems where, as our Public Works Director has said, we are in a infrastructure crisis, we have a lot of problems we need to fix. We can have all the different buildings, we can have everything we have, but if we don't have roads for the people, no one's going to come and no business is going to want to come to Wyandotte County.

I don't have a problem with being bold in what we do, but it needs to be strategically bold and I would, as Commissioner Kane said, the reason last budget cycle, I didn't support a one mill reduction because it came to us at the very end, literally a week or two before we had to finalize the final vote, that's why I had voted no.

I want us to be where we are now, have the conversation of a one mill reduction, and look into a possibility of a sales tax, not put it on the ballot this year, but look into and have the conversation as a Commission and as a community.

Commissioner Davis said, I just want to say, Mayor, this is a waste of our time. It is a waste of our time. There was opportunity throughout the entire week to communicate with all of us, including Commissioner Townsend who was unable to be here on what was going to be presented today and it was very difficult. The plans, the arrangements, the details, we weren't even going to be here. There wasn't even going to be a virtual component, which is pretty unprecedented, considering we have been doing remote and then hybrid options. If we are going to work together, we need to come to the table willing to compromise and Mayor, if you want to be successful, I need you to come to the table willing to compromise, willing to answer your phone, willing to answer emails, and willing to work with us. If not, this will not happen. I will tell you right now, given the lack of information and data, I can't even entertain this on the Economic Development & Finance Committee because it is just not where we need to be and we need far more information.

Ms. Harrison-Lee, you have experience, considerable experience, can you speak to, in your experience, what has been a proper standard budget process. Can you advise us, can you advise the Mayor, from your experience, how things have been done?

Cheryl Harrison-Lee, Interim County Administrator, said budget processes vary in different communities depending upon the budget platform that you use and oftentimes what you will see. There are some jurisdictions that have in their ordinance that they will start with the Strategic Planning Session which provides some feedback from the Commission to the staff some of the things they would like to see considered from that Strategic Planning Session. Staff then begins to start to develop a framework for the budget. There will be public engagement sessions, depending on the community. You might see various town hall meetings, so it varies a little bit from community to community in terms of how it ultimately ends up. I would say the constant is strategic planning, community engagement, feedback from the commissioners, and then staff development of the budget and budget public hearings.

Commissioner Davis said so it's fair to say, our own Interim County Administrator, given her experience, given what we all voted for, that expertise we are currently not following. Mayor, you appointed Ms. Harrison-Lee, we approved, that's her experience, we're not following. I yield.

Commissioner Kane said could you put the 8.5 mill reduction up there again, please? Okay, I've been here, I think, this is my eighteenth budget, we haven't reduced it that much in 18 years and I don't know how we went from last year barely making it by where this year we come in and say well hell, we can do an 8.5 and that isn't even counting the PILOT. Another comment that was made, that we're not going to fill the jobs. Public Works is shorthanded, right, Mr. Fisher? All these departments are shorthanded and Public Works—I mean Public Safety, we need all of them, but Public Works—I don't want to put the burden on our employees. And one of the things that I told upstairs that I want to be a better employer for our employees and we have not done a good job of that at all. The morale is the lowest it's ever been since I've been here, and when I see that 8.5 and we haven't even talked about the PILOT, what are we going to tell our employees that we barely give a raise and those other employees, the Fire Dispatch which is down to next to nothing, and say—and I want to lower the mill levy, Mayor, but I don't want to strap us for the next Commission. You know this is a big deal. Tom Cooley was here and Tom Cooley said, do not take points off the board and by God, the next year, we took them off there and we had to put two more back on.

We couldn't remotely consider this, let alone the PILOT, and I don't know where all these numbers come from and I don't know where this vision—but my vision was we share all our thoughts of what we wanted, and Mayor, this is your thoughts, this is my thoughts, and it's kind of like arguing with my wife, I disagree with you 100%. I can't do this and I ain't kidding either. I couldn't—I wouldn't tell anybody—I wouldn't vote on this, no way in hell. I'm embarrassed to be a commissioner right now.

Commissioner McKiernan said you know, one of the things that we have done, Commissioner Markley and myself, the rest of us who were on the Commission at the time, reinstituted the Community Survey. It was clear from the community in the first survey and every survey since then, that the most important thing for us to do is to fix the physical infrastructure of this city; roads, streets, curbs, sidewalks, alleys; fix it and that doesn't even get into sewers, storm and sanitary. And so we have been meeting as committees discussing how we can begin to tackle the enormous, deferred maintenance debt that we have to dig our way out from under on the maintenance of our physical infrastructure and Mr. Fisher and his folks from Public Works have told us that we are chronically underfunded, not overfunded, underfunded. One of his employees told me something yesterday that I just thought was, wow, this was really telling. He mentioned a particular piece of infrastructure that has recently failed and said that's the canary in the coal mine for everything beginning to fail.

So, I just think that we have again gone to strategy before vision. We've gone to strategy before priority, we've gone to strategy before considering the needs of the community and, ultimately, I believe that is a very short-sighted approach, because we don't take into consideration the very real needs of the people who live in this community, and we need to consider improving quality of life inside the community and inside City Hall. That's ultimately why the 11 of us are here.

Commissioner Bynum said I appreciate the information, it's fascinating to look at. It's interesting and it's valuable to have but if we're going to have a retreat around visioning, I think for a later conversation, I'm really going to need us to have a conversation around this concept of revenue neutral because, and I remember bringing this up last year, when this topic first surfaced as part of the business of the legislature requiring us to do this, and if we choose revenue neutral, this is where I'm going to need deep education. Because if we choose a revenue neutral budget, then I do not understand how on earth we ever build our tax base or speak to these infrastructure needs that Commissioner McKiernan brought forward, that are daunting, is not even close to being the correct word. We've looked at the numbers.

Some of us who are chairing these committees, have looked at the preliminary scope of what we've been talking about in these subcommittees now for five, six months, and I will say the other thing that we have said to each other is that it's on us, the elected officials, to bring those enormous needs forward. We cannot make staff bring those needs, we have to do it and we've said that several times. I do not understand how a revenue neutral budget grows the community in any way. So that would definitely be a conversation I would want to have later and I appreciate all of these comments, but I would like to move into the retreat portion of the evening.

Commissioner Ramirez said thank you Commissioner Bynum, that was something that I had led through as I was talking, was the subcommittees that we've been on. You know we—that's the reason why we created them because we, as a Commission, wanted to get down in the weeds and find a way forward, instead of just every year staff coming up to us with the CMIP, what strategies what outcomes can we come up with, and those subcommittees we have come up with outcomes and strategies from each committee. We have created a document, we will be releasing that once we finalize it, but going to what Commissioner Bynum was saying, some of the numbers—the money that we need to increase, it just won't fit the budget. That is, the recommendations that are being proposed. I'll just give one number for one outcome. The primary strategy to increase our Pavement Condition Index For Street Preservation from what we currently do is $7.2M annually by an additional $20 plus million annually by 2025. How are we going to get there if we have an 8.5 mill reduction across all funds. That's just for Street Preservation, that doesn't touch sidewalks our bridges, our stormwater. Like I said, we can be bold, but we have to be strategically bold about it.

Commissioner Stites said I'm on the Infrastructure Committee, subcommittee that Commissioner Bynum chairs and I don't have it in front of me, but one of the things that stuck out in my mind on our last meeting was—it was amazing to me. The bridge failures that are expected, and I can't remember the numbers, Jeff, if somebody wants to chime in and say what the numbers were, but it was $50-$60M guaranteed every five years, five to ten years that we're going to have to spend because the bridges are going to fail. They're not getting better, they're getting worse, they're not getting any better at all. You just think about, I was thinking about it, now I'm all for reducing our taxes also, don't get me wrong. I mean, I'm going to ride that fence, but you know, I also don't want to—I don't want to saddle, or restrict I guess, handcuff us where we cannot get critical infrastructure and other things that need to be done in our community.

The taxes are—I was on the Edwardsville Commission—City Council for six years and I remember, I was preaching reduce the mill levy and we did reduce it five out of my six years that I was there. I remember being told, well, the only way you're ever going to do it is to reduce services and I think that if you think about it in that aspect, which we never did reduce services, but we were able to reduce our city mill levy, which I'm very proud of, and we still got our things done that we needed to get done. I don't want to handcuff us to the point here that we're not able to take care of the needs. If we don't have roads for people to go to work and drive on and we're not taking care of our employees to drive those dump trucks, to drive those police cars, the fire trucks, the dispatchers to get to work, we might as well just hang it up, it's all going to go away.

Commissioner Markley said I just agree with everything everybody's been saying. I don't think that our guiding star should be a revenue neutral rate. That's the state's guiding star, and it was a wrong star for them to settle on because the goal of every county is to not be the same. We should be growing. Our entire goal is to grow our tax base and if we're not going to take advantage of that, then why bother growing our tax base. Our guiding star should be our community survey, the wants and needs of our community, stabilizing our workforce, and stabilizing our infrastructure, and that's the path we should be taking, and I agree with the rest of the comments.

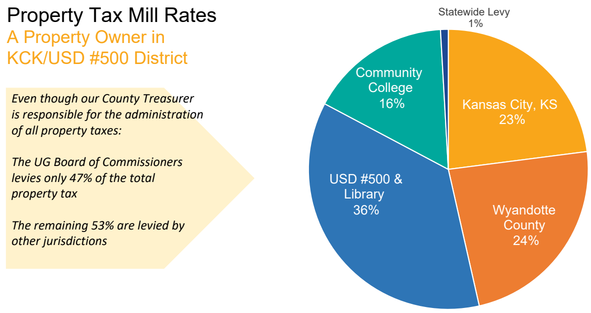
Commissioner Davis said couple things I know of, and I agree with Commission Bynum, so I am going to hurry up. I know that a lot of our residents have received, just about everybody, right; the information, not necessarily a bill, but we're all getting this mail that really says in red it’s not a bill, so you don't owe $150,000, but I do think that it is important and we probably should adopt it as a practice, we need to educate our residents on our actual share of property taxes. We have other taxing jurisdictions that are also responsible and they can cut us off, they can cut our fee, if we say, hey, we're going to lower here, but then school districts or library board or the community college raise it, then for the person receiving that bill, you still end up paying that amount of money. If we're going to have a very serious conversation about reducing the mill levy, we need to engage all of the school districts and the community college, and that is the very minimum that we need to do. In addition, we need to show that dollar graphic every time we have a conversation about the budget and property taxes and say the Unified Government actually while we collect what actually goes on our coffers is less than 50%, it's less than 50% that we actually receive. We need to educate our citizens so that they know we are not fully responsible for that property tax bill, and it is incumbent upon us to include those other taxing jurisdictions in that conversation.

Commissioner Burroughs said I will share with you the reason why you have a revenue neutral rate is because, people, local governments aren't listening to the residents, the property taxes, is the most onerous tax that is out there and that's what the legislature hears and they see and they're not getting the relief at home, so they're coming to the state. This is the message that I would send, that we have a way to address all of this and it's called bold leadership. We all have priorities, I want to see a mill reduction. I've stated that since I've been here.

When I first came aboard I asked just what you stated, Commissioner Davis, in reference to sending a letter to all the other taxing entities, get into the table, and ask them to stay neutral on raising any rates going forward. The former administration said no, they had no idea of what it would take to get them to—how dare we ask somebody else to run their business. That, basically, they just don't come and tell me how to tax, but I will share this with you, there's ways we can do this. We do have a number of unfulfilled positions within our administration, all the way down, and I do appreciate and respect the fact that we want to take care of our employees, we want to be good employers. We just went through wages and increased some wages and we're looking at increasing the minimum wage for our employees. I think that's the prudent thing to do, it gives us a stronger financial footing in which to make decisions moving forward.

As far as infrastructure, I haven't heard one iota yet as to what we're going to get from the federal government in reference to the funds available to address the major infrastructure problems we have here and we're talking about doing it within the budget process, but we have no idea how much money will come in and that doesn't allow us to then look at other needs within the community. We haven't even talked about reserves and so, this meeting Mayor, as I stated, I think some of us are a little confused as to why we're here this evening, but I'm going to continue to advocate for the ratepayers in our community. We have to lower the taxes, we have to get them under control. If we don't, it doesn't matter what we do in this community, we're going to see a mass exodus to our rural communities and they would love nothing more than to have the population growth leave our community, because then they will have a larger population and they will be able to address their concerns. But we can afford a mill levy reduction and I'm going to do my part and partner with those that believe that being fair to the ratepayers and taxpayers of this community should be first and foremost their priority and that's where I stand.

Commissioner Stites said if we could get, and I think it'd be a good way to break it down like which Commissioner Davis was saying, about you know what percentage goes to each entity, and you know what we could use it as $1 bill, just $1, does 33 cents go to this person, does 1.8 cents go to this one, you know let's have it; I don't got it, so you know what, I don't care who they are, I need it.



Ms. VonAchen said there it is right there. It's represented as a pie.

Commissioner Stites said I guess that is what makes it a little bit challenging for me to get my mind around it is because you know we talk about infrastructure needs at the city level, well infrastructure needs at Bonner Springs and Edwardsville are taken care of with their own city dollars, so it makes it tough. I mean the community college 16% , that's a lot of money. I think that's another conversation for another day but, it's hard for me to be able to—I am for tax reduction in my district for sure and I'm in a unique position, that's for sure, but I appreciate the presentation.

Commissioner Johnson said the needs are the needs of our community and what it looks like to me just as a 30,000 foot level, is that we're trying to rob Peter to pay Paul. You reduce—we're talking about reducing mill levies, but we're talking about potential sales tax increase, it's all to deal with the same problems. We have to be very prudent in economies such as we are in right now and while I do know that there is pressure, constant pressure, from our constituency and constant misinformation in terms of whether or not we are the highest paying, tax paying district, or community in the State of Kansas, it's not true, and we have the information that has proven that.

What has already been said, and I'm going to jump onboard, because I think I said it first, is that we have to have a comprehensive strategic conversation of all the taxing entities, this goes back to six years ago. We've been talking about it, but we have never ever one time—there's been some nuance, some suggestion that we have tried to do it in the past and it has failed. We need to try again to have a comprehensive conversation with all of our—because we're all servicing the same people and, so again, to suggest a revenue neutral rate, I didn't like it before; I still don't like it. I think we need to be very strategic and very prudent and then, at the same time, making sure that we, by all means possible, educate our constituency constantly to let them know what we're doing here only represents 46% of—47% of one mill and that's not going to make that big of a difference in the pocket books of our constituents. Now, an 8 mill, maybe, but the kind of damage that I think that would do to us, I'm not willing to jump off that bridge at this particular time.

Commissioner Bynum said I don't know how much more slides we have. I was going to ask, if we're getting ready to move into the next part, could we have 10 minutes. That was the request I was going to make. I need a cookie break. **Mayor Garner** said yes, we will.

Commissioner Ramirez said this is my last thing and it'll be a request and I'm sure from what I've heard, the full Board will more than likely agree with my request. My request to you Mayor and to Ms. Harrison-Lee as to what Commissioner Burroughs is saying, please create a letter, send it to all taxing jurisdictions and invite them to the table. That is the request I ask. It will be good to know who will show at the table and who won't.

I just want, as our previous administration didn't do that, wouldn't do it, so thank you, I ask that request be fulfilled.

Commissioner Burroughs said I just want to state this to my colleagues, that the Senate yesterday passed the 65 and older property tax freeze in the Senate, and I would anticipate it being part of the tax plan to come before the House next week and just want to bring that to your attention, as we start to work through the budget. Just a little bit of good news for those seniors in our community that have cried out for tax relief, it could have an impact on our budget, and we need to know how much that impact is, but that doesn't mean we do a shift.

Commissioner McKiernan said I guess in the old days they called it alchemy, right, turning lead into gold, and that is our eternal challenge here is to turn lead into gold, how to simultaneously increase services and decrease fees and that is an impossibility. So it is our job, and I think I've heard it clearly from everybody who's here tonight, it's our job to find out how we titrate that, how we manage to meet in the middle between lowering the fees, while at the same time providing more varied and greater levels of service. And that's what I thought we were going to come here tonight for, was the opportunity to set our vision, which would then drive those titration discussions.

Mayor Garner said thank you commissioners. In the interest of time, I'll give my statement. A lot that you all put forward, that's the purpose of this strategy. It's designed to have these robust conversations, these debates, that are too frequently over the years, I've never seen happen before. The public needs to know where we stand on the issues. They need to know where you stand as individual representatives throughout your districts, they need to know that we're having the hard conversations about the future of Wyandotte County, so this is intentional, when you talk about a budget strategy which is going to lead into the facilitator. Different doesn't mean deficient when you have these types of conversations. It's just different, but it's the right way forward.

Commissioner Davis, I'm not wasting my time doing the work of the people, and you being here is not a waste of time, and you need to recognize that. When we have these hard conversations, there's no waste of time when you're talking about people's lives and the livelihood of Wyandotte County, the direction that people have told me when I campaigned that they wanted this county to go. I will not—I say that with all—I'm here because I've sat in people's living rooms and watched them cry. I've watched people that are on fixed income say that they cannot take it. I've watched the young lady working two and three jobs just trying to make ends meet. I've watched people lose their houses and cry. I've watched people say that the tax burden here is far too heavy. I've watched developers walk away and say they will not do business here because of taxes, burdensome fees, and our BPU. You cannot continue to do the same things and expect a different result.

I've heard a lot of conversations here today. I'm really passionate about this. I'm Mayor today because I stood behind a commitment I made to this community that I'm going to fight for what this community voted me in office for and that is to give them the relief that they deserve. We are $1.7B in debt and we keep borrowing. Ms. VonAchen, if you would, could you give just a Reader's Digest of what revenue neutral is.

Ms. VonAchen said well, whatever property tax we're currently collecting this year would be the same amount we would collect next year.

Mayor Garner said so basically, our budget stays the same, am I correct? **Ms. VonAchen** said well, the property tax is only 30% of the City General Fund and about 50% of the

County General Fund, so there are other revenue sources which may grow. **Mayor Garner** said in general, what I'm saying is, a revenue neutral does not take us below where we're at this year as far as our funding, right? **Ms. VonAchen** said yeah, the other revenues would grow, so there is a little bit more money you would generate from the other revenue sources.

Mayor Garner said so, when you talk about—I guess the thought is, is that we're giving money back and we're dropping our budget down to levels below where we're at the previous year and that's just not the case. This recommendation, Commissioner Kane, is just that. It's a recommendation, a proposal from this Mayor to start this discussion that, hopefully, you all can at least put the people of this community first for a change, and I don't mean that to disrespect anybody. But I can tell you, I've heard it again, and I've heard it again, and I'm not going to back away from it. I'm going to fight for this community and I mean that.

People are telling me that their taxes are too high, the BPU fees are too high, that our burdensome fees are too high. I've had numerous discussions about how to get to where we're at with a professional Administrator that said, and a CFO that said, this can be done responsibly, not irresponsibly, not that it is going to hurt this community or set us back, but responsibly to keep us at the levels where we were today—are at today. I say that with confidence that I believe in our CFO and our staff and our Administrator and what this proposal and recommendation, because that's all it is, to start a conversation that they brought forward.

I'm never going, as long as I'm Mayor, going to stop fighting for this community, and what I ran on and what people told me they wanted, and that is relief. They got their tax bills. You haven't been watching the feedback from this community about being disappointed and afraid of what could come from these mill levy increases, I asked you to please look, listen to the people of this community. I've talked to developers that want to do business here, but then they come back to our taxes, our fees, amongst a lot of other things.

It was asked that we need to bring the other taxing entities together. I've already made contacts and I've got meetings set up to do just that because it does no good if we lower our mill levy and we are not in agreement with our other taxing entities and they see it as opportunity not to do the same or to raise their mill levies. So yes, we have to be in agreement and what's best for Wyandotte County. We are one unified county. Commissioner Stites represents Edwardsville and Bonner Springs, I've talked to those people in those communities, the Wyandotte County side. I can tell you everywhere I campaigned, it doesn't matter, all four corners of Wyandotte County. Everyone I've talked to from every persuasion, their number one complaint was taxes, BPU, and burdensome fees and that's just a start.

This isn't a waste of my time. I'm willing to go out into this community and continue to see what's important to our residents and to bring that back to you and that's what I'm doing and that's what this proposal represents. But I didn't just stop here, this isn't the only proposal, we are just at the beginning of our budgetary conversation. We haven’t even got to the end yet.

What I've tasked our CFO and our Administrator also do, was to work with you, just like you want to see what's important to you, what do you want the budget to look like, it's not my budget, ultimately, you have to decide, and hopefully, we can get to a point to where you all can find some common ground to agree on, while also putting the community first and making sure whatever you do is community-driven.

So, I'm tasked with coming back with a total of three to four additional proposals that reflects the will of this Commission, so we have done this in a thoughtful way. We have come up with a recommendation that yes, I support, that I would want you to consider a proposal from your Mayor that is doable, it's actionable, it's responsible, and it doesn't set this community back.

I'm aware that infrastructure is of great concern and great need. That's why I had a conversation with our Lieutenant Governor and he assures me that he would let me know as soon as those infrastructure funds come down, so we can start prioritizing our infrastructure needs and then having a real conversation about how we shore that up if we come up short. I'm not overlooking those types of issues. The half-cent sales tax proposal is just that, it's a proposal for you to consider because if we are going to lower the mill levy, I believe that we should involve our community in making some of the decisions that can be impactful to them, which is how do we spread the tax base, especially to those sunsetters and those people that don't live here to help bring about the police stations and the fire stations and the equipment that our public safety folks need, that they told me they need, critical needs, parks, rec centers that are falling apart in disrepair, spray parks, road projects; all these things are of great importance to us. So as the Mayor, it would be irresponsible of me not to bring you responsible, actionable, and doable proposals as part of a proposal package that staff and our Administrator bring to you to consider as we move into the budget conversations.

You can reject what I put out, that's fine, but I wanted to give you something to work with and a starting point and something to consider, something that you can talk amongst yourselves. Eight percent, it's bold, but it doesn't hurt from where we're at today. What it does, is bring the relief that our citizens have been demanding that they want, because most people that I've talked to, the phone calls I've got, the emails I've got, they tell me that that their valuations went up and they're concerned because their taxes are going to go up.

I know we all love people, we all care about this community, we may diverge from our opinions on how best to get to where we need to be, but what I tell you is these conversations need to be had. I just ask that you please listen to the people that are in this community, in all four corners, and realize that we just cannot keep doing business as usual. How do we grow our tax base, is we've got to get rooftops. Rooftops aren't going to come, businesses aren't going to come if it doesn't fit into their business model. You know how we've been getting businesses, by giving away the farm with huge incentives that bring little to no value to Wyandotte County. What it does bring, is if I have a house and my valuation goes up and I look at this huge multi-million complex, take your pick and I pay more than them. How is that right to ask any of our taxpayers to feel good about their valuations going up, paying more taxes when we've given away huge tax incentives; my opinion, it's wrong. Wyandotte County deserves better, our citizens deserve better. I'm not going to stop fighting, that's why I'm here. We can disagree without being disagreeable.

I just urge you all to please join me in listening to our constituents as we move through this budget cycle, because their voice matters to me, and when I ran on being community-driven that's what community-driven means.

We'll adjourn until about—recess until 6:45 p.m. and we'll come back, thank you.

Mayor Garner reconvened the meeting at 6:51 p.m. and said I'm going to turn it over to our Interim County Administrator, Cheryl Harrison-Lee.

Ms. Harrison-Lee said, Mayor and commissioners, effective collaborative budget development is much like a three-legged stool with the three legs being staff, the Commission, and the community so all parts are equally important to be able to get to an effective budget. So to that end tonight we are inviting your insight, we're going to have that facilitated by Ed O'Malley from the Kansas Leadership Center. Mr. O'Malley is the founder and President and CEO of the Kansas

Leadership Center. He is an accomplished and seasoned professional, as well as a former elected official. He's a speaker, consultant, and an author and is here tonight to help facilitate the Strategic Visioning Session for the budget development that staff will use to be able to develop the budget and bring back to you.

Ed O'Malley said thank you, Madam Manager, and please don't hold that former elected official thing against me. I served in the Kansas House with Commissioner Burroughs a long time ago and I promise I always voted exactly the way local governments would want me to, I promise. I'm not sure actually, Tom, don't look it up, I don't know. Thank you for the opportunity to be here. Mayor, thank you for the opportunity to be with you tonight. I am from the Kansas Leadership Center. We're based in Wichita, Kansas, we do work around the state. Some of you have participated in some of our programs. Our main work over the last 15 years has been leadership development, people like yourselves, others heavily engaged in civic life come to programs and experiences of the Center; kind of like spring training for major league baseball players, even the best of the best go back to training to get better on their skills of public engagement and public leadership.

In recent years, more and more often, we have local governments, community groups, community coalition's engaging with us to help them flesh out what is the vision, what is the hope, what are the aspirations they have for their community, for their public initiative, whatever it might be if that's, of course, the context I'm in today with you. Our job and I have a colleague with me, Tina Khan from the Kansas Leadership Center, one of our facilitators and teachers who's with me as well, who will be taking lots of notes from our conversations.

Our job is really two-fold tonight. Number one we want to explore with you, help you explore really and, by the way, I just have questions, so I don't have a presentation. I don't have any slides. All I have are some open-ended questions that I want you to answer. We have questions that will help you explore and us explore together what are the biggest aspirations you have for the UG. What are the biggest concerns you have. What makes progress hard on those things, so we're going to explore this. We're not going to walk out of here tonight with the vision. I think you'll walk out of here tonight with having made some progress with clarity around what are the aspirations of the concerns, or maybe at least, clarity around who feels what.

The point is not to walk out of here with agreement. The point is to hear from you and hear what's on your mind. After tonight, I think you all know this, if you don't, I hope you'll play along, after tonight Tina and I will be in touch to have a conversation with each of you to ask some follow up questions so we're starting the conversation, but then we want to have just a one-on-one conversation with you to keep hearing your thoughts.

Eventually, you know, within a few weeks will engage back with the manager and share the themes that were lifted up that we saw lifted up tonight and the themes that we're going to lift up from those one-on-one conversations, which, as you might imagine those one-on-one conversations they're not going to be recorded conversations. They're going to be a chance for you to share what's on your mind around the questions we talk about tonight and any additional reflections you had between now and that phone call and then we'll put some thoughts back to you; here's what we heard, here the themes that we lifted up.

What we'll do is we'll go no later, I think that remains until 8 p.m. I think a good hour and 4 minutes of this conversation will get it started, rationing the cookies until 8 o'clock. So a couple other thoughts about ground rules; what's useful right now is for you to share what you're thinking, to be curious about what other people are thinking. It's really not a time, at this juncture, to debate. Like the questions I'm going to ask you—the first one is going to be, by the way, when you think about the future of the UG, what's your greatest aspiration. Brian and Melissa, you don't need to agree, but I'd love to hear what your answers are. I shouldn't use your first name. I should call you Commissioner Kane and Commissioner—so hearing your thoughts and knowing that the point is to surface these things, and then what Tina and I are going to be doing as we review the notes and listen as we talk with you on the phone, what are the themes that are emerging. My guess is you have some things on here that you will disagree on. I'm just guessing that there are some disagreements in this room here and that's okay. My experience with public bodies is disagreements are okay.

I'm also assuming that there might be more in this room that you agree on, that's just my assumption based on working with a lot of public bodies, so our job is to help you make sense of all that, in a way that helps you engage in the work that you've been asked to do. So without any more opening remarks, let me ask you the first question and also I should say we're going to work in a few different ways over the next hour and three minutes. We're going to spend some time in the large group conversation, but this is—you would have more of a retreat like mine for the next hour, okay, so we're going to do a few things different too, so there is going to be some times, when I'm going to ask you, the three of you, and madame manager, I think you should be in the conversations and the three of you to huddle up and to have a quick conversation, and you all to huddle up and have a quick conversation. We won't do that for 30 minutes. We might do it for four okay.

What I found is giving you a chance to hear one another, but also give you a chance to get your head warmed up before you share publicly, it can be quite useful, so we're going to spend a little bit of time in small groups, we're going to spend time in the large group. I may or may not, at one point or another, ask you to take a minute and just think for a minute and jot some thoughts down individually. I might pull that facilitation trick out if it's needed. Okay, any questions about purpose, any questions about how we're going to work together the next hour.

Alright, so the first question, and Tina nor I have any opinions on the answers on what the answers to these questions should be. The first question is when you think about the future of the Unified Government, what is your greatest aspiration? I want to call your attention to the word greatest. We're all politicians. I'm a former, but you know you can take the boy out of politics, you can't take the politics out of the boy, right, so we're all able to speak about lots of aspirations and I know you can do that. What would be very helpful is to hear your greatest aspiration.

This is one where we are going to start just for, you know, rapid fire, three minutes, in small groups, so you'll huddle up, huddle up, huddle up just for three minutes and share your thoughts on this question. As you come back, I would love to hear your answers. So take three minutes. I'll call you back here in just a moment.

Commissioner Johnson said can I clarify, what's it mean by Unified Government? **Mr. O'Malley** said what would be the best context—**Commissioner Johnson** said when you're talking about the government, the organization that we know. **Mr. O'Malley** said what context you think would be most beneficial. So, I would encourage you to go with community and we're super flexible here. If you have thoughts about an aspiration for the government, speak up. We can take both sets of notes if we need to, not a problem, three minutes.

Talk about one more minute and if you run out of things to talk about, you can talk about your second aspiration. All right, come on back. So let's hear some of these and you know we're a small enough group that it would be great to hear everybody and I know politicians can talk for a long time. It's true so rapid fire headline like. You know the good news is, I am no longer a politician, so if I have to cut off the mic or make you unhappy, I might be able to get away with it, but we want to hear from everybody and we've got other questions too, and I also want to just make sure we have time for people to build off one another. That feels really effective right now and useful. Let's speak efficiently and don't be offended if I ask you to sum it up, so we can move it along.

Who wants to go first and, by the way, if you feel uncomfortable sharing what you shared in your small group, just share whatever your partner said. They won't care, they will be fine. I'm joking about that.

Commissioner Burroughs said first class city (inaudible). **Mr. O'Malley** said what does that mean to you. **Commissioner Burroughs** said it means the problems that we have discussed now, have they been addressed. Neighborhoods are whole, families are happy. Rec centers, community is collectively doing well. Our city is a first class city, not city (inaudible). **Mr. O'Malley** said I love that word order.

Commissioner Stites said I think the way we started out in our group, by saying live, work and play and you know you guys have all seen pricing bumper stickers and shirts and things that go around our community that say proud to be from the Dotte. You know what I am, born and raised, been here my whole life, you know when we talk about first class city, I think that this quote follows right under what Commissioner Burroughs was saying, first class in the way that we live, the way that we work, how we take care of our employees, and how we play and that we have a place to play and proud to call Wyandotte County our home.

Commissioner Ramirez said mine was, goes both ways for community and for us, the UG as an organization being receptive and open with each other. It just seems that within our community as I've talked to my constituents, there's this other that the other person is the other, that they're the bad guy or that there's a bad—we just don't talk very well with each other. Communication; being open, receptive to each other's thoughts, comments; I think that's my greatest aspiration, because if we can be able to sit down and have an open conversation and be direct and know what the other person wants, we can get work done.

Commissioner Davis said mine would be changing the internal and external perception of our community. I'm tired of people speaking bad on our city, promoting negative perceptions that are not true, but that's from the outside. From the inside, and that's what's even harder to stomach, our own residents talking bad about our community, our own people talking bad about our community. I want us to change that, how do we change how—my highest aspiration is Wyandotte County’s perception is positive, we’re innovative, we’re forward thinking people, want to be here, they want to move here, they want to live, work and play. And that's not just a tactical part, but it's also the perception part and I really want us to change and focus on that perception.

Commissioner McKiernan said we’ll just keep going this way. I was ascribed, so I will tell everybody around, so from Mr. Johnson to piggyback on Commissioner Davis that the members of our community are proud of themselves and proud of our community and they choose to live here with pride and from Commissioner Bynum, that our building infrastructure is of sufficient condition to support a very high quality of life and work. Then from myself, that our median household income is higher than any other city or county in the metro area.

Mayor Garner said I just want to improve people's lives and make Wyandotte County or at least help make Wyandotte County a community that's absolutely second to no one.

Commissioner Markley said I think what would demonstrate sort of the culmination of many of our goals is if, when you were driving down every street in our county, you had that feeling you have in some of our neighborhoods already, where you go gosh, this is a great little neighborhood, this is a sweet little neighborhood. So I think that's the vision, that every neighborhood has had the attention that it needs so that when you drive down that street, you go gosh, that's a great little neighborhoods that deals with our codes and our infrastructure, all those bite issues that we've been obsessed with over all these years; that's the vision.

Mr. O’Malley said well, thank you. I love that descriptor too. One of the things that we talked about with the manager was the question how would you know if you were making progress and that's a great example, so we might come back to that one. I think everybody had a chance to go.

Here's the next question, and by the way, you all are politicians, so you know the rule. I'm going to ask a question, but you can do what politicians do, you can answer whatever question you want to, right? So I guess what I'm saying is, I mean this affectionately, if I'm not asking you a question that's helping you share what you think will be useful for you to share, share what you think would be useful to share. That's okay. Don't be too loyal to my questions, be loyal to your community, be loyal to what's in your heart, in your head about this community.

My next question for you is the flip side of that first one. We're kind of just getting warmed up here in our first 10 minutes or so, so it's the flip side of that first question. This one is when you think about the future of the Unified Government, thinking about the community, the community of the UG, what concerns you the most? I want to apologize for this question being a little negative, but hey, we’ve got to be real, and if you ask me questions about my organization, I'm going to have things that I most aspire to. I'm going to have things that concern me the most. When I was serving an elected office, I had things I aspired to for my district, and I had things that concern me the most.

We're going to focus on the negative maybe just for a minute, but we're doing it for a purpose of trying to illuminate what are the types of things that need your leadership. And so, when you think about the future of your community, what concerns you the most. I would call your attention to those last two words, the most. Not a laundry list, the most. And again, we’re going to, just for a couple minutes in small groups, but I would ask you this time a different small group. So you're going to like get up and walk a little bit. Okay, there you go. Manager, thank you for demonstrating that. Three or four minutes.

Mr. O’Malley said come on back. Let's hear some of these answers and, by the way, I don't know if any of you are K-State fans, I need to tell you that oh—**Someone** was inaudible. **Mr. O’Malley** said okay, maybe I'll just ask this differently. I've got purple shoe laces on everybody, I mean yeah, okay, let me, let me ask a different one. I hope this might work differently. Any Bill Snyder fans, I mean you’re okay with Bill Snyder, right, I'm getting nothing from our friends here. Okay, the reason I bring this up is Coach Bill Snyder was one of our original board members at the Kansas Leadership Center and if you know anything about Coach, you know that we could be beating Oklahoma 52 to 7. We could have beat Oklahoma 52 to 7, and Coach Snyder afterwards, would be talking about what we could have done better. Okay, so he was one of our founding board members. By the way, he agreed to be on the board, because, in time, you might remember this, we wrote a bill and crafted it and passed it to name the highway after Coach that rolls into town. I sponsored that bill and I learned if you name a highway after somebody and then you ask them to serve on your non-profit board, they have to say yes.

This question really comes from Coach. It's a question about what needs attention, what's our biggest concern. So let's hear some of these answers. Again, we're not debating. It's okay to have different answers, but we want to hear the different answers and we're still just getting warmed up, so the next question we're going to go to kind of different level, but we got to hear these things first.

Commissioner Ramirez said I guess I'll go first. I had Ms. Harrison-Lee and Commissioner Kane, we all agreed that it's changing our culture of what we always done—we always keep the thing the status quo. As a culture through within our community and within our organization, that's the greatest concern that we need to change and I'm sure, each of us commissioners, have the same view or some level of that view. So we all agreed on that. **Mr. O'Malley** said I'm not going to let you off the hook yet because it's a great thing for us to explore for just a minute. I can imagine what you're going to say, and remember, where this is eventually going. So, how do we—what does it look like to exercise leadership, which is your job, by the way, not just your job; other people in the communities leadership is needed as well. What does it look like to exercise leadership to make more progress towards our greatest aspirations and to mitigate these most significant concerns.

So just to dig a little deeper, that's the thing that concerns you the most. So just describe why that concerns you the most. Talk about why that's what came to the top for the three of you.

Commissioner Kane said if we don't change people's minds, then we're never going to move on. We're always going to be right here and we'll be happy and we're not happy, we will be miserable because we didn't do anything but just sit there. And if we don't put our best foot forward to move the community forward, you know, we're in trouble. We have to be community-minded to move everyone forward, all four corners of Wyandotte County, just not my district or Commissioner McKiernan's district, or any of these. All of us have to move forward to make this a better place and when people sit still they get old, they grow fat, and they die and I'm old, but we have to push the community to go in the right direction because it's just like the homeless situation we've got, we have to improve it, it's not an option and it's not just—it's in all our districts. So we got to move as many people forward and those that want to move forward, maybe we need to pull them forward a little bit.

Mr. O'Malley said Commissioner Kane, thanks for chiming in and the next question we're going to get even deeper into some of this, but I just got to make one quick comment because has the term CAVE people made its way to Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, yet? By the way, have you heard that term CAVE people? I hear it in other local governments and other places. It stands for Citizens Against Virtually Everything. No, no, no, no, no here's the deal, I know we laugh, but I actually think my experiences, that I think what you two are sharing is really, really interesting. I hear you saying that the status quo is not—you'll need a change and my experience working in community life, working across the state and well beyond, is that. I don't know many people who think of themselves as a Citizen Against Virtually Everything. So when I've heard that term, I usually hear about other people, nobody ever claims to be it, and so what I'm playing with is and I think where your comments are making my mind go is, how do you mobilize the people who you need to mobilize, how do you mobilize change when there are lots of reasons to keep the status quo, which we can explore here in a minute. But let's hear some more of these concerns, other things that concern you the most.

Commissioner Johnson said the negative opinions about our community that are based on misinformation and that's where I kind of started, but to even go a step further, the things that makes us, what I would consider our greatest asset, which is the diversity of our people. It's also our greatest detriment because in many regards we live in such a silo community. Most of the person's around this table I would not have met before I became a commissioner and I am finding out about so many more people, whether that be from Bonner or Edwardsville, Piper; wherever the case may be, since I've been a part of this Commission, which is a great opportunity. But the average person that lives in our community may not live amongst other people in our community, and I think that can be an impediment. **Mr. O'Malley** said and maybe just take that a little bit deeper, what's the consequence of that, those silos of diversity. What's the consequence when it comes to planning, visioning, guiding the overall community? **Commissioner Johnson** said being vulnerable. You know, giving up some control maybe. The things that keep us separated that have been going on for decades. We're not dealing with something that is new, this has been in and around Wyandotte County probably as long as I've been alive and maybe I'll go back to the early 70s, late 60s, and somebody might correct me; there's only a few of you that could correct me, but I just want to make sure you're all interested. This is inclusive language.

Mr. O'Malley said other things that concern you the most.

Commissioner Davis said I was in the same group with Commissioner Johnson and just to add on to that, often the narrative, which is true, Wyandotte County is one of the most diverse counties per capita in the country. That is beautiful, that is an asset, but it also presents a challenge and it's one of the things that scares me because when we look at disparities, not just on race, but if you look at disparities on gender, by education, by job profession, by the geography of where you live in the city, agriculture, more suburban or city; wherever, those disparities are present and so with us not having a homogenous city my fear is that one of our greatest assets diversity becomes our greatest challenges and it leads to widespread disparities that we are unable to fix.

Mr. O'Malley said let's get some other concerns in here.

Commissioner McKiernan said speaking only for myself this time. So when I think about the future of the UG, the thing that concerns me the most is that our staff will not have the resources and/or support to do their jobs and to provide the excellent service that they are capable of providing for the benefit of our citizens.

Mr. O'Malley said a few more, anything that folks want to get on the table they haven't heard yet.

Commissioner Bynum said mine was the desire to provide tax relief, while also addressing the daunting infrastructure needs of the community, so I'm going to try to stop focusing on that, but it's really a huge concern for me. **Mr. O'Malley** said two big concerns, and then the third one of balancing those two, yeah, that's right. You found a sneaky way to say three concerns, by the way, I'm impressed with that. **Mr. O'Malley** said that's been super helpful.

Commissioner Markley was inaudible due to mic not being turned on. We’re just like scrabbling along the sides still and we’ve just faced a lot and it looks like externally we’re going to continue. (inaudible) we can’t just say, well people, are going to figure out how to live in this world. They’re just going to figure it out on their own (inaudible).

Mr. O’Malley said my next question for you, and I know we could talk about—Mr. Mayor did you have—**Mayor Garner** was inaudible. **Mr. O’Malley** said I'm sorry if I missed you. Thank you for saying that. Say a little more, what does that mean? **Mayor Garner** said well, a lot of things that I talked about. Businesses do not want to locate here, people not being able to afford to live here, burdens on our seniors, not having programs for our kids, infrastructure that's crumbling, taxes that are high, I can go on down the list. Maybe not being as responsible or responsive to our citizens as we can. It's just a litany of things that we look at. Maybe not providing the types of support that our public safety officials need, our Police and our Fire, to keep this community safe and if they don't keep this community safe, it's more people that are going to leave this community. When you talk about our fees with BPU and how people that are poor have their utilities cut off, not just because they couldn't pay their utilities, but also because they couldn't pay a burdensome PILOT fee as well, so there's just a lot of things that can really tie into this becoming a failed community if we just don't get a handle. **Mr. O’Malley** said yeah, the term failed community is what struck me by that and that's, I think, not fun to think about, but maybe a useful term or mindset to have that we want to make sure that we don't have come reality.

Mr. O’Malley said here's my next question. Before I ask the question, just a quick reflection, I've been involved in, you know, community groups and civic groups for a long, long time. I think Commissioner Burroughs and I were in our teenage years when we were in the legislature together, so I've noticed in these types of conversations throughout the state, and we have the privilege of doing work throughout the country and around the world now, what I notice often is most of the things listed when people answer these questions, didn't pop up yesterday. I'm guessing, and I could be wrong, I follow things up, I live in Wichita now, I'm from this metro area, the district that I represented was just across the county line, Roeland Park. But I follow things close enough that I think this is an informed guess, that if I would have been here five years ago and asked the same two questions, I might have gotten some of the same answers, is my assumption. My guess is we didn't all of a sudden have an aspiration to take really good care of our employees. My guess is the concern related to how the community engages across the difference, then it just emerged last week.

What I'm getting at is, and this isn't to say that there haven't been good people, including many of you who have been working on these things, I'm not trying to say there's been no progress. I'm certainly not saying that, but I am saying that if these are the things that concern us the most and the things we most aspire to, not trying to blame anybody, but I'm just clearly, if these are the things that concern us the most and that we most aspire to, we haven't made enough progress on them. I mean that's kind of obvious.

So, if I'm back in five years, you know, ideally, there are different answers and that would be a signal that something fundamentally has changed. That you would have made enough progress on some of these things, that these wouldn’t be your top spot. These wouldn't be your top answer. So here's my question, sorry for the long lead in, the question, and this might be the last time you go to small groups, so if you're one of these people that hates going to small groups, just so you know, I think this is the last time. The question is what makes progress so hard. The way to think about is there's a gap, the things that concern us the most describe our current reality. Our greatest aspirations is the future we want. There's a gap between our current reality and the future we want for our community, what makes closing that gap so hard.

I know there's a time and there's a place to debate policy. I know there's a time and a place to get specific into policy. In my experiences there's also a time and a place for a governing body to get clear about what are the characteristics that make it hard to make progress on these things because there must be real things in the way, I mean, there must be. Good people have been working on these things and, by the way, if your first instinct about what makes progress hard is in the room, if she or he is in the room, talk about the second thing that makes progress hard. No, I'm just kidding. What I'm serious about, though, is if your first instinct is to think what makes progress hard is, you know is so, and so, is Tina. I would encourage you to think a little deeper because over the last—I think these concerns could go back 5, 10, 50 so let's not fall into the easy trap of it's so and so because it's not. So what makes progress so hard. We're going to get to what does this all mean for you and your leadership, what makes progress so hard. All right, go for it, find another group somehow. I'm going to give you a few more minutes on this one. It's going to be six or seven or eight minutes.

Mr. O'Malley said come on back. To me this question—this is the key question, yeah, in my opinion, it's what makes it hard in your work. As people exercising leadership in this community is to try to figure out how to overcome the answers you're about to provide. You see how that's different and coming up with the perfect idea, which you're going to also have to do some of that maybe. But if you don't figure out how to mitigate the answers you're about to give, I'm going to come back here in five years, or somebody else is going to be here in five years, and they're going to ask some similar questions and you're going to get similar answers.

Okay, so this question, your answers, which we could talk about this question for hours, we're not going to, but we're going to just begin to surface some of the things that make progress hard because as you craft a vision, which gets translated into budget priorities in a way of funding the government of this community, which is just a piece of—the government has a piece of progress on these, but it isn't the whole piece. As you do that, we've got to make sure we're grounding it and how do we overcome the things we're about to talk about, so let's start to hear some of these.

Commissioner Markley said they're communal solutions, right, like the idea of our reputation or our neighborhoods. We ten commissioners cannot solve the problem of our reputation or the problem of our siloed diverse communities or the problem even of our neighborhoods. It has to be a communal solution and I think the struggle is the community has to buy in to the fact that that's a priority problem, a problem and the priority problem, and Cheryl was saying they have to—it has to be a shared priority. They have to buy into the fact that it's a problem, but it's a priority problem and that they have to be part of solving it and a lot of times they look back at us and say, well, I don't have to solve it, I elected you and you're supposed to handle that. But the problem is, almost every problem—I think every problem we come up with is a problem that we can't solve without it being a communal solution.

Mr. O'Malley said thanks for getting us started, and these are really critical characteristics, so I heard lots of things in there. You're going to see what we're going to get all these themes back to everybody. Some of the things that I'm hearing in that, it shines a light on all this stuff, the commissioners can't do it all that people expect you to. So, in essence, these challenges you've lifted up so far, can't be solved by authority alone, is the way I would say that even though everybody is going to want to tell you that you should solve it.

Commissioner Markley said it can't be solved by budget alone either. No amount of budget money is going to make the guy not throw his trash in the driveway and we all know that, like we could have a million codes officials, but they still have to give him 14 days' notice and then if he doesn't obey it, we have to send out an abatement team. That guy is still a jerk and no amount of budget money solves that problem, so no amount of authority and no amount of budget money is going to solve the problems that we were saying were our primary problems.

Mr. O'Malley said I also heard what you said, you talked about communal problems, there communal decisions, and I just want to say this, I think you all know this, but leadership is harder in public life than it is in private life, and the reason why is because in public life nobody has enough authority to do much of anything, in private life, a CEO has a lot of authority and authority can be useful. It's not everything, but in public life systems are designed—your system of government is designed to have very diffuse authority. The Mayor's authority is only so much, the managers authority is only so much and, by the way in cities or communities that have a different form of government with stronger authority, it's still not enough authority and it's different in civic life.

Let's keep going. Other things that make progress hard.

Commissioner McKiernan said when I think about what makes progress hard is human nature. So when we try or do new and different things, there's fear of loss, there's fear of change, and there's fear of the unknown.

Mr. O'Malley said I just want to touch on the fear of loss, because I think it's connected to the fear of change and change came up earlier. So that's on at least three commissioners minds about the status quo, the fear of change, and what I would encourage you to think about, from my experience, is I actually don't think your community is afraid of change. I don't think any community is afraid of change. Good change is fine. You know, the federal government sending 100 million dollars in infrastructure money into your community is going to change things and you're going to like that change, most people are going to be okay with that. What we find as we work with organizations and communities and companies around their toughest challenges and biggest aspirations, is that it's not that people are afraid of change because, again, people have good change. They're afraid of the loss that comes with the change you might be pushing or the perceived loss. So if that loss is keeping people, or that perceived loss, might not be real, it doesn't matter, those of us in politics knows it doesn't matter, real or perceived, it's the same in politics and government. If that loss isn't addressed, you'll get people to focus on the status quo. There's a fear of loss, so what at least Commissioner McKiernan is suggesting, is that progress on these things will require the type of change that might require some loss and it would be interesting to explore what that is. We won't do that tonight, but what does that mean exactly.

What else makes progress hard?

Commissioner Ramirez said I would say unlimited solutions with limited resources. **Mr. O'Malley** said okay, keep going there, unlimited solutions with limited resources, say more. **Commissioner Ramirez** said as we had a discussion earlier, we all have different solutions, different ideas how to fix the issue, but we have limited workforce, we have a limited funding source, we have just as limited—as you said, limited authority to fix the issues in our community. All of us, each 10 of us, we can come forward, 11 including the Mayor, can come forward with an idea, a solution to fix our homeless issue. But there is limited resources out there to actually get the job done and to alleviate that. **Mr. O'Malley** said yeah and I think it connects, though, to what we were just talking about with loss. It might connect, let me just play here for a minute, because how we spend our money tells us what we value and a lot of times we want to try to value everything.

Commissioner Stites was inaudible. **Mr. O'Malley** said no, I feel like we've known each other forever, but I just met you tonight for real, so I think there's something going on here.

Commissioner Stites said trying to please everyone, and you know things that we were presented with tonight, you know, if it wasn't an issue where we just say we're going to drop the mill one to 20, I don't know, whatever the number is and it didn't affect something else, and that didn't affect something else, do we give raises, are we able to pave streets or all those things. We want to please everybody. I do, I mean I want everybody to be happy and be just like we started out with live, work and play and do all the things that people want for us to do, but we just can't. We can't please everyone. **Mr. O'Malley** said there's something too about timeframe in mind too, because you'll have—I think the aspirations of the concerns you listed, if I went out and talk to a community group, I'd get a lot of the same answers, so people aren't happy. So the question is, to make more progress, would we have to perhaps disappoint people in the short term, so that in the long term they're going to take—some of things are going to come off the list. Or are we going to keep them happy in the short term, or happy enough, because we're spreading things around enough that we're saying we value everything. And I haven't studied your budget. I mean—I'm just, you know, you're not unique in the way a lot of us, you know governing systems work.

So there's a question there about it gets to that loss. If we're going to go all in to really make something happen, that might mean we can't make this other thing happen and acknowledging that as hard and especially difficult as a governing body, knowing that you each have an external stakeholder group that you're accountable to. That's not anything you don't know. I'm just trying to name it because how you then craft goals and a vision that count for some of these dynamics is really important.

Commissioner Johnson said it's a tie-in to what was said about fear of loss, also fear of pain and those are the things that keep people from wanting to change as well, and, you know, how much will it hurt to make—how much will it hurt me. What I put down was a me and my mentality versus we and our mentality. As long as the bad things don't affect my household, everything is fine and nor am I concerned about how those things affect others in my community and so as long as I'm comfortable, I'm not in pain, I'm not threatened by loss of anything, I don't care about what happens in other communities, and I think that's a problem. The last thing is that many of us have an ingrained acceptance of old, comfortable, and a negative thinking, whether it be amongst us as leaders, staff and/or our constituency that we represent. Sometimes we're just comfortable. It's like the expression of the frog that was in the pot of water, you continue to turn the heat up, they don't know that there's—that they are now supper.

Commissioner Kane said two things that stick out in my mind, some of us remember because we're aged, is when they widened Parallel and there were 300 or 400 homes dispersed and people really hurting, but it was the best thing at that time and, as Commissioner Burroughs was talking a minute ago, when he was walking on the field out there at the racetrack, there were 50 or 60 homes displaced, but that ignited the western end of Wyandotte County and that's why you have the Legends and everything else. So, sometimes it hurts good and sometimes it hurts bad and thank God, the Commission and the State Legislators at the time, when all that went down had a vision, but sometimes that vision can adversely affect others.

Mr. O'Malley said yeah, I was a young staffer for Governor Bill Graves when that happened and I was in charge of the small staff that fielded phone calls and wrote letters back. We were just getting email back then, you know, and the number of calls from the people who lived in those homes, you know, it was pretty intense. So there's loss that comes with progress, and it can be hard to figure out how to negotiate that which we all know.

Other thoughts about what makes progress hard.

Mayor Garner said for me it's the lack of shared division. I mean a shared vision, a lack of shared vision, not just amongst the elected body but amongst staff, and if you go beyond these four walls of the Unified Government, it's a lack of shared vision in the community. Everybody has their own agenda. People are siloed. As unified as we try and be, there's still a lot of areas where we need to come together and find areas that we can agree on, that we can build on, as opposed to looking at the things that we can't agree on. Trying to find that common ground and build on those things that we all can agree on is going to make Wyandotte County better, but just really that lack of a shared vision to me is a huge concern.

Mr. O'Malley said my experiences, human systems don't accomplish amazing things without a shared vision and I understand it's hard to come up with a shared vision in a governing body, I get that. But my experiences, also you got to be looking for ways you can. You got to be able to recognize that they're going to be differences, but if you don't coalesce around a vision that can mobilize at least most of you—you know amazing things just aren't going to happen. I mean it's just not. It's an ingredient. We're going to end on time, I promise.

Commissioner Davis said very, very quickly, what I wrote down, and I think what we all kind of hinted at was competing and conflicting priorities, both at the Commission level as elected officials, and within our community, within the same neighborhood and two homes may want two different things. But, along with that what I haven't heard us really talk about is the inability to compromise to say I may not get the whole pie, but I'll get half. And if I can figure out what that half is and be satisfied with that half, if I can live with that half, if that half can make me happy, then I can come to the table ready to get things done.

Mr. O'Malley said other thoughts on this question.

Commissioner Bynum said mine, I think it has some similarity to what some others have said. The simple answer, I think, is that because we live in a democracy and hearing all of our voices is important, consensus can be really difficult and Commissioner McKiernan and I have said this many, many times and Commissioner Stites spent many years as a community-oriented policing officer, and I spent a lot of years organizing neighborhoods and what we say is, neighborhood work is messy. It's messy, messy work, and I think that's a part of why progress is hard, but I would also say that this community over the last 25 to 30 years has seen tremendous progress and the community that existed 30 years ago is not recognizable today so progress is hard, but it is possible with a sustained vision. That vision was, we are not going to live this way anymore. I mean period. Codes, crime, delinquent taxes, over and over and over again, and we had that vision and we put resources into those things and we still do today, and that is, I think, a large part of the progress we've seen here. I think having someone that helps you believe that there's a better way, whatever that way is, you know, certainly helps bring others to consensus around an idea.

Mr. O'Malley said I want to—in this last couple minutes, knowing that this is the beginning of the conversation, not the end of the conversation, and please take Tina's phone call and my phone call when we call you. It's the beginning of a conversation literally with us, but also among yourselves and it's a beginning of a process, as the Mayor was saying, beginning of a process. Eventually it's got to get to things like a budget, it's got to get the things like initiatives and policies, but the idea here to think about is if what you all just said is that progress is hard—any budget you pass, any policies you pass, you're going to pass with the idea that they're designed to make progress on these concerns or towards these aspirations we talked about. You're going to connect. Whether you fix that bridge, you're going to connect that to this concern of infrastructure. You're going to connect it all. So the idea here is while you're also—while you're thinking about the policies and the budget and how to make this work financially, if you as Commissioners don't also think about how do you go about all that in a way that reflects the opposite of what you just described, so you say what makes progress hard, we're not making communal decisions. So how do you do it in a communal way. If you don't, my guess is, you're going to contribute to the status quo. Other things, you need others to buy in.

How do you go through this process that the manager talked about the three-legged stool of a good process. The fear of loss, how do you create a process that gets people to talk about the loss involved, and there will be loss if you want game-changing progress. There will be things you might have to give up and it might just be your comfort. That's what it might be, it might be your comfort to your point Pastor.

The inability to compromise, so if the inability to compromise is getting in the way of game-changing progress on the things we care most about, how do you create a process to get you to a set of policies in a budget that prepares people for the compromise that will be necessary. All this is stuff that we call the leadership stuff, which that's why you all get paid the big bucks.

We have literally 60 seconds left, so I think I'll give the final word, Madam Manager, to you. The last thing I'll say, I appreciate you inviting us into this process and then, if you want to do the final word to anybody else, you can do that too, by the way, we can do that, we can just trade the final word around knowing that we only have 60 seconds left, but I appreciate the conversation tonight. I appreciate it being here for the conversation before this conversation. I appreciate the passion in this room from all of you, from the different perspectives, and my guess is if we go back and watch the tape, we could think about how these ideas that we've been talking about now connect to the conversation before and that's really your task, is how to bring these ideas alive in your work together and we're honored to play a small part in helping you do that, helping you find your way to a vision and ultimately policies and procedures and budgets.

Ms. Cheryl Harrison-Lee said thank you very much for starting that process of really convening that three-legged stool of policymakers, elected officials, staff, as well as the community. We're going to be going out into the community. You'll be hearing from Mr. O'Malley and we'll be looking to try to gain from you your thoughts on whether or not this wheel is where you'd still like to be. Any closing comments?

Mayor Garner said thank you Administrator and thank you for your facilitating this conversation and thank all the commissioners for the information you put forward. I think it was a real good, spirited debate. This was all by design, it was intentional, to get the type of conversations and ideas put out on the table. So as we move forward through our budget process, as we engage our constituents, which are the awesome folks that live here in Wyandotte County, we can kind of do some things and get to that shared interest and, hopefully, you all can make some decisions that are community-driven that we all know. I know everybody here at this table that's elected, I know our staff who works hard to support everything that we do every day, I see them at work including those that aren't here; our public servants. Everybody wants a better Wyandotte County and so, what does that look like, that's what that conversation is going to be moving forward as we really talk about this budget cycle. Thank you everyone for being here and thank all those who have watched and be safe and be blessed.

MAYOR GARNER ADJOURNED
THE MEETING AT 8:00 p.m.

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Brett A. Deichler
Unified Government Clerk

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