



MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL - SPECIAL SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024, 6:00 P.M.

The City Council convened in regular session in the Government Center Boardroom at 6:00 P.M. Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance ending with a moment of silent prayer/reflection.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Mboka Mwilambwe	Mayor	Present
Jenna Kearns	Council Member, Ward 1	Present
Donna Boelen	Council Member, Ward 2	Present
Sheila Montney	Council Member, Ward 3	Present
John Danenberger	Council Member, Ward 4	Present
Nick Becker	Council Member, Ward 5	Present, Remote
Cody Hendricks	Council Member, Ward 6	Present
Mollie Ward	Council Member, Ward 7	Present
Kent Lee	Council Member, Ward 8	Present
Tom Crumpler	Council Member, Ward 9	Present

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, to allow Council Member Becker to attend the meeting remotely due to illness.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

AYES: Kearns, Boelen, Montney, Danenberger, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Crumpler

Motion carried.

Council Member Becker joined remotely at 6:09 P.M.

Recognition/Appointments

No recognitions or appointments were made.

Public Comment

Mayor Mwilambwe read a public comment statement of procedure. William Gustavson emailed public comment and provided public comment virtually. Thomas Joseph and Jackie Beyer spoke in person.

Consent Agenda

No Items were listed on the Consent Agenda.

Regular Agenda

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.A. Presentation on the 2025-2029 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Consolidated Plan Outreach Efforts and Preliminary Goals, as requested by the Economic & Community Development Department.

Melisa Hon, Director of Economic & Community Development, thanked Council and City staff for their help. She briefly outlined the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program requirements. She overviewed the CDBG Consolidated Plan process, which included the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP), a resident survey, stakeholder focus groups, public forums, and key informant interviews. She highlighted that 1,408 Bloomington residents responded to the resident survey and noted the demographic breakdown, key questions, and top priorities of respondents. She stated that the goals of the Preliminary 2025-2029 CDBG Consolidated Plan were: (1) preservation of existing affordable housing stock; (2) elimination of slum and blight conditions; (3) support of the provision of public service activities; (4) public facility and infrastructure improvements; and (5) effective CDBG administration.

Council Member Ward asked for additional information regarding the breakdown of respondents by housing and demographics. Director Hon stated that follow up with additional information would be provided.

Council Member Ward, William Bessler, Grants Manager, and Director Hon discussed the prior year funding and future funding sources.

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.B. Consideration and Action on Approving the 2024 Tax Levy Estimate for the City of Bloomington, as requested by the Finance Department.

City Manager Jeff Jurgens briefly introduced the presentation and passed to Scott Rathbun, Finance Director. Director Rathbun discussed the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) History from 2020 to 2024. He discussed the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) History from 2020 to 2024, explaining that the EAV was the property value base used to calculate the levy rate. Director Rathbun stated that the County Assessor initially reported a 10.51% increase in the EAV, equating to a \$236 million increase. However, that historical adjustments were typically made, so they estimated 2024 EAV increase as \$221 million, or 9.84%, with \$12 million (5.47% of the total) attributed to new construction.

City Manager Jurgens then provided historical context, showing the City's tax levy rate and levy amount have remained relatively steady over the past 10 years, though the levy had not kept pace with the 35% inflation increase seen since 2011, only increasing by around 17% in that time. He then compared Bloomington's tax rate to tax levies of other communities of similar size, noting Bloomington was one of the lowest.

Director Rathbun explained the requirement of the public safety pensions highlighting that they must be fully funded by 2024 and how the City's property tax and utility tax (restricted revenues for pension funding) were effected in recent years. He reported that, ultimately, the City's restricted revenues would be \$4 million short of the funding target. City Manager Jurgens discussed Council's options and how each option effected a residential household. He then discussed the various City-maintained public spaces and how the City sought alternative methods for maintaining said spaces. He explained how the loss of the grocery tax and the acquisition of and build out of the new Public Works' Campus would impact the City budget noting how staff actively sought to reduce expenses.

Council Member Montney discussed pension costs and property tax increases since 2001. She explained her reasoning for not supporting the tax levy increase.

Council Members Crumpler and Boelen stressed the importance of funding the public safety pensions.

Council Member Boelen made a motion, seconded by Council Member Crumpler, that the proposed Property Tax Levy Estimate be approved in the amount of \$26,320,384.

Council Member Hendricks stated that while he voted against the levy increase last year, he felt the pressures that residents faced with increased costs, such as water rates and taxes from other taxing bodies. He was open to keeping the levy flat this year use general fund sources to cover the pension obligations but acknowledged that this approach could lead to difficult decisions next year if the expected efficiencies were not realized.

Council Member Ward stated she will not support anything that prevents the City from meeting its obligations to public safety; however, it must be acknowledged that the City had other needs beyond just public safety pensions, and cannot continue to avoid addressing the burden on taxpayers.

Council Member Lee agreed that public safety was important but expressed concern that other taxing bodies had assessed higher tax rates and did not support adding an additional burden to residents.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

AYES: Kearns, Boelen, Lee, Crumpler

NAYES: Montney, Danenberger, Becker, Hendricks, Ward

Motion failed.

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, that the Property Tax Levy Estimate remain flat and be approved in the amount of \$22,320,384.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

AYES: Kearns, Montney, Danenberger, Becker, Hendricks, Ward, Lee

NAYES: Boelen, Crumpler

Motion carried.

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.C. Consideration and Action on Approving the 2024 Tax Levy Estimate for the Bloomington Public Library, as requested by the Bloomington Public Library.

Jeanne Hamilton, Library Director, introduced Library Board President Katrina Parker and continued the presentation. She stated that the Library was requesting a levy of 6,827,275 and shared the recommendation impact. Director Hamilton briefly overviewed the breakdown of FY2026 Library expenses and the increase in value and activity of the Library from May 2024 to October 2024. She shared the 2024 tax levy next steps for the December 9th Council meeting.

Council Member Montney asked for the aggregated increases from the last five years allocated to the Library. Director Hamilton stated that the large increase in 2021 was due to the bond approval and gradual increases were due to the Library expansion.

Council Member Montney and Director Hamilton discussed the operational expenses and book donations of the Library.

Council Member Crumpler expressed his support for the Item and stressed the value of the Library to the community.

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, that the proposed Property Tax Levy Estimate be approved in the amount of \$6,827,275.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

AYES: Kearns, Boelen, Danenberger, Hendricks, Ward, Crumpler

NAYES: Montney, Becker, Lee

Motion carried.

City Manager's Discussion

City Manager Jeff Jurgens thanked Director Melissa Hon and City staff for their efforts on the tax levy estimate. He reassured Council that he and Director Rathbun would continue their work on reducing expenses. He shared updates on the leaf season, information about upcoming events at the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts, and details from the recent Bloomington Bison game.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Mwilambwe echoed City Manager Jurgens's remarks regarding the reorganization of the Economic & Community Development department and reminded the community of the commitment to public safety pensions.

Council Member's Discussion

No Council Member comments.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

Council Member Boelen made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Mwilambwe directed the Clerk to call roll:

AYES: Kearns, Boelen, Montney, Danenberger, Becker, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Crumpler

Motion carried (viva voce).

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON


Mboka Mwilambwe, Mayor

ATTEST


Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk

