Minutes
City Council - Regular Session Meeting
Monday, September 8, 2025 - 6:00 PM

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

Roll Call

Present: Mayor Dan Brady
Council Member Jenna Kearns
Council Member Micheal Mosley
Council Member Sheila Montney
Council Member John Danenberger
Council Member Michael Straza
Council Member Cody Hendricks
Council Member Mollie Ward
Council Member Kent Lee
Council Member Abby Scott

Recognition/Appointments

The following Item was presented:

Item 5.A. Recognition of Firefighters Robert Barnard, Jake Cheeseman, Dalton Hogan, Holden Lueck, Holden Snyder, Ben Schuler, and Ian Wisher, for the completion of their One-Year Probationary Period, as well as the Recently Appointed Captains Joshua Wheeler and Clayton Matteson, as requested by the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Cory Matheny recognized Firefighters Robert Barnard, Jake Cheeseman, Dalton Hogan, Holden Lueck, Holden Snyder, Ben Schuler, and Ian Wisher for the completion of their one-year probationary period with the Fire Department. He also recognized two recently appointed Fire Captains, Captain Joshua Wheeler and Captain Clayton Matteson.

The following Item was presented:

Item 5.B. National Emblem Club Week Proclamation, as requested by the Administration Department.

Tina Fowler, Member of the National Emblem Club #432, accepted the Proclamation. Mrs. Fowler shared about their organization and how it has impacted the community since 1967.

The following Items were presented together:

Item 5.C. Proclamation Recognizing Welcoming Week, as requested by the Administration Department.

Item 5.D. Recognition of Residents Who Have Recently Obtained United States Citizenship, as requested by the Administration Department.

Michael Hurt, City Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer and Welcoming America Commission Staff Liaison, accepted the Proclamation. He then introduced Blanca Acevedo Roque, Javier

Colonel Lopez, and Isaac Kabuya, recent United States citizens and Bloomington residents, who shared that U.S. citizenship journey.

Public Comment

Mayor Brady read a public comment statement of procedure. The following emailed public comments: (1) Paula Helgeson; (2) Michael Hintz; (3) Jim Stangel; (4) Dawn Bittermann; (5) John Solberg; and (6) Lavender Lane. City Clerk Yocum noted that Lavender Lane's email was received on 08/25/2025 and had been shared with Council earlier in the day due to it being held up in the City's spam filter.

The following spoke in person: (1) Laureen Phipps; (2) Diane Benjamin; and (3) Patti Killian; (4) Vee Spikes; (5) Mark Bittermann; (6) Judy Ficek; (7) Noah Tang; (8) Lisa Clover; (9) Marlan Calahan; (10) Mark Adams; (11) Gabriel Sherrod; (12) Ann Campbell; and (13) Tracy Patkunas.

City Clerk Yocum stated that the allowable 30-minute Public Comment time period had been reached and that there were still 12 individuals registered to speak. She asked Council if they'd like to extend time to allow additional speakers or move on to the Consent Agenda.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Montney, to extend Public Comment by 36 minutes.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Motion Carried.

The following speakers spoke in person: (14) Rob Mikel; (15) Julie Sutherland; (15) Andrew Franson; (16) Zach Carlson; (17) Bill Bishop; (18) Alex Gray; (19) Sue McWhorter; (19) Stephanie Calahan; (20) JW Barnett; (21) JR Wilkerson; (22) Steven Brandon; (23) Patty Bishop; and (24) John Biddle. William Gustavson had registered to speak remotely; however, he was not online during public comment.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled by City Council from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Items 7.C. and 7.H.

Item 7.A. Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the August 11, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Item 7.B. Consideration and Action on Approving Bills and Payroll in the Amount of $13,304,706.38, as requested by the Finance Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Bills and Payroll be approved.)

Item 7.C. was pulled from the Consent Agenda by Council Member Mosley.

Item 7.D. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Hutchison Engineering, Inc., for Engineering Services for the Design Work of Water Mains Along the Illinois RTE 9 Project that the State of Illinois Department of Transportation will be Reconstructing in the Fall of 2025, in an Amount Not to Exceed $280,000, as requested by the Water Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 159

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH HUTCHISON ENGINEERING, INC., FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE DESIGN WORK OF WATER MAINS ALONG THE ILLINOIS RTE 9 PROJECT THAT THE STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WILL BE RECONSTRUCTING IN THE FALL OF 2025, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $280,000

Item 7.E. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Agreement with FirstWatch Systems, Inc. for Real-Time Data Analysis and Dashboard Services, in the Amount of $173,288.58, as requested by the Fire Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 160

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH FIRSTWATCH SYSTEMS, INC. FOR REAL-TIME DATA ANALYSIS AND DASHBOARD SERVICES, IN THE AMOUNT OF $173,288.58

Item 7.F. Consideration and Action on a Resolution (1) Waiving the Formal Bidding Requirements; and (2) Approving an Agreement with SiteMed, to Provide Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Required Medical Surveillance and Physical Evaluation, in an Amount Not to Exceed $73,703, as requested by the Human Resources Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 161

A RESOLUTION (1) WAIVING THE FORMAL BIDDING REQUIREMENTS; AND (2) APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH SITEMED, TO PROVIDE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSHA) REQUIRED MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE AND PHYSICAL EVALUATION, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $73,703

Item 7.G. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Approving a Redevelopment Agreement By and Between the City of Bloomington and FMB Holdings, Inc., for the Property Commonly Known as 210 N. Center St. (PIN: 21-04-332-008), as requested by the Development Services Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 - 062

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON AND FMB HOLDINGS, INC., FOR THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 210 N. CENTER ST. (PIN: 21-04-332-008)

Item 7.H. was pulled from the Consent Agenda by Council Member Ward.

Item 7.I. Consideration and Action on an Application by Jayst., Inc., d/b/a Mulligans, located at 531 N. Main St., Requesting Approval of a Change in Ownership for their Class TAS (Tavern, All Types of Alcohol, and Sunday Sales) Liquor License, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Application be approved.)

Items Pulled from the Consent Agenda

The following Item was pulled from the Consent Agenda by Council Member Mosley:

Item 7.C. Consideration and Action on Approving Appointments and Reappointments to Boards and Commissions, as requested by the Administration Department.

Council Member Mosley recused himself as he was one of the members on the proposed appointments. He left the room at 7:31 PM.

Council Member Montney made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, to approve the Item as presented.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Abstain: Mosley

Motion Carried.

Council Member Mosley returned at 7:33 PM.

The following Item was pulled from the Consent Agenda by Council Member Ward:

Item 7.H. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Amending Fees Applicable to Chapter 2 (Administration) of the City Code Regarding the Schedule of Fees for Public Records, as requested by the City Clerk Department.

Council Member Ward asked staff the amount of time it took to download and save one megabyte of PDF records. City Clerk Yocum explained that fulfilling Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests involved more than just saving files to a USB drive. She walked through the process required and the complexities that could be involved based on the records requested. City Clerk Yocum noted a significant increase (40%) in the number of requests received since 2023 and described the current fee structure for printed and electronic records. Council Member Ward and City Clerk Yocum discussed the proposed policy to begin charging for electronic FOIA requests. Council Member Ward expressed concern that the policy could be arbitrary and burdensome, since individuals could repeatedly request large amounts of data for free, creating a revolving door effect. She questioned the fairness and effectiveness of the proposed charges, especially for non-commercial requesters. City Clerk Yocum explained the current process for handling FOIA requests, the significant increase in requested volume, and the staff time involved. She also clarified the timelines for responding to requests and the challenges posed by frequent, high-volume requesters, particularly from commercial entities. City Clerk Yocum stressed the need to balance staff workload with public access and transparency.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, to approve the Item with an amendment that removed the megabyte fee.

Council Member Straza asked City Clerk Yocum how many staff hours were spent fulfilling FOIA requests. City Clerk Yocum explained that three full-time staff members across departments worked on FOIA requests, highlighted a significant increase in commercial requests, and noted that frequent requesters often moved on to other municipalities when fees were established by the City. She emphasized that the new fees would not become a revenue stream for the City, but instead a deterrent for repeat commercial requesters looking to profit off records received. She stated that the changes were not aimed at impacting non-commercial requestors.

Council Member Ward expressed interest in having the megabyte fee assessed to the commercial requesters and asked how to proceed.

Chris Spanos, Corporation Council, recommended post-poning the Item to allow staff to provide additional data to Council and to present a new version of the ordinance reflecting the megabyte fee assessed to commercial requesters only.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, to postpone the Item until the October 13, 2025 Council Meeting.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Motion Carried.

Regular Agenda

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.A. Consideration and Action on a Resolution (1) Approving the Early Termination (Approx. 15 Months Early) of the Existing Agreement with Axon Enterprises, Inc.; and (2) Approving a New Twelve-Year (Beginning October 1, 2025) Agreement with Axon Enterprises, Inc., in the Amount of $13,559,883.81, as requested by the Police Department.

Senior Deputy City Manager Sue McLaughlin explained that the agreement with Axon had been under negotiation since July 2024. She explained how the contract included a portion of the records management system that was related to ongoing discussions about the shared sales tax agreement with McLean County ("County"), the Town of Normal ("Town"), and the City. She emphasized that the Bloomington Police Department ("BPD") had used Axon products for many years with a strong track record and added that the contract covered equipment such as tasers, body cameras, and related software. She then introduced Police Chief Jamal Simington to provide further information.

Chief Simington presented an overview of the contract. He explained that Axon had been a BPD partner for 22 years, providing essential equipment including body-worn cameras, fleet cameras, tasers, and interview room technology. He emphasized the importance of renewing the contract to maintain and upgrade equipment, manage over 800 terabytes of digital evidence, and lock in cost savings of 7–10% annually by bundling services. Chief Simington highlighted the benefits of the Axon ecosystem including improved officer safety, efficiency, and accountability, as well as new features like AI-assisted report writing, real-time translation, and enhanced digital evidence management. He also discussed the contract’s flexibility, non-appropriation clause, and potential for collaboration with other local law enforcement agencies. The total contract value was over $13.5 million for 12 years with significant long-term savings compared to purchasing services separately.

Council Member Straza confirmed with Chief Simington that Axon would continue to update and improve the technology throughout the contract, ensuring the City would have access to the latest advancements and regular upgrades.

Council Member Scott asked Chief about safeguards in place to prevent AI-generated errors in police reports. He explained that the system required officers to review and edit AI-generated draft narratives by intentionally adding false information prompting officers to review carefully. He added that supervisors were required to review final reports also to ensure accuracy and validity. He emphasized that these layers of review and auditing were designed to ensure the ethical and professional use of AI in reporting.

Council Member Ward questioned the urgency of approving the Axon contract noting that a meeting with the County and the Town to discuss records management was scheduled the following week. Chief Simington explained that Axon had already finalized the agreement, and delaying approval could result in higher costs due to upcoming price increases. He emphasized that the contract included an out clause, allowing the City to withdraw from certain components if necessary, while also securing pricing.

Council Member Hendricks confirmed with Chief that the contract figures included the records management system and that the costs would be reduced if the City opted out of that component in favor of a shared system with the County. Council Member Hendricks noted no duplicative efforts were being made.

Council Member Lee confirmed with Chief Simington that BPD had been in communication with the County and the Town's Chiefs throughout the process.

Mayor Brady asked Chief Simington about interoperability with other vendors. Chief explained that the software included in the agreement would enable the Axon system to interface and share information with other systems used by the County and Town.

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, to approve the Item as presented.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 162

A RESOLUTION (1) APPROVING THE EARLY TERMINATION (APPROX. 15 MONTHS EARLY) OF THE EXISTING AGREEMENT WITH AXON ENTERPRISES, INC.; AND (2) APPROVING A NEW TWELVE-YEAR (BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025) AGREEMENT WITH AXON ENTERPRISES, INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF $13,559,883.81

The following Item was presented:

<u>Item 8.B. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Approving Text Amendments to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington [Chapter 44] Relating to Development Intensity and Commercial Uses in Residential Districts, and Single-Family Residential in the D-2 (Downtown Transitional) District, as requested by the Development Services Department.</u>

Deputy City Manager Billy Tyus explained that Bloomington was facing a housing crisis and stated that Items 8.B., 8.C., and 8.D. on the agenda aimed at addressing immediate and long-term housing needs. He described how the proposed zoning code amendments and the Opticos report were intended to increase housing options. He emphasized that no single solution could solve the problem and clarified that the City sought a targeted, incremental approach based on community feedback and infrastructure considerations. He explained that the proposed zoning changes would allow for accessory dwelling units ("ADUs") but that, in response to community concerns, the proposed language would require that ADUs go through a special use permit process. He pointed out that the process would involve review by the Zoning Board of Appeals and final approval by the Council, ensuring oversight and consideration of neighborhood-specific factors before being built.

Director Kelly Pfeifer reiterated the additional oversight included and hit on some of the factors that would be considered. She added that the amendment also sought to clarify confusing provisions in existing Code to make it easier for residents to understand and comply with ADU regulations.

Council Member Ward asked for confirmation that the proposed zoning changes would eliminate minimum lot sizes required for ADUs while adding a special use permit process to increase oversight. Director Kelly Pfeifer confirmed.

Council Member Montney questioned whether removing minimum lot area per dwelling in all residential zoning codes would increase housing density. Alissa Pemberton, Planning Manager, clarified that the change would not eliminate the minimum lot size for properties and that, in single-family districts, only one main house would still be allowed, with the option of an ADU through the special use process. Council Member Montney questioned whether there were pending cases driving this change. Mrs. Pemberton noted that several pending ADU requests in different districts could not move forward under the existing Code. She highlighted that allowing ADUs would allow people to age in place and allow for older children to live on the property, but not in the main house. They then discussed Council Member Montney's concerns and staff emphasized, if approved, cases would continue to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mosley, to extend Council Discussion time by 5 minutes.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Motion Carried.

Council Member Ward asked if the special use permit process for ADUs was intended to address concerns about specific locations and inquired about the locations of pending ADU requests. Mrs. Pemberton confirmed the special use permit was designed to address site-specific issues and clarified that the pending ADU requests were not in Old Farm Lakes or Harvest Point.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Hendricks, to approve the Item as presented.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Scott

Nayes: Montney, Lee

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 - 064

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING CODE OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON [CHAPTER 44] RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY AND COMMERCIAL USES IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS, AND SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL IN THE D-2 (DOWNTOWN TRANSITIONAL) DISTRICT

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.C. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Approving Text Amendments to the Zoning Code of the City of Bloomington [Chapter 44] Relating to Practical Buildability in Mixed- and Multiple-Family Residential Districts, as requested by the Development Services Department.

Director Pfeifer presented the proposed zoning code amendments regarding ADUs, as well as proposed changes to building height limits in certain residential districts to allow for more incremental density. Throughout her presentation, she explained the reasoning behind these changes, addressed concerns about infrastructure, neighborhood character, and stormwater management, and clarified how the new processes would provide additional oversight and flexibility for both residents and the City.

Council Member Montney voiced concerns that the proposed zoning changes, especially those increasing building heights and density, could have significant, unintended impacts on established neighborhoods. She worried that applying these changes across all districts might alter neighborhood character and surprise residents who were not expecting such transformations, particularly in areas like Old Farm Lakes.

Council Members Straza and Montney asked for more information on the proposed changes to the number of stories per building and the height of the building. Director Pfeifer and Mrs. Pemberton responded by explaining the technical aspects of the proposed changes including the alignment of story and height limits in the Code, and clarified that the increase in building height would be relatively modest in terms of feet.

Council Member Montney inquired about current development proposals that would be impacted by the proposed increase in building height limits in the R3a District and questioned how residents would be notified of such changes. Mrs. Pemberton and Director Pfeifer confirmed that a specific project was awaiting approval, and explained that if the text amendment passed, projects meeting the new standards would not require public hearings or neighbor notification. They also discussed the background and rationale for the proposed changes, noting that the adjustment was intended to address developer needs and align with Building Code triggers.

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Kearns, to approve the Item as presented.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Scott

Nayes: Montney, Lee

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 - 065

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING CODE OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON [CHAPTER 44] RELATING TO PRACTICAL BUILDABILITY IN MIXED- AND MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

The following Item was presented:

<u>Item 8.D. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Providing Direction on the Draft Opticos Report, as requested by the Development Services Department.</u>

Senior Deputy City Manager Tyus presented the Opticos report, clarifying that the City was not adopting the report's recommendations in full, but instead were seeking Council approval to further study and identify specific areas where missing middle housing might be appropriate. He emphasized that any future zoning changes would be targeted, based on detailed analysis of infrastructure and neighborhood needs, and would involve additional Council review with public input before implementation.

Director Pfeifer clarified that the City had never intended to apply missing middle housing recommendations from the Opticos report Citywide. Instead, she explained that staff planned to focus on specific regeneration and preservation areas identified in the comprehensive plan, where infrastructure and walkability might support such housing. She emphasized that significant additional analysis would be needed before any changes were proposed, and that the process would involve targeted overlay districts rather than broad zoning changes.

Council Member Hendricks emphasized that the Council was only accepting the Opticos report as information and not making any immediate zoning changes. He acknowledged public concerns and misinformation, clarified that future actions would require additional Council decisions, and expressed appreciation for staff's efforts to inform and engage the community.

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Kearns, to approve the Item as presented.

Council Member Montney expressed concerns about the lack of clear, written documentation specifying which recommendations from the Opticos report would be implemented or excluded. She emphasized the importance of transparency and detailed staff communications.

Council Member Mosley acknowledged that zoning and housing changes are sensitive. He thanked staff for clarifying the process, encouraged residents to participate in public hearings, and emphasized the importance of making informed, incremental decisions rather than adopting all recommendations from the Opticos report at once.

Council Member Straza reiterated that Council was only accepting the Opticos report as information and not enacting any zoning changes. He was concerned about potential impacts to neighborhoods like Old Farm Lakes, stressed the importance of careful and strategic approaches, and urged future changes to be thoroughly studied and limited to appropriate areas.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Scott

Nayes: Montney, Lee

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 163

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING DIRECTION ON THE DRAFT OPTICOS REPORT

City Manager's Discussion

Senior Deputy City Manager Tyus announced a public voting contest to fund concerts at the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts (BCPA), gave an update on Downtown parking and construction, and reminded the public that Downtown businesses remained open during ongoing revitalization efforts.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Brady shared updates on recent community events including naming a street in memory of Reverend Frank McSwain Sr. and the Festival of Joy Downtown. He acknowledged Council and staff participating and highlighted positive community spirit and engagement.

Sr. Deputy City Manager Tyus asked to add his thanks to Council Member Montney for her active involvement and feedback from the community and how they significantly influenced staff's approach to housing and zoning issues, leading to changes in the recommendations presented.

Council Members' Discussion

No discussion was had.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

Council Member Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Kearns, Mosley, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Motion Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 PM.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Dan Brady, Mayor

ATTEST

Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk