City of Bloomington Illinois

Minutes
City Council - Regular Session Meeting
Monday, September 22, 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: 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, Remote 6:02 PM
Council Member Abby Scott

Mayor Dan Brady

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Hendricks, to allow Council Member Lee to attend the meeting remotely due to traveling for work.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion Carried.

Council Member Lee joined the meeting at 6:02 PM.

Recognition/Appointments

The following Item was presented:

Item 5.A. Mayoral Proclamation for the Designation of September 23, 2025, as Illinois Wesleyan University Day, as requested by the Administration Department.

Van Miller, Assistant Vice President for Advancement of Corporate and Community Partnerships, accepted the Proclamation. He expressed appreciation for the recognition and thanked the City for being a valued partner and advocate for the University throughout history. Council Member Ward congratulated the University and the students in attendance and noted various contributions that alumni had made in the community.

The following Item was presented:

Item 5.B. Recognition of Boards & Commissions Appointments, as requested by the Administration Department.

Mayor Brady recognized the following appointments: (1) Dean Fletcher, Board of Police and Fire Commissioners; (2) Maureen Clancy and (3) Ronald Van Donk, Citizens' Beautification Committee; (4) Joseph Hale, Japanese Sister City; (5) Melissa Libert, Library Board of Trustees;

(6) Micheal Mosley, McLean County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; (7) Morgan Riley, Planning Commission; (8) Nitin Aurora, Public Safety & Community Relations Board; (9) Ben Zimmerman, Technology Commission; (10) Charles Brim, Transportation Committee; (11) Rebecca Welch and (12) Melissa Woods, Zoning Board of Appeals; (13) Judy Buchanan, Connect Transit Board; and (14) Rob Fazzini, McLean County Public Building Commission.

Public Comment

Mayor Brady read a public comment statement of procedure. Michael Hintz emailed public comment. The following spoke in person: (1) Brian Dixon; (2) Amy Endicott; (3) Gary Lambery; and (4) Misty Metroz.

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 Mosley, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with the exception of Item 7.M.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion Carried.

Item 7.A. Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the August 25, 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 $12,153,540.06, as requested by the Finance Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Bills & Payroll be approved.)

Item 7.C. Consideration and Action on a Resolution to Approve an Agreement with RJN Group, Inc., for Professional Engineering Services Associated with Water Main Condition Assessment in Census Tract 59, in an Amount Not to Exceed $975,096.05, as requested by the Water Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 164

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN AGREEMENT WITH RJN GROUP, INC., FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH WATER MAIN CONDITION ASSESSMENT IN CENSUS TRACT 59, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $975,096.05

Item 7.D. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Agreement with KP Fencing, for the Water Treatment Plant Removal and Replacement of Fencing Project (Bid #2026-13), in an Amount of $193,666.61, as requested by the Water Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 165

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH KP FENCING, FOR THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF FENCING PROJECT (BID #2026-13), IN AN AMOUNT OF $193,666.61

Item 7.E. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Agreement With PIPCO Companies, Ltd., for Fire Station #3 HVAC Replacement (BID #2026-08), in the Amount of $440,000, as requested by the Fire Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 166

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH PIPCO COMPANIES, LTD., FOR FIRE STATION #3 HVAC REPLACEMENT (BID #2026-08), IN THE AMOUNT OF $440,000

Item 7.F. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving a Contract with Western Specialty Contractors, for the Katthoefer Animal Building Roof Replacement (Bid #2026- 10), in an Amount of $54,875, as requested by the Parks & Recreation Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 167

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A CONTRACT WITH WESTERN SPECIALTY CONTRACTORS, FOR THE KATTHOEFER ANIMAL BUILDING ROOF REPLACEMENT (BID #2026- 10), IN AN AMOUNT OF $54,875

Item 7.G. Consideration and Action on (1) a Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement with District 87 for the Development of an Inclusive Playground on District 87 Property at Stevenson Elementary School, in an Amount Not to Exceed $250,000; and (2) an Ordinance Amending the Budget Ordinance for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 2026, for the Parkland Dedication Fund, to Utilize Reserves, in the Amount of $250,000, as requested by the Parks & Recreation Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution and Ordinance be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 168

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH DISTRICT 87 FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND ON DISTRICT 87 PROPERTY AT STEVENSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $250,000

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 066

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING APRIL 30, 2026, FOR THE PARKLAND DEDICATION FUND, TO UTILIZE RESERVES, IN THE AMOUNT OF $250,000

Item 7.H. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Easement Agreement with the Illinois Department of Military Affairs for Stormwater Collection & Conveyance, as requested by the Development Services Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 169

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN EASEMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS FOR STORMWATER COLLECTION & CONVEYANCE

Item 7.I. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance (1) Waiving the Technical Bidding Requirements; (2) Approving the Purchase of Life Insurance Through Reliance Matrix, for the

Remainder of Fiscal Year 2026, in the Amount of $57,000; and (3) Authorizing the City Manager to Approve One Calendar Year Renewal, as requested by the Human Resources Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 067

AN ORDINANCE (1) WAIVING THE TECHNICAL BIDDING REQUIREMENTS; (2) APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF LIFE INSURANCE THROUGH RELIANCE MATRIX, FOR THE REMAINDER OF FISCAL YEAR 2026, IN THE AMOUNT OF $57,000; AND (3) AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPROVE ONE CALENDAR YEAR RENEWAL

Item 7.J. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Approving a Zoning Map Amendment for the Property Commonly Known as 2425 E. Lincoln Street, from the B-1 (General Commercial) District to the R-3B (Multiple-Family Residence) District (PIN: 21 - 11-327 - 001), as requested by the Development Services Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 068

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FOR THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 2425 E. LINCOLN STREET, FROM THE B-1 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL) DISTRICT TO THE R-3B (MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE) DISTRICT (PIN: 21 - 11-327- 001),

Item 7.K. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Amending the City Code Updating Chapter 6 (Alcoholic Beverages) to No Longer Require City-Owned Facilities Holding Liquor Licenses to Provide Bonds to the City, as requested by the City Clerk Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 069

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY CODE UPDATING CHAPTER 6 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) TO NO LONGER REQUIRE CITY-OWNED FACILITIES HOLDING LIQUOR LICENSES TO PROVIDE BONDS TO THE CITY

Item 7.L. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Amending City Code Chapters 1 (General Provisions), 16 (Department of Finance), and 39 (Taxation) Related to Returned Payments, Applicable Service Fees/Charges, Severability and Privacy Clauses, and the Schedule of Fees, as requested by the Finance Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 070

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTERS 1 (GENERAL PROVISIONS), 16 (DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE), AND 39 (TAXATION) RELATED TO RETURNED PAYMENTS, APPLICABLE SERVICE FEES/CHARGES, SEVERABILITY AND PRIVACY CLAUSES, AND THE SCHEDULE OF FEES

Item 7.M. was pulled from the Consent Agenda by Council Member Scott.

Item 7.N. Consideration and Action on an Application from Nitelife Elements, LLC, d/b/a Wild Oak Social, to be located at 612 N. Main St., Requesting Approval of the Creation of a 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 Scott:

Item 7.M. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Amending City Code Chapter 2 (Administration), Article II. (City Council), Section 17 Updating the Order of Business on Council Agendas, as requested by the Mayor.

Council Member Scott asked for additional information on the reasoning behind the proposal. Mayor Brady explained he believed it would be helpful for Council Members to have the courtesy of going first for comments by the elected, allowing members to represent different wards and share updates or events before hearing from others. He was open to any questions and emphasized the Item was merely a procedural courtesy.

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, Mosley, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee

Nayes: Scott

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 071

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY CODE CHAPTER 2 (ADMINISTRATION), ARTICLE II. (CITY COUNCIL), SECTION 17 UPDATING THE ORDER OF BUSINESS ON COUNCIL AGENDAS

Regular Agenda

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.A. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Amending the Bloomington City Code Updating Chapter 39 Pertaining to the Implementation of a Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax for the City of Bloomington, Illinois, as requested by the Legal Department.

City Manager Jeff Jurgens explained that the City had the option to continue its local 1% grocery tax even after the State had repealed its version. He highlighted that the tax was not new, but a continuation, and that its removal would result in a significant budget shortfall of around $3 million per year. He noted that keeping the tax would help the City avoid service cuts and fund important capital projects, while its elimination would require deeper reductions. He stressed that many comparable Illinois municipalities were also keeping the tax, and that staff recommended its retention as a stable revenue source critical to maintaining fiscal health and supporting the City's ongoing needs.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Montney, to deny the Item as presented.

Council Member Ward argued against maintaining the 1% grocery tax, emphasizing its regressive impact on low-income and vulnerable residents. She expressed concern that the tax would burden those least able to afford it, and proposed that the City consider alternative revenue sources, such as increasing taxes on luxury items or expanding gaming licenses, to avoid placing additional strain on essential goods like groceries.

Council Members Ward and Mosley discussed parliamentary procedures regarding when and how Council members could ask questions and hold debate.

Council Member Mosley questioned whether increasing gaming licenses or certain taxes, such as those on liquor, would generate more revenue for the City, and whether the City had authority to raise them locally. Finance Director Scott Rathbun responded that increasing the number of gaming licenses might simply shift revenue rather than increase it. He confirmed that the City holds the authority to raise local packaged liquor taxes.

Council Member Montney agreed with Council Member Ward's opposition to the grocery tax, noting that the State had removed the tax for similar reasons. She expressed concern that the City's reliance on reserves pointed to a spending problem rather than a revenue problem and argued that the estimated $3 million in revenue from the tax represented money being taken from residents' disposable income.

Council Member Kearns asked staff to clarify whether the alternative revenue sources suggested by Council Member Ward, such as increasing taxes on gaming, hotels, or restaurants, had been considered and deemed feasible. She wanted to better understand why maintaining the grocery tax was being recommended over pursuing other potential revenue.

Council Member Ward and Finance Director Rathbun discussed potential revenue from alternatives to the grocery tax. Council Member Ward also pointed out that video gaming revenues had steadily increased since their inception, suggesting some alternatives could be feasible, though Director Rathbun cautioned that future revenues from other sources are less predictable than those from the existing grocery tax.

Council Member Mosley made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, 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 Mosley asked Director Rathbun whether raising Bloomington's food and beverage tax could lead people to spend money elsewhere, thereby reducing expected revenue. Director Rathbun confirmed.

Council Member Straza cautioned Council against relying on speculative or uncertain revenue from alternatives like increased gaming or liquor taxes, emphasizing that such projections were based on historical data that might not reflect current realities. He advocated for making budget decisions using proven, reliable revenue sources, such as the existing grocery tax, rather than uncertain assumptions about new income streams.

Council Member Scott expressed openness to consider creative, less burdensome revenue alternatives, but felt uncomfortable making such changes at the last minute. She emphasized avoiding cutting revenues in a way that would reduce City services. She also shared that after talking with constituents, the majority voiced support for keeping the grocery tax as long as the City managed funds responsibly.

Council Member Ward confirmed with Director Rathbun that the grocery tax projection was based on historic data and was a reliable source of income.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Montney, Danenberger, Ward, Lee

Nayes: Kearns, Mosley, Straza, Hendricks, Scott

Motion Failed.

Deputy City Clerk Amanda Stutsman noted that if additional discussion was desired that Council would need a motion to extend the Council Discussion time.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Straza, to extend the Council discussion time by 10 minutes.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion Carried.

Council Member Mosley asked the City Manager and Finance Director about specific programs or services that could face cuts if the grocery tax was not continued. He sought clarification of the impact on core services like Police and Fire, as well as capital projects. He noted his intent was to understand the trade-offs and consequences for City operations and future infrastructure planning if the revenue from the grocery tax was lost.

City Manager Jurgens explained that, if the tax were not renewed, the City would need to consider further cuts including possible reductions in staff and programs. He discussed that previous staff cuts had been achieved through attrition, mainly in back-office roles rather than public safety or first responders. He emphasized that future decisions on reductions would involve Council input and might affect capital projects or additional employee positions.

Council Member Mosley and City Manager Jurgens further discussed the potential impact on City capital projects if the grocery tax revenue is lost. City Manager Jurgens expressed concern that, without the tax, critical infrastructure such as flood control and public safety facilities could not continue. He emphasized that staff had already tightened budgets and prioritized needs, but continued loss of revenue would further increase pressure to defer or scale back important projects and City services.

Council Member Straza made a motion to approve the Item with the caveat that the funds be earmarked for infrastructure needs.

The motion died due to a lack of a second.

Council Member Straza and Corporation Counsel Chris Spanos discussed the proposed Ordinance's language, and the potential to modify it to earmark the funds collected for infrastructure needs. Mr. Spanos did not support modifying the proposed Ordinance on the floor.

Mayor Brady and Mr. Spanos discussed the potential to earmark the funds without creating a dedicated fund or modifying the proposed Ordinance.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Montney, to extend the Council Discussion time by two minutes.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion Carried.

Council Member Ward continued to seek alternative solutions to recoup the $3 million. Council discussed parliamentary procedure with Corporation Counsel Spanos.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, to approve the Item with an amendment to the Ordinance replacing the 1% tax with a 0.5% tax.

Council Member Mosley warned Council about tying staff's hands by allocating funds for infrastructure, as well as potential ramifications with the Internal Revenue Service. He confirmed with Corporation Counsel Spanos that staff would need to do additional research to verify the legality of allocating funds in such a manner.

Council Member Lee confirmed with City Manager Jurgens that the grocery tax, like any City- imposed tax, could be repealed or amended by Council at any time in the future. City Manager Jurgens confirmed that if Council later preferred alternative revenue sources, they could choose to rescind the grocery tax, provided appropriate notice was given.

Council Member Ward and City Manager Jurgens discussed ramifications if the grocery tax Ordinance wasn't passed by October 1, 2025. Deputy City Clerk Stutsman confirmed there were no more meetings before the October 1st cutoff.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

Ayes: Danenberger, Ward

Nayes: Kearns, Mosley, Montney, Straza, Hendricks, Lee, Scott

Motion Failed.

Council Member Mosley 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, Straza, Hendricks, Lee, Scott

Nayes: Montney, Danenberger, Ward

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 072

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BLOOMINGTON CITY CODE UPDATING CHAPTER 39 PERTAINING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MUNICIPAL GROCERY RETAILERS' OCCUPATION TAX AND A MUNICIPAL GROCERY SERVICE OCCUPATION TAX FOR THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.B. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Amending Section 7-307 to Expand the Number of Video Gaming Licenses Available to Establishments in Bloomington, as requested by the Legal Department.

City Manager Jurgens presented a proposal to increase the number of City Video Gaming

Licenses from 60 to 75. He explained the existing licensing fees, the regulatory framework, and recent efforts to enforce compliance with sign regulations. He noted that the proposed Ordinance aimed to clear the current Video Gaming Waitlist and provide additional capacity for new establishments.

Council Member Hendricks expressed his long-time support for increasing the cap, which he believed would increase fairness among establishments.

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

Council Member Montney and City Manager Jurgens discussed how video gaming signage was a separate issue. She voiced concerns about the negative social impact of gaming on lower-income residents and stressed the importance of thorough audits and compliance with regulations. City Manager Jurgens and Deputy City Clerk Stutsman explained the annual audit and review process. Council Member Montney advocated for a more detailed review.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Nayes: Montney, Ward

Motion Carried.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 073

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 7-307 TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF VIDEO GAMING LICENSES AVAILABLE TO ESTABLISHMENTS IN BLOOMINGTON

The following Item was presented:

Item 8.C. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Enter Into and Execute Short-Term Sales Tax Sharing Agreements with Downtown Businesses Impacted During Phase 1 of the Downtown Streetscape Project, as requested by the Administration Department.

Sr. Deputy City Manager Billy Tyus introduced an Ordinance to help the Downtown businesses impacted by the Downtown Streetscape Project. He explained that eligible businesses would receive 50% of the City's share of sales taxes generated during active construction in front of their businesses, offering financial relief to them while construction disrupted their operations.

Council Member Hendricks thanked staff and Administration.

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.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 – 074

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AND EXECUTE SHORT-TERM SALES TAX SHARING AGREEMENTS WITH DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

IMPACTED DURING PHASE 1 OF THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE PROJECT

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Rathbun provided an update on City revenues and expenditures. He reported that major tax sources, such as home rule and state sales tax, were performing above budget due to increased online retail sales. He covered local use tax collections being down, hotel and motel taxes going strong, while the replacement tax was under budget, but expected to rebound. He explained the City's use of reserves for projects, and described how equipment needs and capital purchases were trimmed in the new budget. He explained that general fund expenses were tracking as expected, and then explained where to find financial reports online.

City Manager's Discussion

No City Manager Report was given.

Council Members' Discussion

Council Member Scott thanked the City for organizing the "Grab a Cone with Community Engagement" event at Tipton Park, praising it as educational and enjoyable for residents. She expressed appreciation for the City's efforts to connect with the community.

Council Member Mosley acknowledged attending the recent NAACP ("National Association for the Advancement of Colored People") Freedom Fund Banquet alongside the Mayor and Council Member Ward, noting it was a great event and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in significant community gatherings.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Brady shared his experience participating in a ride-along with the Fire Department, highlighting the insights he gained about ambulance services and related finances. He briefly mentioned attending other community events and expressed appreciation for staff's work.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

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

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion Carried (viva voce).

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON	**ATTEST**
Dan Brady, Mayor	Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk