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Minutes
City Council - Regular Session Meeting
Monday, November 24, 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, Remote 6:01 PM
Council Member Sheila Montney, Remote 6:01 PM
Council Member John Danenberger
Council Member Michael Straza
Council Member Cody Hendricks
Council Member Mollie Ward
Council Member Kent Lee
Council Member Abby Scott
Mayor Dan Brady

Council Member Straza made a motion, seconded by Council Member Ward, to allow Council Member Mosley to attend remotely due to a work conflict and allow Council Member Montney to attend remotely due to illness.

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Motion Carried.

Council Members Mosley and Montney joined the meeting at 6:01 PM.

Public Comment

No Public Comment was received.

Consent Agenda

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

Item 6.A. Consideration and Action on Approving Bills and Payroll in the Amount of $10,313,496.87, as requested by the Finance Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Bills and Payroll be approved.)

Item 6.B. Consideration and Action on Approving Appointments to Boards and Commissions, as requested by the Administration Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Appointments be approved.)

Item 6.C. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving the Purchase of Golf Mowing Equipment, from Deere & Company, for Use at City Golf Courses, in an Amount Not to Exceed $322,980.40, as requested by the Parks & Recreation Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 186

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF GOLF MOWING EQUIPMENT, FROM DEERE & COMPANY, FOR USE AT CITY GOLF COURSES, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $322,980.40

Item 6.D. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving the First Amendment to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 General Resurfacing - Phase II Project Agreement with Rowe Construction, A Division of United Contractors Midwest, Inc., in the Amount of $63,334.36, as requested by the Engineering Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 187

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 GENERAL RESURFACING - PHASE II PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH ROWE CONSTRUCTION, A DIVISION OF UNITED CONTRACTORS MIDWEST, INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF $63,334.36

Item 6.E. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving the First Amendment to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 General Resurfacing - Phase I Project Agreement with Rowe Construction, A Division of United Contractors Midwest, Inc., in the Amount of $47,612.89, as requested by the Engineering Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 188

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 GENERAL RESURFACING - PHASE I PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH ROWE CONSTRUCTION, A DIVISION OF UNITED CONTRACTORS MIDWEST, INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF $47,612.89

Item 6.F. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving the Annual Regional Service Agreement with McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) for Regional Planning Services, in the Amount of $54,000 for the MCRPC Fiscal Year of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, as requested by the Development Services Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 189

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ANNUAL REGIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH MCLEAN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MCRPC) FOR REGIONAL PLANNING SERVICES, IN THE AMOUNT OF $54,000 FOR THE MCRPC FISCAL YEAR OF JULY 1, 2025, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026

Item 6.G. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Baxter & Woodman, Inc., for the Design of Phase 5 of the East Street Basin Project, in the Amount of $106,517, as requested by the Engineering Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 190

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH BAXTER & WOODMAN, INC., FOR THE DESIGN OF PHASE 5 OF THE EAST STREET BASIN PROJECT, IN THE AMOUNT OF $106,517

Item 6.H. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Baxter & Woodman, Inc., for Phase 1 Sanitary Sewer Hydraulic Modeling, in the Amount of $85,000, as requested by the Engineering Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 191

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH BAXTER & WOODMAN, INC., FOR PHASE 1 SANITARY SEWER HYDRAULIC MODELING, IN THE AMOUNT OF $85,000

Item 6.I. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Approving a Road Use Agreement with Washington Street Solar 1, LLC, for Utilization of Bloomington Heights Road, in the Amount of $25,000, as requested by the Engineering Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Resolution be approved.)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 192

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A ROAD USE AGREEMENT WITH WASHINGTON STREET SOLAR 1, LLC, FOR UTILIZATION OF BLOOMINGTON HEIGHTS ROAD, IN THE AMOUNT OF $25,000

Item 6.J. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance Approving the Final Plat of The Grove on Kickapoo Creek Tenth Addition (Part of PIN: 22-08-400-017), as requested by the Development Services Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Ordinance be approved.)

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 - 089

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE FINAL PLAT OF THE GROVE ON KICKAPOO CREEK TENTH ADDITION (PART OF PIN: 22-08-400-017)

Item 6.K. Consideration and Action to Approve the Local 362 Civilian Police Services Contract, as requested by the Human Resources Department. (Recommended Motion: The proposed Collective Bargaining Agreement be approved.)

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 7.A. Consideration and Action on Approving the 2025 Tax Levy Estimate for the City of Bloomington, in the Amount of $25,320,384, as requested by the Finance Department.

City Manager Jeff Jurgens presented background on the 2025 property tax levy estimate and the City's financial structure. He explained that the City's total assessed value was about $2.4 billion the prior year and was projected to increase by roughly $195 million to about $2.6 billion after conservative adjustments by the Finance Department. He showed how a Bloomington property tax bill was divided among taxing bodies, noting that only about 11% of the total property tax dollar went to the City. He outlined the City's nine separate levies (e.g., pensions, fire protection, IMRF, Social Security), emphasizing that each levy produced dollars that could only be spent on its specific purpose, and that the total 2024 levy was approximately $22.3 million. He highlighted key funds, starting with the Police Department. He then described similar dynamics for

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the Fire Department, and moved on to the Parks Department. Finally, he reviewed the City's tax rate history, showing that it had generally declined from 1998 through 2004, rose around 2009, then stayed flat for several years before dropping sharply after 2022, amounting to a little over a 21% decrease in the rate from 1998 to the most recent year.

Finance Director Scott Rathbun reported that, despite new or expanded revenue sources such as online sales tax, cannabis, and streaming-related taxes, the City's total tax revenues from 2019 through the Fiscal Year ("FY") 2026 budget had grown at an annualized rate of only about 3%. He explained that when an estimated $6 million was added to reflect the current uptick in online sales tax, the annualized growth rate increased but only by about 4%, which still trailed the roughly 5 - 6% annual increase in key costs such as parks, public safety, and IT/cybersecurity. He emphasized that this created a structural gap between the City's revenue growth and its inflation-driven expense growth.

City Manager Jurgens then presented in more detail the major cost drivers affecting the City's budget, noting sharp increases in electricity (up 66% or $1.4 million), health insurance (up $4 million), pensions (up $4.8 million across all systems), and IT/software, including cybersecurity and public safety technology (up 103% or $1.3 million since FY 2021). He also highlighted significant inflation in construction and equipment costs, including higher prices for sidewalks, asphalt, fire engines, ambulances, garbage trucks, and leaf vacuums. He compared peer communities, emphasizing that Bloomington did not have separate taxing districts for parks, transit, or entertainment venues and therefore maintains a comparatively favorable overall tax burden, despite providing those services directly with a relatively low levy. He then outlined three options for the 2025 property tax levy: Option 1, the staff recommendation, would increase the rate to approximately 0.95 (below the previous 0.99), generating about $3 million in additional revenue to support police, fire, and parks; Option 2 would add another $1 million primarily for pensions and bring the rate close to historical levels; and Option 3 would keep the rate flat at 0.90, still yielding about $1.7 million more due to higher assessed values. He broke out what it would cost individual households acknowledging the burden and stressing the City's hard work and consideration to keep costs low. He described internal measures staff had already taken to manage the forecasted deficit including holding staffing flat, reducing positions through attrition (with notable cuts in Finance, Human Resources, and Parks), improving operational efficiencies, enhancing revenue generation at City venues, and seeking ways within Public Works to maximize infrastructure investment despite escalating project costs.

Council Member Montney reminded the community that the City's portion of the residents' property tax bill was a small portion of the City's overall budget. She noted payments to the Fire and Police pension funds and continued commitment to fully fund them. She then asked for a comparison of the annualized taxes vs. the budgeted amounts. Director Rathbun reiterated his calculations and clarified that the analysis included all tax revenues including those affected by State legislative changes such as streaming taxes, resulting in a 13.4% increase over last year.

Council Member Montney expressed disagreement with the proposal and asked if the total annualized amount of revenue from all current taxes exceeded the requested 3% tax increase. Director Rathbun did not believe so and further explained the calculations.

Council Member Scott expressed concern about what additional costs would mean for the City in the future. She noted that if the situation could be solved simply through different budgeting, the significant cuts already made would not have been necessary. She emphasized that deferring necessary costs would likely increase future expenses and, for that reason, she favored Option 1 for the tax levy.

Mayor Brady clarified with City Manager Jurgens that the total contributions from the General Fund to the Fire and Police Pensions would be $4 million.

Council Member Ward made a motion, seconded by Council Member Danenberger, to approve the Item with Option 1 (Levy Amount of $25.3 Million; Rate of 0.95%; for a Total Increase of 13.4%).

Mayor Brady directed the Clerk to call roll:

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

Nayes: Montney, Lee

Motion Carried.

The following item was presented:

Item 7.B. Consideration and Action on Approving the 2025 Tax Levy Estimate for the Bloomington Public Library, in the Amount of $6,960,000, as requested by the Library Department.

Library Director Jeanne Hamilton, joined by Library Board President Catrina Parker, presented the 2025 tax levy estimate for the Bloomington Public Library. She explained that about 4% of each resident's property tax bill went to the Library, and that the Library relied heavily on property taxes, as it made up about 85% of their revenues. She explained that on the expense side, roughly 59% of costs were wages and benefits, 13% went to bond repayment for the recent expansion and renovation, and about 10% supported the Library's collection. Director Hamilton reported continued growth in use compared to the first half of the previous fiscal year and showed that Bloomington's library tax rate, cost per household, and cost per capita were lower than similarly sized libraries in nearby cities. She stated that the proposed levy was $6.9 million, a cumulative 1.94% increase, which covered both operations and bond repayment, and that the Library Board chose to use capital reserves to reduce the bond levy component, so the overall proposal resulted in a lower tax rate than the prior year. She used a sample $200,000 home (reassessed to $215,600), and she estimated the change would equal about $15.65 expense per month, emphasizing that one borrowed book per month would more than offset that cost for a typical property owner.

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, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Scott

Nayes: Lee

Motion Carried.

City Manager Jurgens explained next steps of the approval process for the tax levies.

The following item was presented:

Item 7.C. Consideration and Action on an Ordinance to Amend Chapter 2 (Administration) of the City Code to Make the Special Commission for Safe Communities a Permanent

Commission, as requested by the Administration Department.

Dr. Scott Denton, former Chair of the Special Commission for Safe Communities, presented and endorsed the proposed Ordinance to convert the Special Commission into a permanent Commission. He stated that the proposed Ordinance and Exhibit A accurately reflected the Commission's prior recommendations and that the Commission had reviewed and supported the language, especially the charge to "*ensure the sustained success of the City's violence prevention strategies, with a continued focus on gun violence and violence prevention strategies*." He described the Commission as a key "defense" complementing traditional "offense" systems such as police and the criminal justice system, and highlighted the broad, community-partner qualifications for membership. Dr. Denton noted that all current members wished to continue serving, and they recommended that the Commission move to meeting every other month rather than quarterly to maintain momentum.

Council Member Montney asked if making the Commission Countywide- based instead of City-based had been considered, as their work was impactful outside of City limits as well. Dr. Denton stated the proposed Ordinance allowed the Mayor to appoint people outside of the City.

Council Member Ward thanked the Commission members for their work over the past two years and noted that the Commission had fulfilled its original charge. She emphasized that gun violence and community safety were complex issues with no single solution and that a proactive approach was necessary. She stated that a permanent commission, composed of experts and community partners, could help implement the recommendations, as well as monitor and evaluate the City's progress over time, rather than treating the issue as something that could be resolved with a short-term fix. She welcomed as broad and inclusive a membership as possible, including participation from other local governments, but stressed that Bloomington had taken initiative even when other entities chose not to appoint members.

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, Montney, Danenberger, Straza, Hendricks, Ward, Lee, Scott

Motion Carried.

Mayor Brady thanked the Commissioners for their work and for their various services throughout Central Illinois.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 - 090

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2 (ADMINISTRATION) OF THE CITY CODE TO MAKE THE SPECIAL COMMISSION FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES A PERMANENT COMMISSION

Council Member Mosley left the meeting (remotely) at 6:50 PM.

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Rathbun presented the mid-year financial report, noting that overall, City revenues were performing better than budgeted. He cautioned that Personal Property Replacement Tax ("PPRT") revenues had fallen from prior highs and remained uncertain, and that capital and equipment costs, especially for building systems and major infrastructure, were coming in significantly over budget, which could require larger transfers from the General Fund. He

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reported that the General Fund began FY 2026 with about $41 million in reserves, with $13 million already committed to major Downtown projects, and that salaries and benefits appeared slightly high at mid-year. He reported on Enterprise Funds, explaining that water revenues were on track despite rate increases, and one large water project bid was about 40% over budget and under review. He stated that golf operations were performing very well, and arena operations, including the Bison tenancy, were trending positively.

Council Member Ward asked Director Rathbun to address a rumor circulating on social media that the City was only paying interest on the Arena. Director Rathbun explained that, under the current bond structure, the City paid interest twice a year, but the principal payment was made only once a year in June, so the December payment was interest only. He stated that about $16 million in principal remains on the Arena bonds and noted that detailed schedules of remaining principal and interest payments, as well as the related budget line items, were included in the City's budget book.

City Manager's Discussion

City Manager Jurgens congratulated the Arts & Entertainment Department for setting a new gross sales record with the Teresa Caputo show at the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts (BCPA) and noted a successful Blippi children's show where staff member Cordaryl Patrick participated in costume. He highlighted employee community service efforts including the Police Department's "Pack the Cruiser" event that collected over 4,000 pounds of food for Midwest Food Bank and the inaugural City staff Thanksgiving food drive that collected over 1,000 pounds. He then reported a successful first pass through the City for leaf collection with staff currently completing a second round. He noted maps and updates of the pickup were available on the City's website. He also announced upcoming Downtown events including the annual Tree Lighting on December 5th, a First Friday event the same day, and Small Business Saturday on November 29th, encouraging Council and the public to visit and enjoy the decorated Downtown.

Council Member Discussion

Council Member Ward announced that World AIDS Day would be observed on December 1st and highlighted related programming at the Bloomington Public Library from December 1 - 5. She noted there would be a candlelight vigil on Monday the 1st and that the Library would host an exhibit of six panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilts and encouraged everyone to attend and recognize the individuals represented by the panels.

Council Member Lee wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and safe travels, noted his appreciation for the Bloomington community, and encouraged residents to reflect on what they were thankful for. He also reminded the community to support Small Business Saturday, emphasizing the importance of small businesses to the local economy.

Mayor's Discussion

Mayor Brady reported on recent and upcoming community activities including the 70th anniversary celebration for Lifelong Access, a Red Cross "Evening of Stars" event featuring Olympian Scott Hamilton, and the successful relocation of the Farmers' Market to the Arena. He thanked Council Member Lee and other local representatives for visitingto Bloomingdale, Illinois, to tour redevelopment and construction projects. He echoed Thanksgiving well-wishes, expressing appreciation for the Bloomington community, and wishing safe travels to all residents.

Executive Session

Docusign Envelope ID: A33CAFEB-ABDB-4049-831A-3ECB66D3B051

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

Council Member Hendricks 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.

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.

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

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON ESTABLISHED 1850