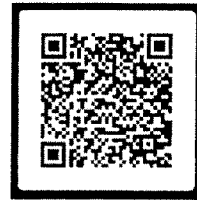


MINUTES
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL
300 NORTH HIGH STREET
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

PUBLIC HEARING: 6:45 P.M., 1ST Floor City Hall Auditorium.

ORD. 30-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (PROPOSED 2026 MUNCIE CIVIL BUDGET).

Rick Yencer, author and former newsman, stated that the Council has more income tax money than last year, which offsets property tax relief. He is not too concerned with spending but with not raising taxes, as property taxes have increased due to assessed values rising 20-25% over the last 5 years. He urged the Council to jump start the Committee for opioid settlement money recommendations, as the Committee had not yet met, and there is significant need for individuals with drug and alcohol problems. He expressed concern about the Administration's use of a building corporation funded by EDIT for public buildings, suggesting EDIT funds should be used to attract business and industry to the community. He hoped taxes would not be raised.

Sarah Vitali expressed concern that the Administration's initial budget submission was bare bones and that the current budget includes later-submitted amendments. She found this unreasonable and hoped the Administration would comply with the approved budget, citing a history of negative audits from the State Board of Accounts (SBOA).

Alex Cooper admitted confusion regarding the meeting time but raised concern about the timeliness of the budget release, noting it was posted partly two weeks prior and partly the next day. He felt two weeks was too compressed for the public to understand the budget and hoped for more time in the future.

ORD. 31-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (PROPOSED 2026 MUNCIE INDIANA TRANSIT SYSTEM BUDGET).

Rick Yencer, author and former newsman, stated that the public transportation system needs a major overhaul, noting low ridership outside of transporting public school children. He suggested testing express routes or Sunday service, similar to Bloomington and Lafayette. He observed that the system, founded 40 years ago, has not changed despite a need for a tax base beyond North American Transit. He mentioned MITS is struggling to find bus drivers and staff, and bus service now runs until 6:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 p.m.

ORD. 32-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (PROPOSED 2026 MUNCIE SANITARY DISTRICT BUDGET).

No public comment.

A motion was made by Mason and seconded by Powell to Adjourn the Public Hearing. PUBLIC HEARING MEETING ADJOURNED.

REGULAR MEETING: 7:00 P.M., 1ST Floor City Hall Auditorium.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by President Harold Mason.

INVOCATION: Given by Councilperson Green.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION: Councilperson McIntosh presented the September 2025 Citizen of the Month Award to Tara Gudger. Tara was recognized as a dedicated Middle School Counselor and Athletic Director with over 3 decades of experience at Muncie Community Schools. Her expertise includes restorative justice, positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS), and family engagement. Her role involves counseling, discipline assistance, and planning athletic and family events. She previously served as a Student Assistance Coordinator, Youth Mentor, and

ROLL CALL:	PRESENT	ABSENT
Dale Basham (At-Large 1)	X	
Ro Selvey (At-Large 2)	X	
William McIntosh (At-Large 3)	X	
Jeff Green (District #1)	X	
Nora Powell (District #2)	X	
Brandon Garrett (District #3)	X	
Sara Gullion (District #4)	X	
Jerry Dishman (District #5)	X	
Harold Mason (District #6)	X	

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Basham to Adopt the Minutes from the August 4, 2025 Regular Meeting. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas, 0 nays. MINUTES APPROVED.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Councilperson McIntosh reported that at one of those previous Finance Committee meetings Mayor Ridenour confirmed continued support for the youth center with at least \$500,000 in EDIT funds. This is in response to raised concerns at an Industrial Neighborhood meeting about rebuilding the center after 25 years.

NEW ORDINANCES:

The purpose is to rezone property at 1600 N. Wheeling Avenue from R-4 Residence Zone to the BC Community Business Zone to allow for a change in use from residential to retail. The request received a favorable

recommendation from the Plan Commission. No representation from the Plan Commission attended the meeting. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. INTRODUCED.

ORD. 27-25 BEING AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF MUNCIE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE FROM THE R-5 RESIDENCE ZONE TO THE BC CENTRAL BUSINESS ZONE ON PREMISES LOCATED AT 718 N. WALNUT ST., MUNCIE, INDIANA.

A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Selvey to Introduce.

The purpose is to rezone property at 718 N. Walnut Street from R-5 Residence Zone to the CB Central Business Zone to match adjacent properties and allow for replating after townhomes are constructed. The request received a favorable recommendation from the Plan Commission.

Jonathan Chambless, Co-owner CRU Construction, is the owner/developer of the site. He stated they are currently building townhomes on the same property and sought to expedite the replat process by suspending the rules for a vote tonight. The project involves 7 townhome units, each with 3 beds, 2.5 baths, about 1,800 sq ft, and a tow-care detached garage with alley entrance. The goal is to match the architecture of the neighborhood. He clarified that the homes would be owner-occupied, targeting demographics like college professors and Ball State teachers.

Councilperson Selvey expressed support for the project, noting it helps expand the property tax base, provides new housing near downtown, and has the support of the Delaware Muncie Metropolitan Plan Commission and the McKinley Neighborhood Association. She proposed suspending the rules to move the project forward.

Councilperson Dishman expressed concern about violence in new developments and hoped for a zero-tolerance policy, even though the units will be owner-occupied.

Steve Craig questioned the reason for suspending the rules, preferring to follow standard procedures unless detrimental. Mr. Chambless assured they do not have a specific reason to suspend the rules other than to expedite the replat process and move things along faster.

Councilperson Powell asked who informed Mr. Chambless details about suspending the rules which he advised it was the Plat Committee. She is curious if they encouraged him to reach out to Councilperson Dishman specifically since he was the sponsoring councilperson. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. INTRODUCED.

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Green to Suspend the Rules to consider adoption. DENIED. The motion failed due to the vote not being unanimous.

ORD. 28-25 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE AMENDING THE TRAFFIC SCHEDULES SET FORTH IN CHAPTER 80 ON THE CITY OF MUNCIE CODE OF ORDINANCES.

A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Selvey to Introduce.

Sarah Williams, McKenzie Street, is a 20-year resident and mother. She spoke in favor of the speed limit reduction due to traffic safety concerns citing the presence of children and school buses, increased non-resident traffic using streets as shortcuts, lack of stop signs on these streets creating long straight shots for speeding, and absence of other traffic calming measures like speed bumps or sidewalks. She noted that lowering speed limits correlates with fewer and less severe accidents, with people twice as likely to be killed at 30 MPH than 25 MPH. The City Engineer was notified of the request and consented to the reduction. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. INTRODUCED.

A motion was made by Green and seconded by Powell to Suspend the Rules to consider adoption. The urgency comes down to public safety, specifically for children and their safety during these darker winter hours. Powell confirmed overwhelming neighborhood support and that it was in fact a safety issue. President Mason stated the same. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. RULES SUSPENDED. A motion was made by Gullion and seconded by Garrett to Adopt. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. ADOPTED.

ORD. 29-25 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 80 (TRAFFIC SCHEDULES) OF THE MUNCIE CODE OF ORDINANCES (UNIVERSITY AVENUE PARKING).

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Green to Introduce.

The ordinance specifically seeks to remove the current restricted parking and prohibit parking at any time on both sides of University Avenue between Dicks Street and North Street, and on the south side of University Avenue between Wheeling Avenue and Reserve Street.

Beth Mesner, Treasurer of Riverside Normal City Neighborhood Association, expressed that the Neighborhood Association vehemently opposes the ordinance, particularly the elimination of parking. She stated they are unaware of the motivation or any studies justifying it, assuming it is related to a bike lane project. Concerns include increased parking needs due to redevelopment in The Village, existing struggles with parking, and forced parking into alleys resulting in demolition of garages and degradation of the historic neighborhood's character. She noted the 2023 restriction to 2-hour parking already forced residents to park in alleys and total elimination would worsen this. She expressed concern about increased traffic speeds on University Avenue which is an ambulance route where traffic calming measures cannot be implemented. She clarified the Neighborhood supports bike lanes but opposes their placement on University Avenue, especially if they are only painted lines without security measures. The neighborhood association sent a letter to councilmembers detailing their concerns and survey results, and plans to hold a meeting on September 25th at Emerson Dog Park.

Mayor Dan Ridenour stated the ordinance arose from discussions by the Bike-Ped Committee, other committees, Ball State University, and downtown stakeholders that were all desiring a stronger connection between Ball State and downtown. He explained that the ordinance addresses an existing code that allows parking where there is no physical room, which is a safety hazard. He mentioned that a planned trail was initially resisted by the Neighborhood, leading to an ineffective proposed route. Research over 27 days counted only 11 cars parked on University Avenue over 5 days, with 8 of 11 having out-of-county plates, suggesting they were students. He felt the parking concern was less warranted after the research, as only 6% of the 48 homes on the south side were using the spots. He presented packets with photographs, alley information, and letters of support from Ball State University, the Muncie Arts and Culture Commission, and Downtown Development for creating a legitimate connection. Ball State is offering resources to create artful connectors and painted crosswalks to enhance safety.

Jim Lee, W. University Ave. resident, supported abandoning parking, citing issues with fast cars, trucks, and motorcycles cruising through The Village, and difficulty pulling out of driveways when cars are parked. He also supported emergency vehicles having a clear boulevard.

Cameron Grubbs criticized Councilperson Basham for signing the ordinance without asking questions and Mayor Ridenour for not providing information or holding meetings beforehand, calling the lack of transparency problematic. He called the Mayor's characterization of students as less than reprehensible, arguing they deserve a voice.

Sarah Vitali expressed concern and encouraged councilmembers to not be bamboozled by the Mayor's numbers, calling the study irresponsible and not scientifically rigorous. She urged a vote against introducing the ordinance until a reasonable rationale is presented.

Chris Paladino, Director of Real Estate Services, Ball State University, provided clarification on the Village development and stated Ball State's support for the ordinance to improve connectivity between The Village and Downtown. He confirmed Ball State will provide supplemental funds to enhance crosswalks with colored thermoplastic for safety and traffic calming. He also announced new landscaping along Martin Street between the Village and White River Greenway, with Ball State maintaining it. He addressed parking concerns, noting that City Council approved ordinance 21-25 in July which implemented changing blue permit parking to 2-hour public parking, along with new on-street parking additions, which will add about 80 new spaces in The Village.

Todd Smekens, W. University resident, questioned what Ball State had done for Downtown Muncie prior to the Lily Endowment grant, noting he has seen no evidence as a resident. He also criticized the lack of communication with District Councilperson Powell. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 5 yeas (Dishman, Selvey, Garrett, Basham, Green) and 4 nays (Gullion, Mason, McIntosh, Powell). INTRODUCED.

Councilperson Selvey suggested if parking is eliminated to redo the alleys to be safe and drivable. She acknowledged existing issues with potholes and stagnant water and hoped for collaboration between the neighborhood association, administration, and Ball State to find an agreeable solution.

ORD. 30-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (PROPOSED 2026 MUNCIE CIVIL BUDGET).

A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Garrett to Introduce.

Kristopher Bilbrey raised concerns about 3 positions unfunded last year by a 6-3 vote, two of which are now being funded again without cuts being made this year. Councilperson Powell clarified that only one voluntary reduction has been made by the Finance Committee so far and that was a typo in the Controller's Overtime line. They are still receiving information from Department Heads. The Committee will make recommendations on reductions on the 23rd, but any councilmember can move to amend the ordinance. Councilperson McIntosh believed the prior year's vote on unfunded positions being 7-2.

Cameron Grubbs asked for clarification on the budget process, nothing the Council is voting to accept a budget still being hammered out. Powell explained that the municipal budget is created by the Administration and the Council's Finance Committee reviews line items to close the gap between expenses and revenue. She noted the impact of Senate Bill 1 (SB1), leading to a hiring freeze and potential loss of benefits for employees. The budget is due to the state by November 1st, with adoption planned for October 6th. Councilperson Basham emphasized that tonight is just an introduction and the budget hearings are currently overlapping. Powell emphasized ongoing negotiations with collective bargaining units and the need to make cuts while maintaining services and caring for employees. Last year President Mason made a motion to amend positions that in turn was ultimately what made it possible for Police and Fire to then obtain a 5% raise. However, reverting to the previous year's budget (if not adopted by Nov. 1) would mean losing income increases. Grubbs suggested an ordinance to set a submission deadline for the budget and asked for a public information officer to facilitate information sharing for the Council beyond just a PR person for the Mayor. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays.

INTRODUCED. Powell noted that only Form 3 and Form 4-B were submitted on time.

A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Selvey to Amend and include Form 1, Form 2, Form 4 which were submitted after deadline. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. **AMENDED.**

ORD. 31-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (PROPOSED 2026 MUNCIE INDIANA TRANSIT SYSTEM BUDGET).

A motion was made by Powell and seconded by McIntosh to Introduce. (Only Form 3 and Form 4-B were submitted on time.) A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Gullion to Amend to include Form 1, Form 2, Form 4 which were submitted after deadline. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. **AMENDED.**

Amanda Price Clark, General Manager for MITS, addressed previous inquiries that providing Sunday service is not a question of money but of driver availability as MITS is struggling to find drivers. Ridership has been increasing since a dip after COVID-19 with more Ball State students using MITS buses due to Ball State's buses being full. MITS has been focusing on facilities, with a new roof and a bus wash in the Capital budget for next year. She stated that after facility improvements (possibly in a year or 2), they could be in a better position to increase hours back to 9:00 p.m. and possibly add Sunday service. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. **INTRODUCED AS AMENDED.**

ORD. 32-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR APPROPRIATIONS AND TAX RATES (PROPOSED 2026 MUNCIE SANITARY DISTRICT BUDGET).

A motion was made by Green and seconded by McIntosh to Introduce.

Deanna Cox, Financial Manager for MSD, was present to answer any questions. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas and 0 nays. **INTRODUCED.** (Only Form 4 and Form 4-B were submitted on time. Form 1, Form 2, Form 3, Form 4 will need to be amended prior to adoption.)

RESOLUTIONS:**RES. 16-25 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE, INDIANA, RELATING TO THE FINANCING OF A FIRE STATION PROJECT AND APPROVING A FORM OF TAXPAYER PETITION IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.**

As the sponsoring councilperson, Basham expressed a desire to delay focus from this resolution in the spirit of getting the 2026 budget approved. He moved to withdraw. **WITHDRAWN.**

OTHER BUSINESS:

Alan Kornblau, Director, and Katherine Mitchell, Assistant Director/Treasurer, Muncie Public Library, presented their budget which will be approved by the Library Board on September 19th. The budget's levy is increasing due to a 4% growth quotient but the circuit breaker is increasing twice as much, so, the actual budget will be slightly less than the current year. They do not anticipate dropping programs.

Kennedy Library won the "Muncie Quest for the Best" award. Maring-Hunt Library houses a Great Achievers program funded by federal money which saw all fourth graders (third graders last year) pass the I-READ test. Centennial Library (formerly Connection Corner) was renamed in July to reflect its original name and location across from Longfellow, serving kids. Carnegie Library is an anchor for downtown cultural arts renovation and will be celebrating its 150th anniversary on November 6th with a light show. The Hunt building on Memorial is used by the Friends of the Library.

There have been some issues resolving library card access for Westminster residents due to its location in Harrison Township which is outside of Center Township where the library is primarily considered. They have engaged a lawyer and are hopeful the issue will be resolved.

In lieu of earlier discussion about solar, Councilperson Green asked about the solar panels at Kennedy Library. Mitchell explained the solar panels at Kennedy Library were installed years ago as an example of what is possible but do not generate much electricity due to wiring issues in the area, resulting in little savings. The software to track energy generation is no longer functional.

Charlize Jamison inquired about updates on the old Chevy plant and the Common Market zoning issues. Councilperson Garrett reports that the fence company will repair the Chevy plant fence before cleanup and revitalization can begin. He also reported positive conversations with Mr. Martin regarding the Common Market who plans to meet with the Fire Chief tomorrow and is hopeful about the outcome.

Troy Watters announced the Boy Scout Troop #22 annual hog roast fundraiser is Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the fairgrounds. It is to support numerous projects and service hours for the City and County. Councilperson Garrett encourages support for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts emphasizing the importance of their fundraising for training, camps, and the value of achieving Eagle Scout rank.

Kristopher Bilbrey expressed concern about councilmembers having issues with email communication, stating that if they are not receiving or responding to emails, it is a problem that needs to be fixed. He thanked the Council for withdrawing resolution 16-25.

Lynn Thornburg announced the Washington Street Festival for this weekend. She raised concerns about the ongoing Tillotson Avenue project that started in March 2024 and was only supposed to take 6 months. The project has created large holes, barrels, and machinery blocking her "For Sale" sign hindering the sale of her property at 1304 N. Tillotson. She feels the project is being dragged out and inquired about impacted business/residents.

Councilperson Powell acknowledged her concerns and stated she would contact Rob Keilsing (AEP) to ask them to be better neighbors by moving the machinery. She confirmed paving would not be done until 2026 due to temperature requirements, but barrels should be moved sooner.

Cameron Grubbs promoted the Pride event, Washington Street Festival, and Muncie Bridge Dinner. He questions why Department Heads were being paid above the salary ordinance maximum, which was discussed at a previous Finance Committee meeting and noted it remains unsolved.

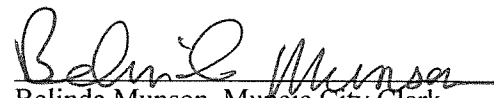
Councilperson Powell confirmed that the Administration contends they can pay up to the maximum established in the salary ordinance, despite councilmembers recalling a discussion that this was only a maximum,

not a directive to pay above appropriated line items. She found at least 4 Department Heads that were paid above the 2024 salary ordinance. She expressed appreciation for the Council and Administration for dealing with the budget challenges, including SB1 and covering first responder payments.

ADJOURNED:

A motion was made by McIntosh and seconded by Gullion to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas, 0 nays. ADJOURNED.


Harold D. Mason, President of the
Muncie Common Council


Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council

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