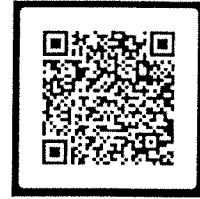


MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL
300 NORTH HIGH STREET
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

PUBLIC MEETING: 6:00 P.M., 1st Floor City Hall Auditorium.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Chairperson Nora Powell.

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	

OPENING REMARKS: Chairperson Powell stated that the purpose of the working sessions is strictly for the Committee to gather information and ask questions about the proposed 2026 budgets. No decisions or official actions would be taken during this meeting. She also announced that public comment would not be taken at this meeting to allow the committee to focus on the presentations. The public was encouraged to provide input at five other in-person opportunities, including a public hearing on September 8th and the final Finance Committee meeting on September 23rd, before the final budget adoption on October 6th. The public can also contact committee members via email at any time.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

CITY COURT

Presenter: Judge Amanda Dunnuck

Key Budget Points:

- The proposed budget includes a 4% salary increase for staff, as directed by the Controller's office.
- The budget for Training Fees & Travel was reduced by \$400, as the Judge pays for her own travel and hotel costs for judicial conferences.
- The line item for Other Insurance was increased to \$2,700 to prevent it from being in the red.
- Other Services and Charges: This line item covers costs for psychological evaluations (which are increasing in frequency and cost), copier fees, and interpreters. Judge Dunnuck noted that

psychological evaluations are one of her most expensive variable costs and hopes that a partnership with community health providers might offer free evaluations in the future.

- Interpreter Services: The court uses Andrea Johnson from Victim's Advocate, who is described as a godsend, for Spanish speaking defendants. This line item is at 30% of its budget at the six-month mark. The interpreter line is used for any defendant not comfortable with English, including Spanish, sign language, and even Farsi speakers.
- Public Defender: Judge Dunnuck explained that reimbursement from state and federal funds is only available for county-level courts (Circuit and Superior), not municipal courts. To qualify, a state statute would need to be changed to include city and town courts. She also stated that the public defender's caseload is high, and his calendar is currently booked into January. The public defender's position is salaried, which works well for the current arrangement.
- Court Secretary Salaries: The significant increase in this line item is because three secretaries who were previously paid from the Adult Probation User Fee account are now back in the City's General Fund after that account was depleted.

ANIMAL CARE AND SERVICES

Presenter: Josh Taulbee, Director of Muncie Animal Care and Services

Key Budget Points:

- The budget proposes a 4% salary increase for full-time employees.
- Budget Reductions: Reductions were made to Gas (and oil), Cages, Pole & Equipment, Natural Gas, and Other Services & Charges to be fiscally conservative.
- Budget Increases: The largest increases were \$10,000 each for Institutional & Medical and for Food & Litter.
- Food & Litter Costs: This line item was 169% over budget by the reporting period. Mr. Taulbee explained it costs approximately \$1.35 to \$1.45 per day to feed each animal, and with 420-450 animals in care during the previous month, costs escalate quickly.
- Staffing: The Department has 26 employees, the majority of whom are part-time (21 part-time).
- Energy Costs: The high Electricity cost (\$32,000) is due to the age of the building and multiple HVAC units needed to keep the facility operational 24/7. Mr. Taulbee stated he is open to pursuing energy efficiency grants but noted it can be difficult for a government entity to secure them.
- Interlocal Agreement: The Animal Shelter services the City of Muncie and unincorporated areas of the Delaware County through an interlocal agreement. The County Commissioners are aware that the van they previously provided is no longer functional and are working on providing a replacement vehicle, likely a truck. All repair costs for this vehicle would come from the Shelter's budget.
- Salary Discrepancy: Chair Powell noted Mr. Taulbee's salary showed a 15.5% increase, not 4%. Mr. Taulbee explained his 2025 salary was not accurately reflected in the budget documents, but Council members requested clarification and a copy of the salary ordinance to verify the correct figures.

BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Presenter: Richard Rawlings, Building Commissioner

Key Budget Points:

- The budget reflects a 4% raise for salaried positions, as directed by the Controller.

- Salary Discrepancy: Chairperson Powell pointed out that the Building Commissioner's salary showed a 7% increase from the previously adopted amount. This continued a pattern seen with other Department Heads where salaries being paid were higher than what the Council had adopted.
- Utility Costs: A question was raised about why the Department's utility costs were higher than others. Matt Wagley, Deputy Controller, explained costs are allocated based on office square footage.
- Fee Recoupment: Mr. Rawlings stated the Department tries to recoup costs for securing properties through tax liens. They have also started taking trash/debris cases to court to secure court orders for cleanup and fines.
- Clerk Position: The clerk position remains unfunded, with duties handled by a part-time employee.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Presenter: Yvonne Thompson, Human Rights Director

Key Budget Points:

- The only increase in the Department's budget was for salaries. A 7% increase from the adopted 2024 salary was noted, continuing the discrepancy issue.
- Director's Retirement: Director Thompson announced she is retiring. She suggested the board may reduce the salary for her successor, which the Council may want to consider.
- Training Fees and Travel: This fund is used to partner with community organizations like the MLK Dream Team, NAACP, and Muncie Public Library, and for professional development for board members.
- Council Accolades: Multiple Council members thanked the retiring Director for her years of dedicated service to the community, her advocacy, and her positive impact on Muncie.

MUNCIE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Presenter: Chief Nate Sloan and Deputy Chiefs Melissa Criswell and Chris Deegan

Key Budget Points:

- The LIT budget of \$2,156,000 was distributed via email due to a DLGF issue.
- Salary Increases: The proposed budget reflects a 4% salary increase, though the FOP is still in negotiations with the City Administration. The apparent 9% increase for Chiefs is inaccurate because funds from an approved raise in early 2025 have not yet been transferred internally.
- Staffing: The Department is currently staffed with 106 officers, just under its full staff level of 108. The Chief noted that onboarding and training a new officer is a 16–18-month process and is very expensive.
- Front Desk Clerk: Funding for this position was moved to the Patrol officer line item. The Department intends to staff the front desk with a staff position moving forward.
- Social Worker Program: The grant funding for this program has expired. The Department is using other revenues to sustain the program and is actively seeking new funding to continue and grow what has been a successful initiative.
- Overtime: The Overtime budget was increased by \$16,000 to offset potential pay raises. The Chief explained that despite increased staffing, overtime costs remain high due to a large volume of requests for police presence at community events, such as “Fire Up Downtown,” which alone cost \$10,000 in overtime.
- Fuel and Tires: These costs are budgeted in the Public Safety LIT fund, not the general fund.

FINAL REMARKS: Council members requested a copy of the minutes from the meeting where the current salary ordinance was adopted to review the conversation around Department Head salaries. It is noted that Ordinance 33-24 is the 2025 salary ordinance and Ordinance 16-25 is an increased amendment while Ordinance 11-25 and Ordinance 12-25 are the Police and Fire increased amendments. Councilperson Basham made a request for all Departments presenting in the future to provide a current budget performance report ahead of the meetings to better inform questions.

ADJOURNED:

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



Nora Powell, Finance Committee Chair
Muncie Common Council



Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/City-of-Muncie/100069317225158/>

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