



**MINUTES OF THE
SEPTEMBER 2, 2025
LENEXA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COMMUNITY FORUM, 17101 W 87th STREET PARKWAY
LENEXA, KS 66219**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sayers called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Handley, Eiterich, Charlton, Nicks, Arroyo, Williamson, Denny, and Herron were present with Mayor Sayers presiding.

Staff present included Beccy Yocham, City Manager; Todd Pelham, Deputy City Manager; Mike Nolan, Assistant City Manager; Scott McCullough, Community Development Director; Sean McLaughlin, City Attorney; Jennifer Martin, City Clerk; and other City staff.

APPROVE MINUTES

Councilmember Denny made a motion to approve the August 19, 2025 City Council meeting draft minutes and Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

There were no modifications to the agenda.

PROCLAMATIONS

Johnson County Christmas Bureau 65th Anniversary Recognition and Celebration Month

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month

Diaper Need Awareness Week Sept. 15-21

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of an engineering agreement with Walter P. Moore for the design of the Clare Road Roundabout Replacement Project
This project involves heavy preventative maintenance, including replacing the existing asphalt roadway within the roundabouts with concrete, along Clare Road between 83rd Street and Prairie Star Parkway. The design services contract is for \$258,645. The construction project is estimated to be \$3.5 million.
2. Resolution consenting to the enlargement of the Consolidated Main Sewer District of Johnson County, Kansas to include property located at 19510 W. 87th Lane

The City is required to consent to any proposed enlargement of the Consolidated Main Sewer District (CMSD) of Johnson County. This consent will allow CMSD to enlarge its sanitary sewer system to serve property located at 19510 W. 87th Lane.

3. Ordinance incorporating by reference the 2025 Standard Traffic Ordinance and repealing existing City Code Section 3-8-A-1
The League of Kansas Municipalities annually publishes the Standard Traffic Ordinance (STO), which is a comprehensive traffic code for all Kansas cities. Lenexa generally adopts a new STO every two years to stay current on legislative changes, including minor changes that are specific to Lenexa. The proposed ordinance will incorporate by reference the 2025 Standard Traffic Ordinance into the City Code, along with specific changes and additions previously adopted.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Nicks made a motion to approve items 1 through 3 on the consent agenda and Councilmember Charlton seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. Consideration of a resolution levying a property tax rate exceeding the revenue neutral property tax rate of 25.142 mills for the fiscal year 2026 budget
 - a. Public hearing to consider exceeding the revenue neutral property tax rate
 - b. Resolution levying a property tax rate exceeding the revenue neutral property tax rate of 25.142 mills
For the fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget, the City's revenue neutral property tax rate was calculated to be 25.142 mills by Johnson County. Since the estimated mill levy in the recommended FY 2026 budget is 26.209 mills (a 0.750 mill reduction from FY 2025) and exceeds the revenue neutral rate, the City will hold a public hearing and consider a resolution to exceed the revenue neutral rate for the FY 2026 budget.

Beccy Yocham, City Manager, said this is the fourth and final public discussion of Lenexa's proposed FY 2026 budget, which reflects months of collaboration between staff and the City Council and is guided by long-standing budget principles that support the City's strong financial position. She reported that the City's assessed valuation for FY 2026 is estimated at \$1.95 billion, up from \$1.82 billion in FY 2025, with about one-third of the increase coming from new growth. The recommended mill levy is 26.209, representing a 0.75-mill reduction from FY 2025 and a quarter-mill lower than the initial June proposal, made possible by ongoing savings in FY 2025 compensation costs. The total proposed budget is \$260.6 million, an increase of \$13.8 million over the FY 2025 approved budget of \$246.7 million, with more than one-third of that increase attributed to special revenue and economic development funds that are not operating expenses. No changes are recommended to user fees, the stormwater service charge, or franchise fees.

Ms. Yocham noted the addition of 2.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions: one in Parks and Recreation, one in Municipal Services, a 0.5 FTE in the Public Market, and a 0.25 FTE in Community Development, bringing total authorized staffing to 569.15 FTEs—less than a one-percent increase. She talked about continued strong community support, citing the City's 2023 citizen survey in which 71% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the value they receive for their tax dollars compared to 54% in the metro area and 32% nationally, and 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of City services compared to 74% metro-wide and 49% nationally. She also noted the April 2025 election in which 79% of voters approved renewal of the 3/8¢ sales tax dedicated to parks, recreation, and pavement maintenance, reflecting residents' confidence in Lenexa's ability to maintain a high quality of life. She added that this meeting included the two required public hearings—one on exceeding the revenue neutral rate and another on the FY 2026 budget—and there would only be one presentation.

Ms. Yocham said that Lenexa continues to deliver extensive services valued at about \$124 per household per month while maintaining a solid financial foundation and strong resident trust.

Nate Blum, Chief Financial Officer, presented key financial details of Lenexa's proposed FY 2026 budget, providing an overview of revenues, expenditures, and the overall budget process. He noted that staff began developing the recommended budget in January, with public discussions starting in June. Total revenues for FY 2026 are estimated at \$171.5 million, including \$75 million in property taxes (43.7%), \$72.7 million in sales and use taxes (42.4%), and 8.6% from service charges such as the Rec Center and pools. Total expenditures are projected at \$172.9 million, slightly higher than revenues, reflecting a planned drawdown of fund balances in certain funds.

Mr. Blum explained that state law requires the City to budget reserves and economic development funds, resulting in a total recommended budget of \$260.6 million, though operational expenditures are closer to \$150 million once pass-through and reserve amounts are excluded. Public safety—fire, police, and municipal court—remains the largest spending category at \$41 million (24%), followed by economic development funds, including TIF and CID, at \$30 million (17%). The General Fund, including reserves, totals \$160.5 million (62% of the overall budget), with special revenue funds at \$57.5 million (22%), debt service at \$23 million (9%), and enterprise funds—Rec Center, stormwater, and cemetery—just under \$20 million.

Mr. Blum highlighted that total expenses and transfers for FY 2026 are increasing only 1.14%, well below the current inflation rate, and even with reserves included, the increase remains at 2.42%, also below inflation. The City's mill levy continues its downward trend, proposed at 26.209 mills for FY 2026, down from a high of 31.832 mills in 2018, representing a total reduction of 5.623 mills (about 18%) over eight years. Each mill is valued at roughly \$1.9 million, returning an estimated \$10.6 million annually to taxpayers. Lenexa is

among only four Johnson County jurisdictions planning to lower the mill levy for FY 2026, with its rate just below the county median.

Mr. Blum shared that the average Lenexa home value rose from almost \$468,000 to just over \$493,000, resulting in an estimated property tax increase of about \$2.98 per month, or 2.46%, for the average homeowner. He also reviewed the public engagement process, which began with posting the recommended budget on June 20th and collecting and responding to approximately 14 pages of public questions, and included multiple public meetings and an updated proposal to include the additional quarter-mill rollback. He said there would be a public hearing on exceeding the revenue neutral rate and a public hearing on adopting the FY 2026 budget and the City Council would consider their respective resolutions.

Mayor Sayers said she would allow up to three minutes per speaker during the public hearings and asked that all questions and comments be directed to the Governing Body. She said any new questions would be answered following the closing of the public hearing.

Mayor Sayers opened the public hearing at 7:25 PM.

Gene Senesac, Olathe resident, expressed concern about rising property taxes and the impact on seniors on fixed incomes, stating that home value increases have outpaced mill levy reductions, leading to higher revenues. He urged a stronger emphasis on reducing spending rather than seeking additional revenue and cautioned that economic conditions may be softening. He challenged the Council to scrutinize the budget closely.

Barry Schneider, 9063 Barstow St., said he is a longtime Lenexa resident who recently returned after living in Florida. He spoke in support of limiting property tax increases and talked about a Florida program that caps tax growth for senior homeowners. He noted that while Lenexa has worked to assist lower-income residents, rising property values and inflation are creating burdens across all income levels. He urged the Council to maintain the revenue neutral rate to help residents of all ages and incomes manage steadily increasing property taxes.

Ron Powell, 7703 Constance St., spoke in favor of maintaining the revenue neutral rate, citing concern over rising property taxes. He noted that despite repeated mill levy reductions, his own property taxes have consistently increased, and he has not seen the benefits of the reductions reflected in his bills over the past 23 years. He emphasized that while City financial reports look positive at a macro level, the year-over-year spending increases create real burdens for homeowners on fixed incomes and urged the Council to better control spending to limit future tax hikes.

Mary Abraham, 8413 Harbinger St., said she has lived in Lenexa for over 40 years and urged the Council to keep the property tax rate at revenue neutral and to explore property tax relief for seniors. She explained that she and her

husband are retired public servants living on a fixed income and that annual property tax increases directly affect their ability to remain in their home. While appreciative of the City's services, she asked the Council to consider programs that provide tax breaks for senior citizens and retirees to help keep Lenexa affordable.

Jennifer Haynes, 8507 Allman Rd., said she is soon to retire and is concerned about the state Homestead Act property tax relief program. She explained that the program caps a home's assessed value at \$350,000, a limit unchanged for years and well below Lenexa's current average home value. As a result, many seniors do not qualify for the relief they had anticipated when planning for retirement. She urged City leaders to advocate for updating the Homestead Act cap or pursue similar measures so seniors on fixed incomes can remain in their homes despite rising property values and taxes.

Jon Herman, 21620 W. 100 Ter., said he recently retired after moving to Lenexa six years ago and voiced support for measures that limit property tax increases for seniors. He shared concerns that rising property taxes could eventually force older residents out of their homes despite having them paid off. Citing examples from Missouri where property taxes are frozen at age 65, he urged the City to explore similar protections or advocate for state-level action. He noted that Kansas's current Homestead cap is outdated and insufficient for Lenexa's housing market and asked the Council to investigate options to help seniors stay in their homes.

Betzaida Imperiale, 8227 Halsey St., said she has lived in Lenexa almost 20 years and expressed appreciation for the City's amenities, but shared concerns about rising property taxes and their impact on seniors. As a single mother still carrying a mortgage, she described refinancing before the pandemic and now facing higher costs from COVID-era challenges, government changes, and increasing taxes. She urged the Council to explore solutions, such as reviewing incentives or tax breaks given to corporations and adopting senior tax-relief measures similar to those in Missouri, to help residents remain in their homes and protect family legacies.

Mayor Sayers asked if the Council had any additional questions or comments.

Councilmember Nicks said he supports the proposed budget, which staff has carefully developed over several months and reflects the community's priorities. He acknowledged the budget exceeds the revenue neutral rate but reiterated that residents consistently praise the City's high-quality services. He talked about having confidence in local decision-making, and how Lenexa residents and voters, rather than state officials, should determine what constitutes a good budget. He noted that the revenue neutral rate does not account for inflation or new development. He said he understood residents' concerns about mortgages and property taxes and requested further education on the Homestead Act.

Ms. Yocham clarified that the Homestead Act is governed entirely by Kansas

state law. She said any caps or maximums are set by the state legislature, not by local ordinance, so the City has no authority to change or limit them.

Councilmember Nicks suggested exploring whether the City's existing tax rebate program, which considers factors such as home value, age, disability status, veteran status, and income, could incorporate or align with the state Homestead provisions. He asked staff to research the idea and report back with more information for future consideration.

Councilmember Williamson voiced support of Councilmember Nick's comments, agreeing that the City should explore options to expand the existing rebate program or develop additional assistance specifically for seniors.

Councilmember Eiterich thanked residents for their input and acknowledged concerns about rising property values and the resulting impact on seniors. She talked about the City's efforts to maintain affordability through programs such as the property tax rebate, noting that Lenexa's city tax represents about 22% of a homeowner's total property tax bill. She also spoke about the balance between providing high-quality services and keeping residents in their homes, and how exceeding the revenue neutral rate is necessary to serve a growing population. She thanked staff for responsibly managing funds and finding an additional quarter-mill reduction in the budget.

Councilmember Eiterich also talked about the Kansas Homestead exemption, explaining that it is a state law with valuation limits based on statewide averages, which can disadvantage higher-cost areas like Johnson County. She encouraged residents to contact state legislators to advocate for changes that better reflect local housing costs and reiterated the importance of local control and home rule in addressing these issues.

Councilmember Handley joined the other councilmembers in supporting further exploration of options to strengthen or supplement the Homestead program, noting the financial strain described by many residents. He shared personal perspective as a relatively new homeowner, observing that rising property taxes affect younger and early-career residents as well as seniors. He stressed the importance of maintaining essential city services such as road maintenance, snow removal, and parks while keeping taxes reasonable. He talked about the need for a balanced, thoughtful approach that protects core services without abrupt budget cuts, acknowledging that all residents are feeling the impact of higher costs.

Mayor Sayers agreed and highlighted that the City faces the same rising costs as residents, citing higher prices for asphalt, fuel, parts, and other materials. She commended staff for managing these pressures responsibly, keeping inflation impacts low, and using innovative approaches as properties return to the tax rolls after incentives. She noted that the additional quarter-mill rollback was achieved through careful budgeting, including staff pay adjustments, and emphasized that resident feedback has been carefully considered. She talked about the value residents receive for their tax dollars, the importance of

Lenexa's appeal as a place to live, and the City's commitment to gradual, measured reductions in the property tax rate, rather than following an arbitrary rate set by state officials who are not directly involved in the local budget process.

Councilmember Nicks made a motion to adopt the resolution levying a property tax rate exceeding the revenue neutral property tax rate of 25.142 mills and Councilmember Eiterich seconded the motion.

Jennifer Martin, City Clerk, called the roll call vote:

Councilmember Handley - Yes

Councilmember Eiterich - Yes

Councilmember Charlton - Yes

Councilmember Nicks - Yes

Councilmember Arroyo - Yes

Councilmember Williamson - Yes

Councilmember Denny - Yes

Councilmember Herron - Yes

Mayor Sayers - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Eiterich made a motion to close the public hearing and Councilmember Arroyo seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The public hearing closed at 7:58 PM.

5. Consideration of a resolution approving the fiscal year 2026 budget

a. Public hearing to consider the fiscal year 2026 budget

b. Resolution approving the fiscal year 2026 budget

The Governing Body reviewed the fiscal year (FY) 2026 recommended budget at Committee of the Whole meetings held in June and July 2025 and received a budget update at the City Council meeting on August 19, 2025. The total recommended FY 2026 budget for all funds is \$260.6 million and the estimated mill levy for the budget is 26.209 mills.

Mr. Blum said he had no additional comment or presentation.

Mayor Sayers said she would allow up to three minutes per speaker for the public hearing and asked that all questions and comments be directed to the Governing Body. She said any new questions would be answered following the closing of the public hearing.

Mayor Sayers opened the public hearing at 7:59 PM.

Gaylene Van Horn, 8131 Rosehill Rd., voiced concerns about the proposed demolition of the former City Hall to construct a new Fire Station 6. She suggested other options, including the Gleason Fire Station and the Olathe Fire

Academy that has collaborative training opportunities. She urged the City to explore partnerships to avoid duplicating resources and emphasized fiscal responsibility.

Nancy Schneider, 9063 Barstow St., urged the City to allocate \$12,000 in funding for a dedicated sensory swim hour for autistic children at the Lenexa Aquatic Center and talked about drowning as the leading cause of death for children with autism.

Tim McCabe, 7902 Hallet St., expressed concern over rising property taxes and questioned whether Lenexa's developments are generating the anticipated revenue. He urged the Council to reconsider the proposed budget, suggesting the City use reserve funds rather than increasing the tax burden on residents, and called for a clear assessment of which projects are delivering the promised return on investment.

Gene Senesac, Olathe resident, commended the Council for its public engagement and urged continued proactive outreach and action. He highlighted the financial strain rising property taxes place on residents of all ages, noting that increased home values do not translate into available funds but instead raise tax bills. He encouraged exploring shared resources with neighboring cities to avoid duplicate facilities and offered options ideas such as renting Lenexa's council chambers to other municipalities as a revenue source.

Councilmember Eiterich made a motion to close the public hearing and Councilmember Charlton seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The public hearing closed at 8:11 PM.

Councilmember Nicks thanked residents for their ongoing questions and staff for providing detailed responses since May. He voiced strong support for the FY 2026 budget, noting it reflects the City's long-term vision and successful history of planning. He asked staff for data on the return on investment from past development incentives as those projects come onto the tax rolls. He talked about the importance of evaluating whether such incentives achieve their intended outcomes over time, even if results take many years to measure.

Mayor Sayers talked about how the budget reflects the City's core values of exceptional public service and stewardship, citing the City's proactive response to the 2023 storm cleanup as an example of staff acting effectively without needing additional funding approval. She said she supports the proposed budget as lean and responsive to resident feedback, acknowledged rising costs for both the City and residents, and affirmed a commitment to further mill levy reductions in the future if savings from incentives or employee programs allow.

Councilmember Denny made a motion to adopt the resolution approving the fiscal year 2026 budget and Councilmember Charlton seconded the motion.

Ms. Martin called a roll call vote:

Councilmember Eiterich - Yes
Councilmember Charlton - Yes
Councilmember Nicks - Yes
Councilmember Arroyo - Yes
Councilmember Williamson - Yes
Councilmember Denny - Yes
Councilmember Herron - Yes
Councilmember Handley - Yes
Mayor Sayers - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

There were no councilmember reports.

STAFF REPORTS

There were no staff reports.

END OF RECORDED SESSION

BUSINESS FROM FLOOR

Laura Owen, 9036 Barstow St., voiced concerns with the handling of the investigation into Councilmember Arroyo's immigration status.

Nancy Schneider, 9063 Barstow St., spoke in support of Councilmember Arroyo.

Tim McCabe, 7902 Hallet St., voiced concerns with excessive spending, too many apartments, rising crime, and City leadership.

ADJOURN

Councilmember Williamson made a motion to adjourn and Councilmember Denny seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

/s/ Jennifer Martin
City Clerk