

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



AUGUST 3, 2026

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

ORD. 9-26 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE, INDIANA APPROVING MATTERS RELATED TO LEASE FINANCING OF FIRE STATION PROJECT.

Rob Miller introduced himself and stated his opposition to the project as currently written. He emphasized that while everyone agrees firefighters deserve a safe and functional facility, he does not believe the City needs to build the largest and most expensive station possible. He noted that the City is proposing to borrow \$11.5 million, which he felt was not clearly justified. Miller also questioned why the City had not approached Ball State University about a land swap to potentially build a less expensive, single-level building on adjacent property. Regarding the City's financial health, he pointed out a dire fiscal situation with a \$1.5 million loss this year and projected county losses of \$6 million by 2026. He expressed concern that property tax caps would limit future funding for emergencies and urged the council to ask the Administration to sharpen their pencil.

Terry Moore spoke in favor of the ordinance, stating that Fire Station #5 is over 60 years old and currently lacks working water. He described conditions where firefighters must pump out a pit just to flush toilets. Moore cautioned against the City going cheap on the station, citing Fire Station #7 as a "joke of a station" that is too small for its crew and ambulance. He argued that since firefighters live at the station 24 hours a day away from their families, they deserve a station they can actually live and work in. He concluded by urging the Council to pass the ordinance, noting that the City did not go cheap on this design.

Kristopher Bilbrey informed the Council that the City's live stream had no audio before addressing Ordinance 9-26 and Resolutions 10-26 and 11-26. While acknowledging that a new station is needed, he expressed concern that the project is not being handled with fiscal responsibility given the substantial expenditure of money. He questioned whether the Mayor and the Administration were prepared to provide the substantial answers and documents that were missing from previous Public Services Committee meetings. He specifically criticized the Controller for previously stating he did not have certain documents and suggested the Council recess until such information could be retrieved from the Controller's office upstairs. He reminded the nine councilmembers of their serious obligation to citizens and firefighters to demand complete answers and review all supporting documentation rather than simply processing presented legislation. He concluded by stating that "unanswered questions are not good" and that more information is always a benefit to the process.

Karen Brubaker expressed her nervousness as a first-time speaker and stated she had several unanswered questions regarding the project. She specifically asked for clarification on the lease finance agreement versus the BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) agreement, noting they appeared to be different. She voiced her desire to see the \$11.5 million figure reduced, stating that the City does not seem to be in a position to spend that amount and urged the Council to consider ways to get the cost down.

Rick Yencer emphasized the public's constitutional right to speak and noted that the government was already under investigation for breaking open records laws. Regarding the fire station, he stated the City is not just spending money but heading into debt for the next 22 years to the tune of approximately \$16 million plus interest. He noted this is in addition to the \$12 million plus interest spent on the previous station. President Green Adjourned the Public Hearing.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Councilperson Basham.

INVOCATION: Delivered by Dr. Sandra Whitaker, a former Muncie Community Schools administrator and current board member of the Muncie Ethics Commission.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION: Justin Oliver was recognized as the Citizen of the Month for August 2026. The presentation was led by Councilperson Basham, who shared a long personal and professional history with the honoree. Basham introduced Oliver as a "real-life hero," detailing a career defined by education and military service. He first met Oliver over 20 years ago when Oliver was a Ball State University student beginning his semester at Muncie Southside High School. Shortly after that semester, Oliver was deployed to the Middle East to serve in the Iraq War. Upon his safe return, Oliver became the Project Lead the Way coordinator at Muncie Central High School. He was eventually promoted to Assistant Principal, a role in which he served as Basham's "right-hand man" during Basham's tenure as interim principal. Basham highlighted Oliver's character, noting he had raised a family with his wife, Brandy, navigated the challenges of high school leadership, survived serious health issues, and even foiled a home break-in. Oliver was specifically thanked for his role in keeping Muncie Central High School a safe environment for students and staff. Justin Oliver accepted the award, describing himself as a "behind-the-scenes logistical type of person" who was surprised by the recognition. His remarks focused on his deep roots in the Muncie community. Born on East 15th Street on Muncie's south side, Oliver emphasized that he bleeds purple. Though he spent 13 years in the Delta school system after his family moved to the country, he returned to Muncie Schools to begin what is now his 20th consecutive year at Muncie Central. He reflected on student teaching at Wilson Middle School and coaching under the legendary Mike Paul at Muncie Southside. Oliver expressed great pride in his work with the Delaware County Safe Schools Committee, where representatives from every local school system meet to coordinate safety efforts. He also highlighted his strong working relationships with the Muncie Police Department and Muncie Fire Department. He concluded by thanking the school board, his long-time boss and colleague Chris Walker, and his wife and children for their support despite the long hours his career requires.

ROLL CALL:	PRESENT	ABSENT
Dale Basham (At-Large 1)	X	
Ro Selvey (At-Large 2)	X	
William McIntosh (At-Large 3)	X	
Jeffrey 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 Garrett to Amend the Minutes from the July 6, 2026 Regular Meeting (comments regarding the practical gain of immediate adoption for the McKinley Neighborhood team were made by President Green, not herself). A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Mason to Adopt the Minutes from

the July 6, 2026 Regular Meeting As Amended. An all-in-favor vote showed 9 yeas. MINUTES APPROVED.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COMMUNITY CENTER DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Councilperson McIntosh read a formal report regarding the proposed Community Center in response to the Mayor's July 28 community update. The update stated that the Committee voted to recommend the Industry United Methodist Church as a location for the future community center; however, to his understanding, no formal motion was made, no vote was called, and no recorded vote was taken to recommend any location. If that understanding is correct, the public record should be corrected to accurately reflect what occurred. Transparency is more than holding open meetings; it requires that what is communicated publicly matches what actually took place. Residents deserve factual and truthful reporting, especially when public resources and long-awaited community projects are involved. Councilperson McIntosh respectfully requested that the Administration review the July 28 update and issue a retraction. He is requesting clarification on how the information in the July update was obtained if no formal motion or recorded vote occurred. What documentation supported the claim made in the update? Transparency requires that official communications were grounded in the actual public record and he respectfully asked for the basis of that statement. Also, the Mayor mentioned Resolution 15-25, that he along with Councilperson Mason co-authored, saying that the Council appointed the five neighborhood associations to a Youth Center Advisory Committee without stating the fact that two amendments were added to the resolution. Without risking losing the resolution, they together had to go ahead and vote 'Yes' for the amendment of the resolution. The Council voted 9-0 putting the youth center in the Industry neighborhood, which seemed that manipulated wording was used to get around that in the Committee meeting on July 27th, 2026, at the Mock Street Church. At the July 23rd Industry Neighborhood Association meeting, McIntosh said that the Mayor needs to stand by his promise and do right by the Industry Neighborhood Association by giving them the \$500,000, or at least give them the old park building for a dollar, since that seemed to be the going price now. This way he can go down as the mayor who did good on the City's promise of 20-plus years to replace the Madison Street Multi-Youth Center. The statement the Mayor made in his community update, and the United Methodist Church on Mock Avenue, was not in the Industry neighborhood. In the main meeting, the Committee was told the \$500,000 would stay at the Mock Street Church. That put this Committee in a bad position—an 'offer you can't refuse,' so to speak. If the Committee pushed for the center to be in Industry, the neighborhood would be at risk of losing the funding. In closing, McIntosh stated he was a member of the Industry Neighborhood Association because he paid his dues.

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE: Councilperson Dishman provided a report on the second Public Service Committee meeting held on July 22 regarding the proposed new fire station. Since Dishman allowed Green to start with questions at their first meeting, he allowed Gullion to start with the questions at the second meeting. He recalled Green asking questions about the financial stuff of the firehouse and a few other financial questions. He recalled Gullion had concerns about the Ball State funds, recommending a contract be put in place, and to only trust their commitment if it is in writing. Dishman advised he showed her a letter that Ball State wrote Mayor Ridenour pledging \$1.5 million. She went on to ask questions about how many employees with staff this new fire station, and was advised by Chief Burford around 8 to 10 people. She wanted to know why so many, and he told her

that EMTs, ambulances and additional training will be done out of that building. When she got done with her questions, Dishman asked Chief Burford if it's going to be a two-story and it's going to have a stairway and the pole in the building, and he acknowledged yes. Dishman then asked Greg Martz of GM Development if he was going to use local union labor and he said he would. Seeing what they've done out there on Station 6, Dishman does not see any problems there. He also asked about using land from Ball State, but was informed it was all geothermal stuff in those locations and they can't build on top of geothermal stuff so that's the reason why they're not getting any space from Ball State. Dishman asked both Gullion and Green two times if they had any more questions and both insisted they did not. At that point, Dishman called for a recommendation. He made a motion for favorable recommendation with Green providing the second. Gullion abstained. Favorable recommendation of 2-1. Dishman then adjourned the Public Services Committee meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING ON RES. 8-26: A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE AUTHORIZING AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FINANCIAL OPERATIONS AND INTERNAL CONTROLS OF THE CITY CONTROLLER'S OFFICE.

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Powell to Suspend the Regular August meeting for the Public Hearing on Res. 8-26. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas. MEETING SUSPENDED.

Legal Counsel Brandon Murphy advised he has had the opportunity to discuss Res. 8-26 with the Administration by their Counsel in exchange for assurances that the City Council will receive revised and thorough written responses from the Controller's office to their previously submitted questions by October 16, 2026, a date chosen because of the upcoming budget season. There has been a proposal made to adjourn and postpone this public hearing to a date certain: Special Meeting on November 16, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in this room. Motion made by Powell and seconded by McIntosh. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas. MOTION CARRIED. The Public Hearing on Res. 8-26 will resume on November 16, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. A motion was made by Mason and seconded by Garrett to resume the Regular August meeting. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas. MOTION CARRIED. The Council resumed with their Regular August meeting.

ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY INTRODUCED:

ORD. 9-26 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE, INDIANA APPROVING MATTERS RELATED TO LEASE FINANCING OF FIRE STATION PROJECT.

A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Selvey to Bring out of Committee. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Councilperson Gullion wanted to bring up the \$1.5 million again from Ball State. As chair Dishman did mention, they did talk about this at the Public Services Committee meeting. She was still of the opinion that they could reduce the amount asked for from the \$11.5 million to the \$10 million because, as he mentioned, a letter from Ball State was provided stating they are giving \$1.5 million in a lump sum that will go directly to Station #5. She would like for the Administration to talk about that as the Controller did not have that specific information when she asked about it at the Public Services Committee meeting.

Mayor Dan Ridenour referred to the letter from Ball State. He insisted that their board had already approved it. President Mearns had put in writing that they will pay that however the City wants. If they determine the City does not want it all upfront then they can use it to pay down debt. The thing about the \$11.5 million, if the City used the BOT process that they've been working on, that would max out the price. If there are savings, like there were on Station #6, then the City will capture those. The Mayor would personally not borrow (being a person who attempts to not borrow in his own life) and would

borrow as little as possible. He stated he would personally use that \$1.5 million from Ball State to immediately help fund the fire station so that the City will never draw on the whole \$11.5 million. Interest would not be paid on the \$11.5 million until it was accessed. However, the Council will have the authority to pick. For example, if the Council wished to borrow the whole \$11.5 million and use it as the first two years payments, he supposed they could but felt it would be better not to pay the interest.

Gullion stated that while that was great for the fire stations they, as the Council, had to look at all City departments, not just the Fire Department. She was concerned with the cushion and the transparency aspect of that. She felt like if they need something at other stations, those should be brought to Council for approval.

Councilperson Powell confirmed the Mayor saying is that he wants to borrow as little as possible and questions why he wouldn't support amending the ordinance to reduce the amount to \$10 million? Mayor Ridenour introduced an expert to help address that question.

Bob Swintz, London Witte Group, explained it was mainly due to timing. They were asking for a "not to exceed" bond issue of \$11.5 million. If during that time the money showed up in the bank, they could reduce the bond issue. But, if for some reason, that money was not received in a timely manner, then they would really want to issue the full amount to pay for the fire station. Then if the \$1.5 million comes later, it can be used for other fire station purposes or to pay down debt. Powell had a follow up question and asked why advocate for paying down debt with that \$1.5 million. Is there a penalty for paying that debt down sooner? Swintz responded that ultimately wouldn't be his decision and that they would try to work with the bankers to figure out a way to do that without penalty.

Councilperson Gullion asked specifically when the money from Ball State would be in. Mayor Ridenour referred to the letter from Ball State which reads: "...provide a one-time lump sum payment of 1.5 million when you have confirmed that you have obtained the necessary approvals for the project and have executed a contract with a construction company." The letter stated they would also increase their annual payment to \$300,000 when the project is complete and the aerial truck has been relocated to the new fire station. Ridenour stated he believed there was flexibility there but he, himself, does not run a construction company. He's unsure if a construction company would be on board because there would be no funds until that is done. Once there is a construction company involved then there is opportunity to decide where that \$1.5 million goes. His suggestion is to borrow the \$11.5 million but not access it. As someone that has done many construction loans during his banking career, the Mayor assured the Council that they would not pay any interest if you don't access the funds.

Councilperson Powell acknowledged over \$400,000 that was left over from Station #6 remodeling because even though it said "up to" a certain amount, the City spent "up to" that amount. She questioned how the City could potentially have \$1.5 million left over to put into other stations. That would be almost \$2 million that the Fire Department's capital improvements budget has been increased to. Mayor Ridenour responded no, there would not be \$1.5 million left over because it cost \$11.5 to build it originally. There was no chance that was going to the Fire Department's budget; that's going toward this station. If the station gets built for \$11.3 million, there's \$200,000 left over and then this Council has the right to tell the developer what happens with that. Powell confirmed the Mayor was saying that the \$11.5 million still in ord. 9-26 will go toward the project; then the \$1.5 million coming from Ball State for the project. That represented \$13 million for this project yet they were saying it is up to \$11.5 million. They were told at the Public Services Committee meeting that that would go into other fire stations. The Mayor assured the \$1.5 million is for Fire Station #5 and once a construction company has been obtained as well as all the approvals from Council (how they would like to spend the \$1.5 million) but it had to be spent on Station #5. For example, let's say you have a credit card with a \$3,000 limit; that does not mean you owe \$3,000. If you spend \$1,000 then you would only owe \$1,000. He explained they would not access the full credit line. With this being a Build, Operate, Transfer, and if the costs go over the \$11.5 million then the City could be at risk. Powell stated she believed the Mayor's statements contradicted what Chief

Burford said at the Public Services Committee meeting which was that the \$1.5 million is for the fire station but anything extra would be put toward other stations because they also need to be renovated. Mayor Ridenour agreed and mentioned Fire Station #7 needed to be expanded dramatically. He would love to be able to do this under budget but in this environment, it is not always easy to do. Again, it will be up to the Council to determine how to put this all together in the end. He would prefer not to even access the \$1.5 million and assured that would be his choice if he were on the Council. He would hold the total price to \$11.5 million knowing that \$1.5 million is coming from Ball State.

Fire Chief Dan Burford clarified it was actually over \$500,000 in bond funds that the Fire Department did not access remaining from the construction of Fire Station #6. He explained that these funds were restricted to that specific project and cannot be used for any other purpose without a formal appropriation from the City Council. Regarding the current project, he noted that securing a construction contract requires the City to prove it has the full \$11.5 million in funding available upfront. He suggested that once a contract is signed and Ball State University provides its \$1.5 million contribution, those funds could be applied to the project immediately. This approach would allow the City to avoid drawing on the full bond amount, thereby reducing interest costs since interest is only paid on accessed funds. He emphasized that the fire department cannot use any potential surplus for other station repairs without returning to the council to request a specific appropriation with a detailed plan.

Audie Barber assumed that instead of \$8.6 million, we've spent \$8.55 million on Station #6 because they said we had \$500,000 left over on it. They could apply it back towards the BOT or just leave it in there in case something happens at Station 6. The concerns he has are: Do we really have the money for all these projects? We just got a brand-new Fire Station #6. He 100% understands these stations need updated. But if we don't have the money for it and it puts the City deeper and deeper in debt, then that's going to be a big problem. Also, on Station #6, some of the EMS money (\$200,000 a year, or \$150,000, something like that) was supposed to be taken out of the EMS fund and applied each year towards that building. Is that something that's going to happen this time? Are they going to appropriate some money from the EMS fund to fund this building too? He would like to know more about it. If we don't have the money, don't spend it.

Todd Smeckens, Muncie Voice, agreed that Fire Station #5 needs to be updated but he has a problem with the financial arrangements. First of all, the bond lawyers do not represent the people in this room; they represent the investors. He submitted a FOIA request to Ball State and found there's been no communication with the Board of Trustees on the \$1.5 million. He argues the City should have a formal contract with Ball State rather than just a letter. Furthermore, they said they would increase their payment to \$300,000, but it is already at \$266,000 so they are only adding \$34,000 a year for a brand-new fire station in their own backyard. They and the hospital are the ones who need the ladder truck, and neither of them are paying their fair share, as far as he is concerned. We are not actually using \$11.5 million to build this station. As soon as it is approved, \$1.2 million disappears in closing costs. Part of those costs is \$685,000 in capitalized interest, which will be used to make bond payments until June 2028. It is interesting that this interest covers payments until conveniently after the next major election. He finds it concerning that whoever the next Mayor is will see \$1.7 million vanish from their EDIT account. He was told the main reason for the EDIT fund was to invest and bring in money; a fire station does not bring in any money.

Councilperson Powell confirmed the lease payment Ball State is currently paying also includes the lease payment for the aerial truck. Chief Burford confirmed it is \$116,000. Powell clarified that payment will cease once the truck is paid off so questions the \$300,000. Chief Burford explained the \$300,000 is for beyond. Ball State pays \$150,000 for fire protection and \$116,000 for the aerial payment which was scheduled to come off in 2027. Powell mentioned that being a significant increase from what they are doing given that payment will be going away. The aerial truck is currently housed at Station #2 in Heekin Park. Powell wished for the Chief to explain why the aerial truck is so important to get back to Station #5

(her District). Chief Burford explained it is the Department's only actual platform truck. It is the only truck in the City that can actually be counted as an aerial for the ISO ratings for insurance. It has to be housed in proximity to your tallest structures, which is Station #5. He adds they had to move it when EMS was brought in. With that, Powell confirmed that the truck most beneficial to fight fire (at Ball Hospital and several building on campus) is across town even though Ball State is paying the lease payment. Chief Burford confirmed that is correct and is the reason it is important for them to get that back at Station #5. Once the station is done and that truck is back in house at Station #5 then Ball State would increase the payment (because it does have that contingency on the increase of the money).

Councilperson Gullion refers back to the letter versus a contract and what was recently mentioned about the Board of Trustees. She requests Mayor Ridenour to come back up and asks him if, to his knowledge, this had gone to the trustees for a vote? Mayor Ridenour does not know what department it went to but was told that it had been approved. Gullion asks if there was a reason the Council couldn't get a written contract? Mayor Ridenour does not doubt that it is coming. Gullion explained when talking about this much money and efficiently running the City, she would like that he would want a written contract. She asks if he plans to ask for that because she feels something more is needed than a handshake. Mayor Ridenour assures it is more than a handshake; it's a written letter. Ball State has committed to it and provided a letter to members on the Council which they have had for some time. It's on an area of our City where the station is totally inadequate; we can only get two pieces of equipment in there and it has major repairs. It's going to happen once a contractor has been obtained after all the approvals from Council.

Councilperson Powell clarified if there is sufficient LIT (Local Income Tax) to cover the expenses? Mayor Ridenour replies yes and is absolutely certain. It had increased substantially as the population has increased (about 1,300 people total in 5 years). The biggest challenge in this community was having a place for people to live because 8,000 to 10,000 people make the drive in to Muncie every day that pay \$0 LIT in Delaware County. The City did not receive anything yet those people travel here and use City services. The Mayor was thankful they are here but would prefer they move here. We are already several hundred thousand dollars ahead of expected revenues for LIT because of the increased population. Powell was aware the wording has to be a certain way regarding the bond rating but makes sure we don't see any danger in the LIT not being sufficient resulting in going to property taxes. Mayor Ridenour replied he does not.

Jason Chaffin, President of Firefighters Local 1348, reminds everyone this process started six years ago, in 2020, with a committee of firefighters and community leaders. Over these last six years, there has been needs assessments, financial and fiscal analysis, and location studies. All of that has been presented over the years, including when the fire station on the northeast side of town was completed. As he has said, we also need a fire station on the northwest side of town. This process is slow—agonizingly slow—but obviously, it needs to be methodological when you are spending this kind of money. He thanks the Council for that. Chaffin has heard questions about locations, and Councilperson Dishman answered the one about the geothermal infrastructure surrounding it. With Ball State and Christy Woods on the other side, it's in a great location, as those studies showed. This process has been negotiated and worked through. He appreciates all the support for the previous project, Fire Station #6. It is a quality-of-place issue, not just for the men and women who have to live there, but for the entire community and the neighborhoods. When we drive by Station #6 now, that is a point of pride for that neighborhood and that area. That is something the city can build on. When we get Station #5 finished, it will be a pride for that neighborhood as well. It spreads to the entire community when we have infrastructure that looks good and shows we are getting better.

Rob Miller referred to the Mayor stating they have the money in LIT today and does not disagree. If the fiscal picture looked like it does today, we're going to be fine for 20 years. But we know that there's an EDIT fund that is going away. We will not have that money anymore; that is going to the

County, and suspects they are not going to give the City any of that money. Second, we know that property tax revenue is going to drop for the City—it's going to fall off a cliff. Have we done a stress test? What does it look like in 5, 10, 15 years when we've lost all that money? He knows LIT will go up year-over-year if the City continues to grow, but it that going to make up the losses? Does anyone remember the last Administration that had to suffer with budget problems? Mayor McShirley was shutting off street lights. That was Miller's first introduction to Muncie when he moved here; the City was cutting services and street lights because they couldn't afford to pay the bills. That shaped his initial opinion of the Muncie government, and he has seen them do better since then. However, he is really concerned that in 5, 8, or 10 years, we're going to be panicking in this City because we would not know where the money is going to come from. Are you going to start firing police officers, laying off City workers, or closing parks? This money for this project is guaranteed—the bondholders will get their money before everything else in the City. He is not saying the firefighters don't deserve a home; please don't take it that way. He is just very concerned with the changes that have happened at the State House and what is going to happen to our City if this gets approved as is today.

Todd Smeckens, again, piggybacked on what was just said. Right now, everything sounds very rosy. He loves the Mayor's optimism, but the City of Muncie is rated one grade above junk. It currently has a BB- rating which is standard and poor because we have too much debt, and that is before adding this \$11.5 million. If you drop to 'junk bond' status where you cannot get investor-grade bonds, your price goes through the roof. They will charge an arm and a leg for any funding, so the Council might want to check into that.

Terry Moore, referring to his earlier comments, stated excluding Station #6, this City has built only one fire station in the last 60 years. He kept hearing about Station #7, and that's the one that was built, but it is in dire need of updating. It is in terrible shape; it was never built to be what firefighters needed. If you don't approve this now, the next time it is in front of you, it will be for \$18 or \$20 million.

Jennay Jackson, Second Battalion Sergeant at Fire Station #5, has been with the department for six years and at this station for five months. She just wanted to share a little bit about her experience there. They are living in sewage most of the time. When toilets are flushed, sewage comes up through the station's drains and the bays constantly have the smell of sewage as it comes up. When you use the bathrooms there and sit down, the water comes up from the toilets. A lot of these things are not fixable at this point, and she just wanted to advocate for the firefighters because they don't get to go home at the end of the day. They don't do eight hours at an office; they live there a third of their lives, and the conditions are deplorable. She hopes the community will also consider that. She can't speak on checks and balances or numbers, but can speak on what the employees are living in. They love this community and are here to serve, so she hopes the community will support them to have somewhere where they can have healthy living conditions while there.

Questions called. A roll call vote showed 7 yeas (Garrett, Dishman, Gullion, Powell, Selvey, Basham, Green) and 2 nays (McIntosh and Mason). Powell voted yes because it is important to her District. McIntosh cited unresolved labor contracts for AFSCME as his reason for voting no. Mason expressed a desire for a more binding contract with Ball State. ADOPTED.

ORD. 14-26 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE PROHIBITING DEPARTMENT HEADS FROM SERVING ON CERTAIN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS; AND ESTABLISHING ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST STANDARDS.

A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Mason to Adopt.

Linda Muckway, a member of the Human Rights Commission, testified in support of the ordinance, noting that her perspective was informed by her service on that specific commission. She explained that the city ordinance governing the Human Rights Commission established specific guidelines for membership, one of which was a requirement for religious representation. Muckway

reported that a member of the clergy had served on the commission until May 31, 2026, but that individual's term had ended and they had declined to renew. She argued that by ensuring this seat was open to a member of the clergy, the commission could fulfill its legal obligation under the existing code. Additionally, she stated that the proposed ordinance would benefit the broader community by creating more opportunities for citizens to get involved in local government. While she expressed uncertainty regarding the exact number of department heads currently serving on multiple boards, she emphasized that residential representation was essential for effective governance. She concluded her remarks by stating that her primary goal was to ensure the Human Rights Commission maintained the proper representation required by its governing rules and urged the Council to see the vacancy filled by a clergy member as intended.

Patty Goddard, City of Muncie HR Director, stated that she was a resident of the City of Muncie, served on multiple boards, and was an appointee of the Mayor. She noted that while the proposed ordinance was intended to "prevent ethics and conflict of interest violations," there was already an existing ordinance—Ordinance 37-24 (the Code of Ethics)—that addressed those issues specifically, and she asserted that the City was already following those standards. Goddard clarified that her comments were her own personal observations and did not represent her employer. Speaking from her personal experience, she noted that she had been appointed to two commissions; she served on them with pride, though she admitted she had not been able to attend one as regularly as the other. She emphasized that she was not anyone's "puppet" and pointed out that she had publicly objected to the Mayor's comments at a meeting two meetings prior. She argued that if the goal of the ordinance was to imply that department heads lacked independent minds, she could attest to the contrary, speaking from her perspective as a department head. Goddard further observed that at the previous Council meeting, the council members appeared to struggle with the wording of the ordinance. She suggested there was confusion regarding the City of Muncie's organizational structure, explaining that the City does not have multiple layers of supervisors; instead, there are Department Heads (only two of which have an additional supervisor and all other staff members are employees). She argued that it was not advisable to exclude employees from serving on boards, commissions, or councils simply because they report to an appointed official, as many employees choose to be civically engaged. She concluded that enacting the ordinance as discussed by the council members would be a "downfall" for the community because City employees are valuable, involved members of the public.

Councilmember Gullion introduced an amendment to clarify the roles prohibited from serving on boards. The amendment defined "Appointed Officials" and "Administrative Staff" to include: the Deputy Mayor, HR Director, City Controller, City Engineer, Traffic Engineer, and Building Commissioner; the heads of the Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire, and Redevelopment; any deputies or executive branch officials appointed directly by the Mayor, as well as administrative staff working for any of the listed officials. A motion was made by Gullion and seconded by Powell to Amend. A roll call vote showed 5 yeas (Garrett, Mason, Powell, McIntosh, Gullion) and 4 nays (Dishman, Selvey, Basham, Green). AMENDED.

Wayne Scaife commended Councilperson Gullion on the amendment, though he noted that it still fell short of his personal preference to include all City employees. He highlighted a specific department head serving on the Human Rights Commission as a primary reason for the necessity of the ordinance and expressed hope that the measure would be made effective immediately. Scaife recalled a previous instance involving that commission where he observed the department head appearing eager to proceed with a vote to terminate an employee without allowing for public input. He further argued that any individual in a line of succession reporting directly to the Mayor would likely feel as though the Mayor were "hovering over" them while they were making board decisions. He concluded by urging the Council to vote in favor of the ordinance as amended and suggested that elected officials should also be included under the service restrictions.

Jeff Robinson, the Development Director at Schaefer Leadership Academy and a former council member, provided testimony focused on resident engagement and the City's appointment process. Robinson clarified that he was not speaking in favor of or against the ordinance but instead wished to highlight that Muncie is filled with residents who are eager to serve their community. He noted that in 2021, the Schaefer Leadership Academy partnered with the City to create goservemuncie.com to address a specific problem: while many citizens want to get involved, they often do not know what boards exist or how to make themselves available for an appointment. He described the website as a free online resource intended to connect residents with leadership opportunities, built on the principle that service should be accessible to everyone, not just those who happen to know the right person. Robinson reported that 51 residents had created profiles on the site within the last year, which he found encouraging, though he believed many more qualified individuals remained to be connected. Regardless of the outcome of the vote on Ordinance 14-26, Robinson asserted that the community would still require qualified and engaged citizens to step into these roles. He encouraged the Mayor, the Council, and anyone involved in the appointment process to strengthen and promote the "Go Serve" resource to residents in every neighborhood. He also requested feedback on how to improve the site so it could become more valuable to the community and urged those in power to use it as a primary resource when making board and commission appointments. Robinson concluded by inviting the public to visit the site and raise their hand to serve, stating that the community is strengthened when people are given the opportunity to participate. He ended his remarks by thanking the Council for their tireless work and commitment to their districts, noting that as a former council member himself, he understood how difficult their jobs can be.

Audie Barber stated that his remarks might not be as polished as the previous speaker's but emphasized that the Council needed to determine the ordinance's effective date. He specifically urged the Council to decide whether the new standards would take effect immediately upon passage or if current board and commission members would be "grandfathered" in. He noted that whether existing members would be required to resign or be reappointed was a significant issue that the Council needed to resolve.

Ellen Whitehead, a resident of Muncie, testified in favor of Ordinance 14-26, clarifying that her views did not represent those of her employer. She stated that the ordinance was fundamentally about protecting public trust, arguing that city government functions most effectively when the public has confidence that decisions are being made fairly and independently. Whitehead noted that the ordinance reinforced these principles by establishing clear expectations regarding ethics and conflicts of interest. She emphasized that building such trust required maintaining appropriate independence between different branches of city government. She suggested that when boards, commissions, and department leadership have clearly defined, independent roles, it strengthens the credibility of their decisions. Furthermore, she pointed out that these standards help avoid situations where the public might question whether personal or professional relationships influenced outcomes, even when all parties involved are acting with complete integrity. Whitehead maintained that it was the responsibility of policymakers to enact policies that promote and preserve these ideals. She concluded by characterizing the ordinance as a common-sense policy intended to protect the integrity of local institutions, the people serving within them, and the trust residents place in their government, ultimately encouraging the Council to vote in support of the measure.

Rob Miller stated that while he was not accusing any specific city employee of malfeasance or being manipulated, there remained a significant lack of public trust in the Muncie government due to transgressions from both current and previous administrations. He argued that it was difficult for any person serving on a board not to consider their professional standing when making decisions. He suggested that employees might worry about upsetting their superiors or jeopardizing future promotions if they were to vote against the administration's interests while serving on a board. Miller expressed support for the amendment introduced earlier in the meeting but voiced frustration with what he perceived as certain council members voting in lockstep with the Mayor. He specifically addressed Councilperson Dishman, asserting that the Mayor likely briefed him on all meetings in advance, as he has not seen the

Councilman vote against the Mayor since switching parties. He also addressed Councilperson Basham, asserting that the Councilman has publicly stated he would do whatever the Mayor requested. While noting he did not know President Green well enough to comment, he expressed surprise that Councilperson Selvey did not support the measure. Miller maintained that the citizens of Muncie were capable of running boards independently and argued that neither the Mayor's secretary nor department heads should sit on these boards. He concluded by emphasizing that his opposition to executive influence over public boards was a matter of principle that should apply regardless of which political party held the mayor's office, characterizing such influence as inappropriate for a local government.

Rita Faulker stated that removing department heads from boards and commissions would help promote their independence from the City Administration and would serve to avoid potential conflicts of interest. She argued that the ordinance would provide more opportunities for local residents to hold these positions and participate in their government. She noted that this shift would allow for a greater variety of perspectives to be considered in the decision-making process.

Patty Goddard, City of Muncie HR Director, clarified that her remarks reflected her personal professional observations and were not intended to represent the official position of her employer. She explained that in her profession, policies are typically developed based on broad trends or systemic needs rather than being crafted to address only one or two specific individuals. She expressed concern that if the ordinance were being developed to target "bad apples" within the Administration, creating a citywide policy was an inappropriate way to handle those individual issues. She questioned whether the proposed restrictions would also apply to the Council's own appointment powers. She pointed out that while the Council was seeking to restrict the Mayor's authority to appoint department heads to boards, they were not applying the same restrictions to their own appointments. Councilperson Powell questioned Goddard on how her professional experience in developing HR policies for city employees directly informed her perspective on individual board service. She sought to understand the connection between Goddard's claim that policies should not be based on "one or two people" and her own service on two city commissions. Powell clarified that the City Council would not appoint a department head to a board and emphasized that the Council does not expect its appointees to be beholden to them when making independent decisions. She offered a perspective on the appearance of conflict, stating that the primary goal of the ordinance was transparency. She argued that if even one Muncie resident felt discouraged from filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission or seeking a resolution from a City board because they feared they would not get a fair shake from an appointee who reports to their boss, then the policy was necessary. She maintained that the ordinance was in the best interest of the many to ensure that all residents feel comfortable advocating for themselves. When asked about her own board memberships, Goddard noted that she served on the Delaware County Visitations Bureau (also known as Destination Muncie) who meet once a month. She described the group as a well-organized team from all walks of life that performed significant good for the community. She also reported serving on the Delaware County Disability Awareness Council, though she characterized it as an advisory body that lacked formal enforcement power, or teeth.

Cheyenne Reed, a lifelong resident of Delaware County, testified in favor of the ordinance, characterizing it as an awesome measure that would ensure City boards and commissions are accessible to the general public. While she acknowledged she did not know the specific qualifications of the previous speaker (Patty Goddard), she asserted that there were many qualified people in the community—including several present in the room—who could serve on those boards and would be committed to attending meetings. Regarding the Go Serve Muncie initiative, Reed stated that she found the portal to be a great resource, though she had only learned of its existence a month prior despite being active in the community. She shared her personal experience of filling out an application through the site but noted she had not yet received a response. She expressed a desire to see data regarding the 51 residents who had applied via the portal in the last year, specifically inquiring how many of those individuals had been

contacted or were now serving on a board. Reed argued that with thousands of residents in Muncie, the City should be able to find capable representatives who are not already at the top of existing organizations. She concluded by emphasizing that the opportunity to serve should be a bipartisan issue regardless of who is in the Mayor's office, and she stated that the ordinance would help get necessary information out to the public so they are allowed to serve.

Kristopher Bilbrey testified in support of the ordinance, asserting that the primary issue was not whether the public trusted the current government, but rather the fundamental American right to question and seek redress from leadership. He expressed particular frustration regarding the service of the Mayor's secretary on City boards, describing her as a "lightning rod" for controversy who had frequently treated members of the public rudely during meetings. Bilbrey criticized the four council members who had voted against the earlier amendment, accusing them of voting in lockstep with the Administration due to their political affiliation. During his testimony, a confrontation occurred with Council President Jeff Green over a three-minute time limit; Bilbrey characterized the sudden enforcement of this rule as an inconsistent and inappropriate attempt to silence his voice, noting it had not been applied to previous speakers. He further challenged the council members to either accept public criticism as a part of their elected roles or resign. He specifically highlighted previous comments made by Councilperson Basham, who had reportedly stated his intention to be a voice and a vote for the Mayor, arguing that such a stance demonstrated a lack of independence. Bilbrey concluded by urging the Council to pass the ordinance to ensure professional conduct and put an end to what he described as nonsense in local governance.

Daisy Dale, a member of the Human Rights Commission, argued that residents are not only denied clear opportunities to serve but are also actively discouraged or suppressed when they attempt to do so. She stated that the City fails to adequately promote board and commission vacancies, noting she had only seen the Ethics Commission promoted on a single occasion. She shared a personal account regarding her appointment to the Human Rights Commission, stating that after she emailed her resume and interest to the Council, that private correspondence was shared with the Mayor and the Republican Party Chairman. She characterized it as "creepy" that resumes and emails intended for the Council were distributed to a political party. Dale questioned why her interest in a commission seat drew such narrowed political attention, suggesting that candidates for other bodies, such as the Parks Board or Redevelopment Commission, likely do not face similar efforts from a political party to stop them from joining. She concluded by urging the Council to better encourage the appointment of actual residents to these roles. She argued that boards and commissions should represent the community's interests rather than being populated by individuals chosen simply because they are close to the Mayor or a specific political party.

Sam Johnson, Chairperson of the Muncie City-County Council for People with Disabilities, addressed the Council regarding Ordinance 14-26, speaking in a personal capacity. Johnson began by offering props to HR Director Patty Goddard, noting that she had been a significant help with housekeeping and organizational efforts when he first joined the Disability Council. While he acknowledged that many City employees are civically engaged and generous with their time, he argued that from the public's perspective, there is little to no difference between actual corruption and the appearance or the possibility of corruption. He noted that while his specific advisory council lacked formal enforcement power (no teeth and a zero dollar budget), other boards and commissions hold voting positions that directly impact residents' lives. He maintained that the real danger lies in the appearance of potential corruption when those casting impactful votes also report to City leadership. Johnson suggested that City employees who wish to remain involved could still engage with the community in other ways without necessarily holding voting seats on these specific boards. He stated that he broadly favored the ordinance and suggested that grandfathering existing members might serve as a reasonable compromise. He concluded his remarks by inviting the public—particularly those with disabilities or connections to the disability community—to apply for current openings on the Disability Awareness Council.

Oscar Kreider addressed the Council to express his support for the measure based on his lifelong residency and personal experiences with city government. Kreider stated that his perspective on the operations of Muncie's City government was significantly shaped by a formative experience in the 2010s. He recalled being in an eighth-grade chemistry class when he learned that the Mayor at the time had been arrested for corruption. He asserted that even a short-term resident would be able to recognize what he described as the "slime" within the City government, suggesting that it was more prevalent in Muncie than in other cities. Despite his harsh assessment of the government, Kreider emphasized his pride in and love for the city. He noted that he attends every Council meeting with the hope that the Council members will make him proud, though he stated that he is frequently disappointed in that regard. While acknowledging that others had already accused the Council of being in lockstep with the Mayor, Kreider stated he did not wish to repeat those accusations. He concluded his brief remarks by urging the Council members to do the right thing and vote in favor of the ordinance.

Chris Smith addressed the Council to offer a perspective focused on the importance of civic engagement and resident participation. Smith noted that he had not originally planned to speak on the ordinance but was inspired to do so by the earlier comments made by Cheyenne Reed. He argued that if the Council set aside the specific debate regarding department heads serving on boards, the core issue was whether the City should take actions that encourage more people to become civically involved. Sharing his own journey into public service, Smith recalled that when he decided to become more involved in local government about two years prior, he found that the process was not easy and required him to reach out to multiple individuals to find a path to service. He informed the Council that he currently served on the Muncie Planning Commission and stated that he thoroughly enjoys the role. He concluded by asking the Council to consider whether they truly wanted to see more citizens active in their government. Smith asserted that if that was indeed the goal, he did not see how anyone could answer that question with anything other than a yes vote.

Audie Barber returned to the podium to directly address President Green concerning the conduct of the meeting and the enforcement of speaking limits. Barber criticized the Council President's attempt to unilaterally impose a three-minute limit on public testimony. He asserted that the President was required to follow established regulations rather than acting as if he were "God" and noted that, according to legal counsel, such a restriction would require a formal vote by the Council. He expressed deep frustration with what he perceived as a lack of professionalism from the Council President. Barber suggested that such behavior was unbecoming of the office and claimed that similar actions would have resulted in an individual being escorted from the chambers eight years prior. He challenged the Council President's temperament, suggesting that if the President felt too "hotheaded" to manage the meeting respectfully, he should resign. Barber even offered to provide the President with a piece of paper to facilitate that resignation. In conclusion, Barber reminded the Council members that they were seated on their side of the table to serve the taxpayers of Muncie. He urged the Council to remember their role and to refrain from acting dismissively toward the citizens who fund the local government.

Fire Chief Dan Burford explained that the police and fire pension boards were mandated by Indiana statute and had specific, legally required membership structures. He noted that these boards must include four active members and one retired member, and that by statute, the Fire Chief served as the President of the board. He requested a "carve out," or a specific exemption, for these two boards within the ordinance. He expressed concern that the proposed restrictions on Department Heads and staff serving on boards might inadvertently conflict with the statutory requirement for his staff or himself to serve on these pension boards, which are voted on by active and retired members. The Chief emphasized that he did not want the new ordinance to create a situation where a member of his staff would be legally prohibited from serving in a role that is already required by state law. Legal Counsel Brandon Murphy clarified that Section 4B of the ordinance was specifically designed to address this concern by ensuring that nothing in the local ordinance would prohibit service that is expressly required by Indiana statute.

Councilperson Mason, the primary sponsor of the ordinance, addressed the Council to provide a formal statement for the record. Mason characterized the ordinance as a critical step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and public confidence in Muncie's local government. He emphasized that the proposal was not intended to question the integrity of any specific department head but was instead designed to establish clear ethical boundaries to protect both public officials and the residents they serve. He argued that the ordinance would promote independent decision-making and reduce both actual conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts. He noted that the policy would protect department heads from being placed in compromising situations where their administrative duties might conflict with their responsibilities as board members. Councilperson Mason stated that adopting the ordinance would reinforce the separation of responsibilities, thereby strengthening the integrity of both the City's boards and commissions and the executive branch. He asserted that establishing consistent ethical standards would help prevent future disputes and demonstrate the Council's commitment to sound governance. In response to claims that the ordinance targeted specific individuals, Mason maintained that he authored the measure because he believed it was the right thing to do as a matter of principle. He clarified that he had no personal beef or grievance with any department head. To illustrate the necessity of the policy, he cited a specific concern regarding the Human Rights Commission. He noted that if a department head reporting directly to the Mayor served on the commission, there was a high possibility they might inform the Mayor about complaints brought against the City. He specifically recalled a meeting where, during the suspension of the commission's Executive Director, a department head offered to answer the commission's office phone. He pointed out the inherent conflict in this scenario, where a resident might unknowingly be lodging a complaint with the very department head they were complaining against. He concluded that the only way to resolve such systemic conflicts was to ensure that department heads do not serve on these independent bodies.

Councilperson Selvey addressed the Council to express her strong opposition to the measure. She argued that the Council should not create legislation based on a dislike for a specific individual or department head. She stated that while she might not personally like every department head, she refused to support a policy motivated by a personal beef or grievance. She defended the service of department heads on boards and commissions, asserting that they provide essential expertise and serve as vital liaisons to the City. She noted that these individuals possess specialized knowledge of laws and ordinances that other residents would take significantly longer to learn. She emphasized the importance of maintaining a clear separation of powers, arguing that the Mayor should not interfere with the Council's appointment authority and, conversely, the Council should not dictate whom the Mayor appoints to his own committees. She suggested that if anyone believed a department head had committed a wrong, they should utilize established channels by filing a complaint with the Human Resources department or the Ethics Commission. She criticized the practice of airing such grievances on social media, which she believed damaged the City's reputation. During a direct exchange with Councilperson Mason regarding the necessity of the ordinance, Councilperson Selvey challenged the assertion that the measure was based on broad principle rather than personal grievances. Councilperson Mason stated he did not understand Selvey's explanation and assured her it was not against anybody nor questioning the integrity of any department head. He has no beef with any of the City of Muncie Department Heads. He wrote the ordinance because he believed it was the right thing to do.

Daisy Dale, again, posed a hypothetical conflict of interest regarding budget restrictions, Councilperson Selvey countered that boards and commissions were not comprised of a single person and represented a mix of appointing authorities, meaning they were not subject to the influence of one individual. Regarding concerns about the Human Rights Commission, she pointed out that if the Council felt the current balance of Mayoral and Council appointments was unfair, they had the power to approach the Administration to change that composition rather than enacting new legislation. She concluded the exchange by characterizing the various accusations against the Administration as ungrounded. She

reiterated that any legitimate allegations of misconduct should be backed by evidence and directed to the appropriate ethics bodies. Dale assured that no one was accusing anything specifically, it was just that things could come up like that hypothetical situation. Legal Counsel Brandon Murphy noted that multiple parties were talking over each other, making the record difficult to follow. Dale clarified that she was translating the historical context in her head to ensure the Council understood that the commission's current composition was the result of long-term political shifts rather than a single administration's actions and asserted that the HRC had been the subject of several power grabs and increasing restrictions over the years. She specifically recalled a period under a previous Administration (Mayor Alan Wilson) where the authority to select the commission's Executive Director was stripped from the commission and given directly to the Mayor. She noted that it took several years for that power to be reverted to the commission. She further observed that while city code emphasizes the importance of diversity, many mayors have failed to apply those standards to the HRC. She characterized the current state of the commission as lacking the diversity it was intended to represent.

Linda Muckway, again, emphasized that the HRC ordinance used the word "shall" when defining the categories of individuals who must be represented on the commission. She specifically highlighted that religious representation (clergy) was one of these mandatory categories according to the existing city code. She pointed out that the commission currently lacked any form of clergy or religious representation. She stated that her primary concern was ensuring the City adhered to its own ordinance to maintain proper and legal representation on the commission. Muckway argued that the ethics and board membership standards proposed in Ordinance 14-26 were necessary because they directly addressed these types of issues regarding proper board composition and the integrity of city commissions. Councilperson Selvey recalled that during her previous tenure on the HRC, a member of the clergy had always been present and noted that the last religious representative (Andrew Mitchell) had been a City Council appointee. While Selvey agreed that the absence of a clergy member was a failure of the appointing authorities, she maintained that both the Mayor and the Council shared this responsibility. She concluded that the Council had specifically missed the ball regarding their own recent appointment.

Oscar Krieder, again, addressed Councilperson Selvey's comments directly, stating that while he understood the argument that many civically minded department heads currently serving on boards might be upset by the ordinance, he did not agree with it. He expressed significant concern regarding the recurring allegations of a grand conspiracy or a personal beef against the Mayor and his department heads. He argued that a great deal of the evening's discussion had occurred without clarity and without speakers providing factual evidence to back up their claims. He asserted that words are just words and maintained that if such serious allegations were to be made, they had to be supported by clear information. Councilperson Selvey interjected to ask if he had heard a specific individual's name on the Human Rights Commission mentioned repeatedly throughout the meeting. Krieder clarified that he does not attend Human Rights Commission meetings and was therefore not a witness to those specific discussions. Councilperson Selvey maintained that the individual's name (or a clear insinuation of it) had been brought up several times during the meeting's testimony. Kreider stated he was glad the matter was raised but characterized the idea of a broad conspiracy as a significant reach. He stated it was disappointing to hear such allegations presented in a public forum without the necessary evidence to support them, noting that such rhetoric could be misleading for Muncie citizens who might not be fully aware of the underlying context or the specific facts of the situation.

Wayne Scaife, again, clarified that his concerns were indeed focused on a specific individual serving on the HRC. He argued that because this individual reports directly to the Mayor, there is a high probability that any complaint brought against the City would be disclosed to the Mayor. He cited a specific instance from a recent HRC meeting—which he noted Councilperson Selvey did not attend—following the suspension of the commission's Executive Director. He recalled that the department head in question had offered to answer the commission's phones during the vacancy. Scaife posed a hypothetical

scenario where a resident might call the HRC to lodge a complaint against that specific department. He pointed out that if the department head answered the phone simply as the "Human Rights Commission," the complainant would be unaware they were speaking to the very person their complaint concerned. He emphasized that while this was a specific example, the fundamental issue was not about an individual but about the need for a systemic fix. He maintained that the only way to prevent such conflicts was to prohibit all department heads from serving on any city boards or commissions. In conclusion, Scaife addressed Councilperson Selvey directly, asserting that she should not view the ordinance as a personal attack, as the measure was intended to address structural ethical concerns rather than personal grievances.

Terry Moore questioned the Council's policy regarding speaking limits, noting that some individuals had been allowed to address the body multiple times. He suggested that public testimony should be limited to a single appearance per person to maintain order. He questioned the motives and standing of some of the ordinance's most vocal critics, asserting that it was "funny" how some individuals making the loudest comments were either not property taxpayers or were late on their tax payments. Arguing that the Council had discussed the matter sufficiently, Mr. Moore urged the members to call for questions and proceed to a final vote rather than continuing the lengthy back-and-forth.

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Basham to Call for Questions. A roll call vote showed 5 yeas (Basham, Dishman, Garrett, Selvey, Green) and 4 nays (McIntosh, Mason, Gullion, Powell). MOTION PASSED. A motion was made by Powell and seconded by Gullion to Adopt As Amended. A roll call vote showed 4 yeas (McIntosh, Gullion, Powell, Mason) and 5 nays (Selvey, Basham, Dishman, Garrett, Green). MOTION DENIED.

NEW ORDINANCES:

ORD. 15-26 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TEXT OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING A NEW MCKINLEY NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY DISTRICT.

Councilperson Dishman, the sponsoring member of the ordinance, moved to withdraw Ordinance 15-26. Legal Counsel Brandon Murphy informed that because this was a zoning ordinance, its withdrawal required a formal majority vote of the Council. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. WITHDRAWN.

RESOLUTIONS:

RES. 10-26 ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE, INDIANA, RELATING TO FIRE STATION #5 PROJECT.

A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Powell to Bring out of Committee. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. MOTION CARRIED. A motion was made by Basham and seconded by Garrett to Adopt. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. ADOPTED.

RES. 11-26 AUTHORIZING THE ENTRY BY THE CITY OF MUNCIE, INDIANA, INTO A BOT AGREEMENT AND RELATED DOCUMENTS FOR FIRE STATION #5 PROJECT AND TAKING CERTAIN OTHER ACTION RELATED THERETO.

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Basham to Bring out of Committee. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. MOTION CARRIED. A motion was made by Garrett and seconded by Selvey to Adopt.

Councilperson Gullion requested that the City's financial and legal representatives explain the specifics of the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) process to the public.

Jacob McClellan (Bose McKinney & Evans), serving as bond counsel, explained that Resolution 11-26 specifically authorizes the project's construction contract. He clarified that this contractual authorization was separate from the actual financing of the project. He further detailed that the project's

financing was routed through the building corporation, with the lease serving as the operative document for those financial transactions. He reiterated that the resolution at hand was strictly to proceed with the construction contract. In explaining the BOT process to the public, McClellan stated that the developer, Greg Martz (of GM Development), would essentially act as the City's manager to construct the fire station. Under this model, the developer would operate the facility for a designated period of time before transferring ownership back to the City for a predetermined, fixed contract amount.

Greg Martz (GM Development) provided a detailed timeline for the project, noting that the design phase would take approximately six months, followed by a 15-to-16-month construction period. He explained that while the new station was being designed, a temporary station would be constructed at the former "Little Red Door" location on Jackson Street. Once the temporary facility was complete, the Fire Department staff would vacate the existing Station #5, which would then be demolished to make way for the new structure.

Councilperson Powell inquired whether the temporary facility on Jackson Street would be capable of housing the department's aerial truck. Martz clarified that it would not be able to house the truck due to the specific size limitations of the temporary bays. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 9 yeas. ADOPTED.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Patty Goddard, City Human Resources Director, addressed the Council to clarify that her comments reflected her own professional observations and were not intended to represent the official position of the administration. She spoke on the true meaning of being a "public servant," emphasizing that while holding local government accountable is essential, serving the public should never require accepting personal abuse. She described a recent interaction in which a City employee, despite remaining calm and respectful, was met with profanity and personal/family insults from a member of the public. She concluded by stating that City employees are neighbors and members of the community who deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect they strive to show the public.

Karen Brubaker expressed her disappointment with the Council's decision to defeat Ordinance 14-26, stating that the action demonstrated a failure to listen to and represent the concerns of constituents. Additionally, she addressed the long-standing lack of a community center in the Industry neighborhood, urging the Council to take the necessary steps to establish a facility within that specific neighborhood.

Kristopher Bilbrey addressed the Council, noting that he had intended to apologize for becoming upset earlier in the meeting, but decided against it after listening to the Council President attempt to restrict councilmembers from addressing the public. He contested the City Attorney's characterization of the meeting as "difficult," pointing out that it was only 9:12 p.m. He argued that while public employees deserve respect, elected officials must be held to a higher standard of accountability. He asserted that his right to speak was granted by the founding fathers and veterans rather than the Council, and declared that he would never be silenced. He criticized Council President Green for failing to communicate via email and challenged the Council to show greater respect to the public.

Wayne Scaife opened his remarks by noting that under Robert's Rules of Order, a motion to call the question requires a two-thirds majority vote to pass, which he argued was not properly adhered to during the vote on Ordinance 14-26. He recalled distributing copies of the 2002 Hope 6 Grant to the Council in 2020, noting that no members had followed up with questions. Quoting directly from the grant, Scaife detailed the original scope of the unfulfilled \$12.3 million project, which was to include a 15,000-square-foot community center with classrooms, a computer learning center, recreation facilities, a

childcare center for 80 children, and a 40,000-square-foot urban grocery store serving multiple neighborhoods. He lamented that the project had been drastically reduced to a single, inadequate building. He also noted that \$393,000 earmarked by Congressman Pence in 2008 had been spent during the Tyler administration without producing a center. Finally, he explained that the original Hope 6 plan included a public plaza designed to generate lease income to supplement the operations of the South Madison Community Center, addressing long-term funding concerns.

Rodney Vaughn expressed strong disapproval regarding the Mayor's absence during the public comment portion of the meeting, arguing that the Mayor had an obligation to listen to the citizens who fund his office. He shared his experience growing up in the Whitley neighborhood, noting that the local Buie Community Center had been sold to the Boys and Girls Club under the Mayor's direction, which he argued stripped the community of a vital resource. He linked the lack of recreational spaces to rising rates of youth drug use and gun violence. Finally, he criticized the Administration's proposal to locate the new community center at the Mock Street Church, pointing out that it was outside the Industry Neighborhood, creating safety risks for children who would have to walk over two miles home after public transit stops running.

Daisy Dale requested information from the public or Council regarding the Civilian Review Board, which had disbanded several years prior. Regarding the community center project, she raised a discrepancy in the property's address, noting that the official memorandum listed 1910 South Mock Avenue, while a recent public announcement listed 1912. She also questioned whether the proposed renovations would make the building ADA compliant, given the presence of a tall set of stairs.

Dr. Chip Taylor expressed appreciation that the Administration had committed to providing a thorough response to the Council's questions regarding Resolution 8-26. He commended Councilperson Powell for her detailed inquiries and urged the full Council to support her efforts to obtain the audit reports. He highlighted the importance of civic engagement, referencing earlier comments by Cheyenne Reed, and encouraged residents to utilize Go Serve Muncie, email the Mayor, and contact their Council representatives. Dr. Taylor suggested that the Clerk's office compile and publicize a list of upcoming board appointments in October to streamline the January appointment process. Lastly, he pointed out that many City boards and commissions are out of compliance with legal requirements because their webpages fail to list current members and term expiration dates, and he urged these bodies to correct their websites.

Cassandra Woods spoke on behalf of the children of the Industry neighborhood, where she was born and raised. She recalled that the 2002 Hope 6 Grant designated Industry as the city's most distressed neighborhood and set aside \$393,000 for a new community center—a promise that remains unfulfilled after 24 years. She criticized an Youth Center Advisory Committee meeting where she was restricted to a three-minute speaking limit under the guise of council rules. She refuted the Mayor's video claim that a vote had been taken to locate the center at Mock Street Church, asserting that only discussion had occurred. She presented census data showing that the Industry Neighborhood is 63.7% Black children, compared to 9.6% citywide, and argued that moving the center 2.1 miles away to Mock Street Church would exclude the very community the grant was designed to serve. She requested that the Council review the original grant documents, confirm that no official vote had been taken on the location, and ensure the center is built within the Industry neighborhood.

Judith Hill called for transparency from the Mayor, questioning why he had publicly announced the passage of the community center location when no vote had occurred. She argued that neighborhood boundaries had to be respected, asking if the city's west side would tolerate their community center being

moved to a different neighborhood. She expressed frustration that citizens repeatedly presented the truth at public meetings only for their concerns to be voted down. She accused a block of five councilmembers of voting in lockstep based on political affiliation rather than the interests of the public.

Paul Partisanna expressed support for the concerns raised by the other speakers in the room. He then transitioned to state and national issues, noting that Indiana has criminalized being unhoused, rural hospitals are facing closure, and residents are at risk of losing Medicaid benefits. He expressed disillusionment with state and federal governance and urged the public to participate in the upcoming midterm elections, noting that early voting begins on Tuesday, October 6th.

Carl Malone, speaking as the president of the Industry Neighborhood Association and a member of the Park Board, recalled a retreat two years ago where Councilperson Basham was the sole Council representative present. He stated that the Mayor had committed during that retreat to right the wrong of the demolished community center. He shared that in 2012, under the Tyler administration, the Neighborhood successfully operated Garfield School, serving over 260 youth by the end of the summer and hosting a gun line initiative funded by Old National Bank. He emphasized that without a physical community center, the Neighborhood lacks a dedicated space to address social ills. He stated that he felt "bamboozled" by the City's broken promises and would have protested the demolition of the South Madison Community Center had he known it would not be replaced.

Lynn Thornberg stated that she had signed up to speak to ensure she did not lose her opportunity to address the Council. Addressing Councilperson Selvey's earlier comments on Ordinance 14-26, she argued that the fact a councilmember sponsored the bill indicated a genuine problem existed. She supported the ordinance's goal of enhancing transparency and preventing the Administration from holding a "stronghold" over City boards. She also urged the Council to address the City's unhoused population.

Audie Barber referred to Muncie as "Little Chicago" and expressed skepticism about the reliability of the Ball State fire station paperwork compared to the City's failed promises regarding the community center. He criticized the Council for failing to return emails and answer citizen questions. He suggested that the former Walgreens building on 12th and Madison would be a superior location for the community center compared to the Mock Street Church. He expressed deep disappointment that the Council defeated Ordinance 14-26 despite significant public support, accusing five members of voting in lockstep to support the Mayor. He warned the Council that several members had won their seats by very slim margins and could easily lose in the next election. Finally, he suggested that councilmembers and the City Attorney should resign if their duties are too burdensome.

Terry Moore identified himself as a lifelong Muncie resident, property owner, and timely taxpayer. He suggested that the school board should work to restore school-based recreation programs, comparing them to the programs he participated in during the 1960s. He expressed disappointment with the disrespectful treatment directed at the Council by certain speakers, commending the HR Director for maintaining a professional demeanor during a separate confrontation. He supported the Council President's decision to ignore emails from persistent critics, characterizing those messages as fodder intended only to provoke.

Jeanetta Presley, a peer recovery coach, informed the Council of the recent passing of a member of the homeless community, Brian Bernard. She argued that the City is failing its homeless and mentally handicapped populations. She explained that while Mr. Bernard qualified for mental health care, his and his wife's employment disqualified them from regular healthcare. Consequently, the mental health

medications he was prescribed depleted his potassium and magnesium levels, leading to a fatal heart attack. She begged the Council to take action to bridge the gap between mental health and regular healthcare access. She noted that her own hospice care forced her to resign from organizing community meals and she could no longer continue her volunteer work.

Councilperson McIntosh addressed the residents who had attended in support of the Industry Neighborhood Youth Center, and thanked them for attending. He acknowledged that their "backs were against the wall" due to the Mayor's promises regarding the \$500,000 for the park. He reiterated that the Council previously voted 9-0 to support placing the center within the Industry Neighborhood. He formally went on the record to state that if the City fails to place the center within the Industry Neighborhood, he will resign from the Community Center Development Advisory Committee.

ADJOURNED:

The next regular City Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 14, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. A motion was made by Mason and seconded by Garrett to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 9 yeas. ADJOURNED.

Jeffrey Green, President of the
Muncie Common Council

Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council

Muncie City Council meetings are streamed on the City of Muncie Facebook page and archived on its YouTube page: Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/people/City-of-Muncie/100069317225158/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@city.of.muncie Website: https://www.muncie.in.gov
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