

---

**DATE:** Monday, February 10, 2025  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

---

The City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, February 10, 2025, at 7:53 p.m.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT:** Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey\*, CM Jaya Kolisetty, CM Chaundra Bishop, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry\*

**\*CM PRESENT REMOTELY**

**ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Bourema Ouedraogo, Carol Mitten, Matt Roeschley, Larry Boone, Dave Smysor, John Zeman, Marcus Ricci

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

With a quorum present, Mayor Marlin called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:53p.m.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**a. 12-16-2024 Committee of the Whole Minutes**

Motion to approve by CM Wu, seconded by CM Kolisetty.

Voice Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

**NAY:** None.

**3. Additions to the Agenda**

None.

**4. Presentations and Public Input**

*Bill Colbrook* grieved the recent deaths of Darnell “DJ” Wicks, 7; Sherman D. McCraney, 18; and Melvin Braxton, 43 due to gun violence. Expressed anger as the tragedies may have been prevented by increases in police spending through the identified action items in the BerryDunn report. Stated the findings and recommendations of the report dissatisfied certain City Councilmembers and the ideas of the progressive Chief of Police have also been rejected by City Council. Plead for Council to support the residents of Urbana by supporting the Urbana Police Department’s (UPD) proposals and initiatives through increasing the UPD budget and sincerely thanking the officers for their daily work. *Tammy Little* stated the FirstFollowers drop-in center is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays with people lining up before opening on some days for assistance with 99.9% of the clients being homeless while seeking housing assistance. Shared an account of a client, who had recently been released from the Department

of Corrections after having served a 41-year sentence, that was brought to the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD) terminal via a van with no resources who had gone to FirstFollowers for assistance. Stated that 70-year-old man with medical issues ended up having to wait outside Strides Shelter and had to later be transported to a hospital for hypothermia. Stated there has been a significant increase in people trying to receive aid through FirstFollowers and FirstFollowers needs help in being able to provide sufficient aid to everyone. **Child accompanied by Giovanna DiBenedetto** grieved the death of Darnell “DJ” Wicks and stated having more police officers could have prevented his death. **Giovanna DiBenedetto** shared a personal account of her lived experience as a survivor of domestic violence and fleeing her abuser by moving to the City of Urbana. Stated Darnell “DJ” Wicks was not as fortunate as her to have been able to escape domestic violence. Praised Police Chief Boone’s plans shared with Council on addressing domestic violence despite the rejections from Council and the public. Stated those who oppose expanding the UPD’s programs and funding do not understand fear and domestic violence. Blamed City Council for the death of Darnell “DJ” Wicks for not expanding the funding for the UPD. Promised she will persistently appear before Council to voice support for the UPD and Police Chief Boone’s proposals, acting as the voice of Darnell “DJ” Wicks and those who also died due to preventable deaths. **James “T.Y.G.A.R.” Corbin** expressed the impact felt from the recent deaths in the community and called for people to not blame one another but start the healing process. Stated his niece recently played with Darnell “DJ” Wicks before his death and it has had a profound effect on his family due to their personal relationships. Stated he does not oppose the UPD but hopes for violence prevention measures to address the issues holistically in conjunction with local organizations. Stated the community and UPD need to work together instead of blaming one another to address the issues that lead to violence in the community. Prayed for healing. **Justin Morris** stated he has been incarcerated several times due to his actions but now is set on elevating himself and his community. Stated he resides in Silver and Vawter and the area is densely populated with children with no activities or recreational areas nearby that are available to them. Questioned how children can be expected to behave well if there are no resources for them to enjoy their childhood. Stated children are being pushed through school despite having failing grades and a method to improve the behavior of children can be to provide good role models that are consistently a part of their lives. Stated the City of Champaign has a mentoring program for youth, but the City of Urbana does not a similar program. Stated Urbana requires multiple mentoring programs for their youth and expressed hope for those programs to be supported when proposed. Additionally raised the issue of the lack of lighting in Silverwood area contributing to the crime rates in the area. **Tamika Davis** stated she assists many clients of FirstFollowers in the Silverwood area and attested to the lack of lighting in the area at night. Stated there is significant violence in the area with no recreational spaces or playgrounds, children are left to play in the roads. Stated the root problems of the area have already been identified and there must be action taken to heal the community and the conversation cannot only take place when violence occurs as it must be a consistent process. Called for the community to stand together for the health of its people and called for those with information on unsolved crimes to come forward with the truth. **Angela O’Neal** shared she lost her son to gun violence in Urbana and knows the pain that comes with it. Shared her experiences with “A Cry For You” a group for grieving parents who lost their children to gun violence and stated it continues to grow with no solutions in sight. Called on the community and the City to come together and find solutions to address the issue of gun violence.

***Written Public Input calling for healing and not exploitation was received from the following individual and read by CM Evans: Stephanie Cockrell.***

## **5. Council Input and Communications**

**CM Kolisetty** shared the community can access the following resources to help in processing their grief: FirstFollowers, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233), and Courage Connection (217-384-4390 or 877-384-4390). Stated the community must be given space to grieve and conversations must be held to improve the safety and health of the community.

## 6. Reports of Standing Committees

None.

## 7. Committee of the Whole (*Council Member James Quisenberry, Ward 7*)

### 1. Consent Agenda

- a. **Ordinance No. 2025-02-006:** An Ordinance Amending Schedule A of Section 23-62 of the Urbana Local Traffic Code Increasing State Speed Limits in Certain Zones (Correcting Errors and Omissions in Schedule A for Various Streets) – PW

The Ordinance corrects errors and omissions in Schedule A of the Urbana Local Traffic Code for various streets.

- b. **Resolution No. 2025-02-013R:** A Resolution Approving a License Agreement with New Lincoln Square, LLC (Six Total Signs Adjacent to Lincoln Square Mall) – PW

The Resolution authorizes the Mayor to execute a license agreement with New Lincoln Square, LLC to allow for construction, maintenance, operation, and repair for multiple above-ground Lincoln Square Mall signs (five existing and one proposed) within the public rights-of-way and property adjacent to Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana.

Motion to approve by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Kolisetty.

Roll Call Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

**NAY:** None.

### 2. Regular Agenda

- a. **Ordinance No. 2025-02-004:** An Ordinance Approving a Major Variance (Bui Porch Stair Front Yard at 501 West Washington Street / Case No. ZBA-2024-MAJ-03 – CD

Presented by Marcus Ricci, Planner II. The Ordinance approves of a major variance to reduce the required front yard from 15 feet to 10 feet to allow construction of porch stairs on a home addition at 501 West Washington Street, in the R-2 (Single-Family Residential) Zoning District.

Motion to approve by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Bishop. Questions and discussion followed.

CM Bishop called the question.

Roll Call Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Evans, Hursey

**NAY:** Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

*Motion defeated by majority of Nay votes.*

- b. Resolution No. 2025-02-014R:** A Resolution Approving the Equity and Quality of Life (EQL) Program for Fiscal Year 2025 – PW

Presented by John Zeman, City Engineer. The Resolution approves the EQL Program for Fiscal Year 2025.

Motion to approve by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Kolisetty. Discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

**NAY:** None.

## 8. Reports of Special Committees

None.

## 9. Reports of Officers

None.

## 10. New Business

- a. Resolution No. 2025-02-015R:** A Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement (Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant) – PD

Presented by Larry Boone, Chief of Police and Dave Smysor, Deputy Chief of Police. The Resolution accepts the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) for \$16,030 to offset costs for impact resistant protective gear for officers. Larry Boone spoke on his experience with the grant and introduced Dave Smysor to elaborate further on the purpose of the grant. Dave Smysor stated the JAG grant is an annual grant that is received through the City of Champaign with the City of Urbana being a subgrantee for the amount of \$16,030. Stated the grant funds are typically used to address budgetary deficiencies in the UPD and they will be used toward purchasing helmets and shields to have enough to equip the entirety of the department. Larry Boone stated the equipment is solely defensive and to be personal protective equipment for officers. Questions and discussion followed.

Motion to approve by CM Wu, seconded by CM Hursey.

Roll Call Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

**NAY:** None.

## 11. Mayoral Appointments

### a. Mayoral Appointments to Boards and Commissions

#### *Urbana Arts & Culture Commission*

– Robert A. White (term ending June 30, 2028)

Mayor Marlin introduced the candidate and spoke on his background as well as his accomplishments.

Motion to approve by CM Bishop, seconded by CM Wu.

Voice Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry

**NAY:** None.

## 12. Adjournment

With no further business before the Urbana City Council, Mayor Marlin adjourned the meeting at 9:17p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

This meeting was video recorded and is viewable [on-demand HERE](#).

**Minutes approved: 3/17/25**



---

February 10, 2025

Subject: A Call for Healing in the Wake of Tragedy, Not Exploitation

Dear Chief Boone, Members of the Urbana Police Department, and the Urbana City Council,

Our hearts are heavy with grief over the devastating loss our community has suffered. These tragedies cut deep into the fabric of our city, leaving families shattered and our community in mourning. We share in this sorrow, and we are committed to working toward real solutions that address violence and create lasting safety for our people.

However, we are deeply disappointed and disturbed by the response issued by Chief Boone in the wake of this tragedy. Instead of standing in solidarity with a grieving community, offering support, and acknowledging the complex and systemic issues that contribute to cycles of violence, his statement used this painful moment as an opportunity to reinforce a policing agenda that has long fallen short in serving and protecting Black communities.

Chief Boone, your message claims that those who questioned your initiatives must now "confront the painful reality we face" as if we have ever denied the presence of violence in our communities. This assumption is both harmful and dismissive. We have always been aware of the reality of violence—because we *live* with its consequences every day. What we have called for, time and time again, is not a dismissal of the problem but a demand for holistic solutions that address the *root causes* of crime and violence. We have urged investment in healing, mental health services, economic empowerment, housing security, and support systems that restore families rather than over-policing and criminalizing those already suffering under systemic oppression.

We must be clear: having more police would not have prevented this tragedy. More officers on the street would not have changed what happened. What would? Real investments in mental health, family support, conflict resolution programs, and economic opportunities that keep people from reaching points of crisis in the first place.

It is time to have a hard, honest conversation about what actually works and what does not. These problems are not new, and they are not isolated incidents. They are symptoms of a much larger crisis—one that this city and many others have ignored for far too long. Instead of truly addressing these deep-rooted issues, we continue to slap band-aids on wounds that are far too big to be covered up.

And now, in a moment when our community is in pain, when families are in mourning, you have chosen to exploit our tragedy for your own benefit. This proves exactly what we have seen and assumed all along—a lack of genuine care and concern for the people who are hurting the most.

This could have been a moment for leadership, for genuine connection, and for healing. It would have been an opportunity for Chief Boone to visit the families who experienced loss, attend the candlelight vigil, and show up—not as a policymaker pushing an agenda, but as a human being, standing in solidarity with those grieving. This was a time to build relationships and trust. Instead, this painful moment is being used to advance policies that do not serve our people.

I cannot fully express how much it hurt to see this. In the minds of many Black families, police are often just as violent and harmful to us as the streets, and this act of exploitation only reinforces that reality.

Yes, domestic violence must be addressed. Yes, we must act. But real action requires investment in healing, prevention, and community-led solutions. Public safety is not about surveillance and punishment—it is about restoring our people, our families, and our communities.

We demand better. We demand solutions that actually work. And we demand that the pain of our community not be used as a tool to justify policies that fail us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "SCockrell". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent "S" at the beginning.

Dr. Stephanie Cockrell, Ph.D., LSW  
Executive Director, The Well Experience