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**DATE:** Monday, October 27, 2025  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

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The City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in regular session Monday, October 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT:** DeShawn Williams, Mayor; Darcy Sandefur, City Clerk; CM Maryalice Wu, CM Christopher Evans, CM Shirese Hursey, CM Jaya Kolisetty, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry

**ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:** CM Chaundra Bishop

**STAFF PRESENT:** Bourema Ouedraogo, Thomas Webb, Michelle Brooks, Steven Doggett, Larry Boone, Darius White, Matt Roeschley, Olivia Jovine

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Melissa Courtwright, Executive Director for C-U at Home; Cedar King, Men's Program Director for C-U at Home

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

With a quorum present, Mayor Williams called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:00p.m.

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

None.

**3. Additions to the Agenda**

None.

**4. Presentations and Public Input**

**a. C-U at Home Urbana Men's House; The Results from Two Years of Operation – CM's Evans and Wilken**

Presented by Melissa Courtwright, Executive Director for C-U at Home and Cedar King, Men's Program Director for C-U at Home with an introduction from CM Evans. Melissa Courtwright thanked the City of Urbana for their support of C-U at Home. Provided background on the mission of ending homelessness through C-U at Home and supporting a system that allows for people to be empowered to achieve stability by creating pathways out of homelessness. Spoke on the challenges and barriers clients of C-U at Home face. Cedar King noted many clients share the same issue of having an inadequate support system. Melissa Courtwright shared how many clients who have entry-level skills cannot afford fair market rent with entry-level jobs and require housing vouchers, which can be a difficult process to get. Stated clients with C-U at Home are able to achieve stability and begin long-term planning. Spoke on the organization's focus on assisting the most vulnerable of the homeless population.

Cedar King stated seven out of the eight members of the Men's Program at the house on Springfield Avenue were living on the streets before the program and were victims of violence and predatory behavior. Melissa Courtwright shared how the organization connects clients with housing and create stability that allows for further work with the client to be done to address the root cause of their homelessness. Shared the eligibility criteria for the Pathways to Progress program.

Spoke on the goals and focus areas for the mid-barrier house in Urbana. Stated the Urbana house, in the last two years, has seen 25 men live in the house with 15 gaining employment, four enrolling in college, three were drug court clients, and six men faced relapse. Further stated five clients at the house reunited with family, five integrated into the community, three moved into the Phase 4 House, six left due to non-compliance, and one had passed away while receiving care at a hospital. Cedar King spoke on C-U at Home's "Parkland Five" who are clients that sought to attend Parkland College and are now thriving in their academics. Stated the clients all recently lived on the streets and overcome many hardships to now find their success.

Melissa Courtwright shared updates regarding the housing development on Mattis Street and stated construction is expected to be completed by December 31, 2025, allowing for housing 26 people on site. Questions and discussions followed.

#### **b. Public Input**

**Karen Medina** stated how Lieutenant Michael Cervantes was present at the arrest of Aleyah Lewis in 2020 and did not act to prevent her from being harmed. Expressed how people should not be beaten by police officers, women should not have to face domestic violence, and people should not be beaten up. Stated the Urbana Police Department (UPD) never took responsibility for the beating, never apologized for the incident, lied to coverup the beating, and attempted to normalize the use of force. Voiced opposition to Lieutenant Michael Cervantes' promotion to Deputy Chief of Police as he did not act to stop the beating and did not receive training to prevent it. **Stephen MacGuire** opposed the promotion of Lt. Michael Cervantes as it does not demonstrate a desire to move toward de-escalation and de-militarization of the police. Stated from analyzing the bodycam footage from the arrest of Aleyah Lewis, Lt. Michael Cervantes was wanting to start a fight with Aleyah Lewis. Stated the five years since the incident is insufficient time to unlearn the behaviors that caused the beating, and he should not be promoted. Stated the position is significant as whomever is appointed will dictate the culture of policing within the UPD. Noted Lt. Michael Cervantes could teach other police officers to escalate responses as he did in 2020. Emphasized the need for the Alternative Response unit to be as external to the UPD as possible. Stated the call should not have been escalated as it was because the situation was that a man had shot himself and he was harassing two Black women. **Lilah Leopold** expressed discomfort with the proposed promotion of Lt. Michael Cervantes to be Deputy Chief of Police due to his conduct during the arrest of Aleyah Lewis in 2020. Requested another candidate to be nominated for the promotion to Deputy Chief of Police due to his violent actions during that arrest. Stated the promotion of Lt. Michael Cervantes would increase tensions within the community and make residents feel more unsafe given the current state of federal agents kidnapping innocent residents across the nation. **Sarah Nixon** expressed the two UPD officers standing by the entrance to the City Council Chambers are creating an intimidating environment. Voiced opposition to the consideration of Lt. Michael Cervantes for a promotion to the position of Deputy Chief of Police. Stated the residents of the City of Urbana deserve someone who has never violated the standards its residents uphold. Stated the incident causing the initial call was domestic violence and Aleyah Lewis was assaulted by UPD officers due to failing to comply with the commands from the officers for a variety of reasons. Stated Lt. Michael Cervantes' broken thumb was a "Boxer's Fracture" caused from punching,

and he was not injured by Aleyah Lewis. **Marina Minetti** expressed the horror felt after reviewing the bodycam footage as Aleyah Lewis repeatedly asked to speak with a woman but was met with being forced to the ground by men. Stated she appeared afraid of the police officers and the fear was justified by the later actions of the officers. Stated Aleyah Lewis was lynched by the officers, and it is confusing to appoint Lt. Michael Cervantes as the Deputy Chief of Police despite his participation in this arrest. Stated Lt. Michael Cervantes is part of a culture that is not able to handle delicate situations with people. Voiced the appointment of Lt. Michael Cervantes to the position of Deputy Chief of Police will make her feel unsafe. **Chris Zelle** stated viewing the bodycam footage of the arrest of Aleyah Lewis is still traumatizing and displays that UPD seeks to set this tone of violence and promote this form of policing. Stated UPD stands against change and wants the leadership to halt the influence of the Alternative Response model on the culture of policing in Urbana. Stated all cops are bastards as if a cop were to be good, they would stop those who were bad, but good cops face repercussions for stopping bad behaviors. Requested Council defend Urbana against UPD as there are still problems within the culture of the UPD. **Ben Joselyn** stated protestors that stayed after the No Kings protest on October 18 were threatened to be arrested by UPD. Noted the UPD have not interfered in the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) kidnappings in Urbana. Stated UPD has assisted in arresting residents during the protests against genocide on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) campus in 2024. Thanked the Councilmembers who spoke out against the UPD's actions of arresting protestors in 2024. Requested a more trustworthy and accountable police department. Requested the UPD display what changes were made to ensure something like what happened to Aleyah Lewis never happens again. Stated the promotion of Lt. Michael Cervantes despite his involvement in the arrest of Aleyah Lewis is a mistake and hurts the trust between the community and the City.

## 5. Council Input and Communications

**CM Wu** stated members of the police department or fire department will typically attend Council meetings when a promotion is on the agenda. Stated the police officers were not requested to attend due to audience concerns, as to her knowledge. Expressed condolences to Giovanna Dibenedetto on her recent passing and spoke on her activism in southeast Urbana. Stated the Urbana Fire Department (UFD) worked to quickly address two fires on Friday afternoon and thanked them for their swift work. **CM Evans** announced the first Alternative Response Task Force meeting is set for Thursday, November 6 at 3:30p.m. held at the Independent Media Center (IMC) at 202 South Broadway Avenue. Noted the public will not be able to share public input at the meeting, but public input can be emailed to "CityClerk@urbanail.gov". Stated the public is invited to watch in person and online (at <https://www.urbanail.gov/executive-department/page/urbana-public-television>). **CM Quisenberry** recognized the passing of Giovanna Dibenedetto and spoke on her work building community in southeast Urbana through Silverwood Hearts. **CM Wilken** thanked the public for their input and engagement. Stated that while the police officers may have been attending to listen on the promotion of Lt. Michael Cervantes, their presence can be considered intimidating by people as they were in their full gear. Invited them to sit down as part of the audience in the future as it may be less intimidating for members of the community. Thanked the members of the public for attending the recent Pride events. Expressed hope for further discussions both publicly and internally regarding how best to protect residents against the terrorism committed by federal agents and ICE. Requested the discussion on the Police Surveillance Ordinance (2024-12-042) to return on November 10's meeting to discuss updates. **CM Hursey** expressed condolences for Giovanna Dibenedetto's family on her passing and spoke on her work in the community. Raised an issue with how the public described the Aleyah Lewis arrest to be a lynching. Stated from her perspective, as an African American, the situation was bad, but it was not a lynching. Stated the speculation and misinformation surrounding the situation has still left people upset and hoped for people to consider that police officers can be retrained and reformed. **CM Kolisetty** shared her condolences for Giovanna Dibenedetto. Stated during Public Input, Councilmembers are not allowed to respond to questions posed. Agreed with CM Hursey regarding the use of "lynching" to

describe the violent arrest of Aleyah Lewis as it should be used to appropriately describe historic and ongoing lynchings across the nation. Stated people should not dismiss the voices of people of color who say certain things are harmful. Stated the conversation surrounding the violent arrest can be productive or diminishing depending on the thoughtfulness of the conversation. **Mayor Williams** stated public safety must protect the safety and dignity of the community. Voiced opposition to corrupt policing and systemic harms to minorities as he has lived under those systems as well. Acknowledged residents may disagree with his actions at times and encouraged opposition to be voiced. Stated under his leadership, there is room for both accountability and growth with second chances being given alongside many requirements for growth to be demonstrated. Stated he seeks to lead the City with integrity for everyone in the community.

## 6. Reports of Standing Committees

None.

## 7. Committee of the Whole (*Council Member Shirese Hursey, Ward 3*)

### 1. Consent Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2025-10-080R:** A Resolution Authorizing Staff to Implement Certain Provisions of the Secure 2.0 Act to the City of Urbana Deferred Compensation Plan with MissionSquare Retirement – HR/F

The Resolution authorizes the Mayor to implement changes to the City’s deferred compensation plan with MissionSquare Retirement to apply required and certain optional provisions of the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement 2.0 Act (SECURE 2.0 Act).

- b. **Resolution No. 2025-10-082R:** A Resolution for Improvement Under the Illinois Highway Code (State Motor Fuel Tax for Windsor Road from Philo to High Cross) – PW

The Resolution appropriates \$13,000 of State Motor Fuel Tax (State MFT) funds for Phase I Preliminary Engineering for Windsor Road (Philo to High Cross), Section 00-00361-00-ES.

- c. **Resolution No. 2025-10-083R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a License Agreement with Icon Hospitality, LLC (Two Signs adjacent to Hotel Royer) – PW

The Resolution approves and authorizes the execution of a license agreement with Icon Hospitality, LLC, allowing them to construct, maintain, operate, and repair two above-ground Hotel Royer signs within the public rights-of-way and property adjacent to Hotel Royer in Urbana.

- d. **Resolution No. 2025-10-084R:** A Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of an Illinois Arts Council Agency (IACA) Grant for Urbana Arts and Culture Operating Support (FY 2026 Urbana Arts and Culture Program) – CD

The Resolution authorizes the acceptance of an IACA grant to support general operations of the Urbana Arts and Culture Program in the amount of \$10,000.

- e. **Resolution No. 2025-10-086R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a Community Partnership Agreement (Experience CU, Fiscal Year 2025-2026) – CD

The Resolution approves and authorizes a Community Partnership Agreement with Experience Champaign Urbana (ECU) that includes a contribution from the City of Urbana of \$15,000 for Fiscal Year 2026.

- f. Resolution No. 2025-10-087R:** A Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of an Economic Mobility Leadership Institute Grant from the African American Mayors Association – Exec

The Resolution authorizes the acceptance of an Economic Mobility Leadership Grant from the African American Mayors Association providing \$5,000 in funding toward convening a financial literacy program.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

**NAY:** None.

## **2. Regular Agenda**

- a. Resolution No. 2025-10-081R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a Revised Intergovernmental Agreement for Geographic Information System Services – PW

The Resolution approves and authorizes the execution of a revised Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Champaign County Geographical Information System Consortium (CCGISC) and Champaign County for Geographical Information System (GIS) services.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

**NAY:** Wu

- b. Resolution No. 2025-10-085R:** A Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Execution of an Economic Development Agreement (Champaign County Economic Development Corporation, Fiscal Year 2025-2026) – CD

The Resolution approves and authorizes an Economic Development Agreement with the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) which includes a contribution of \$33,644 for Fiscal Year 2026.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

**NAY:** None.

## **8. Reports of Special Committees**

None.

## **9. Reports of Officers**

None.

## 10. Mayoral Appointments

### a. Staff Appointment

#### *Interim Deputy Chief of Police*

– Michael Cervantes (term ending April 27, 2026, or 6 months, whichever comes later)

Presented by Larry Boone, Chief of Police. Larry Boone recognized the emotions surrounding the arrest of Aleyah Lewis from the community. Voiced opposition to referring to all police officers in UPD as “bastards” as the officers are working under difficult conditions every day. Stated the UPD has been improving its relations with the community. Recommended Lt. Michael Cervantes for the position of Interim Deputy Chief of Police due to his talent, experience, and character. Spoke on his previous service in the Navy and his work at the UPD since 2006. Praised his recent work contributing to intergovernmental crisis contingency planning for the recent No Kings protest and also handling operations, without incident, during the day of the protest. Stated this appointment displays a significant promotion for someone who has great talent and improves the future of the UPD. Questions and discussion followed.

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

Roll Call Vote:

**AYE:** Wu, Hursey, Kolisetty, Quisenberry

**NAY:** Evans, Wilken

### b. Board and Commission Appointments

#### *Community Development Commission*

– Rachael Harp (term ending June 30, 2028)

#### *Civilian Police Review Board*

– Jane McClintock (term ending June 30, 2028)

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

**NAY:** None.

## 11. Adjournment

With no further business before the Urbana City Council, Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:22p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

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

**Minutes approved: 11/17/25**