
DATE: Monday, June 23, 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, June 23, 2025, at 7:03 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 Chaundra Bishop, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Femi Fletcher, Vince Gustafson, Don Ho, Larry Boone, Matt Roeschley, Elizabeth Hannan, Demond Dade, Dave Smysor

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

With a quorum present, Mayor Williams called the meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 7:03p.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

None.

3. Additions to the Agenda

None.

Motion to recess and reconvene, due to technical difficulties, and to reschedule the following 06-23-2025 Special Committee of the Whole meeting to occur in City Council Chambers on 06-25-2025 at 6:00p.m. by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Wilken at 7:24p.m.

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None.

With a majority vote, City Council entered recess at 7:24p.m. and will continue from this point in the meeting on 06-25-2025 at 6:00p.m.

DATE: Wednesday, June 25, 2025
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
PLACE: 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

The City Council Committee of the Whole of the City of Urbana, Illinois, met in reconvened regular session Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 6:00p.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 Chaundra Bishop*, CM Grace Wilken, CM James Quisenberry

***CM PRESENT REMOTELY**

^CM PRESENT AFTER ROLL

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Bourema Ouedraogo, Femi Fletcher, Vince Gustafson, Don Ho, Larry Boone, Matt Roeschley, Elizabeth Hannan, Demond Dade, Dave Smyzor, Breaden Belcher

OTHERS PRESENT:

With a quorum present, Mayor Williams called the reconvened meeting of the Urbana City Council to order at 6:00p.m.

4. Presentations and Public Input

a. General Presentation on Alternative Response Models – CM’s Wilken and Evans

Presented by CM Wilken. Highlighted items from a public report made by the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) on Alternative Response in the City of Evanston. Stated the presentation does not represent LEAP and the City is finalizing a contract with LEAP to facilitate the Alternate Response Task Force for developing Alternate Response program models. Stated LEAP will be providing a presentation in the future once the contract is signed.

Read a segment of a letter from Lieutenant Diane Goldstein, Executive Director of LEAP stating how alternate response systems improve public services while enhancing public safety. Shared the executive summary in the report on how alternate response systems can create a more just and equitable public safety system that improves racial justice, community trust, and community safety across cities it has been implemented in. Shared LEAP’s recommendations on establishing a community responder program to respond to low-risk situations without a need for police or medical response.

Shared how the report found community responders could handle approximately 36% of calls for services handled by the Evanston Police Department, alleviating about 5,000 hours of work annually from the department. Shared LEAP had recommended housing the alternate response system within the Evanston Parks and Recreation Department. Shared the recommendation to hire six two-person response teams, support staff, and a program director to manage the alternate response system while also hiring with an emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity, lived experience, skills in de-escalation, and connections to the community. Shared LEAP’s recommendation to seek multiple sources of funding for the program to allow for sustainability and expansion of the program.

Shared the report contains the following sections: Overview of Stakeholder Concerns; Local

Initiatives; Dispatch Process; Call Types; Program Impact; Responder Qualifications, Hiring, & Training; Responder Staffing; Operating Agency; Key Service Connections; Community Engagement; Documentation and Impact Evaluation; Implementation Plan; and Funding.

Highlighted Figure 1 in the report regarding an overview of categories across calls for service where minor disputes and report-taking calls comprise 53% of calls for service in Evanston. Shared Figure 11 which notes the outcome of community response eligible calls for service where less than 1% of calls resulted in arrests being made. Shared Figure 16 which detailed the need and capacity for responders by hour based on the average calls received per hour. Spoke on Figure 13 which compares the capacity of five community responder teams to six, noting the expectation to expand long-term due to an increase in trust for the program both from the community and the police department. Shared Figure 22 which estimates budgets for six months of development leading up to the beginning of the program and the first year of operation for a five community responder team setup to a six team setup. Shared Figure 21 which compared budget sizes across alternate response programs from various cities. Shared Figure 26 and 27, which detailed the estimate of calls for service being handled by the alternate response team in the short-term and long-term.

Motion to extend by 3 minutes by CM Quisenberry, seconded by CM Wu.

Voice Vote:

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

NAY: None.

Shared information from the City of Evanston's website regarding their [Crisis Alternative Response Evanston \(CARE\) team found online here](#). Shared how their Alternative Emergency Response Subcommittee began meeting in October 2020, LEAP published a report providing recommendations in 2023, and the CARE program began in February 2024 with \$400,000 in funding. Questions and discussion followed.

b. Public Input

Luke stated a majority of people who provide public input are against providing additional funding to the Urbana Police Department (UPD) and questioned what progress has been made with the UPD and Alternate Response Task Force. Thanked CMs Evans and Wilken for continuing to advocate for the Alternate Response Task Force and requested Council to question the bipartisan disregard for the demands central to the 2020 Black Lives Matter national protests. Stated the people of Urbana deserve to have their basic needs met, to have support for the most marginalized people in the community, and to have true public safety.

Christian voiced opposition to the proposed regressive 1% Grocery Tax to increase funding for the UPD. Stated the City can be made safer through access to food, reducing over-policing, and consumer protections. **Theo** expressed gratitude for the presentation on Alternative Response Models. Voiced how police intervention has not once helped people seeking assistance with mental health issues. Stated there was recently an incident where the police responded and if they had not responded, the person involved would still be alive as the person managed to disarm an officer and commit suicide. Stated funding an alternate response model would better serve the needs of the community than increasing the funding for the UPD.

Maxwell Haynes stated the role of the government is to utilize taxpayer funds in service of the community, addressing constituent wants and needs. Questioned the authority, competency, and right to exist as a community authority if Council is unable to meet the needs of its constituents. Stated the community does not want or need increases to the UPD budget. Stated public safety can be achieved through meeting the basic needs of the community, but there are no services in place to meet those needs and is especially true for people with disabilities,

people of color, LGBTQ+ people, homeless people, and many people living check to check. Stated the police only punish those acting in desperation and serve to keep government in power. **Ben Joselyn** stated the UPD has had a 71% increase to their budget over the last six years with a supportive Council. Stated complaints that the Council does not support the UPD due to their questioning of requests, which are left unanswered. Stated the criminalization of poverty and Police Chief Boone's biases show an inability to listen and provide factual information. Expressed a lack of confidence in Police Chief Boone's ability to serve the community and the truthfulness of what he says to Council. Noted the only Councilmembers challenged in the recent election were opposed by candidates that were advocating for more expansion to the UPD, and those candidates were defeated, showing the community does not want greater expansion to the UPD. Requested Council to provide a reason why they will vote in favor of expanding the UPD and what the expansions to the UPD have provided to the community recently. Stated Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will continue to kidnap people from the community and resistance should be prioritized.

Written Public Input in opposition to the expansion of the UPD budget were received from the following individuals and read by Council: Lindsay March, Lilah Leopold, BJ Bell, Matt Turino, Alen Romero, and Derek Briles. Written Public Input in support of allocating funds toward supporting victims of violence was received from the following individual and read by Mayor Williams: Esther Patt. Written Public Input calling for more awareness on other taxes that increase annually was received from the following individual and read by CM Evans: Steve Campbell. Written Public Input in opposition to the 1% Grocery Tax, in support of allocating funds to support victims of violence, and in support of an alternate response program housed outside of the UPD was received from the following individual and read by CM Wu: Sarah Nixon. Written Public Input in support of the UPD was received from the following individuals and read by CM Evans: Peggy Patton & Todd Kinney, Eileen Kohen, Phyllis D. Clark, and Kanittha Fay. Written Public Input in support of allocating funds toward supporting victims of violence was received from the following individual, but was not read: Jeffrey Glassman. Written Public Input in opposition to the expansion of the UPD budget were received from the following individuals, but were not read: Olivia Webb and B. Singleton.

5. Reports of Officers

a. Human Resources Staffing – HRF

Presented by Elizabeth Hannan, Interim City Administrator / Human Resources & Finance Director / CFO and Femi Fletcher, Human Resources Manager. Femi Fletcher stated an addition of one Full-time Employee (FTE) to the Human Resources Department (HR) for a Human Resources Generalist position is required to meet several needs. Stated the position will provide internal support, support for HR staff, and establish HR management staff succession planning. Shared there are currently six FTE's within HR with one HR Manager, one Labor & Employee Relations Manager, two Recruiting Coordinators, one Benefits Coordinator, and one HR Assistant. Provided background on the responsibilities across positions within HR. Shared improvements made to internal HR systems and noted vacancies within the City have been reduced from 30% to 10-12%.

Stated the new Human Resources Generalist position increases management-level HR staff by one FTE and provides redundancy within HR while providing more support to the internal workforce. Stated the position will improve staffing levels, retention, staff development, and staff engagement. Shared the position will report to the Human Resources Manager while supervising the Human Resources Coordinators and Human Resources Assistant. Shared proposed duties for the position.

Shared the cost of the position would be \$143,187 in recurring expenditures for salary & benefits with \$9,300 in one-time costs for workspace furnishing. Questions and discussion followed.

6. Council Input and Communications

CM Kolisetty thanked Council for rescheduling the meeting to a time that allowed for the entirety of Council to attend. Thanked Mayor Williams for the thoughtful conversations regarding the budget and the ability to respectfully voice disagreement regarding the budget increases to the UPD. Stated no tangible plan to reduce burnout within the UPD has been presented and the staffing increases from the previous year still resulted in greater overtime amounts. Thanked CM Wilken for asking for a plan regarding the Community Engagement Team and stated, from experience with working on intimate partner violence, the Community Engagement Team's proposed involvement in safety planning and relationship counseling is a danger to the community. Voiced opposition to the proposed Community Engagement Team and emphasized the risk it adds to the lives of residents. **CM Wilken** thanked the public for their engagement and the work that has gone into the budget. Agreed with CM Kolisetty's concerns regarding the budget proposals from the UPD. Noted the City of Evanston began the process of developing an alternate response system in 2020 and expressed hope for finally being able to establish alternate response. Stated the delay to the development of the alternate response system by terminating the contract with BerryDunn was necessary to ensure transparency in the development of the model. Stated the Community Engagement Team requires experts involved in its formation, the creation of its policies, and it should be collaborative with an alternate response system rather than potentially undermining it and endangering the community. **CM Hursey** stated she does not own any properties.

7. Reports of Standing Committees

None.

8. Committee of the Whole (Council Member Maryalice Wu, Ward 1)

1. Consent Agenda

- a. **Resolution No. 2025-06-040R:** A Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for Head Start – Exec

The Resolution writes in support of full federal funding for Head Start, a nationally recognized, federally funded early childhood education program that promotes school readiness for children from low-income families.

- b. **Resolution No. 2025-05-039R:** A Resolution in Support of Full Federal Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – Exec

The Resolution writes in support for full federal funding for LIHEAP, a federally funded initiative that helps low-income households pay for heating and cooling costs.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

2. Regular Agenda

- a. **Ordinance No. 2025-06-019:** An Ordinance Approving the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget – HRF

The Ordinance approves the FY2026 Annual Budget. Questions and discussion followed.

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

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Quisenberry, Williams

NAY: Kolisetty, Wilken

- i. Motion to amend to add a one-time expenditure of \$200,000 for the purpose of providing re-location money for victims of violence by CM Evans, seconded by CM Quisenberry. Questions and discussion ensued.

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

- ii. Motion to amend to add a one-time expenditure of \$100,000 to fund assistance toward people experiencing gaps in services and fund continued immigrant services by CM Wilken, seconded by CM Evans. Questions and discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: Wu, Bishop

- iii. Motion to amend the Annual Budget to remove the two police officer positions approved last year for the three-year Community Engagement Team Pilot Program, the Sergeant position for the Community Engagement Team Pilot Program, and the \$30,000 toward leasing an office to establish a police substation on South Philo Road by CM Evans, seconded by CM Wilken. Questions and discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Evans, Kolisetty, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Hursey, Bishop, Quisenberry, Williams

- iv. Motion to amend the Annual Budget to remove the proposed three police Patrol Officer positions by CM Evans, seconded by CM Wilken. Questions and discussion followed.

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Evans, Kolisetty, Wilken

NAY: Wu, Hursey, Bishop, Quisenberry, Williams

- b. **Ordinance No. 2025-06-020:** An Ordinance Revising the Annual Budget Ordinance (Budget Amendment #10 – Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Estimates) – HRF

The Ordinance amends the FY2025 budget to conform to estimates provided in the proposed budget.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

- c. **Ordinance No. 2025-06-021:** An Ordinance Amending City Code Chapter 22 (Taxation) by Adding Article X (Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax) – HRF

The Ordinance continues the grocery tax, collected and distributed by the State, to allow for the City to maintain current services and expand some services. Questions and discussion followed.

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

Roll Call Vote:

AYE: Wu, Evans, Hursey, Bishop, Quisenberry

NAY: Kolisetty, Wilken

9. Reports of Special Committees

None.

10. New Business

None.

11. Mayoral Appointments

- a. ***Staff Appointment***
Interim Public Works Director

– Vincent (Vince) Gustafson (term ending June 30, 2026 or until position filled, whichever is sooner)

Mayor Williams provided an introduction for the candidate and spoke on Vince Gustafson's background and character. Discussion followed.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

b. **Staff Board Appointment**
Police Pension Fund Board

– Kristine Francisco (term ending June 30, 2027)

Presented by Mayor Williams.

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

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

c. **Staff Board Reappointments**
Firefighters' Pension Fund Board of Trustees

– Elizabeth Hannan (term ending June 30, 2028)

– Kristine Francisco (term ending June 30, 2028)

Presented alongside the *Board and Commission Reappointments* by Mayor Williams.

Motion to approve together with *Board and Commission Reappointments* by CM Wu, seconded by CM Quisenberry.

Roll Call Vote:

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

NAY: None.

d. **Board and Commission Reappointments**
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

– Bruce Michelson (term ending June 30, 2028)

– Susan Jones (term ending June 30, 2028)

Civil Service Commission

– Bill Gray (term ending June 30, 2028)

Community Development Commission

– Chris Diana (term ending June 30, 2028)

Design Review Board

– Travis Schiess (term ending June 30, 2028)

Historic Preservation Commission

– Dennis Roberts (term ending June 30, 2028)

– Andrew Weiss (term ending June 30, 2028)

Sustainability Advisory Commission

– Jessica Lehmkuhl (term ending June 30, 2028)

The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

- Beth Shied (term ending June 30, 2028)
- Julia Pollack (term ending June 30, 2028)
- Shirese Hursey (term ending June 30, 2028)

Urbana Arts & Culture Commission

– Barbara Hedlund (term ending June 30, 2028)

Zoning Board of Appeals

- Harvey Welch (term ending June 30, 2030)
- Nancy Uchtmann (term ending June 30, 2030)

Board and Commission Reappointments were approved together with Staff Board Reappointments.

12. Adjournment

With no further business before the Urbana City Council, Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 9:01p.m.

Seok Hyun Cho

Deputy City Clerk

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

Minutes approved: 7/28/25

PUBLIC INPUT June 23, 2025

From Olivia <[REDACTED]>
Date Mon 6/23/2025 5:01 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello,

I am an outdoor educator in who resides in Urbana. I'd like to comment on the proposal to add four more positions to the Urbana Police Department. I was very excited to learn about the Alternative Response Task Force being funded, but it seems it has yet to meet. Is this not the very problem the task force was formed to address? If the police department is overworked, Urbana residents have already made their preferred solution clear: taking alternative response models seriously. If the problem of understaffing is a crisis, then the task force should be reacting accordingly. I would prefer to see the city explore alternative response models first, and then determine how many new officers are still needed.

Thank you,
Olivia Webb

Public Input 6/23/2025. Grocery tax and some other taxes and fees

From [REDACTED]
Date Fri 6/20/2025 3:21 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>
Cc Press-News Gazette <[REDACTED]>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Mayor and City Council,

This email is from Steve Campbell, born, raised, schooled and lived in or around for my entire life. Which is currently 74 years.

Replacing a 1% Grocery Tax with a replacement 1% Grocery Tax could, I realize, be a problem for the current council.

Having owned residential rental real estate in Urbana since 1985, a business in downtown Urbana for a quarter of a century and personal real estate I am, at least familiar, with the history of Urbana's license fees, other fees, taxes and all the other things they might be called and that would be charged to the citizens and businesses of Urbana.

I understand the current council concern about replacing a state 1% Grocery Tax with a replacement city tax, which if it, totally, goes away will cost the city of Urbana and its residents hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue used towards its services and other expenses.

The current city council, and the previous mayor, have also passed new, or changed the way, previous rules regarding taxes, fees, etc were implemented.

For example,

The "Impervious Water fee or tax" was implemented in 2023 with an AUTOMATIC increase in amount collected. Which therefore requires no further action by the council or bringing to the attention of the public, the citizens of Urbana.

Which, by the way, Mr. Dobosz of the Public Works department has quit responding to my texts, emails or calls concerning the implementation and way it is being computed.

The "Motor Fuel Tax" was changed to increase the amount per gallon and AUTOMATICALLY be increased, I believe, annually.

Which, by the way, does not include by the gallon charge for diesel fuel or some means of taxing electric vehicles. Most of which, on average, are heavier than gasoline powered vehicles, causing more

wear and tear on our city roadways.

So I understand the concerns of doing away with an existing tax on food, which does not include other items purchased at the grocery store, paper, tobacco, alcohol, soap etc. But trading an existing 1% with an identical 1% tax after all this discussion and dissension does not acknowledge all the other AUTOMATIC, MORE than 1% tax increases that happen automatically. Without appearing before the people of Urbana's City Council.

You want to do away with the food tax, go ahead. I'm fortunate enough that it won't really have an effect on me personally. But, at least be open and honest about all the other tax increases that will be implemented without the people, citizens, being made aware.

This may be read into the record if you desire.

Thank you,

Steve Campbell



PUBLIC INPUT to the Urbana City Council

From Eileen Kohen <[REDACTED]>
Date Sat 6/21/2025 5:25 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>
Cc Kohen Eileen <[REDACTED]>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

I applaud Shirese Hursey, Urbana City Council representative from Ward 2, for her News Gazette article, June 17, 2025. Her voice of reason for decreasing gun violence comes at a time when others see little purpose to adequately fund the Urbana Police Department.

We are fortunate to have Chief Boone lead the department and should provide the funding and the tools (like license-plate readers) necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the Urbana Police Department.

Eileen Kohen

Ward 7, Urbana

PUBLIC INPUT - June 23, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting

From Esther Patt [REDACTED]
Date Sun 6/22/2025 5:11 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please read my message into the public record.

Dear City Council Members:

Please include in the FY 2025-26 budget a specific line item to fund relocation assistance for victims of domestic violence. Compared to the increased costs for policing and physical infrastructure, an allocation of \$200,000.00 to provide housing for victims of violence is relatively small.

For decades, city officials have agreed that our community needs more affordable housing for lower income people and have agreed that we should end homelessness. But because solving these problems costs so much, cities including Urbana are hesitant to spend any funds other than federal HOME and CDBG funds on housing programs. Those funds are getting cut, but you do have other funds that you are planning to use for your priorities.

The Urbana Police Department reported that last year there were more than 700 incidents of battery, including domestic battery and more than 1,000 calls to police about domestic disturbances, including violence.

Providing financial assistance to victims of domestic violence to help them relocate to safe housing would address two of the four strategic priorities listed in the budget: Public Safety and Well-Being and Housing. I ask you to support a motion to earmark funding for this purpose.

Thank you for your service and for your consideration of my concerns.

Esther Patt
Urbana

Comment for public record

From L March [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/23/2025 2:25 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello,

I am reaching out as a previous Urbana resident and current Champaign resident (moved from Urbana Fall 2024 after three years residing in Urbana) and would like to send input for tonight's meeting.

Please have the following comment read into public record:

I have been a resident of Urbana's Ward 1 for 3 years and though I moved to Champaign Fall 2024, I am an employee of a small Urbana business and deeply involved in many programs and events that take place in Urbana. With the vote on the council budget tonight I am emailing to voice my opposition to the proposal to increase the budget to the Police Department in Urbana. City Council has indicated a desire to fully implement the Community Engagement Team. However, Chief Boone has already noted the retention problems in the Urbana Police Department. There is no indication that an increase in budget will assist with this. Raising taxes to further add money to the police budget not only doesn't address the problems within the department, it does not invest in those in our community who need the most support. We should adopt alternative response models to policing, as the outpouring of comments last shows the community wants and is asking for. I oppose all increase in budget for the police department and strongly stand in support of that budget going towards programs that meet the needs of our residents facing housing crises, supporting our public works, the library, and other social services.

Thank you,
Lindsay March
Former Urbana Resident and Current Urbana Employee
Champaign Resident

PUBLIC COMMENT 6/23/2025

From Lilah Leopold [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/23/2025 3:24 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Mayor Williams and Council Members Wu, Evans, Hursey, Kolisetty, Bishop, Wilken, Quisenberry,

I'm out of town for this week's meeting and would deeply appreciate your reading the below out loud at public comment if there's enough time:

My name is Lilah Leopold, Ward 4, and I thank you all for all you do in the service of Urbana and everyone here. I'd like to speak to the budget on your table this evening.

And want to preface this by saying that I do not see my neighbors and those with different backgrounds to my own as an indeterminate mass of victims. I do not presume to speak on behalf of those whose experiences I have not lived. I do also know the problems facing our communities will not go away by not mentioning them, and that Urbana will do better if everyone gets the basic necessities they need. And even if based purely on attendance at city council meetings such as the previous, it appears crystal clear to me that struggle does not conform to racial labels and, at the same time, that historic and prevalent inequities cannot be ignored if they are to be addressed in any real way. Were we not in a position in which arts and programming funding were taking a hit then maybe we could hear more about supporting all of the incredible work that goes on here in these arenas (which overlap with my own work).

But what I hear from my neighbors now, and what I'm adding my voice to now, is turning out to address the bedrock of what is being funded and to try, to the best of our ability, to make the core of this budget as equitable as possible. In a sustaining way.

So: YES to funding a commission to explore what reparations are needed here, specifically—integral to identifying priorities before direct funding happens (this requires a change in the

current budget proposal).

And YES for funding for relocation money for those taking extremely difficult steps to extract themselves from domestic violence to get to a safe place and figure out next steps.

And YES to whatever Cunningham Township needs!

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Lilah Leopold

Agenda Item - Police Budget

From Phyllis Clark [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/23/2025 4:20 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>
Cc Darcy Sandefur <Darcy.Sandefur@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

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Shirese please read this into record for me.

To those of you who have the wherewithal to decide on the importance of law enforcement I am addressing you specifically.

There was a time when we, here in Ward 3, could go out walking in this neighborhood and see The presence of a Patrol Car canvassing. It gave a sense of protection that was welcomed by our community. There has been many, many years since the presence of a Patrol Car has graced this community.

We don't need you to defund the police, we need you to be of help not a hold me back. I know that you feel you are "protecting" those whom you perceive as being profiled, believe me we welcome the feel of safety that Law Enforcement affords us. PLEASE provide police with as much as you can to protect this CITY AS A WHOLE!! Step out of God's way and let him be our Saving Grace, NOT YOU. I SUPPORT FUNDING POLICE INITIATIVES. Safety is tremendously important to all of us, even you!!

Phyllis D. Clark
Retired City Clerk

[REDACTED]

PUBLIC INPUT: Do Not Support Additional Grocery Tax to Fund Hiring for UPD

From B Singleton [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/23/2025 5:39 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

*** Email From An External Source ***

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

To the Urbana City Council:

As a resident of the city of Urbana, I oppose the addition of a further tax on groceries to fund the Urbana Police Department's hiring of new officers when funding, as of yet unused, has already been allocated for UPD's hiring processes and the full impacts of an alternative solution to alleviate the workload of UPD in the form of the Alternate Response Taskforce has not yet been evaluated.

I do not see a valid reason for the grocery tax to increase to further fund UPD when resources already assigned to UPD haven't yet been used, especially when the cost of food is expected to continue to climb and funds for other, more productive services that provide resources that would prevent people from turning to crime to begin with such as housing support or community programs have already been cut or are expecting cuts in the future.

I believe the people of Urbana would benefit more from tax dollars going toward endeavors such as social services and community development, so I ask, please do not vote in support for an increase in grocery taxes to further fund UPD.

Thank you,
-B. Singleton,
Urbana resident
61802/Ward 6

To Be Read Aloud 6/23/25 - Public Comment

From Alen Romero [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/23/2025 6:23 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

I want to address Shirese Hursey - I read your Opinion in the News-Gazette and I wanted to address your what you said.

I wanted to warn the rest of the council away from your reactionary position on the hiring of more police officers.

I want to stick to the main idea of the article which is: leveraging your authority in this community to help protect your class.

I'm sure you know that wages have not gone up in 50 years but did you also know the best time to buy a house was also 50 years ago?

Even though Black folks in this town were locked into racially restrictive covenants and could only own property in your ward - ward 3 - owning property makes you materially wealthier than most Urbana residents - after all the median age for Urbana residents is just 26.7 years old.

So it's no wonder then that your article throws young people under the bus to ask for more cops - how else are you going to protect your property values as a wealthy land speculator?

So when I read articles like this I understand you to be expressing class solidarity with the other people around town who own property and see your comments as a true understanding of the police's function: to protect property.

I am begging the city council and the city to understand that you are inheriting leadership in a historic era of decline and if you don't wake up and protect the people that need the most help you will create a crisis you can't control.

Thank you!

Alen Romero

Public Input To Be Read Aloud At This Evening's City Council Meeting | Vote NO to tax

From SN [REDACTED]
Date Mon 6/23/2025 7:00 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****
Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello City Council,

Thank you for reading my comments aloud during public input.

Firstly -

Imposing a grocery tax, which will only hurt the economically vulnerable portion of the community is not in line with Urbana's values. Please vote no to this immoral budget ask, and keep our integrity as a City intact.

Secondly -

All of our City data and local law enforcement data is clear: domestic violence remains the top priority in public safety, but is the most underfunded of concerns.

City Council, please vote yes to the request for relocation funding for child and adult victims of domestic violence - and for their pets.

Thank you to Alderman Chris Evans for keeping on top of this issue. The relocation funding request is only a start, just one small step in the right direction. Please also make the best use of the skillset and experience brought to Urbana by Chief Boone, and collaborate actively with him to establish a critically needed Family Justice Center in our community.

Finally -

As Alderwoman Sherese Hersey has emphasized, the alternative response initiative was always intended by the people of Urbana to be led by community experts, collaboratively with, but separate from, law enforcement. Please keep this vision intact.

Thank you for your time.

Sarah Nixon

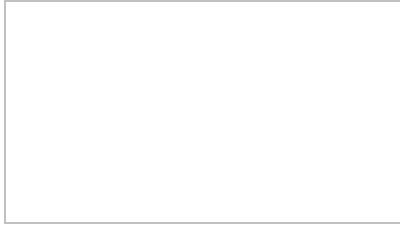
Family Court Reform Advocate



2022 Invited Presenter

[Battered Mothers Custody Conference](#)

Co-Organizer | 2022 Mothers Pilgrimage to The White House



PUBLIC INPUT 6/23

From BJ Bell [REDACTED]
Date Tue 6/24/2025 3:06 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear City Council,

I am writing to you about the proposed budget increase for the Urbana Police Department. I moved here from the east coast many years ago, and I can say happily that Urbana is the safest and friendliest place I have ever lived in. Increasing the number of police officers would not make me feel safer.

I work in the evenings at a grocery store, and have been for the past six years. Of course, there have been many times when we had to call upon the Urbana Police Department for help, and I am generally grateful for their protection in cases of stalking, harassment, and threats. However, one incident sticks out in my mind.

A few months ago, a high schooler had taken food from our store without paying. My coworkers followed store protocol and informed our general manager, who ended up talking to the teenager. The teen knew what they did was wrong, regretted it, and started crying. Unfortunately, the Urbana Police Department had already been called in for this shoplifting incident. I was shocked when I saw that they provided not one but three uniformed officers to talk to a high schooler who was non-violent, apologetic, and in tears. Every single one of my coworkers, including myself, felt terrible and honestly scared for the teenager. I cannot imagine how intimidating it is to be approached by three police officers for shoplifting food under \$20. To me, it felt completely unnecessary--one officer would have been fine.

Incidents like this one, along with results of the 2024 BerryDunn Urbana Public Safety Assessment solidified to me that the UPD's budget is not being used efficiently. I would prefer that the proposed budget increase go towards hiring individuals for the Community Engagement Team or public services that could help our low-income neighbors have access to better food, especially if a new grocery tax is implemented.

Thank you,
BJ Bell

Public input to be read into the record for June 23 2025

From Matt Turino [REDACTED]
Date Tue 6/24/2025 3:06 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Good evening,

My name is Matt Turino, I live in ward 5 and I'm writing to ask that you to vote against

1. the hiring of 4 new police officers
2. the addition of a new police substation in the southern part of Urbana
3. the use of a grocery tax to fund these things

The people of Urbana have said over and over again that we would like to see non-police responders added to the city's staff that could both reduce the workload of our current police and add important different sets to the city's first responder toolbox. We do not want more police, there has not been an increase in crime or population in Urbana. The police department is the fastest growing part of the city while you ask the rest of the departments to make do. The Police talk about being short staffed with patrol officers while taking police out of circulation to add to the management staff. Year after year we write to you and come to the meetings to ask you not to do this. Not every year but many in recent history our well meaning council adds to the police force without holding them accountable for their performance.

The whole country is heading towards more economic uncertainty and you are planning to implement this regressive tax that impacts our most vulnerable people to fund long term positions in our government that are going to add to our budget for years to come. If you are going to create a tax, raise the taxes on landlords that live out of county or out of state or fine them for their mismanagement of the properties they own in this town.

Thank you for your time,

Matt Turino

Public input for 6/25- Please read aloud

From Kanittha Fay [REDACTED]

Date Wed 6/25/2025 3:15 PM

To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>; Larry Boone <Larry.Boone@Urbanall.gov>

***** Email From An External Source *****

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Dear Urbana City Council,

In my opinion, one of the best decisions this City Council has made was the unanimous vote in support of school resource officers.

I have been volunteering heavily and spending a great deal of time at Urbana High School since 2018, and I've seen firsthand the positive impact on students, teachers, and administrators.

Students—regardless of their background—are learning how to communicate with school resource officers not out of fear, but with mutual respect. I truly believe this is one of the greatest gifts we can offer our youth: the ability to live without fear and to communicate with respect.

I encourage you to extend this successful model throughout our city via the proposed community engagement program, beginning with a pilot based on the budget proposed by Mayor Williams.

Respectfully,

Kanittha Fay

Urbana Resident

Public Comment for 6/25/25

From Derek Briles [REDACTED]
Date Wed 6/25/2025 5:40 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>

*** Email From An External Source ***

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Please read my comments aloud during the meeting.

My name is Derek Briles and I am a resident of Urbana ward 4. I am writing to oppose in any increase the UPD budget. Below I am including extract from the Cunningham Township Supervisor's reports on homelessness and housing insecurity. Let's make sure people have adequate housing before we put more cops on the street.

Urbana-Champaign is experiencing a housing and homelessness crisis made worse by extractive housing investors and absentee landlords leading to poor—and sometimes deplorable—housing conditions. Two locations are experiencing significant displacements: Havenstone in Urbana and Champaign Park Apartment.

Havenstone Apartments, Urbana 35 units between 2018 Fletcher and 1305 Silver which were declared unfit for occupancy by the City of Urbana on April 15, 2025.

Champaign Park Apartments has 501 units in 29 buildings with 26 buildings condemned (as of April, 2025) over a long timeframe. CTSO observed deplorable conditions (trash piles, flooding, no heat, no hot water, no water, no electricity) and suspects 100+ residents living there.

All area shelters are confirmed to be full or operating over-planned bed count as of May 7, 2025. STRIDES, Champaign County's only low barrier shelter, is full with a waitlist of over 50 residents.

Champaign Urbana is experiencing a housing and homelessness crisis due to a number of factors including:

**A tightening of the housing market leading to a steep rise (15-40%) in rents.

**Extractive housing investors and absentee landlords leading to poor—and sometimes deplorable—housing conditions.

**A nationwide increase in homelessness by 17%, which is felt locally.

**Insufficient emergency housing options.

Shelter bed numbers remain about half what they were ten years ago.

Let's talk about holding slumlords and exploitative real estate investors to account before we talk about throwing more money at the cops who don't do anything to address the root causes of crime.

Fw: tonight's vote on budget

From Chaundra Bishop <Chaundra.Bishop@UrbanalL.gov>
Date Wed 6/25/2025 8:07 PM
To City Clerk <CityClerk@UrbanalL.gov>

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Urbana, IL <noreply@civicplus.com>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:07:29 PM
To: Chaundra Bishop <Chaundra.Bishop@UrbanalL.gov>
Subject: tonight's vote on budget

***** Email From An External Source *****

Use caution when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Name: Jeffrey Glassman
Email: [REDACTED]

Message: From my study of the questions regarding the budget, I think that along with any strategy to fund police and other public services, it would be a relatively minor addition to also fund emergency relocation services to domestic violence victims. And it would also be a minor addition to fund the establishment of a civilian intervention system to mitigate the dominance of police being the major responders to non-violent service calls. There is another way, a proven way in other communities. If taxes and funding can be used to fund the big conventional solutions, there must be attached the funding for the small innovative solutions in a city like Urbana. Please read publicly, out loud.

Under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), any written communication to or from City of Urbana employees, officials or board and commission members regarding City of Urbana business is a public record and may be subject to public disclosure.

Urbana Budget for 2026

From Peggy Patten [REDACTED]
Date Sat 6/21/2025 1:54 PM
To City Council <CityCouncil@Urbanall.gov>
Cc Todd Kinney [REDACTED]

***** Email From An External Source *****

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Hello Urbana City Council,

We write in support of the proposal to hire additional patrol officers and engagement officers that is part of the 2026 Urbana budget. We support the request for the following reasons:

- * It is keeping with the recommendation made by the Berry Dunn consultants after their comprehensive review of UPD staffing levels.
- * It recognizes the need to increase staffing to avoid overtime burnout and attrition among UPD.
- * It addresses community engagement as an important aspect of public safety.

Like many municipalities around Illinois, Urbana is passing a grocery tax to replace the lost revenue when the state-administered grocery tax ends January 1, 2026. Conflating the grocery tax with police staffing is misguided. Replacing this lost revenue is necessary to support Urbana's core services, some of which include the UPD.

Finally, we disagree with the statement made by some on the City Council that funds for UPD ignore the needs of our most vulnerable community members. An adequately staffed and supported police department that is engaged with and responsive to the needs of our Urbana community is well-positioned to support Urbana's neediest citizens and neighborhoods. We thank Councilwoman Hursey for making this argument so clearly in her 6-17-25 News Gazette commentary.

We appreciate the work of our Mayor and City Council. We ask that you recognize that the UPD is part of the circle of support services we offer in Urbana.

Thank you for your service.

Peggy Patten

Todd Kinney
[REDACTED]

Urbana