

c. Minutes of the May 29, 2025 Workshop



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**City Council – Workshop – Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 29, 2025 - 4:00 PM**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Councilmember Thomas led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

**Attendance**

**Attendee Name**

Present

Indya Kincannon, Mayor  
Lynne Fugate, Councilmember  
Debbie Helsley, Councilmember  
Gwen McKenzie, Councilmember  
Lauren Rider, Councilmember  
Andrew Roberto, Councilmember  
Seema Singh, Councilmember  
Tommy Smith, Vice-Mayor  
Charles Thomas, Councilmember

Absent

Amelia Parker, Councilmember

**Other staff in attendance**

Will Johnson, City Recorder, David Brace, Chief of Staff, Boyce Evans, Chief Financial Officer, Cheryl Ball, Chief Policy Officer, Charles Swanson, Law Director, Kara Finger, Kristin Farley, Chief Communications Officer, Grant Rosenberg, Chief Operations Officer, Kittrin Smith, Deputy Finance Director, Eric Vreeland, Deputy Communications Director, Dr. Kelly Drummond, Human Resources Director, Chris Davis, Knox County Elections Administrator, Ben Bentley, President & CEO Knoxville's Community Development Corporation

The roll-call was taken before the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 4. PRESENTATION

Presentation from Mayor Kincannon and Staff

Mayor Kincannon gave a PowerPoint Presentation.

(A copy of this presentation is attached to these minutes.)

There was dialogue about Knox County's role in this proposed local option sales tax increase and whether it would have to pass countywide if the County chose to be a part of this.

There was a conversation about whether Knox County could modify the tax rate that the City might pass.

Dialogue ensued about the estimated amounts of revenues if voters approve the tax increase.

There was discussion about the amount of local option sales tax the City contributes to Knox County Schools.

There was conversation about the process the City undertook in 1988 to budget for the new revenues after the increase was approved.

Discussion ensued about specific projects the Mayor is proposing to fund with additional revenues.

There was conversation about the timing of the Mayor's proposal.

Dialogue ensued about the flexibility the City will have with other needs, especially in the context of possible changes in federal support to the community.

The Mayor concluded her presentation at this time.

#### 5. COUNCIL QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

There was conversation about the importance to the City committing to the stated spending priorities as it relates to this proposal.

Dialogue ensued about the City's current funding levels for sidewalks.

There was discussion about the estimated costs Knox County would incur to conduct an election if they opted to take this proposal countywide. This was the same discussion regarding the City's costs.

There was continued discussion about the City's contributions to Knox County Schools as well as limitations on the local option sales tax.

There was dialogue about the Mayor's proposal to exempt groceries from the increase in local option sales tax.

There was dialogue about the state's definition of groceries.

A conversation ensued about the history of neighboring counties increasing their local option sales taxes.

There was discussion about the language that will appear on the ballot for voters to consider.

There was conversation about the adoption of Knox County's increased wheel tax.

There was dialogue about the proposed spending priorities, specifically transparency and accountability on the City's commitments to those priorities.

A conversation ensued about a desire to see more specificity in the proposed projects, especially in how the information is communicated.

There was renewed conversation about the wording of the ballot question.

There was conversation about the spending priorities being broken down by councilmanic district.

There was dialogue about the proposed exemption of groceries.

Discussion ensued about spending priorities.

There was a conversation about Knox County's Wheel Tax.

A dialogue ensued about projected growth in the City.

There was a discussion about the City's present ability to fund new sidewalk construction.

There was a conversation about setting aside funds by councilmanic district and involving the neighborhoods in those spending priorities.

Dialogue ensued about the City's capital improvement program and unfunded projects, including deferred maintenance of City facilities.

There was a discussion about the timing and planning for future spending priorities.

Dialogue ensued about how to keep future City leaders accountable for identified spending priorities.  
There was discussion about how converting and developing blighted property increase revenues.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice-Mayor Smith announced that the meeting was adjourned at 5:18pm.

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Presiding Officer of the Council

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City Recorder