

**Westwood, Kansas
City Council Meeting
September 11, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

Council Present: David E. Waters, Mayor
Jeff Harris, Council President
Andrew Buckman, Councilmember
Jason Hannaman, Councilmember
Laura Steele, Councilmember
Holly Wimer, Councilmember

Council Absent: None

Staff Present: Leslie Herring, City Administrator
Curtis Mansell, Police Chief
John Sullivan, Public Works Director
Abby Schneeweis, City Clerk

Call to Order

Mayor Waters called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on September 11, 2025. Ms. Schneeweis called the roll. A quorum was present. The evening's meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with attendees joining both in person and via Zoom.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Councilmember Harris to approve the September 11, 2025, agenda as submitted. Second by Councilmember Hannaman. Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote.

Public Comment

Jim Donovan, 3009 W 51st Street, said he was in favor of prohibiting on-street overnight parking but suggested that the hours be limited to 4:00 AM – 6:00 AM vs. the proposed 2:00 AM – 6:00 AM prohibition.

Steve Platt, 4910 Glendale, Westwood Hills, said he believes the believes the Hunt Midwest proposed project should follow Planned Residential Cluster Development guidelines.

Katie Mauck, 2101 W 48th Street, said when she saw the proposed property tax increase warrants public scrutiny and public involvement.

No other comments were made. Mayor Waters closed the Public Comment portion.

Hearing – Consider Resolution No. 148-2025 approving a tax rate in excess of the Revenue Neutral Rate for the 2026 budget year

Ms. Herring provided an overview of the proposed budget for FY 2026.

Over the last several months the Council and staff have worked to develop the 2026 budget. The Governing Body reviewed the recommended budget on June 12th and again on July 10th. At the July 10th meeting, the City Council approved providing public notice to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate.

The Revenue Neutral Rate is the tax rate in mills that will generate the same property tax in dollars as the previous tax year using the current tax year's total assessed valuation. In Westwood, the Revenue Neutral Rate for fiscal year 2026 would be 18.822 mills. The 2026 recommended budget provides for a total mill rate of 25.199, increased by 4 mills from fiscal year 2025 to increasing funding to the City's under-resourced Capital Improvement Fund/Plan.

Per Senate Bill 13, the recommended budget requires a Revenue Neutral Rate hearing to exceed the revenue neutral rate provided by the County Clerk. Notice of intent to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate was provided to the County Clerk by July 20th and the notice of public hearing was published on August 26, 2025. The public hearing will occur at the beginning of the September 11, 2025 meeting. The adoption of the 2026 budget will occur following the adoption of the Revenue Neutral Rate resolution. Staff recommends the City Council approve a resolution adopting a tax rate more than the Revenue Neutral Rate for the 2026 budget

Mayor Waters opened the public hearing for Resolution No. 148-2025.

Jim Donovan, 3009 W 51st Street, provided an overview of 2026 budget calculations he had prepared and submitted for the record, this document is included in the appendix of this minutes document. Mr. Donovan encouraged the Governing Body to simplify the budgeting process and make budget data available on an excel spreadsheet so he could experiment with the numbers himself.

No other comments were made. Mayor Waters closed the hearing.

Motion by Councilmember Harris to approve Resolution No. 148-2025 approving a tax rate or mill levy rate in excess of the Revenue Neutral Rate for the 2026 budget year. Second by Councilmember Hannaman. Ms. Schneeweis performed a roll call vote of the entire Governing Body. Motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing – Consider Resolution No. 149-2025 adopting the fiscal year 2026 budget

Chris Burns, 2513 W 49th Terrace, asked if the Governing Body considered sales tax and property tax increases and suggested it might be more palatable to the community. Mr. Burns said the fallout from the 2025 special election is that residents are having to pay higher property taxes rather than have the Karbank project move forward and pay for desired city services. Mr. Burns said he believed influence from Westwood Hills residents contributed to the failure of the Karbank project, and Westwood residents are now bearing the burden.

No other comments were made. Mayor Waters closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Waters acknowledged Mr. Burns' suggestion to use a combination of sales and property tax increases to meet the needs of the FY 2026 budget. Mayor Waters said a sales tax increase would require an election, and the city will be able to renew a half cent sales tax in three years, and recent Kansas legislative conversations have contemplated eliminating sales tax on groceries which would greatly impact Westwood's sales tax revenues.

Councilmember Harris said the concept of a combined ad valorem and sales tax increase is the best idea he has heard during the budget planning process. Councilmember Harris said he wanted to wait on the sales tax increase since there will be a need for action in the next few years.

Councilmember Wimer said the vote at hand was the most difficult one she has participated in as a member of the Governing Body. Councilmember Wimer said she has watched staff work to save money over the years, and there are some major street projects that need addressed sooner rather than later. Councilmember Wimer noted the Governing Body and staff have been working on FY 2026 budget planning for months, and only one resident contacted her with their thoughts on the budget. Councilmember Wimer said she believed the Governing Body acts as stewards of the land, tax dollars and resources in the city, and sometimes in stewardship one must make harder decisions than expected. Councilmember Wimer said she hoped new revenue streams could be developed so that the mill rate could one day be lowered.

Mayor Waters said municipal finance is complex and it is nothing like a household budget and to say it is a rhetorical trick because cities have constraints and responsibilities a household does not. Mayor Waters noted a household does not have employees that rely on him to pay a fair wage. Mayor Waters agreed with Councilmember Wimer that the Governing Body's stewardship includes city staff and city owned property and roadways.

Councilmember Hannaman said the funding gap on the budget sheet is only as small as it is because of the work of staff to come up with creative solutions to meet budgetary needs. Councilmember said a city cannot reject development and not have higher taxes, nor can it have lower taxes and avoid impacting services either.

Councilmember Haris said the Governing Body did not raise the mill levy the last couple of years because there was a belief among city staff and the Governing Body that the Karbank project would move forward and bring in roughly \$375,000 of property tax revenue to the city each year. Councilmember Harris noted that amount was more than the property tax increase will yield. Councilmember Harris said the city was reasonably planning on revenue that would have met the City's needs. Councilmember Harris said he didn't find pleasure in this vote, but he believes he has a very serious responsibility to have a plan for the known needs and contingencies of the City.

Motion by Councilmember Hannaman to approve Resolution No. 149-2025 adopting the 2026 budget as certified in the amount of \$8,258,636 with ad valorem tax in the amount of \$1,323,231. Second by Councilmember Buckman. Ms. Schneweis performed a roll call vote of the Governing Body. Motion carried 6-0.

Presentations and Proclamations

No presentations or proclamations were made.

Consent Agenda

All items listed below are considered to be routine by the Governing Body and will be enacted in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Governing Body so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately following approval of the consent agenda.

- A. Consider August 14 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes
- B. Consider Appropriations Ordinance 778

Motion by Councilmember Harris to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. Second by Councilmember Wimer. Ms. Schneweis conducted a roll call vote. Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Waters provided a review of events he attended and plans to attend as Mayor of Westwood.

Mayor Waters acknowledged that the meeting was being held on Patriot Day, and asked for a moment of silence for the lives lost on September 11, 2001.

Councilmember Reports

Councilmember Steele provided an overview of the recent practical road safety assessment she attended along with Councilmember Wimer and Ms. Herring.

Councilmember Wimer noted Oktoberfest is October 4th.

Staff Reports

Administrative Report

Ms. Herring provided an overview of the September 2025 Administrative Report included in the agenda packet and offered to answer questions.

Public Works Report

Mr. Sullivan provided an overview of the August and September 2025 Public Works Reports included in the agenda packet and offered to answer questions.

Public Safety Report

Chief Mansell provided an overview of the August 2025 Public Safety Report included in the agenda packet and offered to answer questions.

Treasurer's Report

The August 2025 Treasurer's Report was included in the packet, no questions or comments were made about the report.

Financial Advisor Investment Report

Adam Pope, Columbia Capital Group, provided an overview of the investment report ending July 31, 2025 and offered to answer any questions.

City Attorney's Report

Mr. Denk did not have anything to report.

Old Business

No Old Business items were considered.

New Business

Consider approving Assignment of Real Estate Purchase Agreement with Hunt Midwest Real Estate Development for purchase rights related to real property (former Westwood View Elementary School)

In June 2023, the Shawnee Mission School District and the City of Westwood entered into a Purchase Agreement to leverage its option to purchase the former Westwood View Elementary School located at 2511 W. 50th St. The school site was intended to be acquired by the City with funding by Karbank Real Estate to create a feature public park, developed with the incremental property taxes and other revenues generated by Karbank's redevelopment – investment in – 5000 and 5050 Rainbow Blvd.

In April 2025, an election was held on whether the City should sell the existing Joe Dennis Park on the corner of 50th & Rainbow Blvd. to enable redevelopment of the site and replacement of the park on the former Westwood View School site. The results were 48% in favor and 52% opposed to the sale of the park. The following week, the City's development partner - Karbank - terminated its purchase agreement with the City, which left the City with no way to fund the purchase of the school site under the current agreement between the City and the School District.

Under the current (fourth) amendment to the City's Real Estate Purchase Agreement with the School District, the City's due diligence period – the date by which the funds must be paid to the School District – expires October 31, 2025.

The events and activities that have taken place over the past five months are detailed here on the City's webpage: <https://www.westwoodks.org/projects-and-plans/page/former-westwood-view-elementary-schoolsite>. Upon City Council direction in May 2025, the City Administrator ran a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Following the drafting of the RFP, creation of an RFP Review Committee, and issuance of the RFP, six teams responded as interested in acquiring the site and redeveloping it for residential uses.

The Assignment Agreement in the meeting packet is presented for Council consideration. The City's requested assignment fee is subject to holding in an escrow fund, to be delivered to the City upon Hunt Midwest closing on the purchase of the property.

Motion by Councilmember Hannaman to approve the Assignment of Real Estate Purchase Agreement between the City of Westwood and Hunt Midwest. Second by Councilmember Steele. Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote.

Consider Ordinance No. 1052 establishing procedure to acknowledge verified hardships resulting from the prohibition of overnight parking on public streets

At the August 14, 2025 City Council Meeting, council adopted an updated new City Code for the City of Westwood. In the new code, overnight parking was changed from a two (2) hour time limit between the hours of 12am and 6am to an elimination of any overnight parking between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

The code currently retains the former language of (a):

Notwithstanding the above, the city, through its designated personnel, shall have the authority to grant a parking permit to park a vehicle in contravention of the above restrictions for a period not to exceed 365 days, upon a showing of the applicant's necessity, and upon a determination that public safety will not be adversely affected by the granting of such permit. The permit shall state the person to whom it is issued, the location where parking is to be permitted, the vehicle to be parked, any conditions thereon in the public interest, and the duration of the permit.

Prior to adoption, several constituents spoke during public comments expressing the desire to have exceptions in situations where someone might have physical hardship and/or overnight guests.

Based on those comments and later council discussion, staff was given direction to provide recommendations for an acceptable variance to the ordinance to address the following issues:

- Some homes may have insufficient or lack dedicated off-street parking, forcing residents to rely on limited street parking.

- Guests and visitors to Westwood may need temporary available parking outside the scope of the parking ordinance.
- Current code does not provide or address alternative solutions or variances.

The current code language allows/ed for parking to be “permitted” for a period of time beyond what is signed and legal (i.e. up to two (2) hours between 12am-6am). Now that overnight parking is completely prohibited between the hours of 2am and 6am, exceptions should not be permitted (i.e. be given a permit to not follow the law). Instead, hardships to non-compliance with the law should be verified and approved. Some could park too close to driveways, intersections, and in no-parking zones, creating visibility and safety hazards, emergency vehicle access is sometimes blocked. Vehicles parked for long periods of time on public streets could cause increased risk of vandalism or theft, reduced safety due to blocked sightlines and could lead to social degradation of neighborhoods.

Motion by Councilmember Hannaman to adopt Ordinance No. 1052 establishing a procedure to acknowledge verified hardship resulting from the prohibition of overnight parking on public streets. Second by Councilmember Wimer. Ms. Schneweis performed a roll call vote. Motion carried 5-0.

Consider renewing Master Agreement for Building Official Services with George Butler Associates, Inc. (GBA)

In August 2023, the City Council approved entering into a Master Service Agreement with GBA (George Butler Associates, Inc.) for Building Official services to supplement what Westwood staff could manage in-house.

At the time of engagement two years ago, the only immediate need for GBA’s services was to provide engineering review of the Karbank development submittal, which was covered under Task Order No. 1.

Although it was contemplated then that GBA could fill-in when the City’s in-house Building Official was on vacation, otherwise unavailable, or desired a second opinion on a project application, the intent at that time was not to use GBA as the City’s full-time Building Official. When Westwood’s former Building Official separated from the City in September 2024, GBA stepped in under a new task order (No. 2) to perform on-call, as-needed services until the position could be fully evaluated, and a determination made about whether to fill the vacancy. When, in January 2025, the city determined the vacancy should be filled and another Building Official/Codes Administrator hired, it was another two months before the position was filled. The vacancy was filled by Michael McCoy in March 2025. McCoy is not ICC certified to review plans nor to conduct inspections nor was he trained at that time to conduct the host of duties assigned to the desk of the Westwood Building Official. Over the past four months, Michael has trained GBA staff in the lead on review and inspections and he is studying for his certification tests. However, until the time McCoy is certified and comfortable conducting plan review and inspections independently, GBA is providing those services.

In August 2025, Task Order No. 3 was executed to retain GBA staff to facilitate the City’s process to review and adopt the 2024 ICC Code set.

There is no fee to renew the MSA nor is there a retainer fee nor monies due to GBA in the absence of an approved, mutually agreed upon task order, which template is included in the Master Services Agreement as Exhibit B.

Under Task Order No. 2, the city has spent a total of \$42,438 – on average \$4,250/month – for GBA’s Building Official services from October 2024 – July 2025, which includes around \$1,500 in total services over that 10-month period charged to Westwood Hills and Mission Woods project, which costs are reimbursed by those cities.

This expense is unbudgeted in the FY 2025 budget due to budget adoption occurring in September 2024, the month before the city unexpectedly began using GBA full time when the former Building Official left the City’s employ. During that same 10-month period (October 2024 – July 2025), the City collected just over \$82,000 in Westwood building permit fees.

Expectations were established upon hire that the City’s full-time Codes Administrator will be sufficiently trained at six months to allow GBA to begin reducing their number of hours and number of inspections spent in Westwood each month. McCoy is learning quickly and is eager to take the reigns; however will likely need longer to earn ICC certification and completely relinquish GBA of the interim Building Official role. However, a plan has been established – and is currently being worked – to draw down and draw back GBA’s services and for McCoy to increase taking on their workload.

Motion by Councilmember Wimer to authorize the City Administrator to renew the Master Agreement with GBA for Building Code Services for an additional four-year term. Second by Councilmember Buckman. Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote.

Consider allowing alcoholic beverages at 5000 and 5050 Rainbow Blvd. during the Oktoberfest event

Oktoberfest is scheduled to be held on Saturday, October 4, 2025 from 4:00 to 8:00 PM. at 50th and Rainbow Blvd. The event will be moved to the following Saturday, October 11th in the event of inclement weather.

City staff has been directed to prepare and bring forward an action for Council consideration to allow alcoholic beverages to be provided and consumed during this event. Article 12-206(2) of the Westwood Municipal Code allows for alcoholic beverages inside the park with the approval of the Governing Body. Staff recommends that the City Council grant a special exception to allow the provision and consumption of alcoholic beverages on City grounds on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 4 – 8 PM, with a rain date of October 11, 2025.

Motion by Councilmember Hannaman to approve the provision and consumption of alcoholic beverages on City-owned property at 5000 and 5050 Rainbow Blvd. during the City’s annual Oktoberfest event on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 4– 8 PM, with a rain date of October 11, 2025. Second by Councilmember Wimer. Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote.

Announcements/Governing Body Comments

Councilmember Harris thanked everyone for a productive meeting.

Executive Session

The Governing Body did not hold an executive session.

Adjournment

Motion by Councilmember Harris to adjourn the meeting. Second by Councilmember Buckman. Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
David E. Waters, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Abby Schneeweis, City Clerk

DRAFT