

PLANS AND POLICIES COMMITTEE MEETING

March 17, 2026

1:00 p.m.

Councilman Denny Whayne Conference Room (Busch Building, 4th Floor)
840 Boonville Avenue

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Abe McGull, Chair; Callie Carroll; Heather Hardinger; and Craig Hosmer*.

MEMBERS

ABSENT: None.

COUNCIL/ STAFF

PRESENT: Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager; Collin Quigley, Deputy City Manager; Jordan Paul, City Attorney; Laura Vales, Assistant City Attorney; Amanda Ohlenselen, Director of Economic Vitality and Workforce Development; Matt Schaefer, Assistant Director of Economic Vitality and Workforce Development; Steve Childers, Director of Planning and Development; Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Anita Cotter, City Clerk and Tonia Stopka, City Clerk Administrative Specialist.

GUESTS: Marta Mieze, *Springfield News-Leader*; Jack McGee, *Springfield Daily Citizen*; Kay Nulls, Missouri Jobs with Justice; Rachel Jamieson, Missouri Jobs with Justice; Jahnari Delmonio, Missouri Jobs with Justice; Stephen Allgera, Missouri Jobs with Justice, Kevin Richardson, citizen; Bryeson Cooper, citizen; Liz Wertz, citizen; Sonja Sadoxly, citizen; Jeanette Rouse, citizen; and Skyler Hawkins, citizen.

*Joined at 1:10 p.m. via Zoom

Opening Remarks and Approval of Minutes

Councilmember McGull, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:02 p.m. He welcomed everyone, and roll call was conducted. Present: Heather Hardinger, Callie Carroll, and Abe McGull. Absent: Craig Hosmer.

The Committee considered the minutes from the December 10, 2025, and January 13, 2026, meetings, which had been previously distributed to members. Councilmember Hardinger moved to approve the December 10, 2025, and January 13, 2026, minutes as presented. Councilmember Carroll seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Carroll, Hardinger, and McGull. Nays: None. Absent: Hosmer. Abstain: None.

Staff Presentation and Discussion: Campaign Finance Ordinance

Councilmember McGull introduced Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager, who invited Jordan Paul, City Attorney, to present an overview of the draft framework for a proposed campaign finance ordinance. Mr. Paul emphasized the proposed campaign finance ordinance would be limited in scope to the establishment of local contribution limits and would rely on existing state regulations for reporting, enforcement, and compliance. He noted the approach would allow the City to enhance local oversight and avoid unnecessary complication of processes.

Mr. Paul referred to the Missouri Ethics Commission (MEC) as a potential educational asset to complement the proposed ordinance. He reported the MEC had a vast and comprehensive library of resources available to support candidates and committees.

Mr. Paul explained the MEC offered a large catalog of brief video tutorials on topics such as electronic filing systems, reporting requirements, contribution limits, and compliance procedures. Written publications were available, as well, on subjects such as recordkeeping requirements, committee formation, exemptions, termination procedures, and permissible uses of campaign funds. Mr. Paul indicated the MEC maintained an ongoing calendar of reporting deadlines, provided access to relevant statutes, and offered regularly-scheduled webinar trainings for candidates and treasurers.

Mr. Paul indicated staff could compile a package of relevant available MEC resources for local candidates. He further noted the MEC would also consider requests for customized training sessions which could be a potential option in future election cycles.

Committee members expressed their wishes for the ordinance to include clear guidelines. They discussed the nuanced nature of in-kind contributions and how they would add a layer of complexity. They questioned whether a separate contribution limit should be established for in-kind contributions, with a potential threshold of \$5,000 based on typical market costs for advertising or event space.

Councilmember Carroll noted contributions such as donated billboard space or use of facilities would have significant market value and not be adequately addressed under a standard cash contribution limit. Councilmember Hosmer expressed his preference for in-kind contributions to be subject to the same limits as cash contributions and indicated a single standard would provide clarity and reduce confusion for both candidates and donors.

In response to member questions, Mr. Paul confirmed City Council could adopt a baseline framework and amend the ordinance later if provisions were deemed necessary following the next campaign cycle. Committee members expressed consensus for advancement of the ordinance to City Council. They agreed the referral would allow for broader discussion with input from the full governing body and the opportunity to address outstanding policy questions.

Councilmember Hardinger moved to advance the proposed campaign finance ordinance to City Council as drafted. Councilmember Carroll seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Carroll, Hosmer, Hardinger, and McGull. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Staff Presentation and Discussion: Fiscal Impact of Development Projects

Mr. Jones introduced Amanda Ohlenselen, Director of Economic Vitality and Workforce Development, to highlight the necessity of a comprehensive fiscal analysis of potential development projects. Ms. Ohlenselen referred to the January Committee meeting during which members requested additional analysis and discussion on how fiscal impacts were evaluated for projects in receipt of public incentives.

Ms. Ohlenselen provided an overview of the City's existing economic development incentive policy. She explained discretionary incentives had to satisfy a "but-for" test, which meant the project would not occur without public assistance. She further explained incentives were structured to provide only the minimum level of support necessary to achieve financial feasibility. She noted fiscal impact analysis was required in certain cases by State statute, such as tax increment financing or Chapter 100 projects and was not consistently applied across all incentive programs.

Ms. Ohlenselen explained the goal of a comprehensive fiscal analysis was to establish a more consistent, transparent, and strategic framework for the evaluation of economic development proposals. Ms. Ohlenselen emphasized staff supported strengthening fiscal analysis but also recommended expansion of evaluation criteria to include broader community impacts. She explained development projects should be evaluated on their direct financial return and on their contribution to quality of life, community development, and long-term economic sustainability.

She described the proposed framework as a holistic approach that would include fiscal impacts, tax revenue generation, and return on investment. She indicated the framework would also consider factors such as neighborhood revitalization, job creation, infrastructure alignment, and overall community benefit.

Ms. Ohlenselen explained how the framework was intended to align with the City's ForwardSGF Comprehensive Plan and represented a shift from a reactive, transaction-based approach toward a more proactive and strategic economic development model. She noted the approach emphasized intentional growth, coordination with regional partners such as Greene County and City Utilities, and support for development within designated urban service areas.

Ms. Ohlenselen introduced a conceptual fiscal impact modeling tool that would allow staff to evaluate how tax revenues generated by development projects were distributed across various taxing jurisdictions. She explained the tool would allow staff to input project-specific variables, such as assessed valuation, property type, and applicable tax rates, and generate projections to illustrate how revenues would be allocated among the City, school districts, and the County.

Ms. Ohlensehlen noted the tool would improve consistency in staff analysis, provide clearer and more transparent data to support Council decision-making, and enhance public understanding of how development incentives impact the broader community. She further explained the tool could be expanded over time to include sales tax impacts or other revenue streams and create a more comprehensive fiscal picture.

Ms. Ohlensehlen also discussed potential implementation strategies, including the engagement of an external consultant to assist in developing evaluation methodologies, identifying best practices from peer cities, and refining analytical tools. She explained a funding request had been submitted as part of the City's budget process and noted resource and staffing constraints could impact the timeline for implementation. Ms. Ohlensehlen noted that, as an interim measure, the City could consider policy changes requiring fiscal impact analysis for projects exceeding a certain threshold, such as \$5 million in project value, particularly when public incentives were requested.

Councilmember Carroll expressed strong support for the proposed framework and noted the improved data and transparency would enhance City Council decision-making and public understanding. Councilmember McGull also expressed support for the framework and noted that improved transparency and standardized evaluation tools would help communicate the basis for staff recommendations and strengthen public confidence in the decision-making process.

Councilmember Hardinger moved to recommend the proposed economic development evaluation framework be forwarded to City Council with a recommendation for approval, contingent upon funding. Councilmember Carroll seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Carroll, Hosmer, Hardinger, and McGull. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Adjournment

Councilmember Carroll moved to adjourn. Councilmember Hardinger seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Carroll, Hosmer, Hardinger, and McGull. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:34p.m.

Prepared by Tonia Stopka