

PLANS AND POLICIES COMMITTEE MEETING

October 15, 2025

1:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS

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

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Councilmember Hosmer.

**COUNCIL/
STAFF**

PRESENT: Councilmember Brandon Jenson; Councilmember Bruce Adib-Yazdi; Darla Morrison, Director of Human Resources; Ryan Hall, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Jordan Paul, City Attorney; Michelle Kaasa, City Clerk Senior Administrative Specialist; and Anita Cotter, City Clerk.

GUEST: Jeff VanDenBerg, Drury University; Alan Tinkler, Missouri State University.

*Attended via Zoom.

Councilmember Abe McGull, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:01 p.m. He welcomed everyone and recognized Councilmember Jenson and Councilmember Adib-Yazdi as being in attendance.

Councilmember McGull noted the main meeting topic was a discussion of a City Council Internship program. He further noted a presentation would be provided on the topic and Councilmember Jenson would discuss a program separate from the current City program.

Roll call was conducted. Present: Callie Carroll, Heather Hardinger, and Abe McGull. Absent: Craig Hosmer.

Councilmember Carroll moved to approve the September 10, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Councilmember McGull seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Hardinger, Carroll, and McGull. Nays: None. Absent: Hosmer. Abstain: None.

Councilmember McGull turned the meeting over to Maurice Jones, Deputy City Manager. Mr. Jones noted the topic would be consideration of a City Council Internship Program. He further noted the Committee had at their places a copy of the Committee Referral Request. Mr. Jones added staff would provide a presentation on the current internship program for the City.

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Mr. Jones turned the meeting over to Councilmember Jenson to provide an overview of his Committee referral request.

Councilmember Jenson noted the referral was intended to address the following objectives: alleviate administrative burden on staff stemming from City Council policy item requests, create stronger relationships with institutes of higher education, and create an additional opportunity for civic engagement with college students. He further noted the request was drafted following the State model.

Mr. Jones noted between Human Resources and the City Clerk's Office there were options that would address the objectives. Mr. Jones turned the meeting over to Darla Morrison, Director of Human Resources.

Ms. Morrison provided an overview of the current City internship program. She noted the program was launched in February 2013, and there had been over 60 interns to date. Ms. Morrison further noted some goals of the existing program overlapped with the objectives noted by Councilmember Jenson. Ms. Morrison added one of the top original goals was to identify top talent in the area and create a pathway for students to come into City employment. She noted the other goals were to provide positive experience and public service exposure to the interns. Ms. Morrison provided an example of current internship brochures to the Committee members.

Councilmember McGull noted the current internship program had been tested for a period of time and further noted the Committee referral would provide an internship program that would be dedicated to City Council. He further noted there could be 1 to 2 interns dedicated to this work.

Ms. Morrison turned the meeting over to Anita Cotter, City Clerk.

Ms. Cotter noted the City Manager's Office, Human Resources, and the City Clerk worked together and reiterated the goals of the program included civic education, professional experience, capacity for assisting City Council with tasks such as research, and encouragement to be engaged with the City.

Ms. Cotter noted the referral request would include a program under the same umbrella as the City program which would have a different structure, and the office of oversight would be the City Clerk's Office. She further noted City Council could only direct staff through their two employees, the City Clerk and the City Manager. Ms. Cotter noted the City Clerk's Office would serve as the point of intake for the projects and the interns would report directly to the City Clerk or designated Deputy Clerk. She added the interns would be assigned to conduct legislative research, policy support, records transparency summarization, and other Councilmember assistance such as casework and correspondence support.

Ms. Cotter noted eligibility would be open to all individuals applying to the City of Springfield's Internship program with a competitive selection based on their resume, cover letter, and interview. Ms. Cotter added it was anticipated there would be a representative from the City Manager's Office, Human Resources, and the City Clerk's Office to conduct interviews for

individuals selected for an interview based on criteria provided by City Council. She further noted recruitment would be conducted in partnership with Missouri State University, Drury University, Ozarks Technical Community College, and other regional schools.

Councilmember Carroll asked how far out regional would reach. Ms. Cotter responded the language was intended to keep options open.

Ms. Cotter noted the duration of the program would be semester-based with the option to renew. She added the hours would be 12 to 15 hours per week with pay at a rate of \$15.00 per hour. Ms. Cotter further noted the employee orientation would be conducted by Human Resources and the City Council orientation would be conducted by the City Clerk's Office, including training in open meetings law, records protocols, and City Council procedures.

Ms. Cotter noted the interns would not be a substitute for City staff but could assist with drafting meeting summaries, policy briefs, correspondence, support public engagement efforts, conduct background research on agenda items or community issues, and organize and document City Council meetings and Committee sessions. Ms. Cotter further noted the City Clerk's Office would coordinate recruitment, orientation, and placement, provide day-to-day supervision, and evaluate intern performance, and ensure compliance with records and confidentiality protocols.

Ms. Cotter referred to an example form provided to the Committee and noted the form would be provided to the City Clerk's Office with the work request. The work would then be assigned to an intern. After the work was completed, the Councilmember would provide an evaluation form after the project was completed to send back with the project. Ms. Cotter added evaluations would ideally also be received from the instructor who placed the intern to determine if the program met the academic needs and if the intern gained necessary skills from the program. Feedback would also be gathered from the interns.

Ms. Cotter noted mid-term and final evaluations would be conducted by the City Clerk's Office. Interns would submit a final assessment, and the program would be reviewed annually for effectiveness, with adjustments made in consultation with Councilmembers and participating universities. Ms. Cotter further noted the internships would be funded from the City's current Internship Program through Human Resources, with resources such as workspace, IT access, and orientation materials provided by City Clerk staff. She added there was a potential for external partnerships with universities possibly providing course credit or cost-share stipends.

Ms. Cotter noted the milestones were to launch the pilot program in Year 1 with the recruitment of 1 to 2 interns, establishment of a baseline program, and the creation of a success matrix for the program. She further noted Year 2 would evaluate the program to determine success, formalize partnerships with universities, and implement potential program improvements, and Year 3 would be institutionalization of the program, evaluation of an increase in budget line item for the Human Resources Department, and the potential development of an alumni network of former interns engaged in the City's civic life.

Councilmember Carroll noted the program sounded good and expressed her belief if one of the goals was talent retention, local interns should be considered. Ms. Cotter responded the presentation was a concept, and City Council could consider final details. Councilmember

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Jenson noted the student may be from Springfield and want a summer internship. He asked if the interns would be working at the direction of City Council through the City Clerk's Office and if the intern had the power of inquiry that a Councilmember would have. Mr. Paul responded the interns were housed in the City Clerk's Office because under the Charter, City Council had two employees, the City Manager and the City Clerk. He noted interns would be treated as any other employee in the City Clerk's Office as they would be assigned a task.

Ms. Cotter noted if the intern needed any assistance with their task, they would go directly through her and she would relay the information to City Council.

Councilmember Jenson recognized Dr. VanDenBerg of Drury University and Dr. Tinkler from Missouri State University for their assistance in drafting the referral.

Dr. Alan Tinkler expressed his support for several of the design elements for the program. He suggested making sure scope of work was clearly delineated as tasks were assigned. Dr. Tinkler noted one aspect of having a curricular experience was to determine how interns were thinking about and managing projects. He added faculty may be able to offer support as interns moved through program completion. He further noted all dimensions included reflection which was critically important. He added one element he included in the Springfield Way Program was to ask interns if there was a learning component they would like to add.

Ms. Cotter expressed an interest in meeting with Dr. Tinkler and Dr. VanDenBerg to work through the process. She noted she viewed the program as a partnership with the universities and expressed she would like to receive feedback from them.

Dr. Tinkler responded this was aligned with best practices, and they would like to build on previous experiences.

Mr. Cotter noted having a library of projects would provide a complete history of the program.

Dr. VanDenBerg noted he envisioned interns becoming ambassadors on campus. He expressed his belief the program was a way to bridge local government to campus.

Ms. Cotter noted alumni could build momentum as interns went through the program.

Councilmember McGull expressed his support for the pilot program. He asked what hurdles there were to a college program that allowed Councilmembers to utilize interns for research projects. Mr. Paul responded college credit normally adhered to a specific process. He added the way the program was set up to adhere to the Charter would flow through the City Clerk. Councilmember McGull asked if there was a way for interns to receive some college credit and for the program to scale up.

Dr. VanDenBerg noted he would like to see program scale up and expressed his belief the pilot program was structured in a way to allow that to happen.

Councilmember Adib-Yazdi noted he had a nephew enrolled at Missouri University of Science and Technology and attending college at Missouri State University. He asked if that was the

type of student that could qualify. Councilmember Carroll noted the city had 50,000 local students and expressed her belief the program did not have a need to go outside of the local area.

Councilmember Adib-Yazdi expressed his belief it seemed like a great program and suggested the interns have a rotating meeting with Councilmembers to hear their perspectives. He asked if other duties assigned by the City Clerk would be part of the process.

Ms. Cotter responded the interns would attend meetings with the City Clerk's Office and learn internal processes to keep them engaged. Ms. Cotter provided an example of a former intern that had become a Police Officer and was currently a member of the Special Response Team.

Councilmember McGull noted this was the first time a pilot program was dedicated to City Council. Ms. Cotter noted the recommendation was to instruct staff to provide the overview to the full City Council at a City Council Lunch meeting with the expectation input would be gathered from other members of City Council and the topic returned to the Committee for refinement and final recommendation. She added there was an available day in November, and this topic could potentially be added. The goal would be to have some of the program started by the beginning of the year.

Councilmember Jenson asked that Evangel University and Tammy Casey from Ozarks Technical Community College be included. He asked if the City Clerk needed additional criteria. Ms. Cotter responded the topic could be sent to the full City Council. At that meeting, City Council would be asked to send feedback including criteria for interns and program requirements, and the City Clerk would provide all information back to the Committee.

Ms. Cotter thanked Ms. Morrison and Ryan Hall, Assistant Director of Human Resources, for their support and work.

Councilmember McGull noted they could move forward with the recommendation as there consensus of the Committee and no opposition. He further noted the next step would be to present the topic at a November lunch meeting. Ms. Cotter noted there was a date in November that the topic could be presented.

Councilmember McGull noted the meeting topic for November would be campaign finance, and the fiscal impact study would be discussed in December.

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:46 p.m.

Prepared by Michelle Kaasa

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