

In the Council Chambers of the Showers City Hall, Bloomington, Indiana on Wednesday, August 07, 2024 at 6:30pm, Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith presided over a Regular Session of the Common Council.

COMMON COUNCIL  
REGULAR SESSION  
August 07, 2024

Councilmembers present: Isak Nti Asare, Courtney Daily, Matt Flaherty, Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Andrew (Andy) Ruff, Kate Rosenbarger, Hopi Stosberg, Sydney Zulich  
Councilmembers present via Zoom: none  
Councilmembers absent: Dave Rollo

ROLL CALL [6:30pm]

Council President Isabel Piedmont-Smith gave a land and labor acknowledgment and summarized the agenda.

AGENDA SUMMATION [6:30pm]

There were no minutes for approval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [6:30pm]

Daily announced her upcoming constituent meeting.

REPORTS

Asare mentioned the recent presentation by the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) about joining an economic district with Brown County and Owen County. He would soon be requesting that council issue a letter of support.

- COUNCIL MEMBERS  
[6:33pm]

Stosberg noted it was the first day of school for Monroe County Community School Corporation. She had attended the previous night's National Night Out event hosted by the Bloomington Police Department (BPD). She acknowledged police, fire, dispatch, and other first responders. Regarding the East Longview greenway, she said the process had worked well; with residents and staff. She noted changes to her upcoming constituent meetings.

Flaherty spoke about the safety improvements on Indiana Avenue and the survey requesting feedback from the public. He mentioned the upcoming meeting at Sample Gates to discuss the project.

Piedmont-Smith reported that she, Zulich, and Rosenbarger attended the Local Progress Convening in Oakland, California. She discussed the sessions that she had attended including Community Led Emergency Response, Messaging, Balancing Priorities in Zoning and Land Use, Building a Progressive Economic Worldview, and Strategizing for Tenant Power and Taking on Corporate Landlords. She noted her upcoming constituent meeting.

Mayor Kerry Thomson stated that the courts had just ruled against the city in the litigation involving annexation, and she would give more details at a later date. She reported that since January there were four homeless encampments closed. Another planned closure was delayed due to staff shortages and not enough time for outreach to those in the encampment. She had asked the Heading Home organization for guidance. Rather than responding at that moment, Heading Home had partnered with other service providers to come up with a Housing Action Plan to address street homelessness. The plan did not replace the existing Heading Home plan, and had ten recommendations. The point in time count, done every January, showed an increase in street homelessness in the Monroe County region, primarily in the city. The city's count had doubled. This was occurring across the nation, but was more rapid in Bloomington. She described the immediate priority needs like outreach and access to services, emergency shelter and housing, case management, homelessness prevention, housing with rent under

- The MAYOR AND CITY  
OFFICES [6:42pm]

\$500/month, more public safety, services, and additional beds including those for medical respite. Having housing was a basic need that enabled people to make progress.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES (cont'd)

Asare asked if housing would be in the budget.

Council discussion:

Thomson stated that the plan was to implement the action items, especially in the downtown areas to improve safety and vitality.

Zulich asked if the city had collaborated with the county on the plan.

Thomson said the administration had reached out to the county, however, there had been many questions. She reiterated the need for strong partnerships for the largest impact. She planned on funding projects that aligned with Heading Home's plans since they were the homelessness experts.

Ruff asked about shared assumptions like the number of unhoused individuals being stable for a decade which was inconsistent with what was presented that evening.

Thomson referenced publicly available data published in May regarding the point in time counts. The data showed there were many unhoused individuals not from the city, the region, or Indiana. There was a temporary effort to reunify individuals, who were from outside the region, with their region. There was success with the Heading Home plan, but the unhoused population continued to increase. It was important to know what worked and what did not. There was compassion fatigue with providers, public safety workers, and staff, and a sense of being overwhelmed because there was always more to do.

Piedmont-Smith asked if there were people with lived experience involved with drafting the plan.

Thomson said yes, with the larger Heading Home plan. She was unsure about the emergency plan she presented that evening. People with lived experience may have been consulted, but it was service providers who determined the plan.

Piedmont-Smith extended the time for Mayor and City Offices reports by five minutes with no objection.

Stosberg asked for clarification on the demographics of the point in time counts regarding the Monroe County region.

Thomson explained the data for those who had been in the county for less than two years and referenced the report that was published the previous day and available online.

Flaherty appreciated the report and asked about unintended consequences. He referenced the survey and noted that a majority of individuals who responded stated they did not wish to return to the region where they were from. He asked what happened when they were turned away from a shelter. He imagined they would remain in the city, unsheltered, and asked how that would reconcile.

Thomson said there were discussions on the topic, and noted that people knew that the city provided services. The goal was to reunify people via partnerships with other regions so that there were services there too. She stated there were not enough services even in Bloomington.

Rosenbarger asked about very immediate needs like bathrooms and care and storage for pets and personal items when individuals were looking for employment, et cetera. Other cities had things like

permanent port-a-pots that could be maintained and cleaned and sometimes churches adopted a port-a-pot.

Thomson said that issue was being addressed and noted the public health concern with fecal matter being where it should not be. The 4<sup>th</sup> Street parking garage had a bathroom but had been vandalized with concrete. The city had spent \$160,000 in repairs.

Rosenbarger understood and reiterated that port-o-pots might be ideal. She noted a five-unit building that was on the market, with rents starting at \$450/month, which might be bought and torn down. She asked if there was a way for the city to buy properties like that and keep it affordable.

Thomson said there were options such as private residents investing in properties like that for the greater communal good. It was crucial to preserve the affordable units that existed.

Piedmont-Smith extended the time for Mayor and City Offices reports until 7:15pm with no objection.

Daily thanked the administration and Heading Home partners for their work. She asked what the metric for success was.

Thomson said it would be fewer individuals living on the streets.

Daily asked what that number was.

Thomson said the goal was to have no one living on the street. She noted an upcoming public workshop by Heading Home.

Piedmont-Smith mentioned council's upcoming Consensus Building Activity focused on street homelessness, the following week.

There were no council committee reports.

Graylie McCause said that as a young transwoman, she understood safety concerns. She appreciated the efforts to house people, but was concerned with removing encampments because they were some people's only option. She had never felt unsafe by the Rail Trail encampment and had gotten to know individuals living there.

Devta Kidd appreciated Heading Home's work and Rosenbarger's comment on affordable housing, lockers, and care for pets. She noted that she lived near three encampments where there had been two murders. She encouraged input from individuals with lived experience; a human-centered design.

Mary Morgan, Director, Heading Home, thanked Melissa Burgess from Health Net Homeless Initiative Program, Dana Jones from Wheeler Mission, Emily Pike from New Hope for Families, Carrie Stillions from Middle Way House, Forrest Gilmore from Beacon, and she and Tatiana Wheeler from Heading Home. One partner had lived experience and provided input on the plan. The plans were not final and action items were ongoing. There was a need to continue to improve the plans as needed. She gave examples as well as specific goals which were measurable.

Eric Spoonmore, President, Greater Bloomington Greater Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber represented about eight hundred and fifty employers, several of which participated in drafting the plan. The chamber supported the plan and asked that the business community be considered supportive partners.

Interim Deputy Attorney/Administrator Ash Kulak read a comment submitted via Zoom chat by Sam Dove regarding concerns with unhoused individuals living at a shelter in Winslow Woods park.

- The MAYOR AND CITY OFFICES (*cont'd*)

Council discussion:

- COUNCIL COMMITTEES [7:12pm]
- PUBLIC [7:12pm]

- PUBLIC (cont'd)

Darel Ruble expressed concerns with the unhoused community. He noted that his daughter was in the county jail and asked she not face retribution for the things he commented on. He appreciated the mayor's efforts to address homelessness.

Kulak read a comment submitted via Zoom chat from Emily Pike who expressed appreciation for a proactive plan. It was a start and many strategies were necessary.

There were no appointments to boards and commissions.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS [7:29pm]

There was no legislation for first reading.

LEGISLATION FOR FIRST READING [7:29pm]

LEGISLATION FOR SECOND READING AND RESOLUTIONS [7:30pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded that Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion was approved by voice vote. Deputy Clerk Susan Stoll read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02 – To Additionally Appropriate Food and Beverage Tax Funds, General Fund Dollars, and ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Dollars for 2024 and to Approve of a Revised 2024 Budget for the Monroe County Capital Improvement Board of Managers [7:30pm]

Stosberg moved and Ruff seconded to adopt Appropriation Ordinance 24-02.

Zulich moved and Stosberg seconded that Appropriation Ordinance 24-02 be divided into 3 parts. Part 1 being the consideration of the second, third, and fourth whereas clauses; Section 1, the additional sums of money additionally appropriated under Food and Beverage Tax Fund 152 – Controller. Part 2 being the consideration of the fifth whereas clause; Section 1, the additional sums of money additionally appropriated under General Fund 101 – Clerk. Part 3 being the consideration of the Sixth and seventh whereas clauses; Section 1, the additional sums of money additionally appropriated under ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund 176 – HAND.

There were no council questions.

Council questions:

The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to divide Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02 [7:31pm]

Jeff Underwood, Controller and Assistant Treasurer, Capital Improvement Board (CIB), stated that the legislation was the final step for the food and beverage tax funds to be appropriated to the CIB's amended budget. He gave a brief summary of the recent process and the breakdown of the request.

Part 1 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02

Piedmont-Smith asked if the construction manager and architect contracts had been signed.

Council questions:

Underwood said the contract with Weddle Brothers had not been finalized because the budget had not been approved. No payments were made in excess of the original budget.

Piedmont-Smith asked where the design stage was.

John Whikehart, Chair, CIB, said they were in the initial design stage with Schmidt Associates. He gave a brief description of the discussions and process including council's letter listing requests. The architects had met with the Planning department, Utilities, utility providers, Convention Center staff, Visit Bloomington staff,

Convention Visitors Commission, Downtown Bloomington, Inc., a Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District (BEAD) advisory group. BEAD was one of eleven cultural districts in the state. The BEAD advisory group advised on design and marketing and was chaired by Galan Cassady. Other members were Holly Warren, Assistant Director for the Arts, Economic and Sustainable Development; Malcolm Abrams from Bloom Magazine; Jennifer Mujezinovic from Clash Gallery; Karen Jepson-Innes from WonderLab Museum; A John Rose from Textillery Weavers; Steve Versaw from Buskirk-Chumley Theater; and Talisha Coppock from Downtown Bloomington, Inc. The design team would be bringing three preliminary designs to the CIB for consideration.

Part 1 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02 (cont'd)

Council questions:

There were no public comments.

Public comments:

There were no council comments.

Council comments:

The motion for Part 1 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Vote to adopt Part 1 [7:43pm]

Clerk Nicole Bolden asked council to consider postponing Part 2 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02.

Part 2 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02

Stosberg moved and Zulich seconded to postpone Part 2 until the September 04, 2024 Regular Session.

Margie Rice, Corporation Counsel, said that Part 2 could be postponed and announcing the date and time in the meeting that evening fulfilled the ten-day requirement. The prior advertisement would still stand and advertising again was not necessary.

Kulak stated that if Part 2 was postponed, it could not return to council as Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02.

Rice clarified that it could, but would not be fully executed until Part 2 was considered by council. It would delay Parts 1 and 3.

There was additional discussion on timing and process.

Stosberg moved to withdraw the motion to postpone Part 2.

Motion to withdraw motion

There were no council questions.

Council questions:

There was no public comment.

Public comment:

There were no council comments.

Council comments:

The motion for Part 2 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 0, Nays: 8, Abstain: 0. FAILED.

Vote to adopt Part 2 [7:50pm]

Jessica McClellan, Controller, presented Part 3 which appropriated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds back from Heading Home for the city to address homelessness. She provided details.

Part 3 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02

Daily asked who would use the funds.

Council questions:

McClellan stated that the funds would return to the city.

Anna Killion-Hanson, Director, Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) department, said staff was working with the Heading Home team to implement the plan. The Treasury department released guidance on how to be in compliance with the ARPA requirements. HAND would administer the funds to ensure full compliance.

Piedmont-Smith asked how the funding would be expended.

Killion-Hanson said it would be a combination of city and community organizations and would be project-focused.

Mary Morgan said the federal requirements were complex and it was best that the city administer the funds. She gave examples of programs, case management, and partnerships with organizations.

Stosberg asked if the transfer of funds would significantly impact staff's workload and if additional staff was needed.

Killion-Hanson said ensuring compliance was a top priority and staff was familiar with federal requirements. It would be ideal to increase capacity in the future. Additional staff was needed regardless of ARPA funds. She noted the ARPA funds had to be committed by 2025. There were differences with the requirements for spending in different types of programs.

Piedmont-Smith asked for clarification on the timeline.

Killion-Hanson said the ARPA funds had to be committed in agreements by the end of 2024.

Piedmont-Smith asked if that was going to be difficult.

Killion-Hanson said no, there was always more need.

Stosberg asked what the updated total was.

McClellan stated that was not known yet.

There were no public comments.

Stosberg said that she hoped there would be good outcomes.

The motion for Part 3 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Terry Amsler spoke about the Consensus Building Activities and provided suggestions.

Piedmont-Smith reviewed the upcoming council schedule including the first Consensus Building Activity to discuss street homelessness.

Piedmont-Smith adjourned the meeting.

Part 3 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02 (cont'd)

Council questions:

Public comment:

Council comments:

Vote to adopt Part 3 of Appropriation Ordinance 2024-02 [8:08pm]

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT [8:09pm]

COUNCIL SCHEDULE [8:12pm]

ADJOURNMENT [8:14pm]

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana upon this 4 day of December, 2024.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:



Isabel Piedmont-Smith, PRESIDENT  
Bloomington Common Council



Nicole Bolden, CLERK  
City of Bloomington