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Bloomington Common Council-Regular Session Minutes
Bloomington Council Chambers, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana
Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 6:30pm

Council President Isak Nti Asare called the meeting to order.

1. Roll Call: (*indicates participation via Zoom) [6:33pm]

Council Members:	
Isak Nti Asare	At-Large, Council President
Courtney Daily	District 5, Council Parliamentarian
Matt Flaherty (absent)	At-Large
Isabel Piedmont-Smith	District 1
Dave Rollo*	District 4
Kate Rosenbarger	District 2
Andy Ruff	At-Large
Hopi Stosberg	District 3
Sydney Zulich	District 6, Council Vice President

City staff, officials, and guests present:	
Nicole Bolden	City Clerk
Larry Allen	Common Council, Attorney (temporary)
Michael Wagenaar	Common Council, O'Neill Leadership Program Fellow
Geoff McKim	City Controller
Sharr Pechac	Human Resources, Director
Desiree DeMolina	Office of the Mayor, Communications Director
Jane Kupersmith	Economic & Sustainable Development, Director
Michael Diekhoff	Police Department, Chief
Jeff Andreasen	aQity Research & Insights, President
Lauren Sturdivant	Walker Consultants, Planner
John Martens	Walker Consultants, Senior Consultant
Michelle Wahl	Parking Services, Director

2. Agenda Summation [6:33pm]

Council President Asare summarized the agenda.

Piedmont-Smith moved and Daily seconded to amend the agenda to move any reports about hiring, which was under item #5, to council committee reports under #4. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

3. Approval of Minutes [6:33pm]

There were no minutes for approval.

4. Reports [6:37pm]

4.1. Councilmembers:

Stosberg announced she would be available for conversations at the upcoming farmer's market.

Zulich expressed displeasure in the change of neighborhood parking permit distribution to include only residents living in a single-family unit. The last-minute change took those affected by surprise,

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and local government had a responsibility to inform people in a timely manner. The government should not dictate who can own a car based on the type of residence they live in.

Piedmont-Smith announced her monthly constituent meeting and spoke about the recent Redevelopment Commission (RDC) meeting, where they discussed a new Hopewell economic development area and proposals for the College Square site. She expressed disappointment with the options and asked RDC to issue a new call for proposals.

Rosenbarger spoke about vehicle ownership in Bloomington.

4.2. The Mayor, City Clerk, City Offices, and City Boards and Commissions:

Piedmont-Smith moved and Daily seconded to amend the rules to allow members of the public to comment on the Parking Study report and the community survey report during the first period of open public comment. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Mayor Kerry Thomson presented a general report to the council. She highlighted two recent accreditations, one for Public Works and another for the Police Department. She gave an update on Showers West tenancy and Readi 2.0 grant funding.

Piedmont-Smith asked for clarification on the Readi 2.0 grant.

Desiree DeMolina, Communications Director, Office of the Mayor, introduced Jeff Andreasen, President, from aQity Research & Insights, who presented the Community Survey results. The survey included a random sample of Bloomington residents, weighted to focus on permanent residents and not on Indiana University (IU) students. 72% of respondents were likely to recommend Bloomington as a place to live. Restaurants, outdoor spaces, ease of getting around, and being a college town were rated as the highest strengths. Most commonly stated weaknesses were expensive housing, number of unhoused people, and issues with city services including transparency, street conditions, and drinking water.

Asare extended the time for the section for mayoral reports by 20 minutes with no objections.

Stosberg expressed concern about mismatch between Bloomington census data and survey respondents. Significantly more respondents stated they were homeowners and/or lived in single-family homes than census data reflected, and the previous 2023 survey was more aligned with the census. Andreasen said the sample was designed to be representative of year-round residents as they are taxpayers and more engaged/familiar with the community compared to IU students. Stosberg stated that while individual students may change, student needs remained consistent and excluding them from the survey was a disservice. Zulich agreed with Stosberg and asked how the survey firm was chosen. DeMolina explained the process and stated the 2023 survey questions received many critiques. Andreasen said surveys conducted with students received a low response rate. Asare asked about the final response rate and asked if it was statistically valid. Andreasen said it was 4-5%. Low student response rate could invalidate statistical confidence. Rosenbarger spoke about prior work in evaluation and said it was difficult to get scientifically valid responses, expressing concern about the 4-5% response rate. The respondents appeared to be the same category of people who already went to public meetings. Piedmont-Smith expressed concern about screen reader accessibility in the slide presentation and survey question wording.

Asare extended the time for the section for mayoral reports by 5 minutes with no objections.

Ruff asked about comparable data in other similar cities. Andreasen stated the firm did not have comparison data because Bloomington was a unique city. Stosberg spoke about her responsibility to her constituents and her disappointment with the study. Zulich said the study was not a responsible

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use of taxpayer money and it eliminated future long-term residents from shaping the future of the city. Asare thanked Andreasen and DeMolina.

Asare extended the time for the section for mayoral reports by 20 minutes with no objections.

Michelle Wahl, Parking Services Director, introduced Lauren Sturdivant and John Martens from Walker Consultants, who presented the Parking Rate Study and Comprehensive Review. The study looked at downtown parking and recommendations were made based on stakeholder meetings and surveys, city data, and best practices. Key findings included that parking rates were low, technology was outdated, communication was confusing, and there was a need for transparency. Organizational recommendations included centralizing parking citations appeals within Parking Services and establishing a parking services mission statement and a data-driven approach; Policy recommendations included zone-based pricing, increasing parking rates, and reducing enforcement hours; Operations recommendations included replacing outdated technology, using multi-space kiosks, and implementing mobile license plate reader (LPR) technology; and Communications recommendations included a recognizable logo, communications campaign, and improved signage.

Piedmont-Smith stated former councilmember Steve Volan recommended zone-based parking rates years ago and expressed concern about LPR technology. Rollo asked about parking technology issues. Martens said there were over 1,400 physical meters/devices and maintaining them was expensive and labor-intensive. Stosberg asked about parking turnover and implementing 2-hour parking zones. Martens spoke about the limitations of using data from Parkmobile and individual meters. Rosenbarger asked about hourly rate recommendations. Martens stated the rate had not increased in a long time and recommended a ten year timeline increase.

Asare extended the time for the section for mayoral reports by 20 minutes with no objections.

Clerk Nicole Bolden commented on the parking study. The parking citation appeals were in the Clerk's Office due to judicial order after Dan Combs sued the city. She expressed concerns with data errors, generalities, and misstatements, and suggested council ask for additional information before accepting the recommendation to move appeals to Parking Services. While the report said the appeal response rate was 2-4 weeks, the actual median response rate was 3 days. Appeals had increased due to legislative and enforcement changes, and parkmobile user error. The Clerk's Office had subject matter experts in parking, and broad statements unsupported by data were inaccurate and unhelpful.

Zulich asked if Bolden was consulted during the study. Bolden stated they had a one-hour conversation at the beginning of the study. Asare asked about action needed on the report.

4.3. Council Committees:

Stosberg reported from the Fiscal Committee on potential local income tax estimates. Due to changes in state law regarding property taxes, revenues would be significantly decreased for local government units, especially for the local school district and the public library.

4.4. Public:

Steve Volan, Transportation Commission, Chair, expressed disappointment that the Community Survey de-emphasized students and stated the Transportation Commission would take a vote on the study recommendations in September. Terry Amsler commented on the Community Survey methodologies. Christopher Emge, Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, spoke about upcoming chamber events and commented on the 2027 proposed city budget. Paul Rousseau commented on the Community Survey and stated it was necessary to capture the views of IU students despite the difficulty. Kevin Keough expressed disappointment with the Community Survey.

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5. Appointments to Boards and Commissions [8:42pm]

There were no appointments to boards and commissions.

6. Legislation for First Reading [8:42pm]

6.1. Ordinance 2026-18

Adopting Guidelines and Requiring Formal Written Commitments as a Condition of Eligibility for On-Premises Alcoholic Beverage Permits within Eligible Statutory Districts Council Sponsor - CM Asare

Daily moved and Zulich seconded that Ordinance 2026-18 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Asare passed the gavel to Zulich.

Daily moved and Piedmont-Smith seconded to discuss Ordinance 2026-18. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Asare and Jane Kupersmith, Economic and Sustainable Development, Director, presented the legislation. Asare stated it would establish a clear and transparent process for businesses seeking certain alcohol permits. The city would determine which establishments should be eligible, and the Indiana Alcohol & Tobacco Commission had the final authority to issue the permits. There was much engagement with local business owners, and the ordinance would set a framework for the process. Kupersmith gave examples of other cities with successful programs, and stated Bloomington had a high number of visitors, and demand exceeded supply. It was difficult for restaurants to stay open in Bloomington, and were cost-burdened if they had to purchase a permit secondhand. Bloomington received three new, non-quota permits from Indiana Senate Bill 89 earlier in the year. The non-quota permits must be renewed annually and could not be sold or transferred.

Stosberg expressed approval of the ordinance and offered comments on the legislation, including on the living wage ordinance compliance. Piedmont-Smith expressed appreciation for council involvement and said the evaluation criteria was vague. Rosenbarger was excited about fewer barriers for restaurants but wished that more bars would be eligible. Asare spoke about resident concerns with bars and expounded upon the goal of the ordinance. There was discussion on eligibility criteria.

Galen Cassady, Uptown Cafe, co-owner, stated the ordinance provided a lower barrier of entry for talented young operators to open a business. He expressed disdain that current permit holders may oppose the ordinance because new permits would reduce the scarcity value of their own permit. Randy Cassaday supported the ordinance and spoke about Taste of Bloomington. Christopher Emge, Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support for the ordinance.

Daily moved and Asare seconded to send Ordinance 2026-18 to second reading on September 2nd, 2026. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Zulich passed the gavel to Asare.

7. Legislation for Second Reading and Resolutions [9:07pm]

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7.1. Ordinance 2026-16

To Amend an Ordinance Fixing the Salaries of Officers and Employees of the Police and Fire Departments for the City of Bloomington, Indiana for the Year 2026 Council Sponsor - N/A

Daily moved and Zulich seconded that Ordinance 2026-16 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Daily moved and Zulich seconded that Ordinance 2026-16 be adopted.

Sharr Pechac, Human Resources, Director, had previously presented the ordinance.

Piedmont-Smith moved and Zulich seconded to introduce Amendment 01 to Ordinance 2026-16.

Amendment 01 Synopsis: This amendment updates proposed Ordinance 2026-16 to correct typos and inadvertently transposed numbers.

There was no public comment on Amendment 01. There was no council comment.

The motion to adopt Amendment 01 to Ordinance 2026-16 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Pechac recapped the ordinance and answered questions previously asked by council. Controller Geoff McKim provided context on cost, position impact, and budget. Chief Michael Diekhoff, Police Department, addressed the need for the new position.

Stosberg asked about the implication of documents incorrectly stating the number of police sergeants for years. Diekhoff said the position had never been filled, and McKim stated that funding for 14 sergeants had been appropriated by council at least ten years prior, but there appeared to have been a disconnect between the budget as appropriated and the salary ordinance document.

The motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-16 as amended received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

7.2. Ordinance 2026-17

To Amend the 2026 Salary Ordinance of Appointed Officers, Non-Union, and A.F.S.C.M.E. Employees for All Departments of the City of Bloomington, Indiana Council Sponsor - N/A

Daily moved and Zulich seconded that Ordinance 2026-17 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Daily moved and Zulich seconded that Ordinance 2026-17 be adopted.

Piedmont-Smith moved and Zulich seconded Amendment 01 to Ordinance 2026-17.

Amendment 01 Synopsis: This amendment updates proposed Ordinance 2026-17 to correct typos and misplaced job positions and titles.

There was no public comment. There was no council comment.

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The motion to adopt Amendment 01 to Ordinance 2026-17 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Pechac had previously presented the ordinance and answered prior questions that had been asked from council regarding the timing of the ordinance. The requests were made in order to prioritize personnel and operations. McKim spoke about fiscal impacts, stating it would result in future savings and gave examples.

There was no public comment.

Zulich spoke about working with Cassie Werne, Special Projects and Operations Manager. Stosberg thanked Pechac, McKim, and Diekhoff. Rosenbarger asked if the council office had been notified of the opportunity to review staff salaries. Pechac did not remember including the council office and apologized. Piedmont-Smith expressed disappointment and stated that the council did not have more leeway in setting staff salaries. Bolden stated that there were emails from HR about staffing updates that were sent to the clerk and council office in April. Stosberg suggested moving forward with the ordinance and revisiting the council office roles later.

The motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-17 as amended received a roll call vote of Ayes: 7, Nays: 1 (Rosenbarger), Abstain: 0

7.3. Resolution 2026-14

Approval of Amended Legal Representation Agreement for Common Council

Daily moved and Piedmont-Smith seconded that Resolution 2026-14 be introduced and read by title and synopsis only. The motion received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0. Bolden read the legislation by title and synopsis.

Asare passed the gavel to Zulich.

Daily moved and Piedmont-Smith seconded that Resolution 2026-14 be adopted.

Asare presented the legislation. The resolution amended a previous resolution that established the council's ability to enter into a contract with interim council attorney Larry Allen. Council was coming to the end of the process of appointing a new council attorney and anticipated overlap between the new attorney and Allen's contracting services.

Piedmont-Smith asked how much the council had paid for the contract. Allen said it was $49,390. Stosberg asked about the not-to-exceed amount. Asare stated that there was enough funds in Line 1 of the budget, and none of the three council staff positions had been filled for several months.

There was no public comment.

Asare spoke about council processes and stated that some needed consideration, such as paying an attorney to attend a meeting and how to staff the office. He stated a lot of the processes were habit, and some inefficiencies were hidden. Councilmembers had expressed concerns about staff's workload and time. He thanked Allen for his services. Piedmont-Smith thanked Allen and spoke about paying rates for and requiring administration work that did not require a Juris Doctorate. Rosenbarger stated it was necessary to have an attorney at council meetings due to adversarial conversations during meetings. She suggested reorganizing some processes such as meeting packet production. She thanked Allen. Stosberg thanked Allen and spoke about staff tasks, stating she had not been able to bring forth most of her legislative initiatives in the past year due to staffing challenges.

The motion to adopt Resolution 2026-14 received a roll call vote of Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0.

Zulich passed the gavel to Asare.

8. Additional Public Comment [9:50pm]

There was no additional public comment.

9. Council Schedule [9:50pm]

Asare reviewed the council's upcoming schedule. Stosberg stated there would be a Fiscal Committee meeting discussing elected official salaries.

10. Adjournment [9:52pm]

Asare adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this day: 4th of October, 2026.

APPROVE:

Signed by:
31826BE6116F4B5...
11/10/2026 | 10:48 AM EST
Signature of Isak Nti Asare, Common Council President

ATTEST:

Signed by:
Nicole Bolden
60DF9211B070448...
11/10/2026 | 11:32 AM EST
Signature of City Clerk Nicole Bolden

Clerk's Note: The above minutes summarize the motions passed and issues discussed rather than providing a verbatim account of every word spoken. Bloomington Common Council meetings can be accessed on the following websites:

- Community Access Television Services[1] (CATS)
- City of Bloomington YouTube[2]

Background materials and packets[3] are available on the Common Council website.

[1] https://catstv.net
[2] https://youtube.com/@citybloomington
[3] https://bloomington.in.gov/council/meetings