



**City Commission Minutes**  
**Public Hearing on the 2026-2027 Recommended Budget**  
**Saturday, April 25, 2026 - 8:30 a.m.**  
**151 Martin Street, Birmingham**  
**City Commission Room 205**  
**Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/1182862423>**

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**I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Clinton Baller, Mayor, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. ROLL CALL**

City Clerk Bingham called the roll.

Present: Mayor Clinton Baller  
Commissioner Andrew Haig  
Commissioner Brad Host  
Commissioner Kevin Kozlowski  
Commissioner William Kolb  
Commissioner Therese Longe

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Ecker; Fire Chief Bartalino, Birmingham Shopping District Director Bassett, City Clerk Bingham, Assistant City Manager Clemence, Information Technology Manager Brunk, Finance Director Chavez, Human Resources Manager Ciluffo, Assistant City Manager Clemence, City Engineer Coatta, Baldwin Library Director Craft, Planning Director Dupuis, Parking Systems Manager Ford, Building Maintenance Superintendent Galik, Police Chief Grewe, City Attorney Kucharek, Museum Director Pielack, Department of Public Services Director Zielinski, Building Official Zielke

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING – 2026 - 2027 RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

CM Ecker and the Mayor introduced the budget, and FD Chavez presented the Budget highlights. Staff answered informational questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding the introduction and highlights:

- While the City is drawing on the General Fund for its road investments, the City cannot perpetually draw down the General Fund.
- Accounting processes differ between public governments and private businesses.
- Being able to review the profits and losses for parking was helpful.
- Among the Commission’s responsibilities is considering whether City rates and fees have been appropriately set.

For General Government, CC Bingham presented the Clerk’s Office budget, CM Ecker presented the Commission and the Manager’s Office budgets, BMS Galik presented the City Hall & Grounds, the Property Maintenance – Library, and the Property Maintenance – 400 E. Lincoln budgets, HRM Ciluffo presented the Human Resources budget, and FD Chavez presented the Finance Department, Treasury, Assessing, Pension Administration, Legal, General Administration, and 48th District Court budgets. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding General Government:

- The expenditures for 400 E. Lincoln would be partially offset by Next’s contributions.
- Paying for employees’ parking directly from the General Fund instead of transferring it into the Parking Fund should be explored as a possibility.

- There may be opportunities to streamline some aspects of the workflow for the Finance and Treasury Departments.
- In some instances City Hall is functioning with obsolete furnishings and equipment. The included requests to update some of those items seemed appropriate.
- It might be helpful in future budgets to present where minor decreases in some of the proposals could be made if necessary.
- While optimizing for cost is appropriate, those efforts must be balanced with effectively meeting the needs of the City. Some past City Managers decreased both investment in infrastructure and the staff needed to support that investment in infrastructure. Consequently, the present Commission now faces a number of thorny, outstanding infrastructure challenges due to that deferred work. In order to better equip the City for the future, the Commission must take a long-range view when considering how staffing correlates with meeting the City's obligations to its residents.

Public Comment

Mary Jaye commented regarding possible opportunities for cost reduction.

David Bloom supported collecting data on the benefits of the private public partnership work Plante Moran was performing on behalf of the City.

For Public Safety, PC Grewe presented the Police and Dispatch budgets, FC Bartalino presented the Fire and Emergency Management budgets, and BO Zielke presented the Building budget. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Public Safety:

- The Birmingham Fire Department was congratulated on having the quickest response time average in the State of Michigan, and one of the best response times in the country.
- Every rental receives an inspection by the City every two years. A property will receive more than the biannual inspections if violations are found.

Public Comment

Mr. Bloom commented regarding anticipated increases in the Police and Fire Department budgets.

Debra Horner commented regarding City grant opportunities.

The Commission took a brief recess, and returned from recess.

For Public Works, CE Coatta presented the Engineering, Sidewalk Construction and Maintenance, Alley Construction & Maintenance, Fiber Optic System, and Streetlights budgets. DPSD Zielinski presented the Public Services, Property Maintenance, Cemetery Management & Maintenance, and Weed/Snow Enforcement budgets. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Public Works:

- The operating costs for the street lights were significant. An audit of whether the electric usage by the streetlights aligns with the electric charges for the street lights might be useful, if possible.
- Adding solar panels to the top of City parking decks might allow the City to meaningfully reduce its electric costs.
- It is challenging to determine whether DTE is charging appropriately.
- The City should determine whether there are any other options for electric providers.
- The City would likely be able to further lower its telephone costs with a change of service.
- The approximately \$16.6 million referred to on page 131 regarding the Department of Public Services (DPS) represents the scope of DPS's services offered to all City Departments. The approximately \$6.1 million regards DPS's direct costs.
- Data comparing the budget and actual expenditures is made available.
- More information regarding a number of aspects of DPS' budget was desired. The three Commissioners with further questions about the data should meet with staff to determine what further information might be most useful.

FD Chavez presented the Health and Welfare budget. Staff answered questions.

PD Dupuis presented the Community and Economic Development budget. Staff answered questions.

For Recreation and Culture, DPSD Zielinski presented the Parks & Recreation, Ice Arena, and Community Activities budgets. MD Pielack presented the Birmingham Historical Museum budget. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Public Works:

- It might be possible to get a donation or a sponsorship for Birmingham's holiday tree. The BSD should explore whether there might be interest.
- Staff indicated that the Ice Arena's prior year budget likely had an error that now gives the appearance of an increase in expenditures between last year's and this year's budget. In actuality, expenditures are anticipated to stay largely even.
- The Commission would be interested in hearing about the long term goals for the Recreation Coordinator position.
- Profits and losses tables were requested for the Ice Arena and the Golf Courses.
- Staff noted that the Ice Arena operates close to breakeven for its revenues and expenditures. It was observed that this was positive as long as that included funds being set aside for future equipment replacements. It was confirmed this does occur.
- It would be helpful if future presentations of the Ice Arena accounts could clarify aspects such as money being set aside for equipment replacement.

#### Public Comment

Mr. Bloom commented regarding appropriately timing the funding requests for Next and regarding the zoning ordinance updates.

The Commission took a brief recess, and returned from recess.

FD Chavez presented the Transfers Out budget. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Transfers Out:

- The City transfers funds out of the General Fund into other funds as needed. Budget amendments involve transfers out.
- The City's General Fund will remain near its maximum goal even after the transfers out, which is 40% of the City's operating budget.
- The City's water and sewer rates are increasingly paying for water and sewer usage. This correlates to diminishing transfers out from the General Fund to water and sewer. There are a number of benefits to this change, including that using the water and sewer rates to pay for the water and sewers does not count towards the City's Headlee maximum.

For Special Revenue Funds, CE Coatta presented the Major and Local Streets budgets, DPSD Zielinski presented the Solid Waste Disposal budget, PD Dupuis presented the Sustainability and Climate Action Fund, FD Chavez and CM Ecker presented the Senior Services Fund budget, and FD Chavez presented the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission, the Law & Drug Enforcement Fund, the Opioid Settlement Fund, the Community Development Block Grant, Debt Administration, and Capital Projects Funds budgets. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Special Revenue Funds:

- While the City presently manages the funds for the 48th District Court, those funds are not available for the City's use.

#### Public Comment

Mr. Bloom commented regarding how sustainability is integrated into the City.

For Enterprise Funds, PSM Ford presented the Automobile Parking System budget, CE Coatta presented the Water Supply System and the Sewage Disposal budgets, and DPSD Zielinski presented both of the Golf Course budgets. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Special Revenue Funds:

- At the end of this fiscal year, the Parking Fund is expected to have a balance of approximately \$45 million.
- The Advisory Parking Committee should likely explore charging more for the on-street parking meters than the parking decks. There may be other opportunities to optimize parking system charges as well.
- In future budgets, it may be useful to provide estimated annualized maintenance costs for the Parking and Engineering budgets.
- A number of factors have caused water bills to increase, including aging infrastructure and the desire to shift the expenses to rate payers and away from the General Fund. The City should be prepared to assist residents with understanding these changes.
- Further conversations regarding the best way for the City to allocate water and sewer rates would be appropriate.
- Consolidating the golf course reporting might be helpful for future budget presentations.

Information about relative utilization of the golf courses would also be of interest.

#### Public Comment

Ms. Jaye commented regarding peak and/or special event pricing for the parking system.

Mr. Bloom commented regarding waiting lists, parking demand, a possible addition to the Peabody parking deck, increasing the ease of leaving decks, and the anticipated longevity of the parking decks.

ITM Brunk presented the Information Technology budget. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding the Information Technology budget:

- The IT budget's equipment costs seemed unexpectedly high.
- Staff should provide a report providing data on hardware, software, and labor costs for each department's IT usage, a ratio analysis with other municipalities, and best practices.
- A full line item breakdown of the IT budget would also be of interest.

#### Public Comment

Mr. Bloom commented regarding allocating the City's costs for the use of GIS, and whether those costs could be passed on to the members of the public with projects requiring those services.

The Commission took a brief recess, and returned from recess.

For Component Units, LD Craft presented the Baldwin Public Library budget and BSDD Bassett presented the Principal Shopping District budget. The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Triangle District Corridor Improvement Authority (TDCIA) budgets were not presented. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding the Component Units budget:

- The Library has its own millage and the Library Board manages how the Library's budget is spent. The Commission does not have oversight over the Library's budget. The City does own and maintain the Library building.
- The City and the Library are finalizing agreements about how Library operations are managed.
- The Commission appreciated LD Craft for providing information on the Library's operations.
- There was interest in understanding how the Library's technological equipment costs per staff compares to the City's.
- The Library's Idea Lab has been a benefit to the community.
- It may be appropriate for the City to offer the Library some support towards its efforts to create a resiliency center since this would be a community-wide benefit.
- Downtown Birmingham has never been stronger, and the Commission appreciates the Principal Shopping District's work.

CM Ecker and CE Coatta presented information regarding Capital Improvement Expenditures. Staff answered questions.

Commissioners discussed the following regarding Capital Improvement Expenditures:

- The City has been operating under the paradigm that all unimproved streets should be improved. Some potential issues with this plan have emerged in the recent past.
- These potential issues include the pace at which roads will be repaired if the water and sewer systems are the determining factor, the costs for the City to maintain all improved streets, the fact that some residents are not interested in fully improved streets, and that some areas of the City with particularly deteriorated road surfaces are not on the upcoming list of planned repairs because of their adequate below-grade infrastructure.
- Residents might experience greater satisfaction and quality of life improvements if the budget for cape sealing was increased significantly.
- There was discussion regarding whether the City might receive a volume discount if a contractor was willing to add more streets to a cape seal project.
- Baldwin Court may have gone longer than average without road surface repairs.
- There was interest in understanding whether the City's cape sealing projects could be optimized for quality and longevity.
- There is support for further exploring options for high-quality, low-cost road surfaces in circumstances where roads are not likely to be fully improved.
- Once the present cycle of cape sealing and improving roads comes to a close, it seems there will be similar challenges with the next cycle. It would be useful to determine how the City might prepare to make the next cycle less challenging.

Public Comment

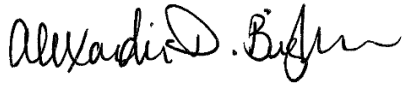
Mr. Bloom commented regarding increasing cape seal projects and possibly expediting the Library's plans to purchase a generator.

Ms. Jaye commented regarding out year plans.

Staff was thanked for their contributions.

**V. ADJOURN**

The Commission motioned to adjourn at 2:16 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist