



City Council Study Session Minutes

October 14, 2024 6:00 PM

Council Chambers - 111 E. Maple Ave.

COUNCIL SPONSORED ITEMS

Councilmember McCandless asked for a moment of personal privilege to welcome Henry Becker, a Student from Rockhurst High School. He needed to observe a governmental body for one of his classes.

1. Review of City Code Regarding the Sale and Discharge of Fireworks (Sponsored by Councilmember McCandless)

Deputy Chief Stobart gave a presentation on fireworks and whether or not they should be permitted within the city of Independence.

Currently lawful

16 firework stands a year

Allowed June 23-July 5

Permits \$400/ea which generates about \$6400

Tents require fire safety inspection, including July 4th holiday

2. Citizen Requests - per Council Rules, Sec. 6.4 only "Council Sponsored Items" are eligible.

PRESENTATIONS

1. 2025 Public Transit Recommendations

Tom Scannell, Director of Community Development, gave this presentation.

Transit Service Analysis

- In 2023, KCATA conducted a service analysis.

- Purpose to align transit services within budgeted amounts
- Options included combining current routes, removing fixed route service on Saturdays and decreasing frequency.
- Reductions in operations and frequency could be filled by IRIS.
- 4 Scenarios chosen
 - Ranged from a 40%
 - 70% reduction in service
 - No Orange/Yellow route, no Saturday, 2-hour headways

What is IRIS

- On demand mobility service
- Supplement existing service and/or increase mobility
- Flexible, user-friendly transportation experience
- Operates in a network of designated stops within an area. Stops could include existing RideKC stops or other locations
- Rides are booked through the app, over the phone or website.

Transit RFP

- RFP released May 1st; closed June 3rd
- 1 response received – First Transit
- Proposed cost 2-3 times higher than KCATA estimated
- All scenario costs were higher than current costs
- Cost ranged from \$2.04 million to \$2.5 million
 - For 40% to 70% reduction in service

Staff's Recommendation

- 24 Route with Citywide Paratransit and IRIS
 - Costs falls within budget amounts
 - No change to 24 route
 - No change to ADA or Non-ADA paratransit operations
 - IRIS is a more modern and convenient service
- Increases mobility over fixed route
- On demand service
 - Cost shared between rider and City.
- Re-Institute fares for paratransit and charge fares for using IRIS

2. 2025 Adventure Oasis Recommendations

Morris Heide, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, gave this presentation.

Discussion Points

Background Information for Adventure Oasis

- Opened in 2005
- Always managed by 3rd party vendor
- capacity is 1600

- No new water features added since opening in 2005
- Closed for 2020 season due to COVID
- Resident-only policy implemented for a portion of the 2021 season, and all of 2022 and 2023 seasons
- No residency requirement for 2024 season

Income and expenditure

- There has been a net loss each year from 2019-2024
- Anticipate loss in 2025 as well

Operational Cost increases

- Staff cost increases
- Maintenance cost increases
- Supplies, material costs and inflation

Capital needs

- AO is not included in the current GO Bond proposal
- \$8.4M in Capital needs for AO
- \$1.3M required to open in May 2025

Attendance

- Prior to COVID, attendance was 65,972 with 5,218 having season passes
- After COVID, dropped to 38,940 with 2,654 season pass holders
- Attendance has grown slightly since the last couple years

Follow-up items for 2023 Financial viability of AO

Recommendations

- Staff recommends closing Adventure Oasis

3. 2025 State Legislative Agenda

John Mayfield gave the presentation for this topic.

Top Legislative Priorities for 2025:

1. The City opposes any changes to Economic Development tools, such as Community Improvement Districts (CID) that would hamper development and redevelopment.
2. The City opposes any reductions, caps or altering of the local sales tax rate.
3. The City opposes any legislation that takes away the right of cities to manage public rights of way including the regulation of pole attachments.
4. The City supports increased funding for mental health services in Independence and Eastern Jackson County including funding for the Missouri 988 program.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Incubation

The City supports legislation that promotes startup businesses, including business opportunities for graduates from the Ennovation Center

Financing Tools

The City opposes any changes in state law that would restrict the flexibility of cities to use financing tools to promote economic development in their communities.

Pay Day Loans

The City supports legislation to control payday loan interest rates.

FINANCE

Sales Tax Caps

The City opposes legislation to limit or cap sales tax rates

Sales Tax Exemptions

The City opposes legislation to expand sales tax exemptions.

Unfunded Mandates

The City opposes legislation that impose state mandated costs for which there is no guarantee of local reimbursement or other related benefits.

MUNICIPAL COURT

Appropriate Fines

The City supports legislation to raise municipal court fines to \$500 in order to be a deterrent to criminal behavior and offset the staff time dedicated to processing criminal offenses.

Driver's License Suspension

The City supports legislation to allow municipal courts to suspend driver's licenses for offenders who fail to pay court fines and/or appear in court.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Crisis Intervention Teams

The City supports legislation for sustainable funding and partnerships to expand Crisis Intervention Teams for local law enforcement.

Mental Health

The City supports increased funding for Mental Health Services in our community

Ground Emergency Medical Transportation

The City of Independence supports legislation that would provide reimbursement for any agency that provides emergency medical transport services for a particular area

TOURISM

Short-Term Rentals

The City opposes any legislation that would limit the authority of local governments to regulate short-term rentals.

UTILITIES

Telecommunications Issues

The City opposes any legislation to limit local control of telecom attachments to municipally owned utility facilities.

INFORMATION ONLY

1. ***Please Note:*** *In accordance with RSMo. 610.021, the City Council may convene in an Executive Session during or after the meeting, in the Council Chambers and move to Conference Room D for the closed meeting, on matters of litigation, legal action, and/or attorney client communications, as permitted by Sec. 610.021(1), on matters of personnel, as permitted by Sec. 610.021(3) and personnel records, as permitted by 610.021(13), on matters of contracts, as permitted by 610.021(12), on matters of real estate, as permitted by 610.021(2) and/or matters of labor negotiations, as permitted by 610.021(9).*