



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

BIANCA L. TIRADO, CITY CLERK

PERSONNEL & FINANCE

AUGUST 20, 2025 6:00 P.M.

Committee Members Present:

Sheila Niezgodski, Karen L. White, Rachel Tomas Morgan

Committee Members Absent:

Dr. Oliver Davis

Councilmembers Present:

Canneth Lee, Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers (Arrived Late), Sherry Bolden-Simpson*

Others Present:

Bianca L. Tirado, Jasmine Jackson, Margaret Gotsch, Lari'onna Green, Bob Palmer*

Presenters:

Kyle Willis, Denise Riedl, Sandra Kennedy

Agenda:

2026 Administrative Departments (Administration & Finance | Legal | Human Rights Commission) . Innovation & Technology Budget Overview

Members marked with an asterisk (*) are in virtual attendance.

Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:

<https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0,0&mediaid=399084>

Please note the attached link for the meeting presentations:

<https://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/0/fol/395495/Row1.aspx?dbid=0&dbid=0&startid=395495&startid=395495&row=1&row=1>

Committee Chair Sheila Niezgodski called to order the Personnel & Finance Committee meeting at 6:00 P.M.

City Clerk Bianca L. Tirado announced: Good Evening, members of the public. If you would like to speak during the meeting on a specific agenda item, please submit your request in the chat - directions to do so are in the chat. We ask that you provide your [FULL NAME] and [ADDRESS], as those are required for all speakers at in-person Council meetings.

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Committee Chair Niezgodski provided information regarding the 2026 Budget Overview process. City Residents can access the City Budget Survey to provide their input using the flowing link: <https://southbendin.gov/budget>. Additional questions pertaining to this meeting or the budget hearing can be emailed to the Personnel and Finance Committee Chair, Sheila Niezgodski, at sneizgodski@southbendin.gov and they will be directed to the appropriate department. The Final Budget Hearing is scheduled for October 13, 2025.

Kyle Willis, City Controller, with offices on the 12th floor of the County-City Building South Bend, IN 46601, provided an overview of the Administration (Admin) and Finance Department's proposed 2026 budget (which includes a few interdepartmental budgets) while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased the Departments goals and accomplishments with emphasis on Four Winds Field, Madison Lifestyle District, Water Utility, Hall of Fame Award, and staffing stability. Kyle Willis presented the final budget for the Controller's Office to be a seven point two percent (7.2%) increase. Liability Insurance increased by one point four percent (1.4%). Central Services decreased by four point seven percent (4.7%). Human Resources decreased by seven point two percent (7.2%). Kyle Willis stated that there were increases primarily due to hazardous waste disposal and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Committee Member Karen L. White asked if there is any reason to be concerned in regard to liability coverage decreasing and who does the City pay for that coverage.

Kyle Willis stated that there is no reason to be concerned and the City pays environmental litigation for liability coverage.

Committee Vice Chair Rachel Tomas Morgan asked regarding the new positions transferred from Venues, Parks, and Arts and the Department of Community Investment to Admin and Finance if the four (4) new full time employees are under Kyle's direct supervision or are only in the Department's budget.

Kyle Willis stated that the new positions are only in the budget.

Councilmember Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers asked if the City has a large number of claims for potholes and pothole related damage.

Sandra Kennedy, Chief Legal Officer, with offices on the 12th floor of the County-City Building South Bend, IN 46601, stated that the City receives a large number of claims for potholes.

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked for clarification on the increase in regard to the Capital line item under Central Services.

Kyle Willis stated that a new gas detection system would be installed where the garbage trucks are parked and serviced.

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked for clarification on the increase in regard to the Other Services and Charges line item under Central Services.

Kyle Willis stated that there are dues and memberships included in that line item and he would follow up regarding what is driving that increase like new contracts or tire removal and disposal.



Council President Canneth Lee asked why the auction of city vehicles changed from in-person to online.

Kyle Willis stated that the auction is labor intensive and the decision to go virtual was made because it is more efficient and economical but bidders can still come and look at the vehicles prior to auction.

Council President Lee asked when the auction is held and how is the public notified.

Kyle Willis stated he would follow up.

Committee Chair Niezgodski held the public hearing, and nobody spoke.

Committee Chair adjured the next presenter to showcase their presentation.

Denise Riedl, Chief Innovation Officer, with offices on the 12th floor of the County-City Building South Bend, IN 46601, provided an overview of the Innovation and Technology (IT) Department's proposed 2026 budget while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased the Department's goals and accomplishments with emphasis on the following: Services provided by three-one-one (311), improved cyber security by installing one hundred (100) new cameras, the kiosk program that offers citizens a new way to pay their bills around town, upgrades made to the South Bend website, and the Venues, Parks, and Arts payment portal. Denise Riedl presented the final budget cut to be zero point zero-four percent (0.04%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Committee Vice Chair Tomas Morgan asked in regard to the Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge, what were some issues that were faced and how can the Department be more productive.

Denise stated that out of one hundred thousand (100,000) phone calls, eight thousand (8,000) of those are seeking help and financial assistance with their water bill.

Committee Vice Chair Tomas Morgan asked if Denise anticipates an expansion of cameras and foresees potential grant funding.

Denise Riedl stated that the Department could have an expansion of cameras but sometimes the funds don't come out of the IT budget and it come from other projects budgets. In regard to grant funding, Denise Riedl also stated it is possible.

Committee Member White stated that with the potential salary increase for the two (2) positions in the Department comes with concern in regard to balance between other departments.

Denise Riedl stated that the Director of Project Management position already exists in the City Ordinance and the salary has been set. Denise Riedl also stated that she has researched similar positions within the city to ensure a similar salary is met.

Councilmember Gooden-Rodgers expressed concern for customer satisfaction in regard to the three-one-one (311) call center and asked if there is an option to leave a voicemail.

Denise Riedl state there is a voicemail system in place primarily for after hour phone calls.



Council President Lee asked for clarity regarding the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) and what's to come.

Denise Riedl stated that the growth of RTCC has been enormous and has saved the South Bend Police Department a lot of time in regard to time spent on investigations and grand theft auto cases.

Councilmember Gooden-Rodgers asked where to new residents receive their welcome packet.

Denise Riedl stated that they are mailed to new residents.

Councilmember Sherry Bolden-Simpson asked if the Department was notified that they would not receive the grant money from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

Denise Riedl stated that they did receive official notice.

Councilmember Sherry Bolden-Simpson asked where she can view the cat camera.

Denise Riedl stated online on YouTube.

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked how the salary was determined for the supervisor position.

Denise Riedl stated that she has researched similar positions within the city to ensure the supervisor salary was consistent.

Committee Chair Niezgodski opened the public hearing.

Mark Piasecki, 101 Conestoga Lane, South Bend, IN 46617, spoke in favor regarding budgetary cuts and asked if the City is at risk for ransomware.

Denise Riedl stated yes, the City is at risk for ransomware.

Jason Overholt, online, no address provided, sent teams messages in opposition of the three-one-one (311) call center and in favor of utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) instead of live agents.

Denise Riedl stated that the City is investing in AI that shows results and is adopting Microsoft 365 Copilot and translation applications.

Committee Chair Niezgodski closed the public hearing and asked Council for comments.

Committee Chair adjured the next presenter to showcase their presentation.

Sandra Kennedy provided an overview of the Legal Department's proposed 2026 budget while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased an organizational chart and a breakdown of current staff and their roles. Sandra Kennedy stated that the Legal Department has one (1) vacancy that will be filled in October. Sandra Kennedy presented the final budget cut to be three point one percent (3.1%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Committee Member White expressed concern for the large budget cut and wants to know how this will impact the Legal Department.



Sandra Kennedy stated that the majority of the decrease is coming out of the travel line item, but if an employee needs to travel the Department has factored in those expenses. Sandra Kennedy also stated the reason she cut the internships is because she cannot afford to cut any staff.

Committee Chair Tomas Morgan expressed concern about the budget cuts and wants the Legal Department to have the opportunity to travel, continue education, and offer internships.

Council President Lee thanked Sandra for making the budget cuts she made and wants to ensure the Legal Department has what it needs to function.

Committee Chair Niezgodski held the public hearing, and nobody spoke.

Committee Chair Niezgodski made a few closing comments regarding the importance of internships and a balanced budget.

With no further business, Committee Chair Niezgodski adjourned the Personnel & Finance Committee meeting at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheila Niezgodski".

Sheila Niezgodski, Committee Chair

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Auxiliary Aid or Other Services may be Available upon
Request at No Charge.
Please give Reasonable Advance Request when
Possible