



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

BIANCA L. TIRADO, CITY CLERK

PERSONNEL & FINANCE

AUGUST 13, 2025 5:30 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, Troy Warner*, Sherry Bolden-Simpson

Others Present:

Bianca L. Tirado, Matthew Neal, Margaret Gotsch, Lari'onna Green, Bob Palmer*

Presenters:

James Mueller, Darryl Scott, Matt Eckerle, Bianca Tirado,

Agenda:

2026 City-Wide 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=398903>

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 5:30 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.

Committee Chair Sheila 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

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Jasmine Jackson
CHIEF DEPUTY CITY CLERK / CHIEF OF STAFF

Matthew Neal
DEPUTY CITY CLERK / DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Margaret Gotsch
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

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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.

Mayor James Mueller, with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building South Bend, IN 46601, presented to the Council and the public the Strategic Priorities for the City of South Bend. Mayor Mueller also discussed the context within which this budget was being developed. Mayor Mueller stated that inflation has increased and the economy has stalled. New federal spending is highly unlikely in the next couple of years. Mayor Mueller stated that some cuts will need to be made in 2026 due to the Indiana Senate Bill 1 (SB1) that was passed. Mayor Mueller stated that he is unsure that today's lawmakers will pass a stimulus to get the economy moving. Mayor Mueller presented a powerpoint presentation showcasing the Preliminary Analysis Income Tax for the next three (3) years that compared and contrasted the calculations based on employed population, number of households, certified local income tax revenues, and fire protection and emergency services (EMS) local income tax rates. One (1) main takeaway is that citizens of the City will likely pay more for the same or lower service level (EMS and Fire Protection Services) which could increase from one point seven-five percent (1.75%) to two point nine percent (2.9%) in the next three (3) years. Mayor Mueller gave a brief overview of the 2026 Projected Revenues and showcased the departmental budget cuts.

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked for clarification on the local income tax portion of the presentation.

Matt Eckerle, Principal at Baker Tilly (BT) with offices at 9229 Delegates Row, Indianapolis, IN 46240, provided a brief overview of the analysis of the local income tax revenues over the next three (3) years. Matt Eckerle stated that, with respect to the increases citizens would incur for EMS and Fire Protections Services, the Department of Revenue is still working on generating the data at that level so that estimates can be made based on actual Department of Revenue data.

Committee Member Rachel Tomas Morgan asked if this is the worse case scenario and what would be something to look forward to.

Matt Eckerle stated that is a good way to simplify it but BT is conservative when assessing growth levels and the focus would be on other revenue sources being made more available.

Mayor Mueller provided a brief synopsis of the presentation and thanked the Council.

Committee Member Karen L. White made a few observations and asked if the 2026 budget reflects a hiring freeze.

Mayor Mueller stated the hiring freeze is based off of vacancies.

Committee Member White clarified that some departments were asked to cut five percent (5%).

Mayor Mueller stated that was the instruction for for the department's budget that are supported by property taxes or income taxes.



Committee Chair Niezgodski clarified that these numbers could change due to changes still being made.

Mayor Mueller stated yes.

Committee Chair Niezgodski opened the public hearing.

Mark Piasecki, 101 Conestoga Lane, South Bend, IN 46617, spoke in opposition to the SB1.

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

Council President Canneth Lee thanked Mayor Mueller and Matt Eckerle for their presentation.

Committee Chair adjured the next presenter to showcase their presentation.

City Clerk Bianca Tirado with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building South Bend, IN 46601, provided an overview of the Clerk's Office proposed 2026 budget while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased an organizational chart and a breakdown of current staff and their roles. Clerk Tirado presented the final budget cut to be three point two percent (3.2%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Committee Member White thanked Clerk Tirado.

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

Committee Member Tomas Morgan expressed gratitude to Clerk Tirado for viewing the budget with scrutiny.

Committee Chair adjured the next presenter to showcase their presentation.

Council President Lee with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building, South Bend, IN 46601, provided an overview of the Common Council's proposed 2026 budget while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased the Council's goals with emphasis on the following: neighborhood revitalization and housing stability, public health and environmental justice, public safety and community policing, infrastructure improvements, education and youth empowerment, transportation and mobility, economic development and job training, parks, recreation, and green spaces, community engagement and civic empowerment, historic and cultural preservation. Council President Lee presented the final budget cut to be eleven point three percent (11.3%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Committee Member Tomas Morgan asked what expenses fall under the category of other services and charges.

Clerk Tirado stated that advertisements and sponsorships come out of that account.

Committee Member Tomas Morgan asked if there was a decrease in fringe benefits.

Kyle Willis, City Controller, with offices on the 12th floor of the County-City Building, South Bend, IN 46601 stated that the budget for health insurance has decreased because the budget was initially higher than it should be based on discussions had with the City's insurance broker.



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

Committee Chair adjured the next presenter to showcase their presentation.

Darryl Scott, Mayor's Office Chief of Staff, with offices on the 14th floor of the County-City Building, South Bend, IN 46601, stated that he will be presenting the Mayor's Office, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Community Police Review Board (CPRB). Darryl Scott provided an overview of the Mayor's Office proposed 2026 budget while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased an organizational chart and spoke regarding current staff and their roles. Darryl Scott presented the final budget cut to be point three-two percent (.32%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Committee Member White thanked Darryl Scott for the presentation.

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

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked if the other services and charges budget line increased due to an outreach South Bend is having with other cities.

Darryl Scott stated yes.

Darryl Scott summarized the proposed 2026 budget for the Diversity and Inclusion's Office while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased the budget overview and provided a budget summary. Darryl Scott presented the final budget cut to be forty-six point six-three percent (46.63%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Councilmember Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers asked why the office does not have a budget for maintenance and repairs.

Darryl Scott stated that with the move to the new city they do not anticipate any repairs.

Council President Lee asked how the office will move forward without the Compliance Officer role.

Darryl Scott stated that the office has been working closely with the Legal Department to ensure minimal disruptions.

Committee Member Tomas Morgan asked for clarity on the education and training budget.

Darryl Scott stated that the training is not necessary but puts the staff in a better position to carry out the mission of the office.

Committee Member White stated that the office may need to address federal and state compliance requirements.

Committee Chair Niezgodski asked if the Director position will be filled and how many positions are in the office.

Darryl Scott stated that the office will keep the role in the budget while they explore different options and the office has a total of three (3) positions.



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

Committee Chair Niezgodski expressed concern regarding the large budget cut.

Mayor Mueller explained that the larger budget cut is because the Compliance Officer's role is being funded through the Administration and Finance Department.

Darryl Scott summarized the Community Police Review Board's proposed 2026 budget while presenting a PowerPoint that showcased the budget overview and provided a budget summary. Darryl Scott presented the final budget cut to be four point nine-two percent (4.92%) and asked for questions or comments from Council or the public.

Councilmember Gooden-Rodgers asked why the advertising and promotion budget is at zero percent (0.0%)

Darryl stated that Pastor King is active in the community and advertises the CPRB in addition to having office hours on Friday.

Councilmember Gooden-Rodgers recommended promotion and creating a brochure.

Council President Lee stated there is an outcry for additional training and wants to know why the budget line for training was cut.

Darryl Scott stated that there will be additional training in 2026 which is why they felt comfortable making that level of budget cut.

Committee Chair Niezgodski stated she wants to know if the budget is sufficient to complete the training.

Darryl Scott stated that Pastor King plans on providing virtual training in order to save resources.

Committee Member White asked what is included in professional services.

Darryl Scott stated he would follow up.

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

Councilmember Gooden-Rodgers and Council President Lee stated that the CPRB is vital.

Committee Member Tomas Morgan thanked everyone for their presentations and scrutinizing their budgets.

With no further business, Committee Chair Niezgodski adjourned the Personnel & Finance Committee meeting at 7:35 P.M.



Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheila Niezgodski".

Sheila Niezgodski, Committee Chair

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Auxiliary Aid or Other Services may be Available upon
Request at No Charge.
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