



City Council Meeting

Regular Session Minutes
September 8, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Liberty, Missouri was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on September 8, 2025 with Mayor Greg Canuteson presiding. Mayor Canuteson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Council Member Phillips, who then led the pledge of allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Harold Phillips and Shelton Ponder, Ward I
Adam Travis, Ward II
Kevin Graham and Jeff Watt, Ward III
Gene Gentrup and Michael Hagan, Ward IV

Council Members Absent: Kelley Wrenn Pozel, Ward II

Staff Present: Curt Wenson, City Administrator
Sara Cooke, Assistant City Administrator
Vicki McClure, Finance Director
Andy Noll, Utilities Director
BJ Staab, Parks and Recreation Director
Jim Martin, Police Chief
Brandon Smith, Economic & Business Dev. Manager
Katherine Sharp, Planning and Development Director
Sherri McIntyre, Public Works Director
Sarah Ranes, Deputy City Clerk

Public Present: Kellie Houx, Courier Tribune
9 members of the public

IV. PROCLAMATIONS

V. APPROVE MINUTES AND SUMMARIES

VI. MEETING SCHEDULE

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Boards and Commissions Reappointment

1. Tourism Committee

- a. Reappoint Bobbie Ford as the Attraction or Museum Representative to a term expiring 5/1/2030.

Council Member Phillips moved to approve the appointment. Council Member Travis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Ordinance establishing the 2025 Ad Valorem Tax Levies for City Operations for the 2026 budget year

The City of Liberty property tax is a vital component of the City's budget that helps to support police, fire /emergency medical services, street maintenance, building and project inspections, planning, senior citizen programs, park maintenance, recreation programs and more. Of the City's property tax levy, 85% supports general operations and 15% supports Parks & Rec. When compared to sales taxes, property taxes typically provide a more consistent and stable funding source for budget planning, especially for ongoing operational costs.

Each year, the City Council has options when setting the Ad Valorem Levy Rate. According to the State of Missouri's Hancock Amendment, the City of Liberty is required to follow an established formula when calculating its maximum levy. Beyond small inflationary adjustments allowed by the formula, increases in revenue from the property tax are a result of new construction and/or increases in personal property in Liberty. Because property taxes provide a more stable and consistent funding source for ongoing City operations, staff typically recommend setting the annual levy rate based on the maximum allowed by the Hancock Amendment. The Hancock Maximum is the highest levy rate you can set in any given year based on the current year's assessed valuations and the prior year's levy rate. For the City of Liberty, this option allows revenue growth within the general fund and parks fund based on the Hancock Amendment.

Looking to the future, beyond current funding needs, property taxes will be vital as continued residential and commercial growth increases the demand for City services across all departments.

The County has provided the City with preliminary June 2025 assessments for all categories of property exclusive of state-assessed railroad and utilities. State-assessed railroad and utility values are obtained from the State of Missouri. The Public Hearing notice was published using preliminary assessments and is as follows.

Based on the average individual real estate property assessment value of \$325,000 for 2025. Individual property assessments will vary from average, some higher and some lower.

Residential Impact - Hancock Maximum	Current 2025 Levy 0.8526	Proposed Levy 0.7929	Annual Difference
		325,000	
Home Value	300,000		
		61,750	
19% Assessment Factor	57,000		
		489.62	
Taxes	485.98		3.64

Mayor Canuteson opened the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either in favor or in opposition of the ordinance. Seeing no one wishing to speak, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Document No. 9998 was read.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to waive the rules and consider the ordinance on first reading. Council Member Graham seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to approve the ordinance. Council Member Travis seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Not approved by the Chair. Ordinance goes into effect October 8, 2025 inscribed in Ordinance No. 12161.

- B. Ordinance adopting and approving the amended development plan for the Downtown Area Redevelopment Project (including a thirty seventh amendment for the 104 E. Franklin project) submitted by the Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation

This amendment to the Redevelopment Plan consists of one parcel (2024 Clay County Parcel 15114000302500 - Owners: Old Farm Holdings LLC). This amendment to the Redevelopment Plan consists of new windows, tuckpoint, HVAC, sidewalk improvements, landscape, drains and a new roof and joists. The interior work will include HVAC, plumbing remodeling, demo of drywall and ceilings and electrical replacements. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$349,000.00. The improvements meet the guidelines that 50% of the improvement cost eligible for abatement is exterior as required.

Estimated taxes currently paid are \$2,771.00 and estimated taxes paid as a result of the 353 Program (PILOT) will be \$847/year for ten years and \$4,384/year for years 11 to 15. The benefit (savings) to the project as a result of 353 tax abatement with improvements is approximately \$7,078.00/year for ten years and \$4,375.00/year for years 11 to 15. The total abatement amount over the 15-year abatement period will be \$97,243.00 unless the investment amount is reached. It is estimated that the abatement will end in 15 years.

Mayor Canuteson opened the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either in favor or in opposition of the ordinance.

Mark Mathis, owner of the Jesse James Bank Museum, wanted to let the City Council know that the beauty of this abatement program allows investors to get things down like what they are doing now but it also allows them to do it right the first time. Mr. Mathis said as an investor and when you go into project such as this, you have no idea what you are getting into. Mr. Mathis stated abatement programs give you a safety net and they allow for you to get things done right the first time around.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing

Document No. 9999 was read.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to waive the rules and consider the ordinance on first reading. Council Member Phillips seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to approve the ordinance. Council Member Watt seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Approved by the Chair and inscribed in Ordinance No. 12162.

C. Resolution granting a certificate of appropriateness for the construction of a new single-family home at 118 N. Prairie Street, Dougherty Historic District

The applicant proposes to construct a 975 square foot single family house with an attached garage. The home is a one and a half story home with front-facing gables, extension of the front porch, and an attached garage on the North/ alley elevation.

A vacant lot at 118 N. Prairie Street was created via a lot split in 2008. The lot meets all requirements for size in the RNC district.

Mayor Canuteson opened the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak either in favor or in opposition of the resolution.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to approve the resolution. Council Member Gentrup seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Inscribed in Resolution No. 3481.

IX. ORDINANCES, CONTRACTS AND RESOLUTIONS

- A. Ordinance acknowledging vendor payments for the period of August 15, 2025 to August 29, 2025

Document No. 10000 was read.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to approve the vendor payments. Council Member Travis seconded the motion.

Roll Call

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Approved by the Chair and inscribed in Ordinance No. 12163.

- B. Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 12109 approving a final change order with The Havens Construction Co., Inc. for the City of Liberty Project 25-011 N. Church Rd. & Camille St. storm sewer repair project by decreasing the contract amount by \$11,358.00 from an amount of \$192,900.00 to \$181,542.00

The City of Liberty Project 25-011 N. Church Rd. & Camille St. storm sewer repair project was awarded to The Havens Construction Co., Inc. for the amount of \$98,475.00 on May 19, 2025 (Ordinance No. 12109). The scope of work involved the removal and replacement of a failing 54" corrugated metal storm sewer pipe which runs under N. Church Rd. just north of the intersection of Camille St.

The project was amended on July 14, 2025 (Ordinance No. 12129) to include the removal and replacement of a 36" corrugated metal pipe just outside the roadway and crossing Camille St., which while not actively collapsing, was in poor enough condition to warrant a conversation about replacement. The amendment increased the contracted amount by \$94,425.00 to a total contract amount of \$192,900.00.

This action decreases the contract amount by \$11,358.00 from \$192,900.00 to \$181,542.00. This amendment is required to reconcile all line items from estimated quantities to final installed quantities.

Document No. 10001 was read.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to waive the rules and consider the ordinance on first reading. Council Member Watt seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to approve the ordinance. Council Member Travis seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Approved by the Chair and inscribed in Ordinance No. 12164.

- C. Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 11999 approving a change order with Gardner Construction Co., Inc. for the design build construction of 427 Mill St. City Records & Storage Facility Project 24-021 by increasing the contract amount by \$40,111.00 from an amount of \$1,197,829.00 to \$1,237,940.00

The City design build construction for the 427 Mill Street City Records & Storage Facility Project (24-021) is in the punch list and closeout phase and, as such, a contract amendment is required to incorporate deductions and additions which have occurred over the length of the project into the contract. The additions and deletions are itemized in the attached change-order sheet. The net change to the project amounts to an addition of \$40,111.00, raising the contract price from \$1,197,829.00 to \$1,237,940.00.

Document No. 10002 was read.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to waive the rules and consider the ordinance on first reading. Council Member Hagan seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to approve the ordinance. Council Member Watt seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Approved by the Chair and inscribed in Ordinance No. 12165.

- D. Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 11802 approving an amendment with HDR Engineering, Inc. for City of Liberty Project 23-009, City of Liberty transportation master plan by increasing the contract amount by \$4,800.00 from an amount of \$428,310.00 to \$433,110.00

The Transportation Master Plan is scheduled to be brought before the Planning and Zoning Commission and then City Council in the October 2025 cycle. As part of the Transportation Final Master Plan several exhibits which were not previously identified within the scope of work were requested and created for the plan. These are:

- Existing Roadway Network - Number of Lanes
- Existing Roadway Network - Posted Speeds
- Travel Time Indices, Replica 2022

The additional non-scoped items require a change order to the contract to provide funding for the exhibits themselves and the work required of the consultant to complete them.

Staff recommends approval of a contract amendment with HDR Engineering, Inc. for City of Liberty Project 23-009, by amending the scope of work increasing the obligated contract amount by \$4,800.00 from \$428,310.00 to \$433,110.00

Document No. 10003 was read.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to waive the rules and consider the ordinance on first reading. Council Member Graham seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Council Member Graham moved to approve the ordinance. Council Member Watt seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Approved by the Chair and inscribed in Ordinance No. 12166.

E. Ordinance of the City of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri, adding a fee for Animal Control Services to the City's Schedule of Fees

Animal Control Officers are occasionally called to assist with animal control issues by other agencies. When staff are available and there has been capacity within the shelter, this has been provided at no cost to the requesting agency. Some agencies have voluntarily provided some financial support for these services, but others have not.

To help cover the increasing costs to respond to these types of calls, care and feed for the animals brought to the shelter, Animal Control staff recommends implementing a flat service fee of \$100.00, plus any medical-related costs.

Document No. 10004 was read.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to waive the rules and consider the ordinance on first reading. Council Member Gentrup seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Council Member Watt moved to approve the ordinance. Council Member Hagan seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Approved by the Chair and inscribed in Ordinance No. 12167.

- F. Resolution to provide direct funding for consulting services with CFS Engineers for work performed on a Planning Sustainable Places Program Project along Leonard/Lightburne St. in an amount not to exceed \$7,781.00

In the summer of 2024, the City of Liberty applied for funding through the Mid-America Regional Council's (MARC's) Planning Sustainable Places (PSP) program. The City was awarded \$142,500.00 in federal funding. As part of the Federal Funding award, the City provided \$36,250.00 as a match and an additional 1.0% (\$1,425.00) to MARC as is the typical agreement for any federal funding awarded through a MARC section process, bringing the City total to \$37,675.00.

This action is requesting direct funding authorization in the amount of \$7,781.00 for the Consultants' attendance, preparation and coordination which was required for them to attend a Public Interfacing "Pop-Up" event at Pool Side Palooza in July. This additional funding will be provided to CFS directly instead of being provided to MARC for payment to CFS per MARC's request.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to approve the resolution. Council Member Phillips seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Inscribed in Resolution No. 3482.

- G. Resolution accepting the N. Church Rd. & Camille St. storm sewer repair project (25-011) with The Havens Construction Co., Inc.

The City of Liberty Project 25-011 N. Church Rd. & Camille St. storm sewer repair project was awarded to The Havens Construction Co., Inc. on May 19, 2025 (Ordinance No. 12109) and later amended on July 14, 2025 (Ordinance No. 12129). The scope of work involved the removal and replacement of a failing 54" corrugated metal storm sewer pipe which runs under N. Church Rd. just north of the intersection of Camille St. and a 36" corrugated metal pipe just outside the roadway and crossing Camille St.

All contract work has been completed by The Havens Construction Co., Inc. in accordance with City standards, specifications and contract requirements. This action accepts the City of Liberty Project 25-011 N. Church Rd. & Camille St. storm sewer repair project, thus allowing release of retainage which has been held per the project contract.

Action: Council Member Hagan moved to approve the resolution. Council Member Phillips seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Inscribed in Resolution No. 3483.

H. Resolution granting a certificate of appropriateness for exterior improvements at 104 E. Franklin Street Liberty Square Historic District

The owner is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior repairs at 104 E. Franklin Street, Liberty Square Historic District, a 353 Tax Abatement project.

The architecture reflects elements of Colonial Revival and Federal styles in its general symmetry windows and doorways set in recessed semicircular surround, louvered shutters, low pitched gable roof, prominent pediment, multipaned windows and broad over hanging eaves. An addition which extends the building to the east continues the use of multipaned windows and stone lug sills. The windows of the original portion of the building feature half circle fanlights, and are framed by radiating brick voussoirs, featuring a stone keystone.

Action: Council Member Phillips moved to approve the resolution. Council Member Hagan seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Inscribed in Resolution No. 3484.

I. Resolution granting a certificate of appropriateness for exterior improvements at 316 E. Franklin

The owner is seeking a certificate of appropriateness for the exterior improvements at 316 E. Franklin Street, a local landmark, a 353-tax abatement project. Renovations will include the following:

- replacement of seven missing windows with wood windows to fit the original openings; and
- like in kind repairs to all remaining windows; and

- like in kind repairs the brick including tuckpointing and replacement at needed; and
- construct a new second floor porch railing; and
- alterations to the non-historic garage; and
- add gravel to both driveways; and
- like in-kind repairs to drive approaches and sidewalks as needed.

Action: Council Member Watt moved to approve the resolution. Council Member Hagan seconded the motion.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0-0

Yes: Council Members Phillips, Ponder, Travis, Graham, Watt, Gentrup and Hagan

No: None

Abstain: None

Inscribed in Resolution No. 3485.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

XI. CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

Daniel Tajchman – Mr. Tajchman encourages residents to visit the City of Liberty, MO website and to take a look at the art throughout the City. Mr. Tajchman said for a City of our size, the artwork is great and amazing. Mr. Tajchman also stated he is favor of any project of the City that encourages walking, biking, etc. On the other hand, Mr. Tajchman has asked the City to instruct their contractors to not park in handicap parking spots on the square and he isn't talking about construction workers or the farmers market workers especially when there is an open spot right next to the handicap spot. Mr. Tajchman thanked the City Council for the great work they do.

XII. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATOR

XIII. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Greg Canuteson, Mayor

Attest:

Deputy City Clerk