

**CITY OF WEST POINT
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 19, 2025**

The City Council of West Point, Kentucky, convened for its Special session on Monday, May 19, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the West Point Independent School building, 203 N. 13th Street, West Point, Kentucky, with Mayor Richard A. Ciresi presiding as chair.

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME -

Mayor Ciresi called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -

Mayor Ciresi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRAYER -

Monie Matthews offered prayer.

ROLL CALL -

PRESIDING OFFICER -	Richard Ciresi, Mayor
COUNCIL MEMBERS'	Amy Bickel
PRESENT -	Dwayne Culver
	Vernon 'Butch' Curl
	Kevin Duke
	Jo Sabol
ABSENT	Chris McVey
STAFF PRESENT -	Ashley Gates, City Clerk

I. REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND REVISIONS FYE 2026 BUDGET

Mayor Ciresi reviewed the most recent changes to the proposed budget and reviewed questions submitted earlier via email by Councilmen Dwayne Culver and Amy Bickel as follows:

FROM COUNCILMAN CULVER – Mayor's response in italics.

10-4230-100 Rents/Leases \$58,700.00

Since the previous budget was zero what is making this increase possible?

1. When we sold the lease right on the water tower, we made the assumption that it would be necessary to draw down the \$42,500 every year from previous budgets, so I have included it in the calculations. However, I do not think we will need the money, and it can be left to draw interest.

2. The cell tower is committed to start construction this month or next, so the \$14,400 annual rent payment should come in July.

3. The remaining \$1800 is from Billboard rental.

10-4320-100 Sale of city assets \$7,000 increase from previous year. What assets are we going to surplus?

This is for the two backhoe's we have that have already been approved for surplus that I have not been able to get listed for sale. I think this number is low. Depending on what they actually bring, I may propose the purchase of a smaller, used tractor.

10-4555-100 ATV permits \$400.00 increase

Since there is limited enforcement, I do not believe this is achievable.

You may be correct and I'm open to adjustment, but I believe the sale of 50 permits is reasonable. I have met with the HCSO regarding this matter and have been assured that enforcement will begin in July.

10-5050-100 Short term Rental \$1200.00 increase

What is the plan to increase or is this associated to the Kayak rental at the boat dock?

We have been remis in sending out reminders for the requirement to pay these fees and will get back on track next month. There are two Airbnb's in town, and I believe this is a reasonable assumption, and may be low.

Expense:

Line 41, no coding 18k increase

Is this line supposed to be there and if so, why the large increase and if not please explain?

The coding should be 10-51000-100 Salaries. This is equal to the amount in last year's budget. The difference is...

- 1. Our City Clerk did not draw full year pay due to not starting full time in the first month of the fiscal year and other missed days, snow days, etc.*
- 2. Our Code enforcement officer has not been able to maintain the schedule we originally set and does not always turn in his time for payment.*

Also, if line 41 is correct would that also increase retirement, FICA and other employment expenses?

No. The FICA and Retirement are correct estimates based on all estimated wages.

10-5290-100 travel / training. What is causing this increase?

This is estimated on the high side as I am not certain that training for P&Z and BOA is going to be held anywhere close. I did not want the budget to restrict the necessary training and have included a moderate hotel/travel expense should it become necessary.

10-5300-100 equipment increased to \$30,000. What equipment is needed?

- 1. This is an estimate to replace the city's work truck, by selling the current one and adding approximately \$22,000 to purchase a newer, used truck.*
- 2. I've estimated \$6,500 to purchase a mower for the steep banks at the boat dock and along Main street.*
- 3. The remainder if for weed eaters, blowers, etc. as we go through these regularly.*

10-5530-100 Code enforcement. Why is this so much higher than previous years?

1. *Demolition of some of the homes that have been condemned where the owners are not available, usually deceased. Once the demolition is complete, we will lien the property and eventually force the sale to recoup some of these costs.*
2. *Dangerous tree removal*

10-9085-100 IRS payment. Is this anticipating the acceptance of the city's offer to settle?

No. This is to continue the \$1,300 agreed monthly payment. There is no allowance for the proposed settlement as we have no indication that our offer will be accepted.

Fire:

10-5310-230 Equipment

Is this the expense for the turnout gear and if so is that the only equipment expense for the entire year?

Yes, but the number is too low. Good Catch! The revised amount should be \$9,500. This would be for 3 sets, without helmets, since we just replaced all helmets this year. Over the last year we have spent a significant amount of money on other equipment, fire axes, ladder belts, hose tips, etc. so I think we should be in good shape.

10-5340-230 Vehicle repairs

I know we will not have to replace tires this year but is this realistic, as vehicles age, they always require more maintenance, just like old people?

This is the million-dollar question. We've spent a LOT of money over the last two years on the trucks, when we spent almost nothing in the three years preceding me taking office. Chief Curl indicated that a significant portion of this expense was catching up on delayed maintenance. So, are we caught up? I hope so. Given the available surplus we could afford repairs if necessary or I'm open to increasing the budgeted amount.

FROM COUNCILMAN BICKEL

Revenue:

Line 32: 10-4995-100 - Do we anticipate our portion of the stabilization being less, in the upcoming year?

The amount shown on the budget is the remainder of the \$50k grant that we hope to receive and spend. However, this project is on hold due to the failure of the USACE to complete the requested H&H study.

Line 33: 10-5010-100 - What contributes to the \$3200 increase?

Two things. We passed ordinance 2023-09 which increased the storm water rate from \$1.50 per ERU to 3.50 per ERU. Additionally, we are now billing vacant properties that have paid no storm water fees in the past, making this increase probable.

Expenses:

Line 41: Salaries - Should we budget for an annual increase for Ashley?

Yes, I'm adding 4%. There was a question regarding the need to continue her health insurance (which would have increased substantially), which has now been resolved. She no longer needs it, so that reduction will more than offset the increase.

Line 43: 10-5102-100 - At one time, we discussed possibly adding an additional maintenance person (part time). Is this still on the radar?

Yes, we partially added this last year and with our current staff of four part-time workers, some seasonal, I believe the budgeted amount of \$56,400 will be sufficient.

Line 45: If considering a full year of benefits (approximately \$7488), does this budget amount leave enough room for a rate increase?

The health insurance is being deleted as it is no longer necessary.

Line 46: Police Contract - When does our contract with HCSO end? Do we anticipate that they will increase the rate at that time?

Technically it does not end as it automatically renews every June 15. The Sheriff's department received a budget increase from the county this budget year, so our number will remain good for one more year.

Line 52: Can you explain what is included in the Hardin County Billing Charges?

This is what we pay Hardin County Water to include our trash and storm water on their water bill and includes all cost of printing, mailing and collections.

Line 66: What is included in the miscellaneous line item, to increase to \$500?

There's really no plan for this as it is a carryover from previous year's budget. As you can tell, we try not to use it.

Line 83: How often are we required to codify?

Every 5 years. We completed our last codification in 2022, so we're not due until 2027. The amount in the budget is for the addition of the new ordinances as they are passed and inserted into our online availability of our ordinances. Keeping this up will reduce the cost of codification which was over \$10k in 2022.

Line 92: What is the reason to anticipate \$10k in stormwater expenses?

We have numerous stormwater problems to address, but this increase will provide the funds for the Jetter and Vac truck (Etown has agreed to provide their truck and labor for their standard fee) to clear underground storm water drains that we do not believe have ever been cleared.

Fire Department:

Expenses:

Line 24: Although I realize that it will be hard to gauge repairs needed, my opinion is that we should increase the budget to at least half of the spend for this year. Increases to \$8500.
I agree. Probably a wise decision based on the recent past.

Councilman Duke questioned the \$1,300 payment to the IRS questioning some type of settlement. The Mayor stated that we have submitted an "offer in compromise" several months ago that was rejected and therefore appealed. The matter has now been moved up in the IRS but we do not have a response and no firm date of when that response may come.

Councilman Curl indicated that the pumper truck has failed pump test and suggested a \$20,000 increase in the fire department equipment repair. Also questioned receipts for fire department runs. The mayor indicated that we have not received any of these funds this year.

Councilman Sabol questioned the expense for Ft. Duffield and if we receive revenue. The Mayor stated we do financially support Ft. Duffield as it is a city park. All revenue and

donations received go directly to Ft. Duffield and do not pass through the city's books. The Ft. Duffield committee does provide monthly financial statements.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2025-05 FYE BUDGET

Amy Bickel read ordinance 2025-05

II. CONSIDERATION, TERMS AND AGREEMENT REGARDING THE RENEWAL OF THE LEASE FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

The Mayor indicated that the largest concern was if the city could afford to renew it and the council had requested additional financial information. The Mayor presented utility information and the information provided by John Stith.

An offer was made to HCBE to pay the city's portion of the utility costs for FYE 2024 and partial 2025 since it was not complete but received no response.

The documentation presented indicates that the average annual utility costs for the school are approximately \$20,000. The current proposed lease has HCBE responsibly for the first \$15,000 leaving the city with approximately \$5,000 per year in expense that would be paid by the West Point Preservation Corp.

HCBE is currently paying \$18,500 in insurance costs not including flood insurance.

The proposed lease would require the city to provide a maximum of \$5,000 for any major repair.

The Mayor proposed two options.

1. The city would renew the lease under the new terms. \$1 per year rent, approximately \$5,000 per year in utilities and \$5,000 in major repairs. The lease would be cancelable by HCBE with a 180 day notice, the city could cancel with 60-day notice.
2. The city would renew the lease as stated in Option No. 1 and would sublease the building to the West Point Preservation Corp. The WPPC would assume all financial liability and maintenance and repair costs and in addition would pay the city \$1,200 annual rent. All public and community events now taking place in the building will continue.

Councilman Culver questioned the viability of HCBE leasing directly to the WPPC, proposing this as a good option if the City attorney agrees that this arrangement relieves the city of all financial obligations. Councilman Sabol shared that the West Point Revitalization committee was part of the city, and also a DBA of the WPPC possibly making the city still liable. Bonnie Ciresi stated that the West Point Revitalization Committee was not a legal entity and was separated from the city by Mayor Ash. Much discussion of the original charter, the current mission statement and the viability of the West Point Revitalization Committee without an agreed result. However, the West Point Revitalization Committee could be removed as a DBA from the West Point Preservation Corp to eliminate the possibility of this being an issue.

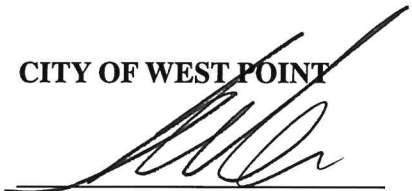
At the end of the discussion, the majority of the council present, to include Sabol, Duke, and Curl, have agreed that no matter what cost, the city would not lease the building or support the building being leased

to the West Point Preservation Corp. Culver and Bickel would support the lease to the West Pont Preservation Corp with additional assurances from the City Attorney.

III. ADJOURNMENT –

A motion to adjourn was made by Duke and seconded by Curl. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at **7:20 p.m.**

CITY OF WEST POINT


Richard A. Ciresi, Mayor

ATTEST:


Ashley Gates, City Clerk