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The Wichita Eagle

City Council approves budget with property tax rate cut

BY KYLIE CAMERON
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Property owners in Wichita will see their first city mill levy reduction in decades after the city council approved the 2026 budget Tuesday.

Amid calls for tax relief from property owners, the budget was

created using a half mill reduction. That equates to \$5.75 in savings for every \$100,000 in appraised value.

"I believe that we're called from this bench to deliver essential services efficiently, spend responsibly and build public trust," council member Dalton Glasscock said. "I believe this budget does just that."

The city's budget grew to \$776 million, up from \$763 million last year, which the city said is largely due to rising staff wages and benefits.

The approved budget includes funding for 42 positions in the fire department that had been funded by the federal SAFER grant. The \$3,988,166 will now come from general funds.

"Where you allocate your time and treasure is a reflection of your values," council member Becky Tuttle said. "I think that this budget is a true reflection of the city of Wichita and what we think the community wants us to do."

Despite the mill levy reduction, very few property owners are likely to see a decrease in

their taxes as appraised values continue to climb.

The city is now projecting budget deficits for 2028 and 2029; it had projected deficits earlier but increased revenue based on climbing property valuations helped push the deficits into the future.

Wichita Mayor Lily Wu was the only vote against approving the budget, citing projected upcoming budget deficits. She also voted against approving the budget last year.

"I want to make sure that we are always cognizant that there are not unlimited dollars that we can collect from taxpayers," Wu said.



BRITTANY GREESON NYT

Lisa Cook, shown in 2019, was confirmed by the Senate in 2022 as the first Black woman to serve on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve.

Fed official to sue over firing, asserting Trump abused power

BY TONY ROMM
NYT News Service

WASHINGTON

A day after President Donald Trump said he would remove Lisa Cook from her position on the Federal Reserve Board, her lawyer said Tuesday that she

would sue to challenge the dismissal, arguing that the president had "no authority" to order such a firing.

But Trump and his top advisers showed no signs of relenting. The administration continued to claim that Cook had engaged in mortgage fraud before she was confirmed as the first

Black female member of the Fed board in 2022, necessitating the termination, even though she has not been charged with, or convicted of, a crime.

The emerging legal clash threatened to compromise the independence and integrity of the nation's central bank, a powerful institution at the heart

of the economy whose responsibilities are to keep prices stable and the labor market strong. The Fed is supposed to be insulated from the pressures of politics, but Trump has unleashed an unprecedented string of attacks on its mem-

SEE TRUMP, 3A

Flags to be flown at half-staff after death of judge

BY AMY RENEE LEIKER
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Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly has ordered flags be flown at half-staff at the state capitol complex and all court buildings in honor of a longtime Sedgwick

County District Court judge who died Aug. 21.

Judge Bruce Brown, who served as the Division 10 Judge in the 18th Judicial Court District, died following "an extended illness," according to news releases from the governor's office and the Kansas Office of

Judicial Administration. He was 64.

Flags will be flown at half-staff until Brown's burial. His funeral is set for Aug. 30.

Brown, who was known around the courthouse for his kindness and even demeanor, was remembered Friday by



Bruce Brown

colleagues for serving the community "with dignity and honor."

"As a criminal judge, he made sure proceedings before him were fair, just, and followed the law," Sedgwick County District Court Chief Judge Jeffrey Goering said in a statement. "He was a skilled

SEE JUDGE, 2A

What Wichitans are saying they want downtown

BY ALLISON CAMPBELL
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After months of gathering input, a nonprofit focused on revitalizing the city's center has put together a picture of what they say Wichitans want downtown to become: a community-centric space with more housing options, better walkability, a livelier riverfront and a neighborhood that feels like home.

Now Downtown Wichita is preparing for a third open house from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at their 501 E. Douglas office. The come-and-go event will be the nonprofit's final big push for community feedback before it assembles a new downtown Wichita action plan that will be presented to city and county officials for approval and implementation.

"Downtown is going to develop no matter what. This gives us an opportunity to shape how that happens," Heather Schroeder, the executive director of Downtown Wichita, said. " ... We really want to make sure that this is a destination that people want to stop (at) when they come to downtown."

Downtown Wichita broke the planning process into three phases: Immerse, Ideate & Iterate and Implementation. Each phase features an open-house-style event for community members to voice their visions for downtown.

So far, the more than 750 participants have emphasized development of the area's transportation, urban landscape and design, quality of life, working and living conditions and residential development — especially options for downtown housing ownership.

FEEDBACK SHOWS INTEREST IN OWNING HOMES DOWNTOWN

The 2010 Project Downtown plan, which this plan will update, found a need for apartments above downtown storefronts. Fifteen years and nearly \$2 billion worth of investment later, Schroeder said, surveying for the next 10-year plan found Wichitans want opportunities to own housing, particularly condominiums and townhouses, downtown. Subsequently,

SEE DOWNTOWN, 4A



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