

# Lax oversight led to budget crisis

## Kirkwood Electric overspent by millions

BY NASSIM BENCHAAABANE AND SETH NELSON  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

KIRKWOOD — A lack of oversight allowed Kirkwood's electric department to overspend by millions of dollars and contributed to citywide budgetary turmoil, an internal report says.

For several years, city officials weren't properly tracking Kirkwood Electric's

spending, the report says. The department underreported how much it was spending, could make expensive purchases without City Council approval, and dipped into city reserves to pay for renovations.

"This proves that there were very serious irregularities in the way that we were operating," City Council member Justin Arnold said Monday.

The report, released late last week, represents the first time Kirkwood has publicly explained in detail how its electric department overspent by millions of

dollars over the past two years and how no one noticed it until the money was already gone.

Moreover, the overspending hit \$15.6 million, the report says, about \$2 million worse than the \$13 million previously publicly reported.

To blame: a combination of inefficient software, misrepresented spending and little inquest from city officials tasked with overseeing Kirkwood Electric, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer David Weidler told the council last week.

"It wasn't one specific thing, it was a lot of things..." he said. "Unfortunately, it was way too much in a very short period of time."

Some City Council members say they don't think Thursday's report goes deep enough. They are now calling for the city to launch a more comprehensive audit of the electric department, digging into how exactly money was spent and whether there was any wrongdoing.

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## KIRKWOOD

# STATE TO CONSIDER SPEED LIMIT CHANGE



DAVID CARSON, POST-DISPATCH

Traffic moves along Manchester Road on May 28, 2026, in Kirkwood.

## City leaders want safer Manchester Road, but large-scale improvements will be slow

BY SETH NELSON  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

KIRKWOOD — For the 20 years that Libby Eversgerd has lived along Manchester Road, the street has been a magnet for dangerous driving.

She's seen it all: cars careening past at high speeds, drivers ignoring pedestrians and traffic signals, even occasional crashes that have left people injured.

"It's incredibly dangerous," she said. "Pedestrians have been hit. People have died."

The stretch of Manchester Road that runs in front of Eversgerd's Kirkwood home has been at the center of concerns from city leaders for weeks.

Last month, they asked the Missouri Department of Transportation to lower the speed limit along it — the bare minimum, Kirkwood officials said, to clamp down on dangerous driving.

"Just the other day, our police caught somebody going 107 miles an hour down it," Kirkwood Mayor Liz Gibbons said at a City Council meeting last month. "That's just an example of how out of control things are."

And now MoDOT has agreed to launch a speed study.

MoDOT is hoping to eventually make safety improvements along the entire roadway, from Maplewood to Wildwood, MoDOT area engineer Ryan Percy said.

But those projects will need to be piecemeal and deliberate — a "slow-rolling" process, he said.

"I can't just come out and throw medians down," Percy said. "I can't take away access from businesses. It needs to be a cooperation. Everybody needs to have their stakes, their hands in, working together."

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**"It's incredibly dangerous. Pedestrians have been hit. People have died."**

Libby Eversgerd, Kirkwood resident who lives on Manchester Road

## O'Fallon may try apartment ban again

Similar moratorium considered last year

BY ETHAN COLBERT  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

O'FALLON, Mo. — For the second time in less than a year, officials here are poised to debate a temporary ban on building new multi-family housing.

This new push is intended to give city leaders time to "evaluate the long-term impacts of rapid, high-density apartment development" in O'Fallon, said the proposal's sponsor, Ward 3 Councilman Doug Link.

"This proposal is about taking a step back, evaluating where we are and ensuring that future growth strengthens O'Fallon rather than placing additional burdens on our roads, infrastructure, public services, schools and neighborhoods," Link said in a statement.

The proposed moratorium comes against a backdrop of a hotly contested St. Charles County Executive race where concerns about population growth and large-scale apartment complexes have dominated much of the campaign. It also comes days after

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## Thousands of fish killed by spilled wastewater

18,000 organisms dead across 2.2-mile stretch of West Fork Black River

BY JUSTIN DIEP  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

MARYLAND HEIGHTS — The spill from a wastewater treatment plant earlier this month killed thousands of fish, amphibians and more in a tributary of the popular Black River in southern Missouri, state conservation officials said Monday.

Matt Combes, with the Missouri Department of Conservation, said in an email to the Post-Dispatch that over 18,000 aquatic organisms, including more than 17,000 fish, 700 tadpoles and 160 crayfish, died in a 2.2-mile stretch of the West Fork Black River downstream from the Highway KK bridge.

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### Shocking development



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Vol. 148, No. 167 ©2026

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