

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Special Meeting

October 29, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. She noted that attendees are not allowed to disrupt the meeting, which includes talking out of turn or without permission, interrupting or making sounds when someone else is talking, or approaching Councilmembers or City employees who are staffing the meeting. If a person disrupts the meeting, Mayor Robinson will issue a warning, end the person's comment time, or ask the person to leave the room for the rest of the meeting. Ms. Robinson said she expects everyone to be able to express themselves without name-calling, taunting or disparaging others.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Stokes led the flag salute.

(a) Veteran's Day Proclamation

Councilmember Zahn read the proclamation declaring Monday, November 11, 2024 as Veterans Day in Bellevue and urged all residents to reflect on the contributions and sacrifices of those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Rafael Munoz-Cintron, National Executive Committee, American Legion Department of Washington, thanked Councilmember Zahn for her support of the American Legion Post and Auxiliary. He said it is important to remember that veterans are defending us 365 days per year and their heroism often goes unnoticed. He said veterans endure long separations from their families. He said the American Legion serves veterans, their families and the community. He thanked the Council for the proclamation.

3. Approval of Agenda

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days.

- (a) Matt Arnold expressed support for Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's proposed ordinance to bring back mandatory minimum sentences for repeat criminal offenders. He said there has been a significant increase in vehicle prowls, home thefts and other property crimes in the Lochleven neighborhood in recent years. He said his family has experienced five incidents related to their vehicles and he has witnessed repeated shoplifting at QFC and Bartell Drugs. He expressed support for the proposal to conduct research and analysis of mandatory minimum sentences for repeat offenders convicted of multiple crimes.
- (b) Chris Marks, representing People for Climate Action, complimented the City's progress to date through its Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI). She expressed support for expanding the Energy Smart Eastside program, which is focused on replacing gas furnaces with heat pumps.
- (c) Alice Meng, speaking on behalf of the People for Climate Action leadership team, noted that greenhouse gas emissions decreased in 2020 but increased in 2021 and 2022. She said the majority of emissions are generated by transportation and energy usage. She said PCA's request for funding to help single-family homeowners and owners of small multifamily and commercial buildings convert to heat pumps would significantly lower existing building emissions. She said the funding would also improve equity and housing affordability. She expressed concern about the ability to meet emission reduction goals.
- (d) Katherine De Stephano expressed support for mandatory minimum sentences for public disorder crimes, including misdemeanor theft. As a local business owner at Bellevue Square for 24 years, she has experienced theft, and she regularly witnesses theft at local grocery stores. She expressed support for the proposal presented for the Council's consideration [Agenda Item 7(b)].
- (e) Angela Phan thanked the Council for their support of young people across Bellevue. She encouraged additional funding for organizations focused on serving specific populations, such as people with disabilities and those in need of culturally and linguistically specific services. She said additional funding would allow youth and families from all backgrounds to meaningfully engage in the community.

(f) Barbara Braun, representing People for Climate Action, thanked the Council for its continued commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. She said 91 percent of emissions are generated by transportation and buildings. She expressed concern about potential threats from federal and state actions beyond the City's control and spoke to the importance of reliable local funding and support.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager: None.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives

(a) Recommendation regarding Bellevue Library Advisory Board

Councilmember Hamilton, liaison to the Library Advisory Board, recalled that he previously requested the Council's support for allowing staff to spend more than eight hours to analyze the effectiveness and future of the Board. He said staff completed that work, which included engaging directly with members of the Board. At their last meeting, the Board members voted unanimously to recommend the sunset of the Board.

Councilmember Hamilton said that staff, with his concurrence, support sunset of the Board as well. He said library boards have evolved substantially over time and the sunset of the Board would be in line with actions in other jurisdictions within the King County Library System. Mr. Hamilton thanked current and past Board members for helping to ensure that community members in Bellevue are confident in the services and support they receive from libraries. He said with the sunset of the Board, the City can now communicate through the King County Library System's established channels.

Katie Halse, Assistant Director, Intergovernmental Relations, City Manager's Office, said staff is seeking Council direction to prepare the necessary legislation to formally sunset the Bellevue Library Advisory Board.

Ms. Halse said that, prior to 1993, the Bellevue Board of Library Trustees served as an advisory body for all of the libraries in Bellevue. After Bellevue libraries were assumed by the King County Library System, the Bellevue Board of Library Trustees became the Bellevue Library Advisory Board. The Board's charge was to make periodic reports and recommendations to the Council and City Manager, and to conduct studies regarding library buildings, property or equipment. Since that time, many of the Board's duties have been assumed by the King County Library System.

Ms. Halse said that current Board members reviewed a number of nuances and opportunities, including the City and library resources used to support the Board's coordination and communications with the King County Library System, the role of the Library Friends group and the mission and purpose of the Bellevue Library Advisory Board. Following a full review, the Board raised a number of issues, including a lack of consistent purpose to develop a substantial work plan and the redundancy of the Board's role with the library system's responsibilities.

Ms. Halse said a number of library advisory boards have been sunsetted including in Shoreline, Renton, Issaquah, Mercer Island, Snoqualmie and Bothell. The Bellevue Library Advisory Board voted unanimously on October 2 to sunset the Board.

Ms. Halse said the current Board recommended establishing a strong liaison program between the City and the King County Library System and ensuring that an annual report is provided to the City Council.

David Frappier, Bellevue Regional Manager, King County Library System, expressed support for maintaining a liaison relationship with the City. He said this approach matches the relationship with other cities that have eliminated their library advisory boards. He said the library system is well positioned to take on the liaison role. He said they are committed to involving the community when designing programs, services and the library's collections to ensure that underserved members of the community will have a voice in the operation of the libraries.

Mr. Frappier said members of the public are invited to provide comment to the library system's Board of Trustees, including at its meetings. He said the Friends of the Bellevue Libraries group and the Newport Way Library Association will continue to be involved and provide financial support to ensure that programs are tailored to the needs of the community. He said there are a number of volunteer opportunities in local libraries.

Ms. Halse said staff concurs with the Bellevue Library Advisory Board's recommendation to sunset the Board, effective the end of 2024. She said Helena Stephens, Intergovernmental Relations Policy Advisor, will serve as the liaison to the library system.

Mayor Robinson thanked Councilmember Hamilton for his work with the Board and for bringing this issue to the Council.

Councilmember Lee, a former liaison to the Bellevue Library Advisory Board, concurred with the recommendation to sunset the Board, noting that it appears to no longer be necessary. He said it is important for the Bellevue community to maintain communications with the King County Library System. He complimented the talent and dedication of current and past Board members.

Councilmember Zahn expressed her support for the recommendation. She asked whether youth are eligible to serve on the King County Library System's Board of Trustees. Mr. Frappier said no, but the library system does have its Teen Volunteer Council, which is one of their most active entities in Bellevue. The volunteers provide advice on library services and programs and actively create new programs.

Mayor Robinson suggested bringing Council action back on a future consent calendar. She would like to invite the Board to a Council meeting for a commendation before taking that action.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct staff to prepare the necessary legislation to sunset the Bellevue Library Advisory Board, for Council action on a future consent calendar. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(b) Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Public Disorder Crimes

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis requested Council support to have staff conduct the necessary research and analysis, beyond the eight-hour limitation, and if appropriate, bring back options for implementing mandatory minimum sentences for public disorder crimes (e.g., theft, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, vehicle prowling, drug-related crimes and assault) for the Council's consideration. He thanked the speakers during oral communications for their comments and support of his proposal. He thanked the Washington Retail Association, Bellevue Police Foundation, and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce for expressing their support as well. He thanked Chief of Police Wendell Shirley and Acting City Attorney Trisna Tanus for their guidance.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the City's Prosecution Division prosecutes misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor crimes committed in Bellevue. He said there are currently no mandatory minimum penalties for public disorder crimes. He said his interest in the issue stems largely from concerns about retail theft. After discussions with law enforcement, prosecutors and others, it is clear the issue warrants the Council's attention. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he frequently witnesses shoplifting in local grocery stores and has learned that many of the incidents are committed by repeat violators. He said many of the habitual offenders are tied to organized retail crime rings, which sell stolen property to support other criminal activity, including assault and car prowling. He said reducing retail theft will improve overall public safety in the community. He said significant retail theft has led to higher costs for businesses, increased prices for consumers, potential dangers for Bellevue workers and a diminished sense of security in the community. He noted the importance of establishing consistent consequences for public disorder crimes.

To fully explore a mandatory minimum sentencing ordinance, City staff will need to review data on public disorder crimes, current sentences and the success of similar ordinances in other cities (e.g., Everett, Marysville). Those jurisdictions adopted ordinances to impose a minimum sentence of 30 days for repeat offenders. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said current, planned and proposed programs, such as the program established through Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the King County Community Court, drug diversions and the City's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan should be reviewed for coordination and alignment.

Mayor Robinson clarified that the issue before the Council is whether to direct staff to conduct an analysis and to allow staff work beyond the eight-hour limitation on proposed Council initiatives. She asked that the motion request a recommendation from staff as a result of their study and analysis.

Councilmember Zahn said we all want to be safe and it is important to understand what is going on in the community. She asked whether public disorder is defined in the code. Ms. Tanus said

there is not currently a definition of public disorder crimes in the code. She said the cities of Everett and Marysville defined the crimes that fall under that category in their ordinances.

Councilmember Zahn asked whether staff will study jurisdictions only within Washington state. She concurred with Councilmember Nieuwenhuis that staff's study should include a review of coordination and alignment with existing programs. She expressed an interest in the financial implications for the City if mandatory minimum sentences are implemented.

Councilmember Lee said the proposal resonates with many members of the community. He expressed support for research and analysis by staff to advise the Council. He said he has witnessed shoplifting and heard concerns from residents and businesses since the pandemic.

Councilmember Stokes spoke in favor of studying the proposal. He looks forward to learning more and considering options. He cautioned that mandatory minimum sentences affect people's lives and he wants to ensure that any enforcement is actually effective.

Councilmember Hamilton said he appreciated Councilmember Nieuwenhuis' proposal. He said data and input from the public and law enforcement experts will help to reach the best solution.

Mayor Robinson said the goal is to reduce crime and she supports the proposal to learn more about measures that will help do so. She said she recently received a call from Senator Maria Cantwell asking why, when crime is increasing in every city around Bellevue, Bellevue's crime statistics are decreasing. She said she supports the request, especially to address retail theft.

→ Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to direct staff to conduct the necessary research and analysis beyond the eight-hour limitation and, if appropriate, bring back options and recommendations for repeat offenders of public disorder crimes, including mandatory minimum sentences, for the Council's consideration. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Ordinance No. 6812 authorizing execution of an Agreement with the Department of Commerce to accept \$1,500,000 in grant funding from the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) Program for Energy Smart Eastside to implement heat pump incentives for adult family homes; and authorizing expenditures of said grant funds contingent on an appropriation increase of

\$1,500,000 in the Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserve Fund through City Council approval of the 2025-2026 proposed budget.

- (b) Resolution No. 10427 authorizing reallocation of funding from Plymouth Housing Kenmore Supportive Housing Project to Plymouth Housing Redmond Supportive Housing Project and authorizing Administering Agency for ARCH to execute all documents necessary for funding the Redmond Supportive Housing Project with updated funding conditions as recommended by the ARCH Executive Board.

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Study Session Items

- (a) 2026-2030 Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan Update Launch

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson introduced discussion regarding the approach and scope for the Sustainable Bellevue Plan Update and progress to date under the 2021-2025 plan.

Thara Johnson, Acting Planning Director, Community Development Department, said staff is requesting Council direction to initiate the update to the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan for 2026-2030. She recalled that the Council adopted the current plan in December 2020.

Jennifer Ewing, Sustainability Manager, provided a brief update on the status of the implementation of the 2021-2025 plan. She said the City has made significant progress on 85 percent of the actions in the plan. Some of the work is ongoing, and some of the actions have been incorporated into ongoing operations and procedures.

Referring to community actions, Ms. Ewing said the Tree Code was updated earlier this year with extensive community involvement. There has been significant progress with the Energy Smart Eastside program that provides incentives for installing heat pumps. She noted efforts to address commercial energy efficiency. She said the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update expanded the Environment Element and renamed it the Climate and Environment Element. She said staffing and funding for the sustainability program was increased over the past year.

For municipal operations actions, the biggest focus is on making buildings more energy efficient and converting the City's fleet to electric vehicles. Ms. Ewing said the Bellevue Service Center will receive retrofits to bring the facility into compliance with the Clean Buildings standard and to provide electric vehicle infrastructure. She said the City is purchasing renewable energy for approximately 70 percent of its energy use through a special program with Puget Sound Energy (PSE).

Ms. Ewing highlighted the timeline for updating the Sustainable Bellevue plan over the next year. Phase 1 work through early next year will update the goals and priorities. Phase 2 work from late winter/early spring through fall 2025 will review progress on actions, update strategies

and actions, and analyze the impact and costs of actions. The draft plan will be finalized and subject to public review before the Council adopts the updated plan by November 2025.

Ms. Ewing described the scope of the plan update: 1) implement new Comprehensive Plan policies, 2) update goals and targets, 3) update greenhouse gas emissions inventory and wedge analysis, 4) develop strategies to achieve 2030 goals, 5) refresh actions and add new actions, and 6) address climate resilience and decarbonization. New topics to consider include fleet medium and heavy duty vehicles, electric landscaping equipment, water conservation, innovative technologies, green economy, funding sources, and climate and sustainability issues related to budgeting, purchasing and capital projects.

Ms. Ewing said the community engagement approach will conduct targeted outreach to business, development and institutional stakeholders and to underrepresented community members. Broad engagement of the community will include surveys, town hall meetings and information distributed at tabling events.

Ms. Ewing requested Council direction to proceed with the update to the Sustainable Bellevue plan.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for the presentation. He asked about the ultimate goal of the plan. Ms. Ewing said the goal is to identify the actions to work on over the next five years to achieve the emissions targets. She said staff would return in February with the next update.

Responding to Mr. Malakoutian, Ms. Ewing said the 2022 report contains information on the performance metrics. She said the 2023 report has not yet been completed.

Mr. Malakoutian commended staff for completing numerous actions under the current plan. However, he questioned whether there is a clear correlation between the actions and achieving the ultimate goal. Ms. Ewing said the impact of certain actions might become more apparent over time. Ms. Johnson said phase 1 involves establishing priorities based on an analysis to determine which actions made the most progress. She said new actions might be needed to achieve the targets.

Mayor Robinson referred to meeting packet materials indicating that the City organization has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 90 percent.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian expressed concern about the ability to meet the 2030 community emissions goals. He suggested that a budget proposal should be submitted to the Council if staff believes that more resources are needed to achieve the goals.

Mr. Malakoutian asked staff to comment on lessons learned over the past few years that will be incorporated into the plan update.

Mayor Robinson said one issue is how the emissions are measured, which is not by taking air samples and measuring the level of carbons. Ms. Ewing said the City follows the national standards for how cities should report on greenhouse gas emissions. She said the analysis focuses

on vehicle trips and the energy used in homes and businesses. Ms. Ewing said approximately nine percent of Bellevue cars are electric vehicles. She confirmed that the metrics are calculated through a model rather than through air samples.

Councilmember Zahn noted the goal to reduce emissions by 50 percent by 2030. She said the budget should align with the required actions over the next five years. She spoke in favor of converting to electric landscaping equipment. She expressed support for exploring new options in medium and heavy-duty electric vehicles. Ms. Zahn asked whether King County shares its data with the City. She encouraged staff to pursue federal grants for resiliency planning. She said the City of Portland has been incentivizing low-carbon concrete. She encouraged outreach to youth through the community engagement process. Ms. Zahn expressed support for moving forward to update the plan.

Councilmember Hamilton said he is pleased with the progress in implementing the Environmental Stewardship Plan, especially related to municipal operations goals. He noted a statement in the agenda memo that “community wide emissions are not on track to achieve the 2030 goal of a 50 percent greenhouse gas emissions reduction.” He asked whether the analysis will include looking at how to get back on track to achieve the 2030 goals. Ms. Ewing said yes, the focus will be on identifying specific actions that will achieve the goals.

Mr. Hamilton asked whether it would be possible to achieve 2050 goals if Bellevue misses the 2030 goals. Ms. Ewing said she believes it would still be achievable. In further response, she said it is difficult to predict costs related to actions due to the dynamic nature of electric vehicles and other technologies. Mr. Hamilton said it would be helpful to see a list of projects and needed resources beyond the preliminary budget. He said it is good to have challenging but achievable goals. He thanked staff for all of their efforts.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said more data is needed for him to make decisions on actions and issues. He expressed support for water conservation and electric landscaping equipment but questioned the level of the impact on reducing emissions. He said he looks forward to a more detailed update on the 2023 and 2024 performance metrics in the future.

Ms. Ewing said staff’s current request is for Council direction to initiate the process to update the Sustainable Bellevue plan.

Councilmember Stokes said it will be good to determine the effectiveness of different actions. He asked whether there is adequate staffing to implement the plan through 2030. He expressed support for moving forward to update the plan and thanked staff for their work.

Councilmember Lee said there are many variables that affect greenhouse gas emissions, which makes it challenging to reduce them. He said this issue affects our future and he acknowledged the broad community interest in environmental stewardship. He suggested forming a commission of citizens, activists, technology experts and others to advise on climate-related issues. Mayor Robinson suggested discussing the idea at the next Council retreat.

Mayor Robinson said that when the City measures its greenhouse gas emissions, much of it is based on the type of fuel/energy. However, the City relies on an electric utility that is not using a clean energy source, which lowers the score. She asked how the use of a clean energy source might affect reaching the 2030 reduction goal.

Ms. Ewing said the Washington state Clean Energy Transformation Act requires utilities to transition to 80 percent renewable energy in 2030 and 100 percent renewable energy by 2045. If Puget Sound Energy (PSE) reaches those goals, the City will be very close to meeting its own goals.

Mayor Robinson asked whether staff could consider hydrogen cell fuel for municipal vehicles. She said there is a town in South Korea fully fueled by hydrogen energy.

- Councilmember Stokes moved to direct staff to initiate the update to the Sustainable Bellevue Environmental Stewardship Plan for the next five-year period, 2026-2030. Councilmember Zahn seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 7:55 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:11 p.m.

- (b) 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget Deliberations Summary - An overview of the ongoing process in advance of final Council Discussions

Acting City Manager Carlson noted the Council's ongoing discussions over several meetings regarding the 2025-2026 preliminary budget.

John Resha, Chief Financial Officer, said the final budget public hearing will be held on November 12 and Council adoption of the budget is anticipated on November 19.

The budget action includes adoption of a number of ordinances related to Development Services fees, Utilities rates, Water Works Financial Policy Sunset Resolution, the award of human services grants, banked property tax capacity, property tax levy and the overall umbrella ordinance.

Mr. Resha presented information regarding the preliminary budget revenues: General Fund (48%), Utility Funds (38%), General Capital Investment Program (CIP) Fund (9%) and other minor sources. He said tax revenues are currently in a dip due to broader economic conditions. The City hopes to see growth in tax revenues in 2025 and 2026.

Budget expenditures total \$1.75 billion, with \$792 million occurring in the General Fund, \$497 million in Utilities Enterprise Funds, \$315 million in General Capital and Equipment Rental Funds, \$94 million in other funds, and \$60 million toward debt services.

Mr. Resha said the budget expenditures are organized around the strategic target areas as follows: Community Safety and Health (32%), High-Performance Government (18%), High-

Quality Built and Natural Environment (16%), Safe and Efficient Transportation System (11%), Thriving People and Communities (6%), Vibrant Economy (2%) and debt service, interfunds and reserves (15%).

Evan Phillips, Financial Strategy and Performance Director, highlighted memory bank items and themes that have been raised throughout several discussions with the Council. In the area of High-Performance Government, issues include the strategic use of City resources to plan for growth and capital investments, enhancing public access to City Hall, discussion of financial transparency, innovation and artificial intelligence (AI), and regional partnerships.

Issues and priorities raised under the Vibrant Economy strategic target area include small business support and permit streamlining, support for community events, attracting and retaining businesses, updating the Economic Development Plan and planning for the upcoming FIFA tournament in 2026. Under the Safe and Efficient Transportation System area, issues and priorities include Vision Zero investments, curbside management plan, capital project management, ongoing maintenance investments and continued expansion of multimodal transportation facilities.

Mr. Phillips said the High-Quality Built and Natural Environment strategic target area issues include development activity, permit streamlining, school impact fees, affordable housing incentives, Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) investments, growth and demands on City infrastructure and utility rate relief. Thriving People and Communities issues and priorities include the cross-cultural center site analysis, alternatives to human services funding, arts funding, update to the Diversity Action Plan, housing stability and homelessness, continued use of the budget equity toolkit, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) investments.

Issues raised regarding the Community Safety and Health strategic target area include discussion of specific public safety units (e.g., water rescue, Police bike patrol, Bellevue Light Rail Unit (BLU) and school resource officers), attracting and retaining police officers, public safety support for large events, fire levy investments, outreach to diverse communities regarding emergency preparedness and utilities rates and investments.

Mr. Resha said the Council priorities and suggestions from the retreat early in the year guided staff's preparation of the budget. He recalled that the issue of using the Council Contingency Fund for one-time investments has been raised. He said staff has heard the following mutual interests expressed by Councilmembers: 1) additional investments in the arts, economic development and small businesses, including an emphasis on the activation of public spaces for events, 2) ways to advance the multimodal transportation system priorities, 3) advancing the achievement of Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) goals, 4) additional investment in human services, especially for rental assistance and youth services, and 5) expanding access to City Hall for public events.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation. She said when she sees only two percent of the budget for the Vibrant Economy strategic target area, she feels like the City is accomplishing a lot considering the budget. She encouraged expanded support for small businesses. Mayor

Robinson said she would like to consider, during the mid-biennium budget update next year, how to increase funding to provide more small business support.

Mayor Robinson asked about the number of starts in construction permits. Mr. Phillips said not quite yet. He said the City is seeing more smaller than larger project permits. He said a decrease in the interest rate could have a significant impact on stimulating development activity.

Councilmember Hamilton said the budget strategically makes impactful investments. He expressed support for considering the use of the Council Contingency Fund. He said it is important to remember that we cannot do anything unless we are operating from a stable foundation. He observed that the budget ensures continued financial stability.

Councilmember Zahn acknowledged that the community's needs exceed available funding, which will require a Council discussion of tradeoffs. She said the budget reflects themes of a thriving community, engagement and placemaking. She said she appreciates the reserve levels maintained by the City. She expressed support for considering uses for the Council Contingency Fund. She suggested piloting programs with the business community such as Small Business Saturdays and adding mobility and arts events at City Hall.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff for their work. Referring to the Safe and Efficient Transportation System strategic target area, he asked about the meaning of advancing the multimodal system to update overall mobility priorities. Mr. Resha said there have been different comments from Councilmembers and discussion around multimodal plans and how to accelerate the delivery of projects. He said staff heard some interest in advancing specific types of multimodal projects. He said staff analyzed which projects could be done quickly within the scope of available dollars.

Mayor Robinson asked everyone to consider increasing support for the Bellevue Farmers Market. She said they have requested only \$7,000 and she encouraged her colleagues' support.

Councilmember Stokes said all the priorities are important and it is difficult to choose favorites. Under Vibrant Economy, he would like to see increased investments in the arts and an emphasis on the activation of public spaces, including City Hall. He noted the importance of Community Safety and Health priorities. He expressed support for the human services priorities under the Thriving People and Communities strategic target area.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for tracking and responding regarding the memory bank items. He expressed support for the strategic target area investments and for contributing \$7,000 to the Bellevue Farmers Market. Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested that some of the budget items sound aspirational or that they should have been already included in the budget based on the priorities of the strategic target area. He cautioned the use of the Council Contingency Fund and said he felt that discussion of the topic should have been addressed earlier in the budget process. Regarding the priority of expanding community events, he wants to make sure they are affordable and accessible to everyone. He thanked staff for capturing the Council's interests in the budget.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis noted his ongoing interest in a third party, independent electrical study, which he feels is vital for growth planning and emergency preparedness. He said the Pacific Northwest Utilities Conference Committee forecasts that the region will need 30 percent more electricity this decade to meet expected demand. He said that is the highest level of growth in 40 years. He noted the increasing demand due to housing development, electric vehicle usage, public infrastructure energy usage, AI machine learning and the use of electronic devices. He expressed concern about having adequate electrical capacity to support growth.

Mayor Robinson asked whether the Council could request a third party, independent study on energy demand.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he thought that was half of the equation. The other factor is what the City will do to prepare for meeting the demand.

Mr. Resha said that when the City has conducted a study in the past, it was considered an oversight review of Puget Sound Energy's work to validate their approach. He said it sounded like Councilmember Nieuwenhuis had additional interests as well, however. Mr. Resha said he believed there is a way to address the issues without a full-blown, lengthy study. He said the review would involve a review of PSE's information with an interest in identifying opportunities and energy needs in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Robinson suggested that when the Council and staff discuss options for the use of the Council Contingency Fund, staff recommend specific line items with a measurable outcome. He said staff will bring back a specific list of investment options for Council consideration.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked his colleagues to support making Battalion 102 whole, from both a public safety perspective and financial perspective. He said the City is paying overtime to compensate for not having the battalion fully staffed and funded, which is not the most efficient use of dollars.

Mayor Robinson suggested asking staff to comment on whether that should be part of the mid-biennium budget discussion as an ongoing item versus a one-time expense using the Council Contingency Fund. Mr. Resha said staff is actively investigating this issue with the Fire Department and Human Resources Department. He said it is a mandatory subject of collective bargaining that is currently under discussion. Depending on the outcome of the negotiations, the City could require additional resources to fully staff the battalion.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed concern regarding the cost of establishing the Office of Housing. He asked how the office will function effectively when the City has had strong success working with A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) and other partners. He expressed concern that the administrative expenditures will increase when he would rather see more funding for actually creating affordable housing.

Mayor Robinson noted that she initiated the idea of creating the Office of Housing. She said the City owns a number of surplus properties that could potentially be developed into affordable housing. She said the intent of the Office of Housing is to address the use of those properties.

Acting City Manager Carlson said the City will continue to work closely with ARCH to implement affordable housing. She said the Office of Housing is anticipated to use existing staff and an existing open position to lead the staff. She said the intent for creating the office is to allow the City to advance housing projects on City-owned properties, faith-based properties and other public properties more quickly.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said the approach seems to be a significant departure from how the City has worked in the past with a partner or vendor with a track record in service delivery. Ms. Carlson said the City is not proposing to be a developer and will continue to work with nonprofit developers for the construction of projects.

Councilmember Lee said ARCH is a regional organization while the Office of Housing will specifically address Bellevue projects. Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Carlson said ARCH typically works with developers and nonprofit organizations and the City provides staffing support to ARCH.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Carlson said there are three City-owned properties currently under consideration for housing projects, out of five potential properties currently identified.

Councilmember Lee expressed an interest in the specific properties. Regarding the Office of Housing, he questioned the need for a new division if it will be using the same staff. Ms. Carlson said staff proposes using the Office of Housing to focus on City-owned and other properties to advance projects more quickly.

Mr. Lee said he wanted to highlight certain memory bank items and questions. He said he believed that the police use of technology is important. He suggested that more can be done to explore ways to make policing more efficient and effective and safer.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Resha said Fire Station 10 is slated and funded for completion in 2025. He said there was a delay due to the availability of steel.

Councilmember Lee recalled his past suggestion to explore autonomous connected electric shared vehicles. Staff confirmed that the technology is included in the smart mobility program.

Mr. Lee expressed support for an enhanced emphasis on small businesses. He opined that tourism is not a very good economic development tool. He said if the economy is good, tourists will come. He encouraged an enhanced focus on business retention and recruitment. He expressed support for creating a separate economic development department.

Mayor Robinson suggested discussing the latter idea during the mid-biennium budget process. She disagreed about tourism and noted its positive effect on economic development.

Councilmember Lee said he raised the above issues earlier in the budget process. City Manager Carlson said staff will follow up with him to clarify his interests and questions.

Mr. Lee referred to high-performance government objectives and suggested that more resources be provided to support the Council. He noted that he previously submitted a proposal.

Mayor Robinson recalled that Mr. Lee proposed additional staffing for each individual Councilmember at a cost of \$200,000 per position. Mr. Lee revised his request to ask for financial resources to enable City Councilmembers to be more effective and efficient.

Mayor Robinson noted general Council support for discussing Mr. Lee's proposal at the Council retreat early next year.

11. Land Use Reports: None.
12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions and Motions: None.
13. Written Reports: None.
14. Unfinished Business: None.
15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.
17. Adjournment

Mayor Robinson noted that the November 5 meeting was cancelled. The next council meeting will be November 12.

At 9:16 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw