

**SUMMARY MINUTES  
COMMUNITY BUDGET HEARING  
COMMUNITY-WIDE VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
APRIL 5, 2025 at 10:30 AM**

Deputy City Manager Alan Stephenson opened the meeting at 10:37 a.m. and introduced Spanish-language interpreter Mario Barajas.

Mr. Barajas welcomed attendees and explained he and Elsie Duarte would be assisting with Spanish-language interpretation. He then provided instructions in Spanish for residents requiring Spanish to English interpretation.

Mr. Stephenson explained the importance of incorporating feedback from the community, listed important upcoming dates, as well as where to find additional information about the budget process in both English and Spanish.

A short video on the proposed Trial Budget was played in English and then in Spanish.

Mr. Stephenson introduced Councilwoman Kesha Hodge Washington who spoke about the importance of community input in the budget process.

Mr. Stephenson opened the floor for public comment:

1. Salvador Camacho expressed his appreciation to the City for making Public Safety a priority, and his gratitude for the approval of the increased Transaction Privilege and Use Tax (TPT). He spoke in favor of increased funding for the Fire Department, noting the critical need to reduce response times.
2. Andrea Luna spoke in favor of identifying permanent funding in the City's General Fund to support the right to counsel to assist people who are facing eviction. She noted the importance of investing in preventative efforts and how investing in the right to counsel saves other City service dollars. She stated that multiple other cities across the nation provide legal assistance to those facing housing issues and requested Phoenix also provide these services.
3. Raj Arora spoke in favor of funding to support the right to counsel and for education for individuals facing eviction. He noted the success of the pilot program and the need for more resources for tenants.
4. Tony Canelo began his statement by reciting several inalienable rights and Miranda rights, noting an individual's right to an attorney. He spoke in favor of increased funding for the right to counsel, and the need for legal support and fair representation for tenants facing eviction.
5. Astrid Balzer spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel, describing the negative impact an eviction had on a friend of hers and others she knows.

6. Isaac Sundin spoke in favor of funding to implement a right to counsel ordinance in Phoenix, noting how eviction rates are increasing each year and how difficult it is to get back on your feet after being evicted
7. Catherine Wilkins spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel, noting that people of all ages are affected by evictions. She described being subjected to a large rent increase and feeling bullied out of her rental, stating how having access to legal guidance during that time would have been helpful.
8. Yovanda Wilkins spoke in favor of funding to implement a right to counsel ordinance. She described her mother's eviction and the negative impact it had on so many aspects of her mother's life. She also stressed how keeping people in their homes decreases the strain on public services.
9. David Shepard expressed concern about the discrepancy between legal representation for landlords compared with tenants and spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel for individuals facing eviction.
10. Nancy Damone described her disabled sister's challenges with paying rent and being able to remain in her apartment. She also described how homelessness creates disfunction in society and urged the City to allocate funding to support the right to counsel.
11. Teena Jibilian expressed how homelessness is not a policing problem but rather a housing problem. She urged the City to allocate funding to support a full right to counsel program for its residents, stating the current tenant eviction assistance project doesn't go far enough.
12. Darren Jezick discussed the increased number of evictions and spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel. He stated increased funding should be allocated to helping homeless individuals rather than the Police Department.
13. Nathan Hatch noted the record high number of evictions and how there is a large discrepancy between landlords who have legal representation versus tenants who do. He noted how other cities in the nation provide their residents with the right to counsel and described savings identified in those cities. He spoke in favor of the City of Phoenix allocating funding to provide legal services to tenants.
14. Charlie Gentry discussed the need for permanent funding to support tenants' rights to counsel. He described how important funding is to stop tenants from being bullied and evicted, and asked the City Council to help protect them.
15. Akshara Sundararajan stated everyone should have the right to affordable housing and provided statistics on the high number of eviction filings in Maricopa County. She emphasized every resident of Phoenix matters and how important it is for everyone to have the right to counsel.

16. Miesha Fish spoke in favor of allocating permanent annual funding for community services and for the right to counsel. She described the challenges she faced after being evicted.
17. Elizabeth Faiella described her history as a homeowner to then become homeless. She stated having access to legal guidance would have been helpful and she requested funding be allocated to support the right to counsel.
18. Orla Bobo submitted a comment in favor of increasing funding for public safety.
19. Susan Connelly spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel to prevent unfair evictions.
20. Juniper Brafford described the importance of having basic needs met and spoke in favor of funding to assist those facing homelessness including funding for the right to counsel.
21. Nora McNery spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel for renters, described the negative impact of being evicted, and noted the importance of keeping people in their homes.
22. Carmen Terrell articulated how important it is to provide funding for the right to counsel for tenants, for subsidized housing, and for supporting the Fire Department, Water Services, and other critical services.
23. Frank Urban expressed frustration over experiences he had as a homeless individual. He felt City staff did not provide adequate notice before being told to move locations, and as a result his items were unfairly removed, destroyed, or lost.
24. Barbara Jones spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel, noting the large number of pages in rental leases and the need for legal guidance and a better understanding of tenants' rights before signing.
25. Faith Kearns described the negative experiences she encountered with Phoenix Police as a homeless person. She spoke in favor of continued funding for shelters and heat relief centers.
26. Noelle Lewis spoke in favor of funding for legal representation for those facing eviction.
27. Evelynne Castillo spoke in favor of the City adding permanent funding for the right to counsel for tenants facing eviction and stated the City's current eviction assistance program needs to be expanded.
28. Anne Ender spoke in favor of funding for the Fire Department, felt the TPT increase was acceptable, and stressed the importance of making public safety a priority.

29. Elizabeth Venable stated she was happy with many of the City's funding allocations this year, including the amount allocated towards keeping shelter facilities open. She requested continued improvements in the quality and accessibility of shelters.
30. Papy Idrissa described his experiences as a homeless individual. He asked the City to provide funding to help people like him.
31. Daniel Musafiri described his experiences as a homeless individual. He spoke in favor of funding to support the homeless.
32. Gregoire Mpakani described coming from Democratic Republic of the Congo to Arizona as a refugee but then had a medical issue which resulted in his inability to pay rent then becoming evicted. He noted how rent amounts keep increasing and requested funding to help the homeless.
33. Samuel Wathaiya stated homeless people aren't homeless by choice and emphasized they are not criminals. He asked police to focus on fighting crime, not on ticketing the homeless.
34. Will Greene spoke in favor of funding the capital improvement plan program, specifically the street transportation and drainage sections, including HAWK pedestrian crossings.
35. Dany Tanga stated he was homeless due to eviction and asked for funding to help the homeless who are struggling with housing issues and evictions.
36. Michelle Ashton stressed the need to increase awareness of the City's eviction assistance program.
37. Sterling Sourk spoke in favor of funding for street transportation and drainage, as well as funding for more trees, Option E, Vision Zero, more HAWK crosswalks, the extension of the 3rd Street bike lane, and more bike lanes in Phoenix, with the goal of increased transportation diversity.
38. Melinda Riddle described how she often bikes to work, and she spoke in favor of funding for the extension of the 3rd Street bike lane, as well as for the McDowell Rd Enhanced Option E.
39. Victor Montoya provided an example of a law office that represented landlords who illegally evicted tenants and spoke in favor of funding for the right to counsel for tenants.
40. Karina Ramirez stated having the right to counsel would be an invaluable resource to help keep people housed.
41. Nicole Rodriguez stated she supports funding for the right to counsel, Enhanced Option E for McDowell Rd more HAWK crossings throughout the City, free public transportation, and affordable housing.

42. Mary Gibbons recommended providing information on tenants' rights to all renters, access to online attorney services, counseling, education, and other supportive services to help prevent evictions.
43. Adelaida Westbrook submitted a comment in favor of funding for the right to counsel and legal assistance for individuals facing housing-related issues.
44. Nancy Palmer registered to speak submitted a comment in favor of funding for the right to counsel and legal assistance for individuals facing housing-related issues.
45. Deborah Dillihant registered to speak in favor of funding for the right to counsel and legal assistance for individuals facing housing-related issues.

Councilwoman Hodge Washington thanked the public for their attendance and engagement. She described how she has attended eviction court proceedings and seen the imbalance in power. She also informed attendees City staff were onsite and able to meet with them, including staff from the Office of Homeless Solutions, Human Services, Neighborhood Services, and Housing.

Mr. Stephenson concluded the meeting at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Kontak  
Budget and Research Analyst