## Brunswick begins FY2026 with \$10.4M operating budget

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The City of Brunswick's of \$10.4 million operating budget for fiscal year 2026 was approved, representing a nearly \$800,000 increase over last year's operating budget.

The city's fiscal year 2025 operating budget was \$9.6 million.

In April, the Brunswick mayor and City Council added a system improvement fee assessment of \$50 per year beginning in fiscal year 2026. They also voted to keep the property tax rate the same at 41 cents for every \$100 of assessed value.

Carrie Myers, the director of finance and administration for Brunswick, said in an interview on Wednesday that the city's revenue has increased from grants and real estate tax assessments.

She said the increased expenses go toward paying their employees and everyday expenses, of which she said prices have been rising.

"The more revenue we have, the more expenses we need to The Brunswick mayor and City Council at a meeting in May. show for it," Myers said.

The Brunswick mayor and City Council unanimously voted in May to approve both the operating and enterprise budgets.

The enterprise operating fund for water fiscal year 2026 is \$4.9 million, and the capital en-



Staff file photo by Esther Frances

terprise fund for water is \$3.02 million.

enterprise operating The fund for wastewater is \$4.5 million, and the capital enterprise fund for wastewater is \$2.4 mil-

The \$50 system improvement fee assessment is split based on several projects: \$25 for the sidewalk programs, \$15 for wa-

ter and \$10 for sewer. Residents of Rosemont and

Fiscal year 2026 began on July 1. Knoxyille who use Brunswick's water system will pay \$15 per

Myers said the fee is to replace revenue from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

ARPA was signed into law in 2021 as COVID relief funds. The deadline to commit ARPA funding to projects was Dec. 31, 2024.

Without those funds, Myers said, the city believed it would be a good time to implement the system improvement fee assess-

She said the revenue from the fee will be put into a fund to use for large-scale projects.

At the April meeting where the fee was first implemented, Mayor Nathan Brown said the city had used ARPA funding for projects since 2021, and "we felt that this was a good year to begin the fee."

Myers said Brunswick tries to be "pretty consistent with our budgeting, so there are really no big surprises in there this year."

At the May 27 meeting, when the budget was approved, city administrator Julie Martorana said that while increased revenue is a good thing for the city, Brunswick must use it responsi-

"We don't want to do that at the cost of taxpayers, where we're increasing property taxes or water and sewer revenue or something like that," she said. We need to be able to show the justification and have the ex-, pense alongside it."

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