

# Holyoke trims about \$45,000 from 2027 budget, passes plan 10-2

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HOLYOKE — During a special meeting Tuesday, ahead of its summer recess, the Holyoke City Council approved an amended \$213 million operating budget for fiscal 2027 in a 10-2 vote.

Councilors Michael Sullivan and Linda Vacon voted against the spending plan, which represents an \$8.97 million, or 4.4%, increase over the current fiscal year.

The council made roughly \$45,000 in cuts before final passage, largely by eliminating unfilled positions across three departments.

City officials said the increase was driven by rising fixed costs, including education, transportation, health insurance and pension obligations. They aimed to preserve city services without major tax hikes or service reductions.

In a letter issued ahead of the meeting, Mayor Joshua Garcia said the budget reflects “unavoidable obligated cost pressures,” including a 3.86% increase in the city’s share of education funding, 5% growth in transportation costs, an 8% rise in health insurance and a 4.14% increase in retirement contributions.

Garcia noted that property taxes account for only part of the budget, with about \$73 million coming from the tax levy.

The remainder is funded through a mix of state and local revenue, including about \$126.8 million in state aid, \$3.55 million in motor vehicle excise taxes and smaller amounts from meals taxes, hotel taxes, payments in lieu of taxes, and other fees.