CITY OF JOPLIN
COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ITEM:
Council Bill No. 2025-014 – AN ORDINANCE amending the criminal code of the City of Joplin Chapter 82 – Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions, Article V. - Offenses Against Health and Safety, by enacting a new section prohibiting the offense of criminal mischief; and establishing a time for this ordinance to become effective.

MEETING DATE
November 17, 2025

ATTACHMENTS
Council Bill No. 2025-013

REVIEWED BY
City Attorney Peter Edwards; Chief of Police Richard Pearson; and City Manager Nicholas Edwards.

SUMMARY
This council bill imposes a penalty punishable by section 1-5 of Chapter 82, for any person unlawfully occupying a residential structure that is property of another.

BACKGROUND
This ordinance adopts Revised Statute of Missouri 569.200, effective August 28, 2024, and modeled after Florida's "anti-squatter" law. The ordinance recognizes that vacant structure fires accounted 61% of fires in the city in 2023 and 44% of fires in 2024. This ordinance is designed to address the unlawful occupation effectively with the goal of improving health and safety in the community.

FUNDING SOURCE
N/A

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends this Council Bill be approved on First Reading.