



City of Lawton

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, OK 73501

Highland Cemetery Board

Minutes

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

2:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room -
Lawton City Hall

"Official action can be taken only on items which appear on the agenda. The Commission may adopt, approve, ratify, deny, defer, recommend, or continue any agenda item. The Commission may also propose and enact floor amendments to any matter presented before them. When more information is needed to act on an item, the Commission may refer the matter to City Staff. Under certain circumstances, items are deferred to a specific later date or stricken from the agenda entirely."

Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call

Reports

1.

- Parks & Recreation Staff

Kelvin Ingram is introduced as the new Parks and Recreation deputy director

- Discuss buying back cemetery spaces

Donald Kousman states that he has obtained a rough draft affidavit from the City Clerk's office with regard to buying back cemetery plots. He states that it may be helpful to advertise it to the public for 1-3 months and allow families to come forward to either relinquish the plots, or possibly sell them back to the City. This would allow us to open up space availability for the future.

Barry Beauchamp asks if there is any criteria for a plot to be considered abandoned.

DK states that it's 50-60 years before it's considered abandoned. The question is what defines abandoned. No burials? No visitors? No flowers?

Kelvin Ingram states that those would likely be legal questions.

BB asks if this is all done thought the Sexton (Donald Kousman), or who

would do this?

DK states that it would be a team effort due to the number of moving parts.

DK states that one example of this is individuals who are disinterred from Highland and moved to other cemeteries. Those plots are still owned by that family.

Duece Gragg states that the city would have to buy them back for the rate at the time of purchase.

DK states that we have done this before, but now we are getting so many more calls that I'm denying it due to needing a standard process for it. The other concern is someone coming forward to sell the plot, then as time passes relatives come forward to challenge the buy-back. The only work-around to that would be to not do buy-backs.

Purchase is final to avoid any conflicts down the road.

BB states that the only true way to do it would be to have some kind of proof of abandonment and proof of purchase dated prior to a set point in time.

- Update on KCA Land proposal.

Donald Kousman states that he has been in contact with Yolanda Ramos from the KCA multiple times and they are not interested at this time. He continues to state that it takes roughly 100 members to make a quorum, so even if you can get on the agenda to make a proposition, it's difficult to be heard and voted on.

- Discuss Concrete Work in Double Depth Section & Chapel Yard.

Donald Kousman states that he wants to pour a 20inch wide, roughly 220ft long. This will allow for monument placement in the double depth section.

Duece Gragg asks if there would be requirements to be met to place a monument on this sidewalk.

DK states that yes, their monument would have to meet certain size requirements to be allowed.

Donald Kousman states that the city surveyor is going to be coming out to do everything necessary on their end so we can move forward. And it wouldn't have to be done all at once. This can be done in stages.

BB asks what the depth would be.

DK says that roughly 4-6 inches should be plenty to hold the weight of the monuments.

Donald Kousman also states that he plans to pour a curb around the chapel to prevent water loss, while leaving it ADA-compliant.

DK continues that we are waiting for CIP to do some needed repairs to the chapel and the office. He mentions that the roof of the chapel was last done in 2008 or 2009.

BB asks how the columbarium is doing

DK reports that he has sold roughly 15 spaces of it.

- Semi-Annual Report of the Trustee

Donald Kousman states that he hasn't received any update regarding this account being acquired by the City to move those inactive funds into the current Cemetery Care Fund.

- Mid-Year Report

Donald shows the board members the Mid-Year report attached to the agenda. We've sold 41 spaces and 74 burials as of the end of July.

2.

- Board Members

Barry Beauchamp asks if the foliage around the Ross Vault was removed intentionally, or if it died off.

Donald Kousman states that it was dying so they removed it before becoming unsightly.

BB states that the work done looks great.

Audience Participation

Anyone who has an item of business to present to the commission that does not appear on the agenda please come forward.

None

Unfinished Business

3. Receive update on Highland Cemetery Renovation Projects

Donald Kousman states that this item was covered under staff reports.

Business Items

4. Consider approving the minutes from the regular meeting held on April 2nd, 2025.

MOTION by Barry Beauchamp; SECOND by Robert Williams

AYES: Robert Williams, Gerald "Deuce" Gragg.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Barry Beauchamp.

MOTION CARRIES

5. Consider approving quote for a new mower at Highland Cemetery

Donald Kousman presents a quote for \$11,659.28 for a new mower due to other mowers breaking down.

MOTION by Barry Beauchamp; SECOND by Robert Williams.

AYES: Barry Beauchamp , Robert Williams, Gerald "Deuce" Gragg.

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIES

Adjournment

The City of Lawton encourages participation from all of its citizens. If participation at any public meeting is not possible due to a disability, notification to the City Clerk at (580) 581-3305 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting is encouraged to make the necessary accommodations. The City may waive the 48 hour rule if interpreters for the deaf (signing) is not the necessary accommodation."

MOTION by Barry Beauchamp; SECOND by Robert Williams

AYES: Barry Beauchamp, Robert Williams, Gerald "Deuce" Gragg

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIES