



City of Lawton

Highland Cemetery Board

City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, OK
73501
2nd Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Monday, January 5, 2026

2:00 PM

"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

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Barry Beauchamp, Robert Williams, Deuce Gragg

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Larry Parks (Director of CED), Kelvin Ingram (P&R Deputy Director), Donald Kousman (Cemetery Sexton), Dylan Dunavin (Administrative Assistant II).

OTHERS PRESENT: James Pooshke

Reports

Audience Participation

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

Unfinished Business

1. Discuss and take action on the James Pooschke project regarding his plots.

Donald Kousman states he wanted to bring this project idea to the board as quickly as possible to help speed the process along for Mr. James Pooschke.

James Pooschke states that he owns several plots at Highland Cemetery, and after the recent passing of his wife in September 2025, he began discussing the potential of a beautification project with Donald Kousman. Some of the tasks that he wants to complete are within the bylaws of the cemetery, such as cornerstones. He states that he would like approval to plant three Chinese Pistache trees using three plots that he owns that will go unused due to personal circumstances. They are slow growing and easy to maintain. The trees would be planted at Mr. Pooschke's expense.

Additionally, Mr. Pooschke continued to state that he would like approval to place full-length marble slabs on top of six of the plots that he owns. However, he states that there is concern over liability for the City in the future should those slabs need to be moved for burial and/or maintained.

Donald Kousman states that the biggest concern of the slabs is who would be moving them in the future for burials? Would the liability and cost fall onto the estate of Mr. Pooschke should damage occur? Would future employees of the cemetery know how to properly handle the slabs?

Mr. Pooschke states that all costs would fall on him, now and in the future, and he would have it written into his after-life plans that a contractor would do any labor regarding the slabs. He does understand the concern of the City regarding liability.

Deuce Gragg asks Donald if those slabs would interfere with the opening and closing of any surrounding plots?

DK states that he doesn't foresee these slabs interfering with any other plots.

Mr. Pooschke continues to state that due to the plot of his recently buried wife still being fresh, he wouldn't do anything to that plot until the ground has had adequate time to settle.

Kelvin Ingram asks if this would need legal review?

Larry Parks replies that yes it would, so if it is added to a City Council agenda, then it would receive legal review that way also.

Kelvin Ingram asks if the tree roots would be non-invasive?

DK states that yes, the desired trees have non-invasive roots.

Kelvin Ingram asks Mr. Pooschke why he wants to do this project now?
Mr. Pooschke states that he wants the site to look nice once he is buried.

Kelvin Ingram asks for confirmation that Mr. Pooschke is asking for approval for three trees, granite, marble slabs, and benches?
Mr. Pooschke confirms.

Donald Kousman asks if other relatives would continue these plans for other plots in the future.

Mr. Pooschke states that he doubts it.

DK states that he typically has dedicated spaces for trees, but the plans are adequate, and the locations would work.

Deuce Gragg states that since a private company would be moving the slabs in the event of a passing, you might not be able to have a quick burial if there is a wait time to get those contractors to the job site and there may be a settlement period where the slab is to the side while the dirt settles. Mr. Pooschke understands and appreciates the comment.

Barry Beauchamp confirms with City staff that this will need to become a City Council agenda item.

Approval of the requested beautification project by Mr. James Pooschke to add trees, benches, marble slabs, to his owned plots at Highland Cemetery.

MOTION by Robert Williams; SECOND by Deuce Gragg

AYES: Barry Beauchamp, Robert Williams, Deuce Gragg

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIES

Business Items

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 Robert Williams; SECOND by Deuce Gragg

AYES: Barry Beauchamp, Robert Williams, Deuce Gragg

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIES