City of Lawton

City Council

Minutes

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501-3944

Tuesday, July 22, 2025 **6:00 PM** **Lawton City Hall**
Wayne Gilley Auditorium

Meeting Called to Order with Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

Meeting called to order by Mayor Stanley Booker with invocation led by Pastor James Graham of Centenary United Methodist Church followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present:
Councilwoman- Ward 1 Mary Ann Hankins Booker
Councilwoman - Ward 3 Linda Chapman
Councilman - Ward 4 George Gill
Councilman - Ward 5 Allan Hampton
Councilman - Ward 6 Bob Weger
Councilwoman - Ward 7 Sherene L Williams
Councilman - Ward 8 Randy Warren

Absent:

Also Present:
Stanley Booker, Mayor
John Ratliff, City Manager
Garrett Lam, Assistant City Attorney
Tammy Branstetter, Sr. Deputy City Clerk

Presentation

1. Freedom Festival Soap Box Derby Awards

Larry Parks, Community Enrichment Director, introduced the Freedom Festival Soapbox Derby winners, noting that the event is one of the most competitive at the annual celebration. He announced the winners: Brody Penderton (Second Place), Piper Henderson (Third Place), and Penelope Harrison (Best of Show). He congratulated all participants and encouraged photos with the winners.

2. Clean Sweep Award

Mayor Booker presented the Clean Sweep Award to the Blackout Rucking Crew, represented by Chris and Ben. He explained that the award recognizes community groups that regularly pick up litter to keep the city clean. Chris shared that their group maintains Ferris Avenue between 11th and 2nd Streets and invited citizens to join their cleanup efforts, noting their national recognition as part of the Go Ruck community.

3. True North Award Recipient

Ratliff presented the True North Award to employee Austin Dawson of the Clean and Neighborhood Services Division. He recounted how Dawson, while working after the recent flood, found a person in distress in a vehicle, called EMS, and stayed until help arrived—actions that likely saved a life. Ratliff commended Dawson's example of the True North Culture and his dedication to the community.

4. Receive a report regarding the Lawton Metropolitan Airport Authority.

Chairman David Madigan appeared before the Council to provide an update on the operations and progress of the Lawton Metropolitan Airport Authority. He began by recognizing the diverse composition of the Authority's board, noting that members represent a wide range of professional fields including finance, construction, engineering, telecommunications, and law. Madigan reminded the Council that the Authority was established 56 years ago by the City of Lawton as a public trust and continues to manage and oversee airport operations and long-term planning.

He outlined the airport's two principal sources of income—operating and non-operating revenues.
Operating revenue, he said, includes controllable income such as parking fees, terminal leases with the commercial airline, restaurant, and rental-car companies, as well as lease income from private hangars and the municipal golf course. He recognized Joe English and Don Ditzworth for their management of the golf course under the Authority's lease. Additional revenue is generated through aircraft refueling operations. Madigan reported that annual operating revenue now totals approximately $3 million, reflecting strong growth in recent years.

He credited Executive Director Barbara McNally for the airport's consistent success and noted that she recently celebrated 40 years of service to the airport, earning applause from the audience and Council.

Madigan explained that non-operating revenue comes from state and federal grants, secured through the advocacy of local, state, and federal legislators. In recent years, the airport has been awarded $5–6 million annually in such grants, which are restricted to capital improvements. He expressed appreciation to Representative Trey Caldwell and Congressman Tom Cole for their continued support.

Madigan highlighted that the airport currently operates three daily flights to and from DFW and serves approximately 95,000 passengers annually. The average load factor is about 70 percent, with a goal of 80–85 percent. Achieving that target would allow the Authority to petition American Airlines for a fourth daily flight, potentially a direct route to Chicago or Denver. He said this would be a “game changer” for Lawton’s economic development and urged residents to support the local airport by choosing to fly from Lawton whenever possible.

Madigan concluded his remarks by showing recent photos of terminal renovations and noting that $22 million has been invested in capital improvements over the past few years. He commended Herring Construction for its work as general contractor and thanked the City for its continued partnership.

Executive Director Barbara McNally then spoke to the Council about ongoing and future projects. She reported that the new terminal is nearly complete, with only punch-list items remaining, and expects full completion within a few weeks. She shared photos showing the front entrance still under construction but progressing steadily.

McNally described the airport’s support for Fort Sill operations, noting that over the past two years the airport has accommodated approximately 150 C-17 aircraft transporting military personnel. Because those aircraft currently park on the parallel taxiway, half of the airport must shut down during loading and unloading. To solve this, the Authority is pursuing a grant to construct a large apron capable of parking three wide-body aircraft and extending the parallel taxiway to meet FAA geometric standards. She thanked City Grants Administrator Cynthia Williams for assisting with the grant application and said a funding decision is expected within the next month.

McNally also described plans for a new $25 million Air Traffic Control Tower, one of only two awarded statewide under a federal program. The project will be entirely federally funded, with construction expected to begin in summer 2026 following subcontractor bid awards. She explained that the tower design is based on a modern sustainable prototype now being replicated nationwide.

Following the presentation, Council members engaged in a detailed discussion:

Mayor Booker asked whether the $22 million in recent capital investment was primarily federally funded. McNally confirmed that nearly all of it was, combining several sources including a $4.3 million ATP grant, federal AIG infrastructure funds, and contributions from the Oklahoma Department of Aerospace (formerly the Aeronautics Commission).

Mayor Booker also asked about the status of the apron-expansion grant. McNally replied that the application had been submitted and results should be known within about a month.

Mayor Booker commended the terminal improvements and commented on the convenience of flying locally. He recounted that when a connecting flight from France to Oklahoma City was canceled, he and Councilwoman Hankins-Booker were able to return home through Lawton's airport instead.

Mayor Booker recognized Madigan's 12 years of service on the Airport Authority, noting that board rules require a one-year break before reappointment. He thanked him for his leadership and encouraged his eventual return.

Hampton asked about the airport's TSA classification compared to other Oklahoma airports. McNally explained that Lawton is one of only four commercial airports in the state required to maintain TSA operations; all others are general-aviation airports without such requirements.

Weger inquired about safeguards in the new tower's communication systems, referencing a past East Coast incident involving outdated air-traffic data. McNally assured him that the new tower will feature modernized communication and data-processing systems and noted that Lawton's less-congested airspace further minimizes such risks.

Ratliff asked whether the proposed apron expansion would eliminate interference between military and commercial traffic. McNally confirmed that was the project's intent and that it would significantly enhance operational efficiency.

Mayor Booker and the Council thanked Madigan and McNally for their thorough report and commended the Airport Authority's continued efforts to modernize the airport and strengthen partnerships with Fort Sill and the surrounding community.

5. Receive a presentation from the Executive Director of Our Blood Institute and discuss the upcoming Boots and Badges Blood Drive.

A representative from the Our Blood Institute (OBI) appeared before the Council to discuss community blood needs and to promote the upcoming "Boots and Badges" blood drive. She began by sharing statistics to illustrate the importance of donation, noting that one out of every three people will require blood in their lifetime. She emphasized that blood donations directly impact every hospital in the Lawton area as well as those in Duncan, Oklahoma City, and Wichita Falls, all of which are served exclusively by OBI.

She informed the Council that OBI had entered an emergency appeal for platelet donations that very day due to shortages. Platelets, she explained, have a shelf life of only five to seven days, with two of those days required for testing, and OBI must collect approximately 700 platelet units weekly to meet demand. She referred to platelets as "liquid gold" because of their lifesaving role for cancer patients, burn victims, trauma cases, and surgical patients.

The presenter also addressed several common misconceptions about donor eligibility, clarifying that most individuals with diabetes, tattoos, or past travel restrictions are still eligible to donate. She encouraged residents to visit the OBI center or participate in community drives.

Turning to the upcoming “Boots and Badges” Blood Drive, she explained that the event would pit the Lawton Police Department and Lawton Fire Department in a friendly competition for bragging rights. The drive would take place that Saturday, featuring family-friendly activities including fire trucks, patrol cars, bounce houses, and a smokehouse demonstration. Donors would receive refreshments, coupons for Firehouse Subs, Hurricane Harbor tickets, and the event’s commemorative T-shirt. The drive would honor first responders and the Cotton County flood victims, underscoring the community’s spirit of resilience.
She closed by inviting everyone to donate at the event or at the OBI center throughout the week, where donors could still “vote” for police or fire. Council members thanked OBI for their work and for supporting regional hospitals.

6. Receive a presentation on the Crosswalks to Classrooms trial and provide direction as needed.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, introduced Street Superintendent Cliff Martin to present the Crosswalks to Classrooms initiative. Martin described it as a traffic-calming pilot project designed to improve safety around schools while incorporating the Mayor’s Kids First initiative. The program uses colorful, art-based crosswalks to slow traffic and engage the community visually, while providing safer routes for students.

Martin explained that the program was selected for Hugh Bish Elementary School, which had recently undergone a speed study. Although the location did not meet the criteria for a speed table, the area exhibited conditions suitable for a pilot safety project. He shared that the installation would cost approximately $3,500, a fraction of the $7,200 cost of a single speed table, and would be partially funded through a LETA contribution arranged with Jason Poudrier and the Arts & Humanities Division.

He stated that roughly $2,000 had been secured through donations and grants, with the remainder to come from the Streets Division budget. The project’s objective was to test the impact of the design before expanding to other schools.

Mayor Booker praised the proposal as an example of the City’s evolving “True North” mindset, which focuses on finding solutions rather than reasons to say no. He remarked that years earlier such a creative idea might have been dismissed outright, but now staff were bringing forward data-driven innovations that achieved results efficiently.

Williams confirmed that Hugh Bish Elementary would receive the first crosswalk installation, noting that the site had long been a concern for student safety during drop-off and pick-up. She expressed appreciation for the fulfillment of that commitment.

Council members discussed the potential to expand the initiative citywide, especially in areas with frequent speeding complaints. Hankins-Booker noted that she receives many calls about speeding and was eager to see whether the crosswalks could serve as an alternative to speed humps. Martin said that while there was no fixed installation date yet, the City aimed to begin the project quickly after materials arrive and would evaluate the results for future implementation.

Mayor Booker thanked Martin and Watrous, concluding that the project perfectly demonstrated the “find-a-way-to-yes” culture being cultivated throughout City operations.

Reports: Mayor/City Council/City Manager

Fort Sill Update
COL Derek Baird, Fort Sill Garrison Commander, began the reports section by highlighting several upcoming events:

The Army Community Service 60th Anniversary celebration would be held that Friday at the Patriot Club from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., featuring indoor bounce houses, food, and a dunk booth.

The Diamond Brigade Run (5K and 10K) would take place Saturday morning, followed by brunch at the Patriot Club.

Super Soak Day at Lake Elmer Thomas Recreation Area (LETRA) would occur later that day, offering water slides and lake activities.
He also thanked the community for supporting Fort Sill and praised Lawton’s Farmers Market, saying he shops there weekly for vegetables and fresh bread.

Councilmember Reports

Warren echoed praise for the Farmers Market, saying it consistently draws large crowds and fosters community pride. He joked that shoppers must arrive early, or “Councilman Hampton will buy everything first.”

Weger reflected on Lawton’s heritage and diversity ahead of the City’s upcoming birthday celebration, noting that its culture has been shaped by tribal nations, military families, and people from around the world. He quoted Galatians 6:9 and said he believes God has blessed Lawton with “deep roots and wide branches.”

Hampton lightheartedly endorsed “lion’s mane supplements” before joining in the Farmers Market praise, saying fresh produce sells quickly and citizens should arrive early. He also referenced ongoing infrastructure projects in Ward 5 and encouraged patience, emphasizing that studies and work are moving forward. Hampton concluded by promoting the next Open Streets Lawton event scheduled for September 20.

Gill provided a progress update on roadwork, including 38th Street between Gore and Lee and the upcoming Lee Boulevard reconstruction from 38th to 52nd Street, noting the 105-in-25 overlay program will also soon go to bid.

Chapman expressed appreciation to City employees for mowing drainage areas in extreme heat and dealing with mosquitoes, acknowledging citizen frustration but reminding residents that crews are working diligently citywide.

Hankins-Booker shared a positive citizen interaction about a property cleanup in her ward. After she alerted staff, the issue was promptly resolved. She reminded property owners, including corporate and rental owners, that they are responsible for property maintenance.

City Manager Report
Ratliff announced that Finance Director Rebecca Johnson would be leaving her position at week's end and commended her for completing three years of overdue audits, restoring the City's fiscal compliance. He said Kristin Huntley would serve as Interim Finance Director.

Ratliff noted an upcoming Eagle Scout project at Gray Warr Park scheduled for Friday and said the park would be temporarily closed for safety during construction. He shared positive outcomes from a recent animal adoption event at the Farmers Market, where 28 pets were adopted, but cautioned that the shelter quickly filled again and urged citizens to spay and neuter their animals.

He concluded by reporting that Lawton Police Department had completed its investigation into the parade threat incident, the case had been forwarded to the District Attorney, and charges were being filed. The Council expressed appreciation for the update and for the City's proactive communication.

Audience Participation

Lawton citizens who have completed a Request to Speak Form and wish to address business not listed on the agenda may step forward at this time.

To ensure compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, the Mayor and Council will receive comments but will NOT engage in direct responses. However, they may refer matters to the appropriate department or individual for further consideration and follow-up action.

To participate, speakers must submit a Request to Speak Form to the City Clerk and reside within the Lawton city limits. Each speaker is allotted 3 minutes, with a maximum of 9 minutes per topic, and Audience Participation is limited to 30 minutes total. All participants are expected to follow the Rules of Decorum as outlined in Council Policy 1-6.

No Request to Speak Forms were submitted.

Consent Agenda

The following items are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted with one motion. Should discussion be desired on an item, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to action and considered separately.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Bob Weger, to approve the consent agenda with the exception of pulling items #25 and #34. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins-Booker, Linda

Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

7. Consider approving a resolution amending the City of Lawton FYE26 budget, as amended, to appropriate $5,702,064.18 in ARPA funds to the Grant Fund for the completion of the Elmer Thomas Park Aquatic Center and $2,659,372.54 in LIDA S2024C loan proceeds to the PROPEL 2040 Capital Improvement Fund for the US-62 Interchange Project.

Resolution 25-191

8. Consider approving a resolution amending the City of Lawton FYE26 budget, as amended, by appropriating $53,000.00 from the Special Revenue Fund (Fire Training Court Costs) to the Fire Training Division's Training and Travel (2007503-52060) to fund critical training programs, such as Officer leadership training courses and specialized rescue training.

Resolution 25-192

9. Contingent upon Council approving a budget amendment, consider approving a Supplemental Fee for additional funding between the City of Lawton and WSB, Inc. for Project EN2104 US-62 Interchange at Goodyear Boulevard in the amount of $455,874.00.

10. Consider approving Resolution No. 25-____ authorizing Petty Cash in the amount of $500.00 for the Aquatics Division of the Community Enrichment Department.

Resolution 25-193

11. Consider approving a Master Services Agreement with WSB Inc for Professional Engineering Services for FY26.

12. Consider approving a task order for WSB to manage the pavement maintenance program for FY26.

13. Consider approving a task order for WSB to perform grant research and development for FY26.

14. Consider approving the migration of our current Tyler Public Safety applications from an on-premise to cloud-based (SaaS) environment, and

authorizing the mayor to sign all documents to execute the agreement.

15. Consider and take action in approving Amendment No. 3 to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements Project Phase I Contract with Garver, LLC in an amount not to exceed $34,485.00 for additional construction administration services due to unforeseen and extended construction durations.

16. Consider and take action in awarding a contract in the amount of $4,151,247.00 to Scott Wampler Construction & Services, LLC, for the construction of Map 46 Water Line Replacement Project PU2409 to rehabilitate high maintenance waterlines.

17. Consider awarding contract CL25-027 Redi-Mix Concrete to Southwest Ready Mix (Primary) for Bid #2, Lawton Transit Mix (Secondary) for Bid #1, and Dolese Bros. Co. (Tertiary) for Bid #3.

18. Consider awarding contract CL25-028 Concrete Repair to A.E. Construction as the Primary vendor, TE Construction as the Secondary vendor, and MTZ Construction as the Tertiary vendor. These vendors meet all requirements and contract increases are minimal. Contract expenditures are expected to be greater than $75,000 per year.

19. Consider awarding CL25-029 Waterline Fittings and Valves to three separate vendors. Line Item no.1 will be awarded to Pioneer Supply, Line Item no. 2 will be awarded to Core & Main LP, and all other line items will be awarded to Ferguson Enterprises, LLC.

20. Consider awarding contract CL25-030 Grassing & Sodding to Green Turf Sod.

21. Consider approving the City of Lawton Jail Food & Supplies, Contract CL25-032, to vendor Stephenson Wholesale Co. dba Indian Nation Wholesale.

22. Consider extending contract RFPCL21-030 Inmate Technology Services: Pay Telephone, Table & Video Installation with Prodigy Solutions, Inc. for an additional year.

23. Consider extending contract RFPCL23-030 Tree Trimming & Maintenance for one additional year.

24. Consider and take action in approving Amendment Number 10 to the Master Services Agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group, INC, in the amount not to exceed $795,000.00 for Construction Inspection and Management services for the Ellsworth Spillway Rehabilitation Project PU2312.

25. Consider approving an Agreement for Funding and Limited Support between the Fires Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA) Development Trust Authority and the City of Lawton, contingent upon FISTA approving the Agreement, to fund the operation, management, administration, maintenance and equipping of FISTA facilities during the FYE26 to encourage economic/industrial development in the City of Lawton and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Agreement.

Dr. Krista Ratliff, FISTA President and CEO opened by presenting a 3D-printed token designed by a Cameron University engineering student who works in FISTA's prototyping lab. The token read "I Love Lawton-Fort Sill." Mayor Booker pinned it to his lapel and thanked the student for the thoughtful gesture.

Dr. Krista Ratliff provided an overview of FISTA's mission as a national security innovation hub that connects Department of Defense partners, private industry, and academia. She explained that the project repurposed a former shopping mall into a thriving defense technology campus aligned with Fort Sill's modernization priorities and the U.S. Army's multi-domain operations strategy.

She reported that FISTA currently has 26 active partners and five pending leases, representing companies from across the United States—23 of which had no prior presence in Oklahoma. Collectively, FISTA has attracted over $98 million in total investment since inception, including $45 million in grants, $18 million in rent, $18 million in other income, and $17 million in City investment. Dr. Ratliff emphasized that the City's contribution represents less than one-fifth of total capital flow, underscoring a strong return on investment.

She said FISTA currently supports 165 active jobs with a combined $19 million annual payroll, producing an economic impact between $38 million and $57 million per year based on standard multipliers. The campus has hosted over 11,000 visitors from 40 countries in the past year, showcasing Lawton on an international stage.

Dr. Ratliff also outlined FISTA's STEM programming, including a $10 million STEM lab under construction, 2,700 students served through onsite programs, 1,782 through offsite outreach, and over 100 local teachers trained in STEM curriculum. She said the goal is to reach every teacher in Southwest Oklahoma so that "every student can be reached through them."

Infrastructure achievements included five new custom suites, 19 pre-fabricated tenant spaces, a new café and kitchen, security upgrades, and construction of a light manufacturing area. Ongoing projects include the anecoic chamber and secure administrative space, modeled after a $50,000-per-day facility in California, and a $2 million lighting upgrade in partnership with the City to improve the I-44 gateway. Dr. Ratliff added that Firehawk Aerospace is breaking ground on a 320-acre 3D-printed rocket-fuel manufacturing site bringing 100+ jobs, with another major partner exploring a 250,000–500,000 sq. ft. facility that could add hundreds more.

Mayor Booker asked about the newly formed FISTA Foundation, which Dr. Ratliff explained was a 501(c)(3) established by the Trust Authority to provide STEM scholarships and fund technology access for local students. She said it had already raised nearly $500,000 and aimed to ensure "no child in Lawton-Fort Sill lacks access to STEM education."

The Mayor also reviewed a chart showing FISTA's funding composition, confirming that out of $98 million total, only $17 million came from the City. Dr. Ratliff noted that the $45 million in grants were already awarded, with another $20 million pending.

Gill commended the presentation, describing FISTA as "vital to Lawton's future."

Mayor Booker asked about the secure compartmented information facility (SCIF) space under construction. Dr. Ratliff replied that it is one of the largest of its kind in Oklahoma and will support classified defense work in partnership with Fort Sill, funded entirely through grants.

The Council thanked Dr. Ratliff for her presentation and her leadership in making FISTA a national model for defense innovation and STEM integration.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Randy Warren, to approve a FYE26 Funding and Limited Support Agreement between FISTA and City of Lawton, contingent upon FISTA also approving the agreement, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the agreement. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins-Booker, Linda Chapman, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed. *Councilmember Allan Hampton was not present for this vote.

26. Consider approving an agreement between the Lawton Youth Sports Trust

Authority and the City of Lawton for FYE26 to provide $415,520 from the General Fund for program support and $821,957.97 from the PROPEL 2040 Capital Improvement Fund for the design and/or lease of property to be the site of a sports complex.

27. Consider approving the First Amended Agreement for professional services between the City of Lawton and Collins, Zorn & Wagner, PLLC ("CZW") to represent the City and employees named in their official capacities in the pending case of Christopher Hartley vs City of Lawton, et al, CIV-24-153-J and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Agreement.

28. Consider authorizing Mayor Booker to sign an updated letter of engagement with Crawford and Associates for continued efficiency and benchmarking analysis and take action as deemed necessary.

29. Consider ratifying the City Manager's temporary waiver of animal adoption fees at the Lawton Animal Welfare Center from July 12, 2025, through July 19, 2025, in response to the shelter exceeding its maximum capacity.

30. Ratification of City Manager's action to waive the park use fees for the Lawton Chamber of Commerce for its Community School Supply Drive event at Elmer Thomas Park on August 9, 2025.

31. Consider modifying the direction given to staff at the June 10, 2025 City Council meeting regarding the 320-acre tract of land located west of NW Goodyear Blvd/NW 97th Street and north of what would be the extension of W Gore Blvd, by directing staff to proceed with the administrative rezoning to the most appropriate zoning district(s), as determined by the Planning Director, to fit the needs of the proposed Firehawk Aerospace development, to include processing a Use Permitted on Review if necessary.

32. Consider accepting the permanent utility and access easement from FSP Investments, LLC for property located at 1904 NW Cache Road for the water

main and sidewalk project # PU2107, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the document and payment for the same.

33. Consider approving an easement for a 12" force main to be constructed on the Commissioners of the Land Office property located at SE Flower Mound Road and SE Woodlawn Road, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the document, and issue payment for the same.

34. Receive a traffic report and consider the installation of traffic-control measures in the form of stop signs at 6414 NW Elm Ave.

Michael Watrous explained that a request for a speed table was received for this location. A traffic study was done, but the requirement was not met for the installation of a speed table. The Streets, Bridges, and Building Development Committee made a recommendation to install stop signs instead.

Motion by Bob Weger, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve the installation of stop signs at 6414 NW Elm Ave. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

35. Consider determining the actual costs of the dismantling and removal of dilapidated buildings and other expenses that may be necessary in conjunction with same by approving invoices for demolition of properties as required by 11 O.S. § 22-112.4 for properties located at 1609 SW Douglass Avenue and 511 SW Monroe Avenue.

36. Consider approving claims lists from June 19, 2025 through July 10, 2025.

37. Consider approving appointments to boards and commissions.

FISTA DEVELOPMENT TRUST AUTHORITY:
Doug Stephens – Mayoral Appointment
1110 NW St James Place
Lawton, OK 73505
UT 08/24/2027

Business Items

38. Consider receiving a presentation from Public Service Organization Family

Promise and approving a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Project for the acquisition and rehabilitation of building and property located at 1308 SW D Ave.

Gary Brooks, Housing Division, opened the item by clarifying that the presentation concerned a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) project rather than a general public service organization project. Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment, explained that “CHDO” is a specific HUD certification that is different from a public service organization designation and that HUD requires the City to set aside dedicated CHDO funds each year for eligible CHDO projects.

Brown added that Family Promise is both one of the City’s public service organizations and a HUD-certified CHDO. She reiterated that CHDO projects draw on CHDO set-aside dollars and not on general PSO funding.

Michael Towe, Board President of Family Promise, thanked the Council for the opportunity to present the “Promise Kept” proposal. He stated that the concept began four to five years earlier as an idea to generate rental income to stabilize Family Promise’s operating budget. He said the plan had since grown in scope, both in the number of families it could serve and in the depth of services offered, with the aim of helping participants become productive residents on a pathway to homeownership. He noted that the board had reviewed and debated the concept thoroughly and that the plan aligns with the City’s Kids First Homeless Action Plan. He then introduced Executive Director Sarah Svec to present the details.

Svec stated that Family Promise of Lawton became a HUD-certified CHDO in 2024 and is one of only fifteen Family Promise affiliates nationwide to hold that designation. She explained that during the same period, Family Promise launched a stabilization program to support families after they exited shelter. She said the program exceeded expectations and was fully funded for expansion through 2026 by the Priddy Foundation of Texas. She added that Family Promise has incorporated AI-driven tools to accelerate crisis response and track outcomes in real time with Lawton-specific data.

Svec identified 1308 SW D Avenue as the proposed project site and acknowledged that the building is in very poor condition and would require comprehensive rehabilitation. She noted that the property sits directly in front of the Salvation Army’s Engage Community project and that Family Promise views the adjacency as an opportunity for coordinated outreach, even though it has deterred previous buyers. She stated that the project would comply with HUD’s twenty-year affordability requirement through recorded instruments—such as a mortgage and a land-use covenant—that will be easily identifiable in title searches and will remain binding through any leadership transitions. She emphasized that, unlike scattered-site rentals, Promise Kept would be a visible, branded Family Promise asset, which would facilitate transparency, monitoring, and public accountability. She stated that Family Promise would work with the City to establish a reporting structure that satisfies HUD compliance and the City’s internal needs, would participate in monitoring, and would maintain outcome data to support audits and future grant applications.

Svec estimated a total project cost of approximately $540,000. She stated that the scope includes rebuilding eleven residential units and restoring an on-site office and laundry facility, as well as covering administrative costs and contingency. She reminded the Council that the City had previously approved a $300,000 CHDO contract for a scattered-site concept that would have produced five units, but that suitable properties did not materialize. She said that allocating an additional $240,000 in CHDO set-aside funding would allow Family Promise to double production to eleven units at an approximate cost of $41,000 per unit, compared to roughly $60,000 per unit under the scattered-site approach. She stated that a single location would reduce overhead, simplify property management, centralize case management, and increase neighborhood safety.

Svec described the program model as a launchpad to homeownership with intensive case management focused on job stability, income growth, budgeting, and credit repair. She stated that Family Promise would report rent payments to credit bureaus to help families build positive credit histories and would connect qualified families to HOME-funded down-payment assistance and to partners such as Habitat for Humanity so that participants could transition into homeownership. She said the project would promote resident stability, expand the local tax base, support schools and businesses, and reduce reliance on long-term subsidies. She added that rental income from Promise Kept is projected to cover nearly one-third of Family Promise's current operating budget, thereby reducing reliance on short-term grants and local funding. She observed that much of Lawton's affordable stock outside of the Housing Authority is owned by out-of-state investors, resulting in federal housing dollars leaving the community. She said this project intends to retain those dollars locally in support of Lawton families. She emphasized that the project aligns with the Kids First Homeless Action Plan and does not require local tax dollars. She stated that Family Promise has served Lawton since 2009 and consistently ranks in the top eighty percent of Family Promise affiliates nationwide. She highlighted her prior real-estate management experience with an approximately 995-unit portfolio and noted that case management for the project is already funded through 2026 by the Priddy Foundation. She concluded that Family Promise adopted a strategic direction five years ago to secure housing-based revenue as a sustainability path and to relieve pressure on City funds and local donors.

Mayor Booker stated that protecting public funds is a primary concern and noted that, although these are federal dollars, local taxpayers are ultimately responsible if requirements are not met. Mayor Booker referenced recent repayments estimated at more than $600,000 and asked Family Promise to provide assurances that it can complete construction and maintain compliance for the full twenty-year affordability term. Mayor Booker asked how Family Promise would handle cost overruns, what additional funding sources would be used if needed, and what succession plan exists given the organization's small size. Mayor Booker stated that more than verbal assurances would be needed to protect citizens over the long term.

Svec agreed with the need to protect HUD relationships and public funds. She reiterated that operating from a single, branded site would enhance visibility and monitoring. She stated that under CHDO rules, if Family Promise could not complete the project, the City would have up to twenty-four months to reassign the project to another nonprofit, which would allow time for another organization to pursue CHDO certification and preserve compliance. She said that detailed costing requires a structural engineering assessment and HUD-experienced scoping and that City-approved CHDO development funds could be used for that pre-development work. She identified potential additional funding sources beyond the CHDO set-aside—such as OFA, private grants, and further support from the Priddy Foundation—and emphasized the intent to use funds strategically to avoid over-spending and repayments.

Mayor Booker asked where the current cost estimates originated. Svec stated that they were rough estimates from two contractors associated with the current owner. She added that after consulting with a CDBG/HUD-experienced partner (CDBL), Family Promise expects costs to be higher under federal construction standards. She said she could not provide a firm figure without the engineering report and did not want to state an amount prematurely and then have to revise it upward later.

Gill confirmed that CHDO development funds may be used for pre-development or exploratory costs subject to City approval. He stated that the project is a stepwise process in which each step depends on the prior step and that missing a step jeopardizes the whole. He asked whether Family Promise was seeking immediate funding or permission to proceed into pre-development and observed that the initial public figures appeared too low to achieve the stated scope. He asked what CDBL had advised and whether any guaranteed pricing was available and said he preferred to see firm cost data before making a decision.

Svec responded that the immediate request was permission to proceed so that CHDO development funds could be drawn down for due diligence, including a structural engineering assessment estimated at approximately $3,500. She described conceptual unit sizes of roughly 600 to 700 square feet for eleven units and said excess parking could be converted to green space because an upper floor lost to fire had reduced the overall parking requirement.

Gill stated that, using a general rule-of-thumb baseline for residential rehabilitation, a 7,000 to 8,000 square-foot project could approach $1.5 to $2.0 million, which is significantly higher than the dollars currently discussed, and emphasized the need to reconcile that gap.

Mayor Booker stated he wants to find a way to yes and asked what near-term funding would be needed to obtain firm answers. Svec again estimated $3,500 for structural engineering. Mayor Booker noted a deadline of September 27 by which approximately $42,000 in older CHDO set-aside funds must be expended or the opportunity would be lost. Brown clarified that the City does not hold those funds in hand and that, if not drawn down in time, the funds would lapse rather than require repayment.

Williams asked staff how much CHDO set-aside is available for drawdown and Mayor Booker asked whether the City had been advertising its availability. Brooks explained that the HOME program requires a fifteen percent CHDO set-aside each year and that no local CHDO project had been undertaken since approximately 2015. Brooks stated that the 2017 set-aside of about $42,000 must be expended by 2025 and that the cumulative CHDO set-aside available, including the FY 2025–2026 grant, is approximately $53,379.97. Brooks provided background on efforts to cultivate CHDO capacity so that units could be transferred to a qualified CHDO and commended Family Promise for reliable program performance and administration in prior collaborations.

Hampton stated that the property lies within Ward 5 and expressed support for Family Promise's mission while raising concerns about long-term sustainability and maintenance after rehabilitation. BLANK said more detailed long-term operations and maintenance information would be needed before making a commitment to avoid an unfinished or deteriorating asset.

Warren acknowledged the merit of the concept but, referencing recent compliance issues and leadership transitions, recommended establishing regular reporting requirements—quarterly or monthly—to ensure ongoing oversight for the life of the project. He suggested embedding oversight in Council policy or, preferably, in an ordinance to ensure continuity beyond current leadership.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to Table.

Hankins-Booker stated that the location "makes sense" and that proximity to partners adds value. She supported the project in principle and favored quarterly reports, or monthly at the outset, to keep the Council informed given the likelihood of leadership changes during a twenty-year compliance window.

Chapman expressed that there is support for the project, but exact numbers are needed for the Council to be good stewards of the citizens' money.

Svec stated that Family Promise would provide frequent reporting and maintain open communication.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion passed.

39. Consider approving an Ordinance pertaining to Streets and Sidewalks, amending Section 20-1-101, Article 20-1, Chapter 20, Lawton City Code 2015, by revising the responsibility to maintain obstructions that are authorized, providing for severability and establishing an effective date.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, explained that this ordinance puts in place a requirement to maintain any approved obstructions or obstructions that have been grandfathered in through annexations to the city or the like.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve Ordinance 25-33, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

Assistant City Attorney Garrett Lam read the title into the record: ORDINANCE 25-33 AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO STREETS AND SIDEWALKS, AMENDING SECTION 20-1-101, ARTICLE 20-1, CHAPTER 20, LAWTON CITY CODE 2015, BY REVISING THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN OBSTRUCTIONS THAT ARE AUTHORIZED, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

40. Consider approving an ordinance pertaining to Vehicles and Traffic, creating Section 23-6-611 in Article 23-6, Chapter 23, Lawton City Code 2015, establishing regulations for the storage and parking of commercial vehicles within the downtown district, limiting long-term commercial parking in the downtown district on public streets and parking, providing for codification, providing for severability and establishing an effective date.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, reported that the City had received complaints from citizens in the downtown area regarding commercial vehicles parking for extended periods in public street parking spaces. He stated that the issue was reviewed by the Streets, Bridges, and Building Development Committee after affected citizens presented their concerns.

Watrous explained that, as a result of those discussions, a proposed code amendment was drafted to address the matter. The amendment would prohibit large commercial vehicles from parking in downtown street parking spaces for more than 90 minutes, in order to preserve parking availability for general public use and prevent large vehicles from occupying limited spaces for extended durations.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to Approve Ordinance 25-34, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

Assistant City Attorney Garrett Lam read the title into the record: ORDINANCE 25-34 AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC, CREATING SECTION 23-6-611 IN ARTICLE 23-6, CHAPTER 23, LAWTON CITY CODE 2015, ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR THE STORAGE AND PARKING OF COMMERCIAL VEHICLES WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT, LIMITING LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL PARKING IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT ON PUBLIC STREETS AND PARKING, PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

41. Discuss the process for appointing a new council member to represent Ward 2 due to the resignation of Councilmember RL Smith and take action as deemed necessary.

Mayor Booker first invited public comment. Justin Harrell, a resident of Ward 2 and a former candidate in the most recent Ward 2 election, addressed the Council. Harrell noted that five candidates had run in that race and expressed his belief that the appointment should go to the next highest vote-getter from that election, beginning with Shelley Fox. He stated that those who filed and campaigned had already demonstrated their willingness to serve the ward, unlike individuals who might now apply without having previously sought election. Harrell concluded by urging the Council “not to be afraid to do the right thing.”

Following public comment, Deputy City Attorney Garret Lam reviewed the legal framework governing the vacancy. He explained that under Title 11 of the Oklahoma Statutes, the City Council is required to fill a vacant council seat within 60 days of the resignation. If the Council fails to do so, the vacancy must be filled by a special election. He noted that the process mirrors that used for prior vacancies and that the Council retains full discretion in how it proceeds, as long as the appointment occurs within the statutory time frame.

Councilmember Warren shared his experience from previous appointments, emphasizing the importance of completing the process before the 60-day deadline to avoid the expense and delay of a special election. He recommended that the Council accept applications for the vacancy to ensure all potential candidates are properly vetted, noting that previous appointments had encountered issues such as candidates being disqualified for residency or criminal history concerns. Warren stressed the importance of confirming eligibility and selecting the most qualified applicant, regardless of prior campaign participation.

Mayor Booker outlined a potential timeline for the appointment process. He proposed that the City begin advertising for applications immediately, with submissions accepted through August 25, 2025. The Council would then review applications in executive session during its regular meeting on August 26, followed by a special meeting for interviews shortly thereafter. He suggested that the Council could reach a final decision at the September 9, 2025 meeting, which would remain within the statutory deadline of September 17.

Motion by Linda Chapman, Second by Sherene L Williams, to start advertising the vacancy on July 23, 2025 and to take applications through the 25th of August, 2025. Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Staff Reports

42. Receive a report from the Community Enrichment Department regarding the current status of the Housing & Community Development Division.

Larry Parks, Director of Community Enrichment, presented an overview of the current status of the City's Housing and Community Development Division. He explained that the purpose of the presentation was to promote transparency with citizens and to seek guidance from the Council on how to further improve public access to information regarding the City's federally funded housing programs. Parks stated that he would invite Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment, to provide detailed information on current projects and funding.

Charlotte Brown began by outlining the City's HOME fund balance, reporting that the account currently holds approximately $985,000. Of that amount, $500,000 is dedicated to the BEDI Brownsfield Program for repayment of the Section 108 loan on Second Street, and $484,423.70 represents repayment moved from the City's general fund into HOME project income, which can be reused for other HOME-eligible projects. The remaining funds are encumbered for bills and contractual payments.

Brown then provided a detailed breakdown of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations for the current year.

CDBG Administration is budgeted at $147,715.80, which covers administrative salaries, supplies, equipment, vehicle maintenance, training, travel, professional services, utilities at the Owen Center, and a portion of accounting support provided by the Finance Department.

Housing Activity Delivery (HAD) is budgeted at $47,260.11, which supports the City's rehabilitation and housing specialists, as well as the Exterior Home Improvement and Emergency Repair programs. These programs provide financial assistance to low-income homeowners for exterior repairs such as painting, siding, windows, doors, and roofing, as well as emergency issues that pose threats to health or safety—such as sewer line replacement, HVAC failures, and electrical or plumbing hazards. Each project is secured by a forgivable mortgage on the property, which is released after the affordability period expires.

Brown noted that the City is making its final payment of $101,160.11 on the Section 108 loan this month, completing that obligation.

Public Service Organizations (PSOs) are budgeted at $110,700, the maximum 15% allowed under federal regulations, to assist local agencies serving low- and moderate-income residents.

Brown added that while no Public Facilities and Infrastructure projects were budgeted this year, a sewer line replacement valued at approximately $260,000–$300,000 was recently completed in Ward 7's Lawton View neighborhood.

During discussion, Mayor Booker asked for clarification regarding the forgiveness terms of the mortgages. Brown explained that the affordability period is typically five years, after which the lien is released if ownership is maintained. She stated that loans are also forgiven upon the death of the homeowner. The Mayor confirmed that the programs generally receive more applications than funding allows, noting that demand increased sharply following a recent hailstorm.

Williams requested clarification on forgiveness conditions, and Brown confirmed that the mortgage is forgiven either after the required ownership period or upon the owner’s passing.

Brown next reviewed HOME program activities, which include funding for administration, rehabilitation, down payment assistance, and CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization) set-aside projects.

HOME Administration is budgeted at $85,166.50, covering administrative salaries and related expenses.

Whole Home Rehabilitation is budgeted at $240,000, allowing up to $40,000 per home for approximately six owner-occupied units. These funds are used for major repairs that bring homes up to livable standards, secured by a forgivable mortgage tied to a period of affordability.

First-Time Homebuyer Assistance offers up to $14,999.99 in down payment and closing cost assistance to help qualified low-income households purchase homes. Brown reported that one family recently received this assistance—the first such case in three years—and two additional applicants are currently in progress.

The CHDO Set-Aside, at $55,149.82, provides funding for eligible nonprofit housing partners to construct or rehabilitate affordable rental housing.

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) is budgeted at $200,000, providing funds to local housing authorities and certified CHDOs to help prevent homelessness.

Mayor Booker asked which program areas had previously led to federal repayment obligations. Brown responded that the issue stemmed from a home rehabilitation project on Northwest Cherry Street, which was structured as a resale (“flip”) and is no longer an eligible activity under HUD regulations.

Warren asked whether the City had ever partnered with Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) on energy-efficiency programs such as insulation and window sealing. Brown replied that the City had not previously coordinated with PSO but agreed that it was an excellent idea to explore.

In closing, Mayor Booker thanked staff for the comprehensive report and noted that both he and several councilmembers support stronger accountability and oversight measures. He emphasized that, beyond standard reporting, the Council would like to see unannounced on-site audits and improved compliance tracking. The Mayor asked staff to bring forward either a Council Policy or ordinance proposal establishing regular monitoring requirements to enhance transparency and protect public funds.

Gill added that any new accountability system should be implemented within existing staffing resources rather than through new positions.

Parks thanked the Mayor and Council for their guidance and affirmed that staff would develop recommendations consistent with the Council's direction.

Executive Session

Motion by George Gill, Second by Allan Hampton, to to enter into executive session. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

The City Council remained in executive session from 8:03PM to 8:43PM.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Sherene L Williams, to return to open session from executive session. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

43. Pursuant to Section 307B.4, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, consider convening in executive session to discuss the pending action in the District Court of Comanche County titled Julie Magness v. City of Lawton, CJ-2023-410 and, if necessary, take appropriate action in open session.

Motion by Bob Weger, Second by Randy Warren, to authorize the City Attorney to engage in mediation for the pending case in Magness v. City of Lawton, case number CJ-23-410 and to appoint Allan Hampton and George Gill as the City's representatives at the mediation.. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

44. Pursuant to Section 307(B)(1), Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, consider convening in executive session to discuss the recruitment and selection process for the position of City Attorney, including potential candidates and the contracted recruitment firm, and, if necessary, take appropriate action in open session.

No action was taken.

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 Allan Hampton, Second by George Gill, to adjourn. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:44PM.