



City of Lawton

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

Library of Tomorrow Council Committee

Special Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

3:00 PM

Lawton City Hall
Council Conference Room

Recommending Body

"Official action can only be taken on items listed on the agenda. As a recommending body, the Committee may review and discuss agenda items, propose and enact floor amendments, and then choose to make a recommendation to the City Council or provide direction to the City Manager. The Committee may also defer items for further review, refer matters to the City Attorney, or send items to standing committees, boards, commissions, or authorities for additional study. In some cases, items may be postponed to a later date or removed from the agenda entirely."

Meeting Called to Order

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

Roll Call

Introduction of Guests

Business Items

1. Consider approving the minutes of the February 20, 2026 meeting.
2. Consider discussing and reviewing the February 24, 2026 City Council motion regarding the Library of Tomorrow Committee, including its appendices and prior Chairperson guidance.
3. Discuss whether the current CIP-funded, voter-approved replacement of the ceiling and fire suppression system is included within the Committee's charge and guidelines as outlined in Agenda Item 1, and consider approving a draft item for submission to the City Council.
4. Discuss a comprehensive review of current library building infrastructure needs to remain viable for the next fifty (50) years and take action as deemed necessary.
5. Consider directing staff to have the Communications and Marketing Department conduct a citizen survey to ascertain public input regarding the library and consider approving proposed survey 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."

Item Title:

Consider approving the minutes of the February 20, 2026 meeting.

Initiator: Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk

Information Source: Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk

Background:

The minutes of the February 20, 2026 Library of Tomorrow Committee meeting have been drafted and are awaiting approval.

Once approved by the committee, the minutes will be posted on the City of Lawton website at www.lawtonok.gov.

Correlation to the True North Statement:

Transparency and Trust

Exhibit:

02/20/26 Draft Minutes

Key Issues:

N/A

Funding Source:

N/A

Recommended Action:

Approve the minutes of the February 20, 2026 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 02.20.26 LoT Minutes



City of Lawton

Library of Tomorrow Council Committee

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

Minutes

Friday, February 20, 2026

10:00 AM

Lawton City Hall- Wayne Gilley
Auditorium

Recommending Body

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Meeting Called to Order

Meeting called to order by Chairman Randy Warren.

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

Blazek-Scherler confirmed compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314.

Roll Call

Present:

Patty Neuwirth- Library Director
George Gill- Citizen
Councilwoman - Ward 7 Sherene L Williams
Councilman - Ward 6 Bob Weger
Councilman - Ward 3 Kirby Brown
Councilman - Ward 1 Lane Hooton

Absent:

Also Present:

Kristin Herr- Library Director
Dewayne Burk- Deputy City Manager
Jari Askins- Interim City Attorney
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk

Introduction of Guests

Chairman Warren welcomed members of the audience.

Business Items

1. Consider approving the minutes of the January 16, 2026 meeting.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2026 meeting. AYE: Patty Neuwirth, George Gill, Sherene L Williams, Bob Weger, Kirby Brown, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

2. Discuss the core functional vision for the library of tomorrow and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Warren stated he would begin and said he had written out his remarks so he would not forget anything. He said the City should define the library's future before spending public dollars. He stated that a public library exists to serve taxpayers as a library first and as a safe, orderly place for reading, literacy, research, educational media, and supervised access to information and technology. He said that when families no longer feel comfortable entering the building, when parents must escort children simply to use the restroom, and when inappropriate activity becomes normalized, the institution has drifted from its core mission and public confidence erodes.

Chairman Warren stated that this erosion cannot be solved by policy alone and cannot be solved by renovating a building designed for a different era. He said a 52-year-old facility designed for the 1970s library model cannot be renovated into a 2050 or 2075 library. He said that older model assumed quiet stacks, minimal technology, limited supervision needs, and did not contemplate current expectations involving safety, digital media, visibility, accessibility, and climate resilience.

Chairman Warren stated that spending \$6 million to \$8 million to extend the life of the structure would not produce a future-ready library, but would merely prolong an obsolete one. He said recent benchmarks from comparable midsized cities indicate that modern library construction is running at approximately \$400 per square foot, meaning that a 60,000 square foot future-ready library would represent about \$24 million in construction alone, before design, technology, furnishings, and contingencies. He stated this is not simply a renovation discussion, but a tens-of-millions-of-dollars civic infrastructure decision if the community intends to meet 2050 and 2075 expectations. He added that the community deserves that level of seriousness.

Chairman Warren stated that before committing to renovation or new construction, the City should also ask the harder and more responsible question of what happens if the City does not renovate the current building or build a new building at all. He said progressive cities are increasingly examining whether the traditional single-building model remains the best way to deliver library services or whether distributed, purpose-

built solutions might better serve taxpayers, improve safety, and reduce duplication.

Chairman Warren described one possible distributed framework worth exploring, without commitment but with seriousness. He said academic and adult research services could potentially be located in partnership with Cameron University, if the university were willing to host a shared facility open to the general public, aligning adult research, quiet study, and reference services in a setting designed for that use. He said children's services could potentially be relocated to the restored and remodeled Carnegie Library. He stated that this was not a theoretical idea because the City has already begun investing in that facility through the PROPEL 2040 Capital Improvement Program and the intent explicitly includes the historic Carnegie Library. He referenced completed repairs to the floor, ceilings, and restrooms and additional work underway, including front step repairs and planned disability upgrades including an elevator. He said that, done correctly, Carnegie could become a purpose-built children's library focused on youth literacy, early learning, family programming, and safe, age-appropriate use, thereby protecting prior taxpayer investment by making the restored facility a heavily used public asset rather than a sunk cost.

Chairman Warren further stated that STEM, maker, and advanced technology services could be integrated into the FISTA STEM labs and maker space, eliminating duplication of equipment, staffing, and programming while placing advanced tools into facilities designed for supervised, hands-on technical learning.

Chairman Warren stated that a distributed approach would re-center each function in a space designed for its actual use, reduce redundancy and operational inefficiency, improve safety and predictability for families and everyday users, and restore taxpayer confidence by making each facility understandable, mission-aligned, and welcoming. He said the core issue before the Committee was not simply whether to renovate or rebuild, but whether the City should continue investing in a model that no longer works or reconsider how library services are delivered in a way that is physically honest, operationally sound, and worthy of public trust. He concluded that if the City is serious about planning for 2050 and 2075, the decision must be driven by function, safety, and long-term value, rather than attachment to a single building or assumptions inherited from a past era. He added that he did not know that his remarks reflected the final answer, but he did know that continually putting money into a building with a 1970s envelope was likely not the right long-term answer. He then opened the floor for discussion.

Neuwirth stated that the library does work and that saying it does not work is beyond belief. She said she totally disagreed with that statement. She stated that homelessness and safety issues are not something for which the library should be blamed. She said those issues are tied to the transfer center not having been moved despite discussion over the years. She said people are there every day because they get off the bus and come over to use the facilities.

Neuwirth stated that additional security has been added and that more would be

welcome if needed. She said library staff constantly monitor the lobby and are out there hourly, telling people they cannot sleep there and directing them to leave if necessary. She stated that it is a public building and the library cannot bar people at the front door. She said those issues have been pushed onto library staff and that staff have managed them.

Neuwirth stated that the library has been repurposed and that many donation dollars from Friends of the Library, McMahon money, and other funding have been spent changing the way the library functions so that it is up-to-date and doing what it needs to do. She stated that the library has a wonderful genealogy section, a great children's section, a production library, and other resources. She said spreading library functions out all over town to Cameron, FISTA, and elsewhere would be an administrative nightmare. Neuwirth also questioned why the City would move the library from a 50-year-old building into a 100-year-old building that is not designed anymore to be anything, saying Carnegie is hard to get around in and the elevator does not go all the way to the top. She added that as an Arts for All member she is in that building often, and it is not fun to be there. She said she would not support going in that direction.

Weger stated that when he envisions the future focus of the library, he thinks of digital access that is already in place. He said one of the questions he would pose is how the current digital library access does not work. He asked in what ways it does not currently work. He said he had heard the issue raised, but wanted a better understanding of how what is currently in place is not working. He added that the Committee should remain future focused and not lose sight of the future, because once that happens the City becomes stagnant and stops moving forward.

Brown stated that he had a couple of thoughts. He asked whether the Committee has a clear futuristic idea of what a library of the future will be. He said that if one looks at where technology is now, most everything is distributed electronically, and he asked how that affects what the City has now. He stated that he does not think the City can lose the ability to have real books and real magazines, but he believes things are moving in a more digital direction. He said that library-type information is now usually obtained through a digital device.

Brown stated that the current library has a hugely important role within the community, but the critical question is how those services are delivered. He asked whether that means stacks of books everywhere or whether it means digital entry into library services. He said that is what he has been grappling with as he has read the charter for the Committee.

Brown stated that no matter which way the City goes in terms of buildings, the fundamental issue is how services will be delivered. He asked whether that might mean an alliance with the region and some regionalization of services. He said a lot of what is in his head is whether there can be collaboration across Southwest Oklahoma to upgrade the ability to provide digital books more than what the City currently has. Brown also said that if users can pull down digital books, and if utilization rates in

families like his are high because everybody loves digital books, then the City needs to consider what that means. He said his family no longer has a library in its home because those books are gone. Brown added that another thought that came to his mind was what happens to the old building if the library is resized, downsized, or moved somewhere else. He said the City owns the building and if the library moves, then the City would still have that building and would need to decide whether to repurpose it, tear it down, or do something else with it. He said that may not seem important to everyone, but from the City side of real estate it matters.

He then questioned whether things like genealogy resources and expertise could potentially be accessed through a library account from digital devices and whether expert staff could assist by Zoom call or chat instead of requiring an in-person visit.

Chairman Warren stated that this discussion is the purpose of the Committee. He said that during the first meeting, much of the discussion had been about what people like about the library, but the reality is that the library is going to have to change and will not be the same in 2050 and 2075 as it is today. He said everyone needs to get over that and work together to determine where the City is going.

Chairman Warren stated that he had done a lot of study between the last meeting and this meeting on county resident involvement and availability of services. He said he could not very well go to the county and ask for more money without also being able to say what the county would get in return. He said that discussion could involve establishing locations in different places around the county where residents could get internet access needed to access library services. He stated that the issue is much bigger than it may seem and that the Committee needs to think through dissemination of services, the future footprint of the building, and whether books will all go away. He said he did not think books would all go away, but he did think the footprint would shrink if the City continues with library-focused services.

Gill stated he would try not to ramble and had written down several bullet points. He asked whether the library the City has today really works, stating that the Committee first needs to examine what the library's mission used to be and what it is today and that he was not sure the current operation is truly meeting that mission.

Gill addressed a point raised by Brown and Chairman Warren regarding buildings. He stated that the City has an older building downtown that is going to need a great deal of work, but it also has the smaller Carnegie Library building, which the City is already spending money on because it is a landmark, even though the City does not really have a mission for that building. He said the Committee needs to look at the factors involved in bringing the existing main library up to current standards versus what it would take to adapt a smaller building.

Gill stated that one of the biggest issues in the discussion is going to come down to the high-tech and digital system parts of the library, and that those costs will generally be similar whether the City is using a large building or a smaller building. He said the City

will have those hard costs no matter what, and therefore needs to evaluate them carefully. He stated that it could be cheaper to modernize a smaller building while also making it more accessible for people using it.

Gill also said that the City has libraries in schools and at universities, meaning people have library access around town already within certain realms, and kids have opportunities to read. He said there is also the media age, in which books and information can be accessed electronically, so there is a lot of access to information that did not exist before. He stated that as a board, the Committee needs to look at cost savings and what can be done to offer a better product to the consumer.

Gill said that downtown conditions probably do not work as well as they should. He recalled that when the current downtown library opened, it became a hub for many people who were not there to read books, and he described it as having become what some people called a flop house, meaning a place for people with no mission in life to stay warm or cool and hang out. He said there were restroom problems when the library first opened and that police had to be assigned there full time. He stated that those problems are not going to be solved today, but that the Committee does need to talk about them.

Gill stated that the Committee should look at a specialized library with a specialized purpose and that a large hall is not always necessary to do that. He said there is a lot of opportunity out there in other places to use library facilities. He concluded that the City needs to bring the library into the modern century in an economical manner while using state-of-the-art high-tech equipment. He then stated that, in his personal opinion, it may be a good idea to look at Carnegie because he is always interested in saving money and avoiding new buildings. He said the existing library would require a lot of money because he had reviewed blueprints and looked at the heat and air, lighting, structure, roof, exterior, windows, and other aspects of the building. He said that depending on how far the City wants to go, it could almost build a new building if it fully addressed those items, and he added that remodeling costs are almost twice per square foot as new construction. He said that is a fact and that he does that type of work for a living.

Hooton stated that he had recently heard the library director speak at a meeting and had been very impressed with how libraries have evolved. He said that, having not been in a library in a long time, he was impressed with the programs taking place now. He stated that the library is adapting to the future and already has electronic books and other offerings, likely at little or no cost. He said he personally likes audiobooks and usually has to pay for them, so he finds it a great thing that the library offers them at little or no cost. He also said that if one looks at the monthly programs or newsletters put out by the library, there is a great deal happening in that building.

Hooton stated that what infuriates him most is the perception that the library is not a safe place. He said that cannot be acceptable and that the City should do something about it, whether that means more security or something else, because it should be a safe and quiet place for families. He said putting library services in three different

facilities seems like it would be very tough to manage and would create many moving parts. He added that, on a personal basis, he is really impressed with what the library has done. He acknowledged that everything needs improvements and refreshing from time to time, but he believes the amount of money being discussed for improvements pales in comparison to what it would take to move operations into other buildings or create a different structure.

Williams stated that she heard Chairman Warren mention the current building as an issue and that Neuwirth had mentioned the transfer center as a source of some of the issues. Williams said that she believes the City is in the process of considering changes to the transfer center and that doing so may help cut down some of the issues in that area. She said that when she goes to the library board meeting, the conditions around the library are noticeable and that people can be seen hanging around outside and near the entrance. She said the City may want to beef up security in that area so that citizens feel safer.

Williams also raised concern about employee job security for the individuals working in the library building. She said that should be taken into consideration. Williams stated that she did like the idea of STEM activities at FISTA and said she could envision keeping the current library while also having an extension or sub-library at the FISTA building because of the STEM programs and technology there. She stated that all of this has to be considered in light of funding, but she would like to see the current library remain where it is and possibly have an extension elsewhere.

Chairman Warren stated that when this process began, he did not have a preconceived idea of what needed to happen. He said he simply knows that money should not stand in the way of what the future needs to be. He stated that he does not think money is the primary consideration because if the community decides it wants something, that has been proven through PROPEL 2040 and other capital improvement efforts, the citizens will get behind what they want. He said he is not trying to disallow discussion of a \$35 million brand-new library and that, although he does not want to spend that amount, if that turns out to be the best solution and citizens support it, he would support it. He said that if the solution is separation of functions, he does not have a problem with that either, but he wants the most economical approach for the future. He stated that if the City spends \$6 million now, within five years it may need to spend another \$5 million or \$6 million, and the question is whether the City spends money incrementally or makes a larger investment and waits another 50 to 70 years before needing to do it again.

Herr stated that when she came to Lawton in 2012, she remembered wondering why the City did not have a branch library on the east side of town and that she would love to have libraries throughout the community. She said communities of similar size have more than the two locations Lawton has. Herr stated that the library recently got a locker at the branch library, making that branch effectively accessible 24/7 instead of just during open hours. She said that if more funding became available, the library would love to put lockers around town so people can access materials, print jobs, or 3D prints for pickup. She said there is still a need for physical interaction with the library.

Herr stated that technology continues to evolve and that the library is in the middle of that evolution. She said people can now request print jobs from the parking lot and have them handed to them curbside. However, she emphasized that not everything is digital and not everyone has access to digital services. She said that if someone loses access to a phone or needs a computer immediately, they come to the library.

Herr stated that she had been listening to the discussion about segmenting services and had been in a library class herself learning how to develop a box with a Glowforge. She said that class involved both children and adults and that one child's mother was in another class doing something else at the same time. She stated that the library truly serves everyone and that segmenting services would disconnect families that come in for multiple reasons at once.

Herr fully acknowledged that there are people sitting in the lobby and that it is not the best look when people enter the library. She said she had mentioned at the last meeting that she would love for the library not to have restroom facilities because the restrooms are a very popular service for LATS riders, Greyhound passengers, and others who are dropped off and have to wait hours for someone to pick them up. She said that if the City had a transfer station, it would change the look of the front of the library. Herr stated that she had stood in the lobby the previous day and would welcome suggestions for redesigning the lobby area, because she keeps looking at it and asking what can be done to transform the space. She said that until there is protected seating somewhere else besides the library, people will continue to need a place to sit.

Herr stated that glass in the meeting room is currently being redone and that if the front lobby area is ever replaced, perhaps the entrance could be changed and the lobby narrowed. She said she would welcome design suggestions. Herr stated that wherever the library is located, whether in the current building or elsewhere, it is accessible to all because the library does not card people at the door and does not ask about housing status. She said this is a problem across the United States and will continue to be a challenge. Herr stated that the library requested full-time security in next year's budget and noted that all three recreation centers have full-time security and City Hall has full-time security, but the library only has half-time security. She said the library would greatly value having a security person there the entire time it is open. Herr said staff do interact with people regularly and stay on top of behaviors, and people are removed when there is a problem, but the issue will continue no matter where the library is located.

Herr stated that Lawton is truly blessed to have as large a library building as it does. She said it is not out of line with the rest of the state and that she could provide numbers showing the footprints of other libraries. She said that because of the library's footprint, it has been able to offer many services and continue reducing the footprint devoted to books. She said books are not ever going to go away and that some people really like books, but the library continues to reduce that footprint. She added that the library wants to keep a substantial book collection for children because children need to

touch and feel actual books and not just read everything on tablets.

Herr stated that the size and flexibility of the building have been a joy because they allow the library to adapt and grow. She described one open space in the library that staff originally wondered what to do with, but which has allowed the library to do three different things within one year because of its openness and flexibility. She added that many shelves are on wheels, allowing staff to keep adapting the space.

Herr then spoke about the mission of the library, stating that she had been looking at quotes and thinking about what libraries are. She said everyone has a different idea in their heart of what libraries mean and that people often tell stories about their childhood library experiences. She acknowledged that there is a “feel-good” aspect to libraries, but said she was hearing that the Committee wants more than a feel-good feeling and wants data and focus on mission. Herr stated that the library is there to serve people and help with lifelong learning, which is a broad concept. She said she and Councilwoman Williams had talked before the meeting about adult literacy and GED issues, and she clarified that while the library helps people with education, it does not always provide the education directly. She explained that at one point, the library received a grant that helped people get their high school diplomas, and the library was able to provide that service for about 30 people. However, the grant ran out, and the library is no longer providing high school diplomas. She said there are places in town, such as Great Plains and Lawton Public Schools, that serve that need, and the library helps connect people to those resources. She said the library often serves as one of the places people go to get questions answered and be guided to other resources.

Herr stated that the library deals with all kinds of questions, including technology, health, medical, and legal questions, and sometimes as simple as making a copy or figuring out how to ride the yellow bus line. She said that when one helps people all day long, one is constantly trying to determine what resources are in the community and connect people to those resources. She reiterated that the library provides many services and has the space to continue adapting as services change over the next 20 years.

Herr stated that Chairman Warren had repeatedly mentioned \$6 million and clarified that the amount in the CIP 2040 for the library is \$2 million. Chairman Warren responded that after the last meeting she had given him a list of current known needs totaling about \$6 million. Herr said the list was labeled as a “pie in the sky wish list.” Chairman Warren stated that was exactly what the Committee is supposed to be considering, because in his view it was not simply a pie-in-the-sky list, but representative of continuing needs that would require the City to keep spending money in pieces if it does not decide where it ultimately wants to end up.

Neuwirth asked Herr, as a library professional, to address Carnegie Library specifically.

Herr stated that when there was discussion of temporarily moving operations, the library held an event at Carnegie in November to see whether the space would work for

a class. She said the building is not ADA friendly at all and that using it was rough, including the restrooms. She said she knows work is being done to upgrade the building, but that for children, its two floors, line-of-sight issues, and accessibility challenges make it rough. She said there is a reason the new building was constructed in 1973, because Carnegie is not conducive to any kind of large group activities. She said Arts and Humanities has done a good job trying to utilize the space and that there are three classes this spring, but the library did not view Carnegie as an ideal place. Herr added that the library has instead been using the Farmers Market for classes and has also been having classes at FISTA. She said that more broadly, one of the things libraries know is that people want the library to come to them, and therefore the library does a lot of outreach. She cited story time at Chick-fil-A every month as an example and said it is hugely popular. She said the library will continue to provide outreach and programming in places like FISTA, the Farmers Market, and other places around town, but reiterated that the library was not impressed with Carnegie as a location for major library services.

Gill stated that he would like to clarify that the Committee is really talking about two items: security and the future of the library. He said security is going to be needed regardless of whether the City builds something new, remodels the existing building, or does something else. He said the City does have a security problem, but that can be discussed at a later meeting. He stated that the primary thing to talk about today is what the City is going to do for the library.

Gill said it is common sense that the City needs to know what it is looking at before it can really decide what to spend money on. He said the Committee has already had several meetings, so it probably should be looking for some feedback on size and direction. He said the library was built years ago on old data that was current at that time but is not current today. He asked whether the City still needs a building that big, whether it needs to cut the building down and stay there, whether it needs to go to Carnegie, whether ADA and other factors would rule that out, or whether it needs to go somewhere else such as FISTA. He said there are many options, but before anything can happen, the City needs to know what it is looking for and how it is going to go about that. He stated that the City is talking about spending anywhere from \$2.5 million to \$4.5 million, and now perhaps \$6 million, and he described that as typical because when someone builds a house or any new structure, they cannot just start and then keep adding rooms or forgotten pieces. He said the City needs to know the end result it is looking for. He concluded that the Committee needs a lot of feedback from library staff, who are doing a good job, and needs to figure out exactly what it will take in terms of new equipment, media, digital equipment, traffic flow, how many people are being served now, and what that will look like in the future.

Hooton stated that when he was talking earlier, he had focused on audiobooks, but that the library is much more than that. He said he remains impressed with how the library is adapting. He stated that spending somewhere between \$2 million and \$6 million on the current library appears to him to be money well spent for the short run, meaning perhaps 10 to 15 years, as compared to the complexity of several different

facilities or a completely new building.

Brown stated that as he had listened to the discussion, he thought the Committee was getting to the point where it needed to remember it has a 120-day requirement to go back to the Council. He said the first thing he wanted to say was that no one should take the discussion as negative toward the current library. He said he thinks the current library is absolutely outstanding and that he takes his four grandkids there all the time, so the library is number one for him.

Brown stated that this has been a healthy discussion because the environment people live in is changing, whether one is older or a grandchild, and the City needs to refine its thinking about how the library will evolve. He said there are a couple of things the Committee could go back to the Council with immediately. First, he said the City needs to get security established at the library. Second, he said the City needs to get the LATS situation addressed. He stated that those are two things the Committee could recommend immediately.

Brown then said the Committee does not currently have a concrete enough definition of what the future library should be to make a decision. He suggested that the City could identify three areas or alternatives: one, going to the public for bond approval for a new library; two, continuing to improve the existing one; and three, looking at alternatives. He said all of those would require heavy engineering review, risk analysis, and cost tradeoffs, and that his fundamental issue is that he does not think the Committee has a clear enough vision of how services will evolve. He gave 3D printing as an example, saying that while the library currently does that, he can now go to five places in town to do 3D printing, so the City must be more efficient about what constitutes future library services. He said the Committee could go back to the Council and say there are three alternatives but not enough definition to make a decision, while also saying there are two concrete things that should get done.

Williams stated that she had omitted one thought earlier and suggested that an online survey could be given to citizens to find out what they think and what they feel their needs are. She said perhaps the survey could include some of the options Brown had mentioned. Chairman Warren responded that such a survey could potentially happen at some point, but that would be for the Council to authorize, not this Committee.

3. Review the status of the Library of Tomorrow Initiative and consider requesting clarifying direction and a timeline adjustment from the City Council.

Chairman Warren said the discussion had helped narrow down what the Committee really needs to be talking about and that more time is needed. He said it would be his suggestion that the Committee make a motion to go back to Council and ask for more time and provide a report on where the Committee stands and why more time is needed. He also suggested that it might be helpful to have some reading material or input from a futurist, explaining that the City Clerk had connections with a futurist and that what the Committee really needs is guidance on future technology, movements in

information technology, and where libraries are going. He said that information could help the Committee drill down on what 2050 and 2075 may look like.

Blazek-Scherler stated that she would be happy to help with that and advised the Committee that the futurist's name is Daniel Burrus. She said he had done work with the City of Lawton and Rotary before and that she had a few phone calls available with him and would be happy to get that information for the Committee.

Neuwirth suggested that Herr also attends state and national library meetings each year and has a great deal of information that she could share with the Committee as well.

Chairman Warren said that is what the Committee needs to do and that part of the future discussion must also be not just what the library will be, but what the citizens of Lawton want the library to be in the future, because that could be very different from what citizens in Portland, Taos, Oklahoma City, or elsewhere want. He said it is up to Lawton's citizens to decide what they want their library to be and then the City must determine the best way to make that happen. He then asked for a motion to go back to Council, provide an overview of where the Committee is, describe the possibilities discussed, and ask for more time and direction.

Motion by Sherene L Williams, Second by George Gill, to provide an overview to the Council and ask for their direction, if they want to clarify the direction that they want us to go, and if they are willing to give us a different timeline.

Gill asked whether the discussion was about mission, design, or both, and Chairman Warren responded that it was both, because the design could be based on the mission.

Brown stated that, as he was listening to the discussion, he agreed the Committee needed to go back to Council, but he raised a more specific question about whether some of the existing building improvements would still need to occur regardless of the long-term decision. Brown asked whether if the City continues to own the current building no matter what happens to the library, the City would still need to spend the approximately \$2 million already programmed for the ceiling and lighting improvements. Brown stated that this was the question he would have if he were sitting on the Council.

Brown then stated that it seemed to him the Committee would likely need to be reconstituted into a more formal group to do the kind of long-range work being discussed, including stratifying needs, doing research, and thinking not only about what citizens want, but about where future library services are headed. Brown stated that he saw several separate issues that could be presented back to the Council: first, the possibility of addressing the ceiling issue now if that work would be needed either way; second, the need to resolve the LATS-related issue; third, the need to establish security at the library; and fourth, the possibility of a more formal future-planning effort to define what the Library of the Future should be.

Chairman Warren responded that Brown was exactly right that the matter may ultimately go back to Council in a way that results in this Committee having completed its work and a different committee being established if Council wishes to continue the process. Chairman Warren stated that the ceiling issue was not necessarily something that had to be done immediately and said that if the library were ultimately moved out of the building, the current building could potentially be gutted and repurposed for another use or torn down. Chairman Warren stated that one of the reasons he believed this committee was created was to avoid spending the \$2 million on the ceiling before knowing where the City ultimately intends to go.

Gill then responded to Brown's question by explaining the ceiling project in more detail. Gill stated that he had served on the engineering committee that helped with the design work and explained that the current plans and specifications for the approximately \$2.5 million project are not simply to repair a failing ceiling, but are really a redesign of the interior lighting system for library use. Gill stated that the current lighting is outdated, proprietary, and inadequate, meaning it is difficult to repair and would need to be replaced if the building continues to be used as a library. Gill stated that the planned ceiling system would consist of a specialized library-oriented lighting package, including floating light pods, and that the project was designed specifically for library operations. Gill stated that if the building were to be used for something other than a library, this particular ceiling and lighting design likely would not be the most efficient or cost-effective option.

Brown added that even if the library moved out and the City chose to put another function, such as offices, into the building, the City would still likely need to redo the building envelope because it would not make sense to move offices into an inefficient building if there were an opportunity to improve it. Brown also stated that one of his concerns is that the ceiling has not yet been pulled down, so there is still uncertainty about what might be discovered once work begins.

Gill noted that even if the building was repurposed for another office, the current design is specifically for a library. If the intent were to use it for another office, a less expensive design could be used.

Warren stated that, based on what he had heard about similar buildings, there is a possibility that mold or other hidden issues could be found, which could substantially increase the cost. Chairman Warren stated that when he sees a \$2.5 million estimate, he worries it could quickly become a \$4 million or \$5 million project, and that this concern is one of the reasons he wanted the Committee to get its arms around the long-term plan first.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: George Gill, Sherene L Williams, Bob Weger, Kirby Brown, Lane Hooton. NAY: Patty Neuwirth. Motion Passed.

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."

Neuwirth asked if the committee would consider meeting at the library sometime. She noted that if the committee is talking about that building and there is a question, the answer would be right there.

Chairman Warren stated that decision would be up to the City Council, but his deal is that it's not really a question of what the library is doing right now; it's a question of what they will do in the future.

Gill stated that everyone has been to the library quite a few times. He said he was wondering a reason on why the committee would want to meet there or if there was something that they needed to see.

Neuwirth stated that there is probably plenty that some of the committee already knows, but the library is more accessible for the public, and the library is what the committee is talking about.

Blazek-Scherler noted that the direction provided in item 3 would be on the February 24, 2025 City Council agenda.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to adjourn. AYE: Patty Neuwirth, George Gill, Sherene L Williams, Bob Weger, Kirby Brown, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07AM.

A citizen commented that she would like to make a comment.

Blazek-Scherler stated for procedural purposes, the meeting would need to be reopened.

Motion by Sherene L Williams, Second by George Gill, to reopen the meeting. AYE: Patty Neuwirth, George Gill, Sherene L Williams, Bob Weger, Kirby Brown, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

The meeting was reopened at 11:07AM.

Annette Wiseman-Vaughn, citizen, asked where meetings are posted because she had missed notice of the meeting and only learned of it because Mr. Maroon shared it. She said she had looked at the weekly events page for Lawton City government and did not see the meeting mentioned there. In response, Blazek-Scherler explained that meeting

agendas are posted on the City of Lawton website homepage under the council meetings or meeting agendas tab and that all public meetings and agendas are listed there, with agendas legally required to be posted 24 hours in advance. Brown added that, in his five weeks of experience, the most efficient way to follow meetings is through the GoLawton app, which is updated daily and includes meeting notices, agendas, and agenda packets. Wiseman-Vaughn responded that she would try harder and acknowledged she did not go to the website every day.

Wiseman-Vaughn then stated that the Carnegie Building is currently being used and that the steps are finished and a Black History Month display is there. She said it is absolutely not ADA compliant for anybody and said, in her opinion, the City of Lawton is not very good about ADA generally, noting that even the wheelchair access button in the current meeting building was not working that day. She also said that while technology has its place, it is extremely dangerous for children, and she described how happy her granddaughter was to get a library card and said the child will not have a cell phone for years because of safety concerns. She encouraged the Committee to reduce the footprint for adults if desired, but not to reduce the physical children's collection. She suggested the Committee look at the Kansas City library and stressed that the current library staff, including Herr and the staff present, have done an exceptional job and are one of the community's greatest resources. She said splitting the library into multiple places would fracture the experience for families who may want to do different things in one visit. She also commented that the person who had previously been in charge of LATS was no longer around and said the library had nothing to do with LATS and that issue could take 20 years to fix.

Williams announced a library event, stating that on Monday, February 23, at 6:00 p.m., the Buffalo Soldiers would be at the Lawton Public Library to speak about their legacy and that the public was invited.

Susan Kramer, citizen, said she wanted to bring to the Committee's attention the fact that the voters approved PROPEL 2040 and that a number of older buildings are included in that plan for renovation, including Lawton Community Theatre, McMahan Auditorium, the Armory, and the museum. She noted that those buildings were built in the 1950s and 1960s and that the current library building is younger than many of them. She also noted that the building in which the Committee was meeting was built in 1909 or 1910 and had been repurposed at great expense, and that the dome on that building is receiving \$2 million in repairs, while the municipal golf course is also receiving \$2 million. She said the library is the only PROPEL project being singled out for this kind of "committee of tomorrow" scrutiny and that meetings and delays are consuming time while prices continue to rise. She said the voters approved the ceiling in 2024 and that other projects are already moving forward, and she questioned why the library is being treated differently.

Kramer further said that the idea of moving services back into the Carnegie Building is outrageous because of accessibility concerns and questioned how many members had toured it or used its bathrooms. She said libraries are not becoming obsolete and are in

fact more important than ever in smaller towns because they bridge the digital divide by offering computers, internet access, educational programs, and support for individuals facing challenges. She said libraries also serve as community hubs for gatherings and learning. She concluded by saying the library is very functional and important to this community, that there are articles every week about its programs and services, and that she did not understand why the City was even having these discussions. She said, "Just let us have our new ceiling."

Jim Maroon, citizen, said the library's genealogy collection is, in his experience and observation of other genealogy researchers, the best in Oklahoma outside the Historical Society in Oklahoma City, with the next best genealogy library he knows of being in Dallas. He said that if collections are moved around, people will only have access to the materials located at each specific site during the time that site is open, whereas now they have access to everything the library has when the library is open. He added that it seemed to him that there may be another agenda behind the discussion that was not being openly discussed, and that this troubled him because it did not sound like the discussion was centered solely on what is best for the community or the library.

Kenra Ford, citizen, said she wanted it on the record that while the roadmap and mission for the future library are being developed, the Committee should not lose sight of items that need to be resolved right now for the safety of the building, the community, and the staff, and to prevent disruption of service. She urged that a process be in place so that interim steps such as ceiling or lighting issues can still be addressed because the future of the library is years away even if planning starts immediately.

After Kenra Ford's comment, Gill indicated a desire to respond, but Blazek-Scherler explained that comments from the committee are not allowed on items that are not listed on the agenda.

Chairman Warren then stated that he did not know how the discussion had shifted from planning for the library's future to the perception that the City was going to close the library or take everything away. He said he did not know anyone on the Committee who was unwilling to do what needs to be done or even to spend \$35 million if that ultimately proves to be the right answer, and said he did not think anyone on the Committee had a preconceived idea. He then entertained a final motion to adjourn.

Motion by Sherene L Williams, Second by George Gill, to adjourn. AYE: Patty Neuwirth, George Gill, Sherene L Williams, Bob Weger, Kirby Brown, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:24AM.

Item Title:

Consider discussing and reviewing the February 24, 2026 City Council motion regarding the Library of Tomorrow Committee, including its appendices and prior Chairperson guidance.

Initiator: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Information Source: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Background:

This item provides committee members with background information regarding the establishment and mission of the Library of Tomorrow Committee, as directed by the City Council.

The City Council action taken on February 24, 2026 establishing the current charge of the Committee is as follows:

Approved keeping the same committee, redefining that the committee shall be charged with conducting fact-based evaluations of the cost, feasibility, and long-term viability of rehabilitating existing library facilities to remain fully functional through the year 2075. The committee shall operate within an open timeline and is required to provide an initial progress report to the City Council at 120 days, which shall include a summary of work completed, preliminary observations, and an estimate of any additional time required to complete its work. Subsequent reporting intervals may be informed by that estimate. The committee shall operate in accordance with the committee charge, definitions of “functional into 2075,” and process guardrails attached hereto as Attachments A, B, and C, which are incorporated by reference for guidance and implementation. The committee shall serve as a fact-finding body and shall present its findings to the City Council without advocating for a predetermined outcome. (Exhibits A, B, and C are attached); dissolved the timeline previously required of the committee; and accepted the Mayor’s nomination of Kirby Brown as Chairman.

The Committee is reminded that the initial 120-day progress report is due to the City Council at the June 23, 2026 meeting.

Correlation to the True North Statement:

Our Pursuit of Excellence

Exhibit:

Excerpt of 02/24/26 City Council Meeting Minutes; Appendices A, B, C to City Council's motion; Councilman Warren's thoughts

Key Issues:

N/A

Funding Source:

N/A

Recommended Action:

Discussion only. No action to be taken.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Excerpt from 02.24.26 CC Minutes
2. Exhibit A- Library of Tomorrow Committee Charge- 02.24.26
3. Exhibit B Definition of Functional into 2075- 02.24.26
4. Exhibit C - Process Guardrails and Methodology- 02.24.26
5. Randy Warrens 2.24.26 Comments During Council

Excerpt from February 24, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes

ITEM 25. Receive an update from the Library of Tomorrow Committee, discuss the Committee's structure, scope, and timeline, and take action as deemed necessary.

Warren opened by stating he did not have a whole lot to report and explained the committee needed more time. He said he was unsure whether the lack of progress was due to his own failure as chair or because the committee's mission had not been correctly spelled out. Warren stated the discussion had evolved into a situation where, in his words, "if we're going to talk about this, we have to hate the library," and he emphasized that was not the committee's intent. He clarified that the intent was to determine whether it was prudent to spend approximately \$2 million on a building without understanding what other issues might exist in the facility and what the building and service model might look like in 2075. Warren stated the committee had not accomplished that objective.

Warren then read a prepared statement summarizing the committee's understanding of the situation. He stated that over several years the City has engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the needs, condition, role, and future of library facilities and services, and a standing committee had been established to explore the concept of the library of the future, with a primary focus on maintaining safe, accessible, and operational facilities for the public. Through that process, Warren stated a list of roughly \$6 million in identified needs had been assembled, including life safety improvements, mechanical and electrical systems, accessibility upgrades, building envelope repairs, site work, and selected interior improvements. He stated those figures had been acknowledged by all parties as preliminary and represented a collection of admitted and suspected needs rather than a validated capital plan, noting many estimates were not developed through comprehensive architectural or engineering assessment. Warren stated the estimates were gathered incrementally over time, often from informal input from tradespeople or consultants responding to a specific maintenance issue or other issues, and he described how newer technologies had been integrated piecemeal into older systems as interim measures with the shared understanding they were intended to get by rather than provide long term solutions.

Warren stated that beyond the identified items, significant unknowns remain because concealed systems and components have not been fully evaluated, and additional issues could emerge through professional assessment, including potential structural concerns, environmental concerns such as mold or moisture intrusion, code compliance gaps, and other latent deficiencies not visible through routine maintenance. Warren also stated that nationwide patterns of library use are changing, with in-person usage declining in many traditional service areas and demand increasing for digital access, online resources, and remote services. He said these shifts raise fundamental questions about how space is used, which activities are core to the library's mission, and how resources can be aligned to encourage digital literacy and access while reducing emphasis on

activities not directly library focused. Warren said the committee's work highlighted tension between continuing to invest in an aging centralized facility model and reexamining how services might be delivered more efficiently and effectively in the future, including consideration of service duplication, operational cost, partnerships, and alternative models that may expand access while reducing long-term financial burdens.

Warren stated that recognizing both the scale of known needs and the breadth of unresolved questions, the committee determined a more structured and professionally supported fact-finding process is necessary. He suggested forming a new Library Facilities Review Committee to evaluate not only the cost of rehabilitating existing facilities, but also the functional role of the library itself, anticipated service demands, and realistic options for delivering library services through the year 2075. He emphasized the intent would not be to advance a predetermined outcome but to ensure future policy and capital decisions are grounded in verified information, transparent assumptions, and a clear understanding of mission, public value, risk, and long term cost.

Warren added that during committee discussion, someone felt the committee was singling out the library, and he said that was not the case. Rather, he believed this could be the first time the City is doing it right instead of throwing money at a problem without fully thinking through whether the investment is truly needed or whether an entirely different plan is warranted. Warren referenced an example from the past where boxes of light bulbs sat unused because implementing them would have required system changes, and he described that as evidence the City does not always plan well. Warren stated it was his hope the current committee could be disbanded and replaced with a committee with a clearer mission. He stressed he had nothing against the library or its employees, described it as a great place, but stated he believed it will not be the same in 2075 and that without planning it will remain cobbled together with the City simply hoping it continues to operate. Warren concluded by reiterating he wished he had more to report, but the discussions had largely remained at "we like the library," which he said does not solve the underlying problem.

Mayor Booker asked Warren whether he had a clearer idea of the mission he wanted and questioned why Council could not simply give that mission to the same committee. Mayor Booker also asked whether Warren had any suggestions about the committee's composition. Warren responded that he knows very little about buildings and engineering and stated he would prefer not to serve as chair of that committee. Warren said he believed the committee needs professionals who can make initial determinations about who should be contacted, why they should be contacted, and what should be asked of them. Warren explained he is the type of person who defaults to calling a ceiling contractor because he does not know enough to determine who should be involved. He said the committee needs members with professional experience, potentially in building trades or related areas. Warren also stated he believes the City needs a clear understanding of what the building holds before spending \$2 million on a ceiling project, and he stated he is terrified of what

might be discovered when the ceiling is removed, noting the possibility of mold or other issues that would not be known until demolition begins. He described the complications of relocating library materials and then discovering problems mid-project, requiring a stop and re-evaluation.

Mayor Booker responded that he appreciated the concerns but stated he would rather leave many of those decisions to the committee. Mayor Booker said he wanted to establish the committee's scope, meaning what problem it is trying to solve and what Council wants it to do. Mayor Booker stated he believed the City could keep the same committee and that the committee could call in professionals for advice as needed, or could bring back a recommendation to hire someone. Mayor Booker reiterated that his primary concern was the committee's scope and what Council wants the committee to solve.

Warren responded that while he had not labeled it scope, he had drafted what he would consider the committee's charge. Warren stated the purpose of a Library Facilities Review Committee would be to serve as the City's independent fact-finding body, distinguish between temporary stopgap measures and long term functional solutions, and evaluate building systems holistically, including mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, envelope, life safety, accessibility, and technology infrastructure. He stated the committee should require professional input when needed and identify assumptions materially affecting cost, including building footprint, occupancy, service delivery models, and operating hours. Warren stated that as in-person visits decline and digital services increase, operations must adapt. Otherwise, the footprint becomes too large, and the library begins adding services that are not truly library services. Warren said the committee must present findings separating verified needs from wants, identify actual risks, evaluate peer cities, and review capital and operating costs and service offerings. He specifically referenced Norman as an example, stating that Norman's library is closed due to mold, and described that as part of his concern about unknown conditions in the Lawton facility. Warren also stated the committee should examine service duplication and consider alternative delivery models, including possible multi-county systems and broader service options for rural areas, potentially supported through state funding mechanisms. Warren noted the County currently pays the City approximately \$50,000 earmarked for books and suggested that could be part of broader discussions. He further stated the committee should analyze cost-effectiveness, including cost per citizen and cost per participant, develop metrics on usage, and acknowledged there are security issues that Council may need to address separately from the committee's work.

Mayor Booker stated that what Warren was reading sounded like it could form the basis of a motion to provide direction to the committee. Mayor Booker asked Warren to reread the charge without commentary and stated that if Warren offered it as a motion and received a second, Council could discuss and move forward with a clear charge.

Motion by Randy Warren to disband the current Library of Tomorrow Committee and to establish another committee, possibly called the Library Facilities Review Committee, that is charged with conducting a fact-based evaluation of the cost, feasibility, and long-term viability of rehabilitating existing library facilities to remain fully functional through the year 2075. The committee shall operate within an open timeline and is required to provide an initial progress report to the City Council at 120 days, which shall include a summary of work completed, preliminary observations, and an estimate of any additional time required to complete the work. Subsequent reporting intervals may be informed by that estimate. The committee shall operate in accordance with the committee charge, definition of function into 2075, and process guardrails attached hereto as Attachments A, B, and C, implementation of which are incorporated by reference for guidance and implementation. The committee shall serve as a fact-finding body and shall present its findings to the City Council without advocating for a predetermined outcome.

Mayor Booker asked for a second. No second was offered, and Mayor Booker declared the motion died for lack of a second. Mayor Booker then opened the floor for discussion and suggested that other committee members might weigh in.

Williams asked whether the Council could make a substitute motion. The Mayor clarified that because the previous motion had died for lack of a second, the body would need a new motion rather than a substitute motion.

Motion by Sherene L Williams, Second by Bob Weger, to keep the same committee with the scope described by Warren.

Epps stated that, for his own edification, he wanted clarification regarding how decisions are currently made within the library structure. He acknowledged that there is a Library Director and asked how new ideas and direction are determined. He asked whether decisions are made solely by the Library Director or whether there is a formal process or advisory body involved.

Library Director Kristin Herr responded that the Lawton Public Library has a Public Library Advisory Board that meets ten times per year. She explained that prior building projects, including the 2020 restroom remodel and the ceiling design process, were taken to the Library Board for discussion throughout those processes. She stated that the environmental review conducted around 2017 was performed prior to remodeling the restrooms to determine whether asbestos was present in the building. She stated that the report did not list mold as a problem, though no guarantee could be made. She further explained that the McMahan Foundation funded the ceiling study, that the

building operates on a five by five lighting grid, and that Guernsey prepared a design plan. She stated that as of November the project was design ready.

Ratliff clarified that daily operations are overseen by the Library Director and Library Board, while resource decisions are addressed through the City Manager's office in consultation with the Council through the annual budget process. He stated that the purpose of the committee was to evaluate whether the previously referenced two million dollar capital investment was prudent in the existing facility.

Epps asked whether the Council was changing that focus.

Mayor Booker responded that the intent was not to change the purpose but to define it more clearly.

Warren acknowledged that the "Library of Tomorrow" framing may not have produced the intended focus.

Ratliff requested that the Council hear from Patty Neuwirth, who serves on both the Library Board and the Library of Tomorrow Committee. Mayor Booker recognized Ms. Neuwirth.

Patty Neuwirth stated that the study process began four years earlier and that the decision not to replace obsolete ballasts was part of that evaluation. She noted that the Council had allocated two million dollars for the ceiling project and that the library representatives were excited about moving forward. She stated that the Library Board discusses the future of library services monthly and described Kristin Herr as highly engaged in researching future library trends. She stated that she did not understand why the City would not proceed with fixing the ceiling, though she expressed no objection to studying long-term direction. She conveyed concern that the matter had continued without resolution.

Warren asked whether there was an immediate safety issue with the ceiling.

Herr responded that the building contains more than one thousand fluorescent light fixtures spaced approximately every five feet. She explained that while some ceiling tiles are old and have occasionally fallen, the primary issue involves outdated lighting infrastructure and inefficiency rather than an imminent safety hazard.

Mayor Booker stated that the matter before the Council was to provide direction to the committee

and allow it to return with recommendations. He reiterated that there was a motion and second on the floor to keep the same committee and refine its mission.

Mayor Booker stated that he understood Warren wished to step down as chairman. The Mayor proposed a friendly amendment asking that the committee remain in place and that Kirby Brown be appointed as chairman.

The Mayor asked Williams and Weger whether they would accept that friendly amendment. Both confirmed.

AMENDED MOTION: to keep the same committee with the scope described by Warren and to appoint Kirby Brown as the chairman.

Hooton spoke and stated that he viewed the issue as having both short term and long term components. He stated that while the long term question of what the library will look like decades from now is important, he believed addressing current lighting deficiencies is also important. He stated that he recently visited the library and was impressed with the programming but not with the lighting conditions. He expressed that the community deserves improved lighting while broader planning discussions continue.

Mayor Booker stated that should be discussed at the next committee meeting, assuming the committee continues to move forward.

Ratliff then requested an additional friendly amendment to clearly dissolve the prior time limitation that had been placed on the Library of Tomorrow Committee, noting that it had originally been established with a 120-day timeframe.

Mayor Booker asked whether the motion maker would accept that clarification. Councilmember Williams agreed. Councilmember Weger, as seconder, agreed to the amendment.

The motion before the Council, as amended, was to keep the same committee, redefining that the committee is charged with conducting a fact-based evaluation of the cost, feasibility, and long-term viability of rehabilitating existing library facilities to remain fully functional through the year 2075. The committee shall operate within an open timeline and is required to provide an initial progress report to the City Council at 120 days, which shall include a summary of work completed, preliminary observations, and an estimate of any additional time required to complete the work.

Subsequent reporting intervals may be informed by that estimate. The committee shall operate in accordance with the committee's charge, definition of function into 2075, and process guardrails attached hereto as Attachments A, B, and C, implementation of which are incorporated by reference for guidance and implementation. The committee shall serve as a fact-finding body and shall present its findings to the City Council without advocating for a predetermined outcome; appoint Kirby Brown as the chairman of the Library of Tomorrow Committee; and to dissolve the previously imposed timeline of completion.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Lane Hooton, Taron Epps, Kirby Brown, Tiffiney Dimery, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Attachment A — Committee Charge

Purpose The Library Facilities Review Committee shall serve as the City's independent fact-finding body to establish a credible, professionally supported understanding of the long-term functional, financial, and operational implications of rehabilitating existing library facilities through the year 2075. **Scope of Work**
The Committee shall:

1. Distinguish between temporary stop-gap measures and long-term functional solutions.
2. Evaluate building systems holistically, including mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, envelope, life safety, accessibility, and technology infrastructure.
3. Require professional input from qualified architects, engineers, inspectors, or facility assessors where material conclusions are drawn.
4. Identify assumptions that materially affect cost, including building footprint, occupancy, service delivery model, and operating hours.
5. Present findings that clearly separate verified needs, estimated costs, risks and uncertainties, and available options.
6. Evaluate peer cities of comparable size and context, including facility size, capital and operating costs, service offerings, and service delivery models.
7. Examine service duplication and identify opportunities to reduce redundancy, improve efficiency, and increase public access.
8. Evaluate alternative library service delivery models, including partnerships, shared facilities, and non-traditional approaches.

9. Analyze cost effectiveness, including cost per citizen, cost per participant, and the relationship between cost and service outcomes. 10. Consider both facility needs and the evolving function of the library, recognizing that building form should follow service purpose. Exclusions The Committee is not tasked with advocating for a specific outcome, but with establishing a credible factual basis upon which policy decisions may be made.

Attachment B — Definition of “Functional into 2075”

For purposes of this review, “functional into 2075” shall mean that a facility:

1. Meets or exceeds applicable building, fire, life-safety, accessibility, and energy codes, including reasonably foreseeable future code evolution.
2. Supports modern library service delivery, including digital access, flexible programming, security, and community use patterns.
3. Operates reliably without dependence on deferred maintenance or temporary system workarounds.
4. Integrates building systems cohesively, avoiding piecemeal layering of new technology onto obsolete infrastructure.
5. Maintains reasonable lifecycle costs, including maintenance, energy consumption, and system replacement intervals.
6. Provides resilience to foreseeable environmental, climate, and infrastructure stressors.

A facility that merely remains open, or that relies on repeated interim fixes, shall not be considered functional under this definition.

Attachment C — Process Guardrails & Methodology

To preserve analytical integrity, the Committee shall adhere to the following guardrails:

1. Anecdotal or informal estimates provided during routine maintenance activities shall not be treated as validated capital costs.
2. All cost estimates shall clearly identify source, level of design or analysis, and key assumptions or exclusions.
3. Estimates shall be normalized to a common baseline where feasible to avoid incompatible scope aggregation.
4. The Committee shall clearly distinguish costs contingent upon maintaining the current facility configuration from those dependent on alternative service models.
5. Wishlist or aspirational items shall be clearly separated from investments required to meet the functional definition.
6. Areas of uncertainty shall be explicitly disclosed.
7. The Committee shall avoid defining solutions solely around preservation of existing facilities without evaluating reasonable alternatives.
8. Findings shall distinguish between maintaining current conditions, improving functionality, and transforming service delivery.
9. Periodic reporting shall focus on progress and learning rather than artificial deadlines.
10. Recommendations shall be supported by comparative data, professional analysis, and clearly stated assumptions.

These guardrails are intended to ensure transparency, credibility, and usefulness of the Committee's findings

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Library Facilities, Services, and Long-Term Planning

Over the past several years, the City has engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the needs, condition, role, and future of its library facilities and services. A standing committee was established to explore the concept of a “library of the future,” with a primary focus on maintaining safe, accessible, and operational facilities for the public.

Through this process, a list of approximately six million dollars in identified needs has been assembled. These items include life-safety improvements, mechanical and electrical systems, accessibility upgrades, building envelope repairs, site work, and selected interior improvements. These figures have been acknowledged by all parties as preliminary and represent a collection of admitted or suspected needs rather than a validated capital plan. Importantly, many of these cost estimates were not developed through a comprehensive architectural or engineering assessment. Instead, they were gathered incrementally over time, often based on informal input from tradespeople or consultants responding to specific maintenance issues. In several cases, newer technologies have been intentionally piecemealed onto older infrastructure as interim measures, with the shared understanding that these actions were taken to “get by” rather than to provide long-term solutions. Beyond the identified items, significant unknowns remain. The current condition of concealed systems and building components has not been fully evaluated, and additional issues may emerge through professional assessment, including but not limited to structural concerns, environmental conditions such as mold or moisture intrusion, code compliance gaps, or other latent deficiencies not visible through routine maintenance.

At the same time, nationwide patterns of library use are changing. In-person usage has declined in many traditional service areas, while demand for digital access, online resources, and remote services has increased. These shifts raise fundamental questions about how library space is used, which activities are core to the library’s mission, and how resources can be aligned to encourage digital literacy and access while reducing emphasis on activities that are not directly library-focused. The current committee’s work has highlighted the tension between continuing to invest in an aging, centralized facility model and

reexamining how library services might be delivered more efficiently and effectively in the future. This includes consideration of service duplication, operational costs, partnerships, and alternative models that may expand access while reducing long-term financial burden.

Recognizing both the scale of the admitted needs and the breadth of unresolved questions, the Committee has determined that a more structured and professionally supported fact-finding process is necessary. A new Library Facilities Review Committee should be formed to evaluate not only the cost of rehabilitating existing facilities, but also the functional role of the library itself, anticipated service demands, and realistic options for delivering library services sustainably through the year 2075. The intent of this process is not to advance a predetermined outcome, but to ensure that future policy and capital decisions are grounded in verified information, transparent assumptions, and a clear understanding of mission, public value, risk, and long-term cost.

Item Title:

Discuss whether the current CIP-funded, voter-approved replacement of the ceiling and fire suppression system is included within the Committee’s charge and guidelines as outlined in Agenda Item 1, and consider approving a draft item for submission to the City Council.

Initiator: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Information Source: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Background:

This item provides for discussion regarding approximately \$2,000,000.00 in current CIP funding that is programmed for ceiling replacement, light fixture replacement, and the installation of fire suppression equipment.

The Committee will consider whether to recommend that the City Council authorize the restart and use of these funds.

Correlation to the True North Statement:

Transparency and Trust

Exhibit:

None

Key Issues:

N/A

Funding Source:

CIP Funds

Recommended Action:

Provide direction to draft a council agenda item to consider directing and authorizing city staff to proceed with necessary ceiling repairs at the existing library facility, addressing identified safety and operational concerns, with a total project budget not to exceed \$2,000,000.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Item Title:

Discuss a comprehensive review of curent library building infrastructure needs to remain viable for the next fifty (50) years and take action as deemed necessary.

Initiator: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Information Source: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Background:

This item provides for discussion regarding the need for a comprehensive review of the current library building infrastructure to evaluate its ability to remain viable over the next 50 years.

The Committee may consider recommending that the City Council place an agenda item directing City staff to procure and coordinate a full professional assessment of the existing library building. Such an assessment would include structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life safety, accessibility, environmental, and building envelope evaluations, along with associated cost estimates, with the goal of determining long-term viability through the year 2075.

While this type of assessment aligns with the Committee’s charge, the Committee does not have a dedicated funding source to carry out such work.

Correlation to the True North Statement:

Our Pursuit of Excellence

Exhibit:

None.

Key Issues:

N/A

Funding Source:

N/A

Recommended Action:

Direct staff to draft a council agenda item to discuss directing staff to procure a comprehensive professional assessment of the existing library building, focused solely on facility condition, system integrity, and long term viability through 2075. The review should include structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life safety, accessibility, environmental, and building envelope evaluations, with the goal of determining long term viability and costs.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Item Title:

Consider directing staff to have the Communications and Marketing Department conduct a citizen survey to ascertain public input regarding the library and consider approving proposed survey items.

Initiator: Kirby Brown, Councilman - Ward 3

Information Source: Sherene L Williams, Councilwoman - Ward 7

Background:

This item provides for discussion regarding directing staff to have the Communications and Marketing Department conduct a citizen survey to ascertain public input regarding the library.

The survey is intended to gather feedback from residents on both the future of the library facility and the services it provides. Potential survey topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Building preferences, including whether to maintain the current library facility, consider alternate buildings, or plan for a new facility in the future
- Digital access and technology support, including internet availability, device access, digital literacy training, and assistance with online services
- Flexible community space, including adaptable areas for meetings, classes, tutoring, workshops, and civic engagement
- Educational and workforce support, including lifelong learning opportunities, job skill development, early literacy, and after-school programming
- Safe and inclusive public space, including access to a reliable, climate-controlled environment for all residents
- Resource navigation, including assistance connecting residents to government services, community programs, and information
- Cultural and creative engagement, including makerspaces, media labs, local history preservation, and creative programming

Feedback collected through the survey may be used to inform the Committee’s ongoing evaluation and future recommendations to the City Council.

Correlation to the True North Statement:

The Citizen

Exhibit:

None

Key Issues:

N/A

Funding Source:

N/A

Recommended Action:

Discussion and possible action to approve survey items and to direct staff to conduct the citizen survey.

ATTACHMENTS:

None