



City of Lawton
Council Fee Committee

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

Minutes

Thursday, October 23, 2025

1:30 PM

Lawton City Hall
Wayne Gilley Auditorium
Conference Room (Behind
Auditorium)

Meeting Called to Order

"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 by Chairman Allan Hampton.

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

The notice and agenda were posted in compliance with the Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314.

Roll Call

Present:

Councilman - Ward 4 George Gill
Councilman - Ward 6 Bob Weger
Councilman - Ward 5 Allan Hampton

Introduction of Guests

Also Present:

John Ratliff, City Manager
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk
Jessica Carter, Emergency Communications Director
Ashley Glaze-Lyle, Emergency Communications Administrative Assistant III
Larry Parks, Community Enrichment Director
Kelvin Ingram, Community Enrichment Deputy Director- Parks & Recreation
Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment Deputy Director
Jim Bonnarens, Lakes Superintendent
Matina Davis-Prudhomme, Citizen

Business Items

1. Make a recommendation to City Council regarding a change to City of Lawton Fee Schedule, Article A-7-25 - Wrecker and Towing Services by changing from a "for each call originating from police department" fee of \$5.75 to a one-time annual fee of \$1,000.00 per wrecker.

Carter: Provided background on current wrecker rotation procedures and code requirements. The current fee is \$5.75 per call initiated by Police or Fire. Administrative challenges include quarterly billing, reconciliations, reinstatements, and unpaid invoices. Peer city comparisons show that Lawton is the only city in the group charging a per-call fee.

Gill: Can you please explain the per call charge?

Carter: In the Dispatch Center, we maintain a wrecker rotation log. This should not be confused with the City Wrecker, which is Priest Brothers. The City Wrecker is separate from the rotation system. The rotation list currently includes 11 independent wreckers. When Police or Fire respond to a call where a vehicle needs to be towed, most citizens do not already have a towing company selected—although their insurance often covers it. In those cases, the responding officer or firefighter will request that Dispatch call a wrecker from the rotation. Per code, each wrecker receives one call-out per rotation cycle, but in practice, Dispatch will attempt to contact them two to three times in case they miss the initial call (for example, if their phone is on silent). Regarding the question of how we charge: If we contact a wrecker on the rotation—for example, Priest Brothers—to respond to a vehicle pickup, we currently charge \$5.75 per call-out. This fee is only charged when the wrecker responds, if they do not respond, we do not bill them. As for how the per-call fee originated historically, I do not have information on when or why that system was first implemented.

Gill: I understand that we are supposed to follow the rotation, so we call them and charge them \$5.75 to call them. How do we go about collecting the money and does it change what we are doing today?

Carter: explained that we currently bill the wrecker companies on a quarterly basis. Ashley takes the wrecker log and verify that each company actually received the calls listed, which requires a significant amount of background work before the invoices are generated in Tyler. Once everything is confirmed, the quarterly invoices are issued for all services provided in accordance with the ordinance, and the companies then submit payment as they would for any standard bill.

Gill: And then they send us payment based on that like a regular bill?

Carter: Sometimes Councilman, we charge a reinstatement fee of \$57.50, which is not something our peer cities are doing. At times, some businesses do not pay their invoices, and we follow up with them regarding any outstanding amounts—both for call-

related invoices and occasionally for their license fees. I mentioned that we assist the License and Permits division with this as well, since we maintain a working relationship with the wrecker companies.

Gill: My last question is that today we're looking at raising it from a \$5.75 one time annual fee? Now what is this?

Ratliff: Hold on Councilman, I think it's a \$5.75 per occasion not a one-time fee.

Carter: Yes, it's per occasion per call that they come out to tow.

Gill: I'm reading off the agenda, and it say that, changing from a for each caller originating from the police department, a fee of \$5.75 to a one-time annual fee of \$1,000.

Ratliff: That is what we're trying to change it too, but it's not currently a one-time fee.

Gill: Ok, if it says it's the fee we're talking about, the \$5.75 so that we're just going to charge them an annual fee of \$1,000, whether they go once or twice or a 100 times.

Carter: Yes, and that way, they wouldn't be capped; they would pay that one-time fee. I kind of already mentioned that sometimes our local businesses don't pay when they receive their bill. There are also some additional administrative steps that need to happen. I will reach out to them before we remove them from the rotation because it's actually a heavy lift on our end to take them off and then put them back on. And sometimes, people don't check their mail, and things can back up—most of you know, as business owners, it gets busy.

Gill: So what you're saying, if I read this right on the agenda, you're willing to do away with this, call them and charge them \$5.75. It doesn't matter they will pay an annual fee of \$1,000 for that. This has nothing to do with their license or anything else. That's just for that service alone.

Carter: Yes Sir.

Gill: Ok, Thank you.

Hampton: Are you clear Councilman Gill?

Gill: I think so, Finally.

Weger: I understand the \$57.50 for the annual license with the city.

Carter: Oh, yeah, for annual license.

Weger: This is not included in the \$1,000, correct?

Carter: No

Weger: The \$1,000 is strictly just you going to pick the car up and taking it to whatever said location is.

Carter: Yes, sir. The idea behind the \$1,000 fee is that it would apply starting in July. Codes says they come in April, but the \$1,000 would cover our fiscal year—from July 1 to June 30—regardless of how many calls they receive. This way, we don't have to worry about billing quarterly or removing them from the rotation. They would remain on their rotation unless they go out of business.

Weger: OK

Carter: I do want to point out one thing, though. Our peer cities are not charging per call, so that is another option if we wanted to go that route. I just wanted to make sure that was clear to everyone, as I wasn't sure how we wanted to align with it when I spoke to Dwayne.

Ratliff: Ok, Ashley, do we keep annual stats on how much they're paying?

Glaze-Lyle: Yes

Ratliff: Because \$1,000 seems like a lot. So, like, I would be curious what they pay annually, like, now.

Glaze-Lyle: So, for last fiscal year, 2024–2025, the total amount we collected from the record callouts was \$9,665.50. If, during that fiscal year, we had been charging \$1,000 per record—and we had 12 records—we would have collected \$12,000 in revenue.

Hampton: Can I interject something here that might clarify things for John? I actually did some research and spoke with a few drivers. I'm going to read a comment from one of the tow drivers, Sydney. She said, as a tow truck owner in Lawton, she believes that the \$1,000 annual fee to be on the city's rotation is fair. She also requested that, if possible, we charge it \$250 quarterly. She believes this would help make the bookkeeping process more efficient and prevent complaints from tow operators who feel they were billed for too many calls. So, and I talked to him about that, and he said that he does two, gets two calls a week approximately. which is about pushing towards the thousand.

Carter: Yeah, and we're about to get into the winter months, and so that's going to pick up a little bit with our bad weather and the icy weather that we're, you know, predicted to get.

Hampton: So, I would imagine it's pretty laborious to deal with each one of those 575 charges, Somebody got be doing that, and it would streamline the process the whole lot

more if everybody just played a fat flat fee that would give you more time in your department and do other things besides tedious booking and all that., we both agree.. John, did you have was that all you had?

Carter: We both agree (her and John)

Hampton: John, was that all you had?

Ratliff: Well, I was just going to say to the your point about the quarterly collections we already collect quarterly, but we're collecting on the \$5.75 per call. So that's something I think that could be easily implemented, right?

Glaze-Lyle: Yeah, an if it's just a one-time fee versus quarterly and we're not having to match up all the call's going through with call.

Hampton: He mentioned that he actually addressed that and explained that the reason he suggested quarterly payments is that some operators only have a truck and not a lot of money. Instead of paying \$1,000 all at once, breaking it into quarterly payments would make it easier on their bookkeeping.

Carter: Yeah, and if we went that route, then we would still keep some of the other...

Hampton: Because that would be exclusion kind of excluding of the smaller difference. Ok, Councilman Gill

Gill: I want to make a motion, Mr. Chairman. And if we get a second, we can have more discussion.

Motion: by Gill, second by Weger, to refer the matter to the City Manager for development of a formal presentation and placement on the City Council agenda for a vote.

Hampton: Did you have anything or anybody else have anything else on that? We don't want to cut it short.

Carter: Yes, sir. I just want to make sure we're clear. We want to, we're ok with doing \$1,000 for the whole year.

Gill: NO. NO. NO. my motion was to give it to the city manager. He'll make a presentation to the council for a vote. We're not going to provide anything.

Ratliff: So, no recommendation from the committee.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Gill, Weger, Hampton. NAY: None MOTION PASSED

2. Make a recommendation to City Council regarding a change to City of Lawton Fee Schedule, Article A-19-1, General Lake and Recreation, by removing the cents from camper/trailer/rv/dry/wet stalls annual lease amounts, removing cents from the boathouse lease amounts, and changing rates for dry storage units to be consistent based on the unit size.

Hampton: Make a recommendation to City Council regarding a change to City of Lawton Fee Schedule, Article A-19-1, General Lake and Recreation, by removing the cents from camper/trailer/rv/dry/wet stalls annual lease amounts, removing cents from the boathouse lease amounts, and changing rates for dry storage units to be consistent based on the unit size.

Gill: Just one second...I was going to make a motion to approve it.

Hampton: Whoa. No, No, No, if you at least let them make the presentation. Who's going to present?

Parks: I explained that similar adjustments were approved by Council last year out at the lakes in 2024. Removing the cents does not create any additional charges nor does it increase any existing charges. In fact, the cost goes down because we round down. This change is intended to make the process more efficient, easier for customers to understand, and standardized for staff who manage it. I also noted that this will help reduce some of the tedious bookkeeping involved.

Hampton: Tedious to deal with.

Ratliff: And while we are taking out the cents, we're adding common sense.

Gill: Well, I thought that I speak?

Hampton: I don't think we were ready for our motion.

Gill: I was going to save time and not have a presentation, cause I think everyone here is in agreement any time that we can cut fees for the citizens of Lawton. We need to do it if it's within reason. This is something that the staff requested, so that's all the more reason for me to make my motion, which I do at this time, that we approve this.

Hampton: You're free to make the motion now. The discussion is there, but I want to make sure that the other council members had an opportunity to hear the presentation.

Motion: by Gill, second by Weger, to approve recommending the proposed changes to Article A-19-1, General Lake and Recreation Fees in order to remove the cents. AYE: Gill, Weger, Hampton. NAY: None 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."

Motion: by Gill, second by Weger, to adjourn. AYE: Gill, Weger, Hampton. NAY: None
MOTION PASSED

Meeting adjourned at 1:48 PM.