

MINUTES
LAWTON CITY LAKES AND LAND COMMISSION SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
NOVEMBER 19, 2025, 4:15 PM
CITY HALL – BANQUET HALL
212 SW 9TH STREET, LAWTON, OKLAHOMA

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m.

Larry Parks: Director/Community Enrichment
Kelvin Ingram: Deputy Director/Parks and Recreation
James Bonnarens: Lakes Superintendent/Parks and Recreations

Also Present: Misty Roberts/Lakes Admin 2

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mark Scott (Chair)
Austin Rabon (Co-Chair)
Kade McClure
Donald Smith

Absent: George Gill
Dustin Hilliary

Notice of the meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall noticeboard as required by law.

REPORTS

1. Parks & Recreation Staff

- Lake Improvements update
Jim Bonnarens states that the School House pavement project is going to council. The project has been delayed due to engineering cost. Dry stalls at Robinsons Landing are also going out for bid.
- Elk Hunt Drawing
We had 572 applicants with 512 being out of town, 60 from Lawton. In application fees the city made \$14300.00. 2 Elk were harvested in the October hunt. The second hunt will be in December.
- Trespassing/encroachment issues on city property and possibly drafting a code to address the issue
There are landowners adjacent to city property that tend to use city property as their own. They leave trailers, vehicles, boats, etc. and leave it. We plan to draft something up in code and bring it back for you to approve.
- Closing the day use area in the winter months
This has been discussed in-house about closing this area. We have use we don't want during the winter/off season months which is why this has become a topic. But we also have a boat ramp in the day use, so we will occasionally have an off-season fisherman or two.

2. Lake Commission – No reports

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Robert Phifer/Premium Parking, Shawn Geib, Kim McConnell/Lawton Constitution.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Approve the minutes from April 23rd, 2025, Special Meeting.

A motion was made by **Smith** to approve the minutes from April 23rd, 2025, Special Called meeting and a second made by **McClure** to approve the minutes. **AYES: Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith MOTION PASSED**

4. Approve the 2026 Lakes and Land Annual Meeting Schedule.

A motion was made by **McClure** to approve the 2026 Lakes and Land Annual meeting schedule and a second was made by **Smith**. **AYES: Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith MOTION PASSED**

5. Nominate Chair and Co-Chair for 2026

Austin Rabon was nominated for Chair and **Kade McClure** was nominated for Co-Chair. A motion was made by **Smith** to approve chair and co-chair for 2026 and a second made by **Scott**. **AYES: Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith MOTION PASSED**

6. Discuss and take action, if necessary, for staff to enforce current boathouse codes on lessees that have failing floatation, non-compliant visible barrels, and people that were tasked with making repairs that have not done so.

Bonnarens stated that over the past four (4) years, the Lakes Division has conducted inspections of boathouses. Owners of older or non-compliant boathouses have been given timelines to either remove or repair structures that failed inspection.

Currently, there are only two vendors available to remove boathouses, one primarily serving the School House Slough area and the other at Robinson's Landing. Approximately three weeks ago, three boathouses were removed in preparation for rebuilding.

Bonnarens explained that if a property owner does not take action to remove a non-compliant boathouse, the City will proceed with removal and bill the owner for the associated costs. He noted that some owners delay compliance, often citing various reasons.

To improve enforcement, the inspection process now includes three classifications: **pass**, **non-compliant**, and **fail**. A "non-compliant" designation indicates that the owner has until the next summer or warm season to decide whether to refloat, remodel, or rebuild the structure. These classifications provide the City with clearer authority and timelines for enforcement.

If an owner fails to take action within the designated timeframe, City code allows for a 14-day notice, issued via certified mail, requiring removal of the boathouse. If the owner does not comply, the City will remove the structure.

Mark Scott states that no action will be taken that staff is basically enforcing code.

7. Discuss and take action, if necessary, to explore using Premium Parking Solutions at the Day use Area and primitive area to recover costs associated to recreation activities.

Robert Phifer with Premium Parking presented a proposal for parking services at the City of Lawton's Lake Lawtonka Day Use Recreational Area. The proposal included an overview of services such as digital presence and marketing, payment systems, signage, parking compliance, parking management, financial outlook, implementation, and enforcement.

Phifer explained that the initial focus would be on the Lake Lawtonka Day Use Area, with the possibility of expanding services in the future. The system would utilize customized signage with QR codes tailored to the City's needs. Enforcement options include:

- Use of Premium Parking equipment by City staff
- Hiring and retaining a Premium Parking enforcement agent
- Use of Glide Eye LPR technology

Phifer noted that Glide Eye LPR uses "Flock" cameras to capture license plate information, allowing verification of payment status. While this option reduces the need for personnel, it would come at a higher cost.

Rabon asked how the City would collect citations. Phifer responded that citations are issued as printouts, and unpaid tickets are sent to collections. He added that there is typically a strong return rate on paid citations. Premium Parking works with the City to determine the appropriate level of enforcement.

Phifer also emphasized the system's ease of use for customers, offering multiple payment options including text-to-pay, QR codes, and kiosks. Accepted payment methods include Apple Pay, Visa, and MasterCard. Disputed citations are reviewed by the Premium Parking team to determine whether they should be upheld or voided.

Rabon asked about accommodation for individuals who prefer not to pay for parking, specifically regarding the distance between paid and free parking areas.

Bonnarens explained that when the Lakes Division previously charged for day use, some visitors avoided fees by using primitive camping areas for day use instead. Currently, the City generates no revenue from the day use area, despite averaging 100–200 vehicles daily during summer months. On major holidays, staff manually collected fees and issued permits, often managing high volumes of traffic.

Bonnarens stated that implementing this system presents an opportunity to generate revenue to offset maintenance and cleanup costs. Under the proposed agreement, revenue would be split 70/30 if the City handles enforcement. Premium Parking would provide signage and software.

Mark Scott asked whether all signage locations had been identified. Bonnarens responded that the day use area would serve as a pilot program due to its single entry and exit point. Other areas, such as the East campground, have multiple access points and are currently used by paying campers. He added that the pilot may help reduce traffic and address issues during peak camping seasons.

It was noted that when the City previously staffed the day use area, a fee of \$5.00 per vehicle was charged.

In response to a question about visitors briefly entering the area (e.g., to locate a friend), Phifer stated that the system can include a grace period.

Rabon emphasized that public concern would likely focus on how the generated revenue would be reinvested. Bonnarens responded that, if implemented and properly allocated, the funds could support improvements at both lakes.

Motion: Rabon made a motion for staff to proceed with drafting a proposal to be presented to the commission for final approval before going to City Council. The motion was seconded by McClure.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed.

8. Discuss and take action, if necessary, on the proposed foot & bike bridge on the west side of Lake Lawtonka

Bonnarens stated that the current foot bridge exists on the southwest corner of Lake Lawtonka, installed by the Mountain Bike Club of Wichita's with assistance from staff. However, the bridge is not adequately sized, and when the lake is full, much of the area up to the shoreline is underwater.

He further explained that the federal government has installed a walk-over gate requiring users to climb a ladder and lift their bicycles over the barrier to access the trail, creating safety and accessibility concerns.

The Mountain Bike Club is proposing construction of an elevated bridge structure that would remain above water, allowing both pedestrian and bicycle traffic to pass during high water conditions. The club currently provides all funding, upkeep, and signage for the trails and has agreed to assume full responsibility for the new bridge.

Mark Scott questioned how maintenance responsibilities would be enforced if the bike club is responsible for maintaining the bridge.

Shawn Geib, a representative of the Mountain Bike Club, stated that the purpose of the project is to improve safety for hikers and cyclists and to maintain non-motorized use of the trails. He explained that the area is typically underwater for six to eight months of the year, forcing users to climb over fences on federal property and detour around the area. The proposed bridge would eliminate the need to climb fences and provide a safer, more direct route. He also noted that materials for the fence and construction have been donated.

Liability to the City was discussed. It was stated that the Mountain Bike Club, which is not an agent of the City, would assume all risks associated with construction of the bridge and any related liabilities.

Motion: Rabon made a motion to recommend that the proposed foot and bike bridge on the west side of Lake Lawtonka be constructed by the Mountain Bike Club of Wichita's, be sent to the City Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Smith.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed

9. Discuss and take action, if necessary, on allowing pellet guns to be used for small game (rabbit and squirrel only).

Bonnarens states that the State of Oklahoma allows this for small game rabbit and squirrel. Currently the only means of taking on City of Lawton hunting property is archery, muzzleloader or shotgun. The lakes division has had numerous individuals come in and want to take their young children hunting using a pellet gun.

Motion: Rabon made a motion on allowing pellet guns to be used for small game. The motion was seconded by Smith.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed

10. Discuss and take action, if necessary, on grazing lessee request to remove trees throughout the lease property.

Bonnarens states that in our grazing leases with the approval of the city, the lessee can remove vegetation. The lessee has a pocket of trees (many are cedar trees) he would like to remove and has the equipment to take out an area of vegetation. Bonnarens states that he has talked to DEQ and he can burn as long as it is 500 feet away from a dwelling and the ash has to stay contained. The is over in the Lake Ellsworth area.

Motion: McClure made a motion to approve the request to remove the trees throughout the lease property. The motion was seconded by Rabon.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed

11. Discuss and take action, if necessary, possible rate freeze at the 2025 rate for all dry stalls.

Scott asked whether rates are required to be set by the City Council or the Lakes and Land Committee. Bonnarens responded that the Fee Committee makes recommendations, which are then subject to approval by the City Council.

Scott further asked whether the Fee Committee intended for this item to be brought before the Lakes and Land Committee. Bonnarens stated that, per instruction, the item was also required to go through the Lakes and Land Committee.

Scott then inquired about the decision made by the Fee Committee. Bonnarens stated that the Fee Committee approved a fee freeze. He further noted that dry stall fees have likely exceeded market value due to annual increases of 25% since 2023.

Motion: McClure made a motion to accept rate freeze at the 2025 rate for all dry stalls. The motion was seconded by Rabon.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed

12. Discuss and take action, if necessary, on raising the boathouse rates at Lake Ellsworth/Ralphs Resort

Rabon asked what action the Fee Committee decided to take regarding raising the fees. Bonnarens stated that the committee decided to increase the fees.

Rabon then asked how much. Bonnarens responded that the current rate is \$667 and explained that the increase is being considered in response to the new concessionaire at Ralph's, who controls seven boathouses and is implementing a phased rate increase. The concessionaire's rates are projected to increase to \$1,250 for the current year, followed by \$1,400, \$1,700, and reaching \$2,000 by 2029, at which point the rates may be frozen.

Rabon asked whether the City intends to follow the concessionaire's pricing structure. Bonnarens confirmed that the City plans to follow those rates.

Motion: Rabon made a motion to accept raising the boathouse rates at Lake Ellsworth/Ralphs Resort. The motion was seconded by Smith.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed

13. Discuss and take action, if necessary, on the agreement between Comanche County and City of Lawton for the county to burn and dispose of tree material from Lake Ellsworth subdivision on City property.

Bonnarens stated that the Eastern District County has approached the City regarding planned road work in the Cove Acres subdivision at Lake Ellsworth. As part of the project, the County will be removing trees that have grown over and near the roadway, with an estimated 30 trees to be removed in order to proceed with improvements.

Bonnarens noted that the County has limited space available to haul the removed trees. As part of a cooperative effort, the City would benefit from the County utilizing its equipment to blade and improve City-maintained roads.

He further stated that a formal agreement regarding this arrangement is planned to be presented before the City Council on December 2, 2025.

Motion: Rabon made a motion to accept the agreement between Comanche County and the City of Lawton for the county to burn and dispose of tree material from Lake Ellsworth subdivision on City property. The motion was seconded by Smith.

Vote: AYES – Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith

Result: Motion passed.

A motion was made by **McClure** to adjourn the meeting, and a second motion was made by **Smith**. **AYES: Scott, Rabon, McClure, Smith**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY THE LAKES AND LAND COMMISSION
CHAIRMAN, MARK SCOTT