City of Lawton

City Council

Minutes

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

Tuesday, October 28, 2025 **6:00 PM** **Lawton City Hall**
Wayne Gilley Auditorium

Meeting Called to Order with Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

Note: Prior to the meeting was called to order, Wayne Gilley Auditorium experienced a loss of electricity. The meeting was called to order in the auditorium and was subsequently reconvened in the City Hall Banquet Room.

Wayne Gilley Auditorium
Meeting called to order by Mayor Stanley Booker.

Roll Call:
Present:
Councilman - Ward 1 Lane Hooton
Councilman - Ward 2 Taron Epps
Councilwoman - Ward 3 Linda Chapman
Councilman - Ward 4 George Gill
Councilman - Ward 5 Allan Hampton
Councilman - Ward 8 Randy Warren

Absent:
Councilman - Ward 6 Bob Weger
Councilwoman - Ward 7 Sherene L Williams

Also Present:
Stanley Booker, Mayor
Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager
Timothy Wilson, Interim City Attorney
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk

Motion:
Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Allan Hampton: Given the loss of electricity in

Wayne Gilley Auditorium, I make a motion to reconvene the regular meeting of October 28, 2025 to 6:15PM on October 28, 2025 in the City Hall Banquet Room, located on the First Floor of Lawton City Hall. Vote on Motion: Aye: Lane Hooton, Taron Epps, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren. Nay: None. Motion Passed

Note: Following the approval of the motion made by Councilman Warren, the meeting was moved to the City Hall Banquet Room and reconvened at 6:15PM.

Lawton City Hall- Banquet Room
Reconvened Meeting called to order by Mayor Stanley Booker with invocation led by Pastor Terry Marsh of Carriage Hills Christian Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present:
Councilman - Ward 1 Lane Hooton
Councilman - Ward 2 Taron Epps
Councilwoman - Ward 3 Linda Chapman
Councilman - Ward 4 George Gill
Councilman - Ward 5 Allan Hampton
Councilman - Ward 8 Randy Warren

Absent:
Councilman - Ward 6 Bob Weger
Councilwoman - Ward 7 Sherene L Williams

Also Present:
Stanley Booker, Mayor
Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager
Timothy Wilson, Interim City Attorney
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk

Proclamation

1. Extra Mile Day

Mayor Booker recognized the City's participation in Extra Mile Day, noting the observance is intended to honor individuals who "go the extra mile" for the community. The Mayor stated the City may recognize up to three individuals annually and announced the following honorees:

Joslyn Wood – Recognized for organizing a Veterans Walk, described as a 24-hour walk at the Veterans Center around Veterans Day.

Wood shared event details: Friday, November 7 (1:00 p.m.) through Saturday, November 8 (1:00 p.m.), followed by a 1:30 p.m. flag conclusion ceremony, with businesses and organizations signing up for one-hour increments to carry the flag.

Jeanette Klein – Recognized for leadership on the Children's United Playground, with the Mayor noting that after the original promoter passed away, Ms. Klein stepped in to carry the project forward and see it completed.

Max Sasseen – Recognized for extensive community volunteer service, including work with the McMahon Auditorium Authority, involvement in Children's United, and support of improvements to the Old Carnegie Library, including current work referenced on the front steps. The Mayor also recalled Mr. Sasseen's earlier fundraising efforts connected to playground development in the community.

Mayor Booker read the Extra Mile Day proclamation and presented recognition copies to the honorees.

2. Clean Sweep Award — The Light of the World Church

Mayor Booker presented the Clean Sweep Award to Light of the World Church, explaining the Clean Sweep program involves adopting a mile of roadway and completing litter pickup at least quarterly (and often more frequently).

Representatives from the church accepted the recognition and briefly shared their appreciation and commitment to helping keep Lawton clean.

Presentations

3. Receive the annual report from the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority (LETA).

Barry Ezerski, Chairperson of LETA, presented the annual review for the last fiscal year. Highlights included:

LETA's 20th anniversary and its origins, including early leadership attributed to Dr. Rosemary Bellino and community partners.

Funding sources described as hotel/motel tax, court fees, and private donations; LETA also serves as a 501(c)(3) and pass-through entity for community events including Freedom Festival and Holiday in the Park.

Beautification efforts focused on city entrances and ongoing maintenance/plantings along Second Street, including replacement/repairs after traffic incidents; the report referenced approximately $18,000 in Second Street plantings and maintenance in the prior year and an incident causing about $6,000 in damage expected to be reimbursed by insurance.

Additional median plantings, including Lee Boulevard west of 38th Street.

Partnership with Neighborhood Services for Trash-Off, moved from April to May due to storms; continued success with volunteer participation and bulk-trash collection efforts near the Museum of the Great Plains and McMahon Auditorium.

“Eye Candy Awards” and the Yard of the Month program. Monthly award includes a $100 gift card to Bedrock Nursery. Online voting now accounts for a majority of votes; participation reported as reaching up to ~1,000 votes in some months.

Residential Yard of the Year: Kathy Walker (Ward 6), location noted as Folkstone Way.

Commercial Business of the Year: Anderson’s Pharmacy.

Community impact awards included:

Champion Volunteer: Dory Thomas (noted service including chairing the International Festival and substantial weekly volunteer hours).

Visionary Leader: Phil Kennedy (noted for long-term community projects and leadership roles).

Rosemary Bellino Lifetime Achievement Award: Ronda Norell (noted involvement with Arts for All, Philharmonic, and Lawton Community Theater).

Kids First Champion Award: Cam Winn (noted for organizing monthly “Stream Clean Saturdays” cleanups).

Grants and projects supported:

Assistance for Eagle Scout and school beautification projects; support to Children’s United.

Grant support for the Team Court facility at 10th and D, including roughly $16,000 for landscaping, irrigation, and lighting; facility opening referenced as May 1.

Additional referenced projects included a “Fly a Flag” program, tulip replanting, sidewalk/artwork improvements, and Shuffler Park irrigation/landscaping enhancements.

Downtown “string lights” update for C Avenue between 2nd Street and 6th Street: lights purchased years earlier were delayed due to COVID; project restarted with renewed stakeholder interest. A grant of $25,000 was referenced for installation, pending a structural engineering review to confirm pole capacity, with a goal of installation by Christmas if feasible.

Mayor Booker commented that while all projects are important, the beautification along Second Street was especially notable this year and was the most beautiful they had seen.

Mayor Booker thanked Mr. Ezerski and LETA members for their work.

Reports: Mayor/City Council/City Manager

Hampton shared appreciation for LETA's support of historic/cultural projects and encouraged attendance at the Farmers Market, briefly describing community engagement there. Hampton also spoke about homelessness and poverty concerns, recognizing local organizations providing food and support, including for families experiencing food insecurity.

Gill provided infrastructure updates:
38th Street project reported at approximately 50% complete, progressing well and under budget, with anticipated reopening in the coming months.
Lee Boulevard (38th to 52nd Street) bids received and within engineer estimates; award made, and construction anticipated to begin in approximately 7–10 days after contract execution.
"107 Streets" road work noted as preparing for bids, with King Boulevard at the airport described as a separate package intended to enhance the airport corridor; funding and estimates reported as favorable due to some bids coming in under budget.

Chapman reported on Museum-related updates, stating they learned that out of 500+ museums in Oklahoma, only 14 hold American Alliance of Museums accreditation, and the Museum of the Great Plains is among those accredited museums. Chapman also announced the Oklahoma Museum Conference is scheduled to be hosted in Lawton in 2027, encouraging community support and promotion. The Mayor acknowledged the report and expressed support for celebrating the museum.

Epps highlighted upcoming holiday activities, noting preparations at Elmer Thomas Park and promoting Holiday in the Park events, including the Holiday in the Park parade and Frost Your Fanny Run on November 22. Epps also noted appreciation for constituent emails and described being impressed with city staff planning for infrastructure and quality-of-life improvements.

Hooton shared brief remarks about constituent outreach and community issues such as streets and signals, describing the first month as a learning experience.

City Manager Report
Burk reminded the public that meeting schedules would adjust during the holiday season: the first two Tuesdays in November (November 4 and November 11) and the first two Tuesdays in December. A special meeting on November 3 was announced regarding CIP project updates. The Deputy City Manager also recognized Citizen Academy graduates in attendance and invited them to stand.

Mayor Report
Mayor Booker recognized staff efforts in response to the power disruption, noting

significant teamwork was required to continue the meeting and relocate to the Banquet Room to keep the agenda moving.

Consent Agenda

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

Motion by Allan Hampton, Second by George Gill, to approve the consent agenda as presented. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

4. Consider the following tort claim recommended for denial: Charlton Roach in the amount of $280.53.

5. Consider the following tort claim recommended for approval: Sandra Brown in the amount of $1,997.61, and approve the resolution authorizing the filing of a Friendly Suit and confessing judgment in said amount.

Resolution No. 25-260

6. Consider adopting a resolution approving the joint petition settlement in the amount of $14,256.00 and making payment in the workers' compensation claim of Chance Mullins.

Resolution No. 25-261

7. Consider approving a Professional Services Agreement between the City of Lawton and the Honorable Jari Askins for the position of Interim City Attorney.

8. Consider granting an overhead right-of-way easement to PSO for the Lake Ellsworth Dam Project and authorizing the Mayor to execute the easement document.

9. Consider approving a resolution amending the City of Lawton FYE26 budget, as amended, to appropriate $87,340.00 to the Cellular Fee Fund to fund up-front costs associated with the Oklahoma 911 Management Authority grant.

Resolution No. 25-262

10. Per the recommendation of the Council Fee Committee, consider approving a resolution amending Appendix A, 19-1, General Lake and Recreation, and Appendix A, Chapter A-19, Article A-19-5, Buildings in Lake Areas,

Schedule of Fees and Charges, Lawton City Code 2015, 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.

Resolution No. 25-263

11. Consider and take action in awarding a contract in the amount of $14,693,000 to Walters-Morgan Construction, Inc., for the construction of SEWTP Dewatering Improvements project PU2414 for construction of a solids handling facility at the Southeast Water Treatment Plant (SEWTP) that removes the loading from the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)

12. Consider approving final Change Order No. 1 with an overall deduction of -$127,920.95 from the original contract amount of $1,851,666.36 with K&R Builders, Inc. for Project EN2112 — Rehabilitation of Cache Rd Wolf Creek Bridges M09-1 & M09-2, thereby placing the Maintenance Bond into effect.

13. Consider awarding project EN2002C, the rehabilitation of Lee Blvd between 38th Street and 52nd Street, to T&G Construction.

14. Consider approving task order for managing the Lee Blvd project EN2002C to WSB in the amount of $150,285.00.

15. Consider accepting the as-builts and maintenance bond for the offsite improvements for the installation of the new traffic control system at NW 50th Street and NW Cache Road.

16. Consider approving an Agreement for Limited Support between the Museum of the Great Plains Trust Authority and the City of Lawton to fund the continued operation of the Museum, contingent upon the Museum of the Great Plains Trust Authority approving the agreement, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Agreement.

17. Consider approving an all-way stop sign at the intersection of SW 69th and SW 70th Streets.

18. Consider approving the installation of an all-way stop at the intersection of SW Dove Creek and SW 54th Streets.

19. Consider approving an amendment to Council Policy 01-06, Council Rules of Procedure, in order to: replace references to “Legistar” with “CivicPlus”; add that items requesting the use of CIP funds show that the request was expressly included within the scope and cost parameters of the project when the original Resolution of Intent was approved; move "Audience Participation" to the end of the meeting; prohibit the removal of boards, commission, and committee appointments from the consent agenda for discussion by the public; allow for the use of an electronic voting system during City Council meetings; and direct Council members not to nominate or reappoint individuals in a manner that would result in more than nine consecutive years of service on the same board or committee without a break in service of one term, or to make appointments that would extend beyond their own term of office.

20. Contingent upon approval of a budget amendment, approve a resolution authorizing the Communications Department to apply for a grant through the Oklahoma 9-1-1 Management Authority, with the intent of receiving 100% reimbursement for eligible expenses.

Resolution No. 25-264

21. Consider approving the Annual Meeting Notice for Calendar Year 2026.

22. Consider approving a resolution rescheduling the regularly scheduled council meetings in November and December 2025.

Resolution No. 25-265

23. Consider approving a resolution rescheduling the regularly scheduled council meetings in November and December 2026.

Resolution No. 25-266

24. Consider approving the claims list from October 11, 2025, through October 24, 2025.

25. Consider approving the minutes of the October 14, 2025 Council meeting.

26. Consider approving proposed appointments to boards and commissions.

COUNCIL FEES COMMITTEE:
Lane Hooton-Mayoral Appointment
212 SW 9th St.
Lawton, OK 73507
Council Term

ENGINEERING SELECTION COUNCIL COMMITTEE:
Lane Hooton-Mayoral Appointment
212 SW 9th St.
Lawton, OK 73507
Council Term

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION:
Vince Cambron – Ward 5 Appointment
701 NW Columbia Avenue
Lawton, OK 73507
01/01/2028

Dennis Clippinger – Ward 6 Appointment
7513 NW Willow Creek Drive
Lawton, OK 73505
01/01/2028

Business Items

27. Approve a resolution of support for a funding agreement between the Lawton Economic Development Authority and the Oklahoma Development Finance Authority in an amount not to exceed $22 million.

Richard Rogalski, LEDA Executive Director, explained that on May 28, the project was awarded $18,000,000 through the Oklahoma Development Finance Authority, with a total project budget of $22,000,000. He stated the authority anticipated consideration for the remaining $4,000,000, and he expected Oklahoma Development Finance Authority action the following day that could bring the total to $22,000,000.

George Liddell, Firehawk Director of Operations, reintroduced Firehawk Aerospace and summarized the project:
Firehawk described as an early-stage defense technology company headquartered in Texas with approximately 70 full-time employees.
Focus on solid rocket motor propellant manufacturing using a 3D printing-based process, positioned as an alternative to traditional “cast and cure” propellant manufacturing.

Proposed facility to provide an additional domestic propellant supply source, supporting DoD needs and alleviating supply-chain constraints.
The proposed site described as north of the Goodyear facility.
Local hiring projection: up to 100 jobs, emphasizing local recruitment rather than relocation.
Company cited strategic advantages including proximity to Fort Sill and workforce availability.

Rogalski referenced a REMI-model analysis indicating an estimated 216 jobs and $27.5 million in annual additional personal income by 2035, emphasizing long-term community economic benefit.

Motion by Linda Chapman, Second by Randy Warren, to approve Resolution 25-267. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Mayor Booker welcomed Firehawk to Lawton/Fort Sill and invited audience recognition.

28. Consider approving a Funding Agreement between the Oklahoma Development Finance Authority and the Fires Innovation and Science Technology Accelerator (FISTA) Development Trust Authority.

Dr. Krista Ratliff, President and CEO of FISTA provided updates:
Announced STEM Lab Grand Opening on November 4 at 12:30 p.m. at FISTA; described as a $10 million community prototyping and workforce development lab.
Announced a food drive (November 1–15) benefiting Fort Sill soldiers receiving SNAP benefits; accepting shelf-stable items and refrigerated donations such as turkeys and hams.
Reported 28 companies currently associated with FISTA and 118% occupancy, noting multiple paying tenants without dedicated space due to capacity constraints.
Introduced Bill Pearson, former Command Sergeant Major at Fort Sill, now Director of Operations at FISTA.
Noted infrastructure limitations including power capacity at Central Plaza requiring new power routing, with gas service expansion also previously required.
Reported that 23 of 28 companies had no prior Oklahoma footprint before locating through FISTA efforts.
Reported annual payroll for contractors working inside FISTA of approximately $19 million.

Dr. Ratliff stated the purpose of the grant is to support infrastructure improvements, security, technology upgrades, and additional tenant suites. The funding was described as part of the P3 (Public-Private Partnership) program through the Department of Commerce, reinvesting certain income tax revenue back into communities, with Fort Sill command approval required for the application.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Allan Hampton, to approve. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton.

NAY: None. Motion Passed.

29. Consider holding a public hearing, considering an ordinance for a change of zoning request for the 320-acre parcel of vacant land owned by the Comanche County Industrial Development Authority, being the South Half (S/2) of Section Twenty-Five (25), Township Two (2) North, Range Thirteen (13) West, I.M, located west of NW 97th Street/NW Goodyear Blvd, east of NW 112th St and north of what would be the extension of W Gore Blvd for Firehawk Aerospace, and considering a Use Permitted on Review on a portion thereof, and take appropriate action as deemed necessary.

Christine James, Planning Director, summarized that the rezoning request related to a 320-acre parcel owned by the Comanche County Industrial Development Authority. Staff described a July 9 neighborhood meeting involving Firehawk representatives, CCIDA, LEDA, and the City. The original request to zone the full 320 acres I-4 was modified into three tracts: I-1 (far west), I-3 (far north), I-4 (southern portion; approximately 160 acres referenced), with the I-4 portion also subject to Use Permitted on Review and a binding site plan.

James stated the Planning Commission (CPC) recommended approval 6–0. Notice of public hearing was published October 5 and mailed to 68 properties within 300 feet on October 3.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.
Mark Gibson: Mr. Gibson provided handouts and thanked the Council, staff, and Firehawk for engagement and responsiveness. He stated that while neither the half-mile buffer petition nor his requested 2,000-foot buffer was adopted, he considered the revised plan an acceptable compromise and cited an approximate 1,000-foot separation as part of that compromise. He emphasized the importance of the binding site plan and UPR as safeguards- particularly if Firehawk does not obtain DoD site approval- and requested continued oversight for Firehawk and any future development. He also raised a concern about DoD-related safety district/“blast zone” considerations not yet addressed during the process (comment truncated due to time limit).
PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Allan Hampton, to approve the ordinance, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

City Attorney read the title: ORDINANCE 25-60
AN ORDINANCE CHANGING THE EXISTING ZONING CLASSIFICATION FROM THE A-1 GENERAL AGRICULTURE DISTRICT TO 1-1 RESTRICTED MANUFACTURING AND WAREHOUSE DISTRICT ZONING CLASSIFICATION ON THE TRACT OF LAND WHICH IS HEREINAFTER MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SECTION ONE (1) HEREOF; CHANGING THE EXISTING ZONING CLASSIFICATION FROM THE A-1 GENERAL AGRICULTURE DISTRICT TO 1-3 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

ZONING CLASSIFICATION ON THE TRACT OF LAND WHICH IS HEREINAFTER MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SECTION TWO (2) HEREOF; AND CHANGING THE EXISTING ZONING CLASSIFICATION FROM THE A-1 GENERAL AGRICULTURE DISTRICT TO 1-4 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT ZONING CLASSIFICATION ON THE TRACT OF LAND WHICH IS HEREINAFTER MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SECTION THREE (3) HEREOF; AND AUTHORIZING CHANGES TO BE MADE UPON THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ORDINANCE

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

James requested a separate motion to include the use permitted on review, which was a part of the original suggested motion, but was not included in the motion that was made.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Allan Hampton, to approve a Use Permitted on Review Certificate. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

30. Consider and take action in accepting the final report of the Ellsworth Dam and Lawtonka Dam Gate Operations Study conducted by Jacobs Engineering and adopting the updated gate operations policy.

Rusty Whisenhunt, Public Utilities Director, stated that the City received a FEMA High Hazard Dam grant in 2022 to partially fund a comprehensive gate operations study for both the Ellsworth Dam and Lake Lawtonka Dam. He explained that it had been more than twenty years since the City last conducted a formal review of the gate operations policies for these high-hazard dams. Mr. Whisenhunt noted that the study was funded through a cost-share arrangement consisting of approximately sixty-five percent grant funding and thirty-five percent City funds. He further explained that updated rainfall data provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was incorporated into the Ellsworth Dam analysis, while the Lake Lawtonka evaluation relied on existing rainfall intensity assumptions due to the absence of updated data. Mr. Whisenhunt summarized that the primary objectives of the gate operations policy are dam safety, protection of the City's domestic water supply, and flood mitigation. He stated that the study's recommended operational changes were modest overall, with more adjustments required at Ellsworth Dam than at Lake Lawtonka, and that these changes include modifications to the timing and sequence of gate openings to help reduce downstream impacts during smaller to moderate storm events.

The report identified flow rates at various gate openings, with discussion noting that at maximum openings, flows exceed those associated with extremely rare storm events.

Gil asked whether, regardless of the amount of rainfall occurring at a given time, the required gate operations could create additional downstream flooding concerns.

In response, Rusty Whisenhunt, Public Utilities Director, stated that the updated gate operations policy is designed to reduce downstream flooding impacts during more common storm events, such as 10-, 15-, and 20-year storms. He explained that while downstream flooding is unavoidable once all gates must be fully opened during extreme rainfall events, the revised operational approach allows the City to mitigate impacts as much as possible in smaller and moderate storms. Mr. Whisenhunt added that the overall program is considered safe and provides a balanced approach to dam safety, water supply protection, and flood mitigation.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Linda Chapman, to accept the report. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

31. Consider and provide direction on action on Wedgewood Water Association due to delinquent water bill payment overages and continued revenue losses.

Rusty Whisenhunt, Public Utilities Director, presented an overview of the Wedgewood Water Association issue. He explained that Wedgewood is a platted county subdivision that is entirely surrounded by the City of Lawton, bounded generally by 38th Street to the west and Bishop Road to the south. Although geographically enclosed by the City, Wedgewood remains outside the City limits and operates as a county subdivision. Whisenhunt stated that the Wedgewood Water Association was originally authorized nine water meters, of which seven are currently active. The system consists of individual meters as well as a master meter arrangement.

Whisenhunt reported that the Wedgewood Water Association is currently approximately $28,000 in arrears on its water account and continues to fall further behind at a rate of roughly $700 per month. He explained that while individual customers are paying their individual meter charges, significant water overages are being recorded at the master meter. He attributed these overages to the deteriorated condition of the association's private water lines and the possibility of unknown or unmetered taps along the system. As a result, the City is experiencing an ongoing loss of water revenue related to this association. Whisenhunt stated that City staff have been attempting to identify a solution to this issue for several years.

Whisenhunt presented a proposed solution involving the construction of a new 4-inch water main. He explained that because the area lies outside City limits, the City does not provide fire protection there, and therefore no fire flow capacity is required. The proposed water main would extend from 38th Street, loop through the subdivision, and directly serve the seven active meters, eliminating reliance on the association's failing private lines. The new main would also be positioned to serve several undeveloped or commercial lots that currently have service lines extending back to 38th Street. Whisenhunt stated that the estimated material cost for the project is approximately $25,000 to $30,000, and the work could be completed in-house by the Public Utilities construction division in roughly three weeks. He emphasized that this approach represents the least expensive option to immediately stop the ongoing water revenue loss.

Mayor Booker questioned how City taxpayers would recover money spent outside the City limits on what was described as a broken agreement.

Whisenhunt responded that the $28,000 delinquent balance remains owed, and that each customer would be required to sign a new outside water sales agreement directly with the City in order to connect to the new line. He stated that such agreements could potentially allow the City to negotiate repayment of the outstanding overages. He acknowledged that the situation presents a challenge, noting that the City would be investing resources in an outside service area where contractual obligations were not previously upheld.

Mayor Booker asked whether the association had failed to maintain its infrastructure as required. Whisenhunt confirmed that the association did not keep up with necessary repairs and maintenance, which contributed to the excess water loss and growing arrearage.

Mayor Booker asked staff for a recommendation on recovering costs already incurred.

Burk stated that there was no clear or immediate solution for recovering the funds, explaining that staff's primary objective was to "stop the bleeding" and prevent further losses. He noted that allowing the situation to continue without action would only worsen the financial impact on the City. He acknowledged that terminating water service entirely could leave county residents without water and could create negative public perception, but emphasized that staff had limited alternatives.

Wilson asked Whisenhunt to address the legal authority for the proposed solution. Whisenhunt explained that Wedgewood is a platted subdivision with public utility easements, which allow the City to install and own a water main in those rights-of-way. He stated that the City already owns water mains outside City limits in other locations. Once installed, the new main would be City-owned, and all customers would be required to enter into outside water sales agreements, giving the City full control over service and enforcement.

Mayor Booker asked whether customers would then reconnect individually and be charged standard outside rates. Mr. Whisenhunt confirmed this and stated that service would be treated as any other outside water customer arrangement. He acknowledged that questions remained about whether all customers were properly paying individual fees under the prior association structure and stated staff would verify that information.

Mayor Booker noted that the $28,000 balance continued to grow and asked whether there was a concrete plan for recovery.

Burk stated that staff had met with Comanche County officials, including at least one County Commissioner, who were aware of the issue. He explained that discussions had included the possibility of an interlocal agreement or other cooperative solution that could potentially offset costs, such as coordination on infrastructure needs like roads.

Gill clarified that while individual residents may be paying their bills, the master meter—which is the City's meter—remains unpaid by the association.

Whisenhunt confirmed that enforcement action would need to be directed at the association rather than individual residents.

Gill commented that while shutting off water service is difficult, the City routinely disconnects service for nonpayment within City limits and must apply consistent standards to protect the utility system.

Warren commented that if a City resident failed to pay even a modest balance, service would be disconnected regardless of location, and stated that if the association is unwilling to come to the table to address both infrastructure upgrades and outstanding debt, water service should be shut off until compliance is achieved.

Hampton raised concerns about future maintenance obligations if the City installs the new water line, noting that the City would assume ongoing upkeep costs.

Whisenhunt confirmed that the City would own and maintain the line, as it does with other water infrastructure, and stated that enforcement and monitoring would reduce illegal tapping.

Hampton also referenced past efforts to address water system issues and raised concerns about potential unauthorized taps.

Whisenhunt responded that the City would actively monitor and police the new line, similar to standard City practices.

Hooton questioned whether the total project cost would approach $100,000.

Whisenhunt clarified that material costs are estimated at $25,000–$30,000, with approximately $25,000 in labor absorbed within the existing Public Utilities budget.

Burk asked whether an improvement district could be formed; Whisenhunt responded that with only seven customers, such an option would be financially burdensome.

Epps asked about the legal implications of disconnecting water service to the association.

Wilson stated that an outside water sales agreement exists and that failure to pay required charges constitutes a breach of that agreement, which could legally justify service termination, although litigation or injunctions could be possible.

Epps asked if Wilson felt like the City would be within their rights to shut off the water.

Wilson stated if they're in breach of their agreement. He noted that he had not looked at the agreement, but that Whisenhunt may know more.

Whisenhunt stated the agreement requires them to pay the overages.

Wilson stated that would be a potential breach. The question is whether or not the Council wants to turn the water off.

Mayor Booker stated has apparently not wanted to enforce the agreement. If the Council wants them to enforce the agreement, they apparently need to vote on it.

Wilson stated the item on the agenda is to provide direction.

Chapman stated she is having a problem with what the cost is going to be, how the City gets their money back, and where we get the money to do the work. She stated these are big numbers, and while she feels for the association and the people, we have to look out for our budgeting.

Hampton asked how long this has been going on.

Whisenhunt stated Wedgewood has been an issue for as long as he has been around, so over 35 years.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Randy Warren, to enforce the original water agreement. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

32. Consider a proposal to implement an EMS Mutual Aid Transport Plan and direct staff to take action as necessary, to include obtaining a transport license.

Jared Williams, Fire Chief, presented an item regarding a proposed mutual aid transport license for the Lawton Fire Department. Chief Williams stated that under Oklahoma law, only properly licensed agencies may transport patients, and the Lawton Fire Department is not currently licensed to do so. He emphasized that this request was not intended to change or replace the City's day-to-day ambulance operations. He stated that Lawton's current system, served by Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service and Kirk's, is performing well, and he described the current partnership as strong and effective based on his experience.

Chief Williams explained that his focus was preparedness for large-scale incidents where the existing EMS system could be temporarily overwhelmed. He referenced a recent school bus crash involving the Minco softball team as an example of how quickly a rural incident can exceed transport capacity, noting that multiple patients required transport and the EMS system was strained. He stated that Lawton's daily environment presents similar mass-casualty risks because of the volume of transportation and public activity occurring within the city. Chief Williams reported that Lawton Public Schools transports approximately 5,400 students twice daily using roughly 80 school buses, not including activity buses for athletics and events. He noted that football, basketball, wrestling, and spring sports seasons increase bus travel, and he emphasized that children are on Lawton roads every day. He further cited community-wide risk factors including operations at the Lawton Regional Airport, ongoing commuter air service, and heavy traffic along Interstate 44, which carries thousands of vehicles through the city. He also referenced recent local incidents, including a firearm being discharged in a crowd at Freedom Fest and a self-harm incident at Walmart, as reminders that unpredictable emergencies can occur without warning.

Chief Williams described the transport license concept as an insurance policy for residents and families. He stated that while insurance is often overlooked until it is needed, it becomes critically important during emergencies. He explained that if a major event overwhelmed routine EMS response, the Fire Department could assist as a mutual aid partner by using its two ambulances to transport additional patients when traditional transport agencies had reached capacity. He added that the request aligns with the City's True North culture and Kids First priorities, emphasizing public safety and readiness to protect citizens.

Mayor Booker stated that he had researched the issue prior to the meeting and recalled that a transport license had been discussed previously and referred to a committee, but he was unable to determine the outcome of that effort. The Mayor stated that he had also spoken with representatives from CCM and shared what he described as the most accurate guiding principle for the discussion, which is that the City needs the best 911 response system possible for the community. Mayor Booker acknowledged that ambulance service represents a delicate balance within any community and stated that while he sees value in the concept presented, he believes the issue warrants broader discussion. He proposed convening a committee that includes the ambulance providers, Comanche County Emergency Management, City staff, select councilmembers, and the Fire Chief to fully evaluate what the best 911 response plan should look like for Lawton, particularly in mass-casualty situations. Mayor Booker asked Chief Williams whether he would be willing to participate in that type of structured discussion.

Chief Williams responded that he would welcome the opportunity and agreed that a committee approach was appropriate. He emphasized that his request is strictly limited to mutual aid and mass-casualty response, and not intended to alter the City's day-to-day EMS operations.

Warren stated that the topic of a fire department transport license has been discussed for many years and noted that these conversations date back to earlier administrations. He acknowledged that many circumstances have changed over time and stated that he is not necessarily opposed to a transport license. However, he expressed concern about approaching the issue in a piecemeal manner. Warren referenced past situations in which the City acquired equipment in stages, including the purchase of a chassis and later the addition of a box, without ultimately obtaining a transport license. He stated that he does not want the City to repeat that pattern and emphasized the need for a comprehensive plan. Warren stated that the goal should be to ensure the citizens of Lawton can be confident that the City has done everything possible to provide the best emergency response available.

Hampton stated that the scenarios described by Chief Williams are realistic risks that any community could face and noted that preparedness planning already occurs through exercises, including those conducted at the airport. He stated that he had independently reviewed how other cities structure their emergency response systems and found value in examining different models. Hampton stated that while he does not enjoy paying insurance premiums without immediate return, he understands the necessity of planning for worst-case scenarios. He expressed support for forming a committee so that concerns, benefits, and potential conflicts can be thoroughly discussed among professionals before decisions are made.

Epps stated that one of his concerns is determining how the City defines when the EMS system is truly overwhelmed. He stated that the concept requires clear data points and measurable thresholds, noting that it is unrealistic to plan for every possible scenario. Epps expressed support for a committee that would examine data, assess risk, and identify a reasonable middle ground that balances preparedness with fiscal and operational responsibility.

Hooton asked how many ambulances the Fire Department has.

Chief Williams stated that the Fire Department already has two ambulances and that the only missing component to enable transport is a state-issued license, which he described as costing approximately $600 annually. He stated that this cost is minimal when viewed as an insurance policy that could allow the City to transport additional patients during emergencies.

Hooton stated it is certainly not a barrier to entry and expressed support for further planning but cautioned against allowing the issue to stall indefinitely, stating that continued delay would not serve the community.

Mayor Booker then summarized the discussion and stated that the consensus appeared to support additional evaluation rather than immediate implementation. He formally proposed the creation of an ad hoc committee to determine the best 911 response plan for the community. He stated that the committee would include Councilmembers Warren, Hampton, and Gil, with Councilman Warren serving as chair, and would include representatives from CCMH, Kirk’s, Comanche County Emergency Management, and City staff. Mayor Booker also stated that the committee chair would be authorized to include additional advisors as needed.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Allan Hampton, to to approve the creation of the ad hoc committee as stated.. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Audience Participation

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

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

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

Kimberly Bliss

Kimberly Bliss addressed the Council and stated that she is a resident of Lawton who is currently facing homelessness. Ms. Bliss explained that her situation is not the result of wrongdoing on her part, but rather due to the sudden depletion of funding in a housing assistance program she relied upon. She stated that she entered into a one-year lease through a housing assistance program administered in coordination with the Lawton Housing Authority and was informed only a few weeks later that the funding had been exhausted. Ms. Bliss stated that she received no advance warning and was provided no contingency plan, despite having followed all required steps and signed all necessary documentation in good faith. She explained that she believed she had secured stable housing for one year and is now being told she may lose her home.

Ms. Bliss described the emotional impact of being told that her rent was covered, finally feeling secure, and then having that security taken away shortly thereafter. She stated that the situation has been frightening and overwhelming, particularly because she does not have family in the area with whom she can stay and lives on a limited income. She expressed concern that becoming homeless due to a funding shortage is something no individual should experience, particularly after complying fully with program requirements. Ms. Bliss acknowledged that funding limitations exist but stated that when programs collapse suddenly, the consequences fall on real people who are left without options.

Ms. Bliss requested that the Council look into what occurred with the housing assistance program and work with the Lawton Housing Authority and local partners to identify emergency funding or temporary rental assistance for tenants who were approved and signed leases in good faith. She stated that even short-term assistance could help prevent individuals from losing their housing while longer-term solutions are pursued. Ms. Bliss emphasized that the issue extends beyond her personal circumstances and affects others who trusted the system and complied with all requirements.

Ms. Bliss referenced the Lawton Housing Authority's mission to assist elderly, disabled, and low-income families and stated that she believes the program failed to meet that mission in her case. She reported that she spoke with Rita Love, Executive Director of the Lawton Housing Authority, and was told that the City allegedly owes the Housing Authority approximately $86,000. Ms. Bliss stated that she was unsure how that amount related to the funding program but wanted the information noted. She explained that her rent of $700 is due on November 1 and that she received only two weeks' notice that assistance would end. She stated that the Housing Authority did not contact her directly and that she was notified by her property management company instead. Ms. Bliss further explained that the property owner had made significant investments to bring the home into compliance for inspection, including new flooring and maintenance work performed by contractors who traveled from Texas. She stated that the property passed inspection in May, that funding reportedly ran out in June, and that rent payments continued through October. She stated that she currently has $174 available and cannot make up the remaining balance.

Mayor Booker stated that the Lawton Housing Authority is not an entity of the City of Lawton. He noted, however, that there was a prior agreement between the City and the Housing Authority and stated that he would have the City Manager look into the matter further. Mayor Booker thanked Ms. Bliss for coming forward and sharing her concerns.

Casey Carr

Casey Carr addressed the Council and stated that he is a resident of Lawton requesting that the Council revisit a demolition agenda item related to his home, which is currently listed for demolition. Mr. Carr respectfully requested a short extension to allow him to complete final repairs and preserve the property. He explained that the home has been in his family since the 1970s and was originally purchased by her great-grandmother. Mr. Carr stated that the home is where his father grew up and where he was raised, and that he did not inherit the property but had to take significant steps to reclaim it after it was lost due to unpaid taxes. He explained that he located the property, negotiated with the new owner, and repurchased it at a significantly higher cost in order to keep it in his family's name.

Mr. Carr stated that during the same month he reacquired the home, his first child was born, and that eleven months later his mother passed away. He explained that shortly thereafter the property was placed on the demolition list. Mr. Carr disclosed that he is disabled and lives with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, which causes chronic pain, fatigue, and muscle weakness. He further stated that he has been dealing with a torn ACL, a complex meniscus tear, a partially torn MCL, and bone edema in his left knee, and that he delayed medically recommended surgery in order to continue work on the home before demolition deadlines.

Mr. Carr stated that he is also a small business owner in Lawton and has continued working, supporting his family, and investing in the home despite his health challenges. He described repeated incidents of vandalism and theft at the property, including more than ten break-ins, police reports, arrests, stolen materials, and severe property damage. He stated that at one point he was unable to continue work for four to five months due to delays in obtaining a permit and limitations caused by his mobility issues. He also noted that he was fifteen minutes late to the City Council meeting at which his home was discussed and therefore was unable to speak at that time.

Mr. Carr stated that he did not realize the exterior condition of the property was the primary concern until the October 14 City Council meeting. He explained that since learning that information, he redirected all efforts toward exterior improvements. Mr. Carr stated that the exterior addition that raised concerns has been completely demolished, that the home now has brand new siding and skirting installed around the entire structure, and that painting would be completed by the following day. He stated that Councilwoman Sherene Williams had personally visited the property and encouraged him to address the Council. Mr. Carr further stated that he has already paid an electrician, that a licensed plumber is prepared to begin work once permits are approved, and that he has exhausted his savings to reach this point. He stated that he worked past sundown each night during the prior week, despite his injuries, to make progress.

Mr. Carr requested that the Council revisit his demolition case and grant an extension of thirty days to allow him to complete the remaining work, stating that while six months would provide peace of mind, thirty days would be sufficient to finish the project. He asked the Council to allow him to preserve the home before demolition occurs.

Mayor Booker thanked Mr. Carr for his comments and stated that the proper process for addressing demolition matters is through Neighborhood Services, also referred to as the Department of Safe and Clean Neighborhoods. Mr. Carr responded that he has been working through that process and stated that Councilwoman Williams encouraged him to speak due to missing the prior meeting. Mayor Booker directed Mr. Carr to visit with the City Manager following the meeting.

Matina Prudhomme

Mayor Booker announced that Matina Prudhomme was listed to speak.

Blazek-Scherler stated that Ms. Prudhomme had notified her that she was unable to remain for the meeting and was not present.

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 George Gill, Second by Randy Warren, to adjourn. AYE: Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren, Taron Epps, Lane Hooton. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at .