



City of Lawton

City Council

MINUTES

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

Monday, December 2, 2024

3:30 PM

**Lawton City Hall
Council Chambers/Auditorium**

SPECIAL MEETING

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR PRO TEM RANDY WARREN WITH INVOCATION BY SHERENE L. WILLIAMS, FOLLOWED BY THE 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."

ROLL CALL

Present: Kelly Harris, Ward 2
Linda Chapman, Ward 3
George Gill, Ward 4
Allan Hampton, Ward 5
Bob Weger, Ward 6
Sherene L Williams, Ward 7
Randy Warren, Ward 8

Absent: Mary Ann Hankins, Ward 1
Stanley Booker, Mayor

Also Present: John Ratliff, City Manager

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. Presentation and First Public Hearing, pursuant to 62 O.S. §859, of the proposed Second Amended Skills Training, Education, Development, and Investment (STEDI) Project Plan and supporting increment districts for the purpose of providing information, including an analysis of potential positive or negative impacts, and answering questions regarding the proposed Second Amended STEDI Project Plan and increment districts.

First Read of Ordinance No. 24-___ Repealing Article 10-20 of Chapter 10, Lawton City Code, in its entirety and replacing it with the enactment of Sections 10-20-101 through 10-20-171 by approving and adopting the Second Amended Skills Training, Education, Development, and Investment (STEDI) Project Plan; designating and adopting the Project Area and increment district boundaries; establishing a date for the creation of Increment District No. Five, City of Lawton; establishing a date for the creation of Increment District No. Six, City of Lawton; identifying and establishing tax increment districts temporarily designated as Increment Districts No. “A”, “B”, “Ca”, “Cb”, “Da”, “Db”, “E”, “Fa”, “Fb”, “G”, “Ha”, “Hb”, “I”, “J”, “K”, “M”, “N”, “O”, “P”, “Q”, “R”, “S”, “T”, and “U”, City of Lawton; deferring their numbering and effective date; establishing the City of Lawton as the principal entity to carry out and administer the project plan; authorizing and designating the Lawton Economic Development Authority to carry out implementation actions for the project; establishing a tax apportionment fund; declaring apportioned funds to be funds of the Lawton Economic Development Authority; authorizing the use of ad valorem and sales tax increment revenues for the payment or financing of certain project costs; authorizing the Lawton Economic Development Authority to pledge the apportioned increments to repayment of debt; establishing plan objectives and implementation procedures; authorizing the use of other resources to pay for or finance project costs; authorizing the Lawton Economic Development Authority to issue bonds and carry out certain provisions of the project plan; ratifying and confirming the actions of, and acknowledging the recommendations and findings of the review committee and the planning commission; directing continuing apportionment; providing for severability; providing for codification; and declaring an emergency.

Attachments: [9a. 2. Sec Amend STEDI Plan Ordinance 11.26.24F](#)

[7b. Second Amended STEDI Project Plan 11.12.2024 w Exhibits - this will be a part of the proposed ordinance as an exhibit](#)

Richard Rogalski of the Lawton Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) began the presentation by providing background on project plans in Lawton. He stated that project planning in the city began in 2012 with the Downtown Redevelopment Project Plan, followed by the STEDI Project Plan in 2019. The STEDI Plan focuses on industrial, non-retail business development and was created under the same state statute as the Downtown Plan. The plan initially established TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District 3, and in December of last year, TIF 4 was created through a minor amendment. The current proposed amendment, however, constitutes a major amendment to the plan. Rogalski emphasized the importance of industrial development for Lawton, highlighting the city’s \$10,000 median income gap compared to the state average. He stressed that the community’s challenges are tied to this income disparity and that this project plan aims to grow the “pie” rather than divide existing resources.

Dan Batchelor from the Center for Economic Development Law (CEDL) explained that economic growth is not a zero-sum game, emphasizing the need to invest in non-retail economic development to create job opportunities and higher wages. This, in turn, increases consumer demand and fosters improved living conditions. He described the process for approving a major amendment to a project plan, which involves three steps: recommendation by a review committee, which has already been completed with unanimous approval; review by the City Planning Commission, which has also been completed; and two public hearings before the City Council, with the current meeting serving as the first hearing. Batchelor also gave a detailed presentation on the proposed changes, which is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.

Gill asked if the City Council would establish income limits for the Home Buyer Assistance program included in the plan. Batchelor confirmed that the Council would determine the terms of the program. Gill also inquired if the homes must be located within the TIF districts, to which Batchelor responded that the program would assist with purchasing homes anywhere in Lawton.

Harris asked how the projects in the plan would affect the budgets of the City, County, and school districts. Batchelor explained that the allocation of tax increments to public schools would increase from 35% to 50%. Furthermore, when the \$62 million public infrastructure investment threshold is reached, 100% of the operating levies will be distributed to the affected taxing jurisdictions. Harris also asked about the timing for the "Near Term" Incremental Sales Tax Revenues of \$200,000 to \$500,000 annually. Batchelor clarified that these are the estimated amounts for the first few years, and over the next ten to twenty years, these revenues could increase four- to fivefold as commercial activity and the market grow.

Hampton asked how long the plan would extend into the future and if more districts would be created. Batchelor stated that while the increment districts have been created legally, they have not been activated yet. Activation would only occur with a development agreement, at which point the maximum length of the district would be twenty-five years or until authorized project costs are paid. He further explained that once the \$62 million infrastructure investment threshold is met, taxing jurisdictions would begin to receive 100% of their operating revenue levies.

Weger inquired if the \$62 million threshold applies collectively to all tax increment districts. Batchelor confirmed that it could because it is collected from all activated districts. When Weger asked how the \$62 million figure was determined, Batchelor explained that it was an estimate based on the infrastructure needed to attract significant new investment activity.

Harris raised a question about whether inflation was taken into account in drafting the amendment. Batchelor assured the Council that inflation had been considered, which is why the budgets for infrastructure improvements are higher than in the original plan, and the threshold was set at \$62 million rather than \$30 million.

Batchelor concluded by stating that the strategy outlined in the amendment represents a forward-thinking approach to economic development. He expressed confidence that the plan would demonstrate to others that Lawton is an excellent place to live and conduct business.

Rogalski closed the discussion by emphasizing that without this plan, progress is unlikely. He reminded the Council that the money for the plan belongs to the original review committee, which unanimously approved it. He reiterated that bold initiatives like the STEDI Project Plan and PROPEL 2024 are

essential for Lawton's future growth and development. Without them, the city risks remaining stagnant.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED.

No one appeared to speak.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

Motion by GILL, to read the ordinance.

Ratliff asked if the motion includes approving the amendment to the STEDI Plan.

Lisa Hardin, LEDC, stated the amendment will not be approved until after the second public hearing.

Second by WILLIAMS, to read the ordinance.

The City Attorney reads the ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ARTICLE 10-20 OF CHAPTER 10, LAWTON CITY CODE, IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACING IT WITH THE ENACTMENT OF SECTIONS 10-20-101 THROUGH 10-20-171 BY APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE SECOND AMENDED SKILLS TRAINING, EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT (STEDI) PROJECT PLAN; DESIGNATING AND ADOPTING THE PROJECT AREA AND INCREMENT DISTRICT BOUNDARIES; ESTABLISHING A DATE FOR THE CREATION OF INCREMENT DISTRICT NO. FIVE, CITY OF LAWTON; ESTABLISHING A DATE FOR THE CREATION OF INCREMENT DISTRICT NO. SIX, CITY OF LAWTON; IDENTIFYING AND ESTABLISHING TAX INCREMENT DISTRICTS TEMPORARILY DESIGNATED AS INCREMENT DISTRICTS NO. "A", "B", "CA", "CB", "DA", "DB", "E", "FA", "FB", "G", "HA", "HB", "I", "J", "K", "M", "N", "O", "P", "Q", "R", "S", "T", AND "U", CITY OF LAWTON; DEFERRING THEIR NUMBERING AND EFFECTIVE DATE; ESTABLISHING THE CITY OF LAWTON AS THE PRINCIPAL ENTITY TO CARRY OUT AND ADMINISTER THE PROJECT PLAN; AUTHORIZING AND DESIGNATING THE LAWTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS FOR THE PROJECT; ESTABLISHING A TAX APPORTIONMENT FUND; DECLARING APPORTIONED FUNDS TO BE FUNDS OF THE LAWTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY; AUTHORIZING THE USE OF AD VALOREM AND SALES TAX INCREMENT REVENUES FOR THE PAYMENT OR FINANCING OF CERTAIN PROJECT COSTS; AUTHORIZING THE LAWTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO PLEDGE THE APPORTIONED INCREMENTS TO REPAYMENT OF DEBT; ESTABLISHING PLAN OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES; AUTHORIZING THE USE OF OTHER RESOURCES TO PAY FOR OR FINANCE PROJECT COSTS; AUTHORIZING THE LAWTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO ISSUE BONDS AND CARRY OUT CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE PROJECT PLAN; RATIFYING AND CONFIRMING THE ACTIONS OF, AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION; DIRECTING CONTINUING APPORTIONMENT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Motion by GILL, to adjourn the meeting of December 2, 2024.

Warren asked if any action was needed to accept the reading of the ordinance.

Andrew asked Hardin if any action was needed, to which Hardin replied no. Andrew stated I believe we have done everything we need to do.

Second by WILLIAMS, to adjourn the meeting of December 2, 2024.

Blazek-Scherler stated there was a motion and second to read the ordinance, but no vote was taken.

Andrew stated yes, I just read it. Sorry about that.

Warren asked if we could retroactively take a vote on that.

Andrew said there really isn't anything to vote on. I just went ahead and read it. We're good. We just had to have it publicly read; it's read, so we can adjourn.

Rogalski stated reading the ordinance is just part of the presentation.

Andrew stated it's statutory.

Ratliff stated the reading of the ordinance included "by approving and adopting the second amended STEDI Project Plan". This is just a prospective reading, and we are not approving and adopting even though that was what was read in the title of the ordinance.

Hardin stated that is correct. The action on the ordinance will be taken after the second public hearing.

Andrew stated statutorily we have to read it twice and have two public hearings. That is what we did today, and what the 10th will be.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTE ON MOTION TO ADJOURN: AYE: Harris, Chapman, Gill, Hampton, Weger, Williams, Warren. NAY: None. *Motion Passed.*

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:06PM.

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."