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

City of Lawton

City Council

Minutes

Tuesday, June 24, 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."

Meeting called to order by Mayor Stanley Booker with invocation led by Bishop John Dunaway with Abundant Life Church followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present:
Councilwoman - Ward 1 Mary Ann Hankins
Councilman - Ward 2 RL Smith
Councilwoman - Ward 3 Linda Chapman
Councilman - Ward 4 George Gill
Councilman - Ward 5 Allan Hampton
Councilwoman - Ward 7 Sherene L Williams
Councilman - Ward 8 Randy Warren

Absent:
Councilman - Ward 6 Bob Weger

Also Present:
Stanley Booker, Mayor
John Ratliff, City Manager
Timothy Wilson, Interim City Attorney
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk

Presentation

1. Receive a report regarding the Museum of the Great Plains Trust Authority and take action as deemed necessary.

Ronda Norell, Incoming President, Museum of the Great Plains Trust Authority, presented an overview of the Trust Authority's five-, ten-, and twenty-year strategic planning horizons. She discussed the balance between preserving hands-on museum experiences and expanding digital access.

Topics included:
Immersive technology and virtual exhibits.
Educational programming for all age groups.
Community outreach and school alignment.
Visitor feedback mechanisms.
Accessibility improvements.
Strategic partnerships.
Long-term funding strategies, including preliminary endowment discussions.
Reliance on project-based grants due to limited operational funding availability.
Increased emphasis on admissions, retail sales, and marketing.

Norell noted the Museum is one of 14 accredited museums in Oklahoma and the only one of its kind in southwest Oklahoma. She reported recent strong attendance, including approximately 700 children over a three-week period.

Norell's presentation is available for view in the City Clerk's Office.

Mayor Stan Booker commended Ms. Norell's leadership and enthusiasm and stated her vision positioned the Museum well for the future.

Mayor Stan Booker thanked Norrell for the energy, positivity, and vision she brings to the Museum. He stated that those qualities would contribute significantly to the Museum's long-term success and noted her consistent ability to generate enthusiasm and community engagement. Mayor Booker remarked that her leadership and outreach efforts, particularly with youth programming, have the potential to increase attendance to a level that may require additional staffing support.

Norrell responded by noting strong volunteer engagement during recent Museum programs, including approximately 20 adult volunteers per day. She explained that many volunteers were community members, teachers, and grandparents who had not visited the Museum recently and were reintroduced through these programs. She emphasized her personal commitment to active involvement and maintaining a positive, forward-looking approach in her leadership role.

Mayor Booker commended the Museum's exploration of emerging technologies, including the use of artificial intelligence, while expressing appreciation for preserving hands-on experiences such as interactive exhibits for children. He acknowledged the challenge of envisioning how future technologies may change museum operations but thanked Norrell for planning ahead while honoring the Museum's core educational mission.

Mayor Booker asked whether the Trust Authority had discussed potential recommendations for changes to the trust indenture.

Norrell stated that the Trust Authority held preliminary discussions at its most recent board meeting and expressed a desire to meet with City staff to explore potential options. She noted the Board's preference for maintaining an odd number of members to assist with decision-making and stated the Trust Authority would welcome Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities, as an ex officio member. She emphasized that his experience, organizational connections, and collaborative perspective would add value to the Board's work.

Hankins-Booker noted she was wearing a tye-dye shirt that was created at the Arts for All camp.

Williams asked whether the Trust Authority anticipated requesting a specific funding amount for a potential endowment and whether such contributions would be tax deductible.

Norrell stated that discussions regarding an endowment were in the early planning stages and that boundaries, structure, and tax considerations would require further evaluation.

Smith thanked Norrell for her passion and also thanked Poudrier and Museum staff. He stated that the Museum appeared to be moving in a positive direction and expressed excitement about its future.

Chapman stated that Norrell consistently brings excellence to every project she undertakes and thanked her for the presentation. She encouraged Councilmembers to review the materials provided, noting the significant amount of work completed in a short timeframe. Chapman also acknowledged Museum staff and emphasized that a dedicated staff working collaboratively with the Board is essential to the Museum's success.

Mayor Booker stated that the Trust Authority appeared to be providing strong leadership and clear direction. He emphasized the importance of building a shared vision and thanked Norrell for her leadership.

Ratliff stated no action was needed on this item. The purpose was to give an update on the direction of the museum and provide an opportunity for the Council to ask questions of Norrell and museum staff. He also noted the importance of the "connective tissue" between the City and the museum and stated Jason Poudrier would make a good addition as an ex-officio member to the board.

Hampton asked about the total number of artifacts held by the Museum, noting that only a small portion of the collection is visible to the public.

Ian Swart, Assistant Director and Archivist, explained that approximately 2–3% of the Museum’s collection is displayed at any given time and that is quite normal for museums. The Museum has approximately 50,000 cataloged individual artifacts. He described ongoing digitization efforts and previewed a planned exhibit focusing on Lawton in 1901.

Mayor Stan Booker thanked Norrell and Museum staff for the update and expressed appreciation for their enthusiasm and commitment.

2. True North Award Recipient

Mr. Ratliff announced Caitlin Gatlin as the recipient of the True North Award and invited her to the podium. He also invited her husband, Graydon Gatlin, to join her, explaining that he does not typically include family members but wished to do so in this instance.

Mr. Ratliff stated that Caitlin and Graydon Gatlin are both City of Lawton employees and described them as a young couple who support one another while working demanding and irregular hours. He noted that the City places significant demands on both of them and stated that their mutual support and commitment were noteworthy.

Mr. Ratliff referenced Caitlin Gatlin’s actions during the recent flooding event. He stated that shortly after intense rainfall, City staff were operating from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and that Ms. Gatlin had a personal social engagement scheduled that afternoon. He stated that he contacted her and asked her to report to the EOC immediately due to the seriousness of the situation and the need for public communication. He stated that Ms. Gatlin immediately discontinued her personal plans and reported to the EOC without hesitation.

Mr. Ratliff stated that over the following days, Ms. Gatlin was responsible for communicating critical public information related to the flooding. He stated that she performed this work with a high level of personal commitment and care. He specifically referenced a late-night report conducted during the week in which Ms. Gatlin and Fire Chief Williams were present at East Cache Creek at approximately 11:00 p.m. He stated that they were measuring water levels in order to provide immediate information to the public regarding whether floodwaters would crest, noting concerns at that time that the City of Lawton could be physically divided by flood conditions.

Mr. Ratliff stated that Ms. Gatlin’s dedication to duty, communication efforts, and concern for the community were exemplary. He again referenced both Caitlin and Graydon Gatlin as an impressive young couple and stated that they are valuable employees of the City of Lawton.

Reports: Mayor/City Council/City Manager

Hampton reported on the local farmers market and noted the availability of fresh produce for the community. He encouraged residents to take advantage of the market and support local vendors.

Gill provided an update on street reconstruction efforts, including progress on 38th Street. He stated that the project was moving forward and expressed appreciation for the work being completed.

Chapman commented on infrastructure improvements within Ward 3. She expressed appreciation for the progress being made and thanked residents for their support of funding initiatives that made the improvements possible.

Smith reminded the public of upcoming Freedom Festival events and noted an upcoming Lawton Police Department academy graduation. He encouraged community participation and support for both events.

Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities, stated that the Freedom Festival would take place from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on both days.

Poudrier stated that registrations remained open for derby car races and a hot dog eating contest, including special divisions for military families. He stated that military participants could also register for gurney races, with winners receiving backstage passes.

Poudrier stated that Friday evening would include appearances by princess characters, a performance by a local entertainer named Knuckles, and a performance by Butter and the Genre from Oklahoma City. He stated that the event would conclude with a drone show, noting that a new drone company had been contracted and that the show would feature brighter and faster drones, additional displays, and a longer presentation interspersed with fireworks.

Poudrier stated that although a military parade was not held for the 250th celebration, the drone show would include military themes.

Poudrier stated that Saturday's events would include performances by Ashes and Arrows, noting their appearance on America's Got Talent and that the group was currently touring. He stated that princess characters would return and that the event would conclude with what he described as the largest fireworks show in Southwest Oklahoma.

Poudrier stated that Fort Sill would participate in force, including volunteers, a salute cannon, and static displays of military vehicles. He stated that staff were coordinating additional cannon fire to coincide with portions of the drone show.

Poudrier stated that more than 50 vendors would be present and that some vendors had been turned away due to demand. He also stated that the event would include a bounce house park with approximately 20 bounce houses, available for $5 per day.

Mayor Stan Booker thanked Poudrier for the report and made comments regarding the scale and growth of the event, noting that it had expanded to two days and referenced other recent community events.

Ratliff requested to make an introduction and invited Kelvin Ingram forward. He stated that Mr. Ingram is the City's new Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Ratliff summarized Mr. Ingram's military career, including service as a Battalion Command Sergeant Major and assignments with the Field Artillery NCOIC Operations Group and the Joint Readiness Training Center. He stated that these assignments are typically held by highly qualified personnel and expressed that the City was excited to have Mr. Ingram in the role.

Kelvin Ingram addressed the Mayor, Council, and City Manager. He stated that it was a privilege to serve the people of the City of Lawton and that the department would strive for excellence. He stated that Parks and Recreation staff are motivated to serve the citizens of the City and invited communication regarding departmental needs.

Mayor Stan Booker welcomed Mr. Ingram.

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.

Jennette Hutchinson was called as the first speaker and was granted three minutes.

Ms. Hutchinson introduced herself and her husband, Bishop Hutchinson, stating they are affiliated with Harvest Plenty House of Prayer Church. She stated that they were advocating on behalf of at-risk youth on the east side of Lawton through their Chisholm Trail Reading STEM Camp, which they have operated for two years.

Ms. Hutchinson stated that the program integrates reading with STEM education, explaining that reading proficiency is necessary for success in STEM learning. She stated that the program targets illiteracy and students lacking fundamental reading skills, while also promoting critical thinking and problem-solving.

Ms. Hutchinson described the program's use of reading activities, reading comprehension exercises, and pre- and post-assessment tools. She stated that certified teachers use assessment data to develop curriculum aligned with Oklahoma state standards and tailored to individual student deficiencies.

Ms. Hutchinson reported that during the prior year, 15 of 22 students were assessed, with results showing measurable improvement. She stated that one student improved by more than 32 percent and that overall test scores showed a 53 percent improvement.

Ms. Hutchinson stated that the program's next camp session begins July 7, that 12 students were already enrolled, and that certified staff were prepared to facilitate the program. She stated that the program previously received funding through a YFAC grant, but that funding was denied this year due to a misunderstanding regarding audit documentation requirements.

Ms. Hutchinson stated that a packet had been provided to Council outlining prior funding use and program outcomes. She requested that the funding denial decision be reconsidered or that alternative funding options be identified to allow the program to continue.

Mayor Stan Booker stated that someone would contact Ms. Hutchinson to explain the ordinance and procedures governing YFAC funding. He thanked Ms. Hutchinson and her husband for attending and stated that the City Manager had a phone number for follow-up.

Cindy McIntyre was called and granted three minutes.

Ms. McIntyre stated that while she likes the City of Lawton, she believed the reasons given for the cancellation of the Army Birthday Parade were problematic. She stated that the joint City–Fort Sill statement referencing "credible threats" and the Mayor's letter issued the following morning contributed to social media misinformation.

Ms. McIntyre stated that social media posts included threats against protesters and asserted that such threats were not unique to Lawton. She referenced a statement attributed to Mayor Booker regarding "almost certain violence" from groups with national ties and stated that she believed the lack of specificity contributed to the perception that local residents were the threat.

Ms. McIntyre stated that many citizens concluded from official statements that protesters were being characterized as dangerous. She stated that, in her view, this functioned as a "dog whistle" to individuals who believe protesters deserve harm.

Ms. McIntyre stated that millions of people marched peacefully nationwide on the same day and that predicted violence did not occur. She questioned whether the true concern was the Army marching alongside protesters. She stated that if City or Fort Sill leadership had visited the relocated protest site at Shepler Park, they would have seen community members, veterans, and local residents.

Ms. McIntyre stated that protesters support the military but oppose the current

Commander-in-Chief, whom she compared to King George III. She stated that the First Amendment protects peaceful assembly and petitioning government for redress of grievances.

Ms. McIntyre requested that the City and Fort Sill be transparent about the decision-making process and release investigation details when completed. She suggested holding the parade at a later date, such as Veterans Day, and stated that protesters would attend.

Mayor Stan Booker thanked Ms. McIntyre for attending.

Dewight Franklin was called and granted three minutes.

Mr. Franklin stated that he resides at 614 Southwest 26th Street in Lawton and described ongoing issues involving drug activity, violence, and disturbances in his neighborhood. He stated that police are frequently called but often arrive after suspects have left.

Mr. Franklin stated that the issues have persisted for approximately 11 years, following the arrival of a particular family on the block. He alleged ongoing domestic abuse, child neglect, and drug-related activity and stated that complaints have been made to multiple agencies.

Mr. Franklin described a prior incident in which an altercation occurred involving the son of an individual he described as a ringleader. He stated that the individual later returned with brass knuckles and a firearm, discharged rounds into his truck, and was subsequently jailed. Mr. Franklin stated that since that incident, tensions have escalated and that neighbors feel threatened.

Mr. Franklin stated that squatting has occurred in nearby properties and that police have been unable to remove occupants. He stated that residents were chased by an individual with a knife the previous evening and that police were unable to locate the suspect.

Mayor Stan Booker stated that someone would follow up and confirmed that Mr. Franklin’s phone number was available for contact.

Doris Osborne was called and granted three minutes.

Ms. Osborne stated that she resides at 615 Southwest 26th Street and described repeated trespassing and disturbances involving individuals from neighboring properties. She stated that people have entered her yard, stood on her porch, and climbed onto her roof.

Ms. Osborne stated that she has been asked to be patient for more than 11 years and that she no longer feels safe allowing her grandchildren to visit her home. She stated that drug activity occurs nearby and that individuals park in front of her home to conceal their activity.

Ms. Osborne stated that police responses have not resulted in lasting change and that conditions continue to worsen. She requested assistance and stated that she has worked hard to own her home and should not have to tolerate the current conditions.

Mayor Stan Booker asked Ms. Osborne to verify her phone number with the City Manager or City Clerk for follow-up.

Matina Davis-Prudhomme was called and granted three minutes.

Ms. Davis-Prudhomme stated that she wished to address concerns regarding the City Prosecutor’s Office and the Lawton Police Department. She stated that she was recently a defendant in a slander case in Comanche County and was found not guilty.

Ms. Davis-Prudhomme stated that despite the verdict, she believes the actions taken by the City Prosecutor’s Office and the Lawton Police Department constituted an abuse of power. She alleged that charges were pursued without significant evidence and that misconduct occurred during the investigation.

Ms. Davis-Prudhomme stated that the situation caused personal hardship and raised concerns about accountability within City legal and law enforcement departments. She formally requested that the City Council initiate a thorough and impartial investigation. She stated that she has documentation available to support her allegations.

Brenda Rivera was called. No response was received, and she did not appear.

David Reeves was called and granted three minutes.

Mr. Reeves stated that he has been observing City processes for approximately 26 months and referenced being told to “trust the process.” He stated that during that time he has observed changes to Council policies, reduced public input, and what he described as incomplete accounting of civic organizations.

Mr. Reeves alleged instances of hostility toward members of the public, referenced discussion of the Open Records Act, and criticized official press releases that he stated used provocative or vague language that increased public mistrust.

Mr. Reeves referenced industrial development issues and discussed reporting related to Westwin, stating that external reporting suggested the company faced closure absent reinstated federal subsidies, while local reporting indicated a separate agreement with a Turkish firm. He stated that import-export records reflected business connections to entities in China, Hong Kong, and Sri Lanka.

At the expiration of the three-minute limit, Mayor Stan Booker stated that Mr. Reeves’ time had concluded. Mr. Reeves added that, in his view, either the company or the City had been untruthful.

Mayor Stan Booker thanked Mr. Reeves for attending.

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 Randy Warren, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve the consent agenda as presented. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

3. Consider the following tort claims recommended for denial: Cierra Wellington and Samuel Palombo in the amount of $948.00, and Daryll Phillips in the amount of $252.90.

4. Per the recommendation of the Council Fee Committee, consider approving a Resolution amending Appendix A, Schedule of Fees and Charges, Lawton City Code, 2015, pertaining to Chapter 7, Business, by amending Article A-7-36 to add a requirement of the mobile pet grooming vehicles to pay a $20.00 fee per vehicle instead of the $100.00 per vehicle as an individual business.

Resolution 25-176

5. Consider approving proposed revisions to Council Policy 08-01 titled Engineering and Architectural Selection Process by editing contact representative and responsible department information along with fee amount changes which follow the most current version of the Oklahoma Public Competitive Bidding Act.

6. Consider accepting an engagement letter for technical accounting and consulting services with Crawford & Associates, P.C..

7. Consider approving the final change order for project EN2002B-Goodyear Blvd Reconstruction, as constructed by T&G Construction, Inc., thereby releasing the retainage in amount of $241,571.62 and placing the Maintenance Bond into effect.

8. Consider approving the annual Cooperative Agreement and an Agreement for Limited Funding between the City of Lawton and the Transit Trust to provide funds for the operation of a public transit system and authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the same.

9. Consider endorsing the Fiscal Year 2026 Unified Planning Work Program for the Lawton Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process.

10. Consider approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Lawton and the Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization for metropolitan transportation planning for Fiscal Year 2026.

11. Consider approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Lawton and the Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality programs and projects during Fiscal Year 2026.

12. Consider approving the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Lawton and the Lawton Metropolitan Planning Organization for transit planning for Fiscal Year 2026.

13. Consider awarding contract RFPCL25-025 for the City of Lawton Property Insurance to INSURICA Insurance Services LLC for a total cost of $1,450,974.00.

14. Consider approving and granting an easement to the Public Service Company of Oklahoma for the relocation of a new underground electric cable in Elmer Thomas Park for the Aquatics Center and authorizing the mayor to execute the easement.

15. Consider approving a reimbursement contract with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) for the purpose of hosting a household hazardous waste collection event.

16. Consider extending contract (CL23-025) Rock Hauling to G & R Enterprises, LLC of Lawton, OK as primary vendor and Spence Transportation of Elgin, OK as secondary vendor.

17. Consider approving offsite improvement construction plans for a water line and fire hydrants to serve the new airport traffic control tower, to be located at 3702 SW Sheridan Road, subject to the conditions listed.

18. Consider approving a Support Agreement between the City of Lawton and the United Way of Southwest Oklahoma in the amount of $35,000 for 2019 Propel CIP Youth Programs Funding.

19. Consider approving a Support Agreement between the City of Lawton and Teen Court in the amount of $35,000 for 2019 Propel CIP Youth Programs Funding.

20. Consider approving a Support Agreement between the City of Lawton and Marie Detty Youth and Family Services Center, Inc. in the amount of $100,000 for 2019 Propel CIP Youth Programs Funding.

21. Ratify the City Manager's execution of the TSET Healthy Incentive Grant Program Match Commitment Letter for Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority.

22. Ratify the Deputy City Manager's Execution of the TSET Healthy Incentive Grant Program Match Commitment Letter for the FIRES Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA).

23. Consider approving the Claims List for May 15, 2025 through June 19, 2025.

24. Consider approving appointments to boards and commissions.

LAWTON METROPOLITAN AREA AIRPORT AUTHORITY:
Mark Henry – Mayoral Appointment
08/01/2025 – 12/31/2027

LAKES & LAND COMMISSION:
Austin Rabon – Mayoral Appointment
8/10/2028

LAWTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:
David Madigan – Mayoral Appointment
4/25/2031

LAWTON URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY:
Evan Watson – Chairman (Mayoral Appointment)
07/31/2026

PERSONNEL BOARD:
Kelly Gentle – Mayoral Appointment
6/30/2031

PROCESSES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL COMMITTEE:
RL Smith – Mayoral Appointment
06/24/2026

YOUTH & FAMILY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:
Karen Bailey – Mayoral Appointment
UT 2/23/2026

Unfinished Business

25. Discuss proposed amendments to the City Charter to be submitted to the voters at an election on September 9, 2025 and provide direction to staff as deemed necessary.

Before discussion of the item, Mayor Stan Booker requested that Jason Sparks introduce himself.

Jason Sparks identified himself as Chief of Operations for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. He stated that he wished to make himself available to answer questions regarding the State of Oklahoma and the upcoming transition of operations at the Lawton Correctional Center, which he stated is scheduled to occur on July 25, when the State will assume operations from GEO Group.

In response to a question from Mayor Booker, Mr. Sparks stated that employment levels are expected to remain about the same. He stated that all current GEO Group employees who are not contract employees and who pass a background check will be offered employment.
Mr. Sparks further stated that the inmate population would remain similar to current levels, potentially fluctuating by a few hundred inmates, and would remain well below the facility’s capacity of over 2,600.

Mayor Booker asked if Council had questions. No additional questions were raised. Mayor Booker thanked Mr. Sparks for attending.

Mayor Booker returned to Item 25 and stated that discussion of charter amendments began around February, but was postponed due to other matters. He stated that the proposed items had not substantively changed, except that some items were grouped together into a single proposition.

City Clerk Donalynn Blazek-Scherler confirmed that items related to True North, citizen service, efficiency, trust, and transparency were grouped together into one proposition.

Mayor Booker stated that the item was for discussion and that there had already been opportunities for public input. He stated that although no one signed up to speak that evening, there would be additional opportunities.

City Clerk Blazek-Scherler stated that on Friday, the Interim City Attorney and City Clerk would be available from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. to hear citizen input on proposed charter changes; and on July 1, a Special City Council Meeting would be held for further discussion of charter changes, at which citizens would again be able to speak.

Mayor Booker stated that this constituted three total opportunities for public input. He stated that while discussion was appropriate, he believed the number of proposed amendments should be limited to four, citing concerns about voter fatigue. He stated that four charter items were included on the previous ballot and that this seemed reasonable.

Mayor Booker stated that Council should return prepared to identify its top four proposed amendments and narrow the list accordingly.

Warren commented on the importance of the charter amendment process, stating that it is an opportunity to make lasting changes that cannot be altered “on the run” by Council and must be approved by voters. He stated that past charter amendments have generally resulted in positive changes that improved how government works for citizens.

Mayor Booker referenced several specific proposed amendments, including:
Items related to True North;
A proposed transition period allowing a mayor-elect to shadow the outgoing mayor for up to 45 days;
A proposal related to establishing and maintaining service level standards and performance metrics, noting that some of these items could be implemented by policy but would need to be charter amendments to remain in effect unless changed by voters;
A proposal to allow one regularly scheduled Council meeting in November and December, noting that additional meetings could still be held if needed;

A proposal related to the City Council liaison position.

Mayor Booker identified a provision on page two describing the Mayor as the “chief executive and administrative officer” and stated that this language was incorrect, emphasizing that the Mayor does not have administrative duties.

Blazek-Scherler stated that the language appeared to be a typographical error from the submission.

Mayor Booker referenced another provision requiring the City Manager to implement citizen service metrics and stated that some of these actions would be implemented by policy within the next 60 days.

Mayor Booker stated that he favored a provision requiring the City Manager’s role to emphasize efficiency, transparency, and delivery of world-class customer service.

Mayor Booker discussed a proposed amendment related to insurance, stating that the charter currently requires a bond that is no longer available in the market.

Blazek-Scherler confirmed that the charter language is outdated and that insurance is the modern alternative.

Mayor Booker stated that this provision should likely be included among the final amendments.

Mayor Booker stated that he did not see a proposal addressing term limits and stated that his understanding was that removal of term limits had been discussed. He stated that while he did not intend to run again, he does not support term limits and believes voters already have the ability to impose limits through elections.

Warren stated that he agreed with the Mayor’s position on term limits. He stated that if voters wish to retain a representative, they should be allowed to do so. He referenced historical examples, including representation at the state level, and stated that term limits resulted in the loss of institutional knowledge and experience.

Warren stated that in his view, when term limits are imposed, elected bodies lack sufficient tenure to fully understand governance, resulting in greater reliance on staff rather than elected officials. He stated that he supported removal of term limits, clarifying that he did not intend to run again.

Mayor Booker stated that he would like staff to draft language removing term limits so Council could consider it.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Randy Warren, to direct staff to draft the deletion of term limits for consideration as a charter amendment proposal. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Randy Warren. NAY:

Sherene L Williams. Motion Passed.

Mayor Booker asked whether there were additional items Council wished to discuss. He stated that Council should return prepared to identify four proposed amendments for placement on the ballot.

Mayor Booker stated that the Special City Council Meeting on July 1 was necessary to meet ballot deadlines.

Blazek-Scherler confirmed that if deadlines were not met, the item would need to be postponed to a future election, which would result in additional costs of approximately $30,000 to $40,000.

Business Items

26. Consider approving the FYE 2026-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), Local 1882, and the City of Lawton.

Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager presented the proposed three-year collective bargaining agreement between the City of Lawton and the International Association of Firefighters Local 1882. He explained that negotiations began early due to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) compliance issues and the expiration of a six-year agreement originally executed in 2019.

Key highlights included:
Approximately 71 changes overall, including grammatical, formatting, and substantive updates.
A 13% immediate increase in starting firefighter pay, raising it to approximately $54,000.
Roughly 30% total wage growth over the three-year term.
Paramedic incentive pay aligned with Norman.
New paramedic education reimbursement.
Longevity incentives.
Adjustments to uniform allotments.
Addition of 48 hours of flexible holiday leave.
Change in work period from 27 to 28 days, correcting overtime compliance under FLSA.
Increased Fire Marshal standby pay.
Updates to health insurance rates.
Evaluation dates aligned with hire dates.
Incorporation of multiple memorandums of understanding.

Burk emphasized the importance of returning to a three-year contract cycle to allow for more responsive adjustments moving forward.

Motion by Sherene L Williams, Second by RL Smith, to approve.

Warren thanked staff and the bargaining teams, noting this would be his last opportunity to participate in a firefighter contract negotiation. He stated the agreement reflected compromise and progress.

Ratliff echoed appreciation for both negotiating teams and commended Local 1882 for negotiating in good faith. He described the agreement as an important step forward in addressing longstanding concerns and competitiveness.

Mayor Booker expressed appreciation for all parties involved. He noted we may not be completely where we need to be, but we are moving a giant step forward.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

A brief signing ceremony took place following the approval of the contract.

27. Receive bids for the sale of the City's $3,150,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025, and award the sale of the $3,150,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025, to the lowest bidder.

Chris Gander, BOK Financial Securities, presented the results of the annual general obligation bond sale in the amount of $3,150,000, noting the purpose was to maintain the City’s tax rate at approximately 11 mills. Five bids were received.

Gander reported:
The lowest bid, 3.318646%, was submitted by PNC Capital Markets.
Other bids ranged up to approximately 3.75%.

Gander recommended awarding the bids to PNC Capital Markets.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to accept the low bid. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Mayor Booker remarked favorably on the interest rate, noting it compared well to current inflation and market conditions.

28. Consideration and approval of an Ordinance providing for the issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025, in the sum of $3,150,000 by the City of Lawton, Oklahoma, authorized at an election duly called and held for such purpose; prescribing form of the General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025; providing for registration thereof; approving the Official Statement pertaining to the General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025; providing for the levy of an annual tax for payment of principal and interest on the same; fixing other

details of the issue; and declaring an emergency.

Motion by Linda Chapman, Second by Sherene L Williams, to aprove Ord. 25-29, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

TIM WILSON, ACTING CITY ATTORNEY, READ THE TITLE: ORDINANCE 25-29
AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS IN THE SUM OF THREE MILLION, ONE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS ($3,150,000) BY THE CITY OF LAWTON, OKLAHOMA, AUTHORIZED AT AN ELECTION DULY CALLED AND HELD FOR SUCH PURPOSE; PRESCRIBING FORM OF BONDS; PROVIDING FOR REGISTRATION THEREOF; APPROVING THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT PERTAINING TO THE BONDS; PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF AN ANNUAL TAX FOR PAYMENT OF PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF AN ANNUAL TAX FOR PAYMENT OF PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST ON THE SAME; FIXING OTHER DETAILS OF THE ISSUE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Allan Hampton, to declare an emergency. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

TIM WILSON, ACTING CITY ATTORNEY, READ SECTION 11 OF THE ORDINANCE: That by reason of said City being without adequate streets/roadways it is deemed and hereby declared necessary for the immediate preservation of the peace, welfare, health and safety that said bonds be issued without delay, and to that end this Ordinance shall become operative immediately; wherefore an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately from and after its passage and approval.

29. Consider ratifying the action of the Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority to approve entering into a Lease Agreement with Lawton Public Schools for the use of land for the proposed sports complex, said ratification contingent upon LPS also approving the lease.

Brian Henry, LYSA Chairman, addressed Council and stated that the Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority was requesting Council ratification of a lease agreement negotiated with Lawton Public Schools (LPS) for use of land for the proposed sports complex. He stated that the item would be on the July LPS Board agenda and that LPS had already approved the concept and an earlier draft of the agreement. He stated that the Trust Authority was now bringing forward the final version of the lease for Council's consideration.

Henry stated that he would not read the lease in its entirety but summarized the key provisions, including:
A 55-year lease term, with an option for the Trust Authority to renew for an additional 55

years;
The only basis for LPS to terminate the lease would be a default by the Trust Authority, with specific stipulations identified in the agreement; Henry stated he did not anticipate such a default;
The lease requires LPS approval of any improvements made to the property, which Henry stated the Trust Authority plans to obtain as part of the development process.

Henry stated that the lease includes a rent calculation based on property value and a cap rate; however, the agreement provides that no rent would be paid so long as LPS is granted access to the facility for a minimum of 602 hours per fiscal year. Henry stated the 602-hour figure resulted from actual calculations rather than rounding. He stated the figure was derived from the anticipated leasing or rental of the courts, equating to 62 hours per fiscal year.

Henry stated that, similar to existing arrangements where the City has priority use of school facilities, the Trust Authority would have priority use of the proposed facility, subject to the access hours guaranteed to LPS.

Henry stated that discussions with Superintendent Heim had already generated ideas for partnerships that could support statewide-level tournament play. He provided wrestling tournaments as an example, clarifying that these would be large-scale tournaments rather than small dual or three-team events. He stated the project includes unique benefits for both the Trust Authority and LPS.

Henry stated that the lease provides a 36-month period to complete construction before any rent obligations would begin. He stated current plans anticipate construction could be completed in approximately 15 months.

Henry stated that the lease includes four “outs” during the first nine months following execution, allowing the Trust Authority to exit the agreement without obligation if:
Site studies determine the soil is not buildable (noting that testing is already underway and no issues are anticipated);
Required zoning or zoning exceptions cannot be obtained;
Financing cannot be secured.

Henry emphasized that a key provision of the lease is that it does not create an obligation of the City of Lawton, stating that the agreement is an obligation of the Trust Authority, not the City.

Gill stated that his understanding from earlier discussions was that LPS would have use of the improvements and, in exchange, the Trust Authority would not pay rent for the land. He asked whether rent would now be required.

Henry clarified that rent is stipulated in the lease only if the Trust Authority fails to make the facility available to LPS for the required 600 hours per fiscal year. He emphasized that rent would not be owed so long as availability requirements are met and explained the distinction between availability and actual use, stating that the Trust Authority must make the facility available, not ensure LPS uses all 600 hours.

Warren expressed appreciation for Henry's work on the project and stated that the land issues associated with the sports complex had been substantial. He stated that resolving the land issue allows the project to move forward toward construction.

Warren discussed the broader economic development impact of the proposed sports complex, referencing travel and spending associated with tournaments and events. He stated that the facility would bring visitors from across the state and region who would spend money locally on lodging, food, and retail, resulting in increased local tax revenue that could support other City needs.

Mayor Booker referenced economic analysis tools available through the Chamber of Commerce and discussed the importance of demonstrating the economic benefit of sports complexes based on attendance and tournament activity.

Wilson added that the lease also includes an option to purchase the land. Staff stated that at the end of either the initial 55-year term or the renewal term, the Trust Authority would have the first option to purchase the property.

Wilson further stated that because Council is ratifying an action of a Trust Authority, approval of the item requires a two-thirds vote.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by RL Smith, to approve. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

30. Receive an update from the Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority regarding the sports facility/complex and provide any necessary direction, including discussion and potential Council selection of a logo for the facility.

Henry reported that the Trust Authority is effectively scheduled through another year of youth sports programming. He provided the following participation data:
238 teams participated in the most recent year;
3,376 participants, exceeding the prior year's record;
15% year-over-year growth;
56% growth since 2022, which Henry identified as the year Play Lawton / Eastern Sports Management (ESM Sports) was hired to take over youth programming.

Henry stated that the programming changes are working.

Henry reported that during the most recent winter season:
96 teams participated in winter sports;
Facilities had to be secured from Lawton Public Schools, churches, Fort Sill, and other locations with available gym space;
1,171 participants, representing a 37% increase since 2022.

Henry stated that summer softball and baseball registrations had just concluded and showed a 113% increase in participation. He noted that the numbers were impacted by lower participation during the first year of implementation but still reflected significant growth.

Henry stated that the general manager for the Play Lawton group had been working for several months to establish tournament play, noting that when a community does not regularly host tournaments, teams do not initially look for them. He stated that multiple attempts were made to build participation.

Henry reported that the first two-weekend tournament series was held, with softball played the prior weekend. He stated that six teams participated and that the City also hosted its first MLB Pitch, Hit & Run event, with 79 participants.

Henry stated that the upcoming weekend would feature the baseball portion of the tournament, including:
6 T-ball teams,
4 eight-under teams, and
5 ten-under teams,
for a total of 15 teams.

Henry stated that across both weekends, 21 teams participated or would participate, and that seven teams were from outside Lawton. He stated that visiting teams typically stay in town for the duration of the tournament, resulting in local spending. He stated that this begins to demonstrate the economic impact discussed earlier.

Henry stated that he wanted to reset the discussion and ensure Council clearly understood the land configuration. He described the site boundaries using the displayed map, identifying:
East Gore Boulevard along the bottom,
Northeast 45th Street on the right,
MacArthur High School and Middle School just outside the red boundary.

Henry stated that the red boundary line reflected the land the Trust Authority now considers under its control, noting that further coordination with the City would occur regarding surrounding areas.

Henry stated that earlier land challenges had been resolved. He stated that a prior plan involved spending $1 million for 86 acres, whereas the Trust Authority now has control of approximately 120 acres for $300,000, noting that lease payments would not be required due to the use agreement.

Henry described the planned site layout, noting:
The building would be located closer to the roadway to address “check-in/check-out” efficiency;

Outdoor fields would be developed behind the building in later phases;
A playground already exists on the site; and
Discussions with Parks staff include plans for a future splash pad, which would be incorporated into the overall site design.

Henry stated that significant time had been spent on marketing and branding to position the facility as a destination for Lawton. He stated that 20 to 30 naming and branding options were reviewed before returning to a simpler, more direct concept with marketing value.

Henry stated that Eastern Sports Management donated its marketing department to support development of the branding materials.

Henry stated that the proposed name for the facility is “Play Lawton SportsPlex.” He explained:
“Play Lawton” reflects the growing recognition of the Play Lawton brand;
“SportsPlex” reflects both sports activity and the concept of a complex;

He anticipated that users would commonly refer to the facility as “the Plex,” which influenced the stylized “X” and arrow in the logo to represent motion and forward movement.

Henry stated that the proposed logo and name were approved by the Trust Authority the previous Thursday. He noted that the branding materials include acknowledgment of the McMahon Foundation’s $3 million contribution to the project.

Henry stated that the Trust Authority also evaluated renaming East Side Park. He stated that the current name only reflects geography and does not meaningfully tie the park to the community. He stated that references to “east side” or “west side” can be divisive and that the Trust Authority wanted to remove directional references.

Henry stated that the proposed park name incorporates Lawton–Fort Sill, emphasizing the historical relationship between the City and the military installation. He stated that this would improve recognition when visitors search for tournament locations and strengthen community identity.

Henry noted that branding references PROPEL 2040 funding as part of the overall project context.

Henry stated that the branding uses City colors, including red, which Play Lawton has adopted, along with blue to maintain continuity with existing Play Lawton branding. He stated that the colors are identifiable with the City and compatible with current materials.

Henry stated that the subcommittee spent approximately three weeks reviewing slides and concepts before arriving at the final branding recommendations.

Henry stated that the Trust Authority was requesting Council approval of:
The facility logos,
The facility name,
The park name, and
The associated branding descriptions.

He stated that naming for the athletic fields was intentionally excluded at this time, as those may be developed later and could involve sponsorship opportunities.

Henry also stated that, as part of the update, the Trust Authority submitted a TESET Legacy Grant application to help fund the project and believed it to be a strong opportunity.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve logos, colors, and descriptions. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Following the vote, Henry requested to provide one final update. He stated that:
The project architects would be in town on Thursday to deliver the final design concept;
He requested that the Trust Authority meeting be moved to July 7 so the full board could approve the design concept;
If approved, the Trust Authority would also consider the scope of work for the entire area; and
He would like to bring the design concept back to Council on the 8th, if scheduling allowed.

Mayor Booker stated that the timeline was tight but that staff would work to accommodate if possible. He stated that Council was eager to move forward.

31. Hold a public hearing to receive any citizen recommendations or concerns about the upcoming FFY 2025 Annual Action Plan (AAP) and consider approving a draft version of the FFY 2025 AAP.

Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment Deputy Director, stated that the Annual Action Plan is an annual requirement that must be approved each year in order for the City to receive its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funding. She stated that the draft AAP had been presented to the Homeless Action Committee and was based on the current project list.

Brown stated that the plan does not specify individual funding amounts for public service organizations, but instead includes a line item identifying a maximum of 15% of the CDBG allocation for public service organizations (PSOs), consistent with federal requirements.

Brown stated that staff anticipates bringing forward an amendment to both the Annual Action Plan and the Consolidated Plan in the coming months to address issues that have been identified. She stated that approval was being requested at this time so the plan could be submitted immediately.

Mayor Booker asked several questions regarding specific line items and risk.

Mayor Booker asked for clarification regarding the Housing Activity Delivery (HAD) line item.

Brown explained that Housing Activity Delivery funds cover personnel costs for two staff members who manage HOME-funded programs, including whole home rehabilitation, emergency repairs, and related HOME projects.

Mayor Booker stated concerns regarding the City's past performance managing certain housing-related projects and referenced significant financial losses incurred in prior years. He asked what alternatives exist to whole home rehabilitation.

Brown explained that the City's current whole home rehabilitation projects are owner-occupied homes that meet HUD low- and moderate-income thresholds and are not speculative purchases or "flips." She stated that HUD has identified the City as performing well in emergency home repairs and exterior home improvement programs, and those are the areas staff now focuses on.

Mayor Booker asked which line items were associated with the prior problem projects.

Gary Brooks, Housing Administrator, stated that the problematic projects did not fall under any of the line items included in the current AAP. He referenced a prior project on Cherry Street that occurred before her tenure, noting it was a first-time homebuyer construction project, not a whole home rehabilitation project, and that such projects are no longer included in the City's project list.

Mayor Booker asked for confirmation that the City no longer has a line item allowing the types of projects that caused prior losses.

Brown confirmed that those projects are not included in the current plan and stated that she had spoken with the City Manager earlier that day regarding development of a policy—either Council or administrative—to ensure those issues do not recur.

Mayor Booker asked about the submission deadline.

Brown stated the deadline was that day, but confirmed that extensions are available and are typically granted.

Mayor Booker asked why $240,000 was allocated to whole home rehabilitation instead of other housing activities and questioned whether exterior housing and emergency repair programs might better support goals related to homelessness prevention and neighborhood stabilization.

Brooks explained that the exterior housing improvements and emergency repairs are funded through CDBG, while the whole home rehabilitation funds are under HOME. He stated that the $240,000 allocation reflected the need to reprogram funds following repayment of approximately $484,000 to HUD from prior years, and that funds were placed into eligible HOME activities.

Mayor Booker asked about overall risk to the City and citizens under the proposed plan, referencing prior HUD compliance issues.

Brooks stated he did not believe there was significant risk in the current proposal. He identified CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization) set-asides as the area with the greatest potential risk but emphasized that CHDO funding is mandated and must be set aside. He stated that no CHDO construction had occurred in recent years and that any future CHDO projects would be for transitional housing and would require Council vetting.

Brooks explained that the City currently works with Family Promise as the only CHDO partner in town and that any project would be brought forward for Council review before construction.

Brown stated that whole home rehabilitation projects are capped at $40,000 per house, typically bid around $35,000 with a $5,000 contingency for change orders. She stated the City generally completes three to four projects per year, although funding levels could support more, and emphasized that the City has never had to repay funds associated with whole home rehabilitation, which HUD has identified as an area where the City performs well.

Mayor Booker confirmed that the line item associated with past repayment issues was not included in the current plan.

Brown confirmed that the City is not using that project type and stated that a policy is being developed to prevent recurrence.

Mayor Booker questioned whether the allocation represented the best “bang for the buck” and suggested evaluating alternative allocations. He referenced use of analytical tools, including artificial intelligence, to assess approaches that address homelessness without unintentionally increasing it. He asked whether the City could seek an extension to review such an analysis. He noted that Blazek-Scherler had used AI to review the websites for HOME and CDBG and asked it to create a plan that addressed homelessness without increasing homelessness from other communities. He noted that many communities increase their homeless population when they are trying to help. He asked staff to look at the breakdown from AI and ask, "are we getting the best bang for the buck for the citizens"?

Brown stated she did not object to requesting an extension and stated she was unaware of the analysis referenced.

Mayor Booker noted that he had planned to discuss additional items at a future Homeless Action Committee meeting but acknowledged timing concerns.

Brown stated staff plans to return with an amendment to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan to incorporate projects related to the agreement with Dr. Griffin and to initiate the next five-year Consolidated Plan update, which begins in July.

Mayor Booker clarified that the plan could be approved now and amended later.

Brown confirmed that was correct and noted that amendments require a 30-day public notice period.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED. No one appeared to speak. PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED.

Motion by George Gill, Second by RL Smith, to approve with the anticipation of further study and the potential of an amendment. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

32. Consider adopting a resolution determining that an improvement district for the Willow Springs Condominium/Townhouse neighborhood is necessary for the replacement of their water mains, and directing the City Engineer and/or Public Utilities Director to prepare preliminary plans and estimate the cost of the proposed district.

Christine James, Planning Director, presented information regarding the area under consideration, identified as Willow Springs Condominium and Willow Springs Town Houses, located on 67th Street just south of the creek, described as being just south of Cache Road. James stated the area is a townhouse district/condominium association that currently utilizes private water lines serving all residents.

James stated the neighborhood was built “back in the 80s” and that after recent needed repairs and segment replacements, Dan, identified as the association president, approached the City seeking options for replacement of the water lines. James stated the association could not afford to replace the lines on its own, had explored loans, and had exhausted available options to ensure residents could continue receiving water service. James stated that Dan met with City staff and that Public Utilities was involved in the discussion. James stated staff presented the option of a possible improvement district.

James described the general improvement district process and stated it is governed by a lengthy state statute and requires multiple actions by the governing body, noting that there are “several resolutions and ordinances,” with details to come later in the process.

James stated that, in general, the City would pay the upfront cost using the OWRB (Oklahoma Water Resources Board) State Revolving Fund to fund the improvements. James stated that over a set period of years, each property owner would be assessed a set amount to repay the City. James stated that within approximately 10 to 15 years, the City would recoup the funds used upfront for the improvements.

James stated the neighborhood contains 65 property owners and that the association filed an official petition with the Clerk's Office to initiate the improvement district process. James stated staff validated that the petition was signed by 65% of property owners recommending that the City move forward. James stated that the purpose of bringing the item forward was to determine whether the governing body considered the improvement district a viable option to pursue, and that the action requested that evening was direction to staff to begin developing cost information and related materials to "get the ball rolling."

James stated that the process is lengthy and identified that it would involve five resolutions, a couple of ordinances, and a couple of public hearings, emphasizing that this action was the first step in evaluating whether the City should proceed.

Mayor Stan Booker stated he believed an improvement district is a useful financing tool for various purposes. He stated that in this particular case, the utilities would become public utilities at the end of the process.

James confirmed that the water lines would become public utilities at the end of the process.

Mayor Booker stated that having the utilities become public would allow the City to better understand fire flow and ensure that if a line breaks, the City would fix it, noting there have been situations (including outside the City) where water lines break and owners cannot afford to repair them. Mayor Booker stated he was impressed that 65% of residents supported the petition and asked whether 51% was required.

James stated that 51% is required for the petition to be considered legitimate. James stated that even excluding the four LLCs that were part owners, the petition remained above the 51% threshold "by quite a bit."

Warren stated he liked the idea and hoped that other groups and neighborhoods would consider improvement districts when they want something the City "can't just do," such as sidewalks or other neighborhood improvements. He asked whether the improvement district under consideration was for water lines only.

James confirmed that the proposal was for water lines only. James stated that streets were discussed but that the cost was "astronomical," and fitting street improvements into the annual assessment would be too much and would take too long. James stated the association opted to pursue replacement of the water line at this time and address streets at a later date.

Warren asked whether the sewers were public or private.

James stated that the sewers were also private, and then referenced Rusty Whisenhunt, Public Utilities Director, who confirmed, “they’re private.”

Warren stated that was his only comment, adding that while it was a good option, it would not solve all issues.

Whisenhunt stated that there are short sewer services coming from their facilities before they reach the public main and stated those distances are very short.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by RL Smith, to direct staff to move forward. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Resolution 25-177

33. Consider approving an ordinance pertaining to Stormwater and Floodplain Management, amending Sections 19A-2-1-202, 19A-2-1-203, 19A-2-1-205, 19A-2-1-206, 19A-2-1-207, 19A-2-1-208, 19A-2-1-209, 19A-2-1-211, 19A-2-1-212, 19A-2-1-213, in Division 19A-2-1, Section 19A-2-2-222 in Division 19A-2-2, and Sections 19A-2-3-231, 19A-2-3-233 in Division 19A-2-3, and Section 19A-2-4-242, in Division 19A-2-4, all in Article 19A-2, Chapter 19A, Lawton City Code 2015 by updating section titles to correctly correlate to the content, adding definitions, adding responsibilities for the city engineer, defining the size for accessory structures, creating penalties for non-compliance, providing for codification, severability and establishing an effective date.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, stated that in February, the City underwent a Community Assistance Visit (CAV) conducted by FEMA, during which the City’s storm water and floodplain management code was reviewed. He stated that FEMA identified required updates to the City’s code to ensure continued compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Watrous stated that the proposed ordinance includes the changes recommended by FEMA, and that failure to adopt the amendments would result in the City not qualifying under the NFIP.

Gill asked what limitations would result if the City no longer qualified under the NFIP.

Watrous stated that residents located within floodplains would no longer have guaranteed access to FEMA-backed flood insurance, and the City would also lose eligibility for flood insurance premium discounts.

Gill asked whether the proposed ordinance would maintain compliance with the existing federal floodplain standards established when flood boundaries, floodways, and floodplains were originally set.

Watrous confirmed that the City remains in compliance with those federal standards and that adoption of the ordinance would maintain that compliance.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve Ordinance 25-30, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

City Attorney read the title: ORDINANCE 25-30
AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO STORMWATER AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT, AMENDING SECTIONS 19A-2-1-202, 19A-2-1-203, 19A-2-1-205, 19A-2-1-206, 19A-2-1-207, 19A-2-1-208, 19A-2-1-209, 19A-2-1-211, 19A-2-1-212, 19A-2-1-213, IN DIVISION 19A-2-1, SECTION 19A-2-2-222 IN DIVISION 19A-2-2, AND SECTIONS 19A-2-3-231, 19A-2-3-233 IN DIVISION 19A-2-3, AND SECTION 19A-2-4-242, IN DIVISION 19A-2-4, ALL IN ARTICLE 19A-2, CHAPTER 19A, LAWTON CITY CODE 2015 BY UPDATING SECTION TITLES TO CORRECTLY CORRELATE TO THE CONTENT, ADDING DEFINITIONS, ADDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE CITY ENGINEER, DEFINING THE SIZE FOR ACCESSORY STRUCTURES, CREATING PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE, PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

34. Consider awarding a contract to Total Demolition Services, LLC, in the amount of $120,510.00 for the demolition of the property located at 1702 SW N H Jones Avenue.

Jonathan Jernigan, Community Enrichment Department, stated that the property located at 1702 Southwest N.H. Jones Avenue was declared dilapidated on May 28, 2024. He stated that the structure has become a detriment to life, health, and safety for the citizens of Lawton.

Jernigan stated that the City has been working with the State of Oklahoma to assist with the demolition process. He reported that three bids were received for the demolition project and that Total Demolition Services, LLC submitted the lowest bid in the amount of $120,510.

Jernigan clarified that the contract is strictly for demolition, including tearing down the structure and removing debris.

He further stated that the City has spoken with the demolition contractor about salvaging approximately 300 to 400 bricks from the structure in order to support creation of a memorial recognizing the significance of the site.

Gill asked how many bids were received.

Jernigan confirmed that three bids were received.

Ratliff requested additional detail regarding prior discussion about a potential memorial.

Jernigan stated that the City has contacted the property owner, who does not want a memorial placed on the property itself recognizing Mr. Dunbar or Mr. Harkey, the principal of Dunbar School. Jernigan stated that he, Larry Parks (Community Enrichment Director), and City management discussed alternative options and that the demolition contractor agreed to save 300–400 bricks so a memorial could be constructed at Harkey Park instead. He stated that the intent would be to memorialize both the individual for whom Dunbar was named and Principal Harkey.

Mayor Booker asked who would fund the memorial.

Parks stated that staff would attempt to secure funding through the Historic Preservation Committee and, if necessary, through the Parks and Recreation Commission. He reiterated that salvaging bricks would help offset costs.

Chapman asked whether there had been any discussion about allowing former students or community members to obtain a brick as a keepsake.

Jernigan stated that the idea had merit and that the contractor had already agreed to separate bricks during demolition. He stated staff could discuss logistics further with the contractor without altering the bid.

Mayor Booker asked whether the City intended to attempt to recoup demolition costs.

Ratliff stated that the City would pursue judicial action to recover costs, similar to approaches used in prior cases such as the nursing home property. He stated that the City Attorney would address legal specifics. He noted that while full recovery is unlikely, the City could potentially recover some funds through sale of the property if ownership is obtained, rather than relying solely on a lien, which could prevent future sale.

Williams stated that she supported the idea of a memorial at Dunbar Park, noting that Dunbar was her first school and that many constituents have expressed interest in seeing the site memorialized.

Hampton stated that members of his church had previously participated in reunions for former Dunbar students and suggested connecting staff with those individuals. He noted that many community efforts over the years attempted to revitalize the building but were unsuccessful due to funding challenges, including asbestos abatement. He stated that Dunbar School is an important historical landmark in Lawton, noting its significance as one of the City’s first Black schools.

Hampton expressed full support for memorializing the site and referenced broader efforts to preserve Black history in Lawton, including the Johnson House being placed on the National Register. He stated that creating a memorial would be an appropriate way to honor the site's historical importance.

Motion by Sherene L Williams, Second by George Gill, to approve. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

35. Consider approving an ordinance pertaining to nuisances by amending Section 15-2-204, Article 15-2, Chapter 15, Lawton City Code, 2015; by modifying the date of abatement notice changing the notice time from ten days to fifteen days to allow the property owner more time to do the abatement; providing for severability and establishing an effective date.

Jonathan Jernigan, Community Enrichment, stated that under current City Code, property owners are given 10 days to correct violations related to tall grass and weeds, junk and debris, and other property maintenance violations once a notice is issued.

He explained that the 10-day compliance period often proves insufficient, not due to unwillingness to comply, but because of mail delivery delays. Jernigan stated that abatement notices are routed through Oklahoma City, which regularly results in property owners receiving notices several days after the date on the letter. As a result, property owners may lose three to five days or more of their compliance window before even receiving the notice.

Jernigan stated that the proposed ordinance would extend the abatement period from 10 days to 15 days, allowing for a full and fair opportunity to comply. He stated that the change would:
Account for postal delays;
Reduce appeals and complaints related to timing; and
Encourage voluntary compliance before City resources are used for abatement.

Mayor Stan Booker stated that while he supports the goal of voluntary compliance, he is concerned about tall grass continuing to grow during extended notice periods. He asked whether shortening the time between the end of the notice period and actual mowing action could offset the longer notice window.

Mayor Booker asked Jernigan to explain the current abatement process and timeline once a violation is observed.

Jernigan explained that:
Code Enforcement Officers issue a notice on the day a violation is observed;
The property owner currently has 10 days from that date to comply;
On the 11th day, if the violation remains, Code Enforcement issues a work order;

The work order is sent to the City's abatement specialist, who assigns it to a contractor; Once assigned, the contractor performs the abatement.

Mayor Booker asked specifically how long it takes from issuance of a work order to actual mowing.

City Manager John Ratliff stated that the timeframe varies widely, depending on workload and contractor availability.

Gill shared his own experience, stating that notices he receives are often 12 to 20 days old by the time they arrive. He stated that 15 days may still be insufficient for out-of-state property owners, suggesting that a longer window could increase compliance. He stated that in his opinion, 15 days may still not be enough.

Jernigan stated that current abatement timelines vary due to weather and workload. He reported that in the past two weeks, staff issued over 400 work orders and that abatement can range from as early as the 12th day, or as late as three to four weeks, depending on contractor availability and priority, with the most severe violations addressed first.

Chapman asked how many mowing contractors the City currently uses.

Jernigan stated the City currently has eight contractors, but noted that two contractors have indicated they may terminate their contracts due to workload volume.

Mayor Booker asked whether property owners are expected to maintain their property without receiving a notice.

Jernigan confirmed that they are, and stated that expectations are communicated through Neighborhood Watch meetings and community outreach.

Mayor Booker emphasized that residents living next to overgrown properties primarily want to know when the grass will be mowed, and stated that shortening the post-deadline action time is critical.

Mayor Booker asked whether the City files liens for abatement costs.

Jernigan confirmed that the City files liens for tall grass and weeds, boarding and securing, and demolition. If costs are not paid within 30 days, a cost notice is sent to the county with liens attached.

City Manager John Ratliff added that the City has purchased mowing equipment internally for the Community Enrichment Department to help reduce the time between non-compliance and abatement.

Hampton discussed the increased number of vacant lots in his ward due to demolitions and asked how long properties remain in tax sale status.

Jernigan stated that properties remain in the county tax sale process for three years, during which time the City may be responsible for repeated mowing.

City Manager Ratliff stated that the City, through the Oklahoma Municipal League, previously supported legislation to reform the tax sale process, but it was not adopted due to opposition from county treasurers.

Hampton stated that repeated calls from residents about unmowed lots have increased workload in his ward and asked whether that was reflected department-wide.

Jernigan confirmed increased workload and stated that Code Enforcement officers were actively mowing properties that evening to help address the issue.

Motion by RL Smith, Second by Linda Chapman, to approve Ordinance 25-31, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Before the vote, Mayor Booker requested a friendly amendment directing staff to identify ways to reduce the time between the end of the 15-day notice period and actual abatement action.

Smith and Chapman both accepted the friendly amendment:
Motion by RL Smith, Second by Linda Chapman, to approve Ordinance 25-31, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only and direct staff to figure out how to cut the time from the notice to the abatement.

The City Attorney read the title: ORDINANCE 25-31
AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO NUISANCES BY AMENDING SECTION 15-2- 204, ARTICLE 15-2, CHAPTER 15, LAWTON CITY CODE, 2015; BY MODIFYING THE DATE OF ABATEMENT NOTICE CHANGING THE NOTICE TIME FROM TEN DAYS TO 15 DAYS TO ALLOW THE PROPERTY OWNER MORE TIME TO DO THE ABATEMENT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

36. Consider approving an ordinance pertaining to Utilities, amending Section 22-1-4-144, Division 22-1-4, Article 22-1, Chapter 22, Lawton City Code 2015 by adding exemptions for residents to deliver four loads per calendar year, once per quarter, placing additional restrictions on the eligibility of these load deliveries, providing for codification, providing for severability and by

separate vote declare an emergency.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, stated that this ordinance is a follow-up to discussion at the previous City Council meeting, during which Council requested that the City allow four free load deliveries per calendar year, limited to one per quarter, for residential utility customers.

Watrous stated that the proposed ordinance codifies that direction. He further stated that staff incorporated Council's feedback by adding initial restrictions intended to limit potential misuse of the free load deliveries. He noted that staff would continue reviewing the program to identify additional improvements but emphasized that these changes represent an initial step to address concerns raised by Council.

Motion by Randy Warren, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve Ordinance 25-32, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

The City Attorney read the title: ORDINANCE 25-32
AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO UTILITIES, AMENDING SECTION 22-1-4-144, DIVISION 22-1-4, ARTICLE 22-1, CHAPTER 22, LAWTON CITY CODE 2015 BY ADDING EXEMPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS TO DELIVER FOUR LOADS PER CALENDAR YEAR, ONE PER QUARTER, PLACING ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF THESE LOAD DELIVERIES, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Sherene L Williams, to declare an emergency AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

37. Consider approving a resolution amending Article A-22-1, Chapter A-22, Appendix A, Schedule of Fees and Charges, Lawton City Code, 2015, pertaining to Utilities, by adding four free landfill trips per year for residents, once per quarter, and adding exemptions for grass clippings, which had previously existed and followed in code, but were not clearly stated in the fee schedule.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, noted that this item is a follow-on action to the ordinance adopted under Item 36 and ensures consistency between the code and the fee schedule.

Motion by Allan Hampton, Second by RL Smith, to approve Resolution 25-177. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

38. Discuss the creation of the Lawton Cultural & Historical Preservation Trust and potential Certified Local Government designation and provide direction to staff as deemed necessary.

STRICKEN

39. Consider directing staff to begin soliciting bids for a mill and overlay project on SW Lee Blvd from SW 38th Street to SW 52nd Street.

Michael Watrous, Public Works Director, stated that the requested action would authorize staff to solicit bids once all bid packages are finalized for the specified roadway segments. He noted that this action is procedural and allows the project to move forward.

Motion by Linda Chapman, Second by Sherene L Williams, to approve. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

Executive Session

Motion by George Gill, Second by Allan Hampton, to enter into executive session. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, RL Smith, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

The City Council entered Executive Session at 9:21PM and reconvened in Open Session at 10:46PM. No action was taken in Executive Session, in compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act.

Motion by George Gill, Second by Randy Warren, to return to open session. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, RL Smith, Linda Chapman, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

40. Pursuant to Section 307B.4, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, consider convening in executive session to discuss a pending claim for potential litigation involving the demolition of property located at 401 Summit Avenue and, if necessary, take appropriate action in open session.

No Action Taken.

41. Pursuant to Section 307B.4, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, consider convening in executive session to discuss the pending action in the District Court of Comanche County titled City of Lawton, Oklahoma, A Municipal Corporation vs. Transforming Hand, Inc, et al, Case No. CJ-2025-265. and if necessary, take appropriate action in open session.

No Action Taken.

42. Pursuant to Section 307B.4, Title 25, Oklahoma Statutes, consider convening in executive session to discuss the status of an ongoing investigation concerning the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program, and if necessary, take appropriate action in open session.

Motion by Mary Ann Hankins, Second by Randy Warren, to approve an amendment to the agreement to administer and operate an affordable rental housing project between the City of Lawton and the Housing Authority by increasing the funding for FY25 by $50,684.00 for a total of $450,684.00 and directed the City Manager to research other avenues for TBRA expenditures and continue to monitor all transactions for compliance with the Lawton Housing Authority. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. 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 George Gill, Second by Randy Warren, to adjourn the meeting. AYE: Mary Ann Hankins, Linda Chapman, RL Smith, George Gill, Allan Hampton, Sherene L Williams, Randy Warren. NAY: None. Motion Passed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:49PM.