



**MINUTES
COUNCIL BUDGET & EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 17, 2025- 9:00AM
Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma 73501**

Official action can be taken only on items which appear on the agenda. The committee may adopt, approve, ratify, deny, defer, recommend, amend, strike, or continue any agenda item. Any reference to action should be understood as “action within the committee’s scope”.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OKLAHOMA OPEN MEETING ACT, 25 O.S. § 301-314

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Booker, Weger, Gill, Hampton
ABSENT: None.
ALSO PRESENT: John Ratliff, City Manager
Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk
Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager
Chief Jared Williams, Lawton Fire Department

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager
Chief Jared Williams, Lawton Fire Department
Jessica Carter, Emergency Communications
Nolan Berry, Lawton Fire Department
Jason Sellers, Lawton Fire Department

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Discuss the Hatch Independent Audit, specifically the finding that the City of Lawton has 30% more employees per capita compared to Norman, review employee attrition trends, and take action as deemed necessary.

Booker provided a copy of the Hatch Report from February 2023. A copy of this report is available in the City Clerk’s Office. He explained this report is two years old, but it is all the data we have right now. He stated we have ordered some more information that is more financially focused. He requested the financial breakdown of the cost of delivery of government services by department and division. He also asked that the comparisons be “apples to apples”. For example, in Lawton, the Parks Department mows the medians, but in Norman, the Streets Department does it. He believes Frank Crawford and Associates is best for this job because of Crawford’s understanding of municipal government.

Booker noted that in the study, Lawton uses two populations because not all citizens in Lawton receive services from Lawton, namely, Fort Sill.

Turning to “Schedule A” of the Hatch Report, Booker stated we tried to include “Employee Turnover” but were only able to obtain that information from Edmond at that time. He also stated this was done prior to any changes in pay, so he assumes that has decreased. He asked Ratliff if turnover is down from the 24% showing in the study.

Ratliff stated he isn’t sure, but he can find out.

Referencing the “Number of Employees Per Thousand”, Booker noted that this is for the City as a whole and is not departmentalized. He stated the report shows that Norman has 7 employees per thousand and Lawton has 9.8 per thousand; that is roughly a 30% difference. He asked if he was the only concerned about that. All other boards members stated no. He then asked what we could do there. He suggested having the staff compile a report showing this information per department or division.

Ratliff asked for clarification on the information being requested.

Mayor Booker stated to obtain the information from Norman’s budget book and do a comparison.

Ratliff stated that each department can give comparison data.

Mayor Booker stated he also asked Crawford to check on the operational budget of the City and each department, not including capital expenditures. He stated he makes that distinction because CIP capital expenditures are not the same as the budget because they are voted on by the citizens. Mayor Booker went on to the area titled “Capital Outlay Expenditures Per Capita”. He stated the City of Lawton is mid-range for that data, and that was better than he expected. He stated a former mayor told him that would continue to decline to almost nothing, so he was proud to see that it came back better than anticipated.

Weger asked if Norman was being used instead of Edmond because the population or income per capita.

Mayor Booker stated Edmond is a little closer to us, but Edmond’s income is 30% higher, and that makes a comparison to Edmond very difficult. He stated Norman has been the defacto comparison and cited the comparison to Norman during a change in procedure for License and Permits. Mayor Booker stated benchmarking is measuring against the best; it’s not measuring against the average. Norman seems to be right up there in everything, but he also acknowledges that we can’t snap our fingers and say everything has to be the most efficient tomorrow. There is a process to go through that does not disrupt service to the citizens.

Gill stated he also likes Norman because, even though they are a little bigger, they are more in line with what the City of Lawton does.

Hampton stated he believes efficiency is the bounds between providing services and the cost of providing services. He stated the federal government is also trying to bring things to an efficient level. He too likes Norman because it is an educational based community. Thus, they are going to use more empirical process and look at more variables to do things. As a sociologist, when a society gets together, they decide to build and provide services for each other so they can sustain themselves. He noted when he was reviewing Norman, he specifically looked at equipment and IT. He thinks Norman may be using technology and equipment to provide services instead of using people. He believes Norman is a good comparison because the university provides a more educated population.

2. Receive a report from the Fire Chief on fire station realignment and take action as deemed necessary.
3. Discuss Operational Vision Statements that focus on efficiency, world-class customer service, and no “yeah, buts” for all City of Lawton Departments and take action as deemed necessary.

ADJOURNMENT