



City of Lawton

Homeless Action Committee

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

Minutes

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

3:00 PM

Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room

"Official action can only be taken on items listed on the agenda. As a recommending body, the Committee may review and discuss agenda items, propose and enact floor amendments, and then choose to make a recommendation to the City Council or provide direction to the City Manager. The Committee may also defer items for further review, refer matters to the City Attorney, or send items to standing committees, boards, commissions, or authorities for additional study. In some cases, items may be postponed to a later date or removed from the agenda entirely."

Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Booker called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM in the 3rd floor conference room of City Hall.

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

Chairman Booker confirmed with Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office, that the meeting notice and agenda were posted in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

Roll Call

PRESENT : Stan Booker, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L. Williams, Bernita Taylor (Non-Voting)

ABSENT : Terri Lee (Non-Voting), *Melissa Simms (Non-Voting)

*Arrived at 3:05 PM

Introduction of Guests

Committee members present at the meeting introduced themselves. Guests of the meeting introduced themselves as follows: Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army; Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; Gary Brooks, Housing and Community Development; Cynthia Williams, City of Lawton Internal Auditor; Heath Want, Fire Marshall; Anthony Garibay, Deputy Fire Marshall; Tammy Huffman, City Manager's Office; Tim Wilson, Acting City Attorney; Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment Deputy Director; Jonathan Jernigan, Neighborhood

Services Supervisor; Mike Ray, Southwest Ledger; Kim McConnell, Lawton Constitution; Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing; Joe Hankins, Neighborhood Services; Julia Mantzke, City Council Relations Liaison; Brandie Combs, Comanche County Health Department Regional Director; James Churchwell, Lawton Police Department.

Chairman Booker advised that AJ Griffin will be attending the meeting via Zoom to give her presentation, but we're currently experiencing technical difficulties.

Chairman Booker discussed Committee changes as outlined in Council Ordinance 25-04. Copies of Ordinance 25-04 were provided to Committee members. A copy of Ordinance 25-04 may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request. Chairman Booker noted that the ordinance has been changed to where only the elected officials vote.

Due to the technical difficulties with Zoom, Chairman Booker said the Committee will consider business item #2 first.

Business Items

1. Consider approving the minutes of the October 1, 2024, meeting.

A copy of the minutes of the October 1, 2024, meeting may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Williams, to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2024, meeting. **AYE:** Hampton, Weger, Booker, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Receive a presentation from the Potts Family Foundation regarding Public Service Organizations and Nonprofits and provide direction to the City Manager as needed.

A connection with Dr. AJ Griffin, Potts Family Foundation, was made via phone, as Zoom was not working properly.

Chairman Booker said he believes Dr. Griffin is a formidable expert on homelessness in the state, and she works for an organization that is really focused on this. He said he is proud to have met Dr. Griffin a few years ago at a Mayor's Conference.

Chairman Booker said when we had the agenda item where we were talking about public service organizations and the potential of changing our goal to homelessness being the number one challenge we wanted to face with our CDBG and HOME funds, the City Manager suggested we bring it to this Committee. Chairman Booker said he then called Dr. Griffin for help and guidance on how to develop measurable metrics. He said Dr. Griffin had a lot of good information in general about public service organizations within communities.

Dr. Griffin said she'd made several trips to Lawton to visit an array of service providers that are working to try to meet the needs of the citizens of the community. She said she wants to encourage the City of Lawton to approach the root of this problem a little differently. Dr. Griffin said homelessness is probably the most complex and layered social challenge that any community must address because there's not a singular cause, nor a singular solution. In fact, the solutions and the causes are nuanced and generally involve lots of people that are not just the visibly unhoused. These are the family members of the unhoused person that you may see on the street. Dr. Griffin said there is also the complexity of unhoused families that include children and teens that are moving from one place to another. The solutions are also really complex. At the end of day, the problem that creates individuals living unhoused is a lack of housing. Dr. Griffin said this, of course, is a challenge in itself. The economics that create this situation are also just a piece of the puzzle. Untreated mental illness, substance-abuse disorders, and access to economic opportunity so that people can afford to place shelter(s) are all pieces of a puzzle that fit together.

Dr. Griffin said what she's seen in the community in her conversations is a need to pull everyone together that has done a great job addressing their piece of this challenge but aren't necessarily seeing their piece as part of a larger system. The ecosystem of Lawton has its own unique characteristics and its own unique assets. As leaders working on this very complex problem together, Dr. Griffin said the things that are getting in the way aren't necessarily a lack of resources. Pulling everyone together collaboratively so that everyone owns their piece of the problem and the solution and works together and acknowledges and celebrates what other people bring to the table is the piece that's missing. Dr. Griffin said what this task force can do to help solve that is to create a shared vision so that everyone is rewarded for being a part of that shared solution. This is hard work, and it requires a lot of planning. Dr. Griffin said a good starting point is to determine what the goal is over the next funding period that you think you can make an impact in the community and the incremental change that you all want, which results eventually in no one living in Lawton without shelter. In discussing the shared goal, Dr. Griffin said to talk about what you want to see over the next twelve months, or over the next fiscal year. Then, you use these metrics to determine who gets a bigger piece of the work next year.

Dr. Griffin noted that this has been the most pressing issue in the State of Oklahoma. She said some things that we have seen across the country that have worked are creative solutions that come from a collaborative effort - not from funding a single nonprofit or single entity and expecting them to be the solution. A collaborative effort includes funding, encouraging and celebrating the work of a lot of different people owning their piece of a very complex systemic change that needs to happen.

Chairman Booker said he's gathering that we may not be working together as well as we should to accomplish this problem and come to solutions for our city. He asked Dr. Griffin if he's correct in his assessment.

Dr. Griffin said this happens a lot in all communities - Lawton is not an outlier. It even happens among nonprofits. Nonprofits that are well intended in doing great work tend to get a little myopic and focus in on themselves and what they do, and they forget that they're a part of a system. Dr. Griffin said until everybody's assets are maximized, nobody is going to be as effective as they can be. She emphasized that it's important to bring everyone together, and to repair relationships and forget about old hurts and competition. Dr. Griffin said the way to do this is with a shared vision or goal. She noted that this task force is the place to come up with that goal. Dr. Griffin said the goal should be surrounded around reducing our homeless population and seeing more of our neighbors living with a roof over their head within the next twelve months, and this goal should include numbers to shoot for. She said how we get there is by everyone working together. The resources should be shared and not siloed. Dr. Griffin said it should not be a competition among nonprofits for dollars. If it has been in the past, you have to let that go, and change the way you fund things so that everyone has to work together. She said you're probably not going to see a lot of progress until that happens.

Chairman Booker said we'll get to work on the shared vision, and we will put this item on the next agenda to determine what our goal is.

Taylor said she's not been to any of the meetings in Lawton with Dr. Griffin. She invited Dr. Griffin to attend a Lawton Housing Task Force meeting. She said she'll be making a report on this group today.

Dr. Griffin said she's sure we are only scratching the surface on the assets the community has available, so she is all in.

Chairman Booker asked Taylor if Dr. Griffin could attend the Lawton Housing Task Force via Zoom, if necessary.

Taylor said yes, we do provide Zoom. She said she will email Dr. Griffin a link with the Zoom information.

Chairman Booker thanked Dr. Griffin for joining the meeting. He said he'll be visiting with her more regarding measurable metrics and things of that nature, and he will bring information back to the Committee. He said that seemed to be where the City Council was going with this, though the Council did not take action.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Receive a report from the Salvation Army and their affiliated partners on the Homeless Program for chronic homelessness and provide direction to the City Manager as needed.

Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army, provided Committee members with a written report regarding the Salvation Army's "Engage" program. A copy of the report may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Captain Brinlee discussed the "Engage" program. He noted that there is a new Tent City going on at the Salvation Army. He said there are some issues with it, but he will be reporting on the program itself. He said the program is completely new, and it's thinking outside the box. Captain Brinlee said it's so new that the Salvation Army actually asked us to cease and desist on this because there were legal issues the program has never been mandated with before. Captain Brinlee said we've been writing a program for the Salvation Army because it's so new to them, and its stats are absolutely amazing.

Captain Brinlee read a portion of the program's Mission Statement as follows: "We will engage with individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the name of Jesus, recognizing that true change requires more than just passing by." He said we recognize that the system we're using right now doesn't work. We've been able to get everybody in the Salvation Army, to include other people in other cities, to agree on the fact that homelessness continues to grow and grow. Captain Brinlee said there is a direct correlation in every city that the more money you pump at it, the worse it gets. He said Los Angeles and Las Vegas are prime examples of cities that pump lots of money into homelessness, but homelessness actually continues to grow. Captain Brinlee said we at the Salvation Army decided to try something different, which is what they've done.

Captain Brinlee said he has stats for January and February, but he's not posted stats for March yet because they've been moving. He said there will be some problems with March's stats - he lost twelve people, and he doesn't know what happened to them or where they went. He said we had so many volunteers coming and taking people from the property and putting them in housing that he couldn't keep track of it. Captain Brinlee said this is something that will need to change in the program as we move forward.

Captain Brinlee said in two months, from January to February, we engaged 82 people, and 34 people were moved off the street. There were 44 people still on the property on the day that they were asked to cease and desist and remove people from the property. Captain Brinlee said 4 of those people went back to the street. Currently, as of yesterday evening, there were still 29 people left on the property.

Captain Brinlee discussed the many places that people can go to from Tent City, including the following: mental health, detox, rehab, shelter, help agencies, reunification with friends or family, or jail. He noted that going back to the streets should not be an option. Captain Brinlee said we understand this happens from time to time, but it's one of the things we try to prevent.

Captain Brinlee discussed statistics for their "Engage" program to include the following:

Numbers: Jan & Feb, 82 people have relocated to our property to start a new journey:

- 6 have gone to drug and alcohol treatment.
- 11 have been relocated to family. All were sober, and connection and pickup were verified. Three completed treatments.

- 2 have gone to Taliaferro for mental health support.
- 5 have gone to assisted living or Section 8 housing.
- 1 family has moved to a shelter (C Carter Crane).
- Veterans Affairs assisted 2.
- 4 were arrested.
- 1 death.
- 5 have returned to the street because they were unable to abide by the goals.
- 47 tents with 51 people are still camping on Salvation Army property and not on the street.

Summary:

- A total of 31 people have been removed from chronic homelessness.
- 8 have gone back to the street or been banned from the property.
- 1 is still in jail.
- Total engagement: 82 people.
- Failure rate: $8 / 82 = 9.76\%$ (approximately 10%)

Captain Brinlee said we were blown away by the stats. Texas and Atlanta were also blown away by the stats. He said the national commander of the whole United States was involved in this, but because there was a risk management issue, we were not able to move forward with that. However, Captain Brinlee said he and the Salvation Army are still moving forward with this project.

Captain Brinlee discussed the statistics:

Daily number of people served

- In 2024, the Salvation Army had 4,325 nights of shelter. When divided by 365, this equals 11.8 people a day on average. Brinlee said the shelter cost \$245,000 to run, and it's a 30-bed shelter. He noted 65% of engagement time was while people were sleeping.
- If we are able to just maintain 42 people a day in tents that would be 15,330 days of shelter. All of that engagement would be while people are awake.

Hours of Client Engagement

- In traditional shelters, people primarily spend their time sleeping. They check in at 6:00 PM, and leave at 8:00 AM. All our agencies and volunteers are typically at home after 5:00 PM and are not able to participate in this shelter model.
- Tent City is open all day, allowing more engagement between 8:00–5:00 when agencies are open and employees/volunteers can engage.

Captain Brinlee said the big difference between us doing tents and us doing shelters is the amount of engagement while the person is actually awake - that's a huge difference.

Captain Brinlee discussed the annual cost(s) for the program as follows:

Annual Cost

- Tent City - \$70,332.00
- High-Barrier Shelter - \$240,000.00

Captain Brinlee said he has already budgeted this for 2025 and 2026 in the Salvation Army's budget. He noted that the \$70,332 annual cost to run Tent City is a significant decrease from the amount it takes to run a high-barrier shelter, and it includes the involvement of a case manager. The food for Tent City did not have to be paid for because many people came by to bring food. The tents and sleeping bags paid for by the Salvation Army cost about \$2,000.

Captain Brinlee said by running the "engaged" program in conjunction with our day center and volunteer training initiatives, we aim to connect with 320 homeless individuals in 2025. While it's challenging to predict exactly how many people we can help transition off the streets, one thing is clear. Without fully committing our resources, the homelessness issue in Lawton will persist. This is not something that can be solved by simply throwing money at it; it requires a diverse range of relationships and widespread engagement.

Captain Brinlee said there is a commonality with homelessness - it's the breaking down of relationships. He said you'll see in case management that their relationships are completely broken down. He said what we decide to do in the "Engage" Program is to focus on the following three things:

1. **Stewardship** - ensuring individuals can take care of themselves and clean up after themselves to maintain the property at Tent City. Captain Brinlee said if you can teach somebody stewardship, you can actually get them in Section 8 Housing.
2. **Relationships** - teaching individuals how to maintain quality relationships.
3. **Self-Control** - helping individuals learn how to control their anger and reduce their drug use.

Captain Brinlee said the Salvation Army needs to tear its two-story building down. The thrift store will be moved to another location, and all the social services, staff members, and warehouse area will be housed where the thrift store currently stands. Captain Brinlee said we're in the process of moving right now. He said once we move, we'll have 4,100 square feet of building that's not being utilized. This area will be turned into a Day Center just for the chronic homeless. Captain Brinlee said the space has two offices in it where we can set up desks for other agencies to come in to collaborate and do case management with individuals. He noted that the Salvation Army has secured funding for this project.

Chairman Booker said it's his understanding that the Salvation Army has made Captain Brinlee move the individuals at Tent City outside the fenced area, but they're still on the Salvation Army's property.

Captain Brinlee said that's correct.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee what problems this generates for him.

Captain Brinlee said none, because he didn't ask them to be there. He said he's actually asked them to leave - they're actually squatting, which means the legal issue is off of us, because I didn't invite them to stay there.

Captain Brinlee said we all want to do this, to include the police and fire departments. He said our vision is not led by policies, procedures and accounting. You can change those three things - those things serve vision, but they're not vision. He said once we have a vision of what we want to do in Lawton, it's just a matter of putting our heads together and figuring out the legalities of having a Tent City.

Captain Brinlee said having Tent City in one location is efficient for us, and it's efficient for all other agencies involved. He said we are very good at referring people to other agencies for help in different areas.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he's fine with individuals being on the Salvation Army's property because he did not invite them in.

Captain Brinlee said no - I have to get rid of that property. He said he would not be able to do this long-term because of risk management. He noted that this is new - the Salvation Army is not used to this. They're actually trying to solve this issue, but it's a slow-moving clock. Captain Brinlee noted that the Salvation Army has other issues they're dealing with as well. He said he's not going to leave Lawton's problem up to the people in Atlanta to solve it - this is our problem. We're going to have to move forward in some facet regarding liability issues with someone getting hurt. Captain Brinlee said being homeless is dangerous anyway, but if someone gets hurt on our property and their family members come asking what happened, they could potentially sue us, because we invited them onto our property knowing that they were intoxicated, violent and/or had a mental health disorder(s). He said this is a legal issue and risk-management issue.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he still maintains liability issues when he did not invite the individuals onto the property.

Captain Brinlee said technically right now, no, but he knows that they're there.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee what he needs from the City of Lawton. He said he likes the numbers he sees with the statistics, and he likes the Salvation Army

getting the chronic homeless off the streets. Chairman Booker said in his perception, the chronic homeless are the ones that are in our neighborhoods that we've got to get under control. He noted that there were approximately 32-34 registered sex offenders in December when he last got the numbers, and there were also a number that hadn't registered, which is even more problematic. He asked Captain Brinlee what he needs from the City of Lawton in order to keep this going and enable them to reach their goal of reaching 325 people this year. He asked if 325 is the number of people he plans to get off the streets.

Captain Brinlee said 325 is the number of people they plan to engage if they continue their method. He noted that we have to be able to get more than 50% of these people off the street.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he thinks he could get another 160 chronically homeless individuals off the street if the City of Lawton finds a way for the Salvation Army to continue the Tent City close by them.

Captain Brinlee said if we can get everybody in one spot, that will be efficient for everybody, and he thinks that we can do that. Brinlee said that this is particularly efficient for police officers - it's had an impact on the jail. He said there are several people on the property that haven't been to jail since they came there, and they used to go to jail regularly. The program is making a difference.

Captain Brinlee said when we work with people in case management, he thinks that we can come to a "decision day" after individuals have been offered help and have them choose between going to jail or going to treatment, as opposed to going back to the street.

Captain Brinlee said what he wants is for somebody to take over responsibility of the property across the street from them. The Salvation Army has approved getting rid of the property. Captain Brinlee said he has called for an assessment of the property. He said if someone will take over the property, he will do all the engaging.

Chairman Booker said he recently had a meeting with both Captain Brinlee and John Ratliff, City Manager. He noted that Ratliff thinks there may be some ways we could take ownership of that property and shelter the city from liability through an Authority or Trust. Chairman Booker said we need to discuss this and decide if we want to make that recommendation to direct the City Manager to put together a plan to be brought back to the Committee and then taken to City Council for final approval, to potentially take ownership of the property in a liability-sheltered entity so we don't put the citizens at risk, so that we can continue this program.

Weger asked Captain Brinlee what type of time limit the individuals have before they have to decide where they'll go. He noted that we're often dealing with people that have trouble making decisions. He asked what parameters are set with regard to deadlines for these individuals.

Captain Brinlee said this would be handled by case management.

Taylor said there are resources to help people, and the goal is for these individuals to utilize the available resources to help themselves.

Sergant Dimmit, Lawton Police Department, asked Captain Brinlee how many people can be housed at that area, theoretically.

Captain Brinlee said if I can engage like I want to and create the right environment and keep the area clean, I could house 40–50 people. He said he wouldn't be able to do more than 50. The problem he's having is that this area is in a flood zone.

Hampton said this seems to be an answer to a doorway for those who are chronically homeless, because we're not asking them to be in an established area right away - it's sort of a conducive measure to ensure these individuals have somebody that is caring for them by providing food and shelter until they're moved into more of a solid housing situation.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Williams, to direct the City Manager to look and explore options and opportunities to set up some type of purchase of that property that shelters citizens from any liability. **AYE:** Hampton, Weger, Booker, Williams.

NAY: None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Chairman Booker said to clarify, the Salvation Army is talking about giving this property, not selling it, and they have board approval already.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee for clarification on the people who were bused here from another city.

Captain Brinlee said we have the names of all the individuals on the property, and we have four or five people staying on the property that have been bused in from Norman, Oklahoma.

Chairman Booker said he'd like a motion to direct the City Manager to call the City Manager in Norman, tell him that story, and ask him to not send any more people.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Williams, to direct the City Manager to call the City Manager in Norman, tell him the story of people being bused here, and ask him to not send any more people. **AYE:** Hampton, Weger, Booker, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

4. Receive a report from Bernita Taylor regarding ongoing efforts taken by the Lawton Housing Task Force to mitigate homelessness within the community.

Chairman Booker asked Taylor if she is primarily working with a high barrier shelter.

Taylor said that is correct.

Taylor gave a report regarding ongoing efforts taken by the Lawton Housing Task Force to mitigate homelessness within the community. A copy of the report may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Taylor said the last date that we met was March 27th at 1:30PM at City Hall. We had 22 participants, and 17 organizations were represented.

Taylor said that the purpose of the Prevention Committee is to keep people from being evicted. This Committee met on February 14th. There were 7 people in attendance, and 5 organizations were represented. Taylor noted that 43.5% of Comanche County residents are rent-burdened, and 16.4% of Comanche County residents are below poverty level - that is the target group for this Committee. The Committee is targeting this group to support them and help them to become more economically sound, and prevent them from being evicted. Taylor said this Committee met again on March 14th. There were 7 people in attendance, and 4 different organizations were represented. She noted that Comanche County is ranked 4th in the state for the highest eviction rate. Tanna Vu oversees this Committee, and she's met with the Board of Realtors, Comanche County and Legal Aid to come up with a process to get to these individuals before they get evicted. Taylor noted that their numbers are the result of what they've done in order to keep people off the streets. These are not the individuals that Captain Brinlee is serving - he serves a totally different population. Taylor said we serve families and people that you won't see on the street - they're not on drugs or dealing with mental health problems. Taylor said in February, we spent \$7,226.20 of ESG money to keep people from being evicted. We also spent \$700 to rapidly rehouse a grandma, her daughter, her daughter's two kids, and a disabled person who was behind Walmart in a tent. Taylor said they are still in that home today. In March, we spent \$17,037.64 to keep people from being on the streets.

Chairman Booker asked Taylor where she got the money.

Taylor said the money was received though ESG and COC grant funding. She noted that they're running out of funds quickly.

Chairman Booker asked if these are annual grants.

Taylor said yes.

Taylor said from the end of February to the end of March, they have serviced 53 people. She said she has 33 people right now who she will be onboarding next Tuesday. Taylor said we assess everything with the individuals during onboarding, and we also begin case management.

Chairman Booker asked if case management is paid by COC.

Taylor said case management is paid by MIGHT - there are no grants for this.

Taylor said the Outreach Committee last met on March 7th. There were 10 individuals in attendance, and 8 organizations were represented. The volunteers visited Tent City and personally met with 21 of the 32 people there that day. Of these 21 individuals, 38% were female, 62% were male. The majority were between the ages of 25–55 years old, one person was 24 years old, and two were over the age of 55. Of the 21 individuals, 14 shared their "barriers" to shelter. The top barriers were addiction at 64%, mental health was 50%, and criminal record was 14%. Others shared barriers of not having an ID, recent eviction, or constraints of a pet. Taylor said 3 of the 21 individuals went on to the next step. We provided one with a bus ticket to Texas - this person expressed they were ready to go. One was connected with a local church for help in obtaining an ID, and one is getting connected to a local ministry and identification through the Health Department.

Taylor said her report includes a report from Brenda Spencer-Ragland on the C. Carter Crane shelter. She said Ragland had a meeting on March 6th. There were 11 people in attendance, and 5 organizations were represented. The items discussed were chronic homelessness, poverty, employment and affordable housing. Statistics show that she has served 44 people. Taylor said they do a survey and assessment of the homeless people that organizations send to them. She said 14 of the 84 people we served through the Work Ready program since September that were homeless have gotten jobs and have kept those jobs.

Taylor said we all work together to help these people. She said the final Point-in-Time (PIT) count is 221. Taylor said that number does not represent 221 people on the street - she said we count all the people in all the shelters in Comanche County, along with the people on the street and people living in Tent City. A high percentage of these people were at a shelter.

Chairman Booker asked what the PIT Count was a year ago.

Taylor said it was 251, so we're down by 30.

Taylor discussed the medical committee that provides respite care. She said we had an average of 3-8 people being discharged while homeless. However, Taylor said we had zero people discharged homeless last month.

Taylor said the case management team met on March 28th. There were 6 people in attendance, and five different organizations were represented.

Taylor said the youth house is open, and there are three youths currently staying there.

Taylor discussed the Lawton Housing Resource Center. The center will be located at 15th Street and I Avenue. All the organizations that are working together on the committees will be housed there. There are a total of ten offices in the center. Taylor

said there will also be a shelter for families. The shelter will have three bedrooms with its own bathrooms, a large open-spaced living area with cabinets and a refrigerator, six two-bedroom units, and a respite care room. Taylor said this project cost \$3.5 million. We were lacking \$2.6 million, and we've since obtained this funding through an OFA grant. The funding will be used to renovate the building. However, it will not cover the cost of furnishings.

Williams asked for more information regarding the cost of the new affordable housing, and she asked where it would be located.

Taylor said in the grant she's secured, there was money for affordable housing as well. This does include tiny homes. Taylor said the tiny homes that we're looking at are prefabbed at \$45,000. However, there are also infrastructure costs associated with this project. She said we'd be able to construct 10 tiny homes for \$1 million. Taylor noted that there is other affordable housing that's going up in Lawton View at this time.

No action was taken on this item.

5. Discuss the Homeless Action Plan Bus Program and provide direction to the City Manager as needed.

Joe Hankins, Safe and Clean Neighborhood Services Division, provided background information on this item. Hankins said we started the program back in November. However, the program didn't get into full swing until January. Hankins said in January we got filers out and started contacting various agencies about the program.

Hankins said people call him day or night, and he does his best to try and get them relocated with family and/or friends. He said he will get them wherever they need to go. Hankins said as of today, we've purchased 78 bus tickets, with 10 cancellations from people either not showing up or showing up too late.

Hankins said from what he's seen, the vast majority of the people we send out of here are in desperate need to get back home to their friends and family, where there are more abundant resources. He said he sent off an entire family - the father was able to secure a job in Ohio. Hankins said as far as he knows, this family is flourishing. He said he sees this program working.

Chairman Booker asked if most of these people were from the streets.

Hankins said he does not investigate each person, but when people call him, it's under the understanding that they are homeless and have no place to go. He noted that various agencies around Lawton will call him regarding homeless people on their property.

Sergeant Dimmit, LPD, thanked Hankins for all his hard work.

No action was taken on this item.

6. Discuss the current method in which applications for CDBG funding are evaluated, and consider directing the City Manager to establish metrics to use for future evaluation of said applications to be presented to the City Council for final approval. - **STRICKEN**

Chairman Booker noted that this item has been stricken.

7. Consider granting the City Manager the authority to approve the installation of panhandling signs at various locations throughout the City of Lawton and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Chairman Booker said he feels like the City Manager can make these decisions without the Committee's input.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to recommend that the City Council grant the City Manager the authority to approve the installation of panhandling signs at various locations throughout the City of Lawton. **AYE:** Hampton, Weger, Booker, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Adjournment

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Williams, to adjourn the April 1, 2025, special meeting. **AYE:** Hampton, Weger, Booker, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:08 PM.