



City of Lawton

Homeless Action Committee

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

Minutes

Thursday, May 29, 2025

10:00 AM

Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room

Recommending Body

"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 10:00 A.M. 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 Bransetter that the meeting notice and agenda were posted in compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

Roll Call

ROLL CALL:

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

ABSENT: Terri Lee (Non-Voting)

OTHERS PRESENT: Julia Mantzke, City Council Relations Liaison; John Ratliff, City Manager; Tammy Huffman, City Manager's Office; Tim Wilson, City Attorney's Office; Tammy Bransetter, City Clerk's Office; Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing; Anthony Garibay & Heath Want, City Fire Marshall's Office; Gary Brooks, City Housing & Community Development; Larry Parks, City Community Enrichment Department; Charlotte Brown, City Community Enrichment Department; Jonathan Jernigan & Joe Hankins, City Department of Safe and Clean Neighborhood Services; Captain James Churchwell & Sergeant Ronald Dimmitt, Lawton Police Department; Tanna Vu,

Committee Alternate 3 Member; Whitley Brown, Intern with the Lawton Constitution; Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army; Sarah Svec & Alicia Scheall, Family Promise of Lawton; Debra Johnson, Interim Regional Director for the Comanche County Health Department

Introduction of Guests

Guests of the meeting introduced themselves.

Business Items

1. Consider approving the minutes of the April 1, 2025, meeting.

A copy of the minutes from the April 1st, 2025, meeting may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to approve the minutes of the April 1st, 2025, meeting. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Review and discuss the proposed 2025 Annual Action Plan and take action as deemed necessary.

Gary Books, Housing and Community Development, provided background information on this item. A copy of the proposed 2025 Annual Action Plan may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Brooks said the plan that you see before you is a draft plan that includes the CDBG allotments with the allocations that were given to us on May 13th. Those amounts were slightly less than last year, but not a lot. It was just, I think maybe around \$10,000 in the CDBG and HOME was around \$45,000 less than last year - it wasn't anything substantial, so it left all the categories about the same. Brooks said I was kind of unsure where we were at, so I had left everything allocated as it was last year, and I made some adjustments yesterday to the amount of projects, but I hadn't really changed any of the projects.

Regarding public service organizations, Brooks said they're not actually listed. He said I do have all of those organizations as consultant organizations in the consultation piece of the action plan, but it doesn't designate them in that area as a public service organization receiving funds. Brooks noted that he found out yesterday that Teen Court would be accepting the YFAC grant rather than the PSO grant. Brooks said this will bring us down to eight organizations.

Brooks asked if there are any questions the Committee may have.

Mayor Booker noted that he just received the plan this morning, and he hasn't had a chance to really go through it. He asked what the deadline is for Council passage.

Brooks said we plan on putting it on the Council agenda for June 10th because it needs to be submitted by June 24th.

Mayor Booker said he believes Donalynn informed him there could be an extension.

Brooks said you can file for an extension.

Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment Deputy Director, said the absolute drop-dead date before we lose funding is August 16th - it has to be submitted by then, and if it's not, then we lose our funding.

Mayor Booker said so we've got until August 16th. While the first deadline is June 24th, he asked staff if extensions are typically granted.

Brown said most of the time, yes.

Mayor Booker said because I didn't put the continuum of care report on this either, I'd like to have a meeting next week - that gives us time to review this, and we can have a little more educated discussion. He said if the committee members are okay with that, I'll have Julia get with everybody and find the time that works. Mayor Booker said you're obviously free to call Gary and ask questions individually, but this will give us a little better discussion. He said we will try to meet that deadline of June 10th, and he asked that a placeholder item be put on the Council agenda for June 10th.

Mayor Booker asked Committee members if they have any questions regarding the plan.

John Ratliff, City Manager, asked if there is a place in the plan that shows all the recommended allocations listed on one page.

Brown said no, but we can create that.

Ratliff asked staff to include this list in the next presentation of the plan.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Discuss the current method in which applications for CDBG funding are evaluated, and discuss methods for future evaluation of applications to be presented to the City Council for final approval.

Chairman Booker said this item has two points to it. One point is the 15% that can be allocated to Public Service Organizations, and the other 85% is for capital requests. He asked staff to start by explaining how the PSOs are chosen.

Brooks said we get their applications if they qualify. Most of the PSOs are prior year PSOs. We've been selecting them based on if they qualified before and can deliver their grants adequately, which most of them do. He said there's not been a long line of

people wanting to be a PSO. He said he believes one of the complaints made by the Council is that it's primarily been the same group of PSOs, although there have been some that have left and come back. Brooks said he'd like to say that the measurements and metrics for the PSOs are actually in the paper at the end of the year report that's approved by Council.

Chairman Booker asked for clarification that there are measurable metrics or outcomes for the organizations.

Brooks said yes - they are based on what each organization believes they're going to have and what they have at the end of the year. He said I've been following the regular reports that came from the past, but I don't know that it has always included the details on those metrics - that's something I should include in the future.

Brooks said we have a really solid working group. However, one of the points raised at the Council meeting was that they might not be performing as well as they should. Still, I believe that while their organization hasn't expanded in size, the workload has increased significantly — especially in terms of the number of homes and people they serve, and the variety of situations they handle, as mentioned by this group. Given that, Brooks said he thinks there are more people on the streets and more in need of assistance. So when these organizations fall short, it often comes down to a numbers game — the organizations do what they can with the resources they have. He said the numbers are not finite - they can increase and improve, but there's still a limit on that.

Chairman Booker said what we're looking for here is that there are measurable metrics. He asked if he's correct in stating that there is a report at the end of the year on those measurable metrics, and it's really just that that level of detail never gets to the Council. He said he thinks there's a lot of misunderstanding of what he's looking for. Chairman Booker said what I'm looking for, and he thinks what the elected officials are also looking for is the biggest bang for the buck. He asked staff where we can get the biggest bang for the buck to deal with the homeless issue. That's really what we're trying to figure out - we have a responsibility to citizens to make sure that we're getting the biggest bang for the buck to maximize taxpayer value.

Chairman Booker said he also wants to know how the application process works for capital requests. He said while we're on the PSOs, I feel like with the time situation the way it is, we probably need to look at just continuing this next year the same way we did this year. He said let's start building our plan for next year and determine if we want to change it. Chairman Booker said what we may find is that it's already a good system, and it's working like it's supposed to. He said I would be great with that, but I don't think that's the perception of some of the individuals I've had conversations with.

Hampton said basically a long-term plan is probably necessary so that we can build on what we do this year. He said he believes this is what Chairman Booker is alluding to.

Brown said it is time for us to start looking at the next five-year consolidated plan as well

- the five-year overall plan is what breaks down into the annual action plan. She said we're currently entering year five, so it's time to start moving into the next segment.

Chairman Booker asked for more details regarding how the plan is prepared.

Brown said the Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan. For this plan, surveys are conducted and there's a list of projects that we work together with the PSOs and the community to figure out what they believe the needs are of Lawton. She said this five-year plan is what we foresee will be the needs in the next five years.

Brooks said the surveys assess the top ten needs for the City of Lawton. Staff must then go through all the projects to determine which project(s) fit the needs of the City of Lawton and the community. Then, the City will make a final decision on what those projects can be. Brooks said the funding for the staff in our office is done, and four people is about all the staff funding that we have.

Chairman Booker said I think we just kind of need consensus, and I've told you that I'm kind of thinking we need to look ahead, and that we need to probably stick with the same plan on public service organizations. He said I'm really excited to hear we have measurable metrics - we may want to look at those and may want to make some changes.

Chairman Booker inquired about the process for making capital requests.

Brooks said capital requests are usually in CDBG and those fall under generally larger projects.

Chairman Booker asked if it's allowable for a local service provider to submit a request for capital funding for a portion of their building or for a remodel. If so, he asked how they would go about doing this.

Brown said they would submit a request, but I don't know that we have an actual application process. Once a request has been submitted, Brown said we would then have to look at funding to see if we have funding available and that it would meet our requirements.

Chairman Booker said that the City of Lawton is responsible for ensuring the requestor does what they say they're going to do, or we as the city have to pay the money back. He said that's where we've ran into trouble - with monitoring.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Consider recommending to the City Council approval of a Professional Services Agreement between the City of Lawton and AJ Griffin for advisement on the Annual Action Plan and the creation of metrics for Public

Service Organizations, as well as improving housing opportunities and expanding housing supply in the City of Lawton.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said I really think this item was supposed to say the five-year plan instead of the annual action plan, and the idea is to get a third party to look into what we're doing with a fresh set of eyes. Chairman Booker said I think my observation is, the numbers continue to go up. I know they do everywhere, but that doesn't mean a fresh set of eyes. He said Dr. Griffin is the expert that the Oklahoma Municipal League goes to on homeless issues.

Chairman Booker said the challenge we've run into is using funds from this year's CDBG, and next year we'll only have six thousand that we could use for this. So, if the idea of hiring a third party to have a professional, outside set of eyes to look at this is appealing to the Committee, we could direct the City Manager to work with her on either negotiating or reducing the scope to meet our budget constraints.

Hampton noted that he likes the idea of hiring a professional from the outside to take a look at what we're doing and give us an evaluation on some of the areas that we might change, or even some of the areas we might enhance to better prioritize our plan. He said he thinks this is a great idea.

Taylor asked if Dr. Griffin would be creating metrics for the Public Service Organizations.

Chairman Booker said this was one of the things she had offered to do, but I don't believe it was listed in the agreement she sent. However, this is something we have talked about. We have sent her the information we have, and we haven't heard back from her yet. There is potential for having her do this, if it's needed.

Taylor asked if this would be for all Public Service Organizations, or just those under CDBG.

Mayor Booker said it would just be for the PSOs under CDBG.

Weger noted that it would be good to have Dr. Griffin look at this matrix of viewing the application process. While it continually increases, the funds are what they are, so that's going to require a more thorough review of who's meeting those expectations and parameters the city has set forth - just because they apply doesn't mean they're going to be accepted. Weger said I think having a third set of eyes would be very helpful.

Ratliff said I think what we're really getting at here, based on the Committee's comments, is program evaluation - we want the biggest bang for our buck. He said metrics are a piece of that, but there are other things that go into that as well.

Mayor Booker said we're talking about the five-year consolidated plan and developing that. The numbers should be increasing, so let's get an extra set of eyes that sees

homelessness across the state and has insight regarding what works, what doesn't, etc.

Taylor said it also looks better for your grants - we're going to be going for municipal grants and things. We have a professional that does that for you, and all you have to do when you want to use that in your grant is take that report and stick it in there and work off of those numbers to build a better case for your grant.

Simms said it would be helpful to see what metrics we have available that we're already collecting, and then review the proposed agreement from her just to make sure that it is useful.

Chairman Booker said judging from that, I think what we need to do is direct the City Manager to negotiate within our budget constraints for help from a third party, or an outside set of eyes, in developing our five-year consolidated plan.

Taylor asked if Dr. Griffin will work with what we're already doing to develop her plan.

Chairman Booker said I believe so, but this would be a question for Ratliff.

Ratliff said we can direct Dr. Griffin to to coordinate with PSOs to make sure that the metrics make sense.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Williams, to direct the City Manager to work with Dr. Griffin on setting up a plan that will fit our budget. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

5. Discuss ongoing safety and accessibility concerns caused by panhandling in roadways and on sidewalks, and consider directing the City Manager to enforce Lawton City Code as it pertains to unlawful panhandling.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said panhandling is increasing, and I don't think you need the phone calls I've received on this to know that panhandling is increasing. There's one in particular that's very disturbing - we have a sign that says "donate here instead of to the panhandlers", and they panhandle right underneath that sign with their baby. We have another one that sits right on the edge of the road at Homestead and Cache, blocking the handicap ramp. She's handicapped herself. It's been suggested to me that she's being forced to do that, but nobody has proof of that.

Chairman Booker said there are safety concerns with panhandling, and the phone calls I get have all been stating that we've got to get a grip on this panhandling - it's getting out of control. He said from what I understand, the money would be much better used if it was donated to one of our public service organizations to help with homelessness, rather than given directly to individuals. We need to discuss that and come up with direction.

Simms said we talked about this before when we were initially looking at the signs about having a QR code, so people could donate directly to a hub, and that wasn't really identified. They can kind of disseminate some funds similar to how the United Way does.

Ratliff said we distributed some QR codes on some brochures, which I know went out, but I do remember that discussion about the signs. He said I feel like there was a reason why we couldn't do it on the signs, and that's why we handed out the brochures. He said he will follow up on that.

Hampton said I think the issue was with picking up the QR code with your cell phone and the distance required to do so.

Sergeant Dimmitt, LPD, said it was because if you were further than the lane that was next to the sign, you couldn't pick it up on your phone.

Ratliff said yes, that's right.

Hampton said I think that's probably going to be the issue - making it as easy as possible when they're on the spot to get that information.

Chairman Booker asked Committee members if they have safety concerns.

Hampton said there is a lady at 17th Street and Gore Boulevard that sits at the curb with her legs out on the road all the time. He said this is a safety concern. He said he has been having some of these issues within his ward.

Sergeant Dimmitt said we do have numerous pedestrians that get hit yearly from walking out onto the road. He said I'm not saying they're all panhandlers, obviously, but the safety is that if they're walking through traffic to get to somebody handing them money, there is a chance the light turns green and somebody doesn't see them, and they end up in a fatal accident, or at least a serious bodily injury accident. He noted that if someone is sitting on the sidewalk, pedestrians may be forced to step into the street to get around them, which creates a safety concern. It's also an issue when they're blocking parts of the roadway.

Chairman Booker said being next to the road and blocking the roadway are concerns.

Williams said that there is a lady in a wheelchair that sits at 27th Street and Lee Boulevard where the old bakery used to be, and it creates a safety issue at that stop light. She noted that this is a high-traffic area.

Chairman Booker said another complaint he's had is in the area of Cleveland School.

Taylor asked what City Code currently says about this.

Ratliff said we've got an ordinance right on point for panhandling, and it talks about these things, such as public safety and keeping panhandlers off the streets. It also talks about panhandlers obstructing the sidewalk. So right now, all of those things can be cited.

Taylor asked specifically about the people that walk up to your car.

Sergeant Dimmitt said it depends on the location in which this occurs. If it's on private property, that falls back on the owners of the property. Under the ordinance, we can't enforce things on private property unless the owner of that property wants them removed for trespassing. At that point, we can go in, and we can cite them or arrest them. However, if a person feels fear, or that they're being harassed, we have that right also to come in and file charges for that, but there has to be some level of fear or of some type of verbal assault.

Chairman Booker asked if the answer to that is to be proactive about getting no-trespassing forms filled out the same way we do for camping, because that's coming up here in a minute - talking about camping on private property.

Sergeant Dimmitt said that is correct. He said previously, back in the 90s, we had signs that used to be in the parking lots that said "no trespassing after hours" and cited city code. Those were businesses that had already filled out paperwork with the city so that the police could come in and enforce those things. He said this did make it easier for the officers to enforce these issues.

Chairman Booker asked if it is legal to have "no-panhandling" zones.

Ratliff said yes - generally speaking, the courts have said that panhandling is free speech protected under the First Amendment. However, Ratliff noted that as long as the ordinance is content-neutral—meaning it doesn't regulate the message or type of speech—it can be valid if it's tied to a compelling government interest. In this case, that interest is public safety: keeping people out of the streets and protecting both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. So, you can do that as long as the ordinance remains content-neutral and is clearly connected to a legitimate government interest.

Chairman Booker asked if a "no-panhandling" zone can be called a "no-panhandling" zone.

Ratliff said I think it could, because you're not going after what they're saying - you're trying to protect people.

Chairman Booker said it would unnerve me if I was a parent to see this activity close to the school. He said it seems to me that making schools whatever we need to make them to relieve citizens of that anxiety is reasonable.

Ratliff said protecting children is definitely a governmental interest.

Sergeant Dimmitt said you could very easily articulate that if you have people panhandling, it makes the kids feel uncomfortable. He said you could very easily articulate that that is a safety issue for traffic and kids.

Taylor said you can just post no trespassing signs at childcare facilities and schools, which means if you don't have business here, you should not be on our property. Then, if somebody comes on the property, the principal can call LPD, and they can come out and take care of it.

Chairman Booker said he believes the citizens want panhandling restricted as much as possible. He said it seems like this Committee is in agreement that it's better that money goes to public service organizations providing services than directly to an individual, for multiple reasons. Chairman Booker said I would like to see the City Attorney bring back to us the things that we can do to be the most restrictive possible regarding panhandling, but we obviously don't want to break any laws. We want to consider safety, especially, and consider places where kids are because we've got the Kids First Initiative. We need to be doing everything we can to make families feel safe and kids feel safe.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to direct the City Attorney to bring back to the Committee the things that we can do to be the most restrictive possible regarding panhandling, considering safety and considering places where kids are. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

6. Consider recommending to the City Council approval of the 2025 Kids First: Homeless Action Plan.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said we began this some time ago, and we immediately found that we ran afoul of our priorities. He said if you'll remember, our priorities for funding were children. Number two was families with children, number three was families without children, and number four was single adults. Dr. Griffin recommended that we add victims of crime, and we want to cover that. Chairman Booker said since we've amended the Plan, it came to my attention that we didn't have language included in the Plan for the disabled. He said he thinks we need to combine numbers one and two on page six of the Plan and add the word disabled. So, what you would have is anything involving children, victims of crime (regardless of age), and the disabled.

Chairman Booker said that doesn't mean we're not going to think of something after we pass this through the City Council. If we do, we will have to come back and amend it. He said Tim did a great job of putting in a disclaimer that we're not trying to run afoul of any federal or state rules or regulations and that they supersede what we do.

Tim Wilson, Acting City Attorney, said on page eight, we added a section that references state law regarding zones of safety for children and sex offenders.

Chairman Booker asked Wilson to discuss the disclaimer.

Wilson noted that this is a work in progress - it's a growing document. Once we implement the Plan, we're hoping there are no hiccups, but you never know, so what we've added is on page 11. He said we added a non-discrimination provision stating that we can't and won't discriminate based on protected class. We also wanted to be in compliance with the Violence Against Women's Act for domestic violence. We also added language that says the City of Lawton recognizes that federal and state law frequently changes, and it's the intent of the action plan to comply with federal and state law. The provision of the Action Plan will be subject to and implemented to the extent allowed under applicable law.

Chairman Booker said obviously, we're not intending to violate anything, and if we do, it supersedes us. He asked the Committee for their thoughts about combining one and two and adding this in.

Taylor said with regard to number one, usually the age of young adults is 24 or younger. She asked if there is a reason why the Plan says 21.

Chairman Booker said I like 21, unless I understand why it needs to be 24.

Simms said this has to do with insurance coverage such as Medicaid.

Taylor said generally speaking, most nationwide services cover up to the age of 24. However, if we want to do 21, that's fine as well. She noted that even with homelessness, most of your grants for those transitioning and your housing goes from ages 18 to 24.

Chairman Booker asked if the ages of 21-24 is a high-risk area that we need to be concerned with.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, said this is also a concurrence with neuroscience and the brain - your brain isn't fully formed until about the age of 24, and so there are also increased diagnoses for young adults of mental health crises. She said we know this is occurring in middle school and high school-age kids as well, but all of that culminates in those ages of "I need to enter society as an adult, and I may not have the support I need - I need a little bit of time to get my feet under here".

Chairman Booker said he's okay with changing the age to 24 based on the feedback given. However, he said he will leave this decision up to the Committee.

Hampton asked Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army, if they have people of this age staying at the Engage Community.

Captain Brinlee said yes - we currently have about six people of this age group staying there. He said he's also ran into people outside of the Engage Community that are below the age of 24 and don't have housing.

Taylor noted that they service up to the age of 24.

Chairman Booker said it will be a floor amendment to change the age to 24, and it will also be a floor amendment to combine number one and two on page six of the Plan and add disabled.

Chairman Booker said I'd like Tim to talk about the changes he made to page 8 and explain what's been updated. Just to remind everyone, he said this issue originally came up when we discovered that homeless individuals had broken into a house and were living there. That situation led to two fire department calls, which prompted Councilwoman Hankins—now Hankins Booker—and me to go out and walk the area. We saw that there were kids living just across the easement. I recently received a report showing that 34 sex offenders are currently listing their address as 'homeless,' and that's really where this all started—from a need to protect children. Tim found some relevant information which we've added here, and I want to give him the opportunity to speak about it.

Wilson said we've added some language to Section 2C regarding homeless sex offenders, specifically those who fail to register. I think that's a key point—failing to register is against the law. We included this because when offenders don't register, they're denying families access to important information that would otherwise be beneficial in keeping their children safe. This ties back to why it's important for sex offenders to register—so families have access to that information. More specifically, there's a state statute in Title 21 of Oklahoma law that establishes a 'zone of safety' around schools, licensed daycare centers, playgrounds, parks, and the homes of sex crime victims. With limited exceptions, the law prohibits sex offenders from loitering within a certain distance of these areas. Wilson said I've added a reference to this statute here because our ordinance is essentially reinforcing that same zone of safety. Violating this law is a felony, meaning sex offenders who do so can be arrested and prosecuted. Because it's a felony, prosecution would fall under the jurisdiction of the District Attorney—not the city court.

Weger asked what can be done to make sure these sex offenders do register so that the families do have the information they need.

Chairman Booker said at the time that I was told there were 34 sex offenders, there were seven more that had failed to register and were awaiting sentencing. He noted the LPD must be looking for these individuals to be able to identify them. He highlighted page three of the Plan, which states that the city will not tolerate individuals who violate the law, putting our community and children at risk.

Sergeant Dimmitt said detective Donald Pauley's sole responsibility is ensuring that sex offenders are properly registered and tracking down those who are not. In addition, within our Special Operations unit, we have an officer dedicated specifically to handling pedophilia-related cases. He stays on top of these cases and works actively to get

offenders off the streets. We also work very closely with U.S. Marshals and recently conducted a large roundup operation in the city and across the county. That operation happened about two weeks ago and focused on verifying the locations of registered sex offenders. If someone was found to be in violation—such as failing to register—they were arrested. Given the manpower we have, we're doing as much as we possibly can. People are going to break the law, but as soon as we learn of a violation, Detective Pauley takes the case and moves quickly to either get the individual off the streets or ensure they're properly registered. Sergeant Dimmitt said the laws in place are strong and give us the tools we need—but we can only act on what we know. That's why public awareness is so important. The more the community reports, the more effective we can be in enforcing these laws. If someone knows of a registered sex offender living in a home or violating the law, we urge them to report it to us immediately so we can go and investigate it.

Captain James Churchwell, LPD, said sex offenders are required to check in with Detective Pauley on a monthly basis. They must physically come to the police department to do so. This check-in process is how we catch many people who fail to report or who are in violation of registration requirements. He noted that the Department of Corrections notifies us when a sex offender moves into the area or is planning to return. That information helps determine where they're allowed to live based on legal restrictions.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, asked if the LPD can query utility accounts or tax data as far as coordinating with someone's address if they're not reporting.

Sergeant Dimmitt said we would have to first obtain a search warrant, and we have to have probable cause to justify the search warrant. We can't just issue a broad, catch-all search warrant to target everyone. We need to have prior knowledge or evidence of a specific violation before we can move forward with a search warrant based on probable cause.

Ratliff asked Sergeant Dimmitt to reach out to the Department of Corrections, since they manage the website and the interactive map. He said the map is helpful for tracking registered offenders with known addresses, but I don't believe it includes those who are homeless. One idea might be to have them display homeless offenders separately—either above or below the map—so people can still view their information and photos, even without a specific address. Right now, the pin drops work well for those with known residences, but I don't think there's any way to identify homeless offenders through the map.

Sergeant Dimmitt said he's tracking. He said he will get with them and then send Ratliff an email.

Chairman Booker said in the interest of time, I am going to ask that the Committee either recommend or don't recommend the plan with the floor amendments we

discussed of combining numbers one and two on page six and adding the word disabled, and changing 21 to 24 on age. He said if you feel like you need more time to review it, we can put it on next week's agenda.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to move forward with the Plan with the amended changes as discussed by the Committee. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

7. Receive a report from the Salvation Army and its affiliated partners on the Engage Program addressing chronic homelessness, and provide direction to the City Manager as needed.

Captain Brinlee gave a report on the Salvation Army's Engage Program addressing chronic homelessness.

Captain Brinlee said we had 84 engagements in April, which is amazing. The system is still being developed, but it's already showing results. We're successfully identifying and helping people experiencing chronic homelessness, getting them off the streets, and recording those efforts. It's a sign that the system is working, even in this early phase.

Captain Brinlee said last Monday, on Memorial Day, we held our first volunteer training session. The volunteer application process is thorough and includes an extensive background check, since volunteers will be working with vulnerable adults. Captain Brinlee said some of you in this room may have already received an application or may be interested in applying to work with individuals who are vulnerable or suffering from chronic homelessness.

Captain Brinlee said we collaborate with, or refer to, nearly every agency in town—many of which are listed as preferred partners. Any agency interested in working with the chronically homeless population can gain access to the Salvation Army program. If you or your organization have a specific service or area of focus, you can sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with us to move forward. It's very important to understand that only individuals or agencies who have been approved are authorized to work directly with the chronically homeless population.

Captain Brinlee said we've had a lot of people coming onto the property, and unfortunately, some of them are predators who claim to be acting in the name of the church, but their background check doesn't pass, which is a serious concern for us. That's one of our biggest issues right now. For this reason, Captain Brinlee said I've been tracking our police engagement, including background checks, arrests, and dispatch calls for the month of April. What I'm sharing here is just what I had recorded at my desk, but I'll let Officer Churchwell give a full report on the official stats that he has for April.

Captain Churchwell said since our last meeting on April 1st, there have been 52 calls to the Salvation Army. Of those, 17 were assault calls, 6 calls were regarding unwanted

guests and there was one drug-related call.

Captain Brinlee noted there were 4 arrests made. He said that place has become a gravitation for people that want to do harm for some reason, which works in our best interest, because it allows us to get people to do background checks. He noted that most of these individuals are not residents of the property. In fact, about 80% of them aren't homeless at all—they actually live in houses in the surrounding area.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he's saying that the people he's had to call the police on are not the people that are staying on the property.

Captain Brinlee said that's right - they're people that come there to visit that actually live in houses. These are individuals living in poverty, some of whom have histories of drug addiction and other serious issues. Some are involved in theft—stealing from people, taking pets or belongings—and we've even seen people abandoning their own animals on the property. Captain Brinlee said there have been major issues, and as of now, we've banned all pets from the property moving forward. Some individuals experiencing homelessness have had serious concerns about this change. In response, we've been working closely with Animal Control to address the problem. We've also started offering classes focused on pets and homelessness, including topics like providing vaccinations for dogs. A big part of the issue is that some people in the community don't have anywhere to take their pets, so they end up dropping them off at our site.

Other than that, Captain Brinlee said the the program is working incredibly. Once we get the mentorship and stewardship programs up and running—with volunteers actively engaging in the community and all background checks in place—this program is going to be absolutely incredible.

Sergeant Dimmitt asked Captain Brinlee if the victims in the encampment area being targeted specifically because they're homeless, or is it just coincidental that they happen to be on the property and become victims.

Captain Brinlee said it's generally related to their circle of influence. A lot of them are actually family members. However, on the flip side of this, Captain Brinlee said we have also set up a safe zone where family members can reconnect with their loved ones. This month, we've seen great results—families from places like Chickasha and Oklahoma City have come out, found their daughters or grandchildren, and were able to help them, get them off the property, and into a safe environment. Captain Brinlee said the program has great benefits.

Regarding staffing and training, Captain Brinlee said we have 3 individuals volunteering in stewardship, and 6 individuals volunteering in mentorship. We also have four volunteers that are doing showers on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Captain Brinlee noted that one case manager has accepted a position and will be starting within the next two weeks.

Captain Brinlee said we're facing some serious issues that need to be addressed quickly—one of the biggest being food safety and food insecurity. People are dropping off food at the site in record numbers, often straight from the trunks of their cars. In many cases, their vehicles are in poor condition, and the food isn't safe to consume. Captain Brinlee noted that even well-meaning organizations have brought in food, but this is also not safe, because none of it is regulated. Just last week, someone dropped off raw deer meat from a personal freezer, stored in two ice chests. People were out there cooking it on small barbecue grills, forming patties as fast as they could. As a result, three individuals developed severe diarrhea. He said food insecurity is a major issue, and that's why I'm bringing this up today—I'd like to ask for some level of permission to address it. Additionally, people are being exploited over food. He said if I offered most of you food out of the back of my car, you'd likely decline. But people facing food insecurity often don't have that choice. They're in survival mode, and that puts them at risk.

Captain Brinlee said there are two key reasons why this matters. First, if a foodborne illness breaks out, we need to be able to trace its source. People facing food insecurity deserve the same safety and dignity the rest of us expect when eating at a restaurant or sending our kids to school. Second, there are organizations that have gone through the proper channels and have set aside \$97,000 in their budget to feed people. The organizations have purchased the right equipment, taken food safety classes, earned certifications, and they follow strict food handling protocols, including checking food temperatures. That level of preparation and investment deserves to be protected. Captain Brinlee said when you have four local organizations collectively spending around \$330,000 a year to feed people, and then someone shows up at a nearby park with a barbecue pit, deciding on a whim to feed large groups for two weeks, it undercuts carefully planned budgets and efforts. Additionally, Captain Brinlee said we're not seeing enough collaboration. If one group is already scheduled to serve lunch on Tuesdays, others should respect that. These groups have taken the time to plan, secure funding, and rely on community donations to make it possible. That coordination should be supported and protected.

Captain Brinlee said he's asking for the opportunity to bring together the different agencies and churches that have already invested in this work to create a coordinated plan for how we feed people to be presented to the Committee.

Captain Brinlee noted that the Engage Community property has to be developed. He said in April, the condition of the property was terrible—it was muddy, filthy, and unsanitary. Dogs were relieving themselves on-site - we have since banned them. There's standing water collecting on the property, and overall, it's a mess that urgently needs to be addressed. Captain Brinlee said if I'm unable to develop or improve the property within the next month, and the rain continues, I'll have no choice but to relocate the operation.

Captain Brinlee said one other thing I want to point out is the amount of trash coming off that property—it's significant. In April alone, 8,600 pounds of trash were removed. That

doesn't even include everything. There are nine trash cans that hold about 150 pounds each, plus two large dumpsters weighing about 800 pounds each that get emptied twice a week. When you do the math, the total amount of waste being collected is actually even higher. The upside is that we're managing that trash in one location instead of it being scattered throughout the city. This trash would exist regardless—but having a central place to collect and dispose of it helps us stay ahead of the issue.

Chairman Booker asked if there is anything that we can do to help the Salvation Army with the people that are showing up with food or going in there thinking they're going to work with what are now Captain Brinlee's clients and his program without going through the proper channels.

Hampton said I've done some reading about other communities that have dealt with this, and one of the things that they started with is setting up an ordinance where you can't feed more than two people publicly. He said he thinks there needs to be standardized ways of dealing with this issue.

Taylor asked Captain Brinlee if he has a presentation regarding food insecurities that he would like to share.

Captain Brinlee said I do. He said I've developed everything I need for the other agencies that are feeding like we are so that we can come together, and I can show them photos of the issues we're facing, including health problems that have already come up, so they can see the real impact firsthand. He said if we can develop a safer, coordinated food program, it not only protects public health—it also helps us better track who is in our community, where they came from, and what their condition is. This is a critical part of the larger effort. If someone is feeding people across the street by Walmart, for example, and it's not coordinated, there's no record of who was helped or what was given. That lack of information makes it harder to serve people effectively.

Taylor said I think your presentation might give us a full view of what's going on, why it's not good, and who you'd like to engage to come up with solutions - then the ordinance could come from that.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if they feed the people in the Engage Program.

Captain Brinlee said no, not right now, but I will go back to doing that. He said we have \$97,000 set aside in our budget for this. He said what I'd like to do is bring together all of us who have food handler's licenses, established budgets, and have invested in feeding people facing food insecurity. My goal is for us to sit down and develop a coordinated plan to ensure a safe, consistent feeding program in Lawton—specifically for individuals experiencing homelessness or poverty.

Hampton asked Captain Brinlee if he needs the city to coordinate the meeting.

Captain Brinlee said no, I'll coordinate that, but we do need to come back here and make a report, because in order for us to completely solve this, we are going to need city involvement.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, said she would like to have an active role in this considering the foodborne safety aspect of it and the licenses that we're in charge of. She noted that there's long been discussion about how these individuals deserve healthy, well-rounded food. She said the foodborne illness is a whole other aspect we want to look at.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee to work on his presentation and advise him when he's ready to give the presentation.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he knows of any program in town that works with sex offenders.

Taylor said Grandeur of Grace works with sex offenders.

Chairman Booker noted that he may want to hear from them in the future.

Taylor said that Grandeur of Grace is veteran-specific, but they can give us what they're doing and how it's working. She noted that they have tiny homes that are outside the city limits.

No action was taken on this item.

8. Discuss homeless encampments within the City of Lawton that are located outside the Salvation Army Engage Community, and consider directing the City Manager to take proactive measures to address the issue, including providing property owners with a Trespass Enforcement Authorization Form.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said this is really about us being proactive, and not saying, "well, that's private property - there's nothing we can do", because we can reach out to the property owner and ask them to sign a no-trespass form.

Ratliff noted that the city does have a no-trespassing form that can be provided to property owners. He said we do have a system in place for this. However, I don't think it's being widely used or publicized. For example, if you go to our website and simply search "trespass", the form comes up immediately. But the fact that this topic is on the agenda suggests that not everyone is aware of it. The form has been available online for about a year now, and we also have printed copies here. Property owners or managers can submit it either digitally through the website or in person at the Police Department.

Sergeant Dimmitt said I met with the Board of Realtors and gave them a full breakdown

of this process. The idea was to make sure that when new property owners come in—especially those managing rental properties or representing out-of-state owners—they're aware of the forms and can get them filled out. If there is something new that needs to be revisited or if there's a need for me to present it again to the Board of Realtors or any other group, just let me know.

Chairman Booker said I'd like to see this become a citywide effort—whether it's the Police Department, Solid Waste, or the Department of Safe and Clean Neighborhoods—anytime a tent is spotted, the property owner should be contacted. He said I use an app on my phone that gives me access to property tax records, so it's easy to identify who owns a particular parcel. I assume the city uses this tool when sending out notices. Chairman Booker said we're free to discuss this, but I'd really like to see a motion here to direct the city manager to be proactive, utilizing all the city's assets to obtain these forms wherever they see a tent. He said we can't allow this activity in our neighborhoods, because our job is public safety and to provide neighborhoods for families where children can thrive.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Weger, to direct the City Manager to be proactive in utilizing all the city's assets in obtaining no trespassing forms from property owners. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

9. Consider recommending to the City Council approval of the Lawton Unhoused Trust Authority Indenture.

John Ratliff, City Manager, provided background information on this item.

Ratliff said you have a copy of the Trust Indenture in the back of your packet - this is just a draft. Essentially, there are nine trustees, with two alternates named, but we can substitute the names - this is just what we've come up with. The purpose behind this Trust is to manage the real property - Captain Brinlee was talking about this. Ratliff said he thinks if we can stand this trust authority up at the next Council meeting, we can talk about the transfer of the property, we can talk about grading it, and we can talk about making the improvements that Brinlee has talked about, because that's exactly the purpose of this authority - to manage property and manage assets to help with the homeless issue.

Ratliff said he is certainly open to any comments or any amendments the Committee wants to make, but this is just the legal framework for this authority so we can move forward, acquire the real property, and start making the improvements necessary to make it a livable place.

Chairman Booker asked the Committee if there is a motion for recommendation to the Council.

Weger made a motion to recommend the trust indenture to the City Council.

Hampton seconded Weger's motion.

Taylor said she is a trustee of this authority. She asked if this authority is particularly aimed towards the Engage Community, or if it's for other things as well.

Ratliff said it's for other things as well, but right now, that's the primary purpose.

Melissa Simms, Comanche County Health Department, said we need to check on state employee involvement as a trustee before we're good this.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, noted there's a change going on with the Director of the United Way, but the trust indenture currently lists Mark Woommavovah. She recommended just listing a general CEO/President for the United Way.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Hampton, to recommend to the City Council approval of the Lawton Unhoused Trust Authority Indenture. **AYE:** Williams, Booker, Hampton, Weger. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Adjournment