



City of Lawton

Lawton City Hall

212 SW 9th Street

Lawton, Oklahoma

73501 3944

City Council

MINUTES

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

6:00 PM

Lawton City Hall
Council Chambers/Auditorium

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER MAYOR STAN BOOKER WITH INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE LED BY THE COMANCHE NATION COLOR GUARD.

"Official action can be taken only on items which appear on the agenda. The Council may adopt, approve, ratify, deny, defer, recommend, or continue any agenda item. The Council may also propose and enact floor amendments to any matter presented before them. When more information is needed to act on an item, the Council may refer the matter to the City Manager or the City Attorney. The Council may also refer items to standing committees of the Council or a board, commission, or authority for additional study. Under certain circumstances, items are deferred to a specific later date or stricken from the agenda entirely."

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Mary Ann Hankins, Ward 1

Kelly Harris, Ward 2

Linda Chapman, Ward 3

George Gill, Ward 4

Allan Hampton, Ward 5

Dr. Bob Weger, Ward 6

Sherene L. Williams, Ward 7

Randy Warren, Ward 8

ABSENT: NONE.

ALSO PRESENT: Stanley Booker, Mayor

John Ratliff, City Manager

John Andrew, City Attorney

Tammy Branstetter, Sr. Deputy City Clerk

PRESENTATION:

True North Award: Cam Huynh, Stormwater Mitigation

Introduction of Cliff Martin, Streets and Traffic Control Superintendent

Extra Mile Hero- Ronda Norrell

Mayoral Citation: Joshua Smith

PROCLAMATION:

Native American Heritage Month

REPORTS: MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL

COL Baird thanked the City of Lawton and Larry Parks, Parks and Rec Director, for their involvement in Fort Sill's Veterans Day event. He also reminded the community about the Fort Sill Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and Christmas Market.

Williams thanked the Lawton Fire Department for the installation of free smoke detectors.

Weger expressed appreciation for military veterans.

Hampton spoke about the Farmer's Market and thanked the Council for their work.

Gill reported on street work being done around Lawton.

Chapman thanked Cam Huynh, Stormwater Mitigation, and his volunteer crew for their hard work on cleaning up the creeks. She also spoke about the large display of flags at Cameron University and the upcoming holiday parade.

Harris advised citizens to pay attention to what is going on their neighborhood and if they see something that seems odd, say something.

Hankins commented that the signs put up by the city look really nice.

Mayor Booker expressed gratitude for veterans. He also stated that many more road projects will be underway very soon.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Lawton citizens who have completed a Request to Speak Form and wish to address business not listed on the agenda may step forward at this time.

To ensure compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, the Mayor and Council will receive comments but will NOT engage in direct responses. However, they may refer matters to the appropriate department or individual for further consideration and follow up action.

To participate, speakers must submit a Request to Speak Form to the City Clerk and reside within the Lawton city limits. Each speaker is allotted 3 minutes, with a maximum of 9 minutes per topic, and Audience Participation is limited to 30 minutes total. All participants are expected to follow the Rules of Decorum as outlined in Council Policy 1 6.

No Request to Speak Forms were submitted, and no comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA:

The following items are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted with one

motion. Should discussion be desired on an item, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda

prior to action and considered separately.

1. Consider awarding contract CL25 011 Electrical Instrumentation and Control Services for Public Utilities to Worth Hydrochem of Oklahoma, Inc. **24 2111**

Attachments: [Abstract.docx](#)

[Dept Recc to Award CL25 001](#)
[Original Contract](#)

2. Consider accepting the temporary construction easements and permanent utility easements from Soon Seop Hong for 776 NW 16th Street, from Crossroads Building Corporation for 1158 NW Cache Road, and from Johnny and Connie Kinder for 1152 NW Cache Road, for the Cache Road water main and sidewalk project # PU2107, authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the documents, and payment for the same. **24 2108**

3. Consider ratifying the action of the City Manager by accepting the Health Literacy grant of \$5,000.00 from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries for health literacy activities. **24 2121**

4. Consider amending Council Policy 3 1 Sexual Harassment to further define what sexual harassment is, the various forms that it may take (verbal, non verbal and physical), expanding on who shall be covered by the policy, procedures to make a complaint and adding a section dealing with city employees and their interactions with citizens or other non employees and sexual harassment that may arise from those interactions. **24 2082**

Attachments: [CP 3 1 Sexual Harassment clean version](#)

[CP 3 1 Sexual Harassment tracked changes](#)

5. Consider amending Council Policy 3 3 Harassment to further define what harassment is, adding what harassing conduct is and adding bullying to the definition; adding new protected classes; adding new persons covered by the policy and adding an Interactions with Citizens section. **24 2092**

Attachments: [COUNCIL POLICY 3 3 Harassment October 2024 Clean](#)

[COUNCIL POLICY 3 3 Harassment October 2024 tracked changes](#)

6. Consider approving Council Policy 04 06: Annual Allocation for PROPEL Funding. **24 2027**

Attachments: [COUNCIL POLICY 04 06 PROPEL 2019 Funding Allocation](#)

7. Consider determining the actual costs of the dismantling and removal of dilapidated buildings and other expenses that may be necessary in conjunction with same by approving invoices for demolition of properties as required by State Statue 11 22 112.4 for properties located at 2110 SW N H Jones Avenue. **24 2120**

Attachments: [Invoice\(s\)](#)

8. Authorize the City Manager to negotiate with County Commission Josh

24 2139

Powers regarding the possibility of a joint city county jail trust. Further authorize the City Manager to negotiate a more equitable cost distribution with the county for the funding of the city's emergency communications department.

Motion by HARRIS, Second by WILLIAMS, to approve the consent agenda as presented. AYE: HANKINS, HARRIS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAMS, WARREN. NAY: NONE. *Motion Passed.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9. Hold a public hearing and consider adopting a resolution declaring the structures located at 908 NW Bell Avenue, to be dilapidated pursuant to Section 6 5 1 Lawton City Code, ordering the owner to abate the nuisance, authorizing summary abatement, and authorizing the City Attorney to commence legal action in District Court to abate the nuisance.

24 2083

Attachments: [Exhibit A](#)

[Photo of Structure
Resolution](#)

Josh White, Neighborhood Services, reported on the multiple code violations at the property. The water has been inactive since 2024, and the structure has fire dates of 08/17/2024 and 09/01/2024.

Ratliff asked if this is the same property that reportedly had an open arson investigation.

White stated this is not the property with an open investigation. The owner previously had a medical procedure done and couldn't attend the public hearing.

Mayor Booker questioned if we give the property owner any certain amount of time after a fire to secure the property. The last fire date on this property was about two months ago.

White stated we usually try to give them some time for insurance purposes. We have received several complaints from citizens in the area about this house.

Public hearing opened and closed with no comments made.

[Motion by HAMPTON, Second by WEGER](#), to approve a resolution declaring the property to be a

dilapidated public nuisance and authorize the abatement thereof as set forth in the resolution. AYE: HANKINS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAMS, WARREN. NAY: NONE.
Motion Passed.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

10. Receive a presentation from CREOKS Health Services Inc regarding the extension of new mental health services in Lawton, Oklahoma, and authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support for this endeavor. 24 2126

Attachments: [Letter of Support CREOKS](#)

Ashley Westmoreland, representing CREOKS Health Services Inc., addressed the Council, sharing that her meeting with Mayor Booker inspired her to explore community partnerships. She emphasized the significant need for mental health support in Lawton, a need consistently echoed across the community. CREOKS partners with cities statewide, with 27 sites offering diverse programs tailored to each city's specific needs. She highlighted a recent partnership with Broken Arrow, where CREOKS identified a need for crisis support services within the police department and established a community resource center for unhoused youth. Their collaboration resulted in a \$5 million integrated service facility. Westmoreland expressed CREOKS' desire to support Lawton similarly and noted ongoing discussions with local stakeholders, including the City Manager and Ms. Taylor. She praised Lawton's philanthropic community for its willingness to address difficult issues.

Mayor Booker thanked Westmoreland for her presentation and inquired about the purpose of the letter of support she was seeking. Westmoreland explained that the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health regulates service providers, and Lawton currently has a contracted provider. CREOKS is seeking approval to become an additional provider, and the letter would support that request during their upcoming meeting with the Deputy Commissioner.

Councilmember Hankins acknowledged the extensive information presented and requested time for further review. She sought clarification on CREOKS' status as a non-profit. Westmoreland confirmed that CREOKS is a 501(c)(3) organization funded through the Department of Mental Health, serving both indigent populations and those with the ability to pay. Their services would be state-funded, with no cost to the City. Hankins also asked about CREOKS' potential collaboration with Taliaferro, to which Westmoreland confirmed a DCO agreement would be established to provide additional support.

Councilmember Hampton inquired about CREOKS' service delivery model. Westmoreland explained that CREOKS tailors its support to community needs, citing examples ranging from large-scale facilities to shelter assistance. She confirmed that if a physical facility were established, CREOKS would provide all necessary staff and resources. Their model includes embedding workers within existing institutions, such as DHS offices and school districts, ensuring integrated service delivery.

Hampton also asked about CREOKS' history and origins. Westmoreland stated that CREOKS has operated in Oklahoma for 40 years, initially serving Creek, Okmulgee, and Okfuskee Counties before expanding to eight counties. In the most recent review by the Department of Mental Health, CREOKS was ranked as the state's top provider of CCBHC services. She attributed their growth to the success of collaborative partnerships.

Motion by HANKINS, Second by HARRIS, to authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support for CREOKS Health Services, Inc. AYE: HANKINS, HARRIS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAMS, WARREN. NAY: NONE. *Motion Passed*

11. Receive public comments on the usage and allocation of unallocated sales tax revenue received from July 2020 to June 2024. The unallocated funds total \$8,425,974.94. **24 2119**

Attachments: [Resolution of Intent No. 24 114](#)

[2024 Monthly Sales Tax Analysis](#)

Rebecca Johnson, Finance Director, stated this is the second of two public hearings required to allocate these funds. If citizens have any recommendations for the CIP category that they would like to see the funds spent in, now would be the time. Finance will come back in December to have the allocation budgeted.

Mayor Booker stated he would like to clarify that these are inflationary funds and can only be spent on the items in the Resolution of Intent approved by the Council and voted on by the citizens.

No public comments were made.

12. Receive a briefing concerning the recent proposals submitted for the Management & Operations of Ralph's Resort and direct staff as necessary. **24 2136**

Attachments: [Abstract.docx](#)

[Bid Results](#)

Ratliff stated this is a companion item to the item voted down by the Lawton Water Authority. There is no need to discuss.

This item was stricken.

- 13.** Consider accepting a donation in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma in appreciation for the City’s continued support of the Spirit of Survival running and bicycling event. **24 2102**

Layne Hooten, CEO of the Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma, expressed his appreciation for the assistance of the City of Lawton for the Spirit of Survival Event.

Mayor Booker thanked Hooten for the donation and for hosting the Spirit of Survival. He noted that it is one of Lawton’s keystone events.

Motion by GILL, Second by HAMPTON, to accept a donation in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma. AYE: HANKINS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAMS, WARREN. NAY: NONE. *Motion Passed.*

- 14.** Consider an ordinance pertaining to Administration, amending Section 2 3 9 362, and creating Section 2 3 9 366 and Section 2 3 9 367, Division 2 3 9, of Article 2 3, Chapter 2, Lawton City Code, 2015, relating to Boards, Commissions, and Committees by changing membership requirements for the Youth and Family Affairs Committee, establishing the process for the appointment of a chairperson, providing requirements for Youth and Family Affairs grant applicants, and clarifying the roll of the City of Lawton’s internal auditor in the Youth and Family Affairs grant process; providing for severability; providing for codification and establishing an effective date. **24 2025**

Attachments: [YFAC Ordinance](#)

Cynthia Williams, Internal Auditor provided a presentation over the proposed ordinance. This presentation is available in the City Clerk’s Office. The ordinance adjusts membership criteria, establishes a procedure for appointing a chairperson, sets criteria for funding requests, and clarifies the role of the Internal Auditor in the grant process.

Motion by HANKINS, Second by WEGER, to approve Ordinance 24-078, waive the reading of the ordinance, and read the title only.

City Attorney Read the Title: **ORD. 24-078**
AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO ADMINISTRATION, AMENDING SECTION 2-3-9-362, AND CREATING SECTION 2-3-9-366 AND SECTION 2-3-9-367, DIVISION 2-3-9, OF ARTICLE 2-3, CHAPTER 2, LAWTON CITY CODE, 2015, RELATING TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES BY CHANGING MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR THE YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, ESTABLISHING THE PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIRPERSON, PROVIDING REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS GRANT APPLICANTS, AND CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF LAWTON'S INTERNAL AUDITOR IN THE YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS GRANT PROCESS;

PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Booker stated he will be appointing Councilman Weger to serve as the Chairperson to begin in January and he will serve as the interim chairperson until that time.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYE: HANKINS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAMS, WARREN. NAY: NONE. *Motion Passed.*

- 15.** Consider approving an ordinance pertaining to Administration, amending **24 2127**
Section 2 1 1 102, Division 2 1 1, Article 2 1, Chapter 2, Lawton City Code, 2015, relating to meetings of the council, by updating the time of council meetings to 6:00 pm to reflect the current meeting time, providing for severability and establishing an effective date.

Attachments: [Council Meeting 6pm](#)

Andrew stated this cleans up Code so that it matches the Council's current meeting time. There were some issues at the previous meeting because Code doesn't match. We decided it would be the best course of action to update Code to reflect the current situation, and we can change Code again at the end of the 6-month trial period if needed.

Gill stated he doesn't see a reason to do this now because the meeting time will not be determined until March. He also pointed out that the meetings have been happening at 6:00pm for four months without Code being updated.

[Motion by GILL](#), to take no action.

Mayor Booker stated before he asks for a second, he would like to clarify that the ordinance change needs to be done in order to comply with State Statutes and to submit an Annual Meeting Notice.

Ratliff stated no, the ordinance is separate from the Annual Meeting Notice. This ordinance is just to make Code match the current practice. State Statute does not require that we have an ordinance that states our meeting times.

Mayor Booker asked if we have complied with State Statutes in submitting the notice.

Ratliff stated he believes we have, but the deadline for submission is December 15th.

Mayor Booker stated he is good with the motion, then.

Second by WILLIAMS, to take no action. VOTE ON MOTION: HANKINS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAM. NAY: WARREN. *Motion Passed.*

- 16.** Receive a presentation and consider accepting the financial statements and audit report on the City of Lawton for fiscal year ended June 30, 2023, as presented by FORVIS MAZARS,LLP. **24 2124**

Cynthia Burns, Lead Auditor with Forvis-Mazars, presented the findings from the FY2023 audit. She reported that the financial statement audit has been completed, and the City of Lawton received an unmodified opinion—the highest rating possible. No adjustments were made to the City’s financials as a result of the audit. Burns commended Rebecca’s team, along with Crawford and Associates, for their role in ensuring a thorough and clean audit.

Burns stated that today’s presentation serves as the required communication to the City Council as the governing body. While the financial statement portion of the audit is complete, work is still underway on the federal awards audit, which is expected to be finalized within the month. Once completed, the required auditor reporting to the state will also be submitted, with an anticipated completion in November.

Mayor Booker asked if a copy of the opinion was supposed to be included.

Johnson stated no sir, it will be released tomorrow. Tonight is just a verbal report, and you will accept the opinion tomorrow.

Burns stated the staff at the City is working very hard to get things caught up, and they have done a wonderful job.

STAFF REPORTS:

- 17.** Provide City Council with an update on the FY 2024 Audit Process. **23 991**

Rebecca Johnson stated she does not have anything to add after the presentation from Ms. Burns.

Mayor Booker stated he was surprised that the previous report was for 2023, but not 2024. He stated 2024 ended in June.

Johnson stated that is correct; It closed in September and is due in December.

Gill stated Johnson is doing a great job.

Council applauded the entire Finance Department.

18. Receive a report from staff on Short Term Rentals.

24 2100

Judy Franco, IT Director, stated we have gone live with our Short-term Rentals through Deckard Technologies. She noted that the system is already available online and gave a presentation over the software. This presentation is available in the City Clerk's Office.

Mayor Booker asked if the submittal is still being done on the honor's system.

France stated yes, the owner still has to submit it, but Deckard will go through the properties they have identified to show properties that are compliant or not compliant.

Ratliff stated our ordinance allows us to turn off water in the event of non-compliance.

Mayor Booker asked if the process is to send a notice and then turn off water.

Ratliff affirmed.

Mayor Booker asked what the estimated percentage of compliance is.

Charlotte Brown, Community Services, stated the City sent over 124 properties that were previously licensed to Deckard. Some of those licenses have expired and we are in the process of getting those renewed through Deckard. We currently have 80 with a valid license, so we have about 30% in compliance.

Mayor Booker stated 70% of short-term rentals in our taxing jurisdiction are not properly reporting. He asked if there is a plan.

Ratliff stated yes, the implementation of this software will help us close that gap. He explained that the software will identify the owners not in compliance, we will send them a notice, and then if they continue to remain non-compliant, we will shut off the water. This should close the loop on those not properly reporting and solve an issue that has existed for three or four years.

Mayor Booker stated the citizens voted for this tax, and it is our job to make sure it remains in order.

Hampton asked if the new software identifies listings on short-term rental advertisements and then notifies us of properties in Lawton.

Brown stated yes.

Ratliff stated the new software uses AI and internet scraping capabilities to identify online listings. This is a feature that our previous provider did not have, and it is the reason why we switched.

Mayor Booker stated this requirement has been well publicized for four years and believes those who are not compliant should receive some sort of fine. He asked if we had a mechanism to do that.

Ratliff stated no because when the ordinance was passed in 2020, the only remedy included was turning off water. There is no legal authority to impose a fine. We could send it back to a vote of the people to change the ordinance.

Gill asked if there is a way to go in arrears for those who have not complied.

Ratliff stated there is nothing that prohibits us from charging them back taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by GILL, Second by HAMPTON, to adjourn the meeting of November 12, 2024. AYE: HANKINS, CHAPMAN, GILL, HAMPTON, WEGER, WILLIAMS, WARREN. NAY: NONE.
Motion Passed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:16PM.

The City of Lawton encourages participation from all of its citizens. If participation at any public meeting is not possible due to a disability, notification to the City Clerk at (580) 581 3305 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting is encouraged to make the necessary accommodations. The City may waive the 48 hour rule if interpreters for the deaf (signing) is not the necessary accommodation."