



WATONGA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR MARCH 15, 2022

In accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Law, this Agenda was posted March 12, 2022 Prior to 5:00 PM at the Main Street Entrance of Watonga City Hall, located at 410 West Main Street, Watonga, Oklahoma.

The City Council of the City of Watonga did meet at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 in the Conference Room of Watonga City Hall, located at 410 W. Main Street, Watonga, Oklahoma for a scheduled meeting.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:

Council Present: Mayor Bill Seitter, Travis Bradt, Allen Cowan and Ladina Willis. Also present, City Manager Karrie Beth Little, City Attorney Jared Harrison and City Clerk Verlen Bills.

Declaration of a Quorum: At 6:01 PM.

AGENDA

1. **Approve the Nomination** to fill the vacancy for City of Watonga Ward 2 Council Member and to swear in the approved Nomination.

There were nominations put forth to fill the vacancy for City of Watonga Ward 2 Council Member.

City Attorney Jared Harrison: I would just mention, so everyone is aware, we still have a few days left to accomplish this before the 60 day time frame. If we get to the end of that time period, I believe the State Statutes say we have to hold a Special Election and that will be an expense, time consuming and unnecessary complication for the City.

City Manager Karrie Beth Little added, the deadline to find someone willing to serve is April 9, 2022.

2. **Approve the Minutes** of the previous Council Meeting held February 15, 2022.

Motion to approve the Minutes of the previous Council Meeting held February 15, 2022 was made by Travis Bradt and seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

3. **Approve the Monthly Reports** from EMS, Fire Department, City Treasurer, Library, Police Department, Municipal Court, Community Development, Park's Department, Light & Water Department, Street & Alley Department and the Airport.

Mr. Cowan asked about the training hours for Code Enforcement.

Ms. Little replied, that is primarily for his Reserve CLEET Certification.

Mayor Seitter: It looks like EMS got us a good deal for Respiratory Vents. I assume that this was a County purchase.

There was brief discussion as to who is qualified to use a Respiratory Vent.

Mayor Seitter asked the City Treasurer, we adjusted funds so we can pay back the Sales Tax over-payment and not need to deal with this next fiscal year?

Mr. Jacks replied, yes, it would be good to get this over and done with.

Mr. Cowan: Whenever we have so many of the electric disconnects for non-payment, do most of those re-reconnect?

Ms. Little: Yes, there is currently no one disconnected.

Several commented that was good.

Motion to approve the Monthly Reports from EMS, Fire Department, City Treasurer, Library, Police Department, Municipal Court, Community Development, Park's Department, Light & Water Department, Street & Alley Department and the Airport was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

4. **Review and accept the list of Claims** against the City of Watonga for the month of February 2022.

Mr. Cowan asked, what does Teresa France do for the Fire Department?

Volunteer Firefighter Adam Lovitt was present and answered, she runs the emergency alert text service for the Fire Department.

There were brief comments and discussion about our emergency alert texting service.

Mr. Cowan: There are invoices for the Police Department dated from December?

Ms. Little: That is when uniforms were ordered but sometimes the embroidery takes time.

Mr. Cowan: What signs did we get from Econo Signs?

Ms. Little referred to a sign against the wall (a welcome to Watonga), and stated, this is for four signs and includes the hardware. The intent is to put one at each direction coming into town.

Mayor Seitter and Ms. Little discussed other signage around the City and whether or not some signs may need to meet ODOT requirement.

Mayor Seitter asked about some of the faded signs.

Ms. Little allowed that we are working on that.

Motion to accept the list of Claims against the City of Watonga for the month of February 2022 was made Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

5. **Approve the Monthly Financial Report** for February 2022 from RS Meacham.

Ms. Dacia Phillips with RS Meacham explained that the report that was emailed out did not include the Budget Amendments that were passed at the previous Council Meeting. The report she is handing out does includes those Budget Amendments.

(First page, Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual.) We have a Total Income of \$146,212. For Non-operating Income, which is interest and transfers, we have \$149,039. Our total Expenditures are \$261,169. After income and expenditures and transfers, we have revenue of \$27,238 for the month of February. Our budget percentage for this time in the years is 66.67 percent and we can compare year-to-date against the Annual Budget. Our Total Income year-to-date is \$1,516,487. That is 77% of our amended Budget. And then we have Total Non-operating Income of \$1,061,380, which is 56.75 percent of our Annual Budget. Our Total Expenditures, year-to-date, is 2,340,492. That is 62 percent of of the Annual Budget and we want expenditures to be under budget and this is good. Our total year-to-date net income is at \$206,633. We did not really have any big items of note in February. Compared to last year at this time, we had a loss of \$107,738 year-to-date. A big portion of that would be Oil and Gas Income is up this year, compared to last year, and transfers are up.

The next page of the Report is Light and Water. The monthly total for Electric Operating Income is \$129,141. We have Water Operating Income of \$26,708 and Sewer Operating Income is \$1,486. Garbage Operating Income is at \$20,708. Our total Operating Income for February is \$178,042 and that consists of direct income and expense for those departments. After administrative, Capital Improvement fees, transfers and other income, we had Net Income of \$69,578 for the month and year-to-date Net Income \$778,072. The Electric Operating Income year-to-date \$1,250,122, the Water Operating Income year-to-date is \$228,208, the Sewer Operating Income year-to-date is \$50,630 and the Garbage Operating Income year-to-date is \$81,666. The Total Operating Income year-to-date is \$1,610,626. At eight months, we are already what we projected for the full year. Of course, we do budget conservatively. After income and expenditures, we have a net income, year-to-date, of \$778,072 on the budget basis. At this point last year, we actually had a loss, but there were other things going on in the Water Department that were later capitalized and depreciated and at year's end we converted back to accrual basis.

There was not much activity in the Grant Fund. Just a Capital Outlay of \$6,012. Year-to-date the Grant Fund has a Net Income of \$238,661.

Ms. Phillips continued: In the Pubic Works Account, year-to-date we have a Net loss of \$80,388. The total PWA Income year-to-date is \$151,559 and this is only 7 percent of budget, but, as discussed previously, this is because we have not started receiving the FAA grants yet. This will improve as the grants start to ramp up. Year-to-date Total Expenditures is \$206,886. Again, this is only 9 percent of budget and awaiting the FAA grants.

In the Sales Tax Fund, there is a Total Sales Tax Income of \$141,745 year-to-date. Sales Tax Collections are at 74 percent of the Amended Budget. We have Expenditures of \$147,865 which is 59 percent of budget. After Interest Income and Transfers in and out, we have a net loss of \$13,899, but \$110,043 of that is capital purchases that will be depreciated and do not just pertain to this fiscal year.

In the Street and Alley Fund, for Street and Alley Income, we have year-to-date \$24,401 which is only 60 percent of budget. Clean-up and Material Sales are down, this may have to do with the time of year and could improve through the Spring. Street and Alley Expenditures year-to-date is \$167,268 which was the project at Workman and A st. Year-to-date we have spent \$142,774 more than we have brought in, but we have spent restricted funds on projects that needed to be done.

In the Sales Tax Graph, we are showing the three cents that the City actually gets to use, two and a half cents in General Fund and a half a cent to the Sales Tax or Capital Improvement Fund. Last year, for the first nine months of the year, through March collections, we collected \$894,600.67. This year, for the same nine months we have collected \$986,007.57. That is up \$91,406.90 or a 10.22 percent increase.

In Use Tax, for the first nine months of last year we had collected \$163,637.52. This year, for the same nine months, we have collected \$209,643.17. That's up \$46,005.65 or a 28.11 percent increase.

Sales Tax and Use Tax are both trending positive.

Mayor Seitter asked, could we also see the Hospital's portion of the Sales Tax on a separate graph?

Ms. Phillips: We can do another bar graph in next month's report.

Mr. Jacks commented, the most recent month of the Hospital's portion of the Sales Tax was \$89,945.10

Several commented about the improvement in Sales Tax collections.

Mr. Cowan asked, on the Watonga General Fund Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual report, how many different Franchise Fees do we collect?

Mr. Jacks replied, Pioneer Telephone, Center Point / Summit and OG&E. Mr Jacks went on to explain which accounts the monies are deposited into.

Mayor Seitter asked, why are the different franchise fees deposited into different accounts?

Mr. Jacks replied, he was not certain. This was as he was instructed as he took on the responsibility of City Treasurer.

Allen Cowan made the motion to approve the Financial Report for February 2022, presented by Dacia Phillips with RS Meacham. Motion was seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

6. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For City of Watonga City Clerk Petty Cash Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga City Clerk Petty Cash Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga City Clerk Petty Cash Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter: I understand that the banks want a specific name. But we've gone for 11 months here with the previous Mayor still on signature card. Is there an opportunity to put the "Mayor" on all of these accounts, then whenever the Mayor changes, we can take documentation to the banks to show the change of Mayor?

Mr. Jacks: The names on the accounts are up to the City Manager and the Council. The previous City Manager did not think there was a need to change the bank signatures at that time.

Mayor Seitter: Yes I understand why this is needed. If Mr. Jacks or Mr. Bills are not available then there needs to be someone else designated to sign checks. There are several extra backups here and we need to stay up with this so the allowed signatures do not get forgotten about or fall through the cracks. From a legal aspect, could Council approve the Mayor for all the accounts and then document to the banks, when there is a new Mayor and who that Mayor is? We would not need to go through every name on every account next time?

Mr. Jacks explained how the City and banks had dealt with this in the past.

Mr. Harrison: My initial reaction is that banking laws are going to require that they have specific names listed in the minutes, not titles.

Mayor Seitter: We would be showing a specific name in the minutes when there is a new mayor elected.

Ms. Little to clarify: Procedurally we have a motion stating these titles are the approved signatures. Then, if the people with these titles change we take the minutes saying that the Council approved the individual (by name) for that position.

Mayor Seitter's point was that this needs to be easier and simplified, to avoid things falling through the cracks in the future. We should not need to go through every account and every individual in Council. Council would only approve the appointment to an office and the bank accounts would all get changed automatically.

Mr. Harrison agreed that it would be simpler on the City's side and less prone to errors, but he was hesitant because of banking requirements.

This debate continued on for a time. All agreed that it would be worth the effort to explain our concerns to the banks. There might be something that could be worked out.

Motion was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt for City of Watonga City Clerk Petty Cash Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga City Clerk Petty Cash Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga City Clerk Petty Cash Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

7. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the Watonga Public Library Operations Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the Watonga Public Library Operations Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the Watonga Public Library Operations Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt for the Watonga Public Library Operations Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the Watonga Public Library Operations Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the Watonga Public Library Operations Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

8. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the Watonga Public Library State Aid Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the Watonga Public Library State Aid Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the Watonga Public Library State Aid Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Travis Bradt and seconded by Ladina Willis for the Watonga Public Library State Aid Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the Watonga Public Library State Aid Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the Watonga Public Library State Aid Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

9. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the Watonga Public Library Grant Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the Watonga Public Library Grant Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the Watonga Public Library Grant Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Ladina Willis and seconded by Travis Bradt for the Watonga Public Library Grant Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the Watonga Public Library Grant Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the Watonga Public Library Grant Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

10. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga Ambulance Saving Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the City of Watonga Ambulance Saving Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Ambulance Saving Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt for the City of Watonga Ambulance Saving Account at Bank 7, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen and Amanda Black. For the City of Watonga Ambulance Saving Account at Bank 7, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Ambulance Saving Account at Bank 7, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

11. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga General Fund Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga General Fund Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga General Fund Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Travis Bradt and seconded by Ladina Willis for the City of Watonga General Fund Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga General Fund Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga General Fund Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

12. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga Street and Alley Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga Street and Alley Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Street and Alley Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Ladina Willis and seconded by Travis Bradt for the City of Watonga Street and Alley Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga Street and Alley Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Street and Alley Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

13. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga Sales Tax Park Account at First State Bank (Capital Improvements Account), remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga Sales Tax Park Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Sales Tax Park Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt for the City of Watonga Sales Tax Park Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga Sales Tax Park Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Sales Tax Park Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

14. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Grant Fund Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga CDBG Grant Fund Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga CDBG Grant Fund Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Ladina Willis and seconded by Allen Cowan for the City of Watonga CDBG Grant Fund Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga CDBG Grant Fund Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga CDBG Grant Fund Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

15. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga General Obligation Hospital Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga General Obligation Hospital Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga General Obligation Hospital Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Travis Bradt and seconded by Allen Cowan for the City of Watonga General Obligation Hospital Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga General Obligation Hospital Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga General Obligation Hospital Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

16. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga General Saving Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga General Saving Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga General Saving Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Ladina Willis and seconded by Allen Cowan for the City of Watonga General Saving Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga General Saving Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga General Saving Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

17. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** For the City of Watonga Municipal Court Fund Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga Municipal Court Fund Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Municipal Court Fund Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Motion was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt For the City of Watonga Municipal Court Fund Account at First State Bank, remove from the list of authorized signatures, Gary Olsen, Amanda Black and Alaya Keierleber. For the City of Watonga Municipal Court Fund Account at First State Bank, continue with Rodney Jacks and Verlen Bills as authorized signatures. For the City of Watonga Municipal Court Fund Account at First State Bank, add Bill Seitter as an authorized signature.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

18. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To approve Resolution 2022-3 of the Governing Body of the City of Watonga (the "City"), Oklahoma, expressing the intent of the City to comply with and operate in accordance with Municipal Budget Act effective with the budget for fiscal year 2023.

Ms. Phillips: The City of Watonga has been operating under the older budget law, Estimate of Needs Law. As the City was changing the form of government, we thought it would be good time to update accounting procedures to the newer Uniform Budget Act. This new law is a more comprehensive and more strict on things, but these are things we are doing already.

Let me explain some issues with the estimate of needs law, for some of the legal deadlines, we have to prepare the financial statement for the close of the prior year by the first Monday in August. we have to submit financial and estimated needs to the County Excise Board by August 27. Mr Seitter and I have discussed this before, it is extremely difficult to close the books by August 27th when vendors do not even have to have their invoices to you until September 30. Another issue is that you could actually start a new fiscal year without an approved budget. Watonga is probably one of the larger cities that still operates under the Estimate of Needs Law.

We will still have to do a sinking fund similar to the estimate of needs for the G.O. Bonds or the Hospital G.O. Bonds, but it is a much reduced format from what we were doing under the Estimate of Needs Law. We will still need to publish the budget.

I did bring a copy of an email that I sent to Ms. Little and Mr. Harrison that list some of the requirements for the Municipal Budget Act.

Mayor Seitter pointed out, the reason we will still do the estimate of needs for the sinking fund is because the treasurer needs the correct millage.

In the Municipal Budget Act there are more strict deadlines. The budget has to be submitted to the governing body at least 30 days prior to the start of the year.

We have to have a public hearing on the proposed budget at least 15 days prior to the start of the fiscal year and this is one of the main differences between the Estimates of Needs and the Municipal Budget Act is this public hearing. In our experience, in 90 to 95 percent of all cities, this is just a formality and no one shows for these public hearings. We have to publish a budget summary and a notice of a public hearing at least five days before the hearing. And we have to adopt the budget by resolution at least seven days prior to the start of the fiscal year and submit to the State Auditor and Inspector within 30 days after the start of the fiscal year. Our Estimate of Needs did have to be submitted to the State Auditor and Inspector but it went to the County Excise Board first, they signed it and then they sent it on to the State.

Mayor Seitter asked, will we need to have a Special Meeting for the Public Hearing?

Ms. Phillips: Most cities will simply incorporate the Public Hearing into a regular Council Meeting or maybe start 15 minutes early for the Public Hearing.

Mayor Seitter asked, will we have deadline concerns with the 3rd Tuesday in June?

Ms. Phillips replied, that should not be an issue.

Mr. Cowan asked to expand on this.

Mr. Harrison: In other communities, I have seen the Public Hearing to be just an agenda item. They will open the Public Hearing and then close the Public Hearing. I would suggest we watch the calendar closely to make sure we get the Public Hearing 15 days before the 3rd Tuesday.

Ms. Phillips: This is a much better fiscally responsible format for budget for those reasons and having at least 30 days to review the budget before the fiscal year. Also required, a budget summary, three years of budgets, revenues and expenditures prior your actual current year's budget and proposed budget. We already do those things because those are great tools to help make decisions based on that historical data. We are required to budget for the General Fund and all other funds established by the governing body except for grant and capital projects which can be budgeted at one time at the start of the project. Normally, we budget this all once and then amend if needed. Under the Estimate Needs Law we are not required to have a budget for all funds, just the general funds and other cash funds. The public utilities were not required to budget under the estimated law.

It has some different terminology, but we really use the terminology in the Municipal Budget Act. Such as personal services, materials and supplies, other services, capital outlay, debt service and inter-fund transfers. The legal level of control is at the department appropriation within a fund, if not established at a lower level by resolution. And actually that is the same in the Estimated Needs Law, we are accountable at the department level, not the object level, and when I say object level, I mean personal services, materials and supplies, we are not accountable at that level. We are accountable at total department level. And, we also have the 90 percent of estimated revenues limitation.

Budget amendments can be made at any time. Transfers can only be approved by the CEO or designee by resolution as long as they do not exceed the overall budget. Some cities do that part some do not. And then the sinking fund estimate of needs still have to be filed with the county excise board.

That is the differences between the two budget laws in a "nutshell".

Mayor Seitter: This is only the about the budget, it has nothing to do with how we deal with purchase orders or warrants?

Ms. Phillips replied no, the difference that Council will likely see is the Public Hearing and What Council needs to sign off on for the Excise Board every year will be a much smaller document for the sinking fund. If there are no issues, we will be able to capture expenditures for that report by the time it needs to be filed.

Mayor Seitter: As I understand all of this, as a Council, setting the budget is really the only control that we have over expenditures.

Ms. Phillips replied yes, Council is giving us a road map for the year.

Mayor Seitter: Approving the list of claims that Council does every month is really just for our information as the claims have already been paid.

Mr Harrison: I just glanced at the calendar, if I looked at it correctly, our June meeting would be on the 21st. We just need to plan accordingly. We may have to do this in May or have a special meeting. But we can work around this.

Mayor Seitter asked for questions.

Ms. Little: Operationally, nothing will change when it comes to the reporting mechanism. We will still get the same information in a similar format, we will still be going through the same budget process. We are just moving to the next level with the more recent Municipal Budget Act.

Mr. Cowan asked and Ms. Phillips briefly discussed a technical detail of the budget process.

Mr. Bradt asked, most towns are already doing this?

Ms. Phillips replied, most communities our size and larger have changed. It is really the smaller towns that are still under the Estimate of Needs Budget Law.

Motion to approve Resolution 2022-3 of the Governing Body of the City of Watonga, Oklahoma, expressing the intent of the City to comply with and operate in accordance with Municipal Budget Act effective with the budget for fiscal year 2023 was made by Travis Bradt and seconded by Allen Cowan.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

19. **Consideration Discussion and Action:** To approve Resolution No. 2022-4 setting policy for Open Records request procedures.

Mr. Harrison: Obviously, the City and the Trusts are all subject to the Open Records Act, that is not a question at all. But with the change in our form of government and the changes to our structure in the City, we thought this would be a good time to look at how we are handling Open Records Request and all the other laws that apply to this in some form or manner. This becomes a real issue to completely understand.

As you may know, in the past, with the old form of government, each department functions somewhat autonomously. Each department was in charge of overseeing their requests and how they responded to those request. That can lead to potential issues when one department responds a little differently than the other. What we are trying to do, to avoid a conflict, along with the Municipal Budget Act, to modernize, simplify and centralize much of this. We want to be more open and clear as to how we proceed (and comply) with the Open Budget Act.

This is what we are doing with this Resolution. Part of the Open Records Act allow the municipality to designate who is authorized to send out those records. So, for now, we are centralizing this with the City Clerk's Office, that way they can get the training and learn how this is all supposed to work in the right way. But we also give authority in here to the City Manager to designate other officials within the City, because there will be some times when it is just easier for a department head or specific employee to deal with a specific kind of record.

We should start with bringing this all together to develop a uniform policy and structure and everyone will know how we will do this. Then, we can make minor modifications if they are needed. Obviously, at the end of the day, we are always going to follow the Open Records Act.

Mayor Seitter: This Resolution does not mention how long we have to fulfill an Open Records Request, or if we charge for time, or for copies.

Mr. Harrison: That is covered in the Open Records Act. We get to set the fee schedule and we have to respond in a timely manner. Obviously it is going to depend on what is requested. If they want body cam footage with children involved and we have to blur out faces, that will take much longer than a simple request for a copy of a contract for the splash pad.

Mr. Bradt: In item four, it says employees authorized to release records shall be given appropriate training on the Open Records Act. How much training?

Mr. Harrison: Appropriate... It will be continuous and ongoing training because it is complicated and changes all the time. Over the course of the last week and a half, I've learned a few things. It is not as easy as you might think. The main part of the Open Records Act is Title 25 but there are other places in the law where there could be exceptions. Then there are parts of Title 11 that deal specifically with municipal government. It is a complicated monster. Oklahoma Municipal League and others do have some good training on this.

Mr. Bradt: The City Manager will see to it that people are properly trained?

Mr. Harrison: By doing it this way we are putting the responsibility into the hands of the City Manager, making it part of their job. They will make sure the training is appropriate.

Ms. Little: Our first step is to streamline this process, review what is being requested, make the needed changes and get everybody trained.

Mr. Harrison: I agree and I guarantee there will be some changes. At some point in time, some of the routine requests may get sent to a specific department to simplify the process and make it easier for all those involved.

Motion was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt to approve Resolution 2022-4 of the City Council of the City of Watonga, Oklahoma setting forth the Policy and Procedure related to the Release of Records Pursuant to the Oklahoma Open Record Act.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

20. **Discussion Only:** The Watonga Planning and Zoning Committee Members and their responsibilities.

Ms. Little confirmed that we do have a current Planning and Zoning Committee.

Mr. Harrison: I would guess that they have not meet recently. There has not been a lot of activity. But as we look forward with an Economic Development Authority, having a functioning Planning and Zoning Committee will be a part of this. We need to determine how the City will develop, where will residential areas be, where will we want to put industrial zones? The Planning and Zoning Committee is where we start with an overall plan for the flow and layout of the City.

As an example, not to say anything negative about Piedmont, but they did not have great plans. If you go into Piedmont, there is commercial right in the middle of a residential area. It does not feel like the City flows well. Getting a Planning and Zoning Committee to determine those conceptual plans is what Cities need to make happen.

Everything Planing and Zoning does will come to Council for approval. That is different with the Board of Adjustments and we will get to that. (Next on the Agenda.)

I know we have a few items coming up that will require the Planning and Zoning Committee and this is Committee is mostly set. We may need to restructure and appoint some new members relatively soon.

Again, their primary function is that overall planning but there are situations where they will hear some cases like a zoning change. They would be the first body that hears that, then they will make recommendations to the Council to either approve the zoning change request or deny it. This would be the same procedure for a new plat for a new residential subdivision, they look it over, make sure it conforms to all of the plans and codes, then recommend approval of the plat to the City Council.

A good reason for the Planning and Zoning Committee is that is all the do. That is their focus. Like everything else, there is a lot that goes into this. Having one body that is very well versed in Planning and Zoning matters helps take the load off of the governing body.

Ms. Little asked, most applications are time sensitive?

Mr. Harrison agreed, so we need to have that Committee ready to meet. Generally, what I have seen, is to schedule the Planning and Zoning meeting out for the year the same as we do for the Council and Public Works. Planning and Zoning is subject to the Open Meeting Act just as the other bodies are. This would also simplify dealing with the Public's Business in a timely manner.

Mayor Seitter asked, do we have Committee Members now?

Ms. Little replied, all the Members terms expire no later than June 4, 2022 and the first term expires April 1.

Mr. Harrison: The Council will need to appoint at least one member to get that seat filled. It would be good to get back to staggered terms as we do with Council and other bodies, so that we do not lose the institutional knowledge all at once.

Ms. Willis asked, these Committee Members will be well versed about our community of any new developments or construction and be trained for this?

Mr. Harrison: They should be, that is the goal. OML has training available, a planning and zoning handbook and are willing to teach.

Ms. Willis asked about community awareness and education. What does a business do to get started?

Mr. Harrison motioning toward the Mayor and the City Manager: That would probably start at that end of the table, developing a plan of how to accomplish this. To initiate the ideas and assign that duty to someone with instructions to start an awareness campaign of what needs to happen if you are wanting to start a business or you want to start a new commercial development. For most people, one of the first stops they make is City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce so it's convenient we have both in the same building. But I think it's just a public awareness campaign similar to our recycling campaign.

Mayor Seitter: We understand we need to do these things, what is our next step?

Ms. Little: We have the Planning and Zoning Committee. We need to ask the Committee to meet and move forward. Committee Member terms will be expiring shortly and we will need Council to reappoint the current Members or appoint new members. We will need people from all of Watonga willing to serve in order to keep an active and balanced Committee.

As City Manager, I would prefer that there are no City Employees on any of these Committees or Boards to avoid the possibility of conflict of interest.

Mr. Harrison: I do not know of anything that says they cannot serve on any of these boards or committee, but as a course of action, I agree with Ms. Little. It makes it clear that it is an unbiased opinion. At the same time we should remember that the Planning and Zoning Committee is only making recommendations to the Council.

Mr. Seitter: At this time we do have a Planning and Zoning Committee? But one Member's term will expire in April? The Committee does not have a meeting date set? But there is something they need to be discussing?

Ms. Little: We do have an application and that is the reason we need to go through these procedures.

Mr Cowan asked, who will decide when this Committee meets?

Ms. Little: I will help them get a date set and get things started.

Mayor Seitter: Is there a chairman for this Committee?

Ms. Little: Not currently.

Mr. Harrison: The Committee will elect a Chairman amongst themselves. We would need to look back to the last Planning and Zoning Committee meeting to see if we can determine who was the Chairman.

There was some discussion about when the Planning and Zoning Committee's last meeting and who was the Chairman at that time? Records and memories were not clear. Mr. Bradt recalled that he was Chairman at one time. The last Meeting Minutes were dated January 22, 2021.

Mayor Seitter: At this point, we need to get the Members we have now and set a meeting date and one Member's term could expire before a meeting date can be set. And Council will need names to appoint Committee Members.

Ms. Little agreed, we need to get this done.

Mr. Harrison: If the one Member's term expire we should still have a quorum so business can continue. The the other part of this, generally in city government, you serve until your successor is ready to take their seat. So even though the term expires, if we do not have anyone to fill that seat then the current member would continue in that position.

Mayor Seitter: But we are still looking for people to serve.

Ms. Little: Yes, we have the one term expiring and we also have a Council Member and a Volunteer Firefighter who's terms will expire in June and I prefer these positions to be filled by people not connected with the City.

How it came to be that all the Committee Member's terms expiring at the same time was a brief discussion. It was determined that this all happened before Mr. Harrison's tenure.

Mayor Seitter: This is just a discussion item so we're going to move forward with this. We need Council Members to give you some names from our wards or just any where in town?

Ms. Little: For diversification of the members, I think it would be fair and equitable to ask for people from each of your wards.

Mayor Seitter noted that might not work for himself and Mr. Bradt, nor in Ward 2.

Ms. Little: Any names from anywhere in the City could be brought to Council. I just thought it would be more fair if we had names from every Council Member instead of just one Council Member making all the recommendations for all the vacancies. And I would not want to miss that person that is wanting to serve.

Mr. Harrison commented: The Planning and Zoning Committee and the Board of Adjustments are both unique. But they are also a good stepping stones to get good people involved in City Government, to start encouraging some of those future leaders. As the older leaders start to step away we would already have people who understand how some of this works, and that it would not just be business as usual.

Mayor Seitter: We would rather not have Council Members or City Employees on this Committee.

Mr. Bradt added, but they need to understand about zoning and planning. This may not be a good position for just anyone.

Ms. Little: There are things that get a little technical in the application process and there will be questions but we will provide the answers and make sure these people understand what we are asking of them.

Travis Bradt confirmed, there are books and information that tells what can be done.

21. **Discussion Only:** The Watonga Board of Adjustments Members and their responsibility.

Mr. Harrison: The Board of Adjustments is a separate body from the Planning and Zoning Committee, they do have some authority to make decisions. Most of what the Board of Adjustment will act on are conditional use permits, which is allowing certain uses that would not normally be acceptable under zoning rules within a specific area. Those are generally pre populated items, for example, a hot topic today is dispensaries. We can only do so much with dispensaries anyway, because OMMA controls that. Council could pass an ordinance that specifically states restaurants and nail salons are permitted in a C1 Zone, but if you want to put in a dispensary, you have to get a conditional use permit. That would come from the Board of Adjustments. That conditional use permit would be for that one person and no one else in the future at that specific property.

Mayor Seitter: That would just need the approval of the Board of Adjustments, not the Council?

Mr. Harrison: Correct, because Council has basically already said that with the zoning ordinance. If approved by the Board of Adjustments, then it can go in this zoning classification. Essentially, Council has already given that approval.

Mayor Seitter: But if it does not fit in that classification?

Mr. Harrison: Then it would not be allowed conditional use permit. It would require a variance or a zoning change. A variance is permission to do something that is completely against the code (or zone). A variance is more broad than a conditional use permit in that it is not limited to a point in time or the initial owner although this would not be as concerning as a change to the Zoning Classification.

Mayor Seitter asked, this would require Council approval?

Mr. Harrison: No, a variance would not need Council approval.

Mr. Cowan: We would have set guidelines for the Board of Adjustments.

Mr. Harrison: That is where you want good people on this Board. People who know what is going on and understand the comprehensive plan for the City set by the Planning and Zoning Committee. In some communities the same people or some of the same people will serve on both the Planning and Zoning Committee and the Board of Adjustments.

Mr. Cowan asked as an example, what if someone wanted to open a daycare?

Mr. Harrison: If the zoning is R1 (Single Family Residential) and this is just for a home daycare keeping only 2 or 3 children then this could be allowed with a conditional use permit.

Should they want to open a house up to a large daycare with 40 to 50 children, that would at least require a variance or could be a change in the zoning. They would need to work with the Board of Adjustments and step through the full process.

A public hearing, subject to the Open Meeting Act would be required. A date and time would be set, posted and then published in the newspaper. All the property owners within a 300 foot radius of the edge of the property in question would be notified. The Public can be at the hearing and be heard. It would be difficult for someone to try and get this done without being noticed.

Mayor Seitter: Even if 50 people should show up for a hearing to object, the board of adjustments could approve a variance?

Mr. Harrison: I would need to look at the rules for variances again, but I know on a zoning change, if a certain percentage of the people within that 300 foot adjacent area object to a zoning change then the change would require a 75 percent vote of the Council to approve it because enough citizens or residents in that area have objected to the change.

Mayor Seitter: This would not come back to Council for approval.

Ms. Little: With a zoning change it would. The Board of Adjustments would only be making a recommendation to Council for a zoning change.

Mr. Seitter asked, but a variance would not come back to Council?

Mr. Bradt noted, in larger cities there are probably a lot more variances than we might get in a smaller city.

Mr. Harrison: Much of what the Board of Adjustments see are mistakes that need to be corrected. For example, I know of a house built in a cul-de-sac, in error, nine feet in front of the setback line. So, they had to go before our Board of Adjustments. We sent out notices to everyone around the property, and fortunately no one objected. They got the variance and they did not have to tear down their house. They only needed to deal with the Board of Adjustments, and that was it.

In general, I think people will start by trying for a conditional use permit because it is not seen as a big deal. You do not need to jump through quite as many steps. But, if you want it to be good and permanent and forever solution, you can request a zoning change. These are all just different levels of accomplishing change.

Adam Lovitt, a previous Member of the Board of Adjustment noted that he only remembered one request for a variance and that was when the Dollar Tree Store was built. Board of Adjustments is not required to meet very often and this was not a major issue. It sounds like the Council might be concerned that the Board of Adjustments could do too much independently from the Council, but I do not think that could happen.

Mayor Seitter: Previously, I thought everything had to come to the Council. Apparently it does not.

Mr. Cowan: For another example, you would not want your neighbor to open a dog kennel.

Ms. Little: That is the essential part of zoning. If it is not zoned a particular way then it is a hard line in the sand. Any major change would then go to the Planning and Zoning Committee to make recommendation for a zoning change to the City Council. It is already set up this way so that the Council sees these things and has the final say on zoning. The Planning and Zoning Committee could get a request to turn a R1 (Residential 1) Zone into a I2 (Industrial 2) Zone and recommend this to Council.

Council could then acknowledge the recommendation but not be in favor of the change and not allow the change. If we look at the bigger picture, the overall process, Council sets and knows what the zoning is and stays with those zoning rules. With the Board of Adjustments, a variance can be allowed as long the variance is within the zoning rules.

Ms. Little asked Mr. Harrison to review the appeals process.

Mr. Harrison; To make an appeal their next step would be District Court. Please remember, cities have broad police powers over how things will be laid out and structured within the city boundaries. So, unless the Council did something really egregious, I do not see that becoming an issue. That does not mean that someone will not try. We all know that anybody can sue anybody for anything at any time. But as long as we are consistent and stay within our own rules and guidelines it would be hard for us to get into trouble and we need to get this comprehensive plan worked out. Should we start picking and choosing on a regular basis, and stray outside of our rules with just some people and situations, we have let other do something improper and then we tell someone else no. Then we can get into trouble very quickly.

Ms. Little: I should point out, on the current board of adjustments. We have a City Employee, the Mayor, two Volunteer Firefighters and a community member, all serving different terms. And, this board was set in June 16 of 2012. We already have expired terms.

Mr. Harrison: As somebody alluded to this earlier, meeting of the Board of Adjustments is much less frequent. In my experience, I do not see this Board meeting on a regular basis. They only meet as needed.

Ms. Little: Moving forward, I will be meeting with those boards members just to clear the air about where we are with these boards and our change in government. I think we need to have this conversation with them.

Mr. Harrison: In my past experience, good communication between these boards is a really good idea. When a recommendation does come to Council, everyone knows what the baseline is. If we do not communicate every once in a while, tensions can get back and forth. It is better if everyone understands each other.

Mayor Seitter asked for any further discussion?

22. Discussion Only: Areas of Focus for the City of Watonga 5 year plan.

Mayor Seitter: All of the Council Members have submitted to me what they feel we need to work on. I compiled all of this and sent copies out to all. There were 33 items and I put that into five or six categories.

Streets and Lighting are one category, Business and Housing, Infrastructure, Economic Development and Grant Writer, Clean Up and then Community Programs. I assigned the 33 different items to one of the categories and also combined some of the redundancy. This helps us to understand the six areas or categories we are interested in.

Ms. Willis: So did you prioritize these, what is the most important?

Mayor Seitter: No, I did not try to pick a winner. To look at the categories, there are 5 different items for Streets and Lights. Business and Housing has 7 items. There are 7 items for Infrastructure, 2 items for Grant Writer, Clean Up has 4 items and Community Programs has 6 items. To look at this as a whole it shows what we are looking at as a group. There could be other important items, but this shows us what the group is looking at.

To prioritize, it looks like Infrastructure could be the number one category because there were 7 items listed in that category and we do continue to work on those items listed in Infrastructure like water and sewer. There was some crossover in this list of items such as street lighting for all four directions in and out of Watonga. Other ideas, replace or repair all the infrastructure throughout the City, solar Street Lights were suggested and replace the faded signs around town.

Ms. Willis asked, Business and Housing?

Mayor Seitter: Number four is to develop a plan with NODA for new houses on single lots in Watonga with NODA financing availability. Five is planning to do a residential development on the land east of the High School. I would assume that means getting that plated and ready for a developer.

Ms. Little added, and Zoned.

Mayor Seitter: Number eight, update and plan for Noble Street, build homes on the vacant lots and do make overs on the fronts of the old homes. Improve the sidewalks and the street to make it into a main north south fairway again. Number eleven, small affordable housing, assisted living programs and update old homes needing repairs. Number twenty one, recruit new business by selling at a discounted price or donate City owned land to draw new business. Twenty three, find a housing developer to come in and develop a new subdivision on city land and build houses on speculation and give them the lots to do so. Last on the list, number thirty three, plat the City property east of the High School and find a contractor to invest in speculation homes on this property and or other property.

Mayor Seitter: This is the major ideas. Where do we go from here? As a Council where do we want to start? This is our vision of what we think is important to us. How do we take this and start moving forward?

Mr. Cowan suggested that although the goal was a five year plan, not everything he put on his list would take five years. For example, number seven, update the looks of Clarence Nash. This could be a single year project. Some of these items could be short term projects. And, then some like a subdivision will take at least five years.

Mr. Bradt agreed, there's a lot of different time frames involved here.

Mr. Cowan: Replacing old infrastructure could take 15 years.

Ms. Willis: Do we have a plan to recognize where our defects are that we need to fix in each of these category? Do we have a number?

Mr. Harrison: I would say that is not really Council's concern. But it is (in other ways). Council will say, lets get the signs updated and instruct Ms. Little to do so. The details are for her and the employees to figure out and to accomplish that goal.

Ms. Willis, we do not need to get involved with the details.

Mr. Harrison; Council could get involved by budgeting for specific items. Every budget year they could refer back to the Five Year Plan, determine the priorities and budget accordingly.

There are several versions of the Five Year Plan. One view is a list of priorities that need to be done, and that will change and evolve every year. The other view, a real Five Year plan is for long term projects that will take time and be budgeted over time.

What I would be looking for as a citizen or an interested person, is just what is the overall plan? Do we have ideas or plans, and that is why we have been elected, to get the town cleaned up or bring in new development. Then it is up to Ms. Little and her staff to execute that plan.

Ms. Willis: That was part of our training when we first started. We were given our priorities and what we needed to focus on and that was one of the items on my list.

Ms. Little: Now that we have a more clear picture of where we want to go, we should take the 5 year Plans from the different Departments and plug them into the concepts or goals developed by the Council. Then we can see the correlation and bridge the communications. To say, here is the goal, then here is the specific objective and how to get there. We are all on the same page, sometimes we just talk a different language.

Mayor Seitter: Yes, we have laid out about six areas here. These are the areas we have set out. Cleanup is an area, but specifically, what does that means? Infrastructure is an area, and the one thing that's not mentioned on infrastructure is cleaning out the drainage ditches, getting the water to run out of town.

Ms. Little: That is on the Department Head's Plan. They know it's maintenance that they are going to have to address every year because we have 12 miles of ditches to clean out and it is not a feasible goal for one year. But they have mapped that out over several years. Had we unlimited funding this would not be a concern, but we have to keep the budget in prospective and plan things out.

And, I can tell you that seeing the five year plans from the Departments was eye opening, to see on paper what they are actually thinking. They deal with this everyday, they are the experts and have insights that we do not. The Department Heads know what is needed and the Council know what their goals are. Now we just need to match that together, and we are getting there. We just need to put it into a formal 5 Year Plan.

I tell the Department Heads that the Council has goals and they want to see results and they will see those results.

Mr. Bradt suggested an evaluation review.

Mayor Seitter: I understand what you are saying, but I think there's some things on the Council's list that are not on the Department heads' list.

Ms. Little; Very likely and vice versa. Council is thinking on a City wide level and the Department Heads are looking at their departments. That does not mean that the objectives are not the same. It is just different terminology.

Mayor Seitter: I would think, as Council, things that are not on the Department Heads' list that are on the Council's list will be taken care of as we go through this.

Ms. Little agreed.

Mayor Seitter: What has happened with our City, every year with the budget year, we go to the Department Heads and ask them what they need and we budget accordingly. What we are not doing is trying to budget with the broad aspect of the whole City.

Mr. Bradt: Also, sometimes things get put on the back burner for various reasons.

Ms. Little: Funding is the thing. We have a plan of what want to do, but then maybe something else comes along and takes precedence and because of funding so we did not meet the overall goal that we set for the year. I get that, that is just government in general.

Ms. Little went on to describe the differences between the Council's prospective and the Department Heads' prospective.

Ms. Little continued: Sometimes the Department Heads get a mixed message. I think, getting a long term goal in writing will help to clarify the message. I think it will help to make the City better overall and the employees will be thankful for a sustained clear message.

Mayor Seitter: I think the goals for the Council can not take a backseat to the goals of the Department Heads. I'm just going to be blunt about it. I just see the Department Heads saying, those are the Council's goals. That is what they want. We are out here doing this on a daily basis. That is not really important to me. I can claim the funding, but I'm gonna do what I want to do.

Mr. Jacks: I think you will be really surprised when you see what the Department Heads have in mind. I think they will fall in line with what the Council is wanting.

Ms. Willis: I think the Department Head feedback is important.

Mayor Seitter agreed.

Ms. Willis: I was a part of what we called a workout. One person from every department was given a goal and everybody from that department had to work on that goal together. That is similar to what we need to do here as I see it. With the feedback and insight from the Department Heads of things we would never know about otherwise, we can bring this together.

Mr. Jacks: We all want to see our streets fixed but that is just the Street and Alley Department fixing streets. Underneath those streets are old waterlines (and sewer) and it seems like we are always cutting holes in the streets to fix those old lines. It would not be smart to put a brand new street over old lines then cut holes in the nice brand new asphalt to have to repair those old lines. Mr. Rice, Mr. Woldridge and others have been talking about this specific issue for some time. We need to fix the lines first before we put down new street. Department Heads have talked amongst themselves quite often. They are coming together. We have plans for the Treatment Plant, Mr. Rice is working to address sand in some of the sewer lines before we have to spend lots of money for cleanup at the Treatment Plant again.

Mayor Seitter: Yes, the infrastructure is really important. My concern is not just infrastructure. It is the things other communities and people see about Watonga that makes them say, I do not want to be a part of that.

Ms. Willis: Our focus should be, what is going to make a person want to live here?

Mr. Jacks: We are also working on our Electrical System, but without infrastructure no one would want to live here either.

Others agreed, Infrastructure is very important.

Mr. Jacks pointed out, there is talk of a housing addition, but without proper infrastructure, how many new homes can we provide utilities for?

Several commented that this all needs to work together.

Mayor Seitter: So where do we go from here now that we've spent several months getting through this exercise. Is this enough of a blueprint to move forward?

Ms. Little: I think we're ready to do a retreat.

Mr. Harrison: I think it would be a good measure to formally adopt a Capital Improvement Plan. That way, you have something in writing. This would formalize and say, this is what we really mean and this is what we want. Then we can have those discussions of how to proceed. As Mr. Jacks pointed out, we want to bring in a housing addition, but what kind of infrastructure needs to happen first. I think having a laid out plan that everybody starts from is a key to making the conversations go well. This gives everyone a base to start from. That is what I think the next step should be. This should not take very long. We just need to formalize and adopted a Plan. But I definitely think that getting the Department Heads involved and having those discussions to be certain we are all on the same page and it is the Department Heads that will have to make it happen.

Mayor Seitter: Okay, we' will put that on the agenda for the next Council Meeting to have a formalized Improvement Plan.

There was some debate about what to call this, with the word "Capital" Improvements.

Mr. Harrison suggested that we will work out the wording later.

Mr. Cowan asked if the plan could include the steps we need to follow in order to achieve the goals.

Mr. Harrison: I am hesitating. Do we not need to hear what the Department Heads have to say first. Step one is the overall plan, what do we want to see happen. Then you will have the retreat and determine the things we would really like to see happen. That is when Mr. Rice could say, We do not have the electric grid to be able to do that. I think a lot of what you're asking will probably come from a retreat.

There was discussion about whether this would also be a Budget Workshop.

Ms. Little: I am proposing two things. One is the Retreat with the Department Heads, give them time to present their ideas and have real dialogue with them. Council can ask the pertinent questions.

Then we can formalize what we are wanting to do and follow through to the Budget Workshop. At the Budget Workshop we can prioritize and determine what we can afford to do. Whether it is beautification or infrastructure. So, I think we need two different things.

I also think it would just be too cumbersome for a person to wrap their head around this, trying to make sure that the goals of the Council are met and the needs of the Departments are met to the degree that they need to be. We simply do not have enough money to meet all the goals put forth, so we need to have some real conversations.

The consensus was that we should set our Goals first and then have the Budget Workshop and build the Budget around those Goals.

Mayor Seitter: So then we need to set a date at some point for this retreat

There was some discussion and debate about a date for the 5 Year Plan Retreat or Workshop.

Ms. Phillips explained that we will need to start working on next year's budget soon.

Mr. Cowan suggested the sooner the better.

Ms. Little commented that we should not try to move too quickly. We may hear some new ideas that will take time to digest and understand.

Mayor Seitter suggested March 29.

After much debate and discussion a Retreat / Workshop was set for Tuesday March 29, 2022 at 5:00 PM.

23. Council Comments:

(None.)

24. Mayor Comments:

Mayor Seitter asked of Ms. Little, where are we at with the runway project? (Project to remove and replace the Airport Runway.)

Ms. Little: The runway is back open, the project is still on the table.

Mayor Seitter: I received a call that the runway is now open, Our airport tenants went out and rented other facilities for their planes because our runway was going to be closed, and now it is open. These tenants are out this money. What is the plan? Who opened the runway back up?

Ms. Little: To reopen the runway was the recommendation of our Engineer Toby Baker and Parkhill. It did not meet the criteria to be closed because there was no active work being performed.

Mr. Cowan: I thought they were to start on the seventh of March?

Mayor Seitter: The contractor showed up with their equipment and then shutdown?

Ms Little indicated yes.

Mayor Seitter: They showed up and then shut down because they want more money because fuel price have risen. What needs to happen now for the tenants that have spent money for alternate facilities? It seems to me like it's not us, it's the FAA that's done this.

Ms. Little: It's the contractor.

Mr. Cowan: That is out of our hands.

Mayor Seitter: It is also out of the hands of the people who went out and rented these other hangars at other airports. They did so because of the FAA and us. They are out money that is no fault of their own.

Ms. Little: Yes. And at any time, it could shut down again. That is part of the contracting world in which we're stuck with right now, until we get to a more plausible resolution and we are looking at that. Over the long term, with this contract, the airport could be shut down for over a year. This is becoming a situation that we are having to deal with. We did not want this to happen, but we are taking those steps to assure proper communication with the contractor and the FAA and make sure everyone is on board.

We have not had much time to deal with this, this situation just came up last Thursday (March 10). We are going to move forward, we have some options in front of us and we are reviewing those and we have met with a contractor. Again, there is more than just the City involved. There is also the FAA and the Engineer.

The airport runway is open for active use and that is how airports are supposed to operate, when there is no active construction going on. But the contract is still an active contract and at any time construction could resume.

Mr. Harrison: I think Ms. Little has summed the situation well. To go into more detail at this time, should be done in an Executive Session.

Mayor Seitter: If this continues for another year and our tenants are out this money for hangers at other airports, where do they stand?

Ms. Little: At this time there is nothing to review. To be fair, we should wait until the project is finished to review economic impact it might have had on the people. We do not know for sure how long this project will last, and to try and do something at this point could mean altering our budget.

There were several conversations as to changing prospective of this issue in time and how this might change if the project contract became voided or was withdrawn.

Mr. Harrison: It would be very unlikely for that to happen to the contract.

Mayor Seitter: That is really out of control, would that would be the FAA?

Mr. Harrison: Maybe to an extent, but I think we have to get outside of so many guidelines that I do not anticipate something like that to happen. There are plenty of other areas and different settings we can take to keep that from being a huge concern of mine. I think, we are in the same position we have been, we are just waiting for that construction to get started. There is still a contract out there to be completed and the FAA still says these funds are sitting and waiting for us to complete this project. That is functionally no different.

I understand it's different in the sense of runway closed and then the runway is open, and I respect that, but we are still at the same place we were three weeks ago we just did not have the close, open situation. I think Ms. Little has a valid point, if we were to try to make a decision and resolve this now, right now, what if this continues for just a week or a month? The outcome will differ based on what happens. And, that is something we may need to address at some point.

Mayor Seitter: For these people that have moved to other locations, what do we tell them right now?

Ms. Little: There is no update, the airport is open, and you can use it. The construction process has not changed.

Mr. Harrison added and we still have a project and we are trying to make sure it gets completed. I understand, that is not an ideal answer.

Mayor Seitter: Some of the tenants may not be very receptive to that answer.

Mr. Cowan: Most do not buy an airplane and then wonder about where to store it. That is not part of the deal. I do not know why we would feel obligated to the people that have hangar space rented. It is out of our control. Is there a deadline in the contract?

Ms. Little: There are specifications for that in the contract.

Ms. Willis: These people were all notified of this?

Mayor Seitter: They were notified that the airport was going to close on a specific day, but now it is back open.

Ms. Willis: So they paid out another fee to store their airplanes elsewhere?

Several agreed, there will be some frustration.

Mr. Harrison: I wish I had a good answer for that. I understand the frustration. Unfortunately, there is no complete answer right now. The exact answer does not exist at this time.

Mayor Seitter: Basically, they are in limbo until the FAA and the City of Watonga work out this contract dispute?

Mr. Harrison: It is not an FAA thing. Right now, we still have a contract pending. Until we know when construction is going to start, this is somewhat still in limbo.

Mayor Seitter: So the FAA is out of it?

Mr. Harrison: It is a City project that the FAA is funding. For the most part, so long as we stay within the guidelines of the bid specifications, the FAA is not going to get involved. That is going to be their standard responses to a city project. You the City, make sure you take care of it, so we can still give you the funds.

Ms. Willis: The FAA funds the project and we just have to deal with it?

Mr. Harrison: It is our project. It is not an FAA project. We're the ones that have to make sure we are following the steps to get everything taken care of. That's the long and short of it. The FAA is just the funding mechanism and we have to do certain things to stay in compliance with that grant. The FAA is not going to step in and take control of the project.

Mr. Cowan: We have all been a part of things that have delays, this is no different.

Mayor Seitter: Is there a timeline for meeting with the contractor?

Mr. Harrison: That could get into potential litigation strategy? Yes, we are working on it. I do not want to sound evasive, but we are working on it. We are going to have plans as to how to get this going and make it happen. Or we have to start figuring out and discussing more thorough wording and what the next steps look like.

25. City Manager Comments:

Ms. Little: To update, on February 19, we did have a successful recycling event. We had over 20 people participate. We are open two days a week and average about five people a day or 10 people a week. We appreciate those that participate.

We did have a budget amendment review meeting with Ms. Phillips, Mr. Jacks, Mr. Bills and myself. And we all felt pretty good about the amendment review.

We had a retirement party for Jimmie Johnson, the City staff were there and we had a good time. Mr. Johnson was very thankful for that and we appreciate his 27 years of service to the City.

We had training conducted by Sensus Analytics. This is a Light Water Department program that we will be rolling out.

I did a presentation to the Home Community Education group, which is a Blaine County group. They wanted to know what the role of a City Manager is. They had a lot of good questions. There were about 10 people there. It was a good meeting.

We have met with Aeronautics Commission this week. We have also met with Cole Niblett from Garber Engineer about the REAP Grant and for our Treatment Plant. We'll be seeing some things on that in April, and moving that project along.

The good news is that the City of Watonga and Watonga Public Works were announced as Business of the Month by the Chamber of Commerce. They are doing features on us and we are actually going to be hosting Community Coffee on March the 22nd at 9AM. We invite everyone to come. It is sort of a come and go affair.

We do have the new traffic light up and functional. That project was successful from the standpoint of starting in November, to the March implementation, the process moved relatively quickly. That's all I have at this point.

26. **Adjourn:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried at 8:19 PM.

Mayor Bill Seitter

City Clerk, Verlen Bills