

A Work Session of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Waxahachie was held in the Hatchet Conference Room at the Charles Beatty Municipal Services Building, 408 S. Rogers, Waxahachie, Texas, on Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Billie Wallace, Mayor, Council Member Place 4
Chris Wright, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Member Place 3
Tres Atkins, Council Member Place 1
Patrick Souter, Council Member Place 2
Travis Smith, Council Member Place 5

Others Present: Michael Scott, City Manager
Albert Lawrence, Deputy City Manager
Amber Villarreal, City Secretary

1. Call to Order

Mayor Billie Wallace called the meeting to order and announced that due to scheduling conflicts, the order of agenda items were adjusted.

5. Discuss Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) areas

James Gaertner, Executive Director of Public Works and Utilities, reviewed the current Waxahachie CCN area and proposed CCN Decertification areas. He explained staff recommends decertifying two areas, 1697 acres and 731.9 acres, in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.

It was the general consensus of City Council to proceed with the process of decertifying the areas recommended by staff.

4. Discuss Arts Council bylaws, structure, and membership criteria

City Manager Michael Scott initiated a discussion with the Council regarding the Arts Council's current bylaws, structure, and membership criteria. Council members explored several topics, including funding distribution, the possibility of making the Arts Council a City Board appointed by the Council, and refining membership and funding criteria. They emphasized balancing tourism support with the preservation aspect of the board's mission.

City Attorney Terry Welch reviewed options for restructuring the Arts Council and inquired about the desired number of members and their duties, with plans to draft an ordinance. The Council expressed interest in including the Mayor or their designee on the board and suggested modeling the structure after the Waxahachie Community Development Corporation. They also considered renaming the board to align with state law on eligible funding.

Laurie Mosley, Convention and Visitors Bureau Director, mentioned that the Texas Hotel and Lodging Association could offer free training on the proper use of funds. The Council further discussed potential revisions to the bylaws and application deadlines.

Ultimately, the Council reached a consensus for Mr. Scott to collaborate with the City Attorney to draft an ordinance for review.

3. Discuss Credit Card processing fees

{Council Member Tres Atkins arrived}

Chad Tustison, Senior Director of Finance, shared that the City currently absorbs approximately \$930,000 in credit card processing fees for payments made to the City. He reviewed payment options and highlighted which methods incur fees for the City. He sought the Council's opinion on discontinuing the practice of absorbing these fees, suggesting that customers could still choose to pay by credit card but would be responsible for the processing fees.

Council Members discussed the potential impacts of this change on citizens and considered the pros and cons. Staff reassured that no-fee payment options would still be available, and customers would be notified in advance of any changes. Additionally, the Council discussed offering bank draft options for utility billing customers to simplify payment setup.

In the end, the Council reached a consensus to stop absorbing credit card processing fees for customers who opt to pay by credit card. Staff will work on proactively informing citizens about the change.

6. Discuss City Charter Revisions

Mr. Scott addressed the Council regarding previous discussions on Charter revisions and sought guidance on how to proceed.

The Council considered presenting the following proposed changes to voters:

- Adding two additional City Council seats, effective in 2027. One of which would be the Mayor who would be an at-large elected position that is contested in a City Council election, with potential amendments to the Mayor's duties in the Charter.
- Implementing 3-year terms for City Council members.
- Staggering election cycles: three Council members elected in one cycle, four in the next, with no election every third cycle.

The Council also explored a pay incentive for candidates to cover time and travel and discussed the complexity of dividing the city into districts or wards. They touched on challenges with Council Places and low voter participation.

Additionally, the process for selecting the Mayor Pro Tem was reviewed, and the consensus was to maintain the current system, allowing the remaining Council members to appoint someone to the position.

The Council's general consensus was to consider a Special Election in May 2026 for proposed Charter amendments. They agreed to hold another Work Session to thoroughly review the current Charter and potential changes and to survey constituents. The Council decided not to alter Charter

language regarding administrative duties, which fall under the City Manager. Mr. Welch will draft ballot language for Council review.

2. Review Budget Calendar

{Break at approximately 5:17 p.m. and reconvened at approximately 5:25 p.m.}

Mr. Tustison introduced Assistant Finance Director Mariana Dunn and presented the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Calendar. He outlined the budget development process, the City's financial health, and sought input from the City Council on budget priorities and expectations.

Council Members inquired about potential increases to the Homestead Exemption, and Mr. Tustison confirmed that he would present options during the April 15th Budget Work Session.

Mr. Tustison also reviewed the previously identified budget priorities: Quality of Life, Personnel, Public Safety, Growth Management, and Infrastructure. Mr. Scott asked if the Council had any changes to these priorities, and the Council confirmed there were no adjustments.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary