

City Council
July 18, 2025

A Work Session of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Waxahachie, Texas was held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Meeting Rooms C & D, Waxahachie, Texas, on Friday, July 18, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

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

Others Present: Ricky Boyd, Interim City Manager
Albert Lawrence, Deputy City Manager
Amber Villarreal, City Secretary

1. Call to Order

Mayor Billie Wallace called the meeting to order.

2. Discuss update of the City Hall redevelopment and renovation project

Jon Vidaurri of Vidaurri Management Group (VMG), Jared Pruitt of Turner Construction, and Michael Karnowski of Architexas were present to provide a comprehensive overview of how the City Hall renovation project progressed to its current stage.

Mr. Karnowski presented the updated floor plan and site plan for the City Hall renovation project, following a request from the City Council. Mayor Wallace expressed concern that the Council had not been kept adequately informed and asked for a review of the project's background. Mr. Vidaurri explained the original scope, which included remodeling the 2000s addition and renovations to the 1911 and 1950s sections, along with converting the terrace into 3,000 square feet of office space for a new courtroom and Council chamber. In February 2024, the project team requested an additional \$5.7 million after a more detailed evaluation revealed significant issues, especially with the 2000s addition, which was ultimately deemed unsalvageable and required complete reconstruction. This led to the adoption of Option 4A, which involved rebuilding the 2000s section, remodeling the 1950s portion, and upgrading the old post office area. Turner Construction's initial schematic estimated the total project cost at \$12.537 million.

Councilman Atkins inquired about the cost increases, and Mr. Karnowski reviewed the updated site and floor plans. Mr. Pruitt noted that utility infrastructure is complete, the parking structure is being poured, and early-release packages were ordered to mitigate long lead times. Mayor Wallace questioned why demolition occurred before finalizing a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP). Mr. Vidaurri explained that under the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) model, early work is typical, and at that time the project was within budget with contingency included. Budget projections remained on track until May 15, 2025. Council Members Wright and Smith confirmed the cost increase stemmed from unforeseen issues discovered during detailed evaluations. After the January 2024 estimate jumped to \$13 million, the team began exploring options to reduce costs back toward the \$12.2 million target.

The Council expressed concern that unknown risks weren't adequately accounted for and that changes in building plans and vendor-related issues led to further escalation. Mr. Pruitt explained that material prices had risen and some vendors had withdrawn from the project, which created additional challenges. Mayor Wallace asked about the current project timeline, and Mr. Pruitt stated the estimated completion date is August 6, 2026, with no further cost increases expected at this time. Mr. Vidaurri added that alternative strategies are available if necessary. Communication with staff has been maintained through weekly meetings.

Council members reviewed the revised floor plans, including the need for a new IT and mechanical room due to demolition of the 2000s addition. Councilman Wright raised concerns over unexpected sprinkler costs; Mr. Karnowski clarified that while installation was anticipated, the cost was higher than expected. Councilman Smith noted that if the third floor remains unfinished, fire sprinkler requirements may be avoided—pending confirmation from the Fire Marshal. Council also discussed options for reducing the project's scope. Councilman Atkins criticized the decision not to lock in pricing earlier, but Mr. Vidaurri explained that the project had not reached the design phase necessary to solicit accurate bids. Mayor Pro Tem Souter raised concerns over potential cost inflation and suggested the city may be overpaying, urging the team to explore solutions. Councilman Wright acknowledged vendor cost increases, and while he disagreed with the pricing surge, he emphasized the need to find a workable path forward. Councilman Smith requested a breakdown of pricing for each renovation area.

{Mayor Pro Tem Souter left the meeting at 11:42 a.m. and City Council recessed.}

{The meeting reconvened at 11:56 a.m.}

Councilman Smith suggested that revising the project scope to focus more on renovation and limit new construction could help reduce overall costs. Councilman Atkins agreed and proposed having a City Council liaison participate in the weekly project meetings, which Mr. Vidaurri acknowledged could be beneficial. Councilman Atkins also requested access to past monthly progress reports and agendas or minutes from the weekly meetings to better understand the project's development.

City Council expressed appreciation to Mr. Vidaurri, Mr. Pruitt, and Mr. Karnowski for their patience, detailed responses, and willingness to provide alternatives and additional information. Deputy City Manager Albert Lawrence inquired whether any communication delays or breakdowns contributed to project challenges or cost increases. Both Mr. Vidaurri and Mr. Karnowski confirmed that staff had remained responsive and actively engaged, with staff regularly asking during weekly meetings how they could help move the project forward.

Interim City Manager Ricky Boyd asked how long it would take to update the scope of work, and Mr. Karnowski responded that revisions would be completed promptly. Mr. Boyd also requested that Mr. Pruitt contact vendors to determine if they would consider extending their pricing deadlines, allowing the Council adequate time to review and make a decision during the August meeting. Additionally, Mr. Boyd asked Turner Construction to review whether any pricing increases from the lowest bidders now make the second-lowest bidders more competitive.

3. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary