

City Council
August 4, 2025

A regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Waxahachie was held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Meeting Rooms A and B, Waxahachie, Texas, on Monday, August 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: 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
Ed Voss, City Attorney Representative
Amber Villarreal, City Secretary

1. Call to Order

Mayor Billie Wallace called the meeting to order.

2. Invocation

3. Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge of Allegiance

Interim City Manager Ricky Boyd gave the invocation, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Texas Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Announcements/Presentations

- a. Introduce Honorary Council Member
- b. Present Proclamation recognizing August 3-9, 2025 as “National Health Center Week”

Mayor Wallace introduced James Taylor as the August Honorary Council Member. James “JT” Taylor has served the Waxahachie Police Department for over 16 years in various roles, including CID, SWAT, Field Training Officer, and currently as the Community Services Officer. Known as the public face of the department, JT is deeply engaged in community outreach and support.

After surviving stage four testicular cancer in 2008, he began donating blood and platelets to Carter BloodCare in 2013, with a personal goal of reaching 50 gallons by the end of this year. His story has been featured on WFAA and Carter BloodCare's platforms, helping raise awareness and hope.

JT has helped raise nearly \$100,000 for testicular cancer awareness through partnerships with the Testicular Cancer Foundation. He also volunteers extensively, including with the Miracle League and numerous community events like Cops and Kids Picnic, Shop with a Cop, and local blood drives.

Devoted to public service, family, faith, and his hometown, JT exemplifies servant leadership and remains a valued and honored member of the Waxahachie Police Department

Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Souter presented the proclamation recognizing August 3-9, 2025 as “National Health Center Week.”

5. Public Comments

Matt Craig, 515 Bent Trail, Red Oak, Texas, a representative from the Pet Coalition of Ellis County, a new 501(c)(3) organization supporting animal rescues, spoke to emphasize the urgent need for expanded animal services in the county following the SPCA's departure and current shelter overcapacity. As a foster and supporter of multiple rescues, they highlighted the growing strain on fosters and rescue groups and urged the City to prioritize planning and funding for a new animal shelter in next year's budget. The Coalition offered their support and expertise in both immediate and long-term solutions, including continued efforts like their pet food pantry serving Waxahachie and Ellis County.

John Wedel, 417 W. Jefferson, Waxahachie, Texas, a representative from the Ellis County Rural Heritage Farm, a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2017, spoke to raise awareness of the farm's mission to preserve and promote the rural and natural heritage of Ellis County. Located on a 145-acre property west of Scarborough Fair, the farm offers educational, hands-on experiences about small family farm life in the Blackland Prairie region, and hosts events like Farm Heritage Day and wildlife programs with local partners. Supported by donations, memberships, and grants, the farm is currently undergoing evaluation by the Texas Historical Commission for designation as a Texas Historic Site, which could boost local tourism and benefit the city of Waxahachie. Community support is vital, and residents and council members are encouraged to learn more and consider offering assistance or letters of support.

Ira Tenpenny, 109 Rosa, Waxahachie, Texas, expressed concern about the approval process for a short-term rental at 800 Dunaway, noting that the required signage lacked a QR code and did not clearly inform neighbors, many of whom were unaware of the true intent behind the development. He emphasized that the original home was torn down only after the SUP (Specific Use Permit) was granted, creating confusion and frustration in the neighborhood. He urged the city to better protect the integrity of single-family residential zones, suggesting designated areas for short-term rentals to prevent them from spreading unpredictably and disrupting established communities. Mr. Tenpenny emphasized the long-term consequences of such zoning decisions and asked for greater transparency and foresight moving forward.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of the City Council meeting of July 21, 2025
- b. Minutes of the City Council work session of July 18, 2025
- c. Set City Council meeting for September 2, 2025

Action:

Tres Atkins moved to approve all items on the Consent Agenda as presented and authorize the City Manager and/or Mayor to execute all necessary documents. Motion was seconded by Patrick Souter and carried unanimously (5-0).

7. Continue Public Hearing on a request by Lexi Cassels, Kimley-Horn, for a Zoning Change from a Commercial (C) zoning district to Planned Development-Multi-

Family-2 and Planned Development-Commercial (PD-MF-2 & PD-C) zoning district, for a mixed-use development, located directly east of 2050 Conquest Boulevard, (Property ID 191630 & 191636) - Owner: B&T Realty Services Inc (ZDC-91-2024)

Senior Director of Planning Trenton Robertson announced the applicant requested to continue the Public Hearing to the September 2, 2025 to allow the developer additional time to analyze the final construction costs of the development.

Action:

Chris Wright moved to continue the Public Hearing for ZDC-91-2025 to the September 2, 2025 City Council meeting. Motion was seconded by Patrick Souter and carried unanimously (5-0).

8. Consider proposed Ordinance approving ZDC-91-2024

No action taken.

9. Consider funding request from the Ellis County Woman's Building in the amount of \$10,000 to assist with building renovations, repairs, and upgrades

Hanna McCleary, Chairwoman of the Ellis County Woman's Building Board, requested a one-time budget contribution of \$10,000 to assist in the renovations, repairs and upgrades at the Ellis County Woman's Building. The Ellis County Women's Building, approaching its 100th anniversary in February 2026, is undergoing major renovations including a kitchen remodel, floor repairs in Davis Hall, electrical upgrades, and exterior improvements such as tree trimming and storm damage repairs. While organizers have raised over half the needed funds and already begun improvements, they requested an additional \$10,000 from the city.

Council Member Travis Smith expressed concerns over the high costs, particularly the \$44,000 kitchen estimate, the bidding process (only two bids received), and whether the scope of work justified the amount. While the Council supports preserving the historic building, several members pushed to delay the funding decision until more detailed information and at least one additional bid could be obtained, emphasizing responsible use of taxpayer money.

Action:

Travis Smith moved to table the request to the August 18, 2025 City Council meeting. Motion was seconded by Patrick Souter and carried 4-1, with Chris Wright voting in opposition.

10. Consider and approve an ordinance authorizing the issuance of City of Waxahachie, Texas, Combination Tax and Revenue Certificates of Obligation, Series 2025; establishing procedures and delegating authority for the sale and delivery of the Certificates; providing an effective date; and enacting other provisions relating to the subject

The Item was presented by Senior Director of Finance Chad Tustison. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) describes the City's large multi-year capital projects which provide new or improved City infrastructure, and comprises of projects for streets, sidewalks and drainage; park improvements; water and wastewater utilities; and municipal facilities. The CIP is funded through

multiple funding sources, including proceeds from bond issuances, operating funds, and development impact fees.

On April 15, 2025, at the City Council work session, staff presented the CIP – updated annually – along with strategies to fund various capital projects for the upcoming year. As part of this overall strategy, the CIP includes the issuance of certificates of obligation to fund a portion of these projects. The total bond issuance is \$22.2 million and consists of streets, parks, public safety, and wastewater projects. If approved, these projects will be funded through the ad valorem tax rate, and wastewater utility fees.

On June 2, 2025, City Council passed a resolution to approve the publication of notice of intention to issue certificates of obligation. This was the first formal step to begin the process of issuing bonds to fund various streets, water, wastewater, parks and public safety capital projects. Notices were published in the newspaper on June 11 and June 18. Additionally, staff prepared the Preliminary Official Statement and other required information, and met with appropriate bond rating agencies.

The City utilizes certificates of obligation to fund capital projects throughout the City as part of its Capital Improvement Program funding strategy. The debt service required to fund the streets, parks and public safety project costs are accounted for in current budget projections and would not require an increase in the total ad valorem tax rate. The water and wastewater projects would be funded through water and wastewater fees.

ORDINANCE NO. 3648

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CITY OF WAXAHACHIE, TEXAS, COMBINATION TAX AND REVENUE CERTIFICATES OF OBLIGATION, SERIES 2025; ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES AND DELEGATING AUTHORITY FOR THE SALE AND DELIVERY OF THE CERTIFICATES; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND ENACTING OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE SUBJECT

Action:

Travis Smith moved to approve an ordinance, with an amendment to remove \$1.9 million in funding for a mobile command center and substitute with \$1.9 million for construction design or engineering costs toward a new, expanded, or remodeled animal services center, authorizing the issuance of City of Waxahachie, Texas, Combination Tax and Revenue Certificates of Obligation, Series 2025; establishing procedures and delegating authority for the sale and delivery of the Certificates; providing an effective date; and enacting other provisions relating to the subject.

Motion died due to lack of second.

Action:

Patrick Souter moved to approve an ordinance authorizing the issuance of City of Waxahachie, Texas, Combination Tax and Revenue Certificates of Obligation, Series 2025; establishing procedures and delegating authority for the sale and delivery of the Certificates; providing an effective date; and enacting other provisions relating to the subject. Motion was seconded by Chris Wright and carried 4-1, with Travis Smith voting in opposition.

11. Consider setting Proposed Tax Rate and Dates for Public Hearing

The Item was presented by Mr. Tustison. As part of the annual budget process, Chapter 26 of the Property Tax code requires taxing units to comply with truth-in-taxation laws in adopting their tax rates. This item meets the requirement for the City Council to set the proposed rate for future consideration and adoption, set the public hearing date and time, and place an item on a future Council agenda to vote on the tax rate necessary to fund the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Annual Budget.

The FY 2025-2026 proposed Budget includes a proposed tax rate of \$0.61000 (M&O rate: \$0.383857, Interest & Sinking Rate: \$0.226143). The proposed tax rate recommended in the Budget provides additional funding for operating costs to keep up with growth and to fund capital needs throughout the city. The proposed rate exceeds the no-new-revenue rate of \$0.575843 but does not exceed the voter-approval tax rate of \$0.610326. When the proposed rate exceeds the no-new-revenue rate or voter-approval rate, state statute requires a public hearing be held on the proposed tax rate, specific publications, and dates of scheduled adoption.

Staff recommends that the City Council take a record vote to propose an ad valorem tax rate of \$0.610000 for FY 2025-2026 and schedule a public hearing for Monday, September 8, 2025 at 5:30 PM. The City Council will consider adoption of the tax rate and budget on September 15, 2025 at 7:00 PM. Both meetings will be held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie, Texas.

Action:

Chris Wright moved to consider a property tax rate of 61 cents and set the date, time, and place for a public hearing for September 8, 2025 at 5:30 PM at the Waxahachie Civic Center. Motion was seconded by Patrick Souter and carried unanimously (5-0), with the vote as follows:

*Billie Wallace – Aye
Patrick Souter – Aye
Chris Wright – Aye
Tres Atkins – Aye
Travis Smith – Aye*

12. Convene into Executive Session to deliberate economic development incentives, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.087; to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property for municipal purposes, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.072; to deliberate personnel matters, including selection of a City Manager, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.074; and to consult with the City Attorney regarding legal issues related to the city manager transition, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.071, and all matters incident and related thereto

Mayor Wallace announced at 8:04 p.m. the City Council would convene into Executive Session to deliberate economic development incentives, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.087; to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property for municipal purposes, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.072; to deliberate personnel matters, including selection of a City Manager, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section

551.074; and to consult with the City Attorney regarding legal issues related to the city manager transition, as permitted by Texas Government Code Section 551.071, and all matters incident and related thereto.

13. Reconvene and take any necessary action

The meeting reconvened at 9:18 p.m.

Action:

Patrick Souter moved terminate the contract for the purchase of property located at 5840 E. Highway 287 and authorize the City Manager to execute all appropriate documentation related thereto. Motion was seconded by Tres Atkins and carried unanimously (5-0).

14. Comments by Mayor, City Council, City Attorney and City Management

Council Member Travis Smith expressed opposition to including a mobile command center in the recent bond issuance, calling it a "want" rather than a "need." He believes such discretionary purchases should be funded through a general obligation (GO) bond and voted on by the public, not included in a certificate of obligation (CO) bond funded without voter approval. Instead, he emphasized the continued need to prioritize funding for an animal shelter. He thanked staff for their efforts and extended special appreciation to the interim city manager, police chief, and their team for proactively addressing a safety issue by installing a temporary sidewalk to help students cross safely before school starts.

Council Member Tres Atkins echoed Councilman Smith's remarks, acknowledging that staff had been under significant pressure in recent weeks. He specifically thanked Senior Finance Director Chad Tustison for his hard work and dedication, noting that his efforts were crucial and appreciated. Councilman Atkins emphasized the value of the recent workshop, stating it helped address many important issues.

Interim City Manager Ricky Boyd thanked all staff, especially Mr. Tustison and the finance team, for their hard work on the budget, noting that more decisions still need to be made. He also reminded the Council about the upcoming Fire Department Shield and Promotional Ceremony, scheduled for Saturday, August 9th at 9:00 AM at the Waxahachie Civic Center, encouraging their attendance

Council Member Chris Wright thanked Ira Tenpenny and John Wedel for their input, particularly appreciating the historical and heritage insights. He addressed the debate over the \$1.9 million in the CO bond, expressing that allocating it without a clear plan for animal services was no better than funding the mobile command center, which at least has a defined use. Councilman Wright also shared his experience attending the World Baseball Classic at the Waxahachie Sports Complex, praising the international energy and excitement of the event. He closed by inviting the public to stay for the continued open budget discussions following the executive session.

Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Souter thanked staff, especially Interim City Manager Ricky Boyd, for their prompt and effective work on the budget and praised Hope Health for its vital healthcare services to Ellis County residents regardless of insurance or ability to pay. On the \$1.9 million CO bond discussion, he stressed the importance of having a clear plan before allocating funds,

particularly for the animal shelter, and reaffirmed his commitment to animal welfare by noting his role in founding and personally funding the Ellis County Pet Coalition. He also expressed gratitude to those who checked on him during his recent surgery recovery.

Mayor Billie Wallace echoed previous comments made by the council, expressed her appreciation for everyone's efforts, and specifically thanked Officer James Taylor for serving as the August Honorary Council Member, stating it was an honor to have him present.

15. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary