

City Council
April 14, 2026

A Work Session of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Waxahachie was held at the Waxahachie Civic Center, Crape Myrtle Room, 2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie, Texas on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 8:30 a.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, City Manager
Albert Lawrence, Deputy City Manager
Shon Brooks, Assistant City Manager
Amber Villarreal, City Secretary

1. Call to Order

Mayor Billie Wallace called the meeting to order.

2. Hear presentations and discussion regarding 5-year Capital Improvement Plan and Budget Update

City Manager Ricky Boyd explained the goal of the meeting is to review the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan to ensure the plan aligns with City Council's priorities and receive a consensus for staff to move forward with a bond issuance.

Council and staff reviewed the draft FY2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), including how projects are prioritized and funded across operating funds, bonds, impact fees, and available bond-interest savings. Discussion focused heavily on water/wastewater capacity for growth, the upcoming utility rate study, and near-term infrastructure projects.

Staff presented a FY2027 capital plan totaling \$91M across 38 projects and asked Council for direction on how to proceed so the city can move into bond issuance and finalize next year's plan.

Mr. Tustison outlined the FY2027 plan composition (water/wastewater, streets, parks, facilities), the CIP development approach (update five-year plan, refine costs/schedules, then match funding sources), and the budget calendar leading to a draft budget in late June and final adoption in July/August. He reiterated the financial policy priorities including maintaining a structurally balanced budget, managing debt and the tax rate, maintaining reserves, and protecting the City's AA+ credit rating.

James Gaertner, Director of CIP Engineering, reviewed the following:

Water Projects: \$24.4 M

- Howard and Sokoll Water Treatment Plant Boundary Separation
- 2026 Water Rehab
- US 77 36-inch Water Transmission Line
- Virginia Avenue

- 2027 Water Rehab
- Cardinal Road Water Transmission Line
- Private Development Oversize Participation (Haven Ranch)
- Private Development Oversize Participation (Saddlebrook 4B)
- Private Development Oversize Participation (Sam's Club)

Wastewater Projects: \$29.6 M

- Northeast Trunk Sewer Phases I-III
- Southwest Trunk Sewer Rehab Ph II
- Virginia Avenue
- 2026 Sewer Rehab
- 2027 Sewer Rehab

Kumar Gali, Director of Utilities, reviewed the following:

Water Utility Treatment Plants:

- South Prong Dam Repairs
- Indian Ground and Elevated Storage Tanks
- Howard Water Treatment Plant Miscellaneous Rehabilitation and Basin 4 Redundancy Design
- Sokoll High Service Pump Station Expansion
- Sokoll Disinfection Improvements
- Sokoll Cell Valve and Actuator Replacements
- Sokoll – Replace Membrane Cell 3 Modules
- Sokoll Water Plant Miscellaneous Improvements

Wastewater Utility Treatment Plant:

- Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion Design Phase 1
- Rehabilitation of Tertiary Filters and Hydropneumatic Tank

It was the general consensus of Council to review the Highland Avenue drainage master plan/report and Phase 3 sequencing assumptions. Mr. Gaertner will develop and bring back comparative options and costs for Highland Avenue drainage (easements/backyards vs mobile home park detention), with a phased/decision-point approach. Mr. Gaertner will also review whether Nelson University's runoff contributes to the Highland drainage path and whether partnership/mitigation is feasible.

Mr. Gaertner reviewed the following.

Streets Projects: \$7.1 M

- Virginia Avenue
- Highland Avenue
- E. University Avenue Phase II
- Peters Street
- Highland Avenue Phase II – Add drainage capacity

{City Council recessed at 9:53 a.m. and reconvened at 10:13 a.m.}

Gumaro Martinez, Director of Parks & Recreation, reviewed the following proposed park improvements.

Park Projects: \$6.5 M

- A&F Thompson Park
- Matthews Park Restroom
- Getzendaner Park Road Improvements
- Farmers Market Parking Improvements
- Lions Park Improvements
- Turf at Lions Park

Council discussed the multiple parks and downtown public-space projects ahead of the next budget cycle, focusing on safety, accessibility, and phased improvements. The longest discussion centered on Lions Park direction (grass vs. synthetic turf), floodplain constraints, funding options, and the operational need for monitoring/security if turf fields are built.

Council reached a general consensus to proceed with synthetic turf practice fields at Lions Park and directed staff to evaluate associated monitoring and security needs. The Council emphasized the importance of making a clear, timely decision to avoid further delays and additional sunk design costs.

James Villarreal, Director of the Sports Complex, presented a preliminary concept to install synthetic turf on additional soccer fields at the complex. The proposal is intended to expand tournament capacity and improve weather resilience; however, it is not currently included in any funded program.

A preliminary layout and an estimated cost of approximately \$4.1 million to turf nine soccer fields was discussed. It was noted that the availability of larger fields is currently a limiting factor in attracting tournaments. Mr. Villarreal highlighted the weekend-heavy nature of soccer scheduling, the revenue potential associated with tournaments, and the success of existing turf fields in reducing weather-related cancellations. While the concept is not part of current bond plans, the potential alignment with WCDC funding capacity was identified for future consideration.

{City Council recessed at 11:33 a.m. and reconvened at 11:50 a.m.}

City Facility Projects (\$23.5M) were reviewed by staff.

Fire Chief Scott Safford reviewed the Fire Station 1 Relocation and Type 3 Wildland Truck purchase 4 as a deployable asset.

City Manager Ricky Boyd reviewed the Council Chamber/Fire Administration Finish-Out at the Comerica Building. Fire Administration is planning to expand into approximately 10,000 square feet on the second floor of the Comerica building to address space constraints and accommodate future growth, as part of a broader proposal to build out the entire facility at once. Staff recommended completing the full buildout, estimated at \$12 million, in a single phase to avoid

operational conflicts, utility complications, and escalating costs associated with phased construction, noting a roughly ten-month timeline could allow multiple departments to occupy the building by next summer. However, several councilmembers expressed concerns about limited clarity on the overall City Hall project scope and questioned whether pursuing both the Comerica buildout and a separate \$10 million City Hall investment aligns with the original intent to maximize existing space and control costs. Additional discussion highlighted potential inefficiencies in current annex usage and noted that certain City Hall expenses, such as elevator, foyer, and sprinkler requirements, may be unavoidable.

Police Chief Joe Wiser requested approximately \$200,000 to conduct a facility needs assessment, citing current space limitations, including insufficient office and locker capacity. There was general support for potentially expanding the effort into a broader, citywide facilities needs assessment, provided clear parameters and cost controls are established. Councilmembers emphasized the importance of focusing on a true needs assessment rather than a comprehensive plan, and staff indicated they would work to provide a preliminary cost estimate by June.

Justin Stoker, Director of Public Works and Engineering, presented a conceptual plan using an already-funded \$6,000,000 allocation for a basic facility and future phased add-ons, with discussion that building all at once could avoid escalation and save an estimated \$1,100,000 versus three-year modules. Councilmembers raised concerns about aesthetics/material storage near homes and questioned cost assumptions, and concluded they wanted to hold off until June while exploring the citywide study option.

Council asked staff to pause and revisit direction on the Streets facility until there is clarity on whether a broader citywide facilities assessment will occur.

Chief Safford presented a fire-based EMS model with an estimated net annual cost to the City of approximately \$3 million after projected revenues. The proposal includes six ambulances (four frontline and two reserve), additional staffing of 34 firefighters, and expanded dispatch and emergency medical dispatch (EMD) capacity. Council discussion focused on existing contract constraints with Allegiance—currently in effect through October 1, 2027, with a 365-day termination notice, along with workforce considerations, including potential impacts on firefighter retention and the use of mandatory ambulance rotations. Additional concerns included vehicle costs and funding options, with staff noting an estimated tax rate impact of approximately four cents if funded through the general fund. Chief Safford also highlighted recent improvements in response times under the current system following enforcement measures and increased unit availability.

Mr. Tustison continued his review of the following:

- CIP Budget Strategy: Bonds, Operating Funds, Impact Fees, Fund Balance / Working Capital
- CIP and Debt Management
- Debt Service and Tax Rate
- General Debt Service Capacity
- Timeline for Bond Issuance

It was the general consensus of Council to direct staff to provide additional information and advance several follow-up actions, including distributing City Hall and Comerica floor plans along with cost-difference estimates comparing a foyer/elevator-only approach to the current City Hall plan; identifying potential firms to conduct a citywide facilities needs assessment and providing a ballpark cost by June; incorporating a quantitative log of EMS provider complaints into regular Fire Department reporting to Council; and revisiting the direction of the Streets facility following the June budget workshop and further discussion on whether to proceed with a comprehensive citywide facilities study.

Dustin Deel, Administrative Services Director, and Quorum Architectural Services provided an in-progress needs assessment update for a new animal shelter, focusing on right-sizing capacity, modern shelter design requirements, and potential regional partnerships. Council discussed conceptual facility scope (including medical clinic and community spaces), high projected costs, financing paths (CO vs GO bonds), land/site needs, and the need for clearer cost breakdowns and partner buy-in before proceeding.

Council reached a general consensus directing Quorum Architectural Services to provide a detailed cost breakdown distinguishing state-minimum requirements from optional or enhanced features, identify potential cost reductions and associated tradeoffs, and develop alternative program options, such as phased construction or varying levels of clinic services, with corresponding cost impacts. Additional direction included analyzing anticipated wastewater needs, presenting final assessment results, and engaging potential partner jurisdictions to gauge participation at defined price points and terms. Council also discussed potential funding strategies, weighing the speed and flexibility of Certificates of Obligation (CO bonds) against the public approval process required for General Obligation (GO bonds), while noting timeline and statutory constraints. Staff outlined options to proceed, including initiating work through a reimbursement resolution, but Mr. Tustison cautioned about the scale of both debt service and ongoing operational costs. Council emphasized the need for clearer cost information and confirmed partner commitments before selecting a funding path, with differing views remaining on the appropriateness of issuing CO bonds without voter approval given the project's magnitude.

3. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Villarreal
City Secretary