



City of Wichita Falls City Council Meeting Minutes February 17, 2026

1. Call to Order

The City Council of the City of Wichita Falls, Texas, met in a regular session on the above date in the Seminar Room at the MPEC with the following members present.

Present: Mayor Tim Short
At-Large Austin Cobb
District 1 Whitney Flack
District 2 Robert Brooks
District 3 Jeff Browning
District 4/Mayor Pro Tem Mike Battaglino
District 5 Tom Taylor

Absent:

Mayor Short called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Invocation

Pastor Gene Holley, Life Church, gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Short led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Presentations

a) Recognition of Foreign Exchange Students - Dave Clark

Dave Clark introduced and recognized foreign exchange students living in Wichita Falls.

Paul Menzies, Assistant City Manager, announced that no discussion or action would occur on Item 10A. He advised that any individuals wishing to address the item may do so during Citizen Comments. The applicants withdrew their request after the agenda was posted and plan to resubmit at a later date with restrictions limiting the use to a data center.

Mayor Short acknowledged community concerns regarding the ongoing investigation and the inability to release the body-worn camera footage at this time, stating the Council shares the public's frustration. He reported that the City has initiated a comprehensive review of policies and procedures, including mental health response,

supervisory practices, training, and accountability, with assistance from the Helen Farabee Centers, and that updates are being posted on the City's website. He also noted the implementation of FlashVote to enhance public engagement and affirmed the City's commitment to continue this work and remain transparent.

5. Citizen Comments

Jack Browne, citizen and Planning and Zoning Commission member, spoke in support of pursuing data center development, citing the city's available land, utility infrastructure, water supply, and potential economic and infrastructure benefits. He also commented on the role of artificial intelligence in driving industry growth and noted that modern facilities use closed-loop cooling systems with limited ongoing water demand.

Stephanie Harris spoke about the Victoria Lang incident and expressed concern about police accountability, the delay in making the matter public, and the need to release body camera footage. She stated that while mental health training is important, the primary issue is officer conduct and oversight, and called for stronger measures to address excessive force and for charges to be pursued against the officers involved.

Sonja Calliste, family and psychiatric nurse practitioner, addressed the Council regarding the Victoria Lang incident and expressed concerns about the lack of documentation of a welfare check, a mental health assessment, and de-escalation measures, as well as the absence of a female officer at the scene. She questioned the depth of officer training, psychological screening, and ongoing competency evaluations, and emphasized the potential harm such encounters can have on individuals with mental illness. She urged the City to ensure a thorough investigation, accountability if misconduct is substantiated, and stronger policies prioritizing mental health awareness, assessment, and de-escalation.

Sandra Gross spoke about the 2026 Martin Luther King Multicultural Parade and Black History Month events. She expressed appreciation for the City's past support of the MLK prayer breakfast and Juneteenth and requested similar visible partnership for the parade, including the use of the City stage at 8th and Scott on February 21st from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Crystal Washington spoke about the Victoria Lang incident and expressed concerns about police accountability, disciplinary practices, and what she described as over policing in certain areas of the city. She called for criminal charges against the former officers involved and emphasized the broader impact of law enforcement actions on families and youth in the community.

Michael Damron addressed the Council, shared personal reflections on his experiences working in Texas, expressed general support for law enforcement and the principles of justice, and requested consideration for assistance.

John Hutchinson addressed the Council regarding the Victoria Lang incident and criticized City leadership for what he described as a lack of transparency and delayed

release of body camera footage. He called for immediate accountability and stated that the matter would remain a community and election issue until further action is taken.

Robert Mitchell spoke about the Victoria Lang incident and expressed concerns about the Police Department's and City Council's handling of the matter. He alleged a lack of accountability, questioned the acceptance of an officer's resignation, raised concerns about Internal Affairs complaint investigations, and stated that the situation could result in a significant financial impact to the City. He also voiced support for Councilor Brooks and opposed what he described as efforts to exclude him from participation.

Valerie Rhodes addressed the Council regarding the proposed data center development, stating she supports the potential for economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure improvements in the area. She also expressed concerns about the concentration of industrial uses near her neighborhood and the impacts on minority communities, and requested consideration of mitigation measures such as sound and physical barriers, lighting controls, performance standards, and improved maintenance of surrounding infrastructure.

Mark Calvano, a developer from San Francisco, spoke regarding solar development and data centers. He requested consideration of a zoning overlay to allow property owners to develop solar projects without individual zoning changes, stating this could generate private investment, jobs, electricity, and support future data center growth. He also commented on the importance of diversifying the local economy, the advantages Texas has for data center development, and noted that newer facilities use closed-loop or water-free cooling technologies.

Consent Agenda – Items 6 - 9

Moved by Councilor Battaglini to approve the Consent Agenda.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and, with no comments or questions from the public, carried by the following vote:

AYES:	Mayor Short, Councilor Cobb, Councilor Flack, Councilor Brooks, Councilor Browning, Councilor Battaglini, Councilor Taylor
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a) City Council Meeting February 3, 2026.

7. Receive Minutes

- a) Homeless Advisory Committee September 15, 2025
- b) Homeless Advisory Committee November 12, 2025
- c) Wichita Falls Economic Development Corporation November 20, 2025

- d) Planning & Zoning Commission December 10, 2025

8. Ordinances

- a) Ordinance making an appropriation to the Special Revenue Fund in the amount of \$104,628.00 for the STD/HIV-DIS Prevention Services Program from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for Calendar Year 2026; authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to execute all documents necessary to accept said funds.

9. Resolutions

- a) Resolution authorizing a contract with Digital Resources, Inc. (DRI) to design, purchase, install, integrate, and test a fully integrated audio/video system in the new City Council Chambers through the TIPS Co-op Purchasing Program with PEG funding in the amount of \$496,500.41.
- b) Resolution authorizing the purchase of three BMW R 1300 RT-P Motorcycles from Retail Motorcycle Ventures, Inc. in the amount of \$122,333.31.
- c) Resolution confirming reappointment of Laura Fidelie to the Firefighters and Police Officers' Civil Service Commission with a term to expire December 31, 2028.
- d) Resolution authorizing the City Manager to award bid and contract for the 2026 Crack Seal Project to Holbrook Asphalt, LLC in the amount of \$232,500.00.
- e) Resolution authorizing the City of Wichita Falls's continued participation with the Steering Committee of Cities Served by Oncor; and authorizing the payment of ten cents per capita to the Steering Committee to fund regulatory and legal proceedings and activities related to Oncor Electric Delivery Company, LLC.

Regular Agenda

10. Ordinances

There was no discussion or action taken on this item.

- a) Ordinance rezoning +/- 37.61 acres of land from General Commercial (GC) to Light Industrial (LI) located at 2100 & 2226 Airport Drive (26.91 Acres, Abstract 344 – T. Currey, & +/- 10.7 acres out of the R. Brown Survey, Abstract 522), and +/- 60.87 acres of land from Multi-Family Residential (MFR) to Light Industrial (LI) zoning district located at 2100 Airport Drive, 2226 Airport Drive, Property ID #107232, and Property ID #107235 (+/-50.27 Acres, T. Currey Survey, Abstract 344; and +/-10.6 acres out of the R. Brown Survey, Abstract 522), and amend the Land Use Plan from High Density Residential to Light Industrial to allow for the construction of a data center.

11. Other Council Matters

- a) Announcements concerning items of community interest from members of the City Council. No action will be taken or discussed.

Councilor Cobb encouraged everyone to vote.

Councilor Brooks expressed frustration with requests for patience regarding the Victoria Lang incident and said the community has waited many years for meaningful change. He called for arrests and accountability, stated that photos and public appearances do not replace real action, referenced the significance of Black History, and urged the public to focus on facts and outcomes rather than appearances.

Councilor Flack stated that differences of opinion among elected officials are a normal and valuable part of the governmental process. She expressed confidence in established policies, procedures, and due process, acknowledged the difficulty of waiting for outcomes, and stated that patience is necessary to ensure the integrity of the investigation and the proper application of the law.

Councilor Browning encouraged voter participation and strongly supported Mayor Short, commending his involvement and service to the community. He stated that it was inappropriate for the Mayor to be personally criticized during public comment.

Councilor Taylor emphasized the need to allow the state and other appropriate authorities to complete their investigation so that any findings would withstand legal scrutiny and potential appeal. He announced the upcoming TIF #3 meeting, recognized the contributions of host families to the community, and expressed appreciation for a recent presentation on data centers and artificial intelligence.

Councilor Battaglino congratulated City Manager Jeff Jenkins for being named the 2026 Dancing for the Stars Mirror Ball Champion, announced his participation in the multicultural parade this weekend, where he will carry the American flag with American Legion Post 169, and noted he would be volunteering at the Home and Garden Show. Quoting Abraham Lincoln, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," he emphasized the importance of unity and expressed strong support for Mayor Short, commending his leadership and dedication to the City. He also stated that Councilor Brooks is an important member of the Council, publicly expressed his support for him, and acknowledged that the current matter is a heavy situation with strong emotions and a shared desire to see justice served.

Mayor Short stated that his support for Councilor Brooks has remained unchanged and reaffirmed that commitment. He announced his plans to attend the MLK Multicultural Parade on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and the installation service for Reverend Ray Dixon as pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

12. Executive Sessions

- a) Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code §551.071,

consultation with attorney on matters involving pending or contemplated litigation or other matters in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meetings Act (including, but not limited to, Lake Ringgold).

- b) Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code § 551.087, to discuss or deliberate the offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect that the City Council seeks to have, locate, stay, or expand in or near the territory of the City of Wichita Falls and with which the City and/or economic development corporations created by the City are conducting economic development negotiations (including, but not limited to, economic development update.)
- c) Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code § 551.072, to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property interests due to the fact that deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the City in negotiations with a third party (including, but not limited to, Lake Ringgold)

City Council adjourned into Executive Session at 9:37 a.m. in accordance with Texas Government Code §552.071, §552.087, and §552.072.

Mayor Short reconvened the meeting in open session at 11:05 a.m. and announced that no votes or polls were taken.

13. Adjourn

Mayor Short adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 3rd day of March 2026.



Tim Short, Mayor

ATTEST:



Marie Balthrop, TRMC, MMC
City Clerk