City of Wichita Falls
City Council Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2026

1. Call to Order

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

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

Present: Mayor Tim Short
Councilor Whitney Flack
Councilor Jeff Browning
Councilor Mike Battaglino
Councilor Tom Taylor

Absent: Councilor Austin Cobb
Councilor Robert Brooks

2. Invocation

Mayor Short gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Short led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Strategic Plan Update and Budget Work Session

a) Strategic Plan Update - Paul Menzies

Paul Menzies, Assistant City Manager, provided an overview of the Wichita Falls Strategic Plan and explained that it establishes the City's direction by aligning City Council policy with staff operations and reflecting community priorities. He noted that the plan is intended to be a living document that will be reviewed and updated as needed. Mr. Menzies summarized the December 2025 planning session, where participants identified key challenges, opportunities, and threats related to growth, water security, economic development, quality of life, infrastructure, funding, partnerships, technology, and community trust. He highlighted the plan's vision for Wichita Falls as a vibrant, growing, unified, and aesthetically pleasing community, as well as its four strategic goals: Financial Stewardship, Customer Experience, Operational Excellence, and People & Organizational Culture. Supporting strategies address water security, infrastructure, economic development, Sheppard AFB, partnerships, technology, funding, and communication. Mr. Menzies stated that implementation will be coordinated by the HR/Communications team, and a mid-year review will evaluate progress and allow for adjustments as needed.

b) Work session regarding the City Manager's proposed fiscal year 2026-2027 budget
Mr. Jenkins provided opening remarks, noting that the proposed tax rate is the lowest in 11 years and that utility rates will be reduced. He also highlighted the budget’s continued investment in employee compensation to maintain competitiveness and funding for additional positions.

Stephen Calvert, CFO/Director of Finance, presented the FY 2027 proposed budget, including changes to the certified tax roll, the increased business property tax exemption, and their budgetary impacts. He noted that the proposed property tax rate would decrease from 0.6825 to 0.6779, the lowest rate in 11 years, while increased property values will generate additional revenue. Mr. Calvert also highlighted the City’s low debt burden, with debt payments below 4% of total tax revenue, and noted that the City’s per capita tax is approximately 27% lower than that of comparable cities. The proposed budget remains structurally balanced, maintains healthy reserves, supports employee compensation, reduces residential water rates, and provides $100.5 million for capital investments.

Mr. Calvert reported that sales tax revenue increased 9.4% and hotel and venue tax revenue increased 25%. He noted that residential water rates will be reduced by 5% on the base rate and 2% on the first 1,000 cubic feet, while sewer rates will remain unchanged. The reductions are supported by debt rolling off and increased usage, with City utility rates remaining approximately 8.8% below comparable cities. Modest increases are proposed for curbside refuse, alley refuse, and stormwater charges.

Mr. Calvert reviewed personnel costs, including the budget impact of the second year of civil service agreements and their role in supporting employee recruitment and retention. He also discussed the compensation study, the recommended 3.4% cost-of-living increase, the phased implementation approach, and proposed personnel changes.

Councilor Cobb joined the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Mr. Calvert reviewed the City's healthy reserves and reserve policy, noting that one-time funds are used for one-time projects. He highlighted more than $100 million in capital investments, funded through certificates of obligation, private investment, and reserves. Major projects include the Justice Center, fleet replacement, Cypress Plant rehabilitation, water infrastructure, The Falls, and sanitation facilities. He also discussed investments in streets, alleys, and sidewalks, including the process for prioritizing street repairs, as well as continued investment in water treatment, delivery, and supply. Councilor Taylor inquired about the potential for additional funding for sidewalks.

Mr. Calvert also discussed the effects of inflation and growth, opportunities for innovation, additional funding secured for the City, and increased revenues from the Golf Course and Castaway Cove. He reviewed the Sanitation Fund's capital strategy and emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate reserves while funding necessary capital improvements.

Mr. Calvert reviewed the budget and tax rate adoption timeline, noting that the City is meeting all statutory requirements and that final City Council action is anticipated on September 15.

5. Adjourn

Mayor Short adjourned the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED this ___ day of ____ ____.

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Tim Short, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Marie Balthrop, TRMC, MMC
City Clerk