



City of Broken Arrow
City Council Special Meeting

City Hall
220 S. 1st Street
Broken Arrow Ok
74012

Minutes

Mayor Debra Wimpee
Vice Mayor Johnnie Parks
Council Member Lisa Ford
Council Member Justin Green
Council Member David Pickel

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Mayor Debra Wimpee called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: 5 - David Pickel, Justin Green, Lisa Ford, Johnnie Parks, Debra Wimpee

3. Preview Ordinances

A. 26-336 Consideration, discussion, and possible preview of Ordinance No. 3905 Amending Chapter 7, Article XVII (Short-Term Rental); Definitions, Operating Standards, Platform Duties, Owner Cap, Enforcement & Appendix Checklist

City Attorney Trevor Dennis presented Item 26-336 and introduced a work session on potential updates to the city's short-term rental regulations. He explained the session was intended to gather council input on proposed changes developed after discussions with short-term rental owners and city staff, including recommendations such as insurance requirements and other regulatory adjustments. Mr. Dennis also reviewed the current classifications of short-term rentals: STR1 properties where the owner lives on site with up to two guest rooms, STR2 properties without owner occupancy and up to four guest rooms, and STR3 properties with up to eight units that function more like small inns or boarding houses. He noted the city currently has 10 STR1s and 61 STR2s, but staff have also identified about 65 properties operating as short-term rentals without a license or sufficient information to categorize them properly.

Mr. Dennis continued the discussion on regulating short-term rentals, explaining that enforcement has been difficult because out-of-state individuals own many unlicensed rentals. He said the city often has trouble serving citations or compelling owners to appear in court, especially since the municipal court is not a court of record, which limits enforcement options. Mr. Dennis noted the city is considering stronger penalties and requirements, such as mandating a local contact agent to help ensure compliance.

He also addressed whether short-term rentals should pay the city's hotel/motel tax, explaining that voters must approve any such tax. The current ordinance defines a hotel in a way that may only clearly apply to properties with five or more rooms, which is why the tax is currently collected only from the largest category of short-term rentals. Because the language is somewhat vague and could be interpreted more broadly, Mr. Dennis said the safest approach would be to clarify the ordinance—potentially through a vote of the people—to explicitly include short-term rentals if the city wants them taxed under the hotel/motel tax provisions.

Council members discussed whether short-term rentals such as Airbnb should be required to pay the city's hotel/motel tax. Mr. Dennis explained that if voters approved an increase or change to the hotel/motel tax, the city could also clarify the definition of "hotel" to include short-term rentals, allowing the city to collect the tax from STR1 and STR2 properties as well. Some council members expressed support, noting that the tax revenue is important for tourism initiatives.

Mr. Dennis also reviewed enforcement challenges with unlicensed rentals, explaining that many owners ignore notices and that the city has been using code enforcement citations and a third-party monitoring service since 2022. One possible option would be working with major hosting platforms to remove listings that lack city permits, which could encourage compliance. He added that the city is reviewing the ordinance because of increasing police calls for service at short-term rentals, with common complaints involving parking and noise, and he invited the police chief to discuss field experiences and enforcement needs.

Police Chief Lance Arnold explained that increased police calls to short-term rentals prompted the city to review and potentially strengthen its regulations. He said officers have responded to incidents where adults rented short-term rentals for large parties, often involving juveniles, and in several cases last summer, officers found evidence of gunfire, such as shell casings, after people fled the scene. These incidents occurred in regular residential neighborhoods and raised safety concerns. Chief Arnold noted that police reviewed call data using information from Community Development and the Host Compliance monitoring service to identify both permitted and unpermitted rentals involved in calls for service over the past two years. He also warned that as tourism and events in Broken Arrow increase—such as with the new amphitheater—short-term rental activity will likely grow as well. Chief Arnold said current enforcement tools are limited, as Community Development has little ability to enforce violations or revoke permits, which is why the city began exploring stronger regulations.

Council members asked about repeated police calls to certain short-term rental properties and how enforcement works when problems occur. Chief Arnold explained that in many cases, the owners are not present, and officers cannot easily determine who rented the property, especially late at night. Because some rentals are owned by out-of-state owners or operate without permits, identifying or contacting responsible parties can be difficult. He also noted that a 24/7 hotline exists through the city's monitoring service for neighbors to report issues. Still, that system only works effectively for permitted rentals with owner information on file. In the case of the address with eight calls for service, Chief Arnold confirmed the property was not permitted, leaving the city with limited enforcement options since there is no permit to revoke.

City Attorney Trevor Dennis reviewed feedback from short-term rental operators and outlined potential adjustments to the proposed ordinance. He said several requested changes relate to STR Type 1 properties where the owner lives on-site, which generally have lower impacts. One proposed adjustment would allow these properties to avoid displaying their license number publicly on listing platforms to prevent revealing the owner's address, while still requiring a license to be submitted to the platform for verification. Another change would clarify that hosting platforms such as Airbnb or VRBO may remit applicable taxes and fees on behalf of the rental owner. Mr. Dennis also suggested allowing existing operators to come into compliance with new rules at the time of their permit renewal rather than within a fixed deadline.

He then presented a policy decision for the council regarding insurance requirements. The proposed ordinance would require short-term rentals to carry \$1 million in commercial general liability coverage. Options include requiring insurance for all short-term rentals, exempting STR Type 1 properties, or removing the requirement entirely. Dennis noted that major platforms like Airbnb and VRBO already provide \$1 million in secondary coverage, and that standalone insurance policies could cost roughly \$2,000–\$3,000 annually, while umbrella coverage might cost \$200–\$400 per year. The council was asked to provide direction on how broadly the insurance requirement should apply.

Council members discussed the proposed insurance requirement for short-term rentals and the differences between the three categories of rentals. Some members noted they had not previously realized the city classified short-term rentals into three types, which helped explain why different levels of regulation might be appropriate. They also discussed the potential cost of insurance, with some suggesting that the less expensive umbrella policies could be reasonable for business operators. In contrast, a \$2,000–\$3,000 policy might be burdensome for smaller rentals. Others questioned whether personal homeowner insurance would actually cover commercial rental activity and noted that determining the correct type of coverage could become complicated. Overall, council members suggested that strengthening other regulatory requirements might reduce the need to focus on insurance mandates heavily.

Carla Coats, a permitted short-term rental owner in Broken Arrow, spoke in support of requiring permits and enforcing regulations on unlicensed rentals. She said responsible operators maintain their properties and contribute positively to the local economy and neighborhoods, but expressed concern about additional costs being imposed on compliant owners. Ms. Coats noted that platforms such as Airbnb and VRBO already provide insurance coverage and screen guests before bookings occur. She emphasized that responsible hosts also want to prevent problem renters and support reasonable regulations that address bad actors while allowing law-abiding operators to continue their business.

Council members questioned short-term rental owner Carla Coats about how her properties operate and how guests typically book stays. Ms. Coats said both of her rentals are classified as Type 2 properties and that about 70 percent of bookings come through Airbnb and 30 percent through VRBO, which also provide secondary insurance coverage and guest screening. Council members acknowledged the benefits of short-term rentals for visitors and family gatherings but emphasized the challenge of regulating problem properties while not burdening responsible operators.

Mayor Wimpee and the council discussed concerns about imposing additional costs on compliant hosts while trying to address unpermitted rentals and disruptive behavior in residential neighborhoods. Ms. Coats explained that she maintains clear rules for her guests, including quiet hours, provides neighbors with her contact information, and is willing to remove guests who violate the rules. She also said she supports reasonable enforcement to address bad actors. Council members discussed potential requirements such as quiet hours and inexpensive noise-monitoring devices, noting these tools could help responsible hosts manage issues before police involvement, while giving the city better enforcement options for problematic rentals. Council members reiterated their goal of finding a balanced approach that supports tourism and local businesses while protecting neighborhood quality of life and ensuring police have sufficient information to respond when problems occur.

City Attorney Trevor Dennis reviewed additional proposed updates to the short-term rental ordinance and asked for council direction on several policy decisions. He summarized earlier recommendations, including defining the three types of short-term rentals, removing a proposed permit fee discount tied to training, and determining whether the city should require liability insurance for some or all rentals. He also discussed a proposed requirement for noise-monitoring devices, noting the council could exempt owner-occupied Type 1 rentals. However, some council members questioned whether owners would always be present to manage issues.

Mr. Dennis outlined other operational standards in the draft ordinance, including requiring a local responsible agent who can respond within an hour, a parking plan to prevent overcrowding and blocked streets, and safety information such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, exit plans, and emergency contacts. Additional rules would include quiet hours, exterior cameras to monitor activity, limits on the number of non-overnight visitors, and requirements for adequate off-street parking.

He also discussed allowing hosting platforms like Airbnb or VRBO to collect and remit applicable taxes on behalf of operators. Finally, Mr. Dennis asked the council to consider whether to place a cap on how many short-term rental properties a single individual or entity can own, with the goal of preventing large companies from purchasing numerous homes and converting them into short-term rentals throughout the city.

Council members discussed whether the city should limit how many short-term rental properties a single owner or company can operate. The mayor questioned the need for a cap, noting that if properties comply with city regulations, owners should be able to grow their businesses. Mr. Dennis explained that some cities impose limits to prevent large corporations from purchasing numerous homes and converting them into short-term rentals, which can drive up housing prices, reduce opportunities for first-time homebuyers, and push out smaller local operators.

The discussion then shifted to enforcement tools. Mr. Dennis outlined a proposed suspension system in which a license could be suspended for 30 days after two verified nuisance complaints within 12 months and 90 days after three complaints, with immediate suspension possible for serious incidents or failure of a local contact to respond. The ordinance defines qualifying complaints as significant public safety issues such as underage drinking, public intoxication, fighting, or parking violations.

Council members questioned whether the enforcement provisions had sufficient “teeth,” asking what would happen if a property continued operating during a suspension. Mr. Dennis said the city could issue daily citations for operating without a permit. Still, he acknowledged enforcement is difficult, especially when properties are owned by out-of-state or foreign owners who ignore municipal court summons. It was also mentioned learning about a software tool used by some cities to identify unpermitted rentals on major platforms and help bring them into compliance, suggesting it might be worth exploring as another enforcement option.

City Attorney Trevor Dennis concluded the work session by asking the council for direction on key policy decisions so staff could revise the proposed short-term rental ordinance. Council members discussed several of the options, with the mayor expressing support for removing the proposed insurance requirement since most rentals already receive coverage through platforms such as Airbnb or VRBO.

Council members emphasized the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms to address unpermitted rentals and operators who ignore citations. Suggestions included exploring liens, utility shutoffs, or other legal tools that could encourage compliance. Staff agreed to research enforcement practices used in other cities and consider additional options.

The council generally supported many of the operational standards discussed earlier—such as quiet hours, safety plans, and local responsible agents—but indicated that further refinement of front-end permitting and compliance requirements could help reduce police calls and neighborhood issues. Staff will revise the ordinance based on the discussion and bring it back to the council for another preview before final adoption.

No action was taken at this time.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

MOTION: A motion was made by Justin Green, seconded by David Pickel
Move to Adjourn

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 -

David Pickel, Justin Green, Lisa Ford, Johnnie Parks, Debra Wimpee

Mayor

City Clerk