



City of Broken Arrow

Minutes Visit Broken Arrow

City Hall
220 S 1st Street
Broken Arrow OK
74012

Chairman Brian Dean
Vice Chair Tommy Yardy
Gene Barber
Ben Buie
Lisa Ford
Craig Hagin
Kathy Muskrat
Sonja Schneider
Trevor Swanson

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Board Chambers

1. Call to Order

Chairman Brian Dean called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Present: 7 - Brian Dean, Tommy Yardy, Ben Buie, Lisa Ford, Craig Hagin, Kathy Muskrat
Sonja Schneider
Absent: 2 - Trevor Swanson, Gene Barber

3. Presentations

A. 25-838 Presentation by and introduction of Clarity of Place for Tourism Strategic Planning Process

Tina Valdecañas, from Clarity of Place, provided an introduction to the strategic tourism planning process underway for Broken Arrow. She explained that the goal is to align tourism efforts with the city's broader development strategy, emphasizing the role of tourism in economic development and its dual value to both visitors and residents. The team, including partners from Kimley-Horn, is using data-driven analysis and planning to ensure the strategy is practical and beneficial to local businesses. A more detailed session is planned for July.

Jeremy Stahle, from Kimley-Horn, introduced himself, noting his roots in Broken Arrow and his past involvement in local infrastructure and tourism-related projects, including New Orleans Square and the upcoming Sunset Amphitheater at Events Park. He emphasized Kimley-Horn's role in providing practical, infrastructure-based insights to ensure the tourism strategy developed with Clarity of Place is both actionable and aligned with how people access and engage with key commercial and cultural areas in the city.

David Holder from Clarity of Place explained their structured, data-driven approach to developing Broken Arrow's tourism strategic plan. The team has already launched the project and is now conducting a situational assessment, comparing Broken Arrow to similar fast-growing cities, such as Edmond, Rogers, and Franklin. They are evaluating local tourism

assets, performance, branding, and community feedback to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Stakeholder engagement is planned for July, with the final, actionable plan to be delivered in September. The focus is on creating a practical, customized strategy that aligns with industry trends and community needs.

Hailey Post, the third member of the Clarity of Place team, is leading stakeholder engagement for the Broken Arrow tourism strategic plan. She highlighted the importance of gathering insights from local stakeholders and comparing Broken Arrow's experiences with those of similar destinations. Ms. Post and Ms. Valdecañas will be in Broken Arrow in July to conduct focus groups and gain a deeper understanding of local perspectives. She expressed appreciation for the community's time and support throughout the process.

B. 25-822 Presentation of Inhouse Advertising's annual update for Visit Broken Arrow

Mark Moore from Inhouse Advertising reviewed the past year's tourism marketing efforts for Broken Arrow. He highlighted progress made since establishing the city's brand, including widespread promotion through digital channels, outdoor advertising, and the airport. A central part of the campaign was the mascot, Bullseye, which helped distinguish Broken Arrow from nearby cities. Key investments focused on high-impact events, such as the Block Party and Christmas, which successfully drew regional visitors, including those from Northwest Arkansas. Marketing targeted a 250-mile radius and focused on families, with future efforts aimed at expanding conference and business tourism within this area. A revamped website and enhanced social media presence also supported brand visibility.

Brad Buchert, web director for Inhouse Advertising, discussed the launch and progress of Broken Arrow's new tourism website. Rolled out in October, the site was rebuilt on WordPress for its flexibility and features a modern design, AI chatbot, and improved functionality. Site engagement has increased significantly, with monthly visitors rising from 2,100 to 2,750 and average session time also growing. Future goals include seasonal content updates, ongoing development of the chatbot, and enhanced site monitoring to prevent downtime. The site aims to compete with peer cities and grow in tandem with key attractions, such as the upcoming event venue.

Madison Dillingham, digital strategy lead at In-House Advertising, outlined the impact of SEO and digital campaigns supporting Broken Arrow tourism. After launching the redesigned website, strategic SEO efforts resulted in a 71% increase in organic search traffic, with the city now ranking #1 for key terms such as "weekend getaways in Oklahoma." The campaign also gained visibility in Google's AI-generated overviews. Recommendations include leveraging proximity to Tulsa in content strategy.

Digital ads targeted a 250-mile radius with two primary goals: promoting downloadable guides and increasing attendance at significant events. Over 4,400 guide downloads were recorded, with the holiday guide being the top performer. Social media campaigns also boosted event turnout—Facebook ads for the block party generated 4,200 "interested" clicks and led to a 15% increase in attendance. Holiday campaigns reached nearly 500,000 people across Facebook and Instagram, garnering over a million total impressions, including streaming TV ads. Creative strategy continues to evolve based on campaign performance data.

The final portion of the presentation focused on Bullseye, Broken Arrow's mascot, and its role in digital marketing. Bullseye was featured prominently in awareness campaigns and the summer guide, which helped generate 345,000 impressions and reach over 100,000 unique users. Future campaign recommendations include expanding guide themes (e.g., date nights, girls' trips), launching monthly newsletters to an email list of 4,500+, and segmenting ad

targeting by geography to focus more on visitors from outside the Tulsa metro area.

For organic social media, consistent branding and posting led to significant growth: Instagram followers increased by 46%, Facebook followers increased by 27%, organic Facebook reach increased by 377%, and Instagram reach increased by 2,000%. Top-performing content included event-focused posts, reels, and influencer-style videos. Recommendations include creating more Reels, testing text placement for algorithm optimization, engaging captions with questions, continuing to use Bullseye, and posting more content about the city's film incentive.

The final presentation segment also covered traditional marketing efforts and creative strategies that complement Broken Arrow's tourism promotion. The team partnered with Channel 6 for two major seasonal campaigns: Summer of Fun and Ultimate Gift Guide, which included TV spots, radio ads, billboards, and online exposure. These promotions generated nearly 1.5 million impressions combined, driving traffic to VisitBrokenArrow.com. Significantly, gift cards used in the campaigns were restricted to businesses in Broken Arrow, thereby reinforcing the local economic impact.

Additional highlights included the successful rollout of promotional items, such as coloring books, t-shirts, and luggage tags—all branded with Bullseye, the city's mascot. These served as both engagement tools and mobile brand extensions. A creative strategy emphasized consistent branding across digital and print assets, expanding Bullseye's presence in guides events, and even proposing a life-size mascot and a "Bullseye Buddies Club" to engage children and families in the long term.

Campaign effectiveness was evident in increased event attendance (15% for the Block Party and 4% for Christmas), a 5.7% rise in hotel tax revenue, and a 13.72% year-over-year increase in retail sales tax. Budget allocations emphasized digital and social media, SEO, and targeted geographic expansion, including plans to explore outreach in Northwest Arkansas and Texas. Looking forward, the team recommended leveraging Broken Arrow's growth studies, enhancing business and church conference marketing, and exploring new seasonal radio sponsorships to continue building momentum.

Broken Arrow launched a new promotional campaign to attract conventions, meetings, and seminars by offering a \$500 rebate for every 12 hotel room nights booked. The city boasts its 15+ event spaces, 1,000+ hotel rooms, complimentary transportation, affordability, and small-town charm, all just 15 minutes from downtown Tulsa. The video and message—developed by the local tourism team, inspired by a visit to Rogers —position Broken Arrow as an unconventional yet capable host city. The campaign is being promoted to planners at the Oklahoma Society of Association Executives conference. The local team, though small, serves as a hands-on "conference concierge" to assist with logistics.

Further discussion with the board focused on the city's involvement in supporting tourism and events. It was clarified that Visit Broken Arrow operates independently of the Economic Development Corporation and is funded entirely by hotel tax revenue. The team emphasized that while economic development is essential, tourism is their specific focus, and they play a hands-on role in coordinating events, such as conferences.

The new convention campaign offers personalized support through a single point of contact, making planning easier than navigating separate hotel and venue systems. The approach targets specific audiences, such as business and church event planners, utilizing tools like connected TV (CTV) advertising for precision outreach. The team expressed confidence in the strategy's effectiveness and plans to share the presentation with city staff for broader visibility and follow-up.

4. General Visit Broken Arrow Business

- A. 25-802 Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of the meeting minutes from the May 13, 2025 Visit Broken Arrow meeting**

MOTION: A motion was made by Ben Buie, seconded by Tommy Yardy

Move to Approve Item 25-802 meeting minutes from the May 13, 2025 Visit Broken Arrow meeting

The motion carried by the following vote:

- Aye: 7 -** Brian Dean, Tommy Yardy, Ben Buie, Lisa Ford, Craig Hagin, Kathy Muskrat
Sonja Schneider

5. Board members' Opportunity to Address Visit Broken Arrow on General Topics Related to City Business or Services (no action may be taken on matters under this item)

The board discussed a recent wedding held in Broken Arrow, which was chosen specifically because of Uber's availability, making transportation convenient for the 88 attendees—most of whom were from out of town. This feedback aligned with Visit Broken Arrow's positive Uber usage data and highlighted how accessibility can influence event planning decisions, especially for non-local guests.

6. Tourism Director Report including updates on the following:

- A. 25-803 Presentation and discussion of the Tourism Manager's Report, including most recent budget report and hotel/motel tax report**

Makala Barton, Tourism Manager, presented Item 25-803, in which the tourism department introduced a new, clearer report format that highlights key financials and activities. May saw limited spending, primarily the first payment to Clarity of Place. Hotel/motel tax collections were strong—\$74,355 in May, up from \$63,000 last year, and year-to-date totals are up as well. A new graph comparing Broken Arrow's hotel performance to state and national averages showed local occupancy (58.1%), outpacing Oklahoma's (55%) but trailing the U.S. (65%). Average daily rates were also slightly higher than the state average.

Intern Carson Whitlock was introduced as a summer team member for the tourism department. The recent hoteliers' meeting had positive feedback on the new conference video, which hotel partners will promote at an upcoming conference. Five board member terms expire in September, and members have been asked to confirm their interest in continuing. Event updates included the upcoming block party, Scott Fest, Chalk It Up, and Tuesdays in the Park (rescheduled due to rain).

Discussion began on rescheduling the July Visit Broken Arrow meeting due to staff conflicts, with the possibility of canceling it and addressing any pending items in August. A new rebate application has been submitted for the Oklahoma Wesleyan Wrestling 918 Open, which is relocating to Broken Arrow due to space constraints.

The board discussed the potential to raise the hotel/motel tourism tax and how the new conference-focused promotional video might help build support among hoteliers by demonstrating clear reinvestment of funds into tourism. While the tax increase hasn't been formally proposed yet, the strategic planning process is being used to gauge interest through focus groups—including one specifically for hotels—and to offer one-on-one input opportunities. The goal is to involve stakeholders early to avoid past issues of feeling

blindsided. It emphasized a gradual and inclusive approach, noting that any serious discussion of a tax increase would likely wait until after the upcoming bond issue. Focus group invites related to the strategic plan will be sent out by the end of the week.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:42 p.m.

MOTION: A motion was made Ben Buie, seconded by Lisa Ford

Move to adjourn

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 -

Brian Dean, Tommy Yardy, Ben Buie, Lisa Ford, Craig Hagin, Kathy Muskrat
Sonja Schneider

Chairperson

City Clerk