



City of Broken Arrow

Minutes

City Hall
220 S 1st Street
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

Visit Broken Arrow

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

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Board Chambers

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Trevor Swanson, Sonja Schneider, Sarah Lopp, Kathy Muskrat, Ben Buie, Brian Dean
Absent: 3 - Lisa Ford, Craig Hagin, Tommy Yardy

3. Administration of Oaths of Office

It was noted that Sarah Lopp is a new member. She signed the oath of office, as did Tommy Yardy, Kathy Muskrat, Craig Hagin, Trevor Swanson and Brian Dean as newly reappointed board members.

4. Presentations - NONE

5. General Visit Broken Arrow Business

- A. 25-1584 Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of the meeting minutes from the October 14, 2025, Visit Broken Arrow meeting**

MOTION: A motion was made by Brian Dean, seconded by Kathy Muskrat
Move to Item 25-1584 meeting minutes from the October 14, 2025, Visit Broken Arrow meeting

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Trevor Swanson, Sonja Schneider, Sarah Lopp, Kathy Muskrat, Ben Buie, Brian Dean

- B. 25-1585 Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of the Gatesway Powwow sponsorship request in the amount of \$4500**

Christina Watkins and Dawn Newrider from the Gatesway Foundation presented Item 25-1585. They reported on the success of their new annual fundraiser, which replaced the longtime balloon festival. Held over two days in October, it drew nearly 500 attendees despite

weather issues, with the second day moved indoors. They exceeded their goal for vendor participation, hosting 22 vendors instead of 10, and saw strong involvement from about a dozen tribes, community members, and individuals with disabilities, all celebrating together. Tribal participants have offered to help plan next year's event, scheduled for mid-November. The Foundation spent about \$10,000 to stage the fundraiser and brought in roughly \$11,000.

When asked whether the event netted \$11,000, Ms. Watkins confirmed that, including sponsorships and vendor fees—and assuming the \$4,500 sponsorship is finalized—the fundraiser will net that amount. It was then asked whether Gatesway is entirely done with the balloon festival, and she explained they ended it due to repeated weather failures and financial losses.

It was noted that the powwow is growing quickly and likely needs a larger venue in Broken Arrow, especially since attendees came from multiple states and stayed in local hotels. Ms. Watkins added that visitors spent time around town, which was a positive outcome for the city.

It was clarified that while the CVB board supported this year's event to help it get established, Gatesway should not expect the same level of funding in the future. The board explained that their room-night numbers don't meet standard criteria and that future requests will be evaluated under the same standards applied to all events.

MOTION: A motion was made Ben Buie, seconded by Brian Dean

Move to Approve Item 25-1585 the Gatesway Powwow sponsorship request in the amount of \$4500

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 -

Trevor Swanson, Sonja Schneider, Sarah Lopp, Kathy Muskrat, Ben Buie, Brian Dean

C. 25-1595

Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of the American Junior Golf Association Junior at Indian Springs hotel rebate request in an amount not to exceed \$15,000.

Makala Barton, Tourism Manager, presented Item 25-1595. The organizer of the junior golf tournament planned for August 2026 was unable to attend or present virtually, so staff asked that the item be tabled until next month. There's no urgency because the event is still far off, and they remain excited about its potential.

MOTION: A motion was made Ben Buie, seconded by Sonja Schneider

Move to Table Item 25-1595 Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of the American Junior Golf Association Junior at Indian Springs hotel rebate request in an amount not to exceed \$15,000.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 -

Trevor Swanson, Sonja Schneider, Sarah Lopp, Kathy Muskrat, Ben Buie, Brian Dean

D. 25-1608

Consideration, discussion, and possible approval of a film incentive rebate in an amount not to exceed \$35,172.94

Makala Barton, Tourism Manager, presented Item 25-1608. She introduced Mr. Randy Wayne to recap the film project. The production was initially approved for up to \$59,000, but after reviewing all receipts and eligible expenses, the final qualified amount was \$35,172.94.

Randy Wayne explained that filming in Broken Arrow went exceptionally well, with strong community support, excellent hotel accommodations, and a successful primary location at Stoney Creek. Additional scenes were filmed at a local gas station and through various driving

shots around town. After meeting with the board previously, the team chose to highlight more of Broken Arrow in the film, bringing in a drone operator to capture Main Street and other local businesses—footage that will now be included in the movie.

He emphasized that without the rebate, the film likely would not have been possible, or they would still be fundraising. The project is now in post-production, which typically takes about six months before release. He closed by thanking the board and offering to answer any questions.

Mr. Wayne said the film should be completed in about ten months, with another six months of post-production and additional time after that before release. Whether it will have a theatrical run is uncertain, as the buyer market changes constantly, though the film's horror-comedy genre increases its chances, since horror sells well internationally.

Because Broken Arrow's incentive program is a pilot and this was the first project to use it, he was asked for feedback. He said he actually appreciated the in-person, straightforward process—much simpler than many incentive programs, which are done online through lengthy submissions and audits. However, he strongly recommended developing clear bylaws or written qualification rules so productions can easily understand what counts as eligible spend. In other cities and states, filmmakers know exactly what qualifies, and his team usually helps refine those programs.

Mr. Wayne explained that some purchases they hoped to make locally couldn't be sourced in Broken Arrow because the film-industry infrastructure isn't fully built out yet. Still, they found at least one new local vendor and were glad the vendor benefited. He noted that having more vendors and crew based in Broken Arrow would strengthen the program. He also gave an example: Amazon purchases qualify for Oklahoma's state rebate because Amazon has a physical presence in the state. Still, purchases from companies without an Oklahoma footprint do not, so clarity on rules like that would help productions plan more effectively.

Ms. Barton said she agrees with Mr. Wayne's feedback because the program was built without deep industry expertise, so they kept it simple for staff, but learned a lot in the first run. She noted that the current rule—"spend in Broken Arrow"—needs refinement because some qualifying expenses, such as services, don't generate sales tax, yet still provide economic benefit to residents through income. She said they need to clarify whether qualifying spend should require sales tax generation or whether local labor and service income should be included as well.

Overall, the program worked better than expected, especially with the 20% bonus tied to using Stony Creek as a production space, which demonstrated the value of offering incentives for local production facilities. She said this first project highlighted areas where they can strengthen, adjust, and improve the rules if the program continues.

MOTION: A motion was made Ben Buie, seconded by Trevor Swanson

Move to Approve Item 25-1608, a film incentive rebate in an amount not to exceed \$35,172.94

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 -

Trevor Swanson, Sonja Schneider, Sarah Lopp, Kathy Muskrat, Ben Buie, Brian Dean

6. 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)

Lights On was a clear success, with turnout noticeably higher than last year's. Erin Hofener,

Marketing & Communications Coordinator, said they're still finalizing the numbers, but the event unquestionably grew. One attendee described how dense the crowd was—so much so that walking a single block took ten minutes. Another noted their store sales were dramatically higher than the previous year, despite being understaffed. The warm weather helped attendance, even if it made the ice rink struggle a bit. Overall, everyone agreed the event ran well, drew big crowds, and created a great atmosphere on Main Street.

7. Tourism Director Report Including Updates on the Following:

A. 25-1622 Presentation and discussion of the Tourism Manager's Report

Makala Barton, Tourism Manager, presented Item 25-1622. She reviewed October spending, including the final payment for the strategic plan, which Council approved the night before. Staff will now create an action plan to implement the three-year direction. Routine costs included Tulsa Chamber membership, Uber, and in-house fees. A new line was added to show the remaining uncommitted funds: \$36,500 left for hotel nights and sponsorship grants, and about \$23,000 left in the film-incentive fund after Horrified used less than expected. Several other productions are in contact but haven't requested funding; over the next six months, the board must decide whether to replenish the incentive program and how to budget for it in the long term. October hotel-tax revenue and occupancy both increased, continuing a positive trend. The first film festival committee meets tomorrow under the director Brad Heath. Upcoming events include the December 6 Christmas parade and the December 10 State of the City luncheon, with seating confirmations underway. Occupancy rose from 53.5% last September to 59.8%, and staff expect to regain access to state and national comparison data once CoStar is implemented. Finally, the sponsorship committee discussed the need for clear parameters for community-event funding, since, unlike hotel-night grants, these requests lack criteria, making consistent decision-making difficult.

The board discussed the need to overhaul its approach to community-event sponsorships. Members agreed that some recent awards—such as Gatesway's—should not be repeated next year because organizers must eventually sustain their events without ongoing subsidy. Ms. Barton explained that without clear criteria, requests vary widely, and the board ends up funding events with little attendance or economic impact simply because there are no rules defining eligibility or award amounts. She emphasized the need for measurable standards, such as attendance, demonstrable economic implications, or other proof of community benefit.

They also noted that most of this year's spending has gone to community events rather than hotel-night-driven tourism, which is not sustainable given their funding structure. They discussed implementing a three-year tapering model so that returning events automatically receive smaller awards, or tying awards to performance metrics that incentivize organizers to grow attendance and improve marketing.

A key problem identified is the overlap between cash grants and waived city service fees. The current language says events cannot receive both, but without coordination, some events lost fee waivers and were instead granted cash, which unnecessarily strained VBA's budget. Ms. Barton and staff plan to work with Community Development to ensure that fee waivers are used first whenever possible, reserving cash grants only when waivers are unavailable. The committee will continue refining a structured system so decisions are fair, consistent, and aligned with actual economic benefit.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 p.m.

MOTION: A motion was made by Brian Dean, seconded by Ben Buie

Move to Adjourn

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 -

Trevor Swanson, Sonja Schneider, Sarah Lopp, Kathy Muskrat, Ben Buie, Brian Dean

Chairperson

Secretary