



**City of Broken Arrow
Minutes
Drainage Advisory
Committee**

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

**Chair Lori Hendricks
Vice Chair Denise Mason
Member Amber Hamilton
Member Johnnie Parks
Member Donna Wallace
Member David Pickel
Member Madison Hicks**

Monday, April 27, 2026

Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Chair Lori Hendricks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks
Absent: 3 - Amber Hamilton, Donna Wallace, Denise Mason

3. Consideration of Consent Agenda

A. 26-549 Approval of Drainage Advisory Committee special meeting minutes of February 23, 2026

MOTION: A motion was made by David Pickel, seconded by Madison Hicks

Move to Approve Consent Agenda

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks

4. Consideration of Items Removed from Consent Agenda - NONE

5. Presentations - NONE

6. General Committee Business

A. 26-569 Consideration, discussion, and possible action to recommend to Council to expend funds to survey an area near the intersection of Elm and Washington to assist in in-house design of a drainage system (Case No. 26-011)

Kenny Schwab, Assistant City Manager of Operations, presented Item 26-569, and the discussion focused on a long-standing drainage issue affecting a residential property near a commercial shopping center built decades ago without modern stormwater standards. He explained that runoff from the parking lot overwhelms an undersized and partially blocked drainage system, causing flooding into a nearby home. While temporary fixes have helped, they are not sufficient in the long term.

The proposed solution is to begin with a \$12,000 design phase, including surveying, securing easements, and evaluating a larger, modern drainage system. The improvement would be located on the commercial property, and staff expressed confidence that the property owner would cooperate.

MOTION: A motion was made by Johnnie Parks, seconded by David Pickel

Move to Approve Item 26-569 action to recommend to Council to expend funds to survey an area near the intersection of Elm and Washington to assist in in-house design of a drainage system (Case No. 26-011)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks

B. 26-570 Consideration, discussion, and possible action to recommend to Council to expend funds for conceptual report and possible preliminary design of a drainage solution. (Case No. 26-012)

He explained that while parts of the area fall within alleyway or limited right-of-way that the city maintains, much of the creek extends beyond those boundaries, leaving sections unmanaged. Utilities like overhead power lines further complicate maintenance, as vegetation is only cleared around those lines.

To address the immediate problem, staff requested approximately \$50,000 to clear and restore the channel, including working carefully around the overhead lines. This would help reestablish proper water flow and reduce ongoing property damage, though it is more of a maintenance fix compared to the larger design-focused project discussed earlier.

The discussion clarified that an easement does not fully cover the drainage path, meaning the city cannot freely access the entire channel. Only small portions—like the alley—are publicly accessible, so any cleanup work depends on getting permission from all affected property owners.

Members acknowledged this is a legacy issue from very old development (dating back to the early 1900s), where drainage was never formally planned or dedicated. While the city can fund a one-time cleanup now, they emphasized this is not something the city can repeatedly maintain.

To address that, the proposed solution is to create a formal agreement with property owners stating that they are responsible for keeping the drainage area clear in the future. That agreement could be recorded with the property, so future owners are also aware. If an easement is eventually established, it would also give the city the ability to step in, perform maintenance if needed, and recover costs if property owners fail to maintain it.

Steven Jones, a resident of Broken Arrow, shared firsthand experience showing how severe and worsening the drainage problem has become. Since 2015, he's seen the channel progressively clog with debris, partly due to utility crews cutting vegetation but leaving it behind, which then accumulates and blocks water flow.

He described significant flooding in his backyard—up to about 18 inches—causing damage to fences and carrying large debris through the area, even recounting a jet ski that floated through during a storm. Mr. Jones' comments reinforced that the situation has escalated beyond what homeowners can manage and highlighted the urgency of clearing and maintaining the drainage channel.

The discussion focused on long-term responsibility and enforcement after the channel is cleared. While everyone supported using current funds for a one-time cleanup, there was concern about what happens afterward since the city cannot keep paying to maintain it repeatedly.

The proposed solution is to formalize responsibility with property owners. Officials suggested not only sending letters but also recording an agreement with the property at the courthouse, so future buyers are aware that maintaining the drainage area is their obligation. This creates continuity beyond current ownership.

They also clarified that if an easement or agreement is in place, the city would retain the right to step in if maintenance is neglected, perform the work, and charge the cost back to the property owners, even placing a lien if necessary. This provides enforcement without requiring ongoing public funding.

Additionally, there was discussion about holding the utility company accountable for debris left behind when they trim around power lines, since that contributes to the blockage.

Overall, the committee agreed on a balanced approach: use public funds now to fix a problem that has grown beyond individual control, but shift long-term maintenance responsibility to property owners with clear legal backing.

MOTION: A motion was made by Johnnie Parks, seconded by David Pickel
Move to Approve Item 26-571 action to recommend to Council to expend funds for clearing of an overgrown channel (Case No. 26-008)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 -

Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks

D. 26-574

Consideration, discussion, and possible action to recommend to Council to expend funds to hire a consulting engineer to design a storm sewer system north west of the Houston St and Midway Rd to help alleviate the surface groundwater and to use any remaining funds to go towards construction (Case No. 26-010)

intended outlet (Covington Creek). The concern is that without a broader fix, the problem could persist or worsen over time due to longer-lasting runoff from the new development.

MOTION: A motion was made by Madison Hicks, seconded by Johnnie Parks
Move to Approve Item 26-574 action to recommend to Council to expend funds to hire a consulting engineer to design a storm sewer system north west of the Houston St and Midway Rd to help alleviate the surface groundwater, and to use any remaining funds to go towards construction (Case No. 26-010)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 -

Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks

E. 26-575

Consideration, discussion, and possible action to recommend to Council to expend funds to assist with clearing of a portion of Aspen Creek to restore functionality of drainage path and protect City Utilities (Case No. 26-007)

David Reed, Project Manager, Stormwater Department, presented Item 26-575. This item involves a floodplain and creek maintenance issue near West Jasper and Aspen in the Indian Springs area, close to the Arkansas River. Two property owners are affected.

The main problems are: First, fallen trees and debris have accumulated in the creek (Adams/Aspen Creek), restricting flow and increasing the risk of flooding. Second, there is a serious erosion issue exposing a sanitary sewer crossing. What was originally buried is now fully exposed, with water flowing beneath it after several feet of erosion—creating a potential infrastructure risk. Third, the homeowners are experiencing ongoing bank erosion and are requesting help stabilizing (armoring) the creek banks to prevent further loss of land.

Because this is a floodplain with a designated stream, any work will require regulatory coordination, including likely approval under a nationwide permit and a local floodplain development permit.

The city is already coordinating internally on the sewer issue. Still, the request before the board is specifically for: clearing the downed trees and debris, and helping stabilize the creek banks.

Overall, this is more of a maintenance and erosion control project, but with added complexity due to floodplain regulations and the exposed utility crossing.

Steve Abernathy, a resident of Broken Arrow, described a long-term but rapidly worsening erosion and drainage problem along Aspen Creek, largely driven by upstream development. He explained that when nearby neighborhoods like Iron Horse and Chestnut Creek were built, the volume and intensity of water flow increased significantly, turning what used to be a manageable creek into what he called a “raging river” during storms.

Over time, that increased flow has undercut the creek banks, causing major erosion and the loss of large, mature trees that once helped stabilize the soil. As those trees fall, the erosion accelerates further, deepening the channel and making the problem worse. He emphasized that the creek now carries water constantly and behaves very differently than it did decades ago.

He also highlighted a critical infrastructure concern: a sanitary sewer line that was originally supposed to be buried is now exposed due to erosion, creating risk and showing how much the landscape has changed.

Mr. Abernathy shared that he has personally taken significant steps to try to stabilize the area—moving dozens of truckloads of concrete and reinforcing the banks—but noted that the scale of the problem has grown beyond what homeowners can realistically handle. Removing fallen trees and stabilizing the creek would require heavy equipment and coordinated effort.

Overall, his message was that upstream development has altered drainage patterns, increasing flow downstream, and while residents have done what they can, they now need city assistance to prevent further erosion, protect infrastructure, and stabilize the creek for the future.

The discussion clarified that while Aspen Creek runs through private property, it falls under the City of Broken Arrow jurisdiction because it contains a major sanitary sewer line, making maintenance important for both drainage and infrastructure protection.

Members emphasized that clearing trees alone isn't enough; the plan would also include erosion control measures like riprap to stabilize the highly erodible “sugar sand” soil and protect the exposed sewer line. They noted that ongoing road and intersection construction nearby is separate from this issue, but makes this an ideal time to address the creek problem comprehensively.

The proposed \$75,000 project would cover clearing debris and adding protection, while also coordinating with property owners and holding a public meeting to gather input. Overall, the

MOTION: A motion was made by David Pickel, seconded by Madison Hicks
Move to Approve Item 26-576 action to recommend to Council to expend funds to obtain a feasibility study to assess the health of a channel in the Aspen Pond subdivision (Case No. 26-013)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 -

Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks

G. 26-572

Consideration, discussion, and possible action to recommend approval to Council to expend funds to design mitigation plans for the outlet structure at the Boy Scout pond near 23rd St and New Orleans St. (Case No. 26-009)

Kenny Schwab, Assistant City Manager of Operations, presented Item 26-572. This discussion explains the complex drainage system at the Boy Scout camp area in Broken Arrow, shaped by both natural creek flow and historical mining.

Originally, Broken Arrow Creek flowed through this area, but strip mining in the 1930s–40s altered its path, creating pits that now act like ponds. As a result, the creek was partially diverted around the pits, while some water still drains into them.

Today, during heavy rain, water from multiple sources converges: the main creek flow, local drainage from surrounding areas, and runoff that fills the old strip pits, effectively turning them into temporary lakes. These flows eventually combine and pass through culverts, reaching volumes of around 4,000 cubic feet per second, which is a very large, fast-moving, and erosive flow.

To manage this, the Boy Scouts have invested heavily in improvements, including a weir (low dam) to control pond water levels, a low-water crossing, and structured outflow systems to direct water safely.

Overall, the system works, but it is highly complex and heavily influenced by past land changes, meaning large storm events still create powerful, potentially damaging flows.

The members focused on the serious drainage and erosion issue at the Boy Scout camp, where an artificial pond and outlet system is being overwhelmed during major storms.

The current setup includes a low-water crossing and weir, which works under normal conditions but cannot handle large storm events (like a 100-year storm). When that happens, water backs up, overtops the structure, and flows around it—often carrying debris like large logs that clog the system and worsen erosion.

This creates two major concerns: First, significant erosion around the outlet structure, which threatens the improvements the Boy Scouts have already invested in. Second, and more critically, downstream infrastructure risk. Just downstream is a major trunk sewer serving much of the area, including NSU and large portions of Wagoner County. If that sewer were damaged, it could disrupt service for a large region.

Because of these risks, the goal is not to completely stop flooding—which isn't realistic—but to better protect the existing structure from erosion, and/or increase capacity or improve flow conditions to reduce overtopping and downstream damage.

To explore solutions, staff is requesting \$70,000 for engineering design, which would evaluate options like reinforcing the structure, modifying the pond/outlet system, or increasing detention capacity.

In short, this is about protecting critical infrastructure and reducing erosion in a system that was never designed to handle extreme storm flows.

Art Hawkins, the executive director of the Indian Nations Council, who owns this property, explained that the Boy Scout camp's drainage problems have worsened over time due to increased upstream water flow, not just normal erosion.

The weir system, built in 2008, originally worked well. Still, around 2014–2015, it began failing as higher volumes of water started overtopping it, washing out both sides and forcing repeated, costly repairs with rock that haven't solved the root issue.

He believes the main cause is altered upstream drainage, including an artificial channel diverting water from Broken Arrow Creek into their system, and land clearing and regrading north of the property, which increased runoff into the site.

As a result, the camp now receives far more water than the system was designed to handle, leading to erosion around the weir, damage extending downstream (including flooding over New Orleans Street), and ongoing maintenance costs that are unsustainable.

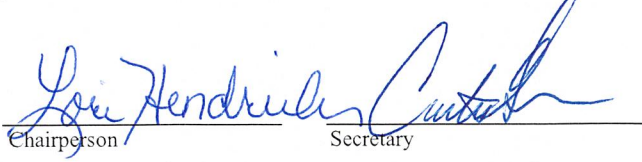
MOTION: A motion was made by Johnnie Parks, seconded by David Pickel

Move to Adjourn

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 -

Madison Hicks, David Pickel, Johnnie Parks, Lori Hendricks


Chairperson Secretary