

Aug. 25, 2026

Council approves naming archery park after Derichsweiler

Councilors voted to approve a Resolution to name the McAlester Archery Park located at 2350 West Highway 270 as "The Bill Derichsweiler Archery Park," honoring the late William Morris "Bill" Derichsweiler for his contributions to the facility and his longstanding service to the McAlester community.

The request was submitted by the City's Community Services Department with support from David Donoley of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Railroad. Derichsweiler played a role in the original development of the archery park by helping secure railroad ties at no cost to the City. Working with Donoley and A-OK Railroad, he helped arrange for the donated materials, which City crews transported from Wilburton to McAlester. The railroad ties were then used to construct the heavy timber safety backstop behind the main target line and other portions of the facility.

Councilman Billy Jack Boatright, who was directly involved in constructing the park during his more than 40 years of service with the City, spoke in support of the naming request during an Aug. 18 Planning Commission meeting. He described Derichsweiler as a personal friend and someone who consistently worked to help the community.

Derichsweiler was a lifelong McAlester resident and served 25 years in the U.S. Navy Reserves. He was also a local State Farm insurance agent and was active in community service. His volunteer work included serving as a past president of the McAlester Boys and Girls Club, and supporting the Knights of Columbus, Good Samaritan Outreach Men's Shelter, Hope House and E-Angel program.

The McAlester Planning Commission voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the full facility name change, and no one spoke in opposition during the public hearing. Replacement signage for the newly named park will be privately funded at no cost to the City. Community Services also confirmed there were no objections from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation regarding the name change.

The Council's approval formally establishes "The Bill Derichsweiler Archery Park" as the facility's new name and recognizes Derichsweiler's role in helping create the park while preserving the legacy of his broader civic and charitable service to McAlester.

Upcoming events

Aug. 29
Southeast Oklahoma Cornhole Tournament
— Multiple times
— Southeast Expo

Aug. 29
The Traveling Comic Book Store
— 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
— Hampton Inn

Aug. 29
Grief Release Gathering
— 6-8 p.m.
— Chadick Park

Sept. 4
DRMF SPOTLIGHTSERIES: James McMurtry
— 8:30 p.m.
— Spaceship Earth Coffee

Sept. 8
Pittsburg County Free Fair
— Multiple times
— Southeast Expo

Check out more events at travelmcalester.com!

Council Report details elements in the latest McAlester City Council meeting as part of the city's efforts to broaden communication with the public. City council meetings are open to the public, with agendas, minutes, packets and more information available at www.cityofmcalester.com and www.mcalesterok.portal.civicclerk.com. Action reported in these updates is tentative until the Council approves the meeting minutes at the next meeting.

More info

Anyone can view the full agenda, the agenda packet, or the livestream of each meeting online in our new portal through CivicPlus. Check it out at https://mcalesterok.portal.civicclerk.com/.

Actions reported here are tentative until the council approves the meeting minutes.

Did you know...

Citizens can sign up to receive alerts from the City of McAlester and to submit service requests to the City.

The City's app, McAlester Connect, is available in the app store for citizens to receive notifications, submit service requests, and more.

Anyone can download the app by searching for "McAlester Connect" in your app store on your phone.

Then create an account to start submitting requests for City services and to stay updated on everything going on in the City of McAlester.

Consent agenda

Council members voted on the following under the consent agenda:

- Approval of minutes from the Aug. 11, 2026, regular council meeting;
- Approval of claims for Aug. 5-18, 2026;
- Acknowledge the destruction of the listed found property in accordance with the City of McAlester City Code Section 66-28 b and c.;
- Indefinitely postpone Tort Claim No. 219102-1-LR, filed by the City of McAlester;
- Concur with Oklahoma Municipal Assurance Group (OMAG) recommendation to deny Tort Claim No. 218787-1-LR, filed by John Hardy;
- Approval of a three-year service agreement with Velocity EHS for renewal of SDS/chemical management services.

More council action

• Councilors received and accepted the annual actuarial funding report and GASB 67/68 financial reporting statements for the City's Defined Benefit Retirement Plan and Trust. As of July 1, 2026, the plan had approximately $15.84 million in market-value assets against $14.49 million in actuarial accrued liabilities, resulting in a 109.3% funded ratio on a market-value basis and 99.2% on an actuarial-value basis. The annual required contribution for FY 2026-27 dropped substantially to $16,823, compared with $355,478 the prior year, while the GASB report showed the plan's net position exceeded its total pension liability by approximately $1.35 million.

• Councilors voted to approve accepting DWSRF Project #13, Kinkead Water System Improvements, as complete and authorizing the Mayor to sign the required closeout documents and final pay applications. The project replaced a frequently broken water line running from the Peaceable Avenue area to Kinkead Road and was completed within about 10% of the project budget. Previous change orders addressed unforeseen conditions, including difficulty locating portions of the existing line, and the project has now passed final inspection. Council's acceptance begins the two-year warranty period and includes final payments totaling $112,240.40 to Pinnacle Construction.

• Councilors voted to approve Change Order #1 for $66,750 to Lone Hickory Cattle, LLC for DWSRF Project #20A Phase I, Choctaw Water System Improvements. The change order moves a portion of already-planned Phase 2 water line work into Phase 1 near the Sixth Street intersection so the utility work can be completed ahead of upcoming street construction and better accommodate construction detours. Because the additional work was already included as bid line items in the project, it could be extended into the current phase without rebidding, increasing the Phase I contract from $308,475 to $375,225.

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Did you know...

The City of McAlester Senior Center offers a daily lunch program, plus tons of activities each week and month, like bingo, dominoes, bunco, a monthly jamboree, various card games, board games, low-impact senior fitness, and more.

Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. at the J.I. Stipe Center and the suggested donation is $2 per meal. Lunch schedules are posted weekly on the City's Facebook page.

Anyone at least 60 years old is eligible to register, or to be registered by a loved one, by calling 918-715-3442.

More council action

• Councilors voted to approve a sidewalk café permit for Urban Wineworks at 115 E. Choctaw Ave. The outdoor seating area had previously been permitted but had fallen out of compliance, prompting the City to request a new application for the existing café setup. City staff and the Building Inspector verified that the current layout meets ADA accessibility requirements following the Choctaw Avenue streetscape improvements, while previously approved variances remain in effect for the canopy and related features.

• Councilors heard from Chief Financial Officer Sherri Swift on the City's July 2026 financial update, the first month of the new fiscal year. The General Fund collected approximately $1.7 million in revenue, or 10% of the annual budget, while expenditures totaled about $1.9 million, or 10.3%, with higher early-year expenses attributed in part to annual contracts paid at the beginning of the fiscal year. The McAlester Public Works Authority generated just over $1 million in revenue while recording about $400,000 in expenditures, resulting in a net increase of approximately $481,000 after transfers. Pooled cash accounts totaled nearly $26 million as of July 31, while the Emergency Fund remained approximately $600,000 below the charter-required minimum. July sales tax collections exceeded projections by about $24,000 and the same month last year by $76,000, while use tax collections were about $20,000 above projections and nearly $57,000 higher than the prior year. Hotel tax collections also finished approximately $8,000 above projections for the month.

• Councilors voted to approve amending Chapter 26, Cemeteries, Division 2, Sections 26-48 and 26-52 of the McAlester City Code regarding the Cemetery Board. The changes reduce the board from seven members to five voting members, allow for a nonvoting advisory member, and permit each McAlester funeral home to designate a nonvoting representative to help avoid potential conflicts when matters such as cemetery fees are discussed. Council also amended the meeting language by removing the word "quarterly," with regular meetings to continue at 2 p.m. on the first Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November at the J.I. Stipe Center.

• Councilors voted to approve amending Ordinance No. 2878, which proposes increasing the City of McAlester lodging tax to 10% subject to voter approval. The amendment changes the proposed effective date from Jan. 1, 2027, to April 1, 2027, allowing the Oklahoma Tax Commission the required 90 days to notify lodging businesses following the Nov. 3 election. The tax increase will only take effect if approved by a majority of McAlester voters on Nov. 3, 2026.

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Did you know...

You can register your storm shelter with McAlester/Pittsburg County Emergency Management to help first responders locate you in case of severe weather or a tornado.

By registering your shelter, you're giving emergency personnel the exact location of your safe space so they can check on you and your loved ones if a disaster strikes.

Registration is free and only takes a few minutes. For more info, contact the Emergency Management office at 918-423-5655 or emergencymanagement@pittsburgcountyem.org.

Staff report

Councilors heard from Community Development Director Jayme Clifton on the ongoing update to the City's Land Development Code, which serves as the primary framework governing land use, setbacks, building heights, parking, subdivision design, signage and other development standards.

Clifton said many existing regulations date to the 1960s and 1970s and are being comprehensively modernized to better implement the City's 2019 comprehensive plan, reduce unnecessary interpretations and variances, and better support current development and economic growth. The City and consultant Freese and Nichols are currently in the first phase of the project, which includes reviewing existing regulations, gathering public and stakeholder feedback, and identifying challenges and potential solutions.

Early themes include modernizing permitted land uses, allowing greater mixed-use flexibility, adjusting lot dimensions and setbacks, expanding housing options, and streamlining subdivision and development review. A roughly 60-page diagnostic report is being finalized and will incorporate feedback from the Aug. 6 stakeholder meetings and community open house, along with responses to the public survey.

The public survey will remain open through Sept. 9, and residents may also provide location-specific comments through an interactive map on the project website at https://www.cityofmcalester.com/LDCsurvey.

Clifton said the next major step is expected to be a joint City Council and Planning Commission work session, tentatively planned for the week of Oct. 20, to review the diagnostic findings before the project moves into code development and drafting.

Workshop

Councilors discussed several topics during the workshop, with no formal action taken.

Council reviewed recommendations from the Community Advisory Committee related to homelessness, including connecting people with available services while also addressing public safety concerns, disruptive behavior and misuse of public spaces.

Councilors discussed vacancies and participation challenges on the Parks Board, including the need for members who can attend meetings regularly and help identify projects and funding opportunities.

Council also discussed whether to pursue a future vote on an additional sales tax dedicated to street repair and maintenance. Members emphasized public education, transparency and input from the Street Advisory Commission before moving forward.

Councilors also reviewed vacancies on the Parking Authority Board of Trustees and whether the authority should continue with new appointments or be dissolved.

City council

The McAlester City Council is comprised of six Council members and Mayor elected by the citizens of the city.

The Council is responsible for setting the goals, policies, and laws (ordinances) of the City, and hires and supervises the City Manager, who acts as CEO of the City in managing the day-to-day operations.

The McAlester City Council meets regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers on the first floor of City Hall at 28 E. Washington Ave., McAlester, OK 74501.

Council meetings are open to the public and available on the City of McAlester's YouTube Channel.

Citizens can check in which ward they reside on the city wards map, check out how to contact a council member, and view meetings dates and information online at www.cityofmcalester.com by clicking on Government tab and then clicking the City Council page.

Council Members



Justin Few
Mayor



Levi Gilmore
1st Ward



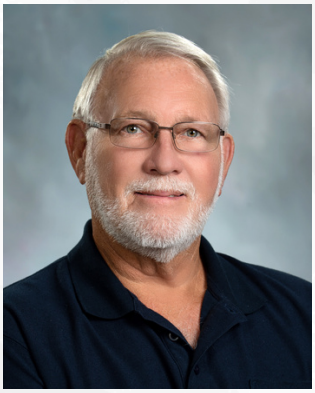
Robin Woodley
2nd Ward



Chris Stone
3rd Ward



Janet Wansick
4th Ward



Billy Jack Boatright
5th Ward



Kevin Beaty
6th Ward
Vice Mayor