



**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTIES OF KAUFMAN AND HUNT
TOWN OF POETRY, TEXAS**

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT ON THIS DAY OF THE 17th of July 2025 at 5:30 pm, the Town Council of Poetry, Texas, held a Workshop & Regular Town Council Meeting at Poetry Community Christian School, 18688 FM 986 Poetry, Texas 75160 with the following present:

A. Mayor Jaffe called the public meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken by Mayor Jaffe. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Terry Fowler, Councilmembers Tom Anderson, Doug Kendrick, Tracie Hibbs and Dale Bryant.

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation: Councilmember Terry Fowler

B. Workshop Agenda:

1. 2025-2026 Budget Preparation Discussion (Secretary Theresa Scholander in attendance during workshop)
 - Preparation of the FY2025–2026 budget, which must be finalized and filed with the county by September 30. Preliminary revenue projections were reviewed, including historical data, and current outstanding obligations. Secretary Teresa provided updated income figures and estimates, as well as a projected carryover of approximately \$61,785 from the current fiscal year.
Revenues were detailed, including franchise fees, sales tax, and solid waste fees. A 3% increase is anticipated in solid waste income. The projected total income stands at approximately \$344,800.
Transparency in financial reporting was emphasized, and specific budget categories were suggested to improve clarity, including a distinction between capital and operational expenses for roads, and detailed professional services accounts (engineering, legal, consulting). Challenges in monthly budgeting due to timing and variability in project execution were addressed, as the town uses a modified cash basis for accounting. Potential future costs, such as impact fee studies, cybersecurity insurance (recommended increase from \$1,250 to \$1,850), and projected road improvement funding, remain the town's top infrastructure priority. Council has agreed to gather and submit specific funding needs for their areas of responsibility to Teresa for inclusion in the next budget draft. Additional workshops are planned to finalize allocations and goals prior to approval.

Council recess at 6:40 pm – resumed at 6:45 pm

C. Items of Community Interests:

Pursuant to Section 551.0415 of the Texas Government Code, the Town Council may report of the following items: 1) expression of thanks, congratulations, or condolences; 2) information about holiday schedules; 3) recognition of individuals; 4) reminders of upcoming Town Council events; 5) about community events, and 6) announcements involving an imminent threat to public health and safety.

1. Thank you to the volunteer road crew for helping pothole repairs on CR249 and CR2458 on July 3rd, CM Fowler, Josh Knight, Debbie Emard, Trevor Kroeger, Jimmy and DJ Johnson, David Potts, CM Kendrick, JT West, Mike Griffin, CM Bryant, Kenny Hibbs, and Sue Jaffe
2. Thank you to Hunt County Precinct 2 road crew.
3. Thank you to David Emard for helping with Sound and Video.
4. Thank you to Scott, Lora and Zoe Lehew for helping with meeting setup.
5. Thank you to PCCS for hosting us.
- **Update on Poetry shooting incidents from July 2024 - January 2025** – Tom Anderson provided an update on the trial and sentencing for shooting incidents on CR 2440 where Jesus Cruz Monje had been recklessly shooting into occupied houses. He was subsequently arrested and convicted on the charge of “Deadly conduct discharge of a firearm”, a third-degree felony. He was sentenced to 4 years in prison, and it is anticipated that he will subsequently be deported as he is apparently here in the country illegally.

D. Reports:

1. Financial
 - a. P&L Budget vs Actual Jun '25
 - b. Bank Reconciliation Summary Jun '25
 - c. Bank Reconciliation Detail Jun '25
 - d. Sales & Use Tax Report Jun '25
2. Roads update
 - Volunteer crews worked on Roads 249 and 3458. Hunt County repaired Roads 2426, 2326, and the intersection at 2400, with plans to continue along 2400 and roads near Grande Verde. Green Meadow and Four Post Lane are beyond pothole repair. Council is working with the respective counties to explore options. Full resurfacing is not currently affordable. Past patching methods have not held well, and new potholes often form nearby. Going forward, council will work to rely more on county crews, who have the equipment and resources to handle roadwork more effectively.

E. Consent Agenda

All items under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Council and will be approved by a single motion. If discussion is desired on an item, it will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately as part of the Regular Agenda.

1. Approve Minutes of June 19, 2025 Executive Session & Regular Meeting
 - Moved to Regular Agenda for further discussion. Motion to move made by Councilmember Hibbs with a second by Councilmember Kendrick. Vote not taken
2. Approve Nichols Jackson 6/30/25 legal bill (\$430.00 lawsuit, \$592.00 other) = \$1,022.00
 - Motion to approve made by Councilmember Anderson with a second by Councilmember Fowler. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Regular Agenda (item sponsor)

0. Approve Minutes of June 19, 2025 Executive Session & Regular Meeting (moved from Consent Agenda)

- Corrections needed addressed by Councilmember Anderson. Motion to approve June 19th minutes with the added corrections made by Councilmember Hibbs with a second made by Councilmember Anderson. Motion passed unanimously.

1. Discuss and take action as necessary on Quickbooks upgrade (Mayor)

Our current desktop version of Quickbooks 2021 is out of date. This proposal will move us to Quickbooks "Plus" Online along with their "Core" payroll module. Our auditors have approved using Quickbooks online.

- Council discussed upgrading from the outdated QuickBooks Desktop 2021 to QuickBooks Online, which is now the only supported version. The upgrade would include adding the payroll module to streamline processes and improve accuracy. The transition offers benefits such as role-based access, integration with budgeting tools, live support, and better financial tracking. The total estimated cost is \$1,690.50 for the first year and \$2,136 annually thereafter.

- Citizen Tara Senkevech

Expressed concern with accounting software price increases, noting a jump from \$300 to \$3,500 with Sage Peachtree. She suggested QuickBooks may follow a similar pricing model. She raised questions about whether QuickBooks' payroll module fully handles tax filings like Gusto does or if manual input would still be required.

Motion to move the accounting software from the desktop version to online made by Councilmember Kendrick with a second made by Councilmember Anderson. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Discuss and take action as necessary on next steps for P&Z implementation (Mayor)

Prior Council passed "Zoning Ordinance 2024-03-01" on 3/21/24. We need to begin laying out our P&Z plan including next steps.

- Discussion on next steps for implementing the zoning ordinance passed in March 2024. The goal is to explore how to activate and enforce the ordinance, which is currently in place but not fully operational. Mayor Jaffe emphasized that this is not a discussion about removing or changing zoning, but about making it functional, developing processes, permits, and communication for residents. Citizen Robin Followell was asked to share her experience with zoning in municipalities. Discussion item – no vote needed.

- Citizen Tara Senkevech

Expressed concern about adding permits and regulations in rural areas, noting that many locals prefer minimal oversight. She referred to other small towns, like Talty, where limited zoning enforcement has worked effectively, citing low violation rates. While preferring county oversight, she acknowledged that, due to legal obligations stemming from the previously adopted zoning ordinance, some regulatory steps must move forward—even if unpopular.

- Citizen Ryan Lutes

Voiced caution about moving too quickly with zoning enforcement, emphasizing the need to understand the scope and scale of implementation. He expressed concern about expanding government unnecessarily and suggested evaluating when zoning becomes essential based on population or development trends, to avoid investing time and resources in a problem that may not yet exist.

3. Discuss and take action as necessary on Code of Conduct/Ethics resolution for Council. (Mayor)

2 ½ years ago Council considered implementing a Code of Ethics resolution that would establish standards for Council, Town Employees and Committee Members. This is a continuation of that effort. We'll look at and consider our draft as well as some from other Texas towns.

- Discussion around the need for a Code of Conduct and Ethics for council members, employees, and committee volunteers. A previous draft was deemed overly complicated. Council agreed the new version should be short, simple, and focused on setting clear expectations rather than enforcing strict penalties.

Councilmember Anderson and Mayor Pro Tem Fowler volunteered to draft a revised version, ideally under 500 words, using examples from other towns as inspiration. No formal action was taken beyond assigning the task.

- Citizen Ryan Lutes

Mr. Lutes urged the council to keep the Code of Conduct simple but not overly narrow, that policies are necessary to address behavior from those who may not follow common-sense expectations. He emphasized the importance of having clear rules to ensure accountability.

4. Discuss and take action as necessary on \$615.33 shortfall in Volunteer Road Crew funding (Mayor)

In reconciling our volunteer road crew funding for this fiscal year we determined that there was an overspend of \$615.33, based on approved funding. In the past, this approval and spending was tracked and documented outside of our accounting system. Going forward it will be integrated into it allowing greater accountability.

- Secretary Teresa reviewed the past year's minutes and compiled all council-approved expenditures for the volunteer road crew. After reconciling approved funds and actual expenses, it was found the town is short by \$615.33, largely due to a missed entry from July 2024 for cold patch material. To reconcile the budget and bring the road crew account to zero, council is requested to approve an additional \$615.33. The funds would come from the general fund. Moving forward, all expenditures will be tracked in QuickBooks using a purchase order (PO)-style system to prevent discrepancies. Council also expressed interest in tracking spending by road for better citizen transparency.

Councilman Anderson made a motion to approve the \$615.33, seconded by Councilman Fowler. The motion passed unanimously.

F. General Public Comments

Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. If a translator is needed, the speaker may be given up to four (4) minutes. Sign up is required in advance either in-person prior to the start of the meeting or by emailing your comments to speak@poetrytexas.org at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting. The Texas Open Meetings Act restricts council members from discussing items not posted on the agenda. Action or responses to your remarks by council members (if not a

posted agenda item) are limited to either a statement of fact or recitation of an existing policy or a proposal to place the subject on the agenda for a future meeting.

- Citizen Tara Senkevech

Praised the volunteer road crew for their recent work, noting the roads look much better and acknowledging the effort involved. She said that residents are still contacting her and saying that they found the bank reconciliation reports confusing and suggested the format of the month-end reports for greater transparency and detail. She expressed her thoughts on the importance of clarity in the financial reports and the audit expenses. She wondered why the pending grant was not addressed in the budget discussion and urged the council to plan for a grant administrator and engineer, noting the process could take up to three months.

Mayor Jaffe responded by explaining that going forward, all financial reports will be generated directly from QuickBooks to ensure accuracy and consistency. Manually typed reports or separate formats will no longer be used, as they increase the risk of errors. Any future month-end or detailed financial reporting will also originate from QuickBooks, the town's official accounting system.

- Citizen Shelley Smith

Shared concerns about the town's limited revenue and the likely need for a future property tax. Using her own property and those of two neighbors as examples, she highlighted disparities in potential tax burdens, ranging from \$4 to \$1,812 annually, based on property size, exemptions, and boundary lines. She feels that many residents may not be aware of how a flat rate tax would impact them and suggested more public awareness.

- Citizen Robin Followell

Expressed gratitude for the road work on CR 2326 and appreciation for upcoming plans for CR 2400. She thanked town staff for their support and praised the new public comment sign-up sheet for its ease of use. She is excited for potential committees and workshops and offered to volunteer. She is concerned about the costs of grant administration and engineering and feels that it should be considered in budget planning.

She disagrees with the public remarks made by the former mayor, expressing that it is disrespectful to the newly elected council. She said that voters chose the current leadership and feels there should be greater respect and support for the new mayor and council.

- Dennis Jenkins

As resident of CR 249, he requested an update on a petition submitted last month and asked the council to support it alongside DPS and the sheriff's office. He recommended replacing "No Through Trucks with Weight Limit" signs with simpler "No Through Trucks" signs, making enforcement easier and helping preserve roads. He also suggested notifying Google Maps to reroute truck traffic.

Mayor Jaffe explained that enforcement of truck restrictions does not require scales, as it is based on a vehicle's Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR), which is listed on the truck itself. The mayor also confirmed that the petition is being actively reviewed in coordination with officials from all three counties.

- Ryan Lutes

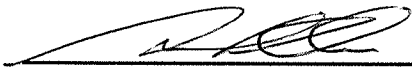
Questioned the need for an additional on-the-ground survey, noting that a legal survey has already been completed. They pointed out that most towns only conduct such surveys when

necessary, particularly in cases involving property rights, and urged the council to carefully consider all spending decisions.

G. Adjournment

Note: The Town Council reserves the right to meet in Executive Session closed to the public at any time in the course of this meeting to discuss matters listed on the agenda, as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, including Sec. 551.071 (private consultation with the attorney for the Town); Sec. 551.072 (purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property); Sec. 551.074 (personnel or to hear complaints against personnel); Sec. 551.076 (deployment, or specific occasions for implementation of security personnel or devices); and Sec. 551.087 (economic development negotiations). Any decision held on such matters will be taken or conducted in Open Session following the conclusion of the Executive Session.

The Town Council meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm



Mike Jaffe, Mayor



Anne E. Hamilton, Town Secretary