



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

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT ON THIS DAY OF THE 18th of September 2025 at 5:30 pm, the Town Council of Poetry, Texas, held a Budget Public Hearing and 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. He explained that the meeting would begin with a public hearing regarding the 2025-2026 budget. Roll call was taken by Mayor Jaffe. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Terry Fowler, Council Members Tom Anderson, Doug Kendrick, Tracie Hibbs and Dale Bryant.

Pledge of Allegiance: Councilmember Tracie Hibbs

Invocation: Councilmember Tom Anderson

B. Budget Public Hearing (*approx. 1 hr. – no public comments*)

1. Discuss and take action on proposed 2025-2026 Budget and Ordinance (Hibbs/Kendrick)

Mayor Jaffe explained that the budget must be discussed in a public meeting under the Texas Open Meetings Act, where the council would review it and then take public comments. He explained the budget setup this year has been adjusted from what everyone might be used to seeing in past years, combining some categories to make it easier to manage while still keeping things clear.

- Council members discussed questions about the “Professional Services” budget line, noting it increased from last year due to new categories like tech support and website services being added. It was explained that some items were consolidated under broader line items to keep the budget more flexible, while also setting aside funds in a rainy-day account and planning for possible mid-year amendments to cover legal, engineering, and mapping costs that are hard to predict.
- Line item (6200), which covers mowing, janitorial, septic upkeep, and related expenses was reviewed next. Since actual costs this year were already over \$3,100, members agreed the proposed \$1,700 was too low and decided to increase the line item to \$3,500 to more accurately cover mowing and required septic inspections.
- The council discussed raising the secretary salary budget from \$24,000 to \$35,000, explaining the increase allows for possible raises, extra hours to handle tasks like updating records and improving the website, and preparation for future election-related work. While it may come in under budget, members agreed more flexibility is needed since workloads have outgrown the current hourly limits.
- The tech support budget was also reviewed as it is increasing from \$4,300 to \$6,800 to cover software upgrades, cybersecurity requirements tied to insurance, and outside support from a consultant. While most tech issues have been handled in-house, the added funds provide flexibility for compliance, system cleanup, and future technology needs.
- The council noted that legal costs are unpredictable, with routine expenses now much lower as there is more reliance on TML resources and ordinances are being drafted in-house. The budgeted amount is mainly a safeguard in case major legal issues arise, with the rainy-day fund available to cover unexpected spikes if needed.

Final adjustments were made to the proposed budget by reallocating funds and addressing surplus balances. Of the \$11,046.28 in unallocated encumbered road funds, \$1,800 was moved to increase the grounds maintenance line item (6200) to \$3,500, ensuring sufficient coverage for mowing, septic inspections, and other upkeep. The remaining \$9,246.28 was directed into the rainy-day fund (6650). With \$2,500 already in that account, the new total for the rainy-day fund stands at \$11,746.28.

Additionally, council explained the purpose of maintaining two separate rainy-day categories, with one reserved specifically for emergencies that might disrupt town operations (such as weather-related damage to town hall).

A motion was made by CM Anderson to place any unspent funds at the end of September close and into account 6650, with a final accounting to be presented at the October meeting to confirm the updated balances. Motion seconded by CM Hibbs. ***Motion passed unanimously 5:0***

A motion was made by CM Anderson to approve the budget with three adjustments: updating the encumbered road fund balance, increasing the grounds maintenance line item to \$3,500, and adjusting the rainy-day fund to reflect the transfers. A motion was made and seconded to accept the budget with these changes. Motion seconded by CM Kendrick. ***Motion passed unanimously 5:0***

A motion was made by CM Anderson to approve the Ordinance 2025-09-01 which adopts the Town budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 beginning October 1, 2025 and ending September 30, 2026. Motion was seconded by CM Hibbs. ***Motion passed unanimously 5:0***

Budget Public Hearing officially ends at 6:07pm

Council recesses at 6:07pm. Council resumed at 6:30 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 David Emard for helping with Sound and Video
2. Thank you to Scott, Lora and Zoe Lebew for helping with meeting setup.
3. Thank you to PCCS for hosting us.
4. There is a Farmer's Market on Saturday September 20th hosted at the Poetry Community Christian School.
5. Special thanks to Secretary Theresa for all her help in cleaning up the flower beds at Poetry Town Hall.

D. Reports:

1. Financial

- a. P&L Budget vs Actual Aug 2025
- b. Sales & Use Tax Report Aug 2025
- b. Sales and Use Tax Quick Report Aug 2025
- c. Bank Reconciliation Summary Aug 2025
- d. Hunt & Kaufman County Roads Escrow Reports Aug 2025

2. Roads & Traffic update

3. Mayor and Councilmember Activity Updates

1. **Mayor Mike Jaffe:** Mayor Jaffe noted that the budget process has been time-consuming over the past month, focusing on ensuring it was done correctly with input from staff and legal counsel. Beyond the budget, he's been handling phone calls, reviewing roads, and staying engaged in daily town matters.
2. **Council Member Doug Kendrick:** CM Kendrick stated that now that the budget is finalized, the council will remain active in the community—inspecting roads, assisting residents, and coordinating

communication efforts. He noted that the Town Secretary has set up an online “Emergency Management” tab to keep the community informed and emphasized that their focus now shifts from budgeting to ongoing community support and engagement.

3. **Council Member Tracie Hibbs:** CM Hibbs shared that she will continue reviewing and preparing for next year’s budget throughout the year. She is also focusing on reviewing planning and zoning documents and assisting with organizing online ordinances and resolutions to ensure they are properly titled and accessible.
4. **Mayor Pro Tem Terry Fowler:** Mayor Pro Tem Fowler reported spending much of the month working on roads and traffic issues, including collaborating with county commissioners to share the town’s vision and discuss potential repairs like ditches to preserve roads. He noted that more detailed updates would be provided later and that he has also been reviewing materials that Dale will be discussing.
5. **Council Member Tom Anderson:** CM Anderson provided an update on Bishop Field, specifically regarding the status of the MUD application and underground petroleum storage tanks. He reported that the MUD application remains under review with no recent updates and that the property owners have not actively pursued changes over the summer. Anderson is maintaining contact with Elizabeth Vanderwerken of the TCEQ, who has been responsive, and will continue monitoring the situation and report any developments to the council.
6. **Council Member Dale Bryant:** CM Bryant reported on his work with Techtop and Hunt County regarding the town’s signage project. He has met with engineers, attended webinars, and reviewed signage standards, emphasizing proper installation with breakaway signs. Bryant noted that unspent funds from the previous year (\$200,000) and the upcoming 2026 allocation (\$250,000) provide a strong opportunity to secure funding for the town’s roads and traffic safety improvements, assuming that the council has no objections to proceeding with the proposed signage plans.

E. Consent Agenda:

1. Approve Minutes from August 21, 2025 Workshop & Regular Meeting
2. Approve Nichols Jackson 8/31/2025 legal bill of \$107.50
3. Approve Minutes TML Worker’s Comp Renewal \$1,075.00

Motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda made by CM Anderson with a second by CM Hibbs.

Motion passed unanimously 5:0

F. Regular Agenda:

1. **Discuss and take action as necessary on the status of County Road 2450 in Trojan Horse Estates and Troy Road in Greco Estates:** Mayor Jaffe provided a detailed summary of the situation on Hunt County Road 2450, particularly the section known as Greco Estates. He explained that the road was developed in phases: Trojan Horse Estates (public streets) and Greco Estates (private streets). The county accepted responsibility only for the Trojan Horse portion, while the Greco portion remains private, with maintenance legally the responsibility of the property owners. He pointed out that the Greco HOA is largely inactive, so residents must handle upkeep themselves. While the town cannot legally spend funds on the private section, Mayor Jaffe offered to personally help organize volunteer efforts, such as hauling asphalt, without using town resources. Potential options were discussed such as the land owners agreeing to donate the road to Poetry, but that would require they all resurvey their property before the town could decide if they wanted it. Outside of that, the road could be marked at the end the public road with a “dead end” sign to reduce traffic and removing unauthorized trash service trucks that damage the road. Overall, the town can maintain only the public portion of the road, and residents on the private portion are responsible for its upkeep, with limited volunteer assistance from town officials. *Discussion item, no motion required.*

2. **Discuss and take action as necessary on the creation and adaptation of a Driveway Culvert Ordinance. (Mayor):** A new resident needed a 911 address and culvert, but the counties said culverts within town limits are the town's responsibility. This highlighted the need for a simple ordinance for new driveways, specifying minimum culvert sizes, materials, and installation standards to ensure proper drainage and protect roads. The town would track compliance via a permit system (no fee), with engineering input from county or town engineers to minimize liability. Inspections would ensure standards are met. Oversized culverts are fine; undersized ones cause problems. Hunt County also offered \$350/day for equipment to clean ditches, helping prevent water damage to roads. Mayor Pro Tem Fowler with CM Bryant, will draft the ordinance and guidelines, review with engineers and legal, and bring a finalized proposal next month. The goal is to give residents clear guidance while protecting town roads. *Discussion item, no motion required.*
3. **Discuss and take action as necessary on Town of Poetry, road repair and refurbishment projects (Mayor):** Mayor Jaffe reported that he requested estimates from Hunt and Kaufman Counties, with Green Meadows and CR 323 in the worst condition due to drainage.
- **Green Meadows:** Kaufman County proposed repairing the first 750 ft of Green Meadows with recycled asphalt and oil for \$6,250. A \$35,000 oil-and-sand option was rejected as unreliable. Motion to approve \$6,250 for 750 ft of recycled asphalt with oil repair made by Mayor Pro Tem Fowler, with a second by CM Anderson. *Motion passed unanimously 5:0*
 - **County Road 323:** Apply 1.5" asphalt cap to the last 1,000 ft., where the road is badly deteriorated. Estimated cost: ~\$9,000 (90 tons of material). The rest of the road will be handled with standard pothole and edge repairs. Funding is available from the road fund (\$91,000 balance). Motion to approve made by Mayor Pro Tem Fowler, with a second by CM Kendrick. *Motion passed unanimously 5:0*
 - **Four Post & Gate Lane** – Discussion on pothole repair. Bid received at \$1,000 for filling potholes and edge work. Previous repairs have deteriorated. Consensus was to move forward, with understanding this work comes from escrow funds.
 - **Ongoing Road & Maintenance Authority** – Council discussed whether small repairs (approx. \$1,000–\$3,000) require full council approval. General consensus: allow the designated road committee members to authorize these repairs up to a threshold, with monthly reporting to Council on expenditures and project status.
 - **Additional Road Concerns Identified** –
 1. Green Meadow, CR 247, and other Kaufman County roads (estimated \$19,250 total).
 2. Hunt County roads including 2400, 2432, 2458, 2460, 2440, 2450, 2434, and 2426, plus Woodland Estates, with several sections cited as deteriorating or unsafe.
 3. Multiple culverts (notably on 2466, 2454, and 2452) have failed or are failing; quotes requested for repair.
 4. Rock bid of \$1,500 previously obtained for 2430 resurfacing noted for consideration.
4. **Discuss and take action as necessary on adding monies to our roads escrow fund with Kaufman County. (Mayor):** Discussion regarding adding funds to the Town of Poetry, road escrow fund with Kaufman County. Current balance is \$2,900, insufficient for upcoming projects totaling \$19,250. Council noted that maintaining adequate funds in escrow ensures timely project completion and supports continued county assistance. Motion by CM Anderson to replenish the escrow to \$20,000, seconded by CM Hibbs. *Motion passed unanimously 5:0*
- 5.

6. **Discuss and take action as necessary on status and next steps for Planning & Zoning. (Bryant):** CM Bryant raised questions about Section 13 of the zoning ordinance regarding abandonment and nonconformity. Some key points of the discussion were,

- **Nonconforming vs. Legal Nonconforming:** Legal nonconforming properties are grandfathered in. The current ordinance doesn't clearly differentiate these, which causes enforcement issues.
- **Section 13.5 issues:** Defines abandonment as six months of vacancy, but we currently lack definitions for "vacant," "unoccupied," etc. Enforcement requires proof, which is difficult without property owner input.

The council emphasized establishing clear policies and procedures before enforcing any rules. Agreeing that the ordinance needs a complete overhaul, including a hardship clause and updated setbacks. Focus going forward will be on future development, not retroactive enforcement. Existing properties generally remain as-is unless they pose health or safety risks. It was agreed during the discussion that the focus during the P&Z revisions is on future development, not retroactive enforcement. Existing properties will generally remain as-is unless health or safety is at risk.

- **Next steps:**

1. Clean up and revise the P&Z ordinance.
2. Incorporate CM Bryant's recommendations and council feedback.
3. Break the ordinance into sections to address over several meetings.
4. Develop clear policies and procedures for enforcement.
5. Focus on new construction and subdivision rules to prevent issues like buildings too close to property lines or multiple driveways.

The council will not enforce current rules immediately but is committed to creating a credible, actionable ordinance for future development. CM Bryant will continue advising citizens under current guidelines while revisions are underway.

G. General Public Comments

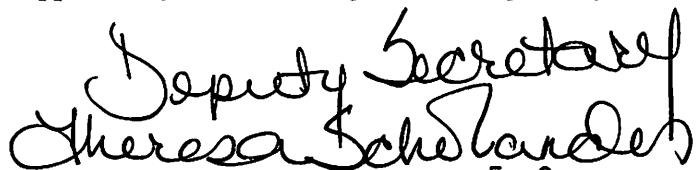
Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. If a translator is needed, the speaker may be given up to four (4) minutes. Sign up is required in advance either in-person prior to the start of the meeting or by emailing your comments to speak@poetrytexas.org at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting. 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 Shelley Smith:** expressed appreciation for the significant effort being put into improving the community, including coordination with TxDOT on tree removal near the schools. She also expressed gratitude to Mayor Jaffe for the hands-on involvement shown during the PAC building project, recognizing the dedication and hard work invested alongside citizens.

H. Adjournment

The Town Council meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm

I certify that the minutes of September 18, 2025 was voted and approved by the Council of the Town of Poetry on this 16th day of OCTOBER, 2025.



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Mike Jaffe
Mayor, Town of Poetry

Prepared by: Anne E. Hamilton
Secretary, Town of Poetry