



**MINUTES OF THE  
MAY 13, 2025  
LENEXA COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
COMMUNITY FORUM, 17101 W 87<sup>th</sup> STREET PARKWAY  
LENEXA, KS 66219**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Sayers called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Councilmembers Handley, Eiterich, Charlton, Nicks, Arroyo, Williamson, Denny, and Herron were present with Mayor Sayers presiding.

Staff present included Beccy Yocham, City Manager; Todd Pelham, Deputy City Manager; Mike Nolan, Assistant City Manager; Scott McCullough, Community Development Director; Sean McLaughlin, City Attorney; Jennifer Martin, City Clerk; and other City staff.

**APPROVE MINUTES**

*Councilmember Denny made a motion to approve the February 25, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting draft minutes and Councilmember Eiterich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

**DISCUSSION**

1. Lenexa Arts Council Annual Report

Logan Wagler, Parks and Recreation Director, said there were three arts-related items on this agenda, reflecting the productivity of the Lenexa Arts Council (LAC). He thanked the LAC members for their ongoing dedication.

Judy Tuckness, current chair of the Arts Council, presented the annual report and introduced the LAC members in attendance. She highlighted the LAC's work in 2024, including 594 volunteer hours valued at nearly \$20,000. She talked about several key programming achievements including:

- Outdoor Concert Series: drew over 3,700 attendees, and partnerships with the Kansas City Symphony for performances at Sar-Ko-Par Trails Park;
- City Hall Art Gallery: marked its eighth year with rotating exhibits and more than 700 attendees at receptions; and
- A special "Place of Peace" Veterans Art Exhibit: this exhibit is set to return in November 2025 in partnership with the Arts Council of Johnson County.

Ms. Tuckness talked about the 34th annual Lenexa Artists Show, scheduled for August–September 2025, and the ninth season of the Lenexa Community Orchestra, with three summer concerts planned. She said in 2024 the orchestra

volunteered over 3,700 hours, amounting to \$123,000 in value, and also received support through grants and in-kind donations from local high schools.

Additional programs Ms. Tuckness talked about included:

- “City Center Live,” a winter performance series;
- Manhattan Short Film Festival, which attracted over 100 attendees; and
- the Peace Poles project, in collaboration with the Lenexa Rotary Club, which raised \$7,000 for Project 1020.

Ms. Tuckness updated the City Council on public art including:

- a new mural by artist Evan Brown being installed at the Lenexa Old Town Activity Center;
- ongoing repairs to *Amusing Breeze* at 87th Street Parkway; and
- LACs annual review of the city’s public art priority list.

She noted that no new public art acquisitions were made in 2024.

On behalf of the LAC, Ms. Tuckness expressed gratitude for the City Council’s continued support of arts programming in Lenexa.

## 2. Public Art Strategic Plan

### *Presentation of Public Art Strategic Plan final draft*

Mr. Wagler opened the presentation by thanking the City Council and the LAC for their participation in joint workshops earlier this year. He explained that the draft Public Art Strategic Plan (“Plan”), developed by Shockey Consulting, reflects the feedback from those sessions and has been reviewed by staff and the LAC with only minor edits suggested. He said the intent of this meeting was to gather final feedback from the Governing Body, with the plan to return for formal adoption at a future City Council meeting.

Sheila Shockey and Cara Elbert of Shockey Consulting presented the Plan. They explained how the Plan aligns with Vision 2040, addresses the growing inventory of public art, and introduces structured policies and processes to guide future investments. They said the Plan emphasizes public art that is inclusive, impactful, and sustainable, emphasizing that best practices and community feedback informed the Plan’s development.

Ms. Shockey and Ms. Elbert talked about the purpose and intent of their work, the strategic planning process, and the engagement strategies used, as well as the specifics of the Plan, which included:

- Mission & Vision: The Plan aims to promote public art that reflects Lenexa's values and enhances vibrancy, public spaces, and community connection.
- Strategic Goals: Three goals—creating vibrant public spaces, fostering community connection, and reflecting both heritage and future aspirations.
- Selection Process: A three-tiered process involving the LAC, City staff, and final approval by the Governing Body. Selection will consider quality, cultural relevance, durability, and alignment with community vision.

- Priority Sites: Six locations were identified—Black Hoof Park, Cedar Station, Ad Astra Pool, Centennial Park, Fire Station #3, and Little Mill Creek Park—each with a unique timeline and investment range.
- Funding: Approximately \$473,000 in public art funds are available, with potential for additional funding via grants and sponsorships.
- Community Engagement: The Plan outlines a broad engagement strategy focused on themes rather than specific artwork, with an emphasis on transparency and inclusion, especially near schools and neighborhoods.

Discussion followed regarding artwork maintenance and pieces in storage. Staff confirmed that stored artworks are tracked and maintained, with examples given, such as the refurbishment of *Team Illusion* sculptures. Councilmembers also shared opinions on existing installations and discussed potential relocation of *Bull Ridge*.

Councilmembers expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and well-reflected plan, and staff noted excitement about moving forward with implementation.

Mayor Sayers said she felt this Plan accurately reflected the discussions that have taken place.

### 3. Public Art Priority List

#### *Annual presentation and discussion of the Public Art Priority List*

Mr. Wagler presented the proposed 2025 Public Art Priority List, as required by City policy. He said this annual list helps guide short-term public art planning and is subject to Governing Body approval at a future City Council meeting. He stressed that the list is fluid and adapts annually based on project timelines and City priorities. He noted that the new Strategic Plan for Public Art, just presented, will guide a formal three-step selection process, and this priority list serves as an early-stage planning tool.

Mr. Wagler said the updated priority list includes only a few changes from the 2024 list:

- Ad Astra Pool and Park was moved to the top due to its active development timeline and the opportunity for early youth and community engagement.
- Lenexa Justice Center was moved to the number two spot because it is a smaller, more manageable 2D art opportunity suitable for early implementation under the new process.
- Centennial Park was moved to the bottom of the list due to uncertainty about its development timeline.

Mr. Wagler said emphasis continues to be placed on public art gaps in central and western Lenexa, which remain a focus for upcoming installations.

Mr. Wagler presented an updated inventory map, showing existing public art and future priority locations. He said several pieces, including *Windswept*, *Kuros*, *Our Place in Time*, and *Sundown*, were noted as recently relocated, under development, or in storage.

Councilmembers' feedback was supportive of the revised priority order.

Mayor Sayers expressed appreciation for including the Justice Center on the list, noting that the community room would benefit from an art piece that reflects community identity.

Councilmember Herron inquired about coordinating art unveilings with park or trail openings and Mr. Wagler confirmed this is already an emerging practice, aligning art installations with related capital projects when feasible—such as the upcoming Ad Astra Pool.

Mr. Wagler said the updated list would be on a future City Council agenda for formal approval.

4. Drone as a First Responder Program Update

*Provide an update on the implementation of the Drone as a First Responder (DFR) program, designed to enhance public safety response capabilities for both the Police and Fire Departments.*

Dawn Layman, Police Chief, provided an update on the Drone as a First Responder (DFR) Program, which was initially introduced at the Governing Body retreat earlier this year. She said that the initiative is a collaborative effort between the Police and Fire Departments and represents an innovative use of technology to improve emergency response times, enhance situational awareness, and support the safety of both first responders and the broader Lenexa community.

Chief Layman noted that Lenexa is among the leading agencies nationwide in adopting this emerging public safety tool. She introduced a short video featuring Gordon Graham, co-founder of Lexipol, a nationally recognized expert in public safety risk management. The video underscored the importance of transparency, public trust, and proper training in deploying technologies like DFR. Lexipol provides the best-practice policy framework used by Lenexa Police Department.

Following the video, Captain Weber ("Maverick") was set to lead the main presentation detailing the DFR program, with Chief Layman, Fire Chief Vaughn, Deputy Chief Eric Schmitz, and Captain Weber available to answer questions following the presentation.

Captain Weber said the pilot DFR Program has been operational in Lenexa since mid-March 2025. While the Lenexa Police Department has used drones since 2017 and the Fire Department even earlier, he said the DFR program marks a new phase where drones are launched directly from docking stations in response to emergency calls.

Captain Weber highlighted the wide range of scenarios where drones are deployed, including crash scene analysis, locating suspects or missing persons, and assisting fire crews with thermal imaging. He presented a video demonstration of a successful live deployment where a drone launched from the Lenexa

Community Center helped locate a fleeing suspect hiding in a cemetery at night, well before officers could locate him on foot.

Captain Weber pointed out some key features of the Program:

- Automated drone deployment from a secure docking station.
- Operated by trained dispatchers at the Lenexa Justice Center.
- Thermal imaging and live video relay aid in rapid situational assessment.
- Each mission is fully recorded for transparency and review.

Performance statistics since March 12, 2025:

- 335 total drone flights (including training)
- 64 hours of flight time, covering nearly 800 miles
- 2-minute faster average response time for emergency calls, and 3-minute faster response for non-emergency calls compared to traditional officer dispatch.

Captain Weber said the DFR Program currently operates from one docking station which has limited reach due to battery constraints. To expand coverage and reduce downtime, a proposal was shared to add six additional drone docks across the city, all on secure, City-owned rooftops.

The cost of the proposed expansion of the drone program were presented.

- One-time cost: \$102,000 (includes 6 new docking stations and replacement deployable drones)
- Annual cost: \$173,700 (covers maintenance, equipment replacement, software integration, and 24/7 support)
- Year 1 total: \$275,700
- The expansion includes a partnership model covering hardware, software, maintenance, and CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch) integration, with support for upgrades as drone technology evolves.

Councilmember Herron asked about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Software Integration. Per Captain Weber, AI is not currently used in the DFR program. While AI may have future potential, he said current drone operations are manually assessed by trained dispatchers. Also, facial recognition capabilities are not part of the system, but the drones can zoom in to read license plates, which has already proven useful.

Councilmember Charlton asked if this would replace the current use of drones. Captain Weber said the DFR Program expands upon, rather than replaces, Lenexa's existing drone use. Officers and fire personnel will continue using deployable drones for scene-specific tasks, while DFR enhances real-time oversight and response.

Councilmember Nicks asked how this Program would be budgeted. Beccy Yocham, City Manager, noted the first-year cost would be brought forward for approval at a City Council meeting as a Capital Improvement Program amendment (CIP), using unallocated Capital Improvement Funds. Future years' ongoing costs will be incorporated into the operating budget.

Councilmember Eiterich asked how this would impact dispatcher workload. Chief Layman explained that CAD system integration allows for automated drone launches, with hover functions and handoff to trained operators. She added that personnel on light duty may also assist during peak times.

Mayor Sayers asked about best practices and air traffic safety. Captain Weber said all drones are equipped with transponder modules and monitored via a base station atop the Lenexa Justice Center, ensuring safe airspace coordination and collision avoidance.

Chief Layman explained how this Program aligns with the City's values, commitment to innovation, transparency, and community partnerships. She said they intend to provide near real-time information about deployments on the department's website to help the community understand how the technology is being used and why it matters.

Chief Vaughn expressed full support for the program, noting prior successful deployments and community appreciation. He affirmed the value of the program in both emergency response and public safety outreach.

Councilmember Arroyo inquired about potential misuse and protections against targeting vulnerable populations. Chief Layman assured the Council that all drone use is governed by existing policy, rooted in criminal nexus or public safety concerns. Any misuse would result in disciplinary action, and all flight data is recorded and reviewable. She added that transparency remains a central value. The department intends to share near-real-time updates on DFR deployments via the department website, including call types and general locations, further reinforcing public trust and visibility.

Several councilmembers expressed strong support, emphasizing improved safety, operational efficiency, innovation, and the leadership role Lenexa plays among peer cities. Councilmembers praised the program as a recruitment asset, a cost-effective investment, and a modern tool aligned with public expectations and city values.

The Governing Body provided positive remarks and encouraged staff to proceed with the full program buildout.

## **ADJOURN**

Mayor Sayers adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.

NOTE: These draft meeting minutes have been prepared using the assistance of AI.

Open AI. (2025). *ChatGPT Plus (4o version)*. [Large Language Model]. Prompt: "Summarize transcript for meeting minutes"  
<https://chat.openai.com/chat>

/s/ Jennifer Martin  
City Clerk