



MEETING MINUTES

Oklahoma Department of Commerce
900 N. Stiles Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
Tuesday, December 2, 2025, 8:00 A.M.

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Review of the Agenda

Chair A. Thomas Tillison called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. and welcomed each Commissioner and guests.

2. Roll Call

Coordinator Karla Jackson initiated roll call at 8:07 a.m. Mrs. Jackson informed the Chair that eight members of the Commission were present.

Members present: A. Thomas Tillison, Chair; Fred Mendoza, Vice Chair; Tami Fleak, Gary Mol, Matt Sandidge, Mark Wood, Sterling Zearley, and John Feary. Tim Gatz was not present.

Guests present: Dagon Boling, Shbrone Brookings, Josh Brookshire, Deanna Cardenas, Lenae Clements, Daniel DeLemos, James Hazzard, Missy Kings, Rhys Martin, Sabrina Monroe, Shanon Pack, Whitney Redding, Becky Samples, Pam Shelton, Cheryl Taylor, Leslie Wilbourn, Kris Wyatt, and Karla Jackson.

3. Declaration of a quorum

Chair A. Thomas Tillison announced a declaration of quorum.

4. Approval of August 21, 2025, minutes

Commissioner Tami Fleak moved to approve the minutes from August 21, 2025. Commissioner Matt Sandidge seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

5. Financial Report

Mrs. Jackson informed the Commission that there were three deposits since the August 2025 meeting. The three deposits were: one in September for \$662,588.50, one in October for \$626,066.77, and one in November for \$669,088.61. These deposits brought the total balance received for FY26 to \$3,537,808.37. The current available grant balance to award is \$3,537,808.37. This amount includes the 2% set aside for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce for administrative costs.

6. Term Limits

a. Commissioner Tim Gatz (Governor)

The first two-year term was completed and is renewable for a three-year term. There was no change requested from the Governor's office.

b. Commissioner Matt Sandidge (Pro Temp)

Commissioner Sandidge was appointed in January 2025. He has completed the first year of a two-year term. No change requested from the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate. He will complete year two of his first term and be eligible for a three-year renewable term.

c. Commissioner A. Thomas Tillison Jr. (Speaker)

The first term was met and is renewable for a three-year term. No change requested from the Speak of the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

7. Oklahoma Office of Administrative Rules Process

a. Update on Removal of Sunset Date for the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission Title 623, Chapter 10, Section 1-1 Purpose –

Mrs. Jackson informed the Commission that she began the process of removing the language from the rules.

b. Update on striking Oklahoma Route 66 Commission Title 623, Chapter 10, Section 1-2 Priority –

This section of the rules will be stricken.

c. Update on renumbering the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission Title 623, Chapter 10, Subchapter Rules.

Mrs. Jackson will hold the changes pending any updated rule changes the Commission makes on item 10 e. from this meeting agenda.

8. Round 1, 2, & 3 Grantee Update

a. OKRT66 Status Report

i. Threatt Filling Station Foundation – Edward Threatt, Vice Chairman, Threatt Filling Station Foundation

The Threatt Filling Station Foundation is a Round 1 Grantee. They gave an update on their Interpretive Center project. They anticipate opening the Center in the second quarter of 2026. Their Foundation ran into a few issues with their project regarding the town of Luther's rezoning, planning commission, and approval from their board. Chair Tillison informed the Foundation that if they need additional help, they can reach out. He informed them that the Commission is very encouraged by their project. Chair Tillison

said that it appears there has not been much completed visually. Mr. Threatt stated that much of the progress on the Interpretive Center has been completed and that it is background work.

ii. City of Erick – Leslie A. Wilbourn, Grant Administrator

Mrs. Wilbourn presented the project for the City of Erick. The City of Erick was a Round 1 Grantee. The project focused on reviving their West Winds Motel sign. Erick faced challenges due to logistical constraints and a lack of ownership of the sign. Mrs. Wilbourn spoke about the challenges the city faced by obtaining an agreement from the owner and the landowner where the sign was placed. The sign was donated to the city, and the city agrees not to sell or replace the sign. Additional challenges the city faced included a competitive bid due to the location and a misunderstanding of the process. Mrs. Wilbourn successfully completed the competitive bid process. The sign is currently at the vendor for restoration. The sign installation date is near the end of January 2026.

iii. Town of Wellston – Leslie A. Wilbourn, Grant Administrator

Mrs. Wilbourn presented the project for the Town of Wellston. The Town of Wellston was a Round 2 Grantee. The project focused on a majestic buffalo and a splashpad. The challenge they faced was treating the project as an implementation project. The Town also received new board members, and they wanted the project to go in a different direction. Now they discovered the project is a construction project. They faced challenges in finding a new artist and in changing the structure of the buffalo. They are now holding for an engineer. They are hoping to begin construction in January.

iv. The Uncommon Ground Sculpture Park, Inc. – Melissa Pepper, Executive Director

Ms. Pepper presented for The Uncommon Ground Sculpture Park, Inc. (TUGSPI). TUGSPI is a Round 3 Grantee. Their project focuses on their 62-acre sculpture park. The Commission awarded TUGSPI for their “Eagle’s Nest” sculpture basket. The project received \$300K in funding for this portion. The nest is installed, and this portion of their overall project is complete.

9. Chairman Report

- a. Update on project challenges and delays, with discussion of potential solutions to strengthen grant administration for the Route 66 Program.

Chair Tillison reported that there should be an additional resource to help get some of the troubled or stagnant projects. The Commission has had extensive discussion

regarding the 2% allocated to the Department of Commerce to support the back office and administrative aspects of the grant. We had not been able to get a quantification of what is being spent on what. The chair surmised that a 5% management fee for the projects is reasonable and something the Commission can justify to taxpayers. The Chair stated that an additional 3% should be spent on a subcontractor, not a new state employee, who could help as an outside resource to the Department of Commerce. This arrangement calls for an MOU between the state agencies. "The individual would be able to work with Commerce, but not hired by Commerce, but as a subcontractor and would work with Commerce to help complement this project." The Chair also stated that he could not review the reporting and be 100% satisfied with how quickly the projects are being completed. The Commission's goal is to complete these projects more responsibly.

Commissioner Mendoza reiterated the fact that this grant administration process has many moving parts. It would be helpful to have someone assist with the oversight.

Commissioner Fleak questioned whether it was necessary to mandate that the new Grantees hire a grant administrator. Commissioner Feary stated that, with the addition of 3% of funds to support oversight, the Commission was addressing the need for Grantees to hire an administrator.

Chair Tillison says that to help with checks and balances, it is necessary to reach out to multiple agencies to see who can facilitate the best potential MOU. The process must be operated by a state agency. The Chair stated that he is mindful of not creating another state liability. He believes the position should be filled by a qualified subcontractor with an MOU, through a state agency. The Commission can decide that, if they are not happy with the service, they can stop it, and there is no long-term residual liability.

10. For Discussion & Possible Action

- a. Discussion and consider approving the Round 5 grant cycle dates.

Commissioner Feary moved to approve the Round 5 grant cycle dates.
Commissioner Mendoza seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The Commission approved the following cycle date for the FY26-FY27 fiscal year.

Grant opens – January 12, 2026

Grant closes – February 27, 2026

Grant scoring – March 9, 2026 – April 10, 2026

Grant Executive Committee meeting – April 21, 2026

Grant award date – April 23, 2026

- b. Discussion and consider approving the Oklahoma Department of Commerce as the meeting site for the FY26-FY27 fiscal year.



Commissioner Fleak moved to approve the Commission meetings to be held at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce for the FY26-FY27 fiscal year. Commissioner Wood seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

- c. Discuss, select, and consider approving the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission's schedule of meeting dates for the FY26-FY27 fiscal year.

Commissioner Feary moved to approve the regular Commission dates for the FY26-FY27 fiscal year.

Commissioner Sandidge seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The Commission approved the following regular meeting dates for the FY26-FY27 fiscal year.

February 19, 2026

April 23, 2023 – award meeting

August 20, 2026

November 19, 2026

- d. Discuss and consider establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, directing funding to provide additional administrative assistance to support the Oklahoma Route 66 Revitalization Grant Program.

The Commission discussed sending a 3% increase in funding to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to facilitate the execution of an MOU between Commerce and another state agency to employ a subcontractor to help facilitate grant administration of the Oklahoma Route 66 Revitalization Grant.

Chair Tillison gave explicit direction that states, "We have a motion to engage in an MOU, even random understanding with the Department of Commerce, that we are wanting to afford 3% of the funds we receive yearly, to engage another state agency for a contractor who is qualified within the State of Oklahoma, or to be qualified through the State, to provide those services."

Commissioner Mol moved to approve an MOU with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to hold an additional 3% in funding to facilitate the search for subcontractors reporting to another state agency.

Commissioner Feary seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

- e. Discuss and consider possible rule changes that might include establishing a Selection Committee within the Commission to provide discretion in determining the eligibility of submitted applications.

Mrs. Jackson informed the Commission that the following Oklahoma Administrative Rules have begun:

- The Commission sunset date of *June 30, 2027*, will be removed.
- The funding dates of *7/1/2023, 7/1/2024, 7/1/2025, & 7/1/2026* will be removed.
- Item **623:10-1-3. Priority** – *In the first and second years of funding, priority will be given to projects that can be accomplished by December 31, 2025, in anticipation of the 100th Anniversary of Route 66 in 2026.* This item shall be removed

The Commission discussed the following additions to be made to the Administrative Rules:

- OMES compliance is now a requirement before an applicant may apply for funding.
- The Commission Chair will have the authority to pause funding for a Grantee that is not performing based on the information received from ODOC.

11. Presentation of Scores

Lenae Clements with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation presented the Commission with the digital dashboard showing the applications and their scores. Mrs. Clements explained that 72 applications were received, totaling \$40,024,767.47, and 50 were eligible for funding, with an overall request of \$26,542,714.58. 50 are eligible for award consideration because they have reached the 450-point threshold out of a total of 900 available points. The Commission has \$3,537,808.37 available to award. The Commission employs a blind scoring process and then convenes to discuss the projects, voting on those it deems suitable. There is no correlation between applicants who scored in the top 15 and the likelihood of receiving a grant-awarded project.

12. Discussion of Grant Submission

The Commission discussed the applications in detail.

13. Action

- Consideration of Individual Grant Funding Action may be taken individually and/or in one full motion.

Commissioner Tillison made a motion to approve the following grant application for funding:

- The City of El Reno for \$725,000.00

Commissioner Sandidge abstained from voting.



Commissioner Fleak seconded the motion, and it was carried with seven votes in favor and one abstention.

Commissioner Sandidge made a motion to approve the following grant applications for funding:

- Lucille’s Route 66 Historical Society for \$68,310.00
- Stafford Air & Space Museum Foundation for \$50,000.00
- Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum for \$71,505.00
- Tulsa Community Foundation/Route 66 Centennial Commission for \$1,000,000.00
- Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum for \$1,080,000.00
- City of Tulsa for \$90,000.00
- City of Warr Acres for \$35,000.00
- City of Miami, Oklahoma, for \$75,000.00
- Stroud Public Library for \$117,748.58
- Friends of the Uptown Foundation for \$45,000.00

This section of grant funding is \$2,632,563.58.

Commissioner Feary seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously.

The overall grant funding total for Round 4 is \$3,357,563.58.

14. New Business

There was no new business.

15. Next Regular Meeting

February 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, 900 N. Stiles Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73104.

16. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair A. Thomas Tillison requested a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mol motioned to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Fleak seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Karla Jackson, Oklahoma Route 66 Grant Coordinator with Oklahoma Main Street at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, submitted the minutes.