

Executive Summary: Renaming “Regional Park” to “Parks and Recreation Projects”

Request #25-317

June 22 2025

Chapter 11, Section: Case Study – Renaming of “Regional Park” Line Item & Unbuilt Park Investigation

1. Background & Finding

On April 14, 2008, during the FY 08-09 budget workshop (Agenda Item 4), City Manager James C. Collard proposed—and the Commission by consensus adopted—renaming the budget line item “**Regional Park**” to “**Parks and Recreation Projects**.” Despite multiple years of appropriated funding, **no “regional park” facility was ever constructed** under that line item.

- **Shawnee Minutes Dataset** confirms the consensus motion (Minutes, p. 6).
- **Shawnee DOGE Dataset** logs sales-tax revenues originally earmarked for “Regional Park” that were later reallocated across numerous smaller capital improvements.
- In the doctoral study (“Integrity of the Game vs. Economic Impact”), this represents a shift from a single-facility mandate to a diffuse portfolio of projects, diluting the original promise made to constituents.

2. Legal & Procedural Framework

- **Open Meetings Act (25 O.S. § 301–314):** Proper notice was posted for the Special Called Session; the agenda was limited to the demolition order, personnel matters, and the budget workshop (including this line-item rename).
- **Budget Publication (11 O.S. § 17-207):** Any change to published line-item titles must be **republished at least ten days** before final adoption. Failure to do so undermines statutory transparency and may mislead voters.

3. Strategic & Fiscal Implications

- **Clarity & Accountability:** While the broader title accommodates multiple recreation projects (ADA restrooms, pool repairs, library upgrades), it **obscures** the original intent of a dedicated regional park.
- **Constituent Expectations:** Voters expressly approved the 3rd-penny sales tax for “Regional Park” construction. Renaming without subsequent construction raises concerns of **misuse** or

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diversion of earmarked funds.

4. Recommendations & Next Steps

1. Republish Amended Budget Summary

- City Clerk to revise and republish the FY 08-09 budget notice—replacing “Regional Park” with “Parks and Recreation Projects”—in the *Shawnee News-Star* and on the City bulletin board at least ten days prior to final adoption.

2. Public Forum & Transparency

- Schedule a workshop open to the public to detail every project funded under this line item and solicit community feedback.

3. Enhanced Financial Controls

- Finance Department to flag all expenditures under “Parks and Recreation Projects” for separate Commission pre-approval, ensuring alignment with intended uses.

4. Doctoral Integration

- Document this case study in Chapter 11’s “**Facility Financial Overview and Impact Analysis**” section, illustrating how line-item nomenclature can influence public accountability.

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Records Request Section

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Under the Oklahoma Open Records Act (51 O.S. § 24A et seq.), I hereby request the following records related to Meeting ID **CSSC-2008-04-14** (April 14, 2008 Special Called Session) and the FY 08-09 “Regional Park” line item:

1. **Budget Notices & Summaries**
 - All draft and final publications of the FY 08-09 budget summary (pre- and post-rename), including affidavits of publication/posting.
2. **Agenda Materials**
 - Complete agenda packet for CSSC-2008-04-14, especially for Agenda Item 4 (Budget Workshop): staff reports, slides, memos, and City Attorney briefs.
3. **Communications**
 - Emails and memoranda between March 1 and June 30, 2008 involving James C. Collard, Phyllis Loftis, John Canavan, and Mike Roberts that discuss the “Regional Park” line item.
4. **Workshop Records**
 - Audio recordings or transcripts, sign-in sheets, and public comment logs for any FY 08-09 budget workshops/hearings between April 1 and May 15, 2008.
5. **Expenditure Logs**
 - Ledger entries, fund transfers, and payment vouchers showing the original appropriation and actual spending under “Regional Park”/“Parks and Recreation Projects” from FY 2008-09 through FY 2012-13.
6. **Legal Opinions**
 - Written opinions or memoranda from City legal counsel regarding the procedural requirements for renaming or repurposing voter-approved sales-tax funds.
7. **Notices & Certifications**

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- The April 10, 2008 “Call for Special Session” and all certificates or affidavits confirming its delivery to each Commissioner (per Deputy Clerk Mike Roberts’s log).

Fee Waiver: Requested as this serves scholarly research and the public interest.

Response Requested: Within three business days per 51 O.S. § 24A.8.

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