

News List

# City Officials Respond to WWTP NOV

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Caitlin Gatlin | Communications & Marketing Manager

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The City of Lawton is committed to transparency and accountability in all aspects of its operations, to include the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The City of Lawton received a Notice of Violation (NOV) from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) earlier this week, which highlighted areas where the facility fell short of regulatory standards.

The areas include exceeding permit limits for ammonia, CBOD<sub>5</sub> (carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand), TSS (total suspended solids), as well as issues with dissolved oxygen (DO) levels.

“We take these matters seriously,” stated Rusty Whisenhunt, Public Utilities Director. “We are experiencing issues in removing TSS and ammonia, as we have disclosed to the public through various channels. However, the excess of TSS and ammonia have led to increased levels in CBOD<sub>5</sub> and lower DO levels in the plant effluent.”

The City of Lawton has a history of cooperation with regulatory authorities, as evidenced by its agreement to DEQ’s Consent Order in May 2021. The City committed \$85 million for the first phase of upgrades to its facilities as a result, a process that continues today. These upgrades will address the problem areas brought forth in the NOV and are expected to be completed by Summer 2025.

The City of Lawton is working diligently to mitigate the high levels of TSS, ammonia, CBOD<sub>5</sub>, and DO. Measures include improving biological activity in the aeration basins and addressing the influent structure and removal of solids and grit that place a large strain on our efforts to maintain an acceptable standard in our effluent.

“We understand the frustration this has caused among our community, and we are fully committed to remedy the problem,” Lawton City Manager John Ratliff stated. “We encourage anyone with concerns regarding the wastewater treatment plant to continue to reach out to the City directly, or report issues to the DEQ for further investigation.”

The City of Lawton has 30 days to respond to the DEQ with remedies to the NOV, and will continue to update citizens on the process in bringing the Wastewater Treatment Plant up to acceptable standards.

[Return to full list >>](#)