

City of Bartlesville — Public Contract & Debt Transparency Program

Council consideration packet | Independent citizen proposal | Draft for City Attorney and Finance review

Requested action: authorize staff to scope a pilot of a searchable public contract register and clearly separated debt-service schedules, using records already maintained by the City and relevant public authorities. Establish a cost ceiling and return for Council approval before purchasing software, altering policy or committing funds.

1 Purpose and current baseline

Bartlesville already publishes its annual budgets, audit archive, City Council agenda packets and meeting minutes. The proposal is not a replacement for those resources or a claim that the City has failed to conduct audits. Instead it would make contract-level information easier to find, connect approvals to amendments and payments, and show the relevant source documents.

The FY2026–27 adopted City budget includes separate general-obligation bond and Bartlesville Municipal Authority (BMA) revenue-debt schedules. For FY2027 it lists \$4,464,650 of City GO debt service and \$3,101,194 for BMA revenue debt service. These are scheduled principal-and-interest amounts—not verified current outstanding debt or actual payments. A public portal should preserve those distinctions. [Source 1]

2 Proposed publication standard

Public component	Minimum data fields / rules
Contract register	Project, department/entity, vendor, contract ID, initial/approved price, amendment history, current authorized amount, funding source, responsible manager, stage, original documentation.
Payments	Invoice number, invoice date, amount paid, payment date, fund code, contract identifier, reversals and reconciliation date; publish only documented transactions.
Debt dashboard	Separate City GO from BMA and any other authority; show bond/loan name, as-of date, opening and outstanding principal, rate, maturity, restricted revenue pledge, annual payment schedule, and source.
Projects and outcomes	Original schedule, approved revisions, close-out documents, contract deliverables, and actual status. Avoid assigning completion absent evidence.
Grants and incentives	Awards, commitments, drawdowns, reimbursements and matching costs displayed separately from contract amounts.

3 Safeguards and constraints

- Do not publish confidential procurement material, protected personal information, security-sensitive detail or information exempt under Oklahoma law; City Attorney review is required.
- Distinguish proposed agenda items, Council actions, signed agreements, vendor payments and project budgets. Do not treat any one of them as another.
- Show issuing authority separately: City, BMA, BDA or another trust only where within the lawful record scope and custodian authority. Avoid double-counting inter-entity transfers.
- Use a correction log; disclose document version and as-of dates; provide a nonpartisan response channel for documented corrections.
- The independent pilot website is not affiliated with the City; staff should validate all source and hosting responsibilities before any official adoption.
- Maintain accessibility (WCAG-oriented design), mobile usability, machine-readable CSV exports and basic backups.

4 Phased implementation (subject to Council direction)

Period	Work product	Approval / control
Days 1–30	Identify datasets, ownership, existing software exports, existing procurement rules and exceptions. Select 10–25 pilot contracts across services.	Finance + City Clerk inventory; City Attorney privacy review.
Days 31–60	Prepare initial schema, define payment matching and as-of debt schedules, verify a pilot batch, choose publication and correction workflow.	Staff cost estimate, labor impact and technical/security review.
Days 61–90	Present read-only demonstration, publication policy, staffing plan and initial budget; seek direction for regular public updates.	Separate Council vote before new procurements or ongoing expenses.

5 Governance and cost controls

Proposed ownership: Finance provides and reconciles ledger exports; the City Clerk supports authoritative Council records and records-law workflows; departments verify project status; technology/communications personnel maintain publication; the City Attorney reviews exemptions and disclaimers. Each trust authority requires confirmation of its records custodian and reporting authority.

Before adopting the portal, require a written estimate of implementation and maintenance costs, existing tools that can be reused, staffing hours, vendor proposals if necessary, data-backup controls, and a public correction procedure. Prefer a limited pilot and measurable disclosure quality over an open-ended implementation.

6 Evaluation measures

- Percent of pilot contracts with source-linked approved amounts and execution status.
- Percent of pilot contracts reconciled to monthly payment ledger amounts.
- Number of amendments with date, approval, revised price, and source links.
- Publication delay between Council action and web record.
- Number of documented corrections and time to update with audit trail.
- Availability of machine-readable data and accessible public viewing.

7 Draft motion for Council consideration

“I move that the City Council direct the appropriate City staff, in consultation with the City Attorney, to prepare and return to the Council within 90 days a feasibility report and limited pilot proposal for an online public contract register and separate municipal debt transparency dashboard. The report shall identify existing public records and systems, appropriate disclosable fields, necessary privacy safeguards, the custodianship of City and trust-authority records, implementation and maintenance costs, and a proposed publication and correction policy. This motion does not authorize new software purchases or expenditures beyond existing lawful authority; further Council approval shall be required for any procurement or implementation requiring it.”

8 Council questions to resolve

- Which City department and each authority possesses the underlying contract and payment records?
- Can existing finance systems export transactions with reliable contract IDs and fund coding?
- What legal exemptions or procurement-stage limitations apply?
- Which fund will cover any implementation and operating expense, if approved?
- How often will the records be updated and when will the audit trail become public?

Source notes

[1] City FY2026–27 Final Budget, debt service tables, PDF pp. 83–85 (book pp. 57–60):

<https://www.cityofbartlesville.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/FY-26-27-Final-Budget.pdf>

[2] City financial archives: <https://www.cityofbartlesville.org/departments/finance-treasury-city-clerk/financial-document-archives/>

[3] Council agendas, minutes and packets: <https://www.cityofbartlesville.org/city-government/city-council/meeting-agendas/>

[4] City Open Records Request form and law reference:

<https://www.cityofbartlesville.org/departments/finance-treasury-city-clerk/forms-archive/>

Draft for consideration only. Final resolution wording, records scope, Charter authority and appropriations must be checked by City counsel and staff before placement on an agenda.