

Opening Statement – Mayor’s Remarks | City Council Agenda Item on Annexation (John T. Griffin Industrial Park)

Before we begin discussion on this agenda item, I’d like to offer a few clarifying remarks on the broader context and intent behind the City’s annexation efforts within John T. Griffin Industrial Park. In all actions, we remain committed to consistent policies and responsible governance.

For decades, the City of Muskogee has strategically planned and invested in infrastructure to support industrial development. Our 2013 Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map—adopted by Council in June 2012—specifically identified the John T. Griffin Industrial Park area for future city industrial zoning. That vision has been advanced through targeted public investment in water, sewer, and roadway infrastructure to ensure the park remains viable for high-impact, job-creating industry.

Today, more than 3,700 acres of industrial land lie within Muskogee’s city limits—including all major industrial parks such as Muskogee Industrial Park, Port Muskogee, Port Muskogee South, Southside Industrial Park, Eastpointe Industrial Park, and the Muskogee-Davis Field Airport. These areas are uniformly governed under the same municipal framework: city services, permitting, taxation, and public safety. John T. Griffin Industrial Park remains the one significant exception.

While the 2013 Comprehensive Plan envisioned the eventual inclusion of the entire park, annexation has historically occurred in phases guided by project readiness, infrastructure timing, and the legal requirement of land adjacency under Oklahoma law (Title 11, §21-103). Although portions of the park may have been eligible for annexation earlier, it has been the City’s consistent practice to proceed in alignment with actual development activity, utility extensions, and adjacent property requirements. This measured approach ensures that annexation is tied to real-world infrastructure deployment—not speculation or premature timing.

As major projects have moved forward—beginning with Dal-Tile, Core Scientific, Project Scissortail, and Polaris Technologies—the City has extended municipal utilities and formally annexed contiguous parcels through the required statutory process. Each action has complied with Oklahoma law, including Planning & Zoning review, public notice, hearings, and final Council approval. At no point has any property been singled out or excluded. The process has been public, consistent, and aligned with the City’s long-term economic development strategy.

This same approach now applies to the remaining unincorporated tracts.

Polaris Technologies, like other users in the park, has received substantial benefits from City infrastructure. In 2023, the City committed up to 2 million gallons per day of potable water—

representing approximately 6.5% of the City's total daily water treatment capacity—along with sewer service, to support Polaris's operations. These services were extended well in advance of annexation, reflecting the City's commitment to equitable infrastructure access and proactive industrial support.

Incorporating these areas into city limits ensures that all users benefiting from municipal infrastructure participate fairly in its cost. This includes the application of the electric franchise fee—uniformly paid by all properties located within city limits, proportionate to electricity consumption. These fees directly support the operation, maintenance, and long-term resiliency of city infrastructure that both residents and industrial users rely upon. Granting individual exemptions or rebates—such as relief from franchise fees—after services have been extended and operations commenced would create unequal treatment for other long-standing businesses that have consistently met these obligations. Such an approach would broadly undermine the City's commitment to fairness, consistency and fiscal responsibility.

This is about completing the vision established in our Comprehensive Plan—integrating John T. Griffin Industrial Park into Muskogee's unified industrial footprint.

We remain committed to consistent policies, and responsible governance. The annexation process we are following reflects those values—and supports our broader duty to plan for Muskogee's long-term growth, infrastructure resiliency and economic vitality.