

From the Office of the Police Chief

*CHIEF JAMES SMITH
LAWTON POLICE DEPARTMENT*

22 January 2021

UPDATE, 11 A.M. 1/22/2021:

The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation has authorized the City of Lawton to release the additional information:

- Zonterious Johnson had a weapon on his person.*
- When the officer encountered Zonterious Johnson, Zonterious Johnson drew that weapon.*
- The officer directed Zonterious Johnson to drop weapon.*
- Zonterious Johnson was facing the officer when the officer fired the initial shot.*

ORIGINAL STATEMENT, 10:30 A.M. 1/22/2021:

The incident that resulted in the loss of life of Zonterious Johnson on January 17 is one that our community is processing and grieving together. Under any circumstances, the loss of life is tragic for all involved. I would like to express my condolences for all involved and I would like the citizens of this community to know that the City of Lawton and the Lawton Police Department are fully committed to understanding all of the facts and circumstances leading up to this incident. Although the initial review suggests applicable policies and procedures were followed, the incident -- currently under investigation by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, an independent and third-party agency -- will be thoroughly reviewed.

All investigations involving officer-involved shootings are conducted by independent, third-party agencies so as to ensure a fair and impartial investigation. Per policy, I cannot offer details in regard to ongoing investigations but I do ask the community and affected loved ones for patience and understanding as this process takes place. Misinformation can further divide us.

In addition to what the OSBI has released, the facts and narrative that can be shared at this time are:

- *On January 17 around 3:30 a.m. Lawton Police Officers were at the Lavish Lounge located at 10th and Park to conduct a compliance check.*
- *Officers observed a significant number of vehicles in the parking lot outside of the building and a significant number of people inside the building.*
- *While conducting the compliance check, officers heard shots being fired from outside the building. Those shots were not being fired by Lawton Police Officers.*
- *At no time did any Lawton Police Officer fire a weapon inside the building.*
- *At no time did any Lawton Police Officer fire a weapon at the building.*
- *At no time did any Lawton Police Officer fire a rubber bullet inside or outside of the building.*

The Lawton Police Department continues to aim to strengthen ties between citizenry and officers, and we strive to maintain open lines of communication, always. In times of crisis, when communication can sometimes be limited, we rely on the partnership of the City of Lawton Citizens Advisory Board, which was established to provide essential outlets to help cultivate understanding, empathy, unity and trust. The day this incident occurred, I requested the Lawton Police Department Chaplain to visit the family of the deceased on my behalf. We continue to lift this family in prayer and we appreciate every healing wish and positive thought that has been sent from community members to everyone affected by this event.

As previously relayed, additional questions or concerns may be relayed to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. A link to information released to date by OSBI regarding the incident can be found at lawtonok.gov/publications/osbi-information-11721.



CITY OF LAWTON, LAWTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
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