

MINUTES
LAWTON WATER AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 23, 2018 - 6:00 P.M.
LAWTON CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS/AUDITORIUM

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Acting Chairman Jay Burk. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bob Morford, Keith Jackson, Caleb Davis, Jay Burk, Dwight Tanner, Jr., Sean Fortenbaugh, Onreka Johnson, Randy Warren.

ABSENT: Chairman Fred Fitch

ALSO PRESENT: Jerry Ihler, City Manager; Frank Jensen, City Attorney; Traci Hushbeck, City Clerk.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2017.

MOVED by Jackson, SECOND by Morford, to approve the minutes of December 19, 2017.

AYE: Morford, Jackson, Davis, Burk, Tanner, Fortenbaugh, Johnson, Warren. NAY: None.
MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS ITEM:

1. Consider approving an agreement between the Lawton Evening Optimist Soccer Association (LEOSA) and the City of Lawton for the cooperative effort to make a first-class soccer complex available to the citizens of Lawton and promote youth soccer in Southwest Oklahoma. Exhibits: Lawton Evening Optimist Soccer Association contract.

Bart Hadley, Assistant City Manager, stated the soccer association has decided not to enter into this agreement and they are willing to pay for the 12 million gallons of water that they have been getting and for trash pickup as well.

Sean McGrath, Public Affairs Officer for the Lawton Soccer Club, stated the City has always been gracious enough to supply the Lawton Soccer Club with free water and sewer. They do not agree to pay their own water. It has been brought to the attention that another club would like to be a home club with them. There are several factors why they cannot enter into an agreement with them. It is important for the Lawton Soccer Club to continue to receive the free water and sewer pickup. It helps them keep the fees down for the 1,200 kids who pay soccer. The agreement states that they have to host two tournaments a year, which they do, and it also states that they have to allow other civic organizations to use the soccer fields, and they do that. Cameron University, McArthur High School and the Lawton Police Department have used it. The other club in question, they do have recreational soccer out there every Saturday. The issue they have is that they want to be a host home club with the Lawton Soccer Club. These are the same tournaments that the Lawton Soccer Club has been applying for and they are not getting

those tournaments. If they are not coming here for the Lawton Soccer Club, then they are not going to come here for a club that does not have a home field. He stated the other club is not sanctioned with the Oklahoma Soccer Association. They have applied in the past and they have been turned down for numerous reasons, they are not an official soccer club, they are just trying to be associated with one. The Lawton Soccer Club is a non-profit, they do this for the kids. They have lived up to their agreement in the past and he is requesting the council continue with this agreement.

Tanner stated Council Member Jackson and the Lawton Chamber put together a meeting with the Lawton Soccer Club and another club called The Predators, trying to work out some type of an arrangement between the two clubs to promote more tournaments. He stated that Mr. McGrath wants to continue the agreement the club has with the City of Lawton.

Mr. McGrath stated they would like the agreement to continue as it has for several years. He stated it is unfortunate that it has gotten to this point. This is a matter that should be between the two clubs regardless of whether they are going to use this deal or not to force their way into a club that they have no right to be a part of.

Burk questioned if a representative from the other club was in attendance.

Armando Mendoza, President of the Lawton Predators Soccer Club, stated the reason they attempted to negotiate an agreement with the Lawton Soccer Club is so that The Predators can become affiliated with the Oklahoma Soccer Association. They are an official soccer club, they are members of the U.S. Soccer Federation and U.S. Soccer Club. If they are not a member of the Oklahoma Soccer Association they are not allowed to bring in tournaments. The reason why they decided to bring this forward to the City was because the Lawton Soccer Club signed an agreement with the City of Lawton stating that they would allow other civic organizations to utilize The Big Green. He stated The Predators are not going to be allowed to use The Big Green and he sees a problem with that.

Tanner stated he and Council Member Davis adopted this from Council Member Jackson and what he was trying to do was to facilitate some type of agreement between the two clubs so that they could share the facility. It is his understanding from Mr. Mendoza that they are not trying to take a leadership role at the complex, they just needed some type of formal recognition and they wanted to assist the Lawton Soccer Club in bringing in more tournaments to Lawton to play at The Big Green. In our agreement with the Lawton Soccer Club to furnish them the 12 million gallons of water and the trash pickup, it states that the complex will be available for tournaments and league play hosted in Lawton by the Lawton Soccer Club, the Lawton Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations, which is what Mr. Mendoza is referring to. He is hopeful that these groups will come to some type of an agreement. This is a complex that was donated to the community by an individual to promote fitness and family oriented activities. He is in support of The Big Green and he does not want to take away the current agreement because if the Lawton Soccer Club was forced to pay for the water they would raise their soccer fees by \$38. The current fees are \$55. He questioned if there was any way they could work this out.

Mr. McGrath stated the board has discussed this and they have had a lot of issues with The Predators in the past. The Predators do absolutely nothing to promote the Lawton Soccer Club and until they see some effort from them they really don't want to try to work with them.

Nicole Burchert, citizen, stated that she has three teenage daughters and her oldest has played for Lawton Soccer Club and The Predators and her middle daughter has played for The Predators. She stated that both of the soccer clubs need to get it together.

Michael Buchert, citizen, stated his daughters have been a part of both clubs. He stated this disconnect between the two clubs is ruining soccer in Lawton. The facility is not where it needs to be and no one knows why. There is bad blood because The Predators took players away from the Lawton Soccer Club because they met a need at the time. He stated there are other clubs out there. He does not know why this needs to come to the city council, it is a waste of the council's time.

Tanner stated the Lawton Water Authority cannot give away services, there has to be a service that is provided to the community and it is spelled out in the agreement. Part of that agreement is that the Lawton Soccer Club allows other civic organizations to participate in the use of The Big Green.

Mr. Buchert stated The Predators play their home games at The Big Green.

Tanner stated both clubs are good organizations and are dedicated to youth soccer. He thinks the difference is that The Predators is a more competitive club.

Mr. Buchert stated they are both trying to be competitive which is actually hurting soccer in Lawton. He feels they need to work this out and actually be able to compromise with each other.

Davis stated he spoke to the individual who donated this property to see what the intent was and he understands that The Predators are a for profit organization and the Lawton Soccer Club is a not for profit. He stated he did not find where it was the council's authority to force a deal, but just continue doing what we have been doing with the Lawton Soccer Club and they have the right to work out the reservations and fees with another organizations.

Tanner stated it is not the council's responsibility to facilitate any agreements between the Lawton Soccer Club and The Predators. He is just trying to encourage some cooperation between the two clubs.

MOVED by Tanner, SECOND by Morford, to approve an agreement between the Lawton Evening Optimist Soccer Association and the City of Lawton. AYE: Morford, Jackson, Davis, Burk, Tanner, Fortenbaugh, Johnson, Warren. NAY: None. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to consider, the meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m. upon motion, second and roll call vote.

JAY BURK, ACTING CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

TRACI HUSHBECK, SECRETARY