

MINUTES
LAWTON WATER AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 - 6:00 P.M.
NEW CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS/AUDITORIUM

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chairman, Fred L. Fitch. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law. Invocation was given by Dr. Charles Whitlow, Union Baptist Church.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Bob Morford, Keith Jackson, Rosemary Bellino-Hall, Jay Burk, Dwight Tanner, Jr., Richard Zarle, Stanley Haywood, Doug Wells.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Bryan Long, City Manager; Frank Jensen, City Attorney; Traci Hushbeck, City Clerk.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 27, 2015.

MOVED by Jackson, SECOND by Burk, to approve the minutes of January 27, 2015. AYE: Morford, Jackson, Bellino-Hall, Burk, Tanner, Zarle, Haywood, Wells. NAY: None. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM:

1. Consider adopting a Resolution authorizing a \$1.00 surcharge on each City of Lawton utility billing per meter, and per units or sub meters served by said meter, as set forth in Exhibit A to the Resolution, for the purpose of identifying and obtaining alternative water sources and establishing an effective date. Exhibits: Resolution No. 15-__, Exhibit A - Sections 22-111 and 22-112, Article A-22-1, Appendix A, Schedule of Fees and Charges, Lawton City Code, 2005.

Wells stated in the early to mid 80's when CIP programs were approved they were approved under a general subject matter that wasn't detailed projects. After citizens voted, councils would change what they were going to do or new council people were elected that wanted something else. Citizens got upset and in 1982 they turned down a CIP and the only way we got it reinstituted is to do very specific CIP programs. We list the projects we are going to do, and under state law we must spend the money on those projects. The council does not have the right to change any projects, only a vote of the people can make the change. Last year, the 3/8 cent was approved earlier in the year by the county and they actually added a 1/8 cent sales tax which made it a 9 % sales tax for the city as a whole. When ours came along we were just extending the existing sales tax at the same amount. In the ballot issue and support ordinance that was approved there were two things said about water. One was sales tax money to be used for water and sewer system improvements, which cloud seeding does not fall under. There was also money to finish a water study with Garver, Inc. which will be done in September. There was no money approved by citizens to pay for cloud seeding. He did a lot of research after receiving a briefing from a company that does cloud seeding and it all indicated that the cloud seeding in Wichita Falls did produce measurable rain above what they would have received otherwise. The

principal behind it is that you have water molecules in clouds that are too light and don't form together as rain and the cloud seeding draws the molecules together and you get more rain out of the clouds. With the stage we are at with the water situation in Lawton any short term effort would be beneficial to us and maybe extend our water supply a few months. If you have followed city government the past few years, we have had flat revenues for about five or six years and we have been cutting the budget the past two or three years and this year will have further cuts. We don't have any pocket of money that we can do something with. This particular item would require an immediate decision because the best time to cloud seed in Oklahoma is the first part of April through the end of August and maybe through October. We would need to get a company contracted so they don't sign on with other communities and we need a source of funds. The only source of funds the he knows of is the surcharge he has recommended. He stated his motion will also say that it is a 12 month surcharge from March 1st through February 29, 2016 for a total of each citizen at \$12 each account which will cover the cost of cloud seeding. He feels this is a valuable tool. If we have low rainfall totals for the spring and summer and a hot summer, then we will be in stage 5 water rationing by fall. Anything that we can do to get a little more water, then we should do it.

MOVED by Wells, SECOND by Haywood, to approve **Resolution No. 15-01** with the stipulation that it be a one year surcharge from March 1, 2015 through February 29, 2016.

Bellino-Hall stated in looking this up the United States National Research Council released a report stating that to date there is no convincing evidence or scientific proof of intentional water modification. She is not convinced that scientifically this will make a difference for us. She hates having people pay an extra dollar to do something that we cannot guarantee will be beneficial.

Wells stated if you go out on the internet and read the scientific journals, most will say that it will provide moisture in the clouds and produce additional rainfall. Cloud seeding takes those molecules that are not dropping and forms them together to drop.

Jackson stated he attended the presentation from the company that did the Wichita Falls cloud seeding and he was highly impressed. Back in 1969 or 1970, Lawton underwent a cloud seeding program and he was one of the ones that was around and completely sold on the results. The science and technology has really changed since that time and he is even more sold on it now. The problem is our water supply is getting convincingly worse and we must do something and he feels this is money well spent.

Morford stated he helped them with the cloud seeding back in the 1970's and he really can't say that it makes it better or worse but it just has to work somewhat and if the moisture is not there is will not work, but if we get the right combination he feels it might help. He had the suggestion that hotel/motel tax should all go for this. We have to get a plan for years to come and he does not feel we can skip this opportunity.

Jackson stated the voters approved funds in the sales tax extension program to study the long term water problem in Lawton but this is something he feels they need to do now.

Mayor Fitch stated with the monies allocated in the sales tax issue they are looking at reuse, which is taking the affluent and recycling, but we still have to get through ODEQ and the legislature to address these issues about what we can do and how we have to do it. It is being

talked about now and maybe we will get a favorable response but that could be four to five years down the road. When you look at drilling wells, that is something that will take a lot of money and is somewhat down the road. Cloud seeding is something that can start April 1st and if the clouds are right they will seed the clouds and it is a short window. The pipeline that we have heard about is projected to come into western Oklahoma and go south with 250 million gallons a day of aquifers, but we are five to six years away before we can bank on that. This is an available issue that can give you a positive result. All these other projects are down the road and we cannot speed that process up.

Tanner questioned if Duncan could possibly go in and help us with the cost of this cloud seeding.

Mayor Fitch stated it will be addressed at their next council meeting in two weeks.

Tanner questioned if they should postpone this decision until they have made their decision.

Mayor Fitch stated no.

Tanner stated Wichita Falls has stated that cloud seeding did help them, but he disagrees with putting an extra dollar on the water bill but he has a greater disagreement in doing nothing about our drought conditions. He is going to support this but he would like to condense it down from a year to three months. At the presentation with SOAR, they said that Wichita Falls spent about \$240,000, which is about \$80,000 a month. If you divide that by the 37,000 accounts that we have, we could condense this down to a three month period for \$2.16 a month.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION by Tanner, to approve the surcharge for a three month period at \$2.16 a month. MOTION DIED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND.

VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION: AYE: Morford, Jackson, Tanner, Haywood, Wells. NAY: Bellino-Hall, Burk, Zarle. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to consider, the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m. upon motion, second and roll call vote.

FRED L. FITCH, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

TRACI HUSHBECK, SECRETARY