



City of Lawton

Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501-3944

Minutes

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

3:00 PM

Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room

Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call

"Official action can be taken only on items which appear on the agenda. The Authority may adopt, approve, ratify, deny, defer, recommend, or continue any agenda item. The Authority may also propose and enact floor amendments to any matter presented before them. When more information is needed to act on an item, the Authority may refer the matter to City Staff. Under certain circumstances, items are deferred to a specific later date or stricken from the agenda entirely."

Chairman Ezerski called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM in the 3rd Floor Conference Room of City Hall.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Barry Ezerski, Lane Hooton, Josh Hale, Onreka Johnson, Dwain Baxter, Ted Symuleski, *Addie Smith

ABSENT: Johnny Owens (excused), Dwight Tanner (excused), Charles Owens (excused), Chris Rabon (excused)

*Left at 4:44 P.M.

OTHERS PRESENT: Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing Manager; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; Garrett Lam, City Attorney's Office; Kelvin Ingram, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director / LETA Executive Director; Jason Poudrier, Arts & Humanities Director; John Saville, Financial Services; Jonathan Jernigan, Safe & Clean Neighborhood Services Supervisor; Antonio Hopson, Safe & Clean Neighborhood Services Deputy Director; Dr. Rosemary Bellino, Former City Council Member and former President of Lawton Beautiful, Inc; Matt Tranquill, Lawton Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Sam Blankenship, Lawton Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Matina Davis, Citizen of the Community

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

Chairman Ezerski verified with Branstetter that the meeting notice and agenda were posted in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act.

Introduction of Guests

Guests of the meeting introduced themselves.

Reports

1. Receive a report from Dennis Totte with Bedrock Nursery regarding current landscaping and irrigation projects, provide direction to Mr. Totte on current projects and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Ezerski noted that Dennis Totte was unable to make the meeting today.

2. Receive a report from Parks and Recreation regarding departmental projects and monthly updates and take action as deemed necessary.

Kelvin Ingram, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation, gave a report regarding departmental projects and monthly updates.

Ingram said I have spoken with Bedrock Nursery, and we're still trying to get a solid date on when the shrubberies will be moved off of Gore. We have to move them, but we're trying to relocate them to another park.

Dr. Rosemary Bellino, former City Council Member and former President of Lawton Beautiful, Inc, said can they not just be trimmed?

Ingram said they can, but it's still going to grow back. That's the issue.

Ingram said the issue was on 36th and Gore. We're trying to get some people from Bedrock to maybe trim it back, but you may just need to move it. We're trying to move it to a more optimal location, because it's a nice shrub, but it is blocking the view. It's causing somewhat of a site issue. I've driven it before, and we've been on this for about a month now. I just wanted to let you guys know it's not falling on deaf ears, and we're still on it.

Chairman Ezerski said just for the rest of the Trustees, and I've seen the same thing too — when you're turning left onto 36th Street from Gore Boulevard heading eastbound, you cannot see past this bush past 35th Street. So any cars coming from the light, you just can't see them because of this bush.

Ingram discussed the Dunbar School Memorial and Harkey Park improvements. Ingram said this project is still ongoing. We are ongoing with getting it funded right now. This is in conjunction with our main memorial effort — new playground equipment is being installed right now. Some aesthetic improvements have also been going on down there as well. The opening of that park will be at 10:00 A.M. on June 19th, which is in conjunction with the Juneteenth celebration.

Ingram said Walker Family Park and Kathy Newcombe Park playground improvements are still ongoing. You can tell that Walker Family Park is almost complete. It's almost at

98%.

Chairman Ezerski said the equipment looks great.

Ingram said they're still completing Kathy Newcombe Park. They're waiting on some further equipment to be finalized so we can get that done.

Ingram said there's an uptake in memorial bench requests going on at our parks. This is going to the City Planning Commission and also being briefed by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Ingram discussed the Lawton Aquatics Center. Ingram said our family day is on the 23rd, and the Grand Opening will be on the 25th and will be free to the public. However, population and crowd control will be facilitated at that time. We will be doing a ceremony that day as well.

Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing Manager, said there's also going to be the Memorial Lap swim.

Ingram said we ask that you come out and support us. We want to make sure this is a well-supported event throughout the community.

Chairman Ezerski said how is mowing going? Are you guys staying up with the mowing?

Ingram said yes sir, we're mowing.

Chairman Ezerski asked who maintains the interchange at I-44 and Gore.

Antonio Hopson, Safe and Clean Neighborhood Services Deputy Director, said that's our mowing abatement contract. It's Lawn Wizards.

Chairman Ezerski said I saw they cut along the pavement, but then the middle was left alone. Are they planning on going back and cutting that too?

Hopson said yes sir, it's in the contract. I'll go out and check that.

3. Receive a report from the LETA Executive Director regarding ongoing LETA projects and departmental updates and take action as deemed necessary.

Kelvin Ingram, LETA Executive Director, gave a report regarding ongoing LETA projects and departmental updates.

Ingram discussed the ASEZ WAO mural project. Ingram said I've spoken with Stillwater Central Railroad and also Deacon Maldonado. We're waiting on some correspondence from the Deacon to submit back to Stillwater to get this project underway. I hope and I anticipate some traction to be done very soon. I wanted this done very soon so we're

not out there painting in the daylight when it's too hot. We're trying to get this done as soon as possible.

Ingram discussed the Veteran's Memorial Sidewalk project. Ingram said at this time, there are no significant updates or changes. The current delays are due to competing operational requirements at this time, but it is on my radar.

Ingram said we also have the abatement portion. Do you want me to brief that as well?

Chairman Ezerski said yes, please.

Ingram said violation notices for the month of April – 745. Work orders pending — 98. Work orders submitted were 326. For securing work orders — none pending. The total requests for April was 15. The work orders requested for the fiscal year to date as of April 30 are 168.

4. Receive Monthly Ward Updates from Trustees and take action as deemed necessary.

No updates were given.

Business Items

1. Consider and take action to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026, meeting.

A copy of the minutes from the April 8, 2026, meeting may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Baxter, **Second** by Johnson, to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2026, meeting as presented. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Consider and take action to approve the list of expenses for the period covering April 7, 2026 – May 11, 2026.

John Saville, Financial Services, provided background information on this item. A copy of the list of expenses for the period covering April 7, 2026 – May 11, 2026, may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Saville said we have a list of seven items on here. Every one of these items is for the Eye Candy Awards, totaling \$9,846, and we'll see that on the income statement. The \$4,800 was for the setup of chairs. There was some food and some bartender services, not the liquor, but the bartender services. Then we had electronic equipment and tech support, which was Journey Productions, in the amount of \$2,018.90. Matthew Hughes did artwork for the event for \$1,800. Gill's Custom Framing provided some framing for the Eye Candy Awards in the amount of \$263. Scott's House of Flowers had arrangements in the amount of \$465. Then we had The Wrights Lights, which provided

a large letter display for the Eye Candy Awards, and Triangle Security provided security at the event.

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Hooton, to approve the list of expenses for the period covering April 7, 2026 – May 11, 2026, as presented. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

3. Consider and take action to approve the Financial Statements for the month of April 2026.

Saville provided background information on this item. A copy of the Financial Statements for the month of April 2026 may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Saville said with our balance sheet, the bank balance is \$334,408.16. We have no receivables, no liabilities, so that is the balance total. Our net assets, restricted and unrestricted, are unchanged. The net income year-to-date, or net loss actually, is \$43,016.86. So those all total to what the cash balance is. I will highlight some of the changes in the cash balance. The beautification fund went down by the \$9,846, which was the Eye Candy Gala. And shout-out to Jason and Caitlin—their budget was \$10,000, and they spent \$9,846. So that's pretty good. We took in \$28.20 worth of interest. We also took in \$220 in donations related to Children United. We did not see any court fines this month. I'm told that we'll double up in May, so we should see a double amount of court fines in the May balance sheet. So that is our cash change and the balance sheet.

Saville said moving on to the profit and loss statement, of course, you'll see that Children's United is miscellaneous income. The interest income is \$28.20. I've got three other items on this month's profit and loss. The \$1,000 was for sidewalk beautification under beautification projects. The \$2,210.75 is carryover stuff from early in the fiscal year from Freedom Festival. Then we have repairs and maintenance from Bedrock for \$11,989.60. Those three items are on there because they weren't on the month for reporting, and I'll explain in a minute what that is. Then again, the Eye Candy Awards expense for \$9,846.90. My system-generated income statement, and still being a little new and trying to learn my way around all of the systems, my system report only showed \$2,500 worth of Eye Candy Awards expenses for the month. Well, I know that not to be true because all of those expenses you just approved were all done in April.

Saville said as I did a dive into that, what it amounted to was the POs that backed up those invoices, some of them were dated earlier than April. There are two ways you can activate the POs. It's by amount, which means it'll accept the whole PO at one time at the date of the acceptance. Or you can do it by amount, which is the preferred way, because that forces you to accept the dollar amount as you're processing payments. What that can happen with is if you've got a PO and the acceptance date was in March, but you cut the check in April, it's going to put it back into March's income statement, because we've already reported on March.

Saville said the way to find out what was going on there was I took the year-to-date income statement, which I know to be correct because it ties to the balance sheet equity section. So I undertook a reconciliation for every single month. Ideally, you should expect that when you add every income statement together, they should tie to your year-to-date total. Well, I had some instances that I'm reporting on this statement here that weren't there, but they're part of the year-to-date, and you voted on those expenses when they were in the list of expenses. It's just a matter of having them on the report for you to be able to vote for. So, the year-to-date is fine, the balance sheet is fine. It's just how they process the POs and the dates of the POs. We've had some remedial training on that. I didn't know it did that. Again, that's just being new to the system and understanding how that process works. We now have that training in place. Plus, I've got a reconciliation spreadsheet where I can go back and take the income statement and tie it back to the year-to-date as we move through. So something like that, I'll be able to catch every month as we go forward. That should not be an issue. Even if they misdate the PO, I'll be able to catch that. So that's the explanation for that.

Saville said so now I'm in a situation where, on my spreadsheet, every single monthly income statement will tie back to the year-to-date total. It was just a weakness in how the POs were dated. So that shows us with a monthly net loss of \$24,799.05.

Saville said the next one is our expense tracker, which is basically the year-to-date income statement showing all the revenue for year-to-date, which is \$98,492.31, and all the expenses, \$141,509.17, which results in the \$43,016.86 net loss that does tie to what we show on the balance sheet for net loss for the year. The expense projects remaining are out there. I will make a comment on the Dunbar project. We do have that listed at \$6,100. That's \$1,100 in donations that we did take in, and then this board voted a couple of months or so back to support that in the amount of \$5,000. So those two amounts are what the \$6,100 represents, and we'll see that on the tracking spreadsheet here coming up. That project remaining balance of \$38,076.54 at the bottom does tie to the total showing on the tracking sheet on the next page.

Chairman Ezerski said were you saying that we had additional allocations that were pending?

Saville said yeah, and I'll get to that. I'll have a hotel/motel tax report as one of my final reports, and I'll be able to update you on that. I think I mentioned to you at the last meeting that there was a reallocation of those because some entity was receiving funds that I think they weren't really supposed to — I don't know the details of that, but at any rate, they reallocated, so we all got a bump on that for the three tranches we've got for beautification, Holiday in the Park, and Freedom Festival fireworks. But I'll get into detail on that here, and I'll be able to update you on some good news there.

Saville said there hasn't really been any change on the top portion of the project tracker. I'm still showing that \$2,500 that the engineer didn't charge us, and then the \$2,600 for the lights. There's been no direction to remove that yet. I think there's still work to do on the electric box over at the Farmer's Market.

Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities Director, said we're working on that.

Saville said so that's still in place, and then the Second Street mural - it was approved for \$800 back in September of 2024. There's been nothing expensed, but we've left it on the project list. And I have no repairs, maintenance or replanting on the list yet. I don't have anything pending on that. And then down at the bottom it's just the grant awards and miscellaneous donations. That has only changed from last month in the fact that the Eye Candy Gala, which was \$10,000 budgeted, and the expense amount was \$9,846.90. So, if they come up with a last-minute bill that's less than about \$153, otherwise we'll close the PO out on that. And then the Trash-Off event. I will mention that we did take in a \$325 donation from the Trash-Off event. I think they charged non-residents a certain amount. I think it was \$25 if you're a non-resident to bring trash to the event over there. And so we did take in \$325, but that was done in May. So that'll be reflected on next month's financials.

Saville discussed the hotel/motel tracker. Saville said this is the spreadsheet I started doing. We've taken in an allocation so far through April of \$133,322.97. And so the trend is actually exceeding what our total allocated amount was. Our total allocated amount was \$147,600. So we're actually trending about \$12,000 above that, but we can't exceed the \$147,600. I'm just showing you that that's coming in pretty well. The total amount that we've drawn was from back in November. We drew \$53,613.16. In scouring all the accounts to see what I could find, there were some charges out there that I didn't think we could use for hotel/motel. But in consulting with some of the leadership in the Finance Department, I found out that I could. So I was able to find \$74,062.95 that I can actually go claim against hotel/motel. So I'm in the process of getting all that finalized to turn in and get a reimbursement check on that. So, within the next week or so, or less than two weeks, we should have that in the bank in with cash under hotel/motel allocation. But I've also been educated on what hotel/motel tax can be used for. I was just strictly looking at beautification, but there are other things that are allowed. Some of the things that Bedrock was doing is allowed. So we'll have \$74,062.95 that we should put in the bank before the end of this month on that.

Chairman Ezerski said that's great.

Saville said then down at the bottom, Holiday in the Park—you'll be voting on that, I think, today. So as soon as that's done and we see some minutes, we can get the requisition, pay the Chamber, and immediately turn around and draw hotel/motel from that. So that will be coming along. And then I've just made a notation down here on the Freedom Festival fireworks. I didn't change it because you haven't acted on it yet. So it's still the \$140,000, but I know that this board will be voting on taking that down to \$50,000, with the \$90,000 give-back so they can make their arrangements with MWR. So anyway, good news with hotel/motel. And it looks like maybe we'll have right at about \$20,000 left on beautification that we won't be able to draw for this year, but according to Council resolution, if those funds are not spent, we can use those going forward.

Chairman Ezerski said they'll rollover.

Saville said yes, they'll roll over. That and fireworks rollover. I'm pretty sure Holiday in the Park does not. It's not specifically listed in the resolution, but the LETA beautification and the fireworks are specifically listed as being able to be retained and rolled over. So we'll have whatever they allocate us going forward, plus approximately \$20,000 that we'll be able to add to that.

Motion by Hooton, **Second** by Hale, to approve the Financial Statements for the month of April 2026 as presented. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

4. Consider and take action to approve financial support to the Lawton Fort Sill Chamber Foundation in an amount not to exceed \$18,000 for professional design services related to the proposed Kids First Amusement Park to be located near Shepler Park and Carnegie Library Town Hall.

Jason Poudrier, Arts & Humanities Director, said I'm going to start off on this one, and then I'm going to hand it off to Matt and Sam to take over.

Poudrier said I want to talk a little bit briefly about how we got to the Chamber Foundation. So, the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority has historically received, within their partnership agreement with the City, about \$40,000 for Holiday in the Park. Of course, that's direct beautification, and it gives you something for kids and families. This past year, with Holiday in the Park, there were some leadership changes in who has direct control over it. And so they're turning in invoices, as John Saville mentioned. They didn't get submitted in a timely fashion like they normally do. Normally, they buy lights, and then they're getting turned in, and they're packaged, and it's all good to go. This year, the Chamber rebranded Holiday in the Park into the Chamber Foundation and kind of really took leadership, got all those invoices together, formatted how they were supposed to be formatted, and submitted them so they could get processed before the end of the year. So all those expenses were directly tied with Holiday in the Park.

Poudrier said the reason that we have the Chamber Foundation, and Matt will probably talk a little bit more about this, is that currently Holiday in the Park serves from October through January. There's fundraising year-round, but we want to expand that mission to year-round in terms of how we can raise money and do more things within the City of Lawton. And so, by rewriting Holiday in the Park into the Chamber Foundation, which will still be the current body entity over Holiday in the Park, that will still be a primary mission, but we can add on things like continually beautifying Second Street. We can talk about the downtown location, and that comes with the Kids First amusement park, where we really light up not just Elmer Thomas Park, but possibly all along Second Street and really tie it into downtown. It's kind of just really broadening the mission.

Poudrier said and so with of introduction, kind of how Holiday in the Park became the

Chamber Foundation and how it's all going to work, we do have the invoices, which is on Item 5. This ask is to assist with some design plans, because it's hard to fundraise without having those initial design plans. Those initial design plans are actually the landscaping and beautification of the area. So, I will let Matt take it from here.

Matt Tranquill, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, said thank you for allowing me to talk here. As Jason said, the Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber Foundation is not controlled by the Chamber of Commerce. In our bylaws, there can only be one person that is on the board or an employee of the Chamber that can be on the Foundation board. That is to make sure that the Foundation is separate.

Tranquill said the Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber Foundation started a couple of months ago. We took over the Holiday in the Park, as Jason said, and our idea is to have community pride, Foundation independence, Foundation economics, making sure that we're spending money that we bring in privately, and also for tourism, correctly. Foundation growth-driven—we want to grow the economy, we want to grow Lawton, and we want to make sure that businesses are represented well within the area. We want to make sure that we're bringing in people for the CVB, heads in beds, and we also want to help with the Kids First initiative that the City has, and then accountable to the community. We are a board of community members. As I said, there are no connections with anybody on the board for the Chamber, with the exception of myself. We have one mission, one goal, and that is to make Lawton a better place to live, to do business, and also to bring people in.

Tranquill said as Jason said, our main event right now is Holiday in the Park. As you all know, Holiday in the Park brings memories. We have that parade right before the lighting. We support the community, build community spirit, and create lasting impact. And we're going to build on this year after year. This year, we have a question of exactly where Holiday in the Park is going to happen. It may not happen in the park, depending on some other factors. But we're going to have Christmas decorations and Holiday in the Park somewhere, and hopefully in the park. But if we can't have it at the park, we're going to have it somewhere because we can't miss a Christmas. So we're very excited about that.

Tranquill said we're so excited that when the Chamber took over this initiative a couple of months ago—and the Chamber has been involved in this on and off for years—when we took it back over a couple of months ago, we decided to have the CVB hire somebody that works year-round on Holiday in the Park, and also our next initiative and any other initiative the Foundation does. And that is Sam Blankenship. Sam comes from Virginia, and he is very, very excited about Holiday in the Park and making that bigger and better. And I'm excited about it too. The whole staff is, and it's going to be great.

Tranquill said that leads us into the Kids First amusement park. I told the Mayor — he wants that to be the name — but we're going to try to find a sponsor to pay for the name to help out with the park. But with that said, the amusement park, the idea is

beautification of downtown. There are a couple of lots downtown, the old annex building, and a couple of other pieces of property that could use some beautification. What we're thinking is—think about a Busch Gardens. We're going to have some rides at a park. We're not going to have a few beautifications at an amusement park. We're going to have amusement park rides at a park.

Tranquill said so right now, the plan—and this was just my plan, and Jason will tell you later that my plan got us this far—but the people that want to donate money want more than just my cartoon drawing of the land. So we're going to get a professional architect. Right now, it calls for over, I believe, 340 shrubs, over 30 trees in just one small lot. So you will see, and we're going to be working with our neighbors there with the properties to make sure that it looks excellent, and it makes the city look even better than what it does now. Community benefit — obviously. The plan right now has three employees — Sam and two others, and then the rest of them will be employed by 14-, 15-, 16-, 17-, 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds. That's what our sister city, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, does. They have 24 rides, and they employ students part-time to run those rides. So we will get a lot of local students trained. We'll get youth and education support around the park. There will be things to educate our kids, stronger community connections, and, as we've been talking about, the beautification of the area. I'm real excited to see what's going to happen in the designs.

Tranquill said so, why does this matter? It enhances quality of life, local economics, and tourism. We're spending as an area, and a government, and a city, and as a community, a lot of money. I think it's \$37 million that we're using for our sports complex. We need something here. We need to keep on building things that will be sticky, so when people come in, and they play in these sporting events, they have something else to do. So they will stay in our hotels instead of going up the road. Because building a \$37 million sports complex, if no one stays and the taxes don't stay, there's an issue. That's not going to happen. But that's why this will help our economics. It will bring new life to our county. Our children deserve the best we can give them. And it builds community pride.

Tranquill said just this past week, the Oklahoma Tourism Division awarded Bartlesville Kiddie Park the number one attraction in the state. I thought that was kind of interesting, that we're trying to copy what was named last week as the number one attraction in the state. I feel ours is going to even look more like a park than theirs does because we're going to start it, and that's going to be the mission from the beginning: to make it a park with amusement park rides.

Chairman Ezerski said are you looking at the old City Hall site?

Tranquill said we have asked the City Manager and also the City Council, and the City Council gave permission to the City to negotiate the properties with us, but what we're asking for is we're asking for the property right in front of the annex. And if the annex ever gets torn down, we would get that property too. And we also are asking for the property that the old annex parking lot is on. And then we also are asking for the

property that the old police station is on, which is directly in back of the Chamber of Commerce, which is right across the street from the Farmers Market, and we're also asking for Veterans Park. And let me tell you something about Veterans Park. It needs some work, and I believe if we take that over, if we don't start immediately putting rides there or doing something, we're going to start thinking about how to make that area much more beautiful than it is right now. So those are the areas we're asking for. And we're dealing with the city lawyers right now, and it looks pretty good. But after they get an agreement, it will go back to the City Council, and the City Council will decide to vote on that or not.

Symuleski said you're saying you want where the old police department was. That's across the street. So how is that piece of land going to tie in with the rest of that?

Tranquill said the idea here is we have a plan right now for basically Phase One. And then Phase Two is in the concrete area of the annex. And then Phase Three would be if they took down the annex. Now, they may never take down the annex, and if they don't, then Phase Two might very well become the police station or become Veterans Park. There's a street between the Library and the Chamber of Commerce. And the plans for this City do not require that street. That street is not needed, according to the experts of who plan cities. So there's all kinds of possibilities. We don't know. But with that said, we feel that if we ask now for all that property, then we don't have to come back every couple of years and explain to a new City Council and a new Mayor, and maybe they have new leadership — who knows? We will have that property to build on to advance it.

Tranquill said now, it would take the City's permission to do things to streets and other things. But if it grows and the community and the people want it, we could do it. And if the community doesn't want to do it, we don't need to do it. One of the ideas for one of the areas there is to build a putt-putt, a miniature golf area. Not one that looks like I put it together, but one that, when you go to the beach and see the nice big ones with mountains and stuff, that's what we're thinking. And right now, we're thinking about tying it into the military and our Native American partners. But those are thought processes way down the road. Unless someone calls me tomorrow and says, "Hey, Matt, I'd like to donate a million dollars for a putt-putt area." Then that just became my number one thing on the list. But we have a lot of great ideas, and I need, and the committee needs, and the board needs to bring in money. And Jason's going to discuss why we're asking for this \$18,000 here in a few minutes. It has something to do with my drawing.

Ingram said so basically it's going to be a compact park?

Tranquill said right now it's going to be 126 by 248. So if you go over there, and you look in front of the annex, it's all the grass area. So there's a grass area right there. If you look at the grass area, it's all the grass right that minute. And that measures 126 feet by 248 feet. In actuality, there's a little bit of space right here that's grass too that we would probably put in use somewhere. But yes, it will be small. We'll have seven to

eight rides in the first phase, and then hopefully build very fast to the second and third phase, just depending on what land is available and where that's going to go and what it is. That's the thought process.

Chairman Ezerski said are you planning on having this open seven days a week?

Tranquill said this is all up in the air — the plan on the table right now has not been voted on. But the plan here is to have it open five days a week. And that's what Bartlesville does. And that's basically May through the beginning of September. And they are open for four hours a day. Remember, you're using 14- to 18-year-olds. I think they open up at 5:00 P.M., and then they close before 9:00 P.M., I believe. And then on Saturday mornings, they're open on Saturday mornings, which Cindy and I have been discussing that with the Farmers Market. We've been discussing that, and I believe that's a good thing—to open up in the morning, because we will be bringing in people that will go to the Farmers Market, and then the Farmers Market will bring people in that will go to the park. But we haven't finalized that with Cindy. We're going to work with Cindy and make sure Cindy is happy with whatever we do. But that's the idea right now, is to have it open on Saturday mornings, and then Tuesday through Friday, we would be open in the evenings.

Tranquill noted that Cindy Nocton is the Director of the Farmer's Market. Tranquill said Cindy is very much wanting to be involved in this because it's right beside her Farmer's Market, and we'll be neighbors. And I have told her many times that we will work with her and do anything we need to do to make sure this does not affect the Farmer's Market negatively. And I really don't see how it could, because the Bartlesville park brought in 200,000 people to their park last year. Now, they have 24 rides. We would start with seven. But the people running Bartlesville believe that we will have a lot more than what I'm budgeting. I'm budgeting 5,600 people coming the first year, and they think it's going to be in the hundreds of thousands. But we will see if that happens or not.

Poudrier said what's the revenue for that many people that come to Bartlesville?

Tranquill said Bartlesville, with revenue from ticket sales and also sponsorships, did \$300,000 last year, and it cost them \$200,000 to run it. So they had \$100,000 that they reinvested into the park. And what we're going to do with this park money when we start making profits like that, we're going to reinvest into the Foundation, into things that need to be done either with the park, with Holiday in the Park, or with other things that would benefit the City and our community and our people.

Dr. Bellino said you don't have a business plan that looks at security, the maintenance, the liability, etc., to present to the LETA before they vote on the money. This is all up in the air to me, but I think a business plan would be in order.

Tranquill said we do have a very rough business plan. And the problem with the business plan right this minute is that there's an order to doing things. And in my

business plan, yes, we have a small business plan that people have seen, but I wouldn't call it the final business plan. It's a Matt Tranquill business plan. It's not been done by a lawyer and stuff like that. But the idea here is that this money is for us to start the process and to get an architect. Because we have to have that architect design it to make sure that everything there can be done. That is the first process of anything. We have to make sure we're able to do it.

Tranquill said I can tell you that I have a very rough estimate that we break even in year one. So we're not going to be asking the City for more money. We're not going to be asking anybody other than people that have tourism dollars and beautification dollars that can't be used for other things. I want our roads to have no potholes. I don't want to take money from pothole repair. I don't want to take money from the Water Department or anything like that. All I'm going to be doing is asking people that have tourism dollars to help us out. And this group has tourism dollars, and that's why I'm here asking this group for this money.

Ingram said will the \$18,000 get us any type of sponsorship? What will LETA get for the \$18,000?

Tranquill said LETA has never asked for anything, I don't believe, and I'm new to the Holiday in the Park, but LETA has never asked to have anything.

Ingram said do we get our name printed anywhere as a sponsor when this park opens up?

Tranquill said I don't have the authority to tell you yes right now, but I would say, as the Chairman of the Board, that I don't think that would be a problem. We have a sponsorship list. I'm not sure where \$18,000 puts you, but wherever \$18,000 puts you, and if you want to be on the list, I think that would be fine. I don't see anybody saying, "No, we can't put LETA on the list of people helping." I see no problem with that. Jason do you see any problem with that?

Poudrier said it would go though the Foundation Board, but no.

Tranquill said I think we could do something. We are here to uplift the whole community. So however we can do it, and you guys have been so nice to the Holiday in the Park Board that we can't say enough good things about you guys about this.

Tranquill said in a few minutes we're going to ask you to reimburse us, and I want to make this very clear what happened there. I took over, and we don't have a lot of money at all. And it came to my attention that you guys said you would pay \$40,000 worth of our bills. So then I went to try to find receipts for bills because I had just taken over. I found the receipts, and I turned them in. So the \$18,000 I'm asking for, and in a few minutes we're going to ask for \$34,000. That \$34,000 was asked for and agreed upon last year, and it has really nothing to do with this part of what I'm asking. It's very confusing that this is happening back-to-back, but the \$18,000 will really help us. We

don't want to use every penny we have in our Foundation because we have things we need to use that for. So that's why we're asking for help. And this is going to be one of the best beautification projects I think that this area has ever seen.

Johnson said what's the estimated cost to get into the park?

Tranquill said \$1.4 million.

Johnson said no, I'm saying for someone to go to the park, to take the family. How much will it cost?

Tranquill said we're trying to do it as low as possible. So for us to break even, we need 5,600 paying people to show up. We need 5,600 paying people averaging \$10 a person. If we can do that, we'll break even with all the funds that we already have. Now, Bartlesville says there's going to be a lot more than 5,600 people coming through. But I am being very cautious because I don't have a bank account that I can just pull money from if we don't get those people. So right now, we're thinking an average of \$10 a person. And the \$10— this has not been voted on. Some people say it should be \$15, some people say \$20. I think it should be \$10 because we want to make this very affordable, so that kids can ride these rides for four hours for \$10. We may have specials, or we may have ways that if the less fortunate kids don't have \$10, there might be ways that we're going to be able to help out. We don't know yet because I don't even have an architect yet. But with that said, we want to make it as affordable as possible. And anyone is going to be able to go into the park. During open hours, the gates are going to be open. It's not like an amusement park like Six Flags. You're going to be able to go in, sit on the benches, and watch the families play. The only thing you're going to have to pay for is to ride the rides. And that's exactly the model of Bartlesville's Kiddie Park.

Chairman Ezerski said what do they charge for riding the rides?

Tranquill said they charge \$0.75 a ride. They started in 1940, and they started with five rides. They started at a piece of land that somebody came in and bought from under them. So then the City said, "Hey, we want this to continue — move into our City Park." So they're in the City Park, and they started at \$0.25 a piece.

Tranquill said the reason we don't want to start too low is that it is very hard to raise prices. It's just not a good thing. People get upset when prices are raised. So we want to put it at a price that we're comfortable with for a few years. Because if we start with \$10, but we find out it costs \$15, it's hard to try to get that extra \$5. So we're going to try to figure out the exact amount that we need. And I think because we're estimating so few people showing up—5,600—I think we can estimate lower, like \$10 instead of higher. But each ride, I believe, will probably charge somewhere between \$1.50 and \$2.00 if you wanted to ride a ride.

Tranquill said I went to Houston to look at some of these rides, and they had some at

the fairgrounds. The one ride that we're going to buy, he sold tickets for \$7 a ride. My daughter rode it, and the ride lasted a minute, maybe a minute and a half, just like any ride. Seven bucks. He makes \$5,000 a day on that ride. Because people just come in, and it's amazing. People spend money on stuff like this because the kids are happy. It doesn't matter if you're poor, rich, or in between. Everybody wants to try to make their kids happy and their grandkids happy, and this is just an inexpensive way to do it.

Tranquill said we're going to have a great big community event at the end of the summer and invite the community to come out. We own some bumper cars that we bought already. We own a train. And we're going to have those rides. We're going to have hamburgers and hot dogs out there, cotton candy, and really show the community where it's going to be located. We'll ask community members if they want to buy little bricks and stuff. But with that said, this is all about the community and making sure that anybody in our community can somehow show up to this park at least once a year without any problems. And then also, I think it's important, Bartlesville, on one Monday a month, has a sponsorship where someone sponsors turning off all the music and all the noise so kids that have issues with noise and volume can come and enjoy the park too without that noise. That has been a huge hit in Bartlesville.

Hooton said at some point and time you need to perform a business plan and let us see it or let someone see it, because this is all based on projections of what you're going to do. It's like Dr. Bellino said, it's a business plan, but also to perform the P & L part of it. We need to see that.

Tranquill said yes, I agree with you.

Hooton said if I'm going to try and raise money for something, I'm going to show someone a P & L, based on my best, best projections.

Tranquill said I have one, but it hasn't been passed by the board. We can work on that with the board, and by all means we can get this taken care of. But I think we need to back up here a little bit. We're here as a Foundation asking for \$18,000 to be given to the Foundation. I'm taking it a step forward to tell you what we're going to use the \$18,000 for, but I'm asking for the Foundation to have this money, which you guys know has already done the Holiday in the Park. I can go and use our dollars from Holiday in the Park to do this, and we will. But what I'm trying to do is I'm trying to make sure that we don't use all the money getting this done and forget about the Holiday in the Park. So I'm trying to just get some people to help us out with the Foundation to help with the money.

Tranquill said I presented this a little bit to the City Council about the land. I'm on the agenda, I just found out, in two weeks at the City Council. I don't know if they're going to ask me to have something in concrete at that time. I'm going to find out. But I understand, Councilman, and we'll get that.

Hale said have you secured other donations specifically for this, or sponsorships for

this? Or a grant?

Tranquill said you can't get that stuff done until you have an architect drawing. You just can't. I've had people in my office saying they have money for us. I have people saying, "There's money sitting there — get me the drawing."

Symuleski said is \$18,000 what the architects want to get these drawings done?

Tranquill said no, the total cost is \$90,000 for the architect. I believe it's going to be \$20,000 with the architect for the first drawings that we need to be able to get the other money. I have a lot of money sitting places that have told us it's ours. Not officially, so I can't name them, but that's ours if I can get the drawing. And that's what I'm trying to get right now, is some money to help me get the drawings.

Hale said not exactly, because what you just said is that you just want us to give you the money and spend it on whatever. Isn't that essentially what you just said?

Tranquill said if you want to say you have to spend that \$18,000 on the drawings, I'm good for that. But most of the time, when someone's asking for money, you come in and ask for the money, and then you spend it however you like to, but I guarantee you we're using it for that. But I'm just asking, like anybody that would be asking for money, not to have it tied. There's a name for it — non-restricted. Everybody that asks for money will ask for non-restricted, but if you want to make this restricted, it doesn't matter to me because I'm writing a check to them and I know I am, but most agencies don't ask for restricted.

Poudrier said as far as the drawings go, and as far as the business plan goes, one of the things that we've spoken with City Council about is that the City Council has directed staff to work with the Chamber as far as the land agreement goes and about how this might work. And so that's kind of why I'm here. We've been instructed to say, "Let's look at the land and how this might work with the Chamber." And as we've been looking at it and getting the funding, you'll have the land, but what's it going to actually cost to make that land suitable for the rides? That's one of the things that the architect does. He's going to map it out. We're going to do the survey and the geological study. We're going to get the plans from engineering because it's where the old courthouse was. So the architect had the question, is there still a foundation there that was covered over, or is it not there? And so that all gets discovered as you have an architect that you're working with. And so that architect is going to, for that first phase—there's four phases of construction or design—and this one is the perspective design. And that's where a lot of what Matt is saying comes in. As soon as you have that perspective design, that, "here's the layout; here's what things would look like," that's what those funders are looking for. And then, as they donate additional funds, then we can address those plans along the way until they become executable.

Poudrier said the other part about those perspective plans, kind of like we were talking about, is we have land here, land here, land here. It's across there, and it's across there

as well. How's that going to work? We can only speculate. That's why we need an architect to give a professional opinion — that's what they do. We've had different professionals do walkability studies on the City of Lawton, and we have four lanes on that road between the Chamber and the Library. It might not need to be four lanes. It can be narrowed down. One thing that does is it slows the traffic down. It makes it safer.

Poudrier said so that's kind of my input. We're working on the land — and that's under the City Council's direction there — and being a liaison working with the Chamber to kind of determine what's the next step. And that next step is, "What is the perspective plan? How can we get those perspective plans drawn in order to move forward?" And so because those perspective plans, as Matt had mentioned, have to do with beautification of downtown and increasing tourism, we felt it fitting to see if LETA wanted to be a part of helping us get those initial plans.

Tranquill said and the Councilman is 100% right. Sooner or later I'm going to have to show a budget.

Chairman Ezerski said well, it sounds like you've already done quite a bit of it. You've already figured out how much you need to sell the tickets for, and how many people you need to have.

Tranquill said I have—it's not what I would put public, personally, just for the simple reason that a lawyer hasn't looked at it. We have a lawyer. She charges me \$350 an hour. And right now, I'd like to get other things taken care of before I dot all my I's and cross all my T's. That's why that's not there. Jason has seen the numbers. Some of the City Councilmen have seen the numbers. The Mayor has seen the numbers. But they're just not something that I'd like to put on the front page of the newspaper right now for the simple reason I don't claim to be somebody that has built many amusement parks in my life, but I am going to make sure this works. And we have people behind us and behind the scenes that are going to help. And sooner or later, the City Council is going to say, "Hey, we'd like to see this." And when that happens, we'll make it happen. But that's why it's not here. And why I didn't bring it today, or even think about bringing it today, is because the idea here is we're going to try to beautify the downtown. Can I guarantee you that it will happen? No, I can't. But that's because any huge project—and this is a pretty big project—it takes initiative, and we're at the beginning.

Tranquill said until we get these drawings from an architect who understands how to draw — he was talking to Jason and me about the slopes and what the slopes need to be and all this stuff yesterday, and I can't do that. And I can't figure out how many trees can actually be planted in that area. Right now, I've done research, and it says that 30 trees can be planted. And it says that 340 bushes can be put in. But we need someone that understands that. We're going to hire a landscape architect. That's part of this money that we're going to spend, is a landscape architect, because they have to work with the other architect to make sure that everyone's on the same page.

Tranquill said and I found out through the grapevine that there is extra money from the hotel/motel that you guys have. And if you don't spend it, I don't know what happens to it. But something happens to it. I think it goes back to the City, and then I don't know what the City does with it. But if you have that money, you had told the Holiday in the Park Board that you would give \$40,000. We're asking for reimbursement of \$32,000 because that's the only thing I can show that we did last year. But we're asking for \$8,000 less than what you guys have already said that you would give us, because I don't have the ability to figure out the other \$8,000. So there is hotel/motel money that you guys have that you're either going to use or you're going to give back to the City. But you have that money to spend. So the question is, do you want to take a chance and help us try to design a park that's going to make downtown very nice? I guess that's the bottom line. And I understand either way. I mean, if you say no, I completely understand. If you say yes, I really appreciate it, and I completely understand. But you have to believe in the mission. You've got to believe in the vision. And you've got to believe that the Chamber of Commerce and the Foundation are going to do everything possible to make it work. I'm selling an idea right now. And it's not my idea. There were a lot of other people that came up with this idea. I'm just the person that's talking about it.

Chairman Ezerski said I understand that. It would be helpful to have some numbers. Most of the time when we get projects pitched like this, we do get at least an outline or something of what you're looking at.

Tranquill said I have it on my phone. I could get it for you. I think that would be allowed if the Chairman allows it because it was on the agenda. I can share that. It would be pretty easy.

Ingram inquired about tabling this item. Ingram said what I recommend we do is provide Tranquill with an opportunity to get us what we need to make our minds at ease. Ingram asked Tranquill if he's against a timeline.

Tranquill said there are a lot of times that people come in here, and you give money without having the numbers. For example, the Holiday in the Park. What numbers did you have there? There are a lot of examples. So I understand what you're saying, Chairman, but I also understand that that's not the norm. It's written for Holiday in the Park that you give us \$40,000 a year. It's just there. You don't see those numbers. And if you have, please let me have them.

Hale said isn't that a reimbursement, though, for your expenses? That's not just giving you money.

Tranquill said well if you want to reimburse the \$18,000.

Hale said maybe if you spent it and brought it back, we would consider it.

Tranquill said but I can't spend it because I don't have it, sir. And that's the problem with

this project. There's a lot of people much more powerful than I am, pushing this project. And the idea here is that you guys are asking, "why is this not done, why is this not done?" Because all of it takes money. And yes, I can do it. If you want us to sacrifice, and I have the authority to do it, do we want to sacrifice the Holiday in the Park to do this? Because that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to write a check for \$20,000. Where's that \$20,000 coming from? It's coming from the Foundation. And where's the Foundation money coming from? It came from the extra that we had made in the past.

Hooton said that's not a great way to win an argument. All we want to do is lessen the odds that something's going to go sour with this. As you said, you've never run an amusement park before. And I don't think anyone else here has either. But we have run businesses. And we want to see where the numbers are projected to be. You don't have to live and die with it. A pro forma can be changed. We want to make sure that it's based on fact. And if we owe you money from the past, I don't have anything to say about that. But committing to the future without any kind of information like this—now, maybe that's the way it was done in the past a long time ago—but we've got to look at it as a business. We've got taxpayers' money here.

Tranquill said I'm asking for the hotel/motel. The hotel/motel tax was brought in from the Chamber of Commerce, and then the City decided they would like to take it. And I think that's a great idea. I'm not asking for tax money. I'm asking for the hotel/motel.

Chairman Ezerski said the hotel/motel tax is still under the City's purview. It's still part of the City right now.

Hale said the City's money is the people's money.

Symuleski said I have a little issue with what's going on with it, too. Two years ago, they were going to do Shepler Park, and they went out—and I could be wrong—but I thought they had paid an architect firm to set up some drawings. Nothing ever happened at Shepler Park with those drawings.

Tranquill said did the drawings ever happen?

Symuleski said I can't tell you for sure. I think they did.

Chairman Ezerski suggested tabling this item.

Motion by Hale, **Second** by Johnson, to table this item until the next meeting. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

5. Consider and take action to approve a funding request submitted by The Lawton Fort Sill Chamber Foundation, formerly Holiday in the Park, for reimbursement of Holiday in the Park-related purchases totaling \$34,411.32.

A copy of the funding request submitted by the Lawton Fort Sill Chamber Foundation in

the amount of \$34,411.32 for reimbursement of Holiday in the Park related purchases may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Chairman Ezerski asked Saville if the receipts have been submitted.

Saville said yes, we have the invoices. They're submitted, so once this is approved, then, with the minutes, we can actually submit that to get a check to the Chamber. Again, I will turn right around and submit to hotel/motel for that. That works on a reimbursement basis — I have to have the invoices to support it.

Matina Davis, citizen of the community, said when Matt was talking, he said he had \$8,000 that he couldn't account for, so that would have made it \$32,000, but on this paper it says \$34,000.

Chairman Ezerski said the receipts that have been submitted total \$34,000.

Tranquill said it was \$6,000. What I was saying is that they have permission to give us \$40,000, but I only turned in \$34,000. So it was a \$6,000 difference, not an \$8,000.

Saville said the allocation for hotel/motel was \$38,540. That is what we could allocate from hotel/motel based on reimbursements that we can turn in. So it's not anything that we can just write a check for. I just wanted to clarify that it's not \$40,000 — it's \$38,000.

Tranquill said I apologize. I was told \$40,000, and I apologize that there's been wrong numbers.

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Johnson, to approve the funding request submitted by the Lawton Fort Sill Chamber Foundation in the amount of \$34,411.32. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

6. Consider and take action to approve the First Amendment to the FY 2025-2026 Agreement for Limited Services between the City of Lawton and the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority, reducing the Fireworks Display Fund allocation and approving Exhibit "1," which is attached and incorporated herein, as the amended FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget.

A copy of the First Amendment to the FY 2025-2026 Agreement for Limited Services between the City of Lawton and the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Poudrier said so this year, due to the construction plans for Elmer Thomas Park, it was deemed necessary to find another location for the Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival. After scouting several different locations, looking at costs and availability, as well as which location could actually accommodate the capacity of a citywide fireworks show, it was deemed that we should go with the Polo Field on Fort Sill. However, because we

are looking at the Polo Field on Fort Sill, they actually have to contract with the fireworks company and the drone company, due to safety concerns. So, we worked with Fort Sill on a plan for the public to be able to access post through Gate Two, as long as they have an ID, so that way it is still open to the public. We also notified them that, with the fireworks that are chosen, we want a lot more aerals so that, regardless of whether people are on post or off post, they'll be able to see it.

Poudrier said the Chamber has supported this action, and LETA has previously supported this action. This is more kind of an audit of how to actually take action on what has been voted on. In talking with Finance, it was determined that the easiest way to basically have the \$90,000 that was appropriated out of hotel/motel tax — it's actually \$140,000; we're not giving them \$140,000 because they're handling the cost of the rest of the show, and we're only doing the fireworks and the drones. So we'll actually have money that we will be holding on to that will roll over into subsequent years. What this does is it modifies the budget to say out of what has been allocated for the Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival, the City will have the \$90,000 back, and then the City will do an agreement with MWR as a title sponsor. After LETA approves this, then City Council will approve it at the end of the month, and then that way we know we'll have the show this year.

Hale said what happens with the \$90,000?

Poudrier said so it goes to Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, who has the contract for the fireworks and drones this year. So we're basically essentially the title sponsor, and as that, I'll still be advertising as branded with the City of Lawton. The City Manager, myself, and City Council will have VIP passes. The City Manager will be up there like he normally is, doing the countdown, and we'll have the show. It's essentially the cost of the fireworks and drones.

Hale said what about the \$50,000?

Poudrier said that rolls over. So in a typical year, we will also have a headline performer, and that money would go towards that performer, would go towards the rental of the stage, and would go towards all of the additional expenses. We have to have light towers, security, and additional security, so it goes to all of those additional expenses. And so, we're just giving them the money for the show because they actually have their own security, their own light towers, and the water buffalo — they have all of that.

Hale said sounds like a good deal.

Poudrier said and that allows us to have an even bigger show when we get back to the park.

Motion by Hale, **Second** by Johnson, to approve the First Amendment to the FY 2025-2026 Agreement for Limited Services between the City of Lawton and the Lawton

Enhancement Trust Authority. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

7. Consider and take action to establish a Freedom Festival Advisory Committee under the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority (LETA), and appoint a Chairperson for the Committee.

Poudrier provided background information on this item. Poudrier said this is exciting. In previous years, it actually started with former Councilman Keith Jackson, who served on City Council as well as on LETA. And LETA has always been the parent organization of the Lawton-Fort Sill Freedom Festival. Keith Jackson left, and Billie Whipp, who was my predecessor, retired, and it came into my lap for the Lawton-Fort Sill Freedom Festival.

Poudrier said Kelly Harris was the chair at one time and did a great job over the last couple of years before being superseded by Taron Epps. However, in talking with Garrett and the attorneys on this it was discussed that it would be great if we had a chairman from LETA, similar to how Keith Jackson was the chairman, to assist in steering Freedom Festival. So, if there is somebody that is on this committee, or if it's something that we would want to nominate a search for or recommend a Council member if that Council member would be so willing to chair it — this is just kind of a discussion, basically. Freedom Festival doesn't happen overnight. Planning for it is year-round. And even though Freedom Festival is getting ready to happen next month, we're planning for 2027. And we're getting ready to already scout locations. So, if you guys have a chairman from LETA, or elsewhere appointed to work with, then we would start filling that with other citizens who enjoy fireworks and want to have fun.

Chairman Ezerski said what do you need us to do today?

Poudrier said approve the formation of the committee, and then if there is somebody who would like to nominate themselves, or somebody who is willing at this time to do that, great. Or simply, you form the committee and get a chairman possibly at the next meeting.

Chairman Ezerski said I don't think we have to decide who's going to be on the committee.

Garrett Lam, City Attorney's Office, said no, you don't have to. I kind of suggested the way that it was done for the Eye Candy Gala.

Chairman Ezerski said is there anybody who would like to take that on?

Johnson said I don't mind it.

Motion by Baxter, **Second** by Hooton, to approve the formation of the committee, and to appoint Onreka Johnson as the chairperson for the committee. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

8. Consider and take action to approve the selection of the April 2026 Yard of the Month Contest winner and authorize the presentation of associated recognition on behalf of the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority.

Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing Manager, provided background information on this item.

Gatlin said you have the four yards that were submitted through our Google form, and those were up for about two weeks for voting. And the public's choice was Ward Four with the green font. It says, "He worked so hard to maintain it, he doesn't even let us walk on it." That was the public choice, with 53 reactions, two comments, and five shares. Who came in second was the pink Ward Four. "He put so much love into bringing it back to life and making it look good." That was 51 reactions, eight comments, and 10 shares. And then the other two yards, the yellow Ward Four had 17 reactions. And the Ward One had 39 reactions.

Gatlin said with the online voting with the beautiful lawton page, citizens would vote on it, and they could vote as many times as they wanted. The board typically had 33% of the voting power. I did realize today in calculating that 33%, whenever we're looking at people only being able to vote once, 33% carries a lot of weight. We're going to come back to the meeting to kind of see how we can maybe change that to make it more fair.

Gatlin said the public's choice was Ward 4, which starts with, "He worked so hard..."

Chairman Ezerski said do we have a motion for a winner?

Hale said I would go with the public's decision on Ward 4. I'm open to suggestions — I'm just going with the people.

Gatlin said I will say, with the way that it's structured now — that we're going to bring back next month to talk about more, to make this, I think, a little more fair — the way that 33% works out with this, you would essentially be adding 33 extra votes.

Hale said whoever we pick is going to win.

Gatlin said and so, from the public standpoint, they might ask then why am I voting at all? That wasn't something I thought of whenever I presented this to you, and I'm sorry for that, so we'll rectify that next meeting.

Chairman Ezerski said we have a motion to take the public's choice. Do we have a second?

Hale confirmed his motion was for the one the public picked.

Motion by Hale, **Second** by Symuleski, to select the yard in Ward 4 with the most public votes as the winner for the April 2026 Yard of the Month Contest. **AYE:** Baxter,

Symuleski, Ezerski, Smith, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY: None. MOTION PASSED.**

9. Discuss the issue of dilapidated signs within the City of Lawton and consider making a recommendation to City Council for enforcement of sign standards and regulations per City Code.

Antonio Hopson, Safe & Clean Neighborhood Services Deputy Director, discussed portions of City Code pertaining to nuisance sign regulations.

Hopson read Section 18-9-1-930 of Lawton City Code as follows: "No person shall maintain or permit to be maintained on any premises owned by him any sign which is unsafe, dangerous, or defective or on public right-of-way. The city may cause such sign to be removed under the provisions of Chapter 15 of this code."

Hopson read portions of Section 15-1-111 of City Code as follows: "Public nuisances affecting public safety (shall include but not be limited to the following):
(2.) All signs and billboards, awnings and other similar structures over or near streets, sidewalks, public grounds of places frequented by the public, so situated or constructed as to endanger the public safety."

Hopson said signs that are falling apart are a public safety issue. I'm sure you are all curious about how we are addressing nuisance signs. We go out to see the sign to see if it's leaning or if it's in bad condition. Then we go to the tax rolls on the County Assessor's page to find out who owns that property. We send that property owner a notice to correct the issue. They have 30 days due process to correct the issue, and if the issue is not corrected in 30 days we start writing citations.

Chairman Ezerski said when a dilapidated building like the Executive Inn is taken down, why don't we take the sign down with it?

Jonathan Jernigan, Supervisor for the Department of Safe and Clean Neighborhoods, said that's something you need to talk to the Building Division about because that falls underneath the building permit process. We did not tear it down. It was a privately owned demo by the property owner, not the City of Lawton, that tore down the building.

Jernigan noted that whenever the City of Lawton demos a property, they take everything off of the property.

Chairman Ezerski said about 10 years ago, Richard Rogalski, when he was Assistant City Manager, was working on a new sign ordinance. We had hearings, and I know the Board of Realtors got with him two or three times. I talked to him the other day, and I guess it never got passed. Do we have any records of any of the stuff that he did?

Hopson said I'll have to look into that.

Chairman Ezerski provided photos of several dilapidated signs. Chairman Ezerski said these are signs that have nothing in them.

Jernigan noted that one of the signs is on city-owned property, and it was recently removed.

Chairman Ezerski said thank you.

Jernigan said we were already addressing it. As soon as the City bought the property last year, we were already in the process of trying to get it torn down.

Chairman Ezerski said the Midtown Square sign has got missing letters.

Jernigan said what the code states is that they are supposed to cover up that lettering. It's supposed to be white or painted over as to not broadcast what the product is. They are supposed to maintain that, and that's why we are writing citations, and we actually do have citations on that.

Hopson said another thing we have to keep in mind is that removing anything is not cheap. Everything comes with a fee, and we've been directed by our Mayor to address dilapidated residential properties — not signs. So, we have to keep in mind that our D&D funds only stretch so far.

Jernigan said if we do dilapidation on signs, it would have to come from City Council every month to have them declare it dilapidated. Then that would take us basically the couple months to a year that it takes us to start removing signs.

Chairman Ezerski said I'm going to talk to some people about redoing the City Ordinance and doing something about this, because this is just a blight. I would ask that you guys do whatever you can to enforce the ordinance.

Hopson said yes sir — we're here to take any recommendations that you guys have for us too. In the meantime, I'll be looking to see if I can find what Richard was working on.

Chairman Ezerski said I'll talk to Richard. He's in City Hall now. I'm sure he's got old emails and stuff that he has from when we worked on it before, and maybe we can get something going.

No action was taken on this item.

10. Consider and take action to contract directly with Bedrock Nursery and Terry Wells to enhance the appearance and increase security at Carnegie Library Town Hall by installing landscaping within the currently fenced area surrounding the air conditioning units in the amount of \$11,900, and constructing an additional secured fenced enclosure around the north-side fire escape in the amount of \$8,500.

Poudrier provided background information on this item. Copies of the estimates from

Bedrock Nursery and Terry Wells may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Poudrier said the Carnegie Library—if you've driven by it recently—the steps look a whole lot better. We're still working with the contractor to match the top color of the steps with the bottom half of the steps. As you know, it's kind of got a two-tone look going on, so we're getting that corrected.

Poudrier said the McMahon Auditorium Authority took over stewardship of this building along with the McMahon Memorial Auditorium and the Armory as a privately-owned board of citizens who started caring for these buildings that are on the National Historic Registry. In addition to redoing the steps, we also added some fencing around the tunnel. Arts for All currently inhabits the basement of Carnegie Library Town Hall, and putting up that fence was night and day because the bus traffic is there. If you've ever visited that tunnel, it was terrible. The smells are gone, but the other thing that we've had is at the rear of the building is a fire escape from the basement. And it goes, of course, down into the ground, and there's a sump pump down there.

Poudrier said recently, not only on the outside of the building but also on the inside of the building, we've redone all of the floors. We've redone a majority of the ceilings. And we were able to do that, actually, with some insurance funds. What had happened is, we had so much water on the roof. The roof actually held up great, but the roof drains hadn't been cleared out because the building hadn't been in use, or there was just so much wind at that time that it clogged the roof drains, but the water had actually started going in through the attic vents. It damaged a lot of the floors. So we had just gotten done redoing some, and then we had to redo them again. And not only that, the basement floor got completely destroyed. So we've redone all of those floors. It looks so much better. What I'm saying with this is that we're making lots of progress on the building.

Poudrier said we now have a nice secure fence that has a push bar on it around the air conditioning units. But now that that area is fenced in, it's continually getting overgrown, and we're wanting to xeriscape it, but not just put more concrete. We're wanting to work with someone like Bedrock to put in like a crushed granite, some succulents around it, so it's actually a beautification. It's a plus-up, and not just, "well, we've killed off the grass," because that's not beautification. So we're asking for assistance with that. And then, like I said, around that back stairwell area. We recently had a sump pump burn out. It's plugged into a wall. We'll get homeless individuals who will mess with the plug-ins. We'll get debris in there that will mess up the pump. And then we had water get into the basement onto our new floors that we had just redone. And luckily, because of the earlier instances, I now have a commercial dehumidifier I was able to stick down there. But we had to tear out some of the flooring we had just put in. So what I'm asking for with that second ask for fencing, is to fence around the back fire escape area with the same fence that we've put up around the AC units that are up there now, in order to keep the homeless out of that area, as well as to make it to where it's covered and taken care of. Right now, it's accessible to everybody. And there's a sump pump that's

down inside there that is plugged in right to the side. So just anyone can unplug it and charge their phones, which happens. And we're wanting to put a fence out and around that area to protect it.

Symuleski said what kind of fencing are you talking about putting in?

Poudrier said it's a six-foot cast iron black fence that goes up and rounds off the top. It's the same fencing that now exists there that goes around the tunnel. So it kind of matches the period date and complements the structure.

Poudrier said one of the things that we had done through this study is that they estimated that for everything that we had done so far, it would cost over half a million dollars. And we've only put in just under \$200,000 because we've basically taken on doing our own contracting. They estimated that the steps were going to cost about \$300,000. We were able to do the steps for \$75,000. We're still working with the contractor, like I said, on the color. But we did do a construction bond, and so they know that if they don't get it right, we're going to call the bond. We're going to get these steps right. Demo, floors, plumbing, and fixtures were around \$85,000. We did all of the basement for, I believe, about \$28,000. However, the money that we've been putting into it, we're starting to get a little low on. And so, for this project, because we saw that this had to do with Bedrock and beautification, we thought we would see if LETA would be willing to take on those costs. If not, we will figure out another way, but we greatly appreciate your consideration for it.

Chairman Ezerski said we do have the money in the budget to do this. The total amount is \$20,400.

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Baxter, to approve the agenda item as presented. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Adjournment

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Baxter, to adjourn the May 13, 2026, meeting. **AYE:** Baxter, Symuleski, Ezerski, Johnson, Hooton, Hale. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 P.M.

Minutes of the May 13, 2026, meeting were approved at the June 10, 2026, Authority meeting.