



## City of Lawton

### Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority

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

### Minutes

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Wednesday, July 9, 2025

3:00 PM

Lawton City Hall  
3rd Floor Conference Room

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#### Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Ezerski called the meeting to order at 3:00PM in the 3rd floor conference room of City Hall.

#### ROLL CALL:

**PRESENT:** Addie Smith, Dwight Tanner, Barry Ezerski, Dwain Baxter, Chris Rabon, Jeremy Lohman, Ted Symuleski

**ABSENT:** Mary Ann Hankins, Johnny Owens (excused), Charles Owens (excused)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager; Neal Kirmer, Communications & Marketing; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; Garrett Lam, City Attorney's Office; Kelvin Ingram, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director; Antonio Hopson, Safe and Clean Neighborhood Services Deputy Director; Jason Poudrier, Arts & Humanities; Kristin Huntley, Financial Services; 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 Meeting Act.

#### Introduction of Guests

Guests of the meeting introduced themselves.

Chairman Ezerski introduced Kelvin Ingram and Antonio Hopson from Parks and Recreation. He asked them to tell the Authority a little bit about themselves.

Antonio Hopson said I've been employed with the City of Lawton for 12 years. I was formerly the Parks and Recreation Superintendent, and my current position is Safe and Clean Neighborhood Services Deputy Director.

Kelvin Ingram said I'm two weeks into the position here and still learning. I'm the Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation for our fine city here in Lawton, Oklahoma. I'm

learning from you just as much as you are learning from me. We're learning from one another. So again, thank you for having me.

Chairman Ezerski said we're looking forward to working with you all. He noted that there's a lot of good stuff happening on that side.

## **Reports**

Chairman Ezerski noted that we've changed the agenda a little bit. He said there were several times when department heads came up here and didn't really have a whole lot to talk about. So from now on, the way we're going to do it is if there's an issue or something we need to talk about or decide on, then we'll go ahead and have them report. Same goes for Dennis from Bedrock. If they don't have anything, then we're not going to put them on the agenda. That way, we can kind of keep things flowing and just focus on what we have to do.

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

No updates were given.

## **Business Items**

1. Consider approving the list of expenses for the period of June 10 – July 7, 2025.

Kristin Huntley, Financial Services, provided background information on this item.

Huntley said we had 10 expenses between your last meeting and this one. The first was to Bedrock Nursery for \$318, which was for the flower pots on Second Street. Another payment was made to Bedrock for \$8,850 to replace the tree rings along Lee Boulevard. We also paid WP Forms, LLC \$99 for the renewal of your website. The Chamber of Commerce received \$68,995 for a light display — specifically the Cinderella carriage, which should be really pretty. There were several expenses related to the Freedom Festival. Fort Sill MWR was paid \$2,500 for the bounce house rentals. Mikayla Christine Hankins was paid \$2,800, and that was for the princess performers at the Freedom Festival. More and More, Inc was paid \$3,538.75, and that was for rentals of tents, tables, and chairs at the Freedom Festival. Denise Castelli was paid \$72,500, and that was for the fireworks display. Then we had two charges from Meta Platforms, Inc. — this is Facebook — one for \$74.96 and another for \$75. That's to promote the post, basically. So if you pay Facebook, they will put it out there more to people who may not already follow LETA's Facebook page.

**Motion** by Rabon, **Second** by Baxter, to approve the list of expenses as presented. **AYE:** Ezerski, Lohman, Baxter, Smith, Symuleski, Tanner, Rabon. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Select a Yard of the Month winner for May 2025.

Neal Kirmer, Communications and Marketing, provided background information on this item.

Kirmer said we have a yard from Ward 2, Ward 5 and Ward 6. Ward 6 received the most votes on the website at 353. This is the house with the red shutters on the front.

Rabon said last time we met, we were talking about trying to limit the number of times a person could vote for themselves.

Kirmer said that issue came up again this month.

Rabon asked if that's why Ward 6 has the most votes.

Kirmer said we believe so, but there's no way for me to tell who voted and how many times. Normally, we only get 75 votes, maybe, is what I've seen, and then all of sudden we have hundreds of votes.

Tanner said I think they're all pretty equal - Ward 6 does have some flowers, and the other two are nicely landscaped.

Chairman Ezerski asked for clarification on how much of a percentage the public vote is versus the Authority's vote.

Kirmer said 66% is a public vote and 33% is the Authority's vote.

Tanner said he likes the yard in Ward 6.

**Motion** by Tanner, **Second** by Rabon, to select the house from Ward 6 as the Yard of the Month winner for May 2025. **AYE:** Ezerski, Lohman, Baxter, Smith, Symuleski, Tanner, Rabon. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

3. Select a Yard of the Month winner for June 2025.

Neal Kirmer, Communications and Marketing, provided background information on this item.

Kirmer said we have three homes again. There is one home in Ward 2, with all the flowers in the front. We have a home in Ward 3, with the cactus and the pink flowers up front. And then there's a home in Ward 8, which has the American flag out front. So, the overall winner — based on the vote tally for this round — is Ward 3 at 19,597 total votes. The next runner-up was Ward 8 with 1,300 votes.

Tanner noted that he really likes the flowers in Ward 2, though he knows they won't win.

**Motion** by Rabon, **Second** by Lohman, to select the house from Ward 3 as the Yard of the Month winner for June 2025. **AYE:** Ezerski, Lohman, Baxter, Smith, Symuleski, Tanner, Rabon. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

4. Receive a report regarding the 2025 Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival, consider additional sponsorship and take action as necessary.

Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities, provided background information on this item.

Poudrier said if you came out, even a little bit, for the Freedom Festival — thank you for coming out. We had probably the most people we've ever had out there, even though we had the least amount of parking in the park that we've ever had, due to the Aquatics Center construction. We're excited about the Aquatics Center. In addition to that, we brought our cost in lower, but we brought in more revenue than we've ever had before — and that's through vendors, sponsorships, and the bounce houses. We didn't bring in as much as we have in the past with the bounce houses, but we brought in almost double compared to last year.

Regarding the budget, Poudrier said you'll see that we were able to save some money this year on the fireworks and the drones. The actual cost for 2024 was about \$152,000 in total as we went through different vendors for the drones and fireworks. That created some headaches in terms of coordination and dealing with people falling under different umbrellas. When we go through an entity like Limelight Entertainment, they have certain insurances that the city doesn't carry. So if anything happens to go wrong — if they can't fire off for whatever reason, or if a performer backs out — they can actually refund that money back to the city. That's one of the reasons we go through Limelight Entertainment for both performers and for the drones and fireworks. This year, we went through the same company for both.

Looking at contracted services, Poudrier said we came in just a little bit under what we spent last year. Additional entertainment costs were a little bit more than last year, but that's just because of how we broke out the costs. We had the princesses out there both days — four princesses, four hours a day — and they also performed on the stage. This year, they actually performed both nights because we didn't have the National Guard band I was hoping for on Friday night. So they were willing to give us two performances, plus walk around both nights.

Going into equipment rental, Poudrier said we saved quite a bit. You'll see the first one under United Rentals was up, but if you look at Herc Rentals, it went from \$2,400 to \$400. Essentially, we saved over \$1,000 in rental costs by going through United for all the light towers. We used to have to get light towers from two different entities because neither one in town had enough. United got more, including some LED ones, and they were excited to sell those off and give us a good rate on all of them.

Looking at overall expenses, Poudrier said last year, we spent over \$181,000. This year, we came in at \$173,000 — so we brought our costs down by almost \$10,000. The

big difference this year was the income. When you look at private donations, last year, we had about \$4,500. This year, we had \$8,250 — so almost double from private donors, which was fantastic. We're super excited about that. Vendor fees came in just under \$10,000 — \$9,650. I had proposed we'd bring in around \$12,000, and we actually brought in \$12,400. We were almost at \$13,000, but some vendors had broken-down food trucks. Since we like to work with them and want to keep them coming back, we said, "You know what — you can't help that, so we're going to refund you." That brought us down to \$12,400.

Poudrier said the Chamber of Commerce and the Visitor's Bureau put their funds together for a \$20,000 partnership this year, which was huge. The McMahon Auditorium Authority was the primary sponsor of the headliner at \$10,000. We also brought in revenue from the bounce houses — and because the weather was fantastic, we brought in almost \$5,000 from those alone. So this year, in private sponsorships alone, we brought in \$22,750. Sponsorship through the McMahon Auditorium Authority, the Chamber of Commerce and the Visitor's Bureau totaled \$30,000. So that's \$52,750 in sponsorships. Also, the additional income that we make off of the vendors and the bounce houses came in at just over \$17,000.

Poudrier said out of the city's hotel-motel fund investment of \$100,000, we were able to turn that into about a 70% increase through additional donations. That brought our total income to around \$172,000. So, from a \$100,000 investment, the city saw a return of \$173,000 — a pretty good return. And again, those hotel-motel funds aren't coming from our citizens' taxes — they come from the tourism tax, from people visiting the city.

Poudrier said looking at all of this, we lowered costs and brought in more income, like I said. However, we did come up just a little short. I always try to push it to the limits of what we're capable of, budget-wise, and we ended up about \$3,250 short. If you look at pages 10–11, specifically the bottom of page 11, you'll see the overall breakdown. The first year we did the drone show, it was a hard sell to get any sponsors — people didn't know what to expect, and we didn't get any sponsorships. However, because of LETA's investment of \$25,000 to help make last year's budget work, this year for the drones we brought in \$14,500. We expect that number to go up as we increase the cost and limit the number of logos in the sky. But because of that initial investment — giving us a shot at doing it — more people now want to see their names in lights, and we expect to bring in even more money that way. So with that, basically the ask is that LETA would help make up the difference.

Poudrier said the other thing — and Kristin Huntley is here, so she can back me up on this — is regarding the hotel-motel funds. This year, the city is looking at possibly being a little bit short. Hopefully we won't be, but they won't know until August, after all the hotel and motel funds have been received. The allocation for the Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival is \$100,000, but that's based on hotel and motel collections coming in at 100% of projections. If the collections are slightly below projection, then that \$100,000 may end up being just a little less. However, not all entities use all of their hotel and motel funds, so there's still a possibility that it could end up being the full

\$100,000. So, basically, the ask of this Authority would be to be willing to make up that difference — which I project to be under \$10,000 — in order to essentially balance the books for the Freedom Festival this year.

Chairman Ezerski asked what the family-friendly funds were from last year.

Poudrier said last year, the mayor mentioned there were some additional general funds available, and he said he wanted those to go toward family-friendly activities. So the funds were distributed to different departments or trusts that handled family-friendly events, and it was divided up. The library received some of those funds, and they used it for several events. So I asked if the Freedom Festival could use some of those funds since this is an event for the city. That year was also the first time we did the drone show. One of my expectations with the drone show was that — since it was the 10th anniversary of the Freedom Festival — we'd do it that one year and be done. But then everyone saw the drone show and said, "Oh, the drone show is so cool, we can't not do that again." So, that's where those funds came from — it was additional money from the city's general fund.

Chairman Ezerski asked if these funds were not available this year.

Poudrier said that's correct - those funds were not available this year.

Chairman Ezerski asked Huntley if the funds would come out of the 2026 budget if we make up the difference.

Huntley said that's correct.

Chairman Ezerski asked if we received all the hotel motel funds that we were supposed to get last year.

Huntley said she will have to look.

Rabon said one of the things we talked about during our last meeting was that we were voting on some things — like the carriage for the Chamber for the light display at Holiday in the Park — and we voted on that early in the meeting. But then we had our treasurer's report at the end, and it kind of came to our attention that we might not receive 100% of our hotel-motel funds. That kind of bothered me, because we're voting on spending money, but then it's not revealed to us until after the vote that we may not actually be receiving all of that funding. Maybe we need to consider putting our treasurer's reports earlier on the agenda, before we start tackling projects, if that's possible.

Chairman Ezerski said normally, that's the way it has been. The problem has been with the transition in Finance.

Poudrier asked if this item could be tabled until next month.

Huntley said that's what I would recommend.

Poudrier said several of the media entities do their billing every 30 days, and because this event happens at the end of the month, sometimes we won't receive some of the invoices until August anyway. So, since we were so close this year, even if this is tabled until next month, we'll still be able to pay out the obligations for the invoices we've received.

Symuleski asked for clarification on how much the shortfall is going to be.

Poudrier said for this year, roughly \$2,000. This is pending the hotel motel obligation.

Chairman Ezerski said the event was awesome. Everyone I talked to who attended said they enjoyed it. It's definitely one of the premier events that we put on as a city. As for the current discussion, I don't think we have any issues moving forward with it. We don't need to take any action right now, because if we're not going to do anything yet, then action isn't necessary. We'll bring it back up next month once we have the financials. That way, we can see where we're at and make sure we have the money. I think this is definitely something that falls within our purview, and we want to help. We just need to see what we have before we spend it.

Symuleski said he agrees.

No action was taken on this item.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion** by Lohman, **Second** by Symuleski, to adjourn the July 9, 2025, meeting. **AYE:** Ezerski, Lohman, Baxter, Smith, Symuleski, Tanner, Rabon. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.