

MINUTES
LAWTON ACCESS BOARD
NEW CITY HALL - CITY ATTORNEY'S CONFERENCE ROOM
212 SW 9th STREET
APRIL 28, 2015

Mike Jones called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. in the City Attorney's Conference Room. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Joseph Harper; Don Kesler, Jr.; Mike Jones.

ABSENT: Sharon Fanning; Kay Love.

OTHER PRESENT: Doug Wellhouse, License & Permit; Rusty Whisenhunt, Public Works; Denise Ezell, City Clerk's Office; Councilman Doug Wells.

Jones stated today is going to be more of an informational session. We have some questions about the CIP funding so Councilman Wells is here to shed some light on the subject.

APPROVE MINUTES of January 27, 2015 meeting

Motion by Kesler, Second by Harper, to approve the minutes of January 27, 2015. **Aye:** Harper; Kesler; Jones. **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. New Business

A. Transition Plan Update and review milestone chart for completion, take action if necessary.

Kesler stated I spoke last week with Councilman Wells about what the city is trying to do with the re-working of the CIP. I asked Councilman Wells to come and share how it will work and to answer any questions we might have.

Wells stated at this time we have 2 CIP programs. There is a million dollars in the 2015 CIP for ADA improvements. Also remember anytime we have a construction project approved it will include sidewalks and street corners. That will include hundreds of thousands more a year.

Whisenhunt stated to date we have almost spent \$800,000 this year.

Harper stated they put in a new intersection at Bell and Arlington and made only one corner accessible and the sidewalk down only on one side. Why?

Whisenhunt stated that is a storm drainage system. They put curb ramps at the intersections they replace and are not installing sidewalks. Sidewalks are done on street projects.

I will have to look at the plans for that project but if they tear up the curbing on a corner they will put in curb ramps. If there is an existing sidewalk and we rebuild the street we put a sidewalk in on one side. If they are doing utility work and tear up the intersection they put curb ramps back. This project may call for ramps and they haven't got it done. I'll pull the plans and look at them.

Jones stated it is safe to say that each intersection or situation is a little different and it may not apply to each corner.

Kesler asked "With the redoing of Fort Sill Boulevard will there be sidewalks"?

Wells stated yes.

Kesler asked "On the east side or the west side"?

Wells stated west side.

Whisenhunt stated they will redo the intersection at Gore to make it ADA compliant.

Kesler asked "Will 2nd Street be postponed with the redo of the CIP"?

Wells stated no.

Whisenhunt stated the design for that project is 80% complete. It will include sidewalks and access into Elmer Thomas Park.

Harper stated my main concern is the bus stops. About 85% of them are not wheelchair accessible.

Wells stated the original contract should have stated that sidewalks were to be added. We are working on this issue.

Jones stated this is one of our more important priorities.

Wells stated what you are reading in the paper about the 2015 CIP I want you to understand the ADA money will not be touched. I went back to the 2012 program and I left the existing projects. The 2012 is the CIP we are talking about changing. We are talking about cutting it off December 31st and moving the unfinished projects into the 2016 program and adding \$72,000,000 for water projects. We have paid \$800,000 to an engineering firm to do a study on ground water, surface water and reuse water. The report is due in September and we have no money to do any of the improvements that will be recommended. They are talking about 10 test wells that will cost a million dollars. Changing the 2012 CIP was the only way I could see to come up with the funding. This will not affect the ADA money and as long as I'm on Council I will keep working for ADA. We are now in a situation with ADA we are playing catch up. Council is trying to get the city in shape with sidewalks, curb cuts and bus stops.

Harper stated some of the streets looks like a checkerboard.

Wells stated they are terrible. A billion dollars would barely be enough to either replace, rebuild or repair what needs to be done within the city right now. We planned on \$950 in sales tax from the 2015 CIP and last month we received \$761,000. People aren't spending so it is tough right now.

Kesler stated a large portion of the city revenues come from water and with the drought the city isn't able to sell water.

Wells stated water is a large percentage of our budget. We are doing everything we can and we will not let up on ADA. All new construction has to be ADA compliant and we will try to fund money as often as we can. Thanks for allowing me to be here today and I'm glad to meet everyone.

Jones stated thanks for your time.

Kesler stated I think we need to redo the maps to include the CIP street work in a different color.

Whisenhunt stated we are working on additional maps that will have completed projects, those that are in ADA compliance, and the ones that are in design or construction. There will be 4 colors shown on the map. Red will be proposed priority routes, green will show the completed routes, blue will be under construction and orange will be nearing a construction date.

Harper asked "When will the construction start on Priority 1"?

Whisenhunt stated it is based on the availability of funding.

Jones stated Russell stated that sidewalks are not a part of bond issued.

Whisenhunt stated in the 2015 CIP the first priority is the police/fire/jail. They have borrowed the money to fund the construction of these projects and have not addressed a second bond to cover any of the other projects.

Harper asked "So you don't know when we will start on the ADA projects or when they will receive the funding"?

Whisenhunt stated that is a Council decision. We are doing projects all the time that ADA work is happening.

Harper stated I'm just concerned as to when they will get started on our priorities.

Whisenhunt stated the million in the 2015 CIP will only address through priority 4. It cost about a quarter of a million for a half a mile and that eats your million up very quickly. Our million will do close to 2 miles if we don't have to acquire any right-of-way.

Harper stated that will get Sheridan and that will be a big help. I thought you had a 15' right-of-way automatically.

Whisenhunt stated when they were originally built you generally had the street right-of-way and 11 or 12' on each side of the street. Sheridan and Gore started out as 2 lane street so now we don't have any room left. In some areas are businesses and for a sidewalk you will have to take part of their parking lot and many of them don't have enough parking as it is.

Jones stated while we are talking about priorities we need to consider something moving forward. It isn't an issue yet but there will come a time when we need to decide what kind of elective projects are going to be a major or minor priority. For example I got a call about accessibility to a pavilion in the park at MacArthur Park. At this time there is no accessible path.

Whisenhunt stated in the transition place we decided the first priorities would be to larger parks that get the most use. This isn't to say that a neighborhood park doesn't need to be addressed. We have a neighborhood park that someone needs access to and want to use. If we don't look at some of the minor priorities/individual request we will never get to where it outweighs the larger parks. If it is based on use it will be a long time down the road before the smaller ones get repaired.

Jones stated we need to talk about what percentage of available funds we want to assign to smaller projects.

Kesler stated maybe 15%.

Whisenhunt stated we need to decide how much we are going to concentrate on the bigger projects and how much to set aside for the formal requests.

Jones stated I suggest we revisit this issue at the next meeting. Whisenhunt and I can look at this park to see what it will actually cost to repair.

Whisenhunt stated that way you can see what the dollar figures will amount to.

Jones asked does that sound okay with everyone.

Kesler stated maybe we need to need to meet every 2 months instead of 3.

Jones stated I agree. We will start meeting every 2 months. Whisenhunt and I will get together and will bring back a couple of examples to look at so maybe we can get an idea of what percentage to assign to small and large projects.

Whisenhunt stated another thing is accessibility is not just physical. There are many kinds of accessibility challenges. The new traffic signals at 38th and Lee have the audible pedestrian crosswalks. This corner will give you an example of all accessibility.

Jones stated something you may not be aware of is the Lake Lawtonka dam was reopened to the public. We are looking at what it would take to make the dam accessible for fishing. We are trying to look at everything and I believe this demonstrates that. I want to introduce Tara Brown who is with us today. We are glad you are here and appreciate your interest.

Brown stated thank you. Before I start let me introduce my mom Ms. Sarah. I contacted the Mayor to see if he would be interested in starting a Mayor's Commission to address the concerns of people with disabilities. Tulsa and Oklahoma City both have this commission. I sat on the board in Tulsa. I have also been appointed to the Statewide Independent Living Council by the Governor. As I look around there is a lot of need to make Lawton accessible. If you are not a veteran then you have nothing available. I did get a membership for LATS and that is a whole other issue by itself. The Director called and asked me a few questions about the ADA and that was great. My daughter noticed that the seats on the LATS vehicle were very soiled and I use this vehicle every day to get back and from to my job at Fort Sill. It is disgusting and a health and safety issue. I didn't just complain I donated the money to fund the cleaning of the seats for the 3 buses that run paratransit services. I didn't know there wasn't any funding in Lawton so I was hoping that we could use some of the ADA funding to purchase some vinyl seats or a plastic seat covers.

Kesler stated instead of changing out the seat once they were clean you could just put a clear plastic cover over it.

Brown stated I agree. I'm glad to see there is a starting point to address the concerns of people with disabilities. I moved here 8 years ago and it looks like Lawton will be my home. I hope that I will be invited back.

Jones stated absolutely. You are welcome to come anytime. Before you leave would please give us your contact information. This board is a new project and a starting point. We feel good about the directions we have. We do wish there was more money to spend but you have to start somewhere. I see lots of good being done. We are looking at the big picture and ways to tackle it. It will take time and may feel as if we are going very slow but we will be moving forward.

Brown stated the reason for me getting on the Statewide Independent Living Council is to try and get things a little closer this way. Thanks you for having us.

2. Comments/Discussion

3. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Motion by Jones, **Second** by Harper, to adjourn. **Aye:** Kesler; Jones; Harper. **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**