



**MINUTES
LAWTON YOUTH SPORTS TRUST AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING**

LAWTON CITY HALL- 212 SW 9TH STREET, LAWTON, OKLAHOMA

2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023, 2:00 P.M.

Chairman Henry called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room of City Hall. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Brian Henry, Hossein Moini, Kelly Harris, Mike Cowan, Krista Ratliff, Randy Warren

ABSENT: Albert Johnson Jr., Carey Monroe, Steve Coleman

ALSO PRESENT: Kobe Humble, COL Deputy City Clerk; Eric Swanson, Southwest Ledger; Christine James, Parks & Recreation Director; Matt Elliott, Eastern Sports Management (ESM); John Wack, Eastern Sports Management (ESM)

II. ADMINISTRATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY OATH(S) OF OFFICE FOR MIKE COWAN

Humble administered the Constitutional and Statutory Oath of Office for Mike Cowan.

III. REPORTS:

A. Programs Committee- Receive a report from Moini regarding the activities of the Program Committee.

Moini had no reports at this time.

B. Facilities Committee- Receive a report from Chairman Henry regarding the activities of the Facilities Committee.

Chairman Henry stated that facilities will be talked about in the business items portion of the meeting.

C. Parks & Recreation- Receive a report from the City of Lawton Parks & Rec Division.

James stated that RSVP is being incorporated into the Parks & Rec Department, therefore Matt Elliott with ESM will be taking over the old RSVP office where he will have his own office and conference room.

John Wack with ESM asked if Elliott would be able to access the internet through the City's network or through Wi-Fi.

James said that was an IT question and she would get an answer on that.

D. Eastern Sports Management- Receive a report from Eastern Sports Management.

Elliott stated that there has been comments from the public that the ball fields are looking great. There are teams coming to play from surrounding areas that have said the ball fields look incredible.

Elliott mentioned that there are still no bathrooms open.

Moini asked why the bathrooms are not open at this time.

James stated that there is a water line break in one of the walls and they are having to wait on estimates from a plumber to get the situation resolved.

James said that there are portable restrooms in the meantime.

Ratliff asked if Elliott is tracking the turf projects that are currently going on at the Lawton Public Schools fields.

Chairman Henry answered yes, there have been positive conversations with Lawton Public Schools Superintendent Hime and Deputy Superintendent James on the matter.

Elliott stated that there has been a food expert coordinator hired recently, Sarah, who previously worked at Mike's Sports Bar & Grill in Lawton.

Elliott said that she has been a great problem solver and has helped work through problems that have come up while getting the concession stands up and running.

Elliott said they are going to the concession stand at Eastside Park after the meeting and that it should be operational tonight after some trouble shooting with point of sale.

Elliott stated that ESM is still looking for someone to take care of field maintenance. There has been an interview that has already taken place and another one coming up. Elliott said that they would be primarily responsible for the work that United has done and maintaining the fields.

Elliott stated that ESM is also in search of a second program coordinator, and they have good candidates in the running for this position.

Elliott said that from fall of 2021 to spring of 2022 which was the end of Parks & Recreation programming when ESM took over, there were 1,824 total youth participating in the program.

When ESM took over in fall of 2022 through summer of 2023, there were 2,433 youth participants in the program which is a 33 ½ percent increase in just youth. This does not include any adult programming, which is about a 50 percent increase.

Elliott stated that going into the fall 2023 league, ESM will be able to compare with their own numbers from the fall 2022 league. This will give ESM a better idea of the growth within the program and ideas for recruiting and encouraging the youth to participate.

Chairman Henry asked how teams are hearing about the program, why they are choosing to join and if they are giving any feedback.

Elliott stated that organization plays a major role in it. Some of the teams felt that their local leagues were not as organized as Play Lawton.

Elliott said that a couple of the teams participating asked if Play Lawton had rules in place. Elliott informed the teams that there are rules, which made the teams very happy.

Elliott said word of mouth seems to be the way teams are hearing about the program.

Ratliff mentioned that she sees the program being advertised on social media quite often.

Cowan asked how the numbers relate to the anticipated quote when the leagues first began.

Elliott said that the numbers are higher than ESM anticipated and that they knew the opportunity and the potential outcome was so great here in Lawton.

Wack mentioned that there are two sets of numbers that ESM is comparing with, the ones that were developed last August when Play Lawton was in the beginning stages of development. The numbers were based off demographics.

Wack stated that the budget for this fiscal year was created about 4-5 months ago. This budget was created without the benefit of knowing what spring and summer participation would look like.

Wack stated that this budget will be re-visited to determine financial standings and while making decisions to potentially hire additional staff.

Cowan asked if ESM is capturing potential participants with low-income in the community.

Wack stated that due to the product being so low, there has not been a barrier to entry.

Wack mentioned that ESM has learned that those people are still paying a lot of money, its just not coming to the Lawton Youth Sports Authority. It is going first to the local booster club and just a portion is going to the Authority.

Wack said that ESM might charge \$80-\$100 for an 8-game season of youth basketball in another market but here they are only charging \$25 for that 8-game season. The booster clubs are charging \$100 and only giving the Authority \$25 of that.

Wack stated that as this infrastructure grows, ESM will be taking over a lot of things that the booster clubs take care of currently.

Chairman Henry mentioned that it is probably more so clubs instead of booster clubs. There are only two booster clubs, Flower Mound and Woodland Hills. These clubs are attaching league play with travel. He stated that the Authority stays out of the middle because the Authority is not sanctioned with booster clubs.

James mentioned that this has been an issue in the past as well.

Chairman Henry mentioned that he believes the booster clubs will eventually go away. He said that as Play Lawton continues to grow, people won't have to join a booster club for a league to get uniforms, etc. because it will be part of the Play Lawton program.

Wack stated that certainly at the recreational level, however at the middle level, which is not recreational but not quite travel, Play Lawton will probably never enforce what goes on.

Wack said that at the direct level, people pay travel fees to participate in a municipally ran league.

Chairman Henry stated that ESM has a not-for-profit league, Play 360 that the Authority could associate with and publicize.

Chairman Henry mentioned that if someone were to donate \$100 for kids to play that can't afford to, it would go into the Authorities account and Play 360.

Chairman Henry said that there have been discussions regarding The Lawton Youth Sports Authority setting up a foundation. The Authority has gone back and forth with this discussion, and it has been tabled for now.

Moini asked Elliott if he has opened fall registration.

Elliott said yes, fall registration has opened as of a few hours ago.

Moini mentioned that there are other organizations that are promoting sports. He wanted to ensure that Play Lawton was being promoted as well.

Wack updated the Authority about ESM looking into more office space for the staff, but that is being put on hold for now.

Chairman Henry mentioned that the budget numbers were projected for year three or four. This a great news for Play Lawton.

Chairman Henry stated his concerns about not being able to handle baseball and softball next spring due to such high registration and the lack of field space.

Chairman Henry mentioned that there are fields, but not all of them are playable.

Moini asked for clarification on the fields.

Chairman Henry stated that the Authority only repaired two fields at Eastside Park.

Moini mentioned that this would be a great time to get estimates on the cost to fix the fields due to the concern of potentially not having enough field space.

Chairman Henry stated that the Authority has been working on that already and they have an idea of how much it will cost.

Moini asked how many fields are needing to be fixed.

Elliott stated that there are two more at Eastside Park. One of them has additional issues that the others do not.

Wack mentioned that ESM is globally generating a list to not only solve specific problems that are related to the projected number of teams to serve but also the Mayors request to make Play Lawton the premier destination for youth sports.

Warren asked how confident ESM is in knowing that those fields will be needed.

Elliott stated that the fields will be needed.

Warren stated that the Authority needs to get the fields playable now so that there will be some growing season.

Chairman Henry stated that it is not necessarily a growing issue, but its more of trying to get it done while teams are not playing.

Chairman Henry mentioned that the Authority only contracted to have nine fields sprayed and fertilized.

Elliott mentioned that the mowing is contracted for all the fields.

E. Finance Report – Consider approving the Treasurer Report from Hatch, Croke, and Associates as well as corresponding financial statement(s) from Eastern Sports Management.

Chairman Henry stated that he does not have the financials from Hatch, Croke, and Associates just yet.

Chairman Henry mentioned that the year-end fiscal adjustments and financial statements for June and July will be presented at the next meeting.

IV. BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. Consider approving the minutes of the June 8 and June 28, 2023, meetings.

Motion by Moini, **Second** by Ratliff, to approve the minutes of the June 8 and June 28, 2023, meetings. **AYE:**, Moini, Henry, Harris, Cowan, Ratliff, Warren. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

B. Receive an update from Chairman Henry regarding proposed sites for the indoor sports facility, discuss entering into negotiations of a long-term lease agreement for one or more of the proposed sites, and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Henry stated that he does not have any of the information that is needed to make a decision on this item.

Chairman Henry updated the Authority on two sites that are in contention currently.

Chairman Henry has asked to let the Authority get through the June month because of the budget discussions.

Chairman Henry said that the negotiations have started with the new Chairman of the KCA on Tuesday.

Chairman Henry said that there have been positive conversations with the KCA and they have a meeting Wednesday where they will continue to work on potential contract terms.

Chairman Henry mentioned that he did request to have the contract terms for the August meeting for the Authority to try and decide between the two sites.

Chairman Henry stated the Lawton Public School land has had challenges with getting information back. He stated that he was promised a draft lease to share with the Authority today.

Chairman Henry said that Lawton Public Schools must have an RFP for the appraisal, and that was done later than expected. Therefore the due date was pushed back.

Chairman Henry is hoping that the draft lease will be ready well in advance of the August meeting. The plan is for the facilities committee and the city to have discussions prior to the August meeting.

Chairman Henry mentioned that the Authority was able to get funding from the CIP that will be dedicated to this project into this fiscal year.

Chairman Henry stated that without the site chosen, the design phase has to be placed on hold.

No Action Taken.

C. Consider hiring Robert D Turner, CPA for auditing services for the Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Henry stated that the Authority is a component of the City of Lawton. This requires the Authority to have an audit, which becomes a component audit to the City.

Chairman Henry mentioned that the Authority started out by trying to combine the financials which was tough based on how the budget and accounting process was set up compared to what the Finance Department put together.

Chairman Henry stated that the Authority passed their budget based on ESM's accounting.

Chairman Henry said that when he originally spoke with Turner, his concern was if the financials are combined then he would be auditing the Authority and ESM.

Chairman Henry stated that he received clarification from Joe Don Dunham, City of Lawton Finance Director; that keeping the two financials separate and auditing the Authority with ESM's year-end report as supported documentation does satisfy the requirement for the audit.

Chairman Henry mentioned that he does not have an amount finalized just yet. If there is a motion, he asked that it be made up to \$10,000 dollars.

Chairman Henry stated that the Authority budgeted more, but he believes it will be closer to \$5,000 dollars.

Motion by Ratliff, **Second** by Warren, to consider hiring Robert D Turner, CPA for auditing services for the Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority and take action as deemed necessary. **AYE:** Moini, Cowan, Ratliff, Warren, Henry, Harris. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ratliff, **Second** by Moini, to adjourn the July 13, 2023, meeting. **AYE:** Moini, Cowan, Ratliff, Henry, Warren, Harris. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

There will be no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:34 PM.