



LAWTON YOUTH SPORTS TRUST AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024 – 2:00PM
LAWTON CITY HALL – 3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
212 SW 9TH STREET, LAWTON, OK 73501**

"Official action can be taken only on items which appear on the agenda. The Authority may 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. Under certain circumstances, items are deferred to a specific later date or stricken from the agenda entirely."

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairman Henry called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM in the 3rd floor conference room of Lawton City Hall. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City of Lawton website as required by law.

PRESENT: Brian Henry, Steve Coleman, Hossein Moini, Carey Monroe, Mike Cowan

ABSENT: Kelly Harris, Albert Johnson, Krista Ratliff, Randy Warren

ALSO PRESENT: Ashton Wall, City Clerk's Office; Eris Swanson, SW Ledger; William Miller, ESM; John Wack, ESM; Matt Elliott, ESM; Kim McConnell, Lawton Constitution; Mitchell Dooley, Parks & Rec; Brandon Mulvany, Citizen

REPORTS:

- 1. Facilities Committee – Receive a report from Chairman Henry regarding the activities of the Facilities Committee.**

Chairman Henry reported that there is limited news to share at this time. The primary update concerns the land transaction: all extensions have been executed and delivered to the closing company. As of Tuesday, the sellers' attorney has confirmed that the opposing party remains committed to signing the necessary documents to resolve the title issues.

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Chairman Henry mentioned that the City Council will review the Authority's action from July 8th, which approved the Limited Support Agreement. This review includes a revised budget that positions us to secure the \$700,000 needed to complete the purchase. All paperwork is currently with the Finance Department and is ready for processing. However, they cannot proceed until the City Council approves and signs the support agreement. If approved, we could potentially receive the check by Friday, and I have already informed the closing company that closing on the 30th or 31st would be most appropriate.

Chairman Henry indicated that, barring any unforeseen issues, everything is set to proceed as planned.

He also mentioned that he will be scheduling a meeting with city officials to discuss the design work, which will be our next significant step following the closing.

2. Parks & Recreation – Receive a report from the City of Lawton Parks & Recreation Division.

No report at this time.

3. Eastern Sports Management – Receive a report from Eastern Sports Management.

Matt Elliott mentioned that, as discussed in the last meeting, ESM has undergone some leadership transitions. He announced that Will Miller is now the new General Manager at Play Lawton and introduced him to the Authority.

Will Miller shared that he has been a resident of Lawton for approximately 15 years, having moved from the East Coast. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Lawton Soccer Club for the past six years, demonstrating his strong commitment to the soccer community. Will also mentioned that he has four children involved in various sports, including basketball, football, and soccer. With his youngest child being 10 years old, he anticipates another eight years of active involvement in youth sports. He expressed enthusiasm for contributing to the community's development and is eager to see what can be achieved together.

Elliott noted that ESM is thrilled to have Miller join the team and that he has already taken a leading role in managing programs.

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Elliott provided an update on the current programming activities. To conclude our seasons of play and transition into summer, the Summer Fleet playoffs are scheduled for next week. Fall registration is now open, and we are actively collecting registrations.

One key initiative that Miller is spearheading is the launch of a new program, affectionately referred to as the "Lil's Program." This initiative will be applied to several sports, starting with youth basketball. This program, initially named "Lil Ballers," focuses on youth basketball. It is designed to teach fundamental skills and provide a fun environment for younger children to learn the basics of the game, rather than emphasizing competitive play.

Elliott stated that they are collaborating with experienced program leaders at our facilities to develop and refine this program. Miller and the team are fully engaged in this effort, alongside our preparations for the fall league offerings discussed in the previous meeting.

Chairman Henry inquired whether 3,000 registrations had been received.

Elliott confirmed that 3,000 registrations were received. The final count for the fiscal year was 3,218, compared to 2,411 in the initial year of operation. This represents a significant percentage increase in participation, and the goal is to continue this positive trend moving forward.

Cowan inquired about how the cost of the basketball camp Play Lawton is organizing compares to other summer basketball camps available in the area.

Elliott explained that the basketball camp is structured as a series of weekly classes, typically comprising eight to ten sessions over an eight to ten-week period. He mentioned that they are currently finalizing the cost, which is expected to be in the range of \$75 to \$80 for the entire program. The goal is to ensure the pricing remains accessible and reasonable while managing the business effectively.

John Wack clarified that the program's range of classes extends beyond just the 4-8 year age group. It includes children as young as 18 months up to four years old, focusing on gross motor skills training within a sports context. For these younger children, the emphasis is on social interaction, playing with peers, listening skills, and basic motor development rather than specific sports skills. These classes will be marketed under names like

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"Little Ballers" or "Little Kickers" for soccer. As the children grow older, particularly at ages 5 and 6, the curriculum will progressively introduce more sport-specific skills.

Monroe inquired about the level of interest in the scholarship program, particularly since there was recently a donation received for the scholarship fund. She asked if there have been any applications submitted.

Elliott indicated that there have been no applications received to date and suggested that Miller could provide further information on this matter.

Miller explained that he is working on strategies to effectively promote the available scholarships without depending entirely on community outreach. He is considering a partnership with the Great 580 organization, led by Jeff Elbert, known for its major community events. Although the discussions with Elbert are still preliminary, the proposed plan includes an application process for the scholarships. Elbert and his team will review the applications and send their recommendations to Play Lawton, which will make the final decisions and assist with the enrollment of the selected children.

Monroe asked whether the scholarships would apply to programs such as "Lil Kickers" and similar introductory classes, or if they would be limited to competitive sports only.

Miller stated that he envisions the scholarships as all-encompassing, aiming to ensure that as many children as possible have the opportunity to participate in various programs, including both introductory classes like "Lil Kickers" and competitive sports.

Monroe inquired whether there are any fundraising efforts planned to generate additional scholarship funds.

Miller stated that they are currently in the exploratory phase for fundraising. He has met with two of his coordinators to discuss organizing a basketball tournament involving local businesses. The concept is to have teams sponsored by various companies. The funds raised from this event would be directed into the scholarship fund.

Chairman Henry noted that this is an area where the Authority could offer assistance, as they have their own network of contacts that could be leveraged to support the fundraising efforts.

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Chairman Henry welcomed Miller to the team and extended his gratitude to Elliott for his contributions to Play Lawton.

4. Finance Report – Consider approving the Treasurer Report from Hatch, Croke, and Associates.

Chairman Henry noted that he was not initially expecting both sets of financials, but they were received in time. As a result, the plan is to review and approve both the ESM and LYSA financial reports.

Chairman Henry presented the financial reports for both ESM and LYSA, which are available for review at the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Moini, **Second** by Monroe, to approve the financial statement(s) from Eastern Sports Management and Hatch, Croke, and Associates. **AYE:** Henry, Moini, Monroe, Cowan, Coleman. **NAY:** None. Motion Passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

5. Consider approving a Letter of Engagement with Christopher Turner at Turner & Associates, CPAs for Audit Services for fiscal year ending June 2024.

Chairman Henry noted that the services provided are the same as last year. The cost for this year is \$7,300, compared to \$7,900 last year. He also mentioned that the Authority had budgeted more than the \$7,300 required for these services.

Motion by Moini, **Second** by Monroe, to approve the letter of engagement from Turner & Associates for audit services. **AYE:** Moini, Monroe, Cowan, Coleman, Henry. **NAY:** None. Motion Passed unanimously.

6. Receive a presentation from ESM regarding a master plan for outdoor playing fields and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Henry highlighted several upcoming priorities, including the purchase of land and the planning of an indoor complex. He reminded the Authority that the City leases land from the County at 17th and G, which is then subleased to the Authority, a factor to be considered in our planning.

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He noted that last year, only two fields on the east side were repaired, and all four fields in Ahlschlager were upgraded, resulting in a noticeable improvement.

He also mentioned that while youth sports are a significant focus, the Authority also oversees adult programming. There are serious issues with some of the fields, with only three out of five infields having been repaired so far.

Chairman Henry requested Elliott to develop a preliminary plan to address the growing number of participants and the need for adequate facilities for both playing and practice. He referred to this as the "first draft" of the plan.

Elliott presented the Outdoor Asset Master Plan to the Authority, which is available for review at the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Chairman Henry noted that he did some calculations to not include provisions for irrigation systems. Additionally, Superintendent Hime and Deputy James are supportive of the youth. He believes that a feasible agreement can be reached to sublease the property from them at a reasonable cost.

Chairman Henry stated that the estimated cost is approximately \$400,000 without including irrigation, whereas the cost with irrigation is around \$1.5 million. Additionally, the current lease with the county expires in June 2026.

Elliott continued with the presentation.

Coleman inquired whether the lease for Ahlschlager includes water provisions as part of the agreement with the City.

Chairman Henry confirmed that, since the City runs the property, they do not charge themselves for water. The sublease agreement specifies that water is included, with the City covering the cost of water provided to the Comanche County Coliseum. In essence, the City's lease payment is effectively providing free water services to the County for the Coliseum.

Coleman also inquired about the presence of a shade structure at the Grandview Complex.

Elliott confirmed that there is a shade structure at the Grandview Complex.

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Coleman asked whether the parking area is paved or gravel.

Chairman Henry responded that the parking area is not fully paved but is progressing towards that status. He also noted that the area currently faces significant issues with weed overgrowth.

Elliott emphasized the importance of considering Monroe's point regarding practice space while making these decisions. He highlighted the need to keep 17th and G available as an open facility for practice use. While games, camps, and tournaments would not be scheduled for that space, it is crucial to ensure that local teams can still use it for practice.

Elliott began the section of the presentation on McMahon Field, which is primarily designed for adult softball rather than youth use. He recommended that any new outdoor diamond assets be dedicated to youth programs, while McMahon Field should continue to serve adult programs.

He mentioned that there are several discussion items related to this. In the context of adult recreational sports, where beverage consumption often accompanies activities, we are interested in exploring the possibility of permitting this at the facility. Additionally, we would consider purchasing any relevant equipment to remain at the facility.

Chairman Henry provided context by noting that, given the league revenue and the cost of goods, adult softball would generate approximately \$8,000 in profit.

Coleman inquired whether the City owns McMahon Field.

Chairman Henry confirmed that, yes, the City does own McMahon Field.

Monroe asked if the lease of McMahon Field also includes the skate park and its maintenance.

Chairman Henry answered that it does not.

Elliott continued the presentation by addressing the capital expenditures.

Cowan asked if, when discussing regional tournaments, we are referring to attracting out-of-town visitors. He pointed out that if these tournaments

are held at facilities that are substandard, the likelihood of those visitors returning is significantly reduced.

Elliott stated, exactly. While first impressions are not everything, they are quite significant in the tournament world. The capital expenditures included here are intended to fund facility improvements, which are necessary to effectively host such events.

Cowan asked if Elliott was suggesting that we are currently in a good position to do that.

Monroe inquired whether Cowan was referring to making the improvements.

Cowan clarified that he was asking whether we are in a good position to host those types of events under the current conditions.

Elliott stated that, at this point, we are not in a good position to host such events.

Cowan inquired about the timeline for becoming capable of hosting these events.

Miller stated that the bathrooms at McMahon Field are currently inoperable due to severe plumbing issues, which is why the largest line item is dedicated to this problem. The water is not turned on at the facility. To address this, Miller has gotten a quote from Robinson Air which estimates that restoring operational bathrooms will cost between \$20,000 and \$25,000.

Coleman inquired whether any other quotes have been obtained for the plumbing work.

Miller stated that he has not obtained additional quotes for this issue yet, but for the East Side, they did not seek other quotes due to the urgency of the situation.

Chairman Henry also emphasized that the East Side was addressed as an emergency due to ongoing programming at the time.

Miller also mentioned that he is exploring the possibility of partnering with corporate entities at ESM to develop sponsorship packages in exchange for goods. This initiative aims to help reduce the overall costs.

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Elliott proceeded to the next part of the presentation, focusing on East Side Park.

Elliott handed over the presentation to Miller to address the organizational aspects.

Miller noted that, having been in the position for just a month, he has been addressing several key issues. The main issue we face right now is the need to hire someone with access to a pickup truck. This vehicle is crucial for effectively handling the job, as it is required to transport supplies, tools, and equipment between complexes. We recently purchased a trailer; however, if our current maintenance supervisor were to leave, we would need to hire someone with a pickup truck to effectively perform the job. Miller suggested exploring a partnership with the Parks and Recreation department of the City of Lawton to obtain or sublease retired fleet vehicles as a potential solution.

Miller stated that the primary focus is on finding the most efficient way to manage the maintenance aspect.

Elliott mentioned that security is another pressing need. Currently, each door at each facility has a different key, and there is no clear record of who holds the keys. Re-coring the locks could help streamline operations and improve security.

Moini asked what the total cost would be if someone were to write a check to cover all the items on the list of organizational needs.

Elliott stated that he has not yet calculated the total cost but estimated it to be around \$3 million. If Ahlschlager Park were excluded from the calculation and only the costs for East Side and McMahon Parks were considered, the total would be closer to \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

Chairman Henry emphasized that there are multiple unknowns within those numbers.

Monroe asked about the plan for prioritizing tasks. She inquired whether similar tasks across all fields would be completed simultaneously or if each field would be addressed separately.

Chairman Henry provided input from the Authority's perspective, explaining that he requested the Master Plan from Elliott to ensure that supplies and numbers are managed and organized effectively.

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He noted that, given the facility's name, "McMahon Park," there may be potential opportunities to secure grants from McMahon for the repairs.

Chairman Henry also mentioned that a decision must be made by 2026 regarding Ahlschlager Park: either renew the lease or vacate the facility.

He also stated that he would prefer not to answer Monroe's question by simply prioritizing the biggest issue first, as this might lead to other concerns being overlooked and potentially escalating. However, we must make a decision on baseball by June 2026. From my perspective, this deadline requires our focused attention.

Moini suggested considering the formation of a committee to focus on this issue. He noted that, given the substantial amount of money involved—\$3 million for various projects—it might be overwhelming to tackle everything before building the new facility. He emphasized the need to determine priorities and then strategize on how to raise the necessary funds, whether through McMahon or other sources.

Chairman Henry stated that the facilities committee has been focusing on the land and the new facility, and this would need to be incorporated into their considerations as well.

Monroe sought clarification on whether the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is specifically for the new complex.

Chairman Henry stated that the current approach involves removing the "up to" language from the original 2019 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He mentioned the question of how the \$30 million, which has been used as a benchmark for construction, would be allocated. He noted that the funds are specifically designated for industrial and economic development. While this project pertains to sports and tourism economic development, there is ongoing discussion about whether it should still fall under Parks & Recreation. The Parks & Recreation division and City Council will ultimately determine how these funds are distributed.

Monroe asked for clarification on whether the funds could be used for the list of repairs or if they are designated exclusively for the new complex.

Coleman asked if the Authority is responsible for any maintenance fees such as mowing at other fields as well. Specifically, he inquired if the mowing contract discussed in the last meeting applies to other fields beyond the one initially mentioned.

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Chairman Henry stated that the mowing contract discussed in the last meeting is all-inclusive and covers all fields currently in use: East Side, Ahlschlager, and McMahon Park. If it is decided to transition from Ahlschlager to Grandview, the contract will be adjusted accordingly. If Ahlschlager is retained for practice use, decisions will need to be made regarding whether to continue mowing it while not watering it.

Chairman Henry mentioned that everything is moving in that direction. From a revenue standpoint, if we can maintain our program support from the City at current levels, we can begin to address some of these needs with revenue. For example, we have repaired the fence, acquired the trailer, and fixed the lighting using revenue. "Revenue," means the income generated from fees and the support provided by the City. These are the two sources of funding currently available.

Coleman asked if the Authority has considered offering naming rights or sponsorship opportunities for facilities like Grandview. He suggested that a business could contribute to specific improvements, such as fixing fences or installing shading, in exchange for naming rights or other recognition.

Chairman Henry stated that there have been no discussions about offering naming rights for facilities like Grandview. Sponsorships have been considered primarily in the context of raising additional capital for the building. He provided examples such as naming a floor "Steve Coleman, Attorney at Law" or "Liberty Bank." These sponsorships are seen as beneficial for operational purposes rather than raising capital.

Miller mentioned that exploring partnerships and sponsorships is one of his main priorities for the first fiscal year. He plans to focus on securing significant contributions to bring to the Authority.

Chairman Henry stated that it would be easier to secure sponsorships and partnerships if they were associated with a specific entity, such as the Brian Henry Corporation, for example. When addressing changes in services for municipalities, we are required to accept any donations in accordance with technical regulations.

John Wack noted that, considering ESM's capabilities, Elliott's arrival at Play Lawton with minimal notice did not initially align with our primary skill requirements. However, over the past 24 months, Elliott has successfully established and launched the program, demonstrating significant adaptability and effectiveness. Coincidentally, this is one of Miller's strengths, as it aligns with his previous work at the LSC Complex. He

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possesses established community connections, strong relationships, and the relevant experience and skill set. As a result, we anticipate that this aspect of the Play Lawton will show considerable improvement. He also highlighted, as Chairman Henry mentioned, that the funds are somewhat flexible. If the operating deficit decreases while support remains constant, a larger portion of the available dollars can be allocated towards maintenance and other related expenses.

Miller built on Chairman Henry's statement about covering expenses with revenue, he and Elliott have prioritized improving the concession stands. They believe that upgrading these facilities could significantly increase revenue, potentially tripling or even quadrupling current sales.

Moini mentioned that the task at 17th and G should be relatively straightforward, potentially requiring only some minor updates, such as applying a fresh coat of paint.

Chairman Henry expressed a desire to have individuals assess the situation to provide a more accurate estimate. He noted that the Authority is scheduled to present an update to the Council soon. His intention is to incorporate this into a spreadsheet to demonstrate that, if we aim to establish the premier youth sports program in Oklahoma, this is the initial step. After addressing all possible issues within the \$25,000 increments, now it's time to make a substantial investment. This will give the Authority Council's input on potential ideas.

Chairman Henry indicated that he did not anticipate any immediate action on this item.

Moini wanted to clarify that when the committees meet, we are still required to post the meetings and follow all relevant procedural requirements.

Chairman Henry confirmed this requirement.

Moini stated that the facilities committee needs to convene and prioritize the list, with support from Eastern Sports.

Chairman Henry mentioned that he is considering the need to reorganize the committees by creating separate groups for indoor and outdoor facilities, rather than having a single facilities committee and a programs committee.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Coleman, **Second** by Monroe, to adjourn the July 18, 2024 meeting.
AYE: Monroe, Cowan, Coleman, Henry, Moini. **NAY:** None. Motion Passed unanimously.

There will be no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:58 PM.

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