



LAWTON YOUTH SPORTS TRUST AUTHORITY REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 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, Carey Monroe, Randy Warren, Kelly Harris, Mike Cowan

ABSENT: Krista Ratliff, Albert Johnson, Hossein Moini

ALSO PRESENT: Kobe Humble, City Clerk's Office; Eric Swanson, SW Ledger; Kim McConnell, Lawton Constitution; Larry Parks, Parks & Rec; Tim Wilson, Legal; William Miller, ESM

REPORTS:

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

Chairman Henry noted that the Programs Committee has fulfilled its initial purpose of finding an operator for the programs over the past two years, so it no longer has relevant tasks. Following a presentation from Miller and Elliott about our current facilities, we've decided to reform the committees. We will now have an Indoor Sports Facility Committee focused on building development, and an Outdoor Facilities Committee, which will oversee all outdoor facilities and any related matters. The Indoor Facilities Committee will include Chairman Henry, Hossain, Coleman, and Ratliff, while Albert Johnson will chair the new Outdoor

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Facilities Committee, which will also include Monroe and Cowan. The council members will be intentionally excluded for now, with plans to integrate them at a later time.

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

Chairman Henry stated that he noticed some work being done at 17th and G.

Larry Parks stated that they are currently upgrading the bathrooms, plumbing, and water facilities for the remainder of the season. Additionally, we recently removed a dead tree that posed a risk of falling. You may have noticed the camera installations; they are now completing the setup at Greer Park. The focus is on upgrading all the bathrooms throughout the area.

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

Miller stated that fall season registration is now completely closed. Unfortunately, we were unable to offer tackle football this year. However, participation in other sports has seen significant growth, with baseball and softball both doubling their participation rates, while flag football and volleyball have each increased by about 20-30%.

I am currently working on a partnership with a neighboring impact league to address the reasons behind the lack of collaboration and participation. Feedback from local elementary schools indicates that the high costs associated with tackle football gear, such as helmets and pads, have led some booster clubs to sell off their equipment.

I have a meeting scheduled for September 25th with key players involved in the impact league and other local teams to discuss how we can unify efforts and engage the community.

Chairman Henry asked how many teams there is in the impact league.

Miller stated that he has not been provided specific information on the number of impacted teams, but he estimates there are about ten based on social media activity and discussions with coordinators. Many of these teams were part of our league last year and have since moved to the other league due to the number of teams already participating there.

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Chairman Henry clarified whether fall participation has doubled.

Miller stated that he does not have the exact participation numbers yet, but based on sales data, from July 1st to today, we've generated \$19,200, compared to \$11,300 during the same period last year. This increase occurred with only a modest price hike of approximately \$5. Notably, baseball and softball have experienced the most significant growth, with participation in both sports doubling.

Chairman Henry asked how many age groups are included in the softball program.

Miller stated that there is only one age group for softball, which is 10U, and there are currently seven teams in that category. In comparison, there are eight teams in 10U baseball, whereas last year, there were only three teams in 10U softball.

Monroe asked whether these teams are affiliated with schools.

Miller stated that he knows Almor West and Woodland Hills have teams, while the remaining teams are from other areas.

Harris asked if there are any teams from Fort Sill.

Miller stated that there is one team from Fort Sill.

Miller mentioned that the team's primary focus over the past month has been on building strong relationships with these clubs. While it's too late to implement changes for this season, they are laying the groundwork for winter and receiving positive feedback on their approach. They will continue to enhance the registration process to make it easier for participants and encourage greater involvement.

Miller stated that they have significantly enhanced the registration process this year by building out all the schools on the registration platform. Now, when users go to register, they will see their specific schools, making it easier for those unfamiliar with the various options.

Feedback from the Booster Clubs has been overwhelmingly positive. While not everyone embraces change, newer Booster Clubs appreciate the streamlined approach. They now only need to manage their season uniforms, as we will provide them with rosters a month and a half before the season begins. This allows them to prepare more effectively.

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Regarding practice logistics, if a school like Pioneer Park does not have enough participants, we can combine teams from schools to avoid complications with registration. This new system should enhance our overall organization and facilitate smoother operations moving forward.

Miller explained that winter registration opened on September 1st, immediately following the closure of fall registration. He emphasized that there will always be opportunities for registration available on the Play Lawton website. We held our first coaches meeting, which received positive feedback, especially since they opted for in-person sessions rather than solely online. This approach has encouraged independent teams to create their own rosters, aligning with the strategy of showcasing available teams for competitive leagues.

Currently, registrations are open for youth and adult basketball, youth and adult football, and futsal (indoor soccer) for both youth and adults. These registrations are already showing a significant increase, tripling compared to previous figures. Miller noted that three Booster Clubs—Pioneer Park, Almor West, and another—have reached out in the past week, expressing excitement about participating for the first time in several years.

Miller addressed the previous concerns regarding facility access with LPS, stating that he met with Gary Dees and Elizabeth Capps this past Tuesday. They reaffirmed their commitment and support for Play Lawton, although they clarified that LPS does not provide the facilities themselves.

To tackle the challenges, Miller created a facility usage form, which he provided about a month ago. This proactive approach outlines the usage plan for the entire year. While LPS wasn't entirely on board initially, they were receptive and provided contacts for every activity director within the district, offering a new direction for collaboration.

Miller plans to submit all facility requests for winter sports this week, aiming to avoid delays and ensure clarity about where games will be held, thus improving the planning process.

Cowan asked if there are any identifiable shortages in terms of requirements for the spaces needed to operate within the LPS.

Miller stated that he doesn't believe there are any. The main challenge has been the transition from Elliott to himself. Elliott had already submitted

requests, and by the time I took over, those requests had been prioritized and were in place.

Regarding your question about numbers, we won't know the full picture until we have the participation data. If the current trends continue, we may indeed face some challenges.

Cowan stated that he wasn't present at the last meeting, but he believe he saw that Eisenhower opted not to participate in utilizing their facilities.

Miller confirmed that both Eisenhower and Lawton High have declined to participate in the utilization of their facilities.

Cowan clarified his question by asking what potential shortages this situation creates in terms of facility utilization.

Miller stated that it puts us in a significant bind, as we currently have no 100-yard facilities under our control. This was a major concern, but it has become more manageable since we no longer need those fields for tackle football. However, we are now offering fall volleyball, which has 13 teams, and we lack the necessary facilities to accommodate them without support from LPS.

Cowan asked how we can resolve this issue.

Miller explained that he has been actively involved in addressing the issue. They started exploring alternative venues, such as the King Center and other locations, for volleyball. For football, they went out to remeasure existing spaces. Although they found that a 100-yard field could not fit at 17th and G, Eastside Park, they were able to accommodate 40-yard flag football fields. This season, they will be hosting flag football at Eastside Park, which is expected to attract larger crowds and boost concession sales. Softball will also be played at the same park on the same nights.

Regarding volleyball, they reached out to Cameron, where they had played the previous fall. Cameron offered the facility at \$325 per night, totaling over \$4,000 for the season, which posed a significant expense. The volleyball season will be played at MacArthur High.

Chairman Henry emphasized that the core issue is growth. Four years ago, this wasn't a concern due to lower participation numbers. However, if we see the same percentage growth in winter sports this year as we did last year, we will face significant challenges with facility availability. LPS has to

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accommodate wrestling and basketball in addition to our needs, which could further complicate the situation.

Monroe expressed her frustration with the ongoing difficulty of finding adequate practice space.

Miller acknowledged that the challenge of securing practice space is a significant concern, which is why he is taking a proactive approach. He plans to update the spreadsheet this week to track facility requests, including when they are submitted and the responses received—whether they are approved or denied. He noted that historically, teams have only had one practice a week due to high participation levels, which limits development. To establish the area as a premier youth sports hub in the state, it is essential to provide more than just one practice per week; otherwise, it simply isn't feasible for team growth and development.

Miller highlighted that participation and assisting parents with registration were key focuses when organizing the schools on the platform.

He also mentioned his collaboration with Summer Hurley-Jackson and Sandy Foster, and acknowledged that he received guidance from the group related to TSET and Canadian Memorial Hospital. Together, they will work on establishing healthy eating practices and policies that aim to enhance community well-being without significantly impacting concession sales. The goal is to provide healthier options and promote an active lifestyle within the community.

Miller announced that a basketball tournament, titled "Champions for Children," is set to launch on December 7th. This initiative aims to address the need for scholarships to assist families who cannot afford registration fees. The tournament will serve as a business-to-business networking event, with hopes of securing sponsorships for future endeavors. The entry fee for the tournament will be \$300.

He mentioned that he has had preliminary discussions with John Michael Montgomery and has engaged the chamber to help orchestrate the event, noting that he is fully supportive. Additionally, Miller has developed a scholarship fund and is in talks with Jeff Albert from the Great 580, which is currently reviewing the policies and procedures for this fund.

All proceeds from the tournament will contribute to the scholarship fund, and the Great 580 will begin accepting applications from the public in need of support for registration fees.

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Cowan asked if the scholarship applications would be based on household income.

Miller explained that the scholarship approval criteria will primarily rely on qualifications such as being approved for WIC or receiving benefits like food stamps. There are specific criteria in place, and he plans to forward this information to Chairman Henry for further review by the Authority.

Miller elaborated that the tournament will feature matchups like CVS versus Walmart, Pizza Hut versus Chick-fil-A, and Liberty Bank versus Fort Sill National. The goal is to create a fun, community-oriented atmosphere rather than simply a competitive challenge. This approach emphasizes the positive reasons behind the event, encouraging participation for a greater cause rather than just assembling teams.

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

Tim Wilson explained that a transaction needs to be completed to ensure accurate accounting records regarding the \$650,000 in CIP funds. This transaction involves returning the \$650,000 currently held in the authority's account back to the city. Once the funds are returned, the city will issue a new check from the recently closed \$40 million loan to the authority, aligning the financial records appropriately.

Chairman Henry presented the financial statements from Hatch, Croke, and Associates for the periods ending June 30, 2024, and 2023, as well as the financial statement from Eastern Sports Management for August 2024. Copies of these statements are available upon request from the City Clerk's office.

Motion by Warren, **Second** by Harris, to the Treasurer Report from Hatch, Croke, and Associates as well as financial statement(s) from Eastern Sports Management. **AYE:** Henry, Monroe, Cowan, Warren, Coleman, Harris. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed unanimously.***

BUSINESS ITEMS:

5. Consider approving the minutes of the July 8, 2024 special meeting and the August 8, 2024 regular meeting.

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Motion by Warren, **Second** by Harris, to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2024 special meeting and the August 8, 2024 regular meeting. **AYE:** Monroe, Cowan, Warren, Coleman, Harris, Henry **NAY:** None. **Motion Passed unanimously.**

6. Consider approving the fourth Amendment to the Real Estate Purchase Agreement with Donna Richards Cooper and the Frank L. Richards 1992 Revocable Living Trust and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Henry noted the capability to amend agenda items and emphasized its importance in light of recent events. He shared the unfortunate news that Donna Richards Cooper's spouse, James Mickey Cooper, passed away in a car accident last Friday, with the funeral taking place today.

Given these circumstances, he proposed an amendment to extend the expiration date from September 30th to October 11th. This extension would provide additional time for necessary signatures related to the title opinion, which includes resolving a transfer title issue from several years ago. One of the beneficiaries had previously hesitated, but the attorneys have confirmed that all parties are now in agreement. However, original signatures from family members spread across the country are still required.

Motion by Warren, **Second** by Harris, to approve the fourth Amendment to the Real Estate Purchase Agreement with Donna Richards Cooper and the Frank L. Richards 1992 Revocable Living Trust **AYE:** Monroe, Cowan, Warren, Coleman, Harris, Henry **NAY:** None. **Motion Passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Monroe, **Second** by Warren, to adjourn the September 12, 2024 meeting. **AYE:** Monroe, Cowan, Warren, Coleman, Harris, Henry **NAY:** None. **Motion Passed unanimously.**

There will be no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:43 P.M.