MINUTES

LAWTON YOUTH SPORTS TRUST AUTHORITY

SPECIAL MEETING

LAWTON CITY HALL- 212 SW 9th Street, Lawton, Oklahoma

3rd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2022– 11:00AM

Brian Henry called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. in the 3rd Floor Conference Room of City Hall. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

I. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:	Sean Fortenbaugh Brian Henry Albert Johnson, Jr Hossein Moini Carey Monroe Clint Powell Krista Ratliff Randy Warren Steve Coleman
ABSENT:	None.
ALSO PRESENT:	Kelly Harris, City Councilman Ward 2 Eric Swanson, Southwest Ledger Kim McConnell, Lawton Constitution Dewayne Burk, Assistant City Manager Michael Cleghorn, City Manager Joseph Painter, Engineering Department Richard Rogalski, Assistant City Manager Christine James, Parks & Rec Director Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, Sr. Deputy City Clerk.

II. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

III. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. Consider nominations for FY22 Officers to include Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary.

Motion by Johnson, **Second** by Fortenbaugh, to elect Brian Henry as Chairman, Hossein Moini as Vice Chairman, Steve Coleman as Secretary, Dr. Krista Ratliff as Treasurer, and Donalynn Blazek-Scherler as Recording Secretary. **AYE:** Henry, Johnson, Moini, Monroe, Powell, Ratliff, Warren, Coleman, Fortenbaugh **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED***

B. Discuss the creation of and/or adoption of Lawton Youth Sports Authority Bylaws.

Chairman Henry stated a draft copy of the bylaws were sent out prior to the meeting. (Available in the City Clerk's Office)

Chairman Henry reviewed the ex-officio position, committees, and the annual audit. He also stated the bylaws and trust indenture both require the authority to report back to City Council on finances and the success of meeting the goals laid out in the indenture.

Chairman Henry asked if there were any questions or edits that needed to be made to the bylaws.

Monroe stated there is a small grammatical error in Article 2: it states "other wise" but should be "otherwise".

Motion by Monroe, **Second** by Fortenbaugh, to adopt the Lawton Youth Sports Authority Bylaws, with a correction to Article 2, changing "other wise" to "otherwise". **AYE:** Johnson, Moini, Monroe, Powell, Ratliff, Warren, Coleman, Fortenbaugh, Henry **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

C. Consider approval of proposed 2022 regular meeting dates of the Lawton Youth Sports Authority.

Chairman Henry stated the Authority needs to establish regularly scheduled meeting dates and times. He assumes there will be several special meetings called in between regular meetings as things are getting started.

After discussion, the trustees agreed to meet on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 2:00pm, starting on April 14, 2022.

Moini stated there are some major decisions and work to be done early on if we plan to start the contractor as of July 1st. That requires us to send requests for qualifications and requests for proposals, interview candidates, and have them ready to go to work by July 1st. He stated that is a very big list but feels like the July 1 start date makes sense because it is the start of the fiscal year. He stated meeting on the 2nd Thursday of every month is great, but everyone needs to understand that additional meetings will be needed in between to get everything done.

Motion by Johnson, **Second** by Coleman, to schedule the next meeting for April 14, 2022 at 2:00pm, and for all subsequent meetings to take place on the second Thursday of each month at 2:00pm thereafter.

Ratliff stated that only gives us 6 weeks to have the RFP process completed. April 14 would be the meeting to post, approve, etc., the job description and everything else. 6 weeks is a very short turn around time.

James stated those things could also be done at a special meeting.

VOTE ON MOTION: **AYE:** Moini, Monroe, Powell, Ratliff, Warren, Coleman, Fortenbaugh, Henry, Johnson. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

D. Discuss the purpose and mission of the Lawton Youth Sports Trust Authority to include transition of the City's youth sports programs to the Lawton Youth Sports Authority and take appropriate action.

Chairman Henry stated the Trust Indenture briefly touches on this, but the short of it is that the Mayor has challenged us to make Lawton Youth Sports the best youth sports program in the state. That is the long-range goal. He stated we are trying to complete this transition by the July 1st date because, not only is that the start of the new fiscal year, but it is also a lull in sports activities.

Chairman Henry stated the idea of this authority is to oversee a contractor or director that runs all aspects of all of the leagues the City currently runs for youth.

Monroe stated the City does baseball, softball, football, and volleyball. Is that correct? Soccer is done through Lawton Soccer Club.

James stated basketball, too.

Chairman Henry stated it is the hope that this grows. Plano Sports Authority has 12 sports including cheerleading, golf, and fencing. He stated that if kids wanted to do it, they put it in place. He hopes this also happens here.

Monroe asked if the new facility was going to have indoor soccer.

Chairman Henry stated the new facility proposal has a full-sized indoor soccer field.

Moini stated one of the problems over the last few years is that the whole emphasis is on the facility. The authority is going to start with the number one problem, which is reinventing the sports programs, then they will address the facility. He stated a lot of the media coverage has been about what the facility will look like. Moini stated they aren't stopping the project, but they are putting a break on this piece of the project until the programs are done.

Warren stated that sports should be the mission, and once that works, he hopes there are multiple facilities.

Johnson asked what the transition of youth sports from the City to the authority entails.

Chairman Henry stated the goal right now is July 1. He then stated the first set of sports will be a mixture of City owned facilities and LPS facilities. There will need to be use contracts in place, arrangements for custodians and referees, keys to the facility, etc.

James stated the City currently has a subscription with Team Sideline, which is a registration platform, and they also do the scheduling. The benefit is that it would be familiar to the citizens of Lawton.

Monroe asked if there were funds for operational costs.

Chairman Henry stated the transition will turn off the spicket of funding from the City. He asked that as the City works on its budget, the same amount budgeted last year for sports be budgeted this year to be given to the Youth Sports Authority.

James stated the City is in the hole $260,000.00 for youth sports.

Chairman Henry stated he doesn't want people to think that the Authority is automatically going to raise rates to fund the $260,000.00. He feels like figuring out that budget is a function of the contractor/director.

Chairman Henry went on to state that he has spoken with and has great detail about three different sports programs. He stated Stillwater has just gone through the process of sports going from City run to being run by an authority and it could be used as a model.

Powell asked if they are using a contractor model or a director model.

Chairman Henry stated all of the authorities he has spoken with use the contractor model.

Chairman Henry asked James her opinion of the transition.

James stated summer seems to be a good time since it is a lull in activities. Right now, Parks and Rec is spraying ballfields, so some of the maintenance will be done prior to July 1. Baseball/softball is the last season for the fiscal year, so registration and everything is complete for now until football and volleyball start.

Burk stated from the City standpoint, it is important to identify the transition date because we are in the process of budgeting for next year. He stated July 1 is an optimal date because of the fiscal year, but we have to know what the transition date will be so we can determine staffing, equipment, and chemical costs.

Monroe asked if the Authority will be leasing the facilities from the City and LPS.

Chairman Henry stated in the models he has seen that lease is $1 a year.

Ratliff stated the Chamber had executed a contract with LPS for the use of all of their sports facilities and she can send that over as a reference point.

James stated the City also has a current lease with LPS.

Chairman Henry stated finding and signing the contract by July 1 is a big deal. If that is not possible, it comes into question whether or not the transition should potentially be staggered. For example, the contractor could take the programs in year one, but not the maintenance. It could be devastating to hire someone right in the middle of growing season unless they are completely setup already.

Johnson asked Burk if the City could allocate in 2023 the same amount allocated to sports in 2022.

Burk stated there is currently a place holder in the budget for that since we didn't know how or when this transition would take place.

Cleghorn stated in his opinion, this is a 12 to 18-month transition. He doesn't see this happening by July 1st. The authority needs time to identify the contractor, funding, managers, etc. Even 12 months is being pretty aggressive in this process. He suggests taking 12 to 18-months to go through each step methodically.

Warren stated that can always be sped up if it needs to be, but it's really hard to slow down once it's started.

Powell stated he couldn't agree with that more. The RFP alone is a lot to do. It would be ideal to find a contractor that is already setup and ready to go.

Warren stated we could get someone that has their own funding, that way they aren't dependent on payment to take place instantly.

Burk stated depending on the person or entity selected, the Authority may want to break their mission into separate functions and then pick off the pieces that can be done one at a time.

Cleghorn stated this will give the City time to reallocate staff. That way, staff knows a date when they will be moving around and have time to train. The July 1 date doesn't give time for that. He stated the authority may want to ratify their mission statement and set the values together as a group. Those things set the course of action, so the mission and value statement are critical to the success of the Authority. He stated they also need to set their transition timeline with milestones.

Monroe stated she completely agrees with Burk and Cleghorn. She is a trustee for the Museum and every single month they talk about roof leaks and who is responsible to fix them. She stated it worries her that there could be problems down the road if the Authority tries to scoop up all the facilities too quickly.

James stated it is good to know that all of the facilities are coming from different pots. For example, LPS's gyms are used for volleyball and basketball. The City has a 5-year agreement to use those facilities, but the City still has to pay for custodians, a facility supervisor, referees, scorekeepers, etc. On the other side, the City owns the outdoor baseball fields that have to be mowed, marked, cut, and sprayed. It takes a lot of time and keeps staff from taking care of the parks. She stated from the City standpoint, some of this maintenance has to come off of their task lists to help improve in other areas. She would like to see this done soon.

Cleghorn stated that the trust indenture is pretty specific in saying that the Authority will do the maintenance and repairs, but right now they don't have the funding or structures in place to take care of that, and he doesn't believe they will be ready to transition by July 1. He stated he believes that the trust indenture answers Monroe's question, but we have to get there first and do it as seamlessly as possible.

Rogalski suggested that the Authority go out with an RFQ that says, “we need somebody to maintain these sports facilities *and* make a recommendation about the transition”. That way, the candidates can tell them what they would do during their interview, and the Authority may be able to pick someone based on what their plan is.

Ratliff stated she thinks now would be an appropriate time to establish a “search” committee or “RFQ” committee so they can at least start meeting.

James stated she sees the first big task being registration for football and volleyball. The Authority could run football and volleyball, and then the maintenance side would come after that.

Burk stated they would have to find the contractor first.

Chairman Henry said even if they could find a turnkey contractor, it is still going to be a lengthy transition.

James said maybe don’t start with football and volleyball. They can start with a sport further down the line.

Warren stated it all comes down to finding the person to do it. We won’t have a timeframe on anything until that is done.

Moini asked if the committees should be formed today.

Chairman Henry stated yes, and he has several volunteers that will serve on these committees as well. He stated there is a gentleman named Mike Keown (sp?) that has reached out to him that would like to serve. He stated Mike is a retired Lieutenant Colonel that was in logistics out at Ft. Sill. His kids went through all the youth sports programs, and he is still involved with youth sports programs even though his kids have graduated. He will be serving on the Programs Committee.

The trustees decided that Moini will serve as Chair for the Programs Committee, and Monroe, Ratliff, and Johnson would be part of his committee. Chairman Henry will serve as the Chair for the Facilities Committee, and Fortenbaugh, Powell, and Coleman would be part of the Facilities Committee. The Financial Committee will be formed once money starts to flow in.

James stated there are some people from the Parks and Rec Commission that would also be interested in serving.

E. Receive update of the status of the Youth Sports Complex Facility.

Burk stated the conceptual design and location of the facility were approved by Council, but the City has not been able to secure the contract with Stantec. A new contract is being drafted so that talk with Stantec can continue, but it is also possibly that the City may go back out for proposals. He stated that because of this delay, the City was not able to apply for grant money.

Monroe asked since the deadline for the grant has not been met, is the location still up for discussion.

Burk stated the location is always up for discussion if the Council decides to change course. He anticipates this will go back to Council after a new contract is drafted, but he does not see the Council changing the location at this point.

Monroe stated there was a lot of back-lash about the location.

Burk stated people are either all for it or they are against it no matter what kind of logic or evidence is provided. He feels like it is the right location, and it has the potential to be something that the community has wanted for a long time. To put our facility out of view from the interstate would be detrimental. Four locations were evaluated. One of the key factors of this project was finding a place that the City already owns so that acquisition costs weren't incurred.

Chairman Henry said he wants to clarify that 4 locations were fully evaluated, but those 4 locations were narrowed down from a list of about 20 that were toured. The evaluations of the potential locations took nearly 3 years to complete.

Burk said that the area that it's in is partially gravel that doesn't grow any grass and there is an old pavilion that hasn't been updated in many years.

Monroe stated she understands that there are people that always complain, but she doesn't believe these concerns are coming from one small group. She asked if there was possibly another location in the park that might work better because the location that was selected is such a sore spot for a lot of people. She asked if the area North of the museum could be an option.

Burk stated they looked at that area, but the visibility of the facility is not nearly as good. We really want this to be a show piece. If you look at that area as a whole, you can see the reflection off the lake and the landscaping and the lights. It has the potential to be really breathtaking. He stated there is also potential to use the lake as part of the sports facility for paddle boats, canoes, or kayaking. We could put in a concession stand and there's already talks of an amphitheater. This will make this location more of a destination spot. Burk stated he understands the concerns that the park should be a quiet place for solitude, but the City has a lot of parks.

James stated that scale has also been an issue. Elmer Thomas park is 160 acres, and this site, including the parking lot, is less than 3 acres. It is a very small footprint.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.
Motion by Johnson, **Second** by Ratliff, to adjourn the meeting. **AYE:** Monroe, Powell, Ratliff, Warren, Coleman, Fortenbaugh, Henry, Johnson, Moini **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***