

**Minutes
Lawton Economic Development Authority
Special Meeting
October 10, 2023 – 11:00 a.m.
City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma 73501**

Fred Fitch, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. in the 3rd floor conference room of City Hall. Meeting notice and agenda were posted on the City Hall bulletin board as required by State Law.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Fred Fitch, David Means, Larry Neal, George Gill, Randy Warren, Jason Hensley, Ron Nance

ABSENT: David Madigan (excused), Ernest Sheppard (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT: Tim Wilson, City Attorney's Office; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; John Ratliff, City Manager; Kim McConnell, Lawton Constitution; Eric Swanson, Southwest Ledger

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OKLAHOMA OPEN MEETING ACT, 25 O.S. 301-314

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Discuss the vacant executive director position, including funding for that position, and take action as necessary.

Chairman Fitch provided Authority members with two proposed professional services agreements drafted by Dan Batchelor and Lisa Harden, Center for Economic Development Law – one between the executive director and the LEDA, and one between the executive director and the Lawton Economic Development Corporation (LEDC). Copies of the proposed professional services agreements may be obtained from the City Clerk's office upon request.

Chairman Fitch said he has spoken to David Madigan to get his input, and Madigan is in agreeance that the executive director position needs to be filled.

Chairman Fitch noted that Richard Rogalski previously fulfilled this role while employed by the City of Lawton. He noted that Rogalski attended LEDC meetings to serve as a bridge between the two entities, considering how closely they work together on various economic development projects.

Chairman Fitch said that Jeannie Bowden has left her position with the LEDC and has gone to work for Westwin Elements. He said the LEDC could now also use some help in their office. Chairman Fitch said the executive director would essentially work for both the LEDA and the LEDC, with the respected entities both contributing to the executive director's salary.

Chairman Fitch noted that the outline of the professional services agreement provided to members refers to this position as a “Coordinator for Economic Development”, but it needs to read “Executive Director” – he said that any motion(s) made should take this into account.

Chairman Fitch stressed the importance of hiring someone knowledgeable about TIF districts who can ensure the tax revenue generated from these districts ends up where it is supposed to be, and in a timely manner.

Chairman Fitch noted that LEDA will have 55% control over the executive director position, with LEDC having 45% control. More control was given to LEDA given the level of involvement this position will have in managing the TIF districts. The executive director’s office will likely be housed at the LEDC – they have an office available.

Chairman Fitch said he will be taking the LEDA agreement to the City Council for review and approval. He explained that LEDA will be asking the City for a loan to pay this salary, and the loan will be paid back with tax revenue from the TIF districts as it becomes available.

Gill asked who would maintain the payroll for this position.

Chairman Fitch said all the details are still being ironed out, but he would like for LEDA to be the one to issue the paychecks.

Hensley noted that on page two of the limited services agreement with the LEDA, under “Key Responsibilities”, the passage that reads “as the Coordinator Economic Development” should read “as the Coordinator **for** Economic Development”.

Chairman Fitch said this change also needs to be reflected in the motion. He noted that it should actually read “as the **Executive Director for** Economic Development”.

Motion by Warren, Second by Hensley, to approve the proposed professional services agreement between (Consultant) and the Lawton Economic Development Authority, with the following floor amendments: changing “Consultant/Coordinator” to “Executive Director”, and changing “as the Coordinator Economic Development” to “A\as the Executive Director for Economic Development” under “Key Responsibilities” on page 2 of the agreement. **AYE:** Hensley, Fitch, Gill, Warren, Means, Nance, Neal. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:22 AM.