

**MEETING OF THE
LAWTON ENHANCEMENT TRUST AUTHORITY
3rd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY HALL
212 SW 9th STREET
JANUARY 12, 2022**

Vice-Chair Hankins called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.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.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Barry Ezerski; Mary Ann Hankins; Addie Smith; Kerry Sweeney; Ted Symuleski; Dwight Tanner; Annette Wiseman-Vaughan

ABSENT: Jay Burk; Lou McConnell; Katy Jackson-Seeley

OTHER PRESENT: Dennis Totte, Bedrock Nursery; Sneha Dongre, Engineering Department; Mike Jones, ADA Coordinator; Susan Schlecht, Finance; John Ratliff, City Attorney; Krista Ratliff, Chamber of Commerce; Charlotte Brown, License and Permits; Corey Bowen, Neighborhood Services; Richard Rogalski, City Manager's Office; Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities; Christy James, Parks and Recreation; Kaley Patterson, Communications and Marketing; Tanya Organ, Library; Lauren Zemaitis, Library; Megan Pool, City Attorney's Office; Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk's Office

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. Reports

A. Receive report from Dennis Totte and take action if necessary.

Totte stated they are doing routine maintenance. They will start doing tree trimming in February. From there, they will go into mulch and insulation at all sites. The Farmer's Market is 90% complete. They were pouring some concrete on the South end, so the retaining wall has not been completed. They should be able to complete the wall in the next week. Totte stated he tried to make some adjustments to the flower beds, but the Farmer's Market wanted to stick with the original plan. Totte stated he felt like the landscaping was a little sparse. He requested to make a change order to put some sod in the back to shrink the flowerbeds and make a bigger statement, but that was denied. It has a Southwest Native look. They did add some additional plants and crushed granite at no added cost. The ribbon cutting will be on February 4th and there will be a soft opening on the 21st or 22nd.

Hankins asked if everything was up to code.

Rogalski stated he knows it meets the code, but he hasn't been out there to see it. The landscaping was designed prior to LETA being involved.

Totte stated it met the minimum requirement. It is meant to be a low maintenance landscape.

B. Receive report from Krista Ratliff on Holiday in the Park and take action if necessary.

Ratliff stated the Chamber took over Holiday in the Park six weeks before it began. They had reached out to LETA and other businesses to become partners in this project. There were 70 plus sponsors who helped with the events. 47 new displays were added this year, and the length of the route was increased, requiring a power extension. This was phase one of a five-year plan that will include additional power extensions in the future. The new displays were dispersed throughout the park with existing displays that were all restrung with LED lights. There were over 400 community volunteers during the eight-week period of Holiday in the Park. 29,438 cars drove through Holiday in the Park, resulting in approximately 100,000 visitors. 20% of those visitors were from outside of Comanche County. \$43,929.00 were collected in revenue from the skating rink, petting zoo, and other events. \$40,000 was spent to create the longest pedestrian tunnel of lights in the state of Oklahoma.

The events kicked off with the Frost Your Fanny Fun Run on November 20th. 250 people registered for that event. This was done in conjunctions with the parade, so the runners were able to experience a true marathon event with spectators lining the street. Next was the Holiday in the Park Parade, which had almost 90 people register to participate. Christmas movie nights took place for free, with water and popcorn provided at no charge. Other events included Christmas Crafts in the Park, weekly hockey games, training with the hockey players, music performances, hayrides, and the Living Nativity.

Ratliff stated there were some issues with this year's event. First, there was a panhandler that set up a "donation" station in the park for three nights. The police were called all three nights, but revenue was down about \$600 on those three nights. There was also an issue with traffic being backed up all the way to I-44 in one direction and to Gore on the other side. Digital traffic signs were brought in by the City to help alleviate this problem.

Viridian Coffee House sold about \$43,000.00 worth of coffee and treats. Holiday in the Park did not benefit from these sales, but it does show people were out and enjoying the park. Viridian did donate 15% of their sales back to Holiday in the Park for future displays.

Ratliff concluded with a video presentation of Holiday in the Park. She stated she would like to thank LETA for their donation, as it gave Holiday in the Park a really great start.

Ezerski asked if Holiday in the Park knew what they are planning for next year.

Ratliff stated they plan to continue into the Phase 2 power extension plan. The strategic plan is to change the display into a cultural celebration. They also want to display some local culture with special displays for the high schools and local businesses. They also plan to increase the number of events. Ratliff stated they received about three times more

donations this year than in the past, and they will use that to continue to grow Holiday in the Park.

C. Receive report from Neighborhood Services and take action if necessary.

Bowen stated 12,911 correspondences were mailed out for the year with 2,019 ending up in abatement. That shows we are getting a lot of voluntary compliance. The trend also carries through to D&D's. The goal for next year is 14,000 correspondences.

Next week is a big dilapidation Council meeting. 4 people have already reached out for demo permits. We have lost some demo contractors, but the contractors left are doing large volumes.

Bowen stated he has hired a new employee and now has a full crew.

Symuleski asked if the safety vests had been ordered yet.

Bowen stated he has had too many employees out to order yet, but now he has the opportunity to get his new employees fitted for vests as well.

Ezerski asked if a permit had been pulled yet for the Park Lane school.

Brown stated they had applied for a demo permit but couldn't remember if the permit was actually issued.

Bowen stated he plans to do a lot more commercial in the next year.

Rogalski asked if Bowen would talk about the Sheridan, Fort Sill, Cache project. Bowen stated this is being referred to as the North "U" Beautification Project. This area has a North boundary of Rogers Lane, an East boundary of Fort Sill Boulevard, a South boundary of Cache Road, and a West boundary of Sheridan. This area is targeted because it is directly off post. They are working on some projects in this area, like an incentive for businesses to update their frontage and landscaping.

Rogalski stated he has not seen an incentive like this in his twenty years, so this is a new thing. The idea is to do sort of a match grant. For example, if a business agrees to do the necessary updates, the City will match 25% of the cost. An official idea will be put together and brought before City Council.

Bowen stated all vendors are available on April 30 for Trash Off. The board agreed this date will work.

D. Consider approving invoices, requisitions, and all other submitted materials for payment.

Schlecht presented two expenses from Bedrock Nursery for 2nd Street repairs and poinsettias for City Hall.

Motion by Wiseman-Vaughan, **Second** by Symuleski, to approve invoices, requisitions, and all other submitted materials for payment. **AYE:** Hankins, Smith, Sweeney, Symuleski, Tanner, Wiseman-Vaughan, Ezerski **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

E. Receive Treasurer Report and take action if necessary.

Schlecht presented the December 2021 Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Sheet, Income and Expense Tracker, and LETA Projects Pending. Report is available in the City Clerk's Office.

Tanner asked if the hotel/motel tax is down or just lagging.

Schlecht stated it is just lagging.

Hankins stated revenue is on target for the City.

Tanner asked how hotel/motel is being accounted for as far as Airbnb is concerned. He stated the website includes tax as a line item but wants to know how the City obtains their portion.

Rogalski stated he had contacted Airbnb about a year ago and they stated they didn't collect this. He will get back in contact with them to see if things have changed.

Schlecht stated she hasn't seen anything coming in from Airbnb.

Tanner stated he sees this tax come out on his own, personal Airbnb.

Rogalski stated there are approximately 149 short term rentals in Lawton.

Motion by Ezerski, **Second** by Sweeney, to approve the Treasurer Report. **AYE:** Smith, Sweeney, Symuleski, Tanner, Ezerski, Wiseman-Vaughan, Hankins **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

F. Receive report from Cultural Preservation Committee and take action if necessary.

Poudrier stated they are making headway on the Highland Cemetery Arch.

They also have a new Arts Coordinator, Gary Reddin (sp?), who will be taking over Cultural Preservation.

Cultural Preservation is continuing to work on cleaning out Carnegie Library Town Hall. Poudrier reached out to Cameron University to propose a standing internship for a technical writer and researcher.

Poudrier stated once there is a plan in place on how historical artifacts and artwork should be appropriately curated, they can start going after some grants.

G. Receive report from Children's United and take action if necessary.

Ezerski stated Children's United took a little hiatus during the holidays and their first meeting of the year will be tomorrow.

The Gala will be Lawton Dancing with the Stars. It is scheduled for April 9th at 6:00pm.

H. Receive report from Parks and Recreation, and take action if necessary

James stated they are still working on the light package for the fountain at Lake Helen. She has an expired quote for a little over \$5,600.00 but has been unable to make contact with that company to see if that price is still good. She believes they may have taken some time off for the holidays, and she will hopefully be able to make contact soon.

The replace benches for C Avenue are in and are ready to be installed. She asked where exactly the benches should go.

Rogalski stated they are to replace the dilapidated benches at 5th and C Avenue.

Brown stated it is directly in front of the Lacy Center.

James stated now that the location is verified, they should be able to get the benches installed in the next week or so.

James stated Holiday in the Park has been disassembled, so Parks and Rec can go back to their regular maintenance type jobs.

On the Highland Cemetery Arch, James stated they have reached out from a historical architect firm that have provided a proposal to evaluate the arch and provide biddable specifications for repairs.

Rogalski stated this firm is a specialist on historical preservation and came recommended from the same person who worked on City Hall. James stated this company is currently working at the Holy City.

James stated for this company to look at the arch without a structural engineer, the cost would be approximately \$12,000.00. The ear mark price is about \$20,000.00 in case a structural engineer is needed. The current problem is where this funding will come from. Because it was a City vehicle that damaged the arch, she was going to try to use CIP funding. Because this would generally be an insurance issue, the CIP money isn't available. She is now looking at some cemetery contingency type money. There is some back and forth on how that funding can be used. She is referencing with Finance and the City Attorney's to determine what strings are attached to using cemetery funds.

James stated the next hurdle will be the cost to actually have the arch fixed. She can only imagine how much it will be since just the assessment is so expensive.

Rogalski stated he would guess about \$100,000.00 for the repairs because the arch will have to be taken apart rock by rock, documented, and replaced rock by rock.

Wiseman-Vaughan asked if the City's insurance would pay anything.

James stated the City is self-insured, so this would be a situation of the City paying itself for the damage that was caused.

Tanner stated this is being done through a specialist because it is a WPA project.

James stated that is correct; City Council has requested this be done by a specialist because of the arch's WPA status. The specialist is what is going to make the repair so expensive.

Symuleski asked who repaired the wall at Ron Stephens Stadium because it looks really good.

James stated that was an LPS project, so she isn't sure who did the work, but she knows it was not a specialist.

Rogalski stated they did have a plan to do a simple repair, like what was done at Ron Stephens Stadium, but Council stated this is a very important, historical structure that belongs to the City, and they preferred to have someone who specializes in this type of work to ensure the repairs were done correctly.

James stated this is tentatively set to go back to Council on January 25th. Right now, she is just trying to work behind the scenes to find the right pot of money to take from.

Ezerski asked if the location of the sports facility has been decided.

Rogalski stated yes, the planned location was approved by Council.

I. Receive report from Public Relations, Website and Facebook Committees, and take action if necessary.

Patterson stated the LETA Facebook Page is doing awesome: there are 8 new followers in the past 28 days. She stated she shared the video of Holiday in the Park early in the day and the video is receiving likes. She plans to post pictures of the Christmas Yard of the Month as soon as they are ready.

J. Receive Monthly Ward Update and take action if necessary.

Tanner stated that Councilman Hampton and his wife have COVID and need prayers. He has kept Councilman Hampton up to date on what's going on with LETA, such as the WPA projects, dilapidated properties, and Holiday in the Park. Tanner stated Councilman Hampton is very pleased with the work LETA has done.

K. Receive a report from the Planning Division regarding ongoing LETA projects and take action if necessary.

Brown stated they have been working on the City Hall lighting project.

Brown stated that License and Permits is down an inspector right now; the electrical inspector is in the hospital with COVID right now. They do have an inspector coming down once a week from Oklahoma City to make up for that deficit.

L. Receive a report on sidewalk and accessibility projects and take action if necessary.

Jones stated they are in the final step before breaking ground on the sidewalk master plan. They have completed the bid process and selected MTZ Construction. The next step is for LETA to approve and sign the contract. If everything is done by Monday, this can be put on the next Council Agenda.

Rogalski stated this is an on-call contract with unit prices, so it doesn't say to go build anything yet.

Jones stated the first project is ready to go. This project will be the South 1 mile of Sheridan Road going West on Cache Road to Homestead.

Brown stated she thought we weren't doing Cache Road because Public Utilities is replacing a water line.

Jones stated the sidewalk project will be shifted to the North side of the road to not interfere with the water line replacement.

Rogalski reiterated that this is just the contract, not the work order to start work. The Sidewalk Master Plan currently says the South side of Cache Road, and that will need to be modified before work begins.

Hankins stated this goes through LETA so it does not have to wait for Council each time a new project is started.

Rogalski stated that is partially correct. LETA must sign the agreement because the money comes out of their account. This is a three-party contract, so the City can use the contract as well.

Motion by Tanner **Second** by Symuleski, to approve the contract between LETA, City of Lawton, and MTZ Construction for on-call sidewalk repair and installation unit prices. **AYE:** Smith, Sweeney, Symuleski, Tanner, Ezerski, Hankins, Wiseman-Vaughan. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

Rogalski stated this contract has been reviewed and accept by the City Attorney's Office on behalf of the City, so it is a good contract.

2. New Business

A. Consider approving the minutes of the December 8, 2021 meeting.

Motion by Ezerski, **Second** by Sweeney, to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2021 meeting. **AYE:** Smith, Sweeney, Symuleski, Tanner, Ezerski, Hankins, Wiseman-Vaughan. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

- B. Receive a request for funding support for McMahan Auditorium Authority/ Freedom Festival and take action if necessary.

Poudrier stated they are trying to grow and improve Freedom Festival, and one of the ideas was to add a headline performer. The price would be approximately \$25,000. In order to fund this, Freedom Fest is looking at roll over hotel/motel funds left over from previous years. The usual apportionment of this fund is \$65,000.00 broken down into \$50,000 for fireworks and \$15,000 for the stage. The resolution allocating this fund specifically says “fireworks display”. Poudrier stated he is working with legal to get this changed to say, “fireworks display and entertainment”. If this is possible, part of this fund and funds from LETA could be used to obtain a headliner performer. For this year, they are looking at Neil McCoy. The expense to LETA would be about \$6,000 to \$8,000, which is the typical amount that LETA spends each year. These funds usually go to operating expenses, like lights, port-a-potties, contracted workers, etc. With or without a headline performer, Arts and Humanities has a goal of raising \$10,000 through sponsorships. The initial request is for up to \$8,000 from LETA.

As a second option, the McMahan Auditorium Authority is looking to bring in The Bellamy Brothers for a show on March 25th. The band would cost around \$15,000, and the total cost to put on the full show would be around \$32,000. When breaking down the ticket sales, they believe they would have to sell about 80% of the tickets for a \$6,000 profit. Arts and Humanities not only wants the profit, they also want to bring entertainment to Lawton, and this show could attain that goal. With additional sources of revenue, such as alcohol sales, raffle tickets, etc, Poudrier stated they could bring in an additional \$2,000, for a total profit of \$8,000.

This proposal is for LETA to help put on a Freedom Festival Benefit Concert similar to the planned Bellamy Brothers show instead of using their money for lights and port-a-potties at Freedom Fest. LETA would need to front the \$30,000.00 for putting on the show, then MMA would repay that money after the show and would have an \$8,000 profit to use towards Freedom Festival.

Poudrier reviewed different scenarios regarding ticket sales and different sources of revenue to show how LETA’s possible position in lending money for the benefit concert. These figures are available in the City Clerk’s Office.

Poudrier stated LETA would have a choice of what artist to bring in for the show. The plan would be for the benefit concert to take place about a month before Freedom Festival.

Wiseman-Vaughan asked if anyone has reached out to Fort Sill to see what they are planning for a summer concert.

Poudrier stated that Fort Sill partners with MWR for their summer show. The cost for their show was approximately \$300,000. Poudrier stated he tried to partner up with MWR, but their attorneys stated they are unable to spend money off post. He stated they stay in contact with MWR and Apache Casino to make sure they aren't competing with them on dates.

Hankins and Sweeney stated the Gala is kind of dying out a little bit, and this benefit concert may be a way to supplement that.

Sweeney stated a discussion does need to be had about how to move forward with the Gala since it hasn't done well in the past few years.

Rogalski stated that LETA does get to decide how to spend their funds, so they could do a concert instead of the gala. The budgeted amount for awards is \$12,000, but the net would be \$11,000.

C. Receive a request for funding from the Friends of the Library for signage and installation of bicycle repair stations and take action if necessary.

Organ stated this is the 4th year that the library has applied and received a health literacy grant. In the past, they used the \$4,000 grants to hosted tai chi and story walks. This year, they will receive \$9,000 and will use those funds to purchase bicycle repair stations, host more tai chi classes, and purchase some things necessary things for the library.

Organ stated they have requested three bicycle repair stations; one will be placed across the street from the library, one at Elmer Thomas Park, and one at the park on 38th Street. She provided pictures of the stations and an example of the signs that will go at each station.

Organ stated they are requesting up to \$4,000.00 to install the bike repair stations and signage. Two of the stations require a concrete pad to be installed and that is a majority of the cost. A quote was provided for the work to be done.

Hankins asked what all is included in the repair station.

Organ stated each station will have an air pump and a selection of tools that may be needed.

Ezerski stated after Holiday in the Park, LETA is way over budget on grant awards. This would require LETA to approve this request out of Grants, then direct staff to move money from Beautification to Grants.

Motion by Symuleski Second by Sweeney, to approve a grant to the Friends of the Library for up to \$4,000.00 for bicycle repair station signage and installation. **AYE:** Symuleski, Tanner, Ezerski, Hankins, Smith, Wiseman-Vaughan, Sweeney **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

3. Discussion

No discussion.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.