

**MEETING OF THE
LAWTON ENHANCEMENT TRUST AUTHORITY
CITY HALL- 3rd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY MARCH 8, 2023– 3:00 P.M.**

Vice-chairman Hankins called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Banquet Hall of City Hall. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall Notice Board as required by law.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jay Burk (entered meeting at 3:13 P.M.), Lou McConnell, Katy Jackson-Seeley, Addie Smith; Kerry Sweeney, Ted Symuleski, Barry Ezerski, Mary Ann Hankins

ABSENT: Dwight Tanner

OTHERS PRESENT: Charlotte Brown, Planning Director and LETA Executive Director; J'Lyn Jorgenson, Legal; Susan Schlecht, Finance; Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities; Mitchell Dooley, Parks & Rec; Jon Jernigan, Neighborhood Services; DaLynna Wood, Communications & Marketing; Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; Matina Davis, member of the community; Aquarion Yarbrough, member of the community.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

No guests present.

1. Reports

- A. Receive a report from Dennis Totte with Bedrock Nursery regarding current landscaping and irrigation projects and provide direction to Mr. Totte on current projects.

Mr. Totte was unable to attend the meeting – no report at this time.

- B. Receive a report from Neighborhood Services regarding monthly updates on departmental activities and take action as deemed necessary.

Jernigan said for the month of February the Neighborhood Services Division sent out over 739 administrative orders, received 390 general complaints and sent out 24 D&D notices of hearing. At the end of February, there were 64 work orders pending completion, 81 abatement work orders requested, and nine D&D properties were torn down.

Jernigan said a pre-bid meeting is scheduled for March 14th regarding the boarding and securing contract. He said Neighborhood Services will also be seeking bids for an additional nuisance abatement contract to help with bulk pickups and the upcoming growing season. Jernigan said they are looking to have a total of seven contractors.

Jernigan said staff is in the process of examining city code with regards to dilapidated signs. He said these signs are considered a structure, and a code change may be necessary to allow for these signs to be taken down. Any proposed code change will go before the City Council for approval. With the way the code currently reads, Jernigan said he's only allowed to write citations for these signs 30 days after sending a written notice to the property owner. He said staff is working closely with Greg Gibson in the City Attorney's office to establish the desired changes. Currently, there is no state statute regarding signs – they're handled by municipalities.

Ezerski said approximately four years ago there was a sign committee that drafted an Ordinance regarding signs, but this Ordinance never made it to Council for approval. He asked if staff is aware of what happened to this Ordinance.

Jernigan said he's not been made aware of such Ordinance.

Ezerski suggested staff contact Richard Rogalski, as he was familiar with the Ordinance.

Symuleski asked for an update on the upcoming Trash-Off event.

Jernigan said Trash-Off is scheduled for April 29th. Staff has completed the flyer for this event, and it's been shared on social media. He said Lawton High and MacArthur Key Clubs as well as the MacArthur JROTC have signed up to volunteer. Jernigan said staff is actively seeking additional volunteers to help with the event.

Gatlin said her office has also sent out notifications regarding this event to various media partners. She said Jernigan will likely do a segment with KSWO in the coming weeks. Several of the local radio stations may also invite staff to share more about this event.

NOTE: The Authority skipped to agenda item 2-D

2D. Discuss the upcoming Trash Off event and take action as deemed necessary.

Jernigan said staff is working to obtain additional youth t-shirts. The desire is to get more elementary schools involved with Trash-Off. Jernigan said there are 411 t-shirts left over from last year's event, and 81 t-shirts left over from the 2021 event.

Jernigan said the Keep Oklahoma Beautiful supplies arrived two days ago. Staff now has over 300 gloves, and Lowes has donated an additional 200 gloves for the event. Jernigan said 3,000 trash bags have been donated to the Oklahoma Beautiful Project.

Jernigan said staff is actively seeking donations to purchase the additional t-shirts that are needed.

Vice-chairman Hankins asked Jernigan how much money staff would need for this.

Jernigan said staff asked LETA to donate \$4,000 last year to purchase t-shirts. He said the front of the t-shirt will have the Trash-Off logo, and the back of the t-shirt will list the various sponsors who have contributed to the event.

NOTE: Chairman Burk entered the meeting at 3:13 P.M. and took over chairing the meeting.

Chairman Burk said yearly donations for the Trash-Off event are worked into LETA's budget.

Motion by Sweeney, Second by Jackson-Seeley, to approve up to \$4,360 in expenditures for t-shirts for the upcoming Trash-Off event. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

C. Consider approving submitted materials for payment.

Schlecht presented the following invoices for the time period of February 2023:

- Downpayment on flowers for the Eye Candy Awards Banquet - \$237.50

Motion by Symuleski, Second by Ezerski, to approve the submitted materials for payment as presented. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

D. Consider approving the monthly Treasurer Report.

Schlecht presented the Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Statement, Income and Expense Tracker, and LETA Projects Pending as of February 28, 2023. The Report is available in the City Clerk's Office.

Schlecht noted that the Freedom Festival expenditures are \$500 less than they were on last month's report – there were some adjustments that had to be made.

Chairman Burk inquired about the LETA sidewalk projects.

Hankins said she saw on the news that Children United recently received a large donation. She asked if these donations go to Children United directly, or if the donations are received by LETA.

Ezerski said there was a fundraising event at Gateway Mortgage Company around Christmas time, and half the proceeds were donated to Children United.

Schlecht said LETA receives all donation funding on behalf of Children United. She said she believes that particular donation may have been reflected on last month's Report.

Schlecht said the Limited Services Agreement that was passed at the most recent City Council meeting will be executed today. After this Agreement is signed, she will be able to disperse hotel/motel tax funding accordingly.

Motion by Ezerski, Second by Sweeney, to approve the Treasurer Report as of February 28, 2023 as presented. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- E. Receive a report from the Cultural Preservation Committee and take action as deemed necessary.

Poudrier said staff is working to move artifacts and artwork from the 3rd floor of City Hall to the Carnegie Library Town Hall for display. Poudrier said the Carnegie Library is climate controlled. He said he's been working with Chris Gill to obtain a quote for moving these artifacts. Poudrier said this cost would come out of the Arts and Humanities budget.

- F. Receive a report from Children United regarding the accessibility playground in Elmer Thomas Park and take action as deemed necessary.

Ezerski said Children United is hoping to have a groundbreaking towards the end of next month for the new handicapped accessible playground. Work is currently underway to make this happen – the sewer line is in the process of being moved. Max Sasseen has suggested ordering some of the accessories now, so that more than just the playground main frame can be installed.

Ezerski said Children United has been seeking donations for a wheelchair swing. He said these swings have tripled in cost since this project was started four years ago. Ezerski said these swings now cost \$53,151. Even with this price hike, it's still been recommended to proceed with ordering the first swing before another price increase occurs in May. Ezerski said 50% of the total invoice must be paid when the swing is ordered, and it takes approximately 20 weeks for the swing to arrive. Ezerski asked that the Authority allow for a check to be written from Children United funding in the amount of \$26,575.50 to cover the down payment of the swing. This check would need to be made payable to ACS Playground Adventures. Ezerski said the remaining balance has to be paid within 15 days of arrival and installation of the swing.

Chairman Burk noted that Max Sasseen has worked diligently to save as much money as possible on this project. He asked if a sign has been selected to display at the playground.

Ezerski said yes – Arrow Sign Company is working on this, and the sign will hopefully be completed by the end of the month.

Ezerski said Children United is still actively working on fundraising. He said the Dancing for Children United event will take place this October. The event had to be moved from the spring season due to scheduling conflicts with other events. Ezerski said there are currently six dance teams lined up for the event, but they are still looking for two more. Children United will also be doing a Poker Run fundraiser on May 20th. Ezerski said Children United is hoping to raise another \$75,000 - \$100,000 by the end of this year.

Motion by Symuleski, Second by Sweeney, to approve a payment in the amount of \$26,575.50 to ACS Playground Adventures from Children United funding for a downpayment on a

wheelchair swing. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

- G. Receive a report from Parks and Recreation regarding departmental projects and monthly updates and take action as deemed necessary.

Dooley said City Parks and Grounds staff have been preparing for spring. He said staff has officially opened bidding for the new mowing contracts. Dooley said there have been several inquiries from mowing companies about the bidding process.

Dooley said staff is still working on the Lakes Master Plan, the Aquatics Master Plan, and the Elmer Thomas Master Plan. He said these Plans are nearing completion, and they will likely be presented to the City Council during the first meeting in April. Before the Council meeting, Dooley said the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Lakes and Land Commission will hold special meetings to review and approve the conceptual plans from Halff & Associates before the City Council meeting in April.

Dooley said staff is gearing up for the aquatics season. Dooley said he recently went to Kansas City to receive training and obtain his aquatics facility operator certification. Dooley said staff will be taking an item to City Council next week to discuss the status of the municipal pools and splash pads and receive direction from City Council on how to operate these facilities this summer. Dooley said the Parks and Recreation Commission recently held a special meeting to discuss this situation, and the Commission's recommendation will be taken to Council.

Dooley said staff is also working to get their HVAC contracts under control so that these systems can operate smoothly at the City's recreational centers.

- H. Receive a report from the Communications and Marketing Department regarding LETA's social media accounts and publicity projects, provide direction to staff on said projects and take action as deemed necessary.

Gatlin said the first day of spring is March 20th, and her staff is preparing for Yard of the Month. Gatlin said staff typically takes applications for Yard of the Month from April 1st through October 1st. She said staff has created flyers advertising for Yard of the Month, and they are working to get the word out through social media. Gatlin said the website is up and running, and it can be viewed at "www.beautifullawton.com". She said staff will be making some changes to the website to get looking more aesthetically pleasing. Through this website, citizens of Lawton can submit nominations and vote for Yard of the Month.

Chairman Burk said the creation of this website is a great way to get citizens more involved with Yard of the Month.

Gatlin said the Authority needs to determine the time frame in which nominations can be submitted before voting takes place.

Chairman Burk said nominations can be received the 1st through the 15th of each month, and voting will take place the 16th through the end of the month.

Gatlin asked for clarification on how the winners will be determined. She asked if the winner is chosen solely from citizens' votes.

Chairman Burk said citizens will have 2/3's input towards the vote, and Authority members will have 1/3 input. Authority members can still make nominations and take pictures to be posted on the website.

Gatlin asked if the Authority wants the address listed with the photos that are placed online.

Sweeney said citizens may not want their address posted for the public to see, so simply listing the ward in which they live should be fine.

NOTE: The Authority skipped to agenda item 2-C

2C. Discuss the planning of the Eye Candy Gala and take action as deemed necessary.

Sweeney said invitations for the Gala have been completed.

Poudrier asked that members RSVP to the event because they need to keep track of the number of attendees.

Poudrier said Journey Productions will have a projector at the event to display videos and slideshows. He said the MacArthur orchestra will be performing at the event.

Gatlin said she is still working to finalize the agenda for the event, but a timeline has been established. She said the cocktail hour will begin at 6:00 P.M., they will begin serving dinner at 6:45 P.M., and the program will start at 7:00 P.M.

Gatlin said she will be the emcee for the program. All the Yard of the Month winners will be announced during the program. Gatlin said she's interviewed Natalie Fitch and Juli Chesko, and the video of these interviews will be played during the program before these ladies receive their award.

Chairman Burk asked if anyone has reached out to Dr. Bellino regarding this event. He said one of the awards is named after Dr. Bellino, and she typically attends the event to present the award to the winner.

Gatlin said she will reach out to Dr. Bellino to make arrangements for her attendance.

I. Receive Monthly Ward Update from Trustees and take action as deemed necessary.

No ward updates were given at this time.

- J. Receive a report from the Planning Department regarding ongoing LETA projects and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Burk asked for an update on the lighting project. He said he understands the projected estimates were almost triple the amount of the \$40,000 LETA has budgeted for this project, but a decision must be made as to how to move forward. Chairman Burk said this project has currently been placed on hold by the engineering department.

Brown said the engineering department got the estimate for the lighting project from MA + Architecture, and their estimate was nearly \$90,000. This estimate includes both design and installation of the lights. LETA currently has \$40,000 from the McMahon Foundation set aside for this project.

Chairman Burk suggested LETA find the money to make this project happen. He said Dr. Moford, the McMahon Foundation, and many others believed in this project, and it's important to see it through to completion.

Ezerski asked how short we are of fully funding this project.

Chairman Burk said he thinks we're short approximately \$50,000.

Chairman Burk said he understands LETA had intentions to beautify the landscaping in front of the City's rec centers. However, this might be something to do one at a time. He said LETA could do the landscaping at one rec center per year so that the funding for this project is spread out.

Ezerski noted that the Downtown Committee is also working on beautification of the downtown area, and the Authority may want to see what all this Committee accomplishes before committing more funding to landscaping in the downtown area. This way, more funding can be allocated to the lighting project.

Brown said she found an email from Joe Painter regarding the estimate from MA + for the lighting project. The cost of materials alone would be \$60,000, and they did not provide a construction estimate. Brown said a high altitude estimate for construction cost would be approximately \$120,000.

Chairman Burk asked Schlecht to discuss how much money LETA currently has.

Schlecht said there is currently \$75,000 in the beautification fund, and \$34,000 in the hotel motel fund.

Chairman Burk noted that LETA has \$86,600 in their grant awards fund.

Brown said that doesn't include the \$40,000 that was given to LETA by the McMahon Foundation.

Chairman Burk asked for clarification on what local grant expenses are.

Schlecht said when LETA spends money from various grants they've received (e.g., the \$40,000 McMahon Foundation grant), this would be listed as a local grant expense.

Chairman Burk said he believes LETA has enough money to help provide additional funding for the lighting project.

Schlecht said there is \$57,000 in the hotel motel fund that has not been claimed yet. This is in addition to the \$34,000 left in the hotel motel fund from previous years.

Chairman Burk recommended that the Authority take \$40,000 from LETA grant awards funding and \$40,000 from beautification funding and put that \$80,000 towards the lighting project. This \$80,000 plus the \$40,000 from the McMahon Foundation would be enough to fully fund the \$120,000 lighting project.

Brown said she will notify Joe Painter that LETA has identified funding sources to cover the remaining costs of the lighting project.

Motion by Ezerski, Second by Symuleski, to take \$40,000 from LETA grant award funding and \$40,000 from LETA beautification funding and couple that with the \$40,000 grant from the McMahon Foundation to proceed with the lighting project not to exceed \$120,000. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

2. Business

- A. Discuss the landscaping of the three centers and the landscaping of the flower beds in front of Nissan of Lawton at 201 W Gore Boulevard and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Burk said this has already been discussed.

Dooley asked that if the medians in front of the City of Lawton rec centers will be funded individually with one median done per fiscal year, he asks that the Authority focus on the HC King Center first. He said new ADA-compliant sidewalks have recently been placed in this area. Dooley said staff is also working to improve the inside of the facility. The kitchen will soon be remodeled. Dooley said they will also be installing new doors at the Center. Repairs have been made to the surface of the parking lot of the King Center, and improvements have been made to the lighting in the parking lot. Dooley said the King Center would be an excellent place to start when it comes to beautification of the rec centers.

- B. Review and discuss By-Laws of the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority and take action as deemed necessary.

Brown said if the Authority has changes they wish to make to the By-Laws, staff will draft these changes and bring the By-Laws back to the Authority for approval.

Chairman Burk mentioned the possibility of doing a retreat for Authority members. He said this has been done in the past, and it really helps the group identify where they're currently at versus where they want to be with regards to the way they carry out goals.

Chairman Burk said he's reviewed the By-Laws, and didn't see much of anything that needed to be changed. However, there's been discussion about adding two ex-officio members to the Authority. These would be non-voting trustees. Chairman Burk said the Chamber of Commerce and Young Professionals have shown interest in these positions.

Chairman Burk encouraged Authority members to notify the Clerk's office if they will be unable to attend a meeting, as there's been an issue recently with unexcused absences. Chairman Burk said three unexcused absences can result in losing your position as a member of the Authority.

If it's the desire of the Authority to add ex-officio members, Chairman Burk suggested they begin their term July 1st to correspond with the start of the fiscal year.

Aquarion Yarbrough asked if LETA meetings are published.

Chairman Burk said notice of all meetings are posted on the bulletin board outside of City Hall, and they're also posted on the City's website.

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Jackson-Seeley, to amend the By-Laws to add an ex-officio member from the Chamber of Commerce and an ex-officio member from the Young Professionals of Lawton. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- C. Discuss the planning of the Eye Candy Gala and take action as deemed necessary.

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

- D. Discuss the upcoming Trash Off event and take action as deemed necessary.

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

- E. Discuss payment(s) of up to \$100,000 to Holiday in the Park for invoice # 2021 and take action as deemed necessary.

Motion by Sweeney, **Second** by Symuleski, to pay up to \$100,000 to Holiday in the Park. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- F. Consider accepting a donation in the amount of \$49.50 from Dwight Tanner to cover the cost of LETA nametags.

Motion by Jackson-Seeley, **Second** by Symuleski, to accept a donation in the amount of \$49.50 from Dwight Tanner to cover the cost of LETA nametags. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Burk, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

3. Discussion

Matina Davis asked for clarification on what LETA's responsibilities are versus what responsibilities are handled by the Parks & Recreation Commission. She also asked if the Eye Candy Gala will be open to the public.

Chairman Burk said LETA's mission surrounds the beautification of Lawton, whereas the Parks & Recreation Commission helps oversee the functioning and effectiveness of the City of Lawton Parks and Recreation department.

Sweeney said invitations for the Eye Candy Gala are sent out strictly to those who have won Yard of the Month or who will be receiving an award during the program. These people typically bring a significant other and/or members of their families. She said unfortunately LETA would not be able to fully fund the event if it were open to the public.

Aquarion Yarbrough said he appreciates the beautification efforts that have taken place outside of the HC King Center. However, he is asking that more attention and funding be dedicated to the inside of the Center. Mr. Yarbrough said the AC is not working in the building, and we need to do a better job of caring for children in the Lawton Community.

Chairman Burk said he understands where Mr. Yarbrough is coming from, but unfortunately this isn't something that would be addressed by LETA. He suggested Mr. Yarbrough attend the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings as well as City Council meetings.

Mr. Yarbrough said he will certainly do that, but he said it's his understanding that several Authority members sit on multiple boards and commissions. He asked that these members start better advocating for the HC King Center.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.