

**MEETING OF THE
LAWTON ENHANCEMENT TRUST AUTHORITY
CITY HALL- 3rd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY APRIL 12, 2023– 3:00 P.M.**

Vice-chairman Hankins called the meeting to order at 3:00 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: Dwight Tanner*, Lou McConnell, Katy Jackson-Seeley, Addie Smith**, Kerry Sweeney, Ted Symuleski, Barry Ezerski, Mary Ann Hankins

ABSENT: Jay Burk (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Schlecht, Finance; Jason Poudrier, Arts and Humanities; Christine James, Parks & Rec; Mary Grace Pewewardy, Communications & Marketing; Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; Kelly Harris, City Council Ward 2 Representative; Jeanette Klein, Children United; Gwendolyn Monts, Theta Upsilon Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

*entered meeting at 3:09 P.M.

**left the meeting at 4:29 P.M.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Vice-chairman Hankins introduced Ms. Gwendolyn Monts with the Theta Upsilon Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

1. REPORTS

- A. Receive a report from Dennis Totte with Bedrock Nursery regarding current landscaping and irrigation projects, provide direction to Mr. Totte on current projects and take action as deemed necessary.

Totte said the tulips are done blooming, and he and his staff are working to change out the bulbs. He said his staff will be changing the flowers out to prepare for the new season in about a month.

Totte said Bedrock has been servicing a lot of sprinkler systems to prepare for the spring and summer watering schedule, which takes place in the morning instead of the afternoon.

Vice-chairman Hankins said the red and yellow tulips in front of City Hall were gorgeous.

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McConnell asked if there were any updates regarding the median in front of Nissan of Lawton. She said it's looking bad.

Totte said this project has currently been placed on hold per direction of Chairman Burk. However, Totte said he'll be requesting to place on item on a future agenda to discuss this issue.

Vice-Chairman Hankins asked Totte if he's noticed much damage done to the flower beds and medians that LETA maintains.

Totte said he's not seen any significant damage thus far, but he will be putting together a list of sites that might require extra attention.

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

Neighborhood Services Supervisor Jonathan Jernigan was unable to attend the meeting to give his monthly report. However, he provided copies of this report to the secretary to pass out at the meeting. A copy of this report can be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Vice-chairman Hankins said it's evident that Neighborhood Services has been very busy, and Jonathan has been doing a great job.

Ezerski asked if the Trash-Off event is still scheduled to take place on April 29th.

Vice-chairman Hankins said that is correct.

Branstetter displayed the t-shirts that have been designed for this event.

- C. Consider approving submitted materials for payment.

Schlecht presented the following invoices for the time period of March 8 – April 12, 2023:

- Nametags for Authority members - \$49.50 to Cameron University print shop
- General maintenance for 2nd Street - \$490.25 to Bedrock Nursery
- General maintenance for 2nd Street - \$93.00 to Bedrock Nursery
- Annual membership dues for FY 2023 - \$340.00 to Chamber of Commerce
- Presents for distinguished guests at Eye Candy Banquet - \$850.00 to Massad's
- Decoration reimbursement for Holiday in the Park - \$51,366.00 to Chamber
- T-shirts for 2023 Trash-Off Event - \$3,997.50 to Stanton's Apparel
- Swing for Children United playground - \$26,575.50 to ACS Playground

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Motion by Ezerski, Second by Sweeney, to approve the submitted materials for payment as presented. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, 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 March 31, 2023. Schlecht also presented a break down of the Hotel/Motel Tax as of April 6, 2023. The Report is available in the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Symuleski asked if the painting has been completed for the navy memorial eagle scout project.

James said she knows they were waiting for warmer weather, but she's not sure if the work has been completed yet. She noted that there are a few welding spots that need to be addressed.

Symuleski said he will drive by the site to see if this has been done yet. He said if there's work yet to be done, perhaps they can use the remaining balance of dedicated funds in the amount of \$8,902.00 to complete this project.

James said she will also reach out to the individuals responsible for this project and ask for an update.

Schlecht noted that she has had recent conversations with Chairman Burk about addressing several of LETA's dedicated funds to determine what needs to be done with them. She said the funding for Fresh Paint Days can be released, but she needs approval from the Authority before doing so. Schlecht said she will soon be presenting updates on the other dedicated funds as she completes the necessary research.

Ezerski asked why only 14.5% of the Hotel/Motel Tax has been collected. He said he understands that collection of this tax must be requested.

Schlecht said that is correct – a request must be made to collect these taxes. She said she could have made this request sooner, but she also has to have enough documented expenses to make the request. Schlecht said the Authority will be receiving an additional \$56,000 Hotel/Motel Tax payment next week.

Ezerski asked if the Hotel/Motel Tax can be broken down into three categories in the budget (e.g. Hotel Motel/Tax – LETA, Hotel/Motel Tax – Freedom Festival, and Hotel/Motel Tax – Holiday in the Park).

Schlecht said she can do that.

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Vice-chairman Hankins inquired about the status of the City Hall lighting project.

Schlecht said the last update given on this project was that Charlotte Brown said she'd be reaching out to Joe Painter in engineering to let him know a funding source for the project has been identified.

Schlecht said there has been recent discussion about having the State take over the collection of Hotel/Motel Tax.

Gatlin said an agenda item is currently being drafted to present this change to the City Council.

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Ezerski, to approve the Treasurer Report as of March 31, 2023 and the Hotel/Motel Tax break down as of April 6, 2023 as presented. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, 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 estimates have been received for the crating and appropriate storage of Lawton historical artifacts. There is a business item on this agenda to approve these expenditures.

Ezerski asked what happened to some of the displays from the old City Hall.

Poudrier said when staff moved out of the old City Hall, unfortunately there was never a sufficient tracking system developed to keep track of these displays and artifacts. He said he and his staff are currently working to locate all of these displays and artifacts so they can develop an accurate tracking system.

Ezerski asked if Poudrier knows what happened to the old broom factory display.

Poudrier said this display is now located at the Museum of the Great Plains. He said several of the City's artifacts were sent to the Museum for curating.

Tanner asked if there were plans to bring back the Miss Lawton display that was showcased at the old City Hall.

Poudrier said they have located these pictures, and his staff has found a potential spot for display in the new City Hall. It's yet to be determined how many photos there will be room to display at once. Poudrier said there's been a recent effort to bring this pageant back to the Lawton Community. He said the new winners can be swapped out with older ones as the years pass. He said he's also working with the Lawton Public Library in an effort to get these images digitized for placement on the Oklahoma Historical Society's website.

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Symuleski asked if there are any artifacts from the old police station that need to be preserved.

Poudrier said his staff was not contacted directly before the contract was awarded for the demolition of the old police station. The building is now in possession of the demolition company, and their contract specifies that nothing be removed from the building without the company's consent. Poudrier said he recently reached out to the engineering department to see if there is any way for the City to make one final walk-thru of the building and collect what the City wishes to salvage. The engineering department said the police department has already done this.

Vice-chairman Hankins said she is glad progress is being made to identify and properly handle the City's artifacts. She said she is also glad that funding has been identified to make improvements to the Carnegie Library and the Lawton National Guard Armory so that these buildings are structurally sound enough as to not incur further damage.

Poudrier said \$100,000 has been awarded for improvements at the Carnegie Library, and \$250,000 has been awarded for improvements at the Lawton National Guard Armory.

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

Klein said the poker run fundraiser was supposed to happen this month, but Harley Davidson accidentally scheduled two poker runs on the same day – the one for Children United and one for the Lawton Police Department. The police department will keep their poker run scheduled for May 24th, and Children United agreed to find an alternative date. However, Harley Davidson and Classic Chevrolet both agreed to let Children United set up a booth during the police department's poker run to promote their cause.

Klein said the swing for the handicap-accessible playground has been ordered. She said it takes 20 weeks for the swing to be delivered. This is because each swing is made to order – the company does not keep the swings in stock. Klein said Max Sasseen advised there is room for storage of the swing in the armory building if it is delivered before the playground is ready for installation.

Klein said she received a call from Neil West yesterday. Neil is affiliated with the Southwest Oklahoma Barbershop Quartet, and he informed her that Children United has been selected as an organization to receive fundraising from their upcoming event. The SW Oklahoma Barbershop Quartet will be performing this Friday and Saturday at McMahon Auditorium. Children United has been invited to set up a table in the lobby to present their cause prior to the performance and during the intermission.

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Klein said the Lawton Board of Realtors has selected Children United to receive funds raised during their golf tournament.

Klein said the sewer system has been completed at the playground, and it's allowed them to begin working on the foundation. She said Max Sasseen has been working with an engineer to get plans drawn for the retaining wall.

Klein said Schlecht recently informed her about a fundraising opportunity with Target. Klein said she plans to visit with the store manager of Target sometime tomorrow to obtain more information.

Klein said Gateway Mortgage recently sponsored a silent auction on Children United's behalf. She said Children United received several thousand dollars from this event.

Klein said the groundbreaking ceremony for the new playground will take place at 4:00 P.M. on May 17th. Klein said a large sign with a QR code will be placed at the construction site. If scanned, this QR code will take you to a website where you can donate money to Children United or even purchase tickets for future events. Klein said Jim Horinek identified this opportunity and helped make it happen. She said the sign will be installed before the groundbreaking ceremony on May 17th.

Ezerski asked when the fundraising dance will take place.

Klein said the dance will be held on October 21st. She said the new date for the poker run is June 24th.

Vice-chairman Hankins asked how much funding Children United is lacking to pay for completion of the playground.

Klein said they're lacking approximately \$400,000. Klein said Children United has raised approximately \$540,000 thus far. Klein noted that a few foundations have agreed to match their funding if they can get to 50%. This means Children United would only have to raise an additional \$200,000 to ensure the playground will be fully funded.

Symuleski asked for an estimate as to when the playground will be completed.

Klein said they're looking to have it done in about one year. She said Children United currently has money in the bank to move forward with additional phases of construction.

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

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James said mowing season has begun. She said all mowing bids received by their department were rejected at the City Council meeting yesterday. James said staff will be going out for a rebid. Until they can get this contract awarded, James said her Parks & Rec staff will be maintaining the mowing. She said her department is taking on this responsibility on top of all their other duties. James said they've acquired a lot of acreage, so these properties will have to be mowed on a prioritized basis.

James said City Council recently approved a drainage beautification project located on the south lawn at City Hall. She said the parks & rec department will be working with the public works and stormwater/drainage maintenance departments to complete this project in-house. James said they hope to break ground on this project next week, weather permitting. She said the entire project should take a couple of weeks to finish. James said all the raw ground will be hydro mulched after project completion. She said they'll be receiving this hydro mulch from the landfill. James said her staff has asked Bedrock to keep the grass at City Hall maintained at 3-4 inches tall as to better allow for excess water to soak into the ground. This will help keep mud off of the nearby sidewalks.

James said there are a total of six sun sails covering the playground at Elmer Thomas park. She said three of the six sails have been replaced. She said these sails are in poor shape – they are not meant to last long in the Oklahoma wind and heat. James said staff is in the process of taking down all of these sails for both aesthetic and safety reasons. She said the finance department is working to identify funding for the replacement of these sails, but they cost approximately \$10,000 - \$12,000 per sail. James said there will not be any shade sails at the playground until this funding is identified.

James said the Elmer Thomas Park Master Plan, the Aquatics Master Plan and the Lakes Master Plan will be presented to the appropriate Commission(s) next week, and these plans will go to City Council for final approval on April 25th.

Ezerski asked if he's correct in thinking most of the City's equipment (i.e. playground equipment) is self-insured.

James said that is correct. However, James said they have turned in a claim to the insurance company for the shade sails at Elmer Thomas park, but it's not likely they'll be covered by the City's policy. James said her department will soon be reviewing all of their playground equipment to determine what all may need to be added to the City's insurance coverage if allowed. However, much of the key information needed has been difficult to locate for the existing equipment. The insurance company would need information such as the manufacturer's brand and the year the equipment was installed. James said going forward, her staff will provide HR with the information needed to add all new equipment to the insurance policy. James said the City's current insurance policy has a deductible of \$10,000.

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

Planning Director Charlotte Brown was unable to attend the meeting – no update at this time.

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

Vice-chairman Hankins said she's noticed several smaller homes being rehabbed, which is a great thing for the community.

Councilman Harris said LETA has participated in the Rotary Club's flag program in the past. He said this program has been taken over by the Great Plains AMBUCS. In the past, LETA sponsored the placement of 50 flags along Gore Boulevard and 25 flags along Sheridan Road. These flags would be displayed for the five flag holidays – Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and Veteran's Day. He asked if the Authority would like to receive additional information on how to participate in this program with AMBUCS going forward.

Vice-chairman Hankins asked that Councilman Harris provide additional information about this program. She said the Authority will create an agenda item to further discuss this opportunity at future meeting.

- J. 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.

Gaitlin said she has been working with Jonathan Jernigan to advertise for the upcoming Trash-Off event. She said they're still in need of additional volunteers. So far, they have appeared on KSWO and a couple of the radio stations.

Gaitlin said the new website, beautifullawton.com, has launched. Gaitlin passed out visuals of what yard of the month nominations look like on the website.

Ezerski said he will mention this new website at the next Board of Realtor's meeting. He asked what the deadline is each month to submit nominations.

Gaitlin said the nominations will be due by the 15th of each month, and citizens will have until the 30th/31st of each month to vote. Any nominations made after the 15th of the month will automatically go to the next month.

2. BUSINESS

- A. Consider approving the minutes of the March 8, 2023 meeting.

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Motion by Ezerski, Second by Symuleski, to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023 meeting.
AYE: Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski.
NAY: None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- B. Consider approving a request from the Communications and Marketing Department for up to \$150.00 per month for upgrades to the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority website.

Pewewardy said the communications and marketing department would like to upgrade the word press forms account for the Authority's website – beautifullawton.com. She said a free account is currently being utilized for the website, and staff is limited in what they can do. Pewewardy is suggesting the Authority approve upgrading the website to a word press forms basic package for one year. This package will allow photos to be uploaded to the website. She said this upgrade would cost \$49.50 for one year.

Gaitlin said word press is currently running a special, and that is why they're only asking for \$49.50 for an immediate 1-year upgrade. However, it is unknown how long this special will last. Gaitlin clarified that this purchase would be an annual fee and not a reoccurring monthly fee.

Poudrier noted that the Authority could advertise their website on their Facebook page and vice versa.

Motion by Sweeney, Second by Tanner, to approve a request from the Communications and Marketing Department for up to \$150.00 per year for upgrades to the Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority website. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- C. Consider a request from the Theta Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority to plant a tree at Greer Park and take action as deemed necessary.

Gwendolyn Monts said one of the initiatives of her organization is to improve the environment within the community. She said they've adopted 38th Street, and they clean this street twice a year. They are now interested in planting a tree in Greer Park, and she asked if the Authority would be interested in donating the tree.

Vice-chairman Hankins asked Monts how much funding she's asking for.

Monts said she's currently not sure what the tree would cost.

James said the most recent tree purchased by the Authority for the Shady 580 campaign cost around \$600-\$700. This included the purchase of the tree, a water bag for the tree and the cost of staking.

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James provided Monts with the City Policy and application to approve the donation and placement of the tree. She said the Authority can donate the funds for the tree. James said her staff recently created a map with 12 possible tree planting locations within Greer Park. She said a tree has been planted in the first location on this map, and she's asking that this tree be placed in the next designated spot according to the map. James also noted that Greer park does not have a sprinkler system, and she asked that any tree planted in the future have a watering bag to accompany it.

Vice-chairman Hankins noted that it's not the best time of year to plant a tree because the summer season is hard on newly planted trees. She said the fall season would be a more appropriate time to plant. She recommended Monts fill out the application provided by James and bring it back to the Authority for approval along with a cost estimate for the tree.

Ezerski asked James if staff has a preference on the type of tree they would want planted.

James said she will find out what type of tree staff is wishing to stick with.

Vice-chairman Hankins asked for an update on the Shady 580 tree planting project.

James said Chairman Burk and Richard Rogalski started this project. She said if the Authority wishes to move forward with the plans staff can make arrangements to do so.

Monts said she will work on obtaining estimates for the tree, and she will bring these estimates back to the Authority for funding approval.

- D. Consider approving the budget for the Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival, to include entering a contract with Denise Castelli of Limelight Entertainment for coordination of fireworks, stage, and headline performer.

Poudrier said he worked closely with Schlecht to finalize the Freedom Festival budget. A copy of the budget can be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request. He said the City of Lawton contributes \$100,000 per fiscal year to the Freedom Festival. He said he's highlighted in red what has changed from last year's budget.

Poudrier said staff received direction from the former City manager to raise the budget for fireworks. He said \$57,000 was allocated for fireworks in last year's budget, and the amount has been raised to \$75,000 this year.

Poudrier noted that this year's budget includes roll over funds from last year's budget.

Symuleski asked if the zip lining company provided a refund last year since their services were not utilized.

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Poudrier said they did provide a refund. He said staff does not wish to pursue zip lining this year.

Poudrier said he and his staff are actively seeking additional donations.

Tanner asked Poudrier if he's asking the Authority to approve the \$124,277 in total expenses that is found in the budget.

Poudrier said that is correct.

Symuleski asked who would sign the Limelight contract.

Poudrier said this contact would go to City Council for final approval, and it gets signed by the Mayor and City Clerk.

Motion by Tanner, Second by Jackson-Seeley, to approve the budget for the Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival with expenses of up to \$124,277, to include entering a contract with Denise Castelli of Limelight Entertainment for coordination of fireworks, stage, and headline performer.
AYE: Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski.
NAY: None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- E. Consider approving a recommendation made by the Cultural Preservation Committee to purchase six-months of storage for up to \$900 at U-Haul Moving & Storage of Lawton for storage in a temperature and humidity controlled facility of City of Lawton historical artifacts, spending up to \$3,000 in professional Art Crating, and purchase shelving and storage containers for an amount up to \$1,000 to properly care for and store City of Lawton Historical Artifacts until a suitable, designated City owned space is prepared to accept the artifacts.

Ezerski asked if the storage would be held at the U-Haul facility on 38th Street.

Poudrier said that is correct. He said this facility is climate and humidity controlled. He said it would cost \$152.85 a month to utilize this storage facility. He said staff is essentially asking the Authority to cover the cost of six months' worth of storage at the U-Haul facility. Poudrier said staff is hoping that improvements to the Carnegie Library will be completed within that six-month period. The artifacts placed in storage will be moved to the Carnegie Library for display once the building improvements are completed.

Tanner asked if the shelving would be permanent.

Poudrier said yes. The shelving would be utilized in the storage facility, but it would be moved to the Carnegie Library with the artifacts.

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Poudrier said the art crating estimate is from Arty Pamplin, a retired firefighter with the City of Lawton. This quote came in at \$3,534.00, but Pamplin said he would provide a discount if staff chose him to handle all of the City's art crating.

James noted that staff will place a photo on the outside of each create depicting what's inside.

Tanner asked if \$4,900 worth of expenditures is currently available in the Authority's budget.

Ezerski asked Schlecht if this funding could come out of the LETA grant awards account.

Schlecht said yes.

Motion by Sweeney, Second by Tanner, to approve a recommendation made by the Cultural Preservation Committee to purchase six-months of storage for up to \$900 at U-Haul Moving & Storage of Lawton for storage in a temperature and humidity controlled facility of City of Lawton historical artifacts, spending up to \$3,000 in professional Art Crating, and purchase shelving and storage containers for an amount up to \$1,000 to properly care for and store City of Lawton Historical Artifacts until a suitable, designated City owned space is prepared to accept the artifacts and authorizing said funds to be taken out of the LETA grant awards account. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

- F. Discuss the proposal from Arrow Signs for signage for Wayne Gilley Auditorium and take action as necessary.

Poudrier said there is currently no signage located at Wayne Gilley Auditorium. He said staff has obtained a quote in the amount of \$8,625.00 from Arrow Sign company to create and install a sign for the Auditorium.

Ezerski suggested Poudrier ask the City Council to pay for this signage.

Motion by Ezerski, Second by Jackson-Seeley, to recommend that staff present this funding request for signage at Wayne Gilley Auditorium to the City Council. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. ***MOTION PASSED.***

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

Sweeney said the Eye Candy Gala will take place this Friday.

Gaitlin said the doors to this event will open at 6:00 P.M. for a cocktail hour, and dinner will be served at 7:00 P.M.

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Poudrier said there will be an open bar at the event.

Gaitlin said 88 people have RSVP'd thus far.

Poudrier said Gaitlin will be the emcee for the event.

Tanner asked if help will be needed for setup before the event and/or cleanup after the event.

Sweeney said no – everything has been taken care of at this time. However, she asked that Authority members arrive on time to help greet guests.

Gaitlin said the only tables that will be designated are the ones for the honorees. Other than that, it will be open seating.

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

Vice-chairman Hankins said the Trash-Off event was briefly discussed earlier in the meeting.

Jackson-Seeley suggested staff reach out to Fort Sill to see if they have soldiers interested in volunteering for this event.

3. Discussion

None.

4. Adjournment

Motion by Symuleski, **Second** by Sweeney, to adjourn the April 12, 2023 meeting. **AYE:** Hankins, McConnell, Smith, Tanner, Ezerski, Jackson-Seeley, Sweeney, Symuleski. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

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