Minutes
Youth and Family Affairs Committee (YFAC)
Special Meeting
January 15 2025 - 9:00 A.M.
Lawton City Hall – 3rd Floor Conference Room
212 SW 9th Street, Lawton, Oklahoma

I. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chairman Bob Weger. Upon roll call vote, a quorum was determined to be present.

Members Present: Bob Weger, Mary Ann Hankins, Carl Fuqua, RL Smith, Bernita Taylor, *Jeff Elbert, **Reshard Horne

Members Absent: Dianne Owens, Taron Epps

Also Present: Karen Bailey, Alternate 3; Tammy Branstetter, Sr Deputy City Clerk; Cynthia Williams, Internal Auditor & Grants Coordinator; John Andrew, City Attorney; Alex Minter, United Way Success by 6 Director; Matina Davis, Citizen of Lawton

*Arrived at 9:06 AM **Left at 9:48 AM

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

The notice and agenda for this meeting were posted by the City Clerk's Office as required by law.

II. **Introduction of Guests**

Chairman Weger introduced Cythia Williams, Internal Auditor & Grants Coordinator, and advised that she will be the internal auditor for YFAC.

Chairman Weger introduced John Andrew, City Attorney.

Matina Davis, citizen of Lawton, introduced herself.

Chairman Weger introduced Karen Bailey and advised the Committee that Ms. Bailey serves as an alternate member for the Committee.

Alex Minter, United Way, introduced herself.

III. **New Business**

A. Consider approving the minutes of the June 18, 2024, meeting.

A copy of the minutes of the June 18, 2024, meeting may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Hankins, **Second** by Smith, to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2024, meeting. **AYE:** Smith, Fuqua, Elbert, Horne, Weger, Hankins. **ABSTAIN**: Taylor. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

B. Review and discuss YFAC Ordinance 24-078 passed at the November 12, 2024, City Council meeting and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Weger provided background information on this item. A copy of Ordinance 24-078 may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Chairman Weger discussed the following change in Section 1, item B of Ordinance 24-078:

"B. Effective December 17, 2021, the membership of the committee shall consist of nine (9) members, ~~two (2) of whom shall be members of the city council and the other seven (7) shall be non-councilmembers~~ composed of a combination of Councilmembers and citizens. The number of Councilmembers shall be less than a quorum, with the remaining members being citizens of Lawton. The non-councilperson members of the committee shall be residents of the City of Lawton who have been determined to have specific qualifications to study and evaluate opportunities for youth of all ages in the city to develop life and career enhancing skills and avoid involvement in the criminal justice system. The councilpersons on the committee, as members of the city council, shall also be residents of the City of Lawton. The committee will include individuals with balanced expertise in business, financial management, and social services. Members shall be nominated to serve on the committee by the mayor and confirmed by the city council."

Chairman Weger said the Mayor wanted to make sure this Committee stays true to its original mission, which is to help the city's at-risk youth. He wanted a broader spectrum of insight in terms of Committee membership. That was something the Mayor shared with the City Council, Council affirmed and the change to the ordinance took place.

Chairman Weger discussed Section 1, item I of Ordinance 24-078:

"I. The Chairperson of the Youth and Family Affairs Committee shall be appointed annually by the Mayor of the City of Lawton. The appointment of the Chairperson will occur at the beginning of each calendar year, with the term lasting for one (1) year or until a successor is elected. In the event that the appointed Chairperson steps down prior to the completion of their term, the Mayor shall appoint a replacement to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term."

Chairman Weger said in the past, the Chairman has been appointed by the Committee – that is no longer the case. This will now be an appointment of the Mayor, and it will be done on an annual basis.

Chairman Weger discussed the grant application requirements found in Section 2 on page 3 of Ordinance 24-078. The requirements are as follows:

"SECTION 2-3-9-366: Youth And Family Affairs Committee Grant Application Requirements

The following provisions govern the application, administration, and disbursement of grants under the Youth and Family Affairs Committee (YFAC) program. These requirements are designed to ensure the proper and lawful use of funds, accountability of recipients, and the successful implementation of eligible programs aimed at developing life and career enhancing skills for the youth of Lawton while helping them avoid involvement in the criminal justice system.

A. **Application Process Deadlines:** To facilitate effective budgeting, the Youth and Family Affairs Committee (YFAC) shall establish a specified grant application period to secure funding for each fiscal year.

1. The grant application period shall commence on the first business day of December and remain open until the last business day of January.

2. YFAC shall review, approve, deny, or modify funding applications and submit a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year no later than April 1st each year.

3. Upon approval of the proposed budget, YFAC may begin presenting funding agreements to the City Council, with all agreements to be submitted no later than the final City Council meeting in June of each year.

4. Successful applicants will receive an official award date after the funding agreement is fully approved, executed by all parties, and a Notice to Proceed is issued by the City of Lawton. Only expenses incurred between the official award date and the termination date specified in the agreement will be eligible for reimbursement.

B. **Program Budget Submission:** All grant applicants must submit a comprehensive program budget as part of the application process. The budget must outline all anticipated program expenses, including but not limited to operational costs, personnel, materials, and overhead. The City reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification regarding any budgeted items. Any discrepancies between the submitted budget and actual expenditures may result in a reduction or denial of reimbursement.

C. **Grant Matching Requirements:** The grant follows a graduated matching funds structure over a three-year period. In the first year, applicants are required to provide 20% of the program's total cost, with the grant covering up to 80% of eligible expenses. In the second year, applicants must provide 40% of the program's total cost, with the grant covering up to 60%. In the third year, applicants must provide 60% of the total program cost, and the grant will cover up to 40%. This graduated structure encourages sustainability and reduced reliance on city funds over time.

D. **Reimbursement-Based Disbursement:** All grants are disbursed on a reimbursement basis only. Recipients must submit detailed claim forms, accompanied by verifiable proof of purchases (such as receipts or invoices), to receive reimbursement for incurred expenses. Advance payments will not be provided under this program. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in denial or delay of reimbursement.

E. **Annual Funding Cap:** The maximum grant awarded to any applicant is limited to $35,000.00 per fiscal year, regardless of the total program cost or the applicant's ability to raise matching funds.

F. **Salary and Wage Limitations:** The portion of grant funds used to pay salaries or wages for program staff shall not exceed a pre-determined percentage of the total program cost. This percentage shall be set by the City at the time of application, based on the nature of the program and the total amount of the grant request. The purpose of this limitation is to ensure that the majority of grant funds are used for direct program expenses and services.

G. **Eligible Matching Contributions:** Matching contributions may include rent, salaries, program materials, and utilities directly related to the program. In-kind contributions may also be considered, provided they are properly documented and substantiated to reflect their fair market value.

H. **Compliance with Prior Year Obligations**: Applicants who received grant funding in prior years must be in full compliance with all reporting requirements, conditions, and audits. Noncompliance with prior obligations, including unresolved audits or unsubmitted reports, will result in disqualification from current-year funding.

I. **Expenditure Restrictions:** Grant funds must be used solely for expenses approved in the grant application. Any deviation from the approved budget must receive prior written authorization from the City. Unauthorized use of funds for unapproved expenses is prohibited and may result in penalties, including reimbursement of funds and disqualification from future funding opportunities.

J. **Mandatory Training:** All grant applicants and administrators are required to complete mandatory training sessions on the grant application and administration process. These sessions will cover topics such as eligibility requirements, financial reporting, outcome-based reporting, and compliance. Failure to attend the training will result in disqualification from the grant process.

K. **General Accounting Standards:** All applicants for grant funding shall adhere to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as defined by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) or other relevant governing bodies. Grant recipients shall maintain accurate and complete records of all transactions related to the use of grant funds for a minimum of five (5) years following the end of the grant period and shall make all records available for inspection upon request by the City of Lawton.

L. **Limitation on Cash Use:** Grant funds shall not be used for cash-based transactions, except in cases where non-cash payment methods are demonstrably impractical or unavailable. Any cash transaction must be fully documented with receipts and a clear statement of purpose, demonstrating the necessity of cash use.

M. **Sanctions for Misuse of Funds and Noncompliance:** Misuse of funds, submission of fraudulent claims, or failure to comply with audits will result in severe penalties. Penalties may include disqualification from future funding, demands for reimbursement of improperly used funds, and referral for criminal prosecution as allowed by law. Any irregularities found in audits or failure to provide requested documentation may result in immediate termination of funding and potential legal action.

N. **Limitations on Multiple Sources of City Funding**: No applicant shall be eligible to receive funding from more than one city program, fund, or grant source within the same fiscal year. Applicants are required to disclose any additional sources of city funding received or applied for during the current fiscal year.

O. **Outstanding Financial Obligations:** Applicants with outstanding debts or financial obligations to the City of Lawton, including unpaid taxes, fines, or fees, are ineligible to apply for or receive grant funding until such obligations are fully resolved."

Chairman Weger said for organizations to be eligible to apply for YFAC funds, they must go through one of the two workshops that the City of Lawton provides. He noted that Cynthia Williams heads the workshops. He said if you're not attending the workshops, you won't apply for the grant. The purpose of the training is so that organizations applying for the grant understand exactly what the City of Lawton is wanting from them. He said we don't want organizations spending hours putting something together that's not going to be within the guidelines of the requirements we have as a city in dispersing those funds.

Chairman Weger said there's been a problem in the past of accountability of receipts. We addressed this issue in the ordinance. He noted that organizations will be reimbursed - organizations will not be getting funding up front. Cynthia Williams will review the expenditures and associated receipts as they come in, and reimbursement takes place if everything is in order.

Chairman Weger noted that we have some organizations that are not going to be qualified, because even yet, some still haven't turned in all the required documentation. He asked Williams if everyone is current in their previous accountability.

Williams said we have two that are not current. Joshua Empowering Survivors Unique Servants owes $43,280.32. They have a payment plan that has been approved. The first payment is going to be made on March 1st. They will continue to pay $1,200 a month and will finish the payment plan in February 2028. Williams said we also have MIGHT CDRC who owes $266.33. However, they did not set up a payment plan – there was an agreement made that they will take that amount from any future awards.

Taylor said she represents MIGHT CDRC. She said the $266.33 Williams was talking about was a check that was paid to a child and never cashed, so she couldn't show it on the bank statement. Taylor said she has called staff and told them she would pay it, but she was told she didn't owe anything, so today is the first time she's hearing that she does owe something. She said she did not want to come to a meeting that she's a part of and have that be said.

Chairman Weger thanked Taylor for sharing that information.

Smith asked what happens in this situation where she issued a check that was never cashed, but the city's records show she still owes something. He asked how we rectify this to where she doesn't owe.

Williams said this was under the old system where the award was paid up front – it was not a reimbursement at that time. She would need to either repay the city or have this amount come out of any future awards.

Taylor said she didn't like this, so she asked to pay the balance. She said she does not want it said that MIGHT owes something. She said this is the first time she's heard there was a balance – she was told that it was taken care of.

Smith noted that Taylor is a very honorable person. He asked Taylor if she is satisfied with the answer.

Taylor said I am, but I don't like that this happened, and I'm very upset.

With regards to item B, Chairman Weger said Williams will be going over the YFAC budget. He said there may be additional requests that those applying for the grants may be asked to provide at the city's request.

Chairman Weger said the matching funds requirement is one of the big things that we've changed. Regarding the amount, we've gone 80%-60%-40% on our grant requests. One of the problems that we noticed from the past is on the city's application for the grant, it states "what other funding do you have?". It was never with the intention that the city would fund the program 100% and/or indefinitely.

The grants are meant to get youth programs for our children up and off the ground by giving them funding to get them rolling so they can begin subsidizing their finances and be on their way. Chairman Weger said this did not always happen in the past, so the Mayor felt like a change was needed.

Chairman Weger said the 80%-60%-40% matching funds requirement is over a three-year period. The first-year applicants are required to provide 20% of the funding, where the grant will provide 80%. The percent of funding that the grant will provide will drop to 60% the second year, and in the third year it will drop to 40%.

With regards to Item D, Chairman Weger said all grants are dispersed on a reimbursement basis, as mentioned earlier. Lack of receipts and/or having things filed incorrectly will delay reimbursement.

With regards to Item E, Chairman Weger said the annual funding cap is $35,000 per grant. He noted that this is the total program cost – the grant will be a maximum of $35,000. There is a salary and wage limitation – this percentage is set by the city. Chairman Weger said the City Auditor will review this with each organization as they apply – they'll look at where each organization is at financially, and the city will determine what that percentage is.

With regards to Item H, Chairman Weger said for those organizations who have received funds, the grant funds from previous years must be in full compliance with all reporting requirements. If they are not, delay or denial can take place.

With regards to Item I, Chairman Weger said grant funds must be solely used for the expense approved in the grant application. He said the city has to be notified of any requests to deviate from the approved budget.

Smith asked who gives the okay on these requests.

Chairman Weger said that would be the City Auditor.

Williams said the City Council will approve a funding agreement for each organization. If there is something that is not working out quite right for an organization, they do have the option to bring their funding agreement back to the City Council, and the Council could make that adjustment. Williams clarified that she is just here to review numbers and present them to the Committee – she does not make the decisions.

Hankins said it's really important to have a single auditor – this is where we had some issues last time. Now everything will go through somebody that really understands numbers.

Williams said staff is trying to be very transparent in the workshops by explaining to the organizations that they should be inclusively vague when they're doing their budget. For example, if an organization lists "rent" on their budget thinking it will cover rent *and* utilities, this will *not* cover utility expenses. The organization would need to list something like "rent and utilities" or "rent and other expenses related to the operation of the building".

Elbert said we've had applicants in the past who have requested funding to cover the building of brick and motor establishments to house their program. He said he doesn't see anything written in the ordinance that states we would cover this, and we've denied applicants that portion of their money because we were under the impression that we're not covering the cost of building anything. For clarification, Elbert asked if this is still true.

Chairman Weger said his understanding is that is true, but he will check into this before he answers in the affirmative.

Elbert said he doesn't want to deny anyone the opportunity if we're allowing them to do this.

Horne asked if this is clarified in the required training.

Chairman Weger said he doesn't think there is anything in the training that says anything about this.

Taylor asked if there is anything in the application that says what we do not fund. She said you can put in the application what you do not fund.

Smith said that's a good idea.

In the event that the Committee states that there are things that someone applies for funds for that the Committee will not be funding, Alex Minter, United Way, asked if applicants will be given an opportunity to provide a revised budget to the Committee as an application attachment so they can qualify for additional funds.

Elbert said moving forward things will be a lot more organized, but what we've done in the past was either gave a partial grant based on our decision as a Committee, or we revisited with the applicants and explained to them what we can and can't do based on the guidelines of the application.

Alex Minter, United Way, said the pre-application training was very thorough. The guidelines of what you are expected to supply the city with were very clear, but we were not told about anything that we could not apply for funding for. This was a question Ms. Williams was asked during the training, and she answered it very well. She was very straight to the point and said that she is unaware of anything that you are not allowed to apply for funding for as long as it aligns with the guidelines of the grant, however if that becomes something I am made aware of I will contact you. Minter said if there is anything else that the Committee has historically not granted funding for, that would be really helpful knowledge for applicants.

Taylor said she would like to make a suggestion. She said she writes a lot of grants, and they don't really tell you what they don't fund - they tell you what they do fund. If it's not within the list of what they do fund, then you don't ask for it. Taylor said if you line out what we do fund, this gives you clarity, because you're going to miss something if you try to put what you don't fund.

Taylor said she no longer applies for YFAC money – that's why she's on the Committee. Taylor said when she applied for funding in the past and paid for salaries, she paid for teenagers' salaries. Taylor said under her budget, they had two months for the teens to work, and she paid $400 and asked the YFAC for another $400. Taylor said we need to specify what types of salaries and wages we will pay for and to what extent. The more these things are clarified up front, the better you are with the applicants because they know what to ask for and what not to ask for.

Chairman Weger said in one of the discussions had with the Mayor, the Mayor expressed concerned that there was so much money going to salaries and not enough money going to the children. The money seemed out of balance and seemed to be going more towards funding salaries instead of fulfilling our mission of enhancing and enriching children's lives.

Hankins said it seems like those should be called stipends instead of salaries.

Taylor said that's what she called them for the teens, but when we're talking staff, that's where you need to say a percentage.

Williams said organizations will still get credit for the salaries and the stipend – the salary part of it can be part of their in kind. She noted that whenever the Mayor was talking specifically about writing this ordinance, he did not want to be restrictive because each organization has a different structure. Some organizations do have more salaries than activities or supplies that are needed, so they wanted to able to meet the needs of each type of organization and not be so restrictive that someone that does need help paying the stipend or the salary can't get what they need. That's why a certain percentage was not laid out.

Taylor said that's subjective. She asked if the city would be putting themselves into a legal situation if they pay a higher percentage of salaries for some organizations than they do for others.

John Andrew, City Attorney, said he'd have to look into some things to answer this question.

Taylor said things need to be the same across the board.

Horne said or it should be written wherein there's a justification that explains why that occurred.

Taylor said it should be justified in the beginning - not after.

Horne said it should also be based off an established standard.

Williams asked Committee members to remember that she is not the one establishing the standards – the Committee will be the ones to establish a yes or a no.

Taylor said that's why she said something – she said we'll get to a place to where we're making subjective decisions because we have too much gray area. Her opinion is that this could lead to legal issues.

Hankins said this is such a hard balance, because some programs need more personnel, and one on one is great for kids.

Taylor said she understands that. She said she feels like she needs more money than 5% from HUD, but they put it all the same because you don't want to get into gray areas. You've got to keep it equal. Taylor said exceptions to guidelines should be established and communicated beforehand. She said it is not good to be vague, especially when it comes to salaries.

Alex Minter, United Way, said this was a question she brought up during the training meeting. Minter said she specifically asked Williams what percentage of salaries applicants are allowed to write into the grant. She said it's standard operating procedure to list how much of a percentage of salaries you can apply for. She said it does make it easier for applicants if there are some stricter guidelines. This lets the applicants know exactly what the Committee would like to see in the applications.

With regards to Item N, Chairman Weger said no applicant shall receive funding from more than one city program. We had a problem in the past where some organizations were "double dipping" – they were dipping from YFAC and also dipping from another entity within the city. He said this is no longer the case.

C. Review and discuss the existing YFAC By-Laws and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Weger provided background information on this item. A copy of the YFAC By-Laws may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Chairman Weger said there are some changes the Committee will need to make to the By-Laws to get them in sync with the ordinance. He said he is a big supporter of things being the same across the board, as Taylor mentioned previously. Chairman Weger said if you've read through the By-Laws, you'll find there are conflicts between the By-Laws and Ordinance 24-078. He said he spoke with legal, and legal has advised that the Committee will make the changes to the By-Laws.

Chairman Weger said to keep in mind that while the By-Laws state that the Committee will elect a Chairman, the Mayor is now the one that appoints the Chairman, per Ordinance 24-078.

Chairman Weger asked Committee members to take some time to read through the By-Laws and notate their questions and suggested changes. The Committee will discuss the By-Laws again at the next meeting after Committee members have had the opportunity to really go through the By-Laws.

Andrew said the best way to go about this is to come up with a document that has all of the amendments in it, and the Committee would have to approve the amended document by a two-thirds majority vote.

Elbert asked Chairman Weger to clarify which two things he said were different.

Chairman Weger said the Committee does not do any elections – they're all Mayor appointed. The term limit on the Chairman is no longer three years – it's one year.

Chairman Weger said he thinks we would all agree that children are worth the investment. One of the problems the Committee has had is that we've had a horrible time getting a quorum. Because of this, we're really going to enforce three unexcused absences. An unexcused absence would be a failure to notify the clerk prior to the meeting that you won't be attending the meeting. If you are going to miss a meeting but you notified the clerk in advance, that's an excused absence. Three consecutive unexcused absences will result in removal from the Committee.

Elbert said the By-Laws do not show unexcused – this needs to be added in.

Smith said he thinks the rule should be having three unexcused absences period – not necessarily consecutive.

Elbert said he agrees. He noted that this time frame for meeting is a lot more convenient for him. He said he coaches wrestling, and he's typically at practice during the 5:30PM YFAC meetings from October to February.

Hankins asked Committee members if 9:00AM would work for them to meet.

Smith said this time works for him.

Chairman Weger noted that the Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month.

Elbert said he would appreciate this accommodation.

Elbert asked if it needs to be clarified in the By-Laws what an unexcused absence is.

Chairman Weger said he thinks so.

No action was taken on this item.

D. Review and discuss the YFAC Preliminary Budget for FY 2026 and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Weger said we began the balance as of July 1 of 2024 at $297,850. There are several programs that already receive funding that are allocated funds – Arts for All is funded at $35,000, and youth programs with LPS and Marie Detty are also funded.

Hankins noted that these grants are set aside – they are not applicants every year.

Williams said they still must provide an application and a budget.

Smith asked how much funding LPS and Marie Detty receives.

Chairman Weger said Marie Detty receives $100,000 in funding, and LPS receives $75,000 in funding.

Hankins noted that the success of the Arts for All youth program is what caused the city to want to start the YFAC program.

Chairman Weger said the rollover expenditures to date are as follows:

MIGHT CDRC - $16,573
LPS - $150,000
Harvest Plenty House of Prayer - $19,860

Chairman Weger said expenditures to date are $19,631. The total encumbrance is $190,369 - $80,369 is for the Marie Detty Gang Program grant, Lawton Public Schools will receive $75,000, and Arts for All receives $35,000. Out of our $297,850 beginning balance, that brings us down to $87,750 in money left over. Chairman Weger said this $87,750 would fund two summer programs or two grants for $35,000 each. He said if the Committee is in agreeance, he would like to make a request of an additional $17,150 to add to our $87,750, which would allow the Committee to fund a total of three programs at $35,000.

Chairman Weger asked Williams where the additional $17,150 would come from.

Williams said this would be a budget request going into this next fiscal year.

Motion by Smith, **Second** by Elbert, to direct staff to request an additional $17,150 in funding for next fiscal year and to request that the rollover amount be included in next year's balance. **AYE:** Smith, Taylor, Fuqua, Elbert, Weger, Hankins. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

IV. Reports/Comments from Chairman and Committee Members

None

V. **Reports/Comments from Staff**

None

VI. **Audience Participation**

Matina Davis, citizen of Lawton, thanked Elbert, Taylor and Smith for speaking up. She also noted that it's very disrespectful for the City Attorney to be on his phone while a meeting is going on when Council Policy states that you should not be on your devices.

Williams asked Committee members to encourage organizations to apply. She said we had a great turn out at the training sessions, but only one application has been submitted at this time.

Taylor said the downfall is the reimbursement. She said the training should help applicants know what is reimbursable and what the time frame is, but at the same time, most applicants don't have the money to spend up front.

Williams said she does want to make sure that the organizations know that we understand, and that the policy is not written with any specific timelines of when you can make payment requests. Williams said if an organization does need to make it weekly, she'll work with them to get those payment requests processed.

Taylor said she will talk to those that she knows, but what's holding them up are the things we went through last year and the timeframe on the reimbursements, because after you spend the money, it's gone.

Williams said we want to get the reimbursements back to the organizations as soon as possible.

Smith said it is a struggle because the vast majority of non-profits are for non-profit. Most of them deal with volunteers, they sacrifice on a daily level, and they don't draw a lot of salary. He said he knows there might be some that do, but the ones that he's seen here have really struggled – the vast majority of the directors and people that are there are paid way below what a minimum scale is, or they may not draw any pay at all. He said he agrees with Taylor in that it can be difficult for some organizations to pay upfront.

Taylor said she does appreciate that the Committee is trying to rectify those situations. Last year was the first year that the grant was reimbursable, so it was a trial and error for everyone. Now, we have come to a place of trying to standardize it and make it easier. However, Taylor said she just wanted to tell the Committee why this is happening with applicants. It's not a hit against the city or the Committee, it's just that there's been too many times of applicants going through the process thinking they're going to get money and then they come in and are told there's no money. The applicants were in tears because they didn't know what to do anymore for their program. Taylor said a lot of that we have to overcome if we want to get the organizations back to trusting that YFAC funding will be there in a way that will allow them to sustain themselves and do what's asked of them.

Smith asked how often we have the required workshops.

Williams said the application period is open from December 1st until January 31st, and she's held two workshops so far. Staff has discussed the possibility of having one more workshop before the application period closes, but we've not set a date yet just because there was great attendance the first time and then it definitely dwindled, and we haven't received any more calls needing that training. However, Williams said if organizations call and they want to have a one-on-one session, she can definitely do a workshop on an as needed basis at this point.

Smith asked how long the workshop is.

Williams said it was no longer than an hour.

Elbert asked where the workshops were held.

Williams said they were held in the banquet room of City Hall.

Elbert said the way it's been in the past is that the Committee approves or disapproves the application for funding based on the site visits the Committee does. He said sometimes the Committee has an applicant come to the meeting to present or answer questions. Elbert said as far as he understands, even though the Committee may approve funding up to certain amount, it's really just a recommendation that we push forward to the City Council. He said he's okay with it continuing to be this way, but at the same time we don't want applicants to get approved for one amount with the Committee and then get approved for a lesser amount with Council.

Taylor said she thinks this is where the $35,000 cap came in.

Hankins noted that organizations are lucky to get money from the city – this doesn't happen in every city. Hankins said with the CIP and with the Kids First Initiative that we're really focusing on coming up, youth programs are very important. Hankins said Williams is a detailed person who knows auditing, and she will do everything she can to make sure things go okay for the applicant, but no grant will go beyond $35,000. Hankins said we kind of had an abuse going on in that applicants were expecting to get funding without submitting receipts.

Taylor noted that all the years prior, people got a lump sum. Last year was the first year that applicants were to be reimbursed, and it was the first time that people had to turn in documentation for what they'd spent the money on. That's when it was seen that people weren't keeping their receipts and having things done. This is why the reimbursement method was put into effect.

Taylor said with what we're doing now, we shouldn't have this happening again. She said she is very pleased with that.

Alex Minter, United Way, said Williams recognizes as a city employee that non-profits do have a difficult time with the reimbursement process, and she realizes that this issue has occurred in the past with the reimbursement requirements. Williams made it very clear in the training that she is there to work with applicants, but she will work with them within the bounds of what we are allowed to do funding wise. Minter said she wants to commend the Committee for having the right people at the table to have those discussions. She said her experience with Williams on the application process has been great because she has addressed all her concerns.

Hankins emphasized that the City of Lawton really cares about kids. She noted that other cities don't fund these types of things.

Smith said that's what makes Lawton great.

VII. **Adjournment**

Motion by Hankins, **Second** by Smith, to adjourn the meeting. **AYE:** Smith, Taylor, Fuqua, Elbert, Weger, Hankins. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:14 A.M.