



Minutes
Youth and Family Affairs Committee
Special Meeting
January 28, 2025 - 9:00 A.M.
Lawton City Hall – Banquet 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, Taron Epps

Members Absent: Jeff Elbert, Dianne Owens, Reshard Horne

Also Present: Karen Bailey, Alternate 3; Tammy Branstetter, Sr Deputy City Clerk

*Arrived at 9:20 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

None.

III. New Business

- A.** Consider approving the minutes of the January 15, 2025, meeting.

A copy of the minutes of the January 15, 2025, meeting may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Hankins, Second by Taylor, to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2025, meeting. **AYE:** Epps, Fuqua, Taylor, Weger, Hankins. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

- B.** Discuss the time and date of future Youth and Family Affairs Committee meetings and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Weger said at our last meeting, the subject came up regarding our times of meeting. We've had some difficulty in the past with establishing a quorum, and it was brought up and suggested that we move the meeting time to 9:00AM on the third Tuesday of each month.

Chairman Weger asked Committee members for their thoughts on moving the meeting time from 5:30PM to 9:00AM. He noted that the meeting will still be held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Taylor said 9:00AM is better for her.

Fuqua said he is good with 9:00AM.

Epps said he will have conflicts from time to time, but he will do his best to make it.

Hankins said she will do what's best for the Committee.

Chairman Weger thanked Committee members for sacrificing their time to serve.

Motion by Epps, Second by Fuqua, to change the meeting time of regularly scheduled YFAC meetings from 5:30PM to 9:00AM. **AYE:** Epps, Fuqua, Taylor, Weger, Hankins. **NAY:** None. **Motion Passed.**

- C. Discuss amending the By-Laws of the Youth and Family Affairs Committee to align with City Code and direct staff to make necessary changes to the By-Laws to be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.

Chairman Weger provided background information on this item. A copy of the By-Laws for the Youth and Family Affairs Committee may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Chairman Weger said there is a conflict between Ordinance 24-078 and the By-Laws that can be found on page 2 of the ordinance under letter "E", which states the following: "Members who miss three (3) consecutive meetings without being excused shall automatically cease to serve on the committee." However, Article 8.07 "Absences – Automatic Removal" found on page 5 of the By-Laws states the following: "As provided by Ordinance 21-03, Committee members who miss three consecutive Committee meetings shall automatically cease to be members of the Committee, and the vacancy thus created shall be filled by the City Council upon nomination by the Mayor." Chairman Weger said the word "unexcused" is missing. He said he has visited with legal, and he would also like to get input from the Committee regarding how the Committee wants to define excused and unexcused absences.

Hankins said she thinks unexcused should be defined as not calling the clerk's office to let them know they won't be at the meeting.

Taylor noted that Committee members are sent emails regarding upcoming meetings, and they could also email back to notify the clerk if they cannot make the meeting.

Fuqua asked if the term unexcused will be added to the wording of the By-Laws.

Chairman Weger said yes, we would direct staff to include unexcused in the wording of the By-Laws. He said this is his understand of what the Committee wants.

Chairman Weger noted that the YFAC application states that the City of Lawton will establish a percentage. He said he visited with legal and the City Auditor on this, and the Auditor has advised that she'll do what the Committee establishes.

Taylor said the percentages are 80% the first year, 60% the second year and 40% the third year.

Chairman Weger said that's correct, and this information can be found under letter C on page 3 of Ordinance 24-078, which states the following:

- 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.

Hankins said that was designed to indicate that organizations should become more independent.

Chairman Weger said that is correct.

Taylor said with this in place, that means a person would have three years of support, and then no support after that.

Chairman Weger said yes - the idea is to hopefully help organizations get up and running to where they can stand on their own and move forward.

Taylor said most of the programs that are using YFAC are dependent on this funding every summer.

Hankins asked Taylor how she feels about the change.

Taylor said her organization is different – she has earned income. She said if these are the rules, then they're the rules, but we need to understand that we might lose some organizations as well.

Hankins said sometimes people change the program name and rearrange it, but that's not what we expect to do here. She said she understands that it can be hard to become self-supporting.

Taylor said this is what some people do – it's the same program but they change the name and put in for a new grant application.

Chairman Weger said this is one reason why the grant application asks applicants what they are offering that's different from others. It also asks the applicant if they have other sources of funding and if they are working on other sources of funding.

Taylor said Hankins brought up at the last meeting that most cities don't have this type of program – that's why she said the rules are the rules. She said the regulations could encourage us to have newer programs every three years instead of continuing to fund the same programs.

Epps said he struggles with this when it comes to non-profit programs. He said in his opinion, this percentage structure is very aggressive, and non-profits aren't typically very aggressive at getting funds because they're not selling a product, per say. Epps said when he looks at the size of our city and the community that's really focused on these types of programs, he's not confident we would see a lot of organizational startups from different individuals. Epps noted that we're a smaller community, and we personally know the individuals that are interested in community work within the community at this present time.

Hankins said when you're receiving state grants, they also want you to wean. She said she's had these types of programs, and it is hard, but that's what they want you to be thinking about. It can be hard to get the funding by yourself, but there are ways. Hankins suggested we monitor things and see how it goes.

Taylor said \$35,000 does not cover the total cost of the summer program that she does. She noted that getting staff in the summer can be difficult – that's where the wages part comes in. If you're paying people, they're more committed. Taylor said she knows that as a non-profit when she didn't have earned income, it would be very hard.

Epps said Taylor has taken her program through the full life cycle – from infancy to self-sustaining. He said he thinks Taylor's opinion on how she got to where she's at matters.

Taylor said it took ten years to get to where she's at today. She said people still think she's self-sustaining, but she's not. She said even with earned income, they still need support because they keep growing and expanding.

Taylor said if the ordinance and the mission of the city is to promote programs for youth, that might go outside of STEM. Taylor said this is why we might have new and innovative programs. The ordinance has different types of missions and targets for youth – the YFAC grant is not solely for STEM.

Epps said he would agree.

Hankins said we don't want people to become dependent on this program. She said there are other sources of funding besides the City of Lawton, though sometimes they can be hard to find.

Smith said he comes from a non-profit sector, and it is difficult. He said a lot of the programs are duplications. He said it's a hard call to make.

Hankins said what we were seeing was not okay.

Epps said he agrees with that.

Hankins said this is what we need to be aware of. She said we also don't want the same kids served for three years with the same program. We have to find a way to monitor this.

Epps said Hankins's proposal to implement the program and monitor the progress of it is one way to go. He also suggested the Committee consider a push to solicit some of the other programs outside of STEM. He said some people may not be aware that there's funding to help them get started.

Hankins said there are private grants from companies that are pretty big grants, but you've got to take time to research these, which isn't always easy.

Epps said it might help to have someone to show applicants how to apply for grants.

Hankins said we originally talked about having training for all applicants to include showing them where to go for grants and possibly having a grant writer come in.

Taylor said she sees this as a solution for the 80%-60%-40% funding limitation. She said when reviewing the grant applications, we should look for variety and for duplications. Taylor said she thinks as we get the applications in, we'll be able to see that we can leave things this way, but we need to think about what we can do to get people to a place for grant and fundraising training.

Epps said for him, the training definitely makes the 80%-60%-40% funding limitation more palatable. He said he thinks the grant training might actually be more impactful than the funding.

Smith said the training could be made mandatory, and we could put milestones on it. He said he thinks the training would be important.

Taylor said we could also have a graduation from the training.

Hankins said it's really up to the director to find money for their organization. She said you can even look up grant writing online.

Chairman Weger noted that all applicants must complete training sessions with the City Auditor. One of the things covered is how to keep records. He asked Branstetter if we've received all the required

documentation and receipts from the previous grant award recipients.

Branstetter said yes, with the exception of J.E.S.U.S., Inc – they're on a repayment plan with the City of Lawton.

Epps said historically stating, this has been an issue.

Chairman Weger said yes.

Taylor said there was also an issue surrounding the percentage of funding that actually serviced the children.

Hankins said there was also concern that the same children were being served.

Chairman Weger said the concern is that there are still children who are not getting into the programs that are intended for them.

Hankins said if we continue to monitor this, then maybe we'll help the people that are doing the programs to understand that they have to start soliciting funding from other sources.

Taylor asked Hankins what she thinks about training.

Hankins said she thinks training is important, but we'll have to figure out how we're going to do that.

Taylor said she thinks grant, fundraising and board training would be helpful. She noted that there is an upcoming board governance training that will be held at the FISTA. Taylor said when we bring in people from OU and other places for the training, it can be hard for some people to grasp all the information in one setting. If you have local people doing the training, this gives them someone to touch back with.

Hankins said she thinks what Cynthia Williams is doing as the Auditor is pretty good for us right now.

Taylor said she agrees because the applicants can call her.

Hankins said she thinks this is all we need right now.

Chairman Weger noted that Cynthia has received a lot of positive comments from those that have gone through the class.

Taylor said the Committee needs to determine if they want to offer additional required training to help applicants become self-sustaining in their programs.

Smith said some people may not like it and chose not to apply. Some people that apply for grant funding might not like going through the training, but they'll see the value of going through it in the future.

Hankins said training is expensive. She suggested the Committee use Cynthia as the resource for training and monitor things to see how they go.

Chairman Weger said it's his understanding that with the training Cynthia is giving applicants, they are being taught how to fill out their applications and they're discussing ways to help applicants enable themselves to fund their programs in the future.

Hankins noted that Cynthia also writes grants.

Chairman Weger said yes, she does. He noted that Cynthia is a local person who applicants can become connected with for help.

Taylor said if we are going to require extra training, we need to determine what the extra training will be and how we will get this accomplished. She said this doesn't have to be done this year – it could be done next year.

Hankins suggested that the Committee continue with Cynthia doing the initial training with the applicants as it has been, and that the Committee work toward finding resources to assist the directors in finding other funding sources.

Epps asked that an item be placed on the next agenda to discuss adding extra required training for applicants.

Motion by Epps, Second by Smith, to direct staff to draft a revised version of the By-Laws incorporating the changes discussed during the meeting to be brought back to the Committee for final approval. **AYE:** Epps, Smith, Fuqua, Taylor, Weger, Hankins. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

IV. Reports/Comments from Chairman and Committee Members

None.

V. Reports/Comments from Staff

Hankins suggested that Cynthia Williams attend the next meeting to give an updated report.

VI. Audience Participation

None.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Smith, Second by Epps, to adjourn the January 28, 2025, meeting. **AYE:** Epps, Smith, Fuqua, Taylor, Weger, Hankins. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 A.M.