



Youth and Family Affairs Committee
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
July 24, 2023, 5:30 p.m.
Lawton City Hall, Banquet Hall

- I. The meeting was called to Order at 6:05 pm by Rick Lowe, Chairman. Upon roll call vote, a quorum was determined to be present, and public notice requirements have been met.

Members Present: Rick Lowe, Dianne Owens, Jeff Elbert, Brenda Myers, Willie Smith,

Members Absent: Lisa Shaw, Mary Ann Hankins, Davison Virgil

Also Present: Kobe Humble, Deputy City Clerk; Marcia Frazier, Teen Court; Kerrie Matthews, Marie Detty; Vanessa Perez, Lawton Public Schools

- II. Introduction of Guests: Marcia Frazier - Teen Court Director, Kerrie Matthews - Marie Detty, Vanessa Perez – Lawton Public Schools

III. Business

***Started with Item E.**

- E. Discuss how to develop and communicate performance measures and take action as deemed necessary.

Chairman Lowe stated that the Ordinance requires the Committee to provide an annual report to the City Council on the progress of programs recommended by the Committee and approved by Council for funding.

Chairman Lowe provided a copy of the Ordinance to the Committee members which is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Chairman Lowe stated that as the Committee has been awarding grants, the individuals are asked to give measurables which are included in all the Committees applications for funding.

Chairman Lowe said that there may be a disconnect when the City Council approves the grant and the contract is drawn up, the measurables are not being included in the contract.

Chairman Lowe stated that the Committee has struggled with receiving feedback such as progress reports, etc. from the programs that are being funded.

Chairman Lowe suggested creating a plan that lists out things that need to be tracked so that when the contract is signed, the grantees know ahead of time what they are required to give progress updates on.

Owens suggested that it should be stated in the application up front as well as in the contract.

Chairman Lowe stated that most of the applications are giving some information regarding what they are doing and what they are going to track.

Chairman Lowe asked what the Committee thought about requiring “check-ins” throughout the year. He mentioned that when he did grants, he was required to complete quarterly or semi-annual reports.

Elbert asked if the check-in requirement would be part of the contract.

Chairman Lowe stated that this would not be a requirement for all programs. For instance, the Lawton Public Schools Makerspace Camp is in the Summer only, therefore they would not be required to submit a report in January.

Smith asked if the City Council gives the ultimate approval, how can the Committee enforce the “check-ins” if the programs are not in the quarter where they need to be.

Owens stated that if a program is wanting funding, they should give a report.

Chairman Lowe stated ideally that Committees like this one usually have someone full-time that manages reports received by grantees. Unfortunately, this is something that the Committee does not have so there may be a struggle in requiring the “check-ins.”

Chairman Lowe pointed out some things to the Committee that he pulled from some of the applications received which are filed with the City Clerk’s Office for review.

Chairman Lowe mentioned that most applications will have the number of participants, the participation rate, number of service hours provided, etc.

Chairman Lowe stated that one thing he did not add, is a budget reconciliation that would be required at the end of the year to ensure that the money is spent like it was proposed to be spent.

Elbert suggested making a Google form with questions that will be sent out to the applicants. This allows the programs that are requesting funding to go in and fill out the questions on their own.

Vanessa Perez gave some advice on another source that could be used for instead of Google. She offered the Committee her assistance in demonstrating how to use the source.

NO ACTION TAKEN

- A. Consider and discuss a request for funding from Lawton Public Schools Makerspace Camp in the amount of \$62,908.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make recommendation to the City Council.

Chairman Lowe stated this request for funding was submitted back in May and was not brought to the Committees attention until the last meeting. The Makerspace Camp has already taken place at the beginning of the summer. If approved tonight, this would be a reimbursement to Lawton Public Schools.

Owens asked how the camp went.

Vanessa Perez stated that the camp went very well. The camp serves first through fifth grade students during the summer half a day. It is for students who attend Lawton Public Schools and there are a limited number of spots available. Once those spots are filled, there is a waiting list.

Perez stated that for this year, the camp lasted the entire month of June. She also mentioned that every elementary within the Lawton Public School system has a “Makerspace” set up where every student gets about 30 minutes a week during the school year to participate in different step-by-step

activities.

Perez said that there is a Makerspace teacher who doesn't necessarily follow a certain curriculum but instead what they do is more responsive to current events, what the students may be interested in or what they are currently covering in their classroom.

Perez stated that the "Makerspace" program is set up for students in Pre-K through fifth grade. Once the students enter middle school, they no longer have "Makerspace." Instead, they have specific stem electives and classes that the students can take.

Perez said that when she hires teachers for the Makerspace Camp, she incorporates the "Makerspace" teachers, different elementary teachers, and middle school teachers that these elementary students will see later in their school career.

Perez stated that there are units throughout the camp that the students rotate through. There is 3-D Printing, Aviation, Construction, etc. Each unit has a specialist who knows the unit well so that they can teach the students.

Perez said that there are facilitator teachers that travel with the students from unit to unit. It is great for building relationships, for students who have high mobility and for students who have not had much social interaction with other students.

Smith asked how the high-risk students are being filtered throughout the camp.

Perez stated that Makerspace Camp is based on students who "want" to be there. The camp is voluntary, so these students must be willing to participate in the camp.

Smith mentioned that the funds are for high-risk students.

Perez stated that her understanding is that the funds are for high-risk students not just in terms of pattern of behavior but also in terms of poverty levels. She said that the program could be stronger in these areas.

Chairman Lowe stated that in the application, it was projected to have 175 students from low socioeconomic groups. He asked if the program hit that projection.

Perez stated that the program was close to that projected number of 175.

Elbert asked the Committee about anything specific in the by-laws to 501C-3.

Chairman Lowe said that it is not limited to 501C-3, it could include governmental entities as well.

Elbert mentioned that he is all for this program and he personally believes that any student in Lawton is considered at-risk.

Smith stated this is an excellent program, he just hopes that the students that need it can take advantage of it.

Myers asked how the program gets the students.

Perez said that parents sign them up.

Owens asked how the parents find out about the program.

Perez stated that it is advertised on social media and the newspaper.

Myers asked if it would be uncalled for to have so many students from Pat Henry, Lincoln, or other high-risk school areas.

Chairman Lowe stated that he is not comfortable setting quotas to the condition of funding the grant, but he encourages the program to look more into the higher-risk students.

Smith stated he encourages the program to investigate the high-risk students because that's what the funds are for.

Myers noted that the teachers should be able to assist in finding these high-risk students that would benefit from this program.

Motion by Smith, **Second** by Owens, to approve the request for funding from Lawton Public Schools Makerspace Camp in the amount of \$62,908.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make recommendation to the City Council. **AYE:** Elbert, Myers, Smith, Owens, Lowe. **NAY:** None. **Motion Passed.**

- B. Consider and discuss a request for funding from Teen Court, Inc. in the amount of \$45,000.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Chairman Lowe gave some background information on this item which was provided to the Committee and is filed in the City Clerk's Office.

Marcia Frazier stated that she has been the director of Teen Court for 29 years and she is looking into retiring within the next year. This is depending on who she can hire for the position and get them trained to take over.

Frazier said that whoever is hired for the position will need to shadow her for at least a year.

Frazier is seeking a funder who will give Teen Court the funds to hire an employee that will sustain the program once she retires. The program will fall apart if there is no one to take it over.

Smith clarified that Teen Court was just seeking the funds for a year.

Frazier stated that it will depend on how much time it takes to get the employee trained to completely take over the position.

Owens asked if the program already had someone in mind for the position.

Frazier answered no. There are still discussions being made about pay and the job description.

Frazier said that she is wanting someone to shadow her every move as the director of Teen Court which covers many bases throughout each week. The potential employee will need to know how to talk to funders, write grants, run the program, deal with teenagers and volunteers, complete outcome measurements, etc.

Frazier stated that overall, there is a lot to learn about the position. She said that she would most likely need the potential employee's salary for a year.

Elbert asked for explanation on the \$10,000 for education for 100 teens.

Frazier stated that program spends \$100,000 contracted with New Start Education to educate risked youth through Lawton Public Schools and Teen Court. All the teens go through 18 hours of education which breaks down to \$5.55 per hour.

Frazier said that the education covers faulty thinking, substance abuse and conflict resolution/anger management. It is mandatory for court cases and for all teens who are put in in-house suspension.

Frazier stated that the program has educated 1,270 teens in 2022. For this year their current education rate is 758 teens.

Frazier mentioned that the education is \$100.00 per teen so the \$10,000 will only educate so many teens which is why the program allocates and signs a contract for \$100,000 a year. She mentioned that the McMahon Foundation and the Priddy Foundation funded the curriculum.

Chairman Lowe mentioned that he was confused by the budget. He asked how much of the \$45,000 will go towards the salary of the position.

Frazier stated that the salary is \$35,000. After discussion with her CPA, there will be about \$4,000 in taxes and the remaining funds will go towards the education of teens.

Owens asked if funded, when does the program anticipate bringing someone on board.

Frazier stated that the board members are meeting on the 4th of August to finalize the job description. The board members discussed the salary at their last meeting. After discussion the board decided that it would be dependent on the persons experience and college degree.

Frazier is hoping to hire by September or October of this year at the latest.

Motion by Smith, Second by Elbert, to approve the request for funding from Teen Court, Inc. in the amount of \$45,000.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make a recommendation to the City Council. **AYE:** Elbert, Owens, Myers, Smith, Lowe. **NAY:** None. ***Motion Passed.***

- C. Consider and discuss a request for funding from All About Understanding in the amount of \$74,861.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Chairman Lowe stated that Mr. Gatling was unable to attend the meeting due to prior obligations but he would be available to answer any questions that the Committee may have after discussion of his request for funding.

Elbert noticed that the operational budget to run the organization is different from the amount that was requested. He also noticed on the budget that Mr. Gatling is asking for funds for the brick and mortar.

Elbert asked what the Committee rules for funding these organizations?

Chairman Lowe stated that there are no set rules on how much is appropriate for rent, leasing, etc. That is something that is up to the Committee to decide on and the City Council to decide if they would like to approve the budget.

Chairman Lowe said that from the beginning, the guides that the Committee has gone with is declining applications for funding the construction of a building.

Chairman Lowe stated that to some degree, funding rent is appropriate within reason.

Chairman Lowe said that he also has some concerns on the budget for All About Understanding. He said that he likes what they are doing, and he would like to fund the organization, but they need to focus more on how they will use the money.

Elbert stated that he believes that they are asking the Committee to fund their organizational operation. He is just having a hard time understanding their budget.

Smith asked if the Committee could schedule another meeting where Mr. Gatling could attend and answer the questions that the Committee has.

Chairman Lowe stated that it should be possible, and he would see about Councilwoman Onreka Johnson to come and connect her resources to help Mr. Gatling with this application.

Myers mentioned that she remembered the Committee asking what curriculum that Mr. Gatling was using because he did not have any. She asked if it was mentioned in the application.

Chairman Lowe said that he did not see it mentioned but it was a huge part of the first grant application that he put in.

Elbert read some information that was stated in the application.

Owens said that she feels the Committee needs more information and suggested that this item be tabled until the next meeting and invite Mr. Gatling to attend.

Myers mentioned that if the Committee does grant this organization and they can't show us an outcome report, then the Committee does not have to approve the grant next time.

Myers stated that she remembers wanting to help this organization because they have the most access to children who are in the at-risk category.

Elbert mentioned the conversation that the Committee had a year or two ago, was that the Committee needs to sit down with this organization and figure some things out.

Chairman Lowe stated that he would reach out to Councilwoman Johnson to see if she would mind getting with Mr. Gatling and helping him make some adjustments to his application.

Chairman Lowe said that he wouldn't mind sitting down with Mr. Gatling to assist him as well.

NO ACTION TAKEN

- D. Consider and discuss a request for funding from Marie Detty Youth and Family Service Center Gang Program in the amount of \$100,000.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make a recommendation to the City Council.

There was no discussion on this item.

Motion by Myers, **Second** by Elbert, to approve a request for funding from Marie Detty Youth and Family Service Center Gang Program in the amount of \$100,000.00 for youth programs within the City of Lawton and make a recommendation to the City Council. **AYE:** Elbert, Owens, Myers, Smith, Lowe. **NAY:** None.
Motion Passed.

IV. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by Chairman, Rick Lowe, at 6:39 p.m.