

Lawton City Council Minutes

Special Meeting April 19, 2007

The Lawton City Council met in Special session on Thursday, April 19, 2007, at the Lawton Friendship Center. Council members answering roll: Don Grigg, Tony Bengford, Rick Schorg, Terry Masching and Perry Ludwig. Also in attendance was Attorney Glenn Metcalf, Wallace Sorensen, Chuck Hoelker, Roger Milligan, Charles Soloman, Attorney Chuck Corbett. Mayor Jeff Nitzschke called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting was to meet with Banner and Concord Township trustees to discuss fire protection for the two townships.

Attorney Metcalf recapped feelings of Council. Discussion ensued regarding ownership of Fire Department. Townships do not feel they should merely purchase fire protection. They would like to be part of a governing board. Attorney Metcalf explained currently Fire Department is department of city, therefore funds must go through city budget.

Trustees stated they have not been receiving accountability reports, therefore did not know there had been excess funds at end of fiscal year past few years. Council informed trustees reports are sent out to township clerks, therefore trustees need to speak to township clerks if reports are not received.

Regarding trustee concerns with City Clerk, Mayor reminded trustees Clerk follows orders as set by Council. If a concern arises, trustees are to speak with Council.

Considerable discussion ensued regarding budget size and spending of funds. Trustees asked about donations. Council explained most donations, such as fundraiser funds, do not come through city, but rather go to Fire Association that was established in recent years. The Association can then purchase items and donate them to the fire department. Other donations are entered into Fire Fund by Clerk. Attorney Metcalf stated State Code is clear that these funds must come into one account, controlled by Clerk. This is according to State Auditor.

Metcalf recommended group decide if they wanted an advisory board or a mandatory board for fire department. An advisory board would work within the city. A mandatory board would have a separate checking account with separate funds set separately from the city. Corbett stated concerns about advisory board working. Council and townships feel lack of communication in recent years has been root of problem.

Excess funds can be identified as Capital Account and set aside for large purchases. Grass rig was purchased with both townships each paying 40% and city paying 20% due to usage expected.

Group felt regular monthly expenses such as fuel, telephone, etc. could be paid without first going to an advisory board. Other expenses should go before advisory board. If unexpected items were needed, city would take funds out of reserve.

Motion by Bengford, second by Masching, to establish a Fire Advisory Board consisting of three persons, one each from the City, Concord Township and Banner Township. The Board to meet no less than quarterly with the Fire Chief to review operations, spending, and departmental needs. Further, the entire membership of the Township Board of Trustees and City Council shall meet annually to review the budget for the next fiscal year before such budget is included in the City Budget for the next year. Further the City shall track the budget excess and establish a Fire Department Capital Improvement line item in each year's budget to retain the accumulated funds. Tony Bengford shall serve as the council's first representative to the Advisory Board. Motion carried on roll 5-0.

With no further business to come before the meeting, Mayor adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

SIGNED BY: _____
Jeff Nitzschke, Mayor

ATTESTED BY: _____
Patricia L Washburn, City Clerk