JOPLIN
SPORTS AUTHORITY

Minutes of the open session of the Joplin Sports Authority Board of Directors held at 1:30 p.m. at Joplin City Hall, 5th Floor Study, 602 South Main, Joplin, Missouri, 64801 on April 26, 2017.

CALL TO ORDER
President Phil Metz called the meeting to order at 1:29 p.m.
Present: Phil Metz, Taylor Brown, Roger Doman, Gary Nodler, Jeff Starkweather, Shawn Klosterman, Cathy Welsh, Wendi Douglas, Patrick Tuttle, Heather Arnold, Christopher Beyer, Paul Bloomberg, Jared Bruggeman.
Absent: Jim Frazier, Mark Turpen.
Staff & Guests: Steve Taylor, Brittnie Harter, Mayor Mike Seibert, Leslie Haase, Greg Bertoncino.

Agenda Items

Event Discussion
None.

Old Business
None.

New Business
A) Joe Becker/Wendell Redden Turf Project — Mr. Hull said he had received a phone call from Joplin City Finance Director Leslie Haase on April 19. Mrs. Haase, at the request of Joplin City Council, was requested to approach the Joplin Sports Authority to gauge the interest of JSA would be interesting in investing funds into the proposed turf project.
Mr. Hull said he had received a formal request via email from Mrs. Haase, her email was shared with the entire JSA Board. Without a definitive direction provided by the board, this is why the need for today's meeting.
Mrs. Haase addressed the board by providing the history into the project — noting the City of Joplin had a one-time savings inside the parks/storm water tax fund. This savings was made possible by projects coming in under budget as part of the 41 percent of the tax funding parks projects. The cost to turf the infields at both stadiums would be $461,363.
The parks/storm water tax savings amounted to $337,000, and Mrs. Haase recommended using $125,000 of cell phone funds to cover the cost of the project.
However, Mrs. Haase said once council began to hear negative comments from the citizens about the project, council was interested to see if JSA would consider contributing to the project.
Mrs. Haase initially asked if JSA would put $125,000 toward the project, however, she said perhaps the JSA budget could handle $60,000 total assistance, $30,000 from the FY2017 budget, $30,000 from the FY2018 budget.
A discussion followed with a number of questions and comments from board members.
Christopher Beyer asked if using JSA funds was legal since JSA funds were 30 percent of the occupancy license tax (hotel/motel tax charged at 4 percent per room, per night for every room in Joplin). Beyer said voters approved the first 2 percent to fund the Joplin Convention and Visitors Bureau, while the second 2 percent was voted upon and approved to provide funding to the JSA, the CVB grant program and entryway beautification. Beyer said he knew over the years, unused CVB funds were allowed to build in reserve and those reserves had been used as part of the funding mechanism to pay for part of the $4.5 million renovation at Joe Becker Stadium.
Wendi Douglas said the tax dollars allocated to JSA were there for JSA to fulfill its mission, and she questioned if that mission included contributing to improvement projects vs. its mission of bringing events to the Joplin area that generated economic impact. Mrs. Haase read from the mission statement on the agenda that noted

JSA's mission is to "attract" and that by contributing to the project, JSA would be within its mission of "attracting" events to Joplin.
Board chairman Phil Metz asked if JSA would contribute to the project, would JSA be allowed to use the venues rent-free for an established period of time?
Mrs. Haase said that it was not intended for JSA to contribute to the project and receive use of the venues rent-free, as it would defeat the purpose of asking for the partnership.
Gary Nodler questioned if in fact contributing to the project was ethical? Nodler said JSA should request a legal explanation and perhaps legal council. Nodler said the approved budget for FY17 was set to meet the demand of scheduled events and activities and should it be used for this project now, would the board run the risk of expending resources now and not having the resources in place later in the budget for the events intended for?
Patrick Tuttle said it would make sense for JSA to contribute to the project as long as the use of the venues would be rent free, essentially prepaying the rent over time.
Mrs. Haase said this proposal was not intended to be a trade in usage fees as the city is still counting on JSA to pay usage fees after the project is completed as the city intends to provide savings to the parks and recreation department following the lose of three full-time employees to start FY17.
Jared Bruggeman said this could be a dangerous precedent, as other entities JSA rents to host events could also seek a similar partnership to help provide assistance to such improvement projects. Mr. Bruggeman asked how it would appear on the JSA annual audit? Mr. Bruggeman asked if the funds could come CVB reserves?
Mr. Metz asked if facility usage fees would increase following the project?
Mrs. Haase said usage fees are reviewed every two years and she could not predict if usage would or would not increase.
Paul Bloomberg said parks and recreation can only charge what the market can pay and he is cautious about increasing fees pricing venues out of the price range the market can handle.
Mayor Mike Seibert said the most important thing at the end of the day is that JSA and the city to remain partners together. Mr. Seibert said JSA will stand to benefit from the improvement project and this board needs to support the opportunity to have turf at Joe Becker and Wendell Redden. He said citizens do not realize how much the two venues are utilized and it's important to show the public what its means to the City of Joplin and what JSA does, the importance for the public to realize the value of turf and the potential economic impact it will have. Mr. Seibert said more revenue would equal more tax dollars generated for Joplin and ultimately for JSA.
Taylor Brown asked the board how does turf benefit the maximum amount of average citizens of Joplin? JSA's work benefits the city by providing economic impact. The partnership between the City of Joplin and JSA will help the perception of Joe Becker Stadium to the public.
Mr. Nodler then shared a story about his father operating a bakery; he explained that during a time of low sales and high production, did his father cut sales staff or production staff? The answer was production staff because without a sales staff, there would be no increase in sales. Mr. Nodler said JSA is the City of Joplin's sales staff and he felt by cutting into the budget of the sales staff, ultimately, there would not be the demand to use the venues and the new turf.
A motion was a made by Gary Nodler for JSA to endorse the turf project for Joe Becker Stadium and Wendell Redden Stadium as presented to council, Christopher Beyer seconded the motion, and the motion carried on a 10-0 vote.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Gary Nodler, seconded by Jared Bruggeman, motion carried on a 10-0 vote. Meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Craig Hull
Director

Phil Metz
Board Chairman