



## WATONGA PUBLIC WORKS AUTHORITY MINUTES FOR JUNE 15, 2021

*In accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Law, this Agenda was posted June 11, 2021 Prior to 5:00 PM. at the Watonga City Hall, on the door of the City Clerk's Office, located at 117 North Weigle, Watonga, Oklahoma.*

**The Watonga Public Works Authority (PWA) of Watonga did meet immediately following Watonga City Council Meeting at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 in the Auditorium of Watonga City Hall, located at 117 North Weigle, Watonga, Oklahoma for a scheduled meeting.**

**Council Present:** Travis Bradt, Allen Cowan, Lindsey Doyel, Ladina Willis and Mayor Bill Seitter. Also present, City Manager Larry Mitchell, City Attorney Jared Harrison and City Clerk Verlen Bills.

**Declaration of a Quorum:** at 8:04 PM.

### AGENDA

1. **Approve the minutes** of the previous PWA Meeting held May 18, 2021.

Motion to approve the minutes of the previous PWA Meeting held May 18, 2021 was made by Travis Bradt and seconded by Lindsey Doyel.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye    A. Cowan aye    L. Doyel aye    L. Willis aye    Mayor B. Seitter aye.

Motion carried.

2. **Approve the minutes** of the Special PWA Meeting held May 25, 2021.

Motion to approve the minutes of the Special PWA Meeting held May 25, 2021 was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye    A. Cowan aye    L. Doyel abstained    L. Willis aye    Mayor B. Seitter aye.

Motion carried.

3. **Review and Accept** the list of claims against PWA for the month of May 2021.

Mr. Mitchell: As of Friday, June 4, we closed out all of our purchase orders so the claims list for July should be very small. We close every year about this time to clear the books, to allow for the year-end in a more timely manner. The next three weeks, the only purchase orders we will approve are the normal routine month to month items. The P.O. list for next month should be pretty clean.

Motion to approve the list of claims against PWA for the month of May 2021 was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye Mayor B. Seitter aye.  
Motion carried.

4. **Consideration, Discussion and Action;** The pending Estimate of Needs for Watonga Public Works Authority for the Fiscal Year of 2021 – 2022. (Draft budget was provided to Council at the Budget Workshop on May 19, 2021.)

Mr. Mitchell: We are not recommending any further changes to this.

Travis Bradt made the motion to approve the Estimate of Needs for Watonga Public Works Authority for the fiscal year 2021 – 2022, as was presented to the Council at the Budget Workshop on May 19, 2021. Motion was seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye Mayor B. Seitter aye.  
Motion carried.

5. **Consideration, Discussion and Action;** To approve the Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 as recommended by RS Meacham.

Mayor Bill Seitter noted that this had all been discussed previously.

Allen Cowan made the motion to approve the Budget Amendments for the Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 as recommended by RS Meacham. Motion was seconded by Lindsey Doyel.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye Mayor B. Seitter aye.  
Motion carried.

6. **Consideration, Discussion and Action;** to approve the Airport Manager's Contract with Jena Ohman to manage and oversee operation of Watonga Regional Airport.

Mayor Seitter commented on the letter that Mrs. Ohman had given to Council: It explains a lot of details. How long have you been the Airport Manager?

Mrs. Ohman: Since January of 2017.

Mayor Seitter: You have been there a little over 4 years. Have you had any raises previously?

Mrs. Ohman: I started at \$22,000, and I am not a City Employee so I get no benefits. I was raised to \$26,000 about 2 years ago.

Mr. Mitchell: We allowed \$32,500 in the Budget, but that was prior to seeing the new contract. We have allowed for some of this increase in the Budget.

Mayor Seitter: I think you've done great things with the Airport. I think it's going great.

Mr Bradt asked Mrs. Ohman for an update on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant in the works for the runway.

Mrs. Ohman discussed at length, the grant situation with the FAA and the Aeronautics Commission to reconstruct the runway. Originally the runway project would cost us a 5 percent match. But now it will be 100 percent paid for. Considering the circumstances we are very fortunate to receive this grant from the FAA. Some of this was due to the COVID Stimulus Money that became available. We hope to go out for bids very soon. This could be a big step in continuing to improve and enlarge our Airport. Eventually widening and lengthening the runway, allowing for more traffic and heavier traffic. And, more hangers.

There was discussion about dealing with air traffic while the runway is under construction and the agreement (next on the agenda) with the Air Force Training Wing from Vance Air Force Base.

Mrs. Ohman allowed that they will be made aware of the construction and schedule their training accordingly.

It was asked how long would construction take.

Mrs. Ohman was not sure at this time but Ponca City was shut down for about a year and they are a much bigger Airport.

There was some concern expressed about lost revenue while the Airport was closed.

Mrs. Ohman allowed that having fuel sales has been a major boost to Airport traffic.

Mrs. Ohman talked about the current poor condition of our runway and explained that is why it may take some time to rebuild.

Mr. Bradt asked about the possibility of extending the runway.

Mrs. Ohman noted that we have already acquired the land to do so. We just need to show the FAA that we have a need.

Mr. Cowan complimented Mrs. Ohman on what she has accomplished at the Airport.

Mr. Jacks added, without the fuel sales there is almost no need for an airport.

Mrs. Ohman agreed and discussed how this has helped the Airport and the Community. She also talked about the effort required to recover some of the lost Hanger leases, no one wanted to stay here as we had not been able to sell fuel in over a year.

Mr. Bradt asked, how many hangers do we have?

Mrs. Ohman gave a rundown of the number of different size hanger we had, what was available. It is not advisable to rent out all the spaces we have. Sometimes, someone needs temporary storage due to weather of breakdowns, etc.

Mr. Bradt asked about the rates for hanger rentals

Mrs. Ohman explained the rate schedule for hanger rental.

Mr. Bradt: Is there any demand to build more hangers?

Mrs. Ohman reported that there are at least five individuals interested. She explained that Watonga is in a unique position. Some people want to get out of their hangers in the Oklahoma City area because hanger rent is so high there.

Mr. Jacks asked about hanger rent at other small airports in our area, are we comparable?

Mrs. Ohman listed some of the area airports and suggested we are comparable when we compare the hanger size and the condition of the hangers. We may need to start thinking about larger and newer hanger spaces.

Mr. Bradt asked, when was your contract raised to \$26,000?

Mrs. Ohman replied 2018.

Mayor Seitter: You keep the Airport open 8 to 5, seven days a week. So when you are not there you pay someone to be there?

Mrs. Ohman: The Office is open, I am available 24 / 7.

Mayor Seitter: So if you are not there then you have to pay someone to work for you?

Mrs. Ohman: Basically what you get with me is my husband, his brother, and his dad. They all help to run the airport.

Mayor Seitter: If they were not there then you would have to hire someone to help?

Mrs. Ohman described some of the work done at the Airport and how the work gets accomplished. Parks Superintendent Donnie Dunn is now doing most of the mowing and that has been a big help. She is able to spend more time in the Office with paper work and grants. Over time, the job description has changed but she feels much more productive now. She feels like she is able to make improvements to the Airport which has an effect on the whole community.

Mr. Mitchell: Are you about ready to present the master plan?

Mrs. Ohman: The Engineer is not quite ready yet. I have seen the outline and I think it's great, but the Engineer wants to go over this with the Council and get their input.

Mayor Seitter: You pay your own taxes with this contract?

Mrs. Ohman: Yes, I pay my own taxes and health insurance. I get no benefits.

Mr. Cowan: Things have changed, the job description has changed.

Mrs. Ohman: Yes, and I have created more work for myself. Putting in and keeping up the fuel system as an example.

Mayor Seitter: When we shut down this airport, what are you going to do with your business?

Mrs. Ohman: Currently Okeene Airport is shut down for repairs and we are housing some of their business for them temporarily. There is a lot of this moving back and forth between neighboring airports to help each other out. We should not have any problem moving to neighboring airport for a short time. We hope to do most of the runway repairs during the colder months when there is less activity.

Allen Cowan made the motion to approve the Contract with Jena Ohman as Airport Manager for \$35,000.

Mayor Seitter noted that the start and end dates for the contract needed to be stated.

After a brief debate Mr. Cowan modified his motion to approve the Contract with Jena Ohman for Airport Manager to start July 1, 2021 and end June 30, 2022. Motion was seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye A. Cowan aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye Mayor B. Seitter aye.

Motion carried.

7. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** to approve a Letter of Agreement between Watonga Regional Airport and the 71<sup>st</sup> Flying Training Wing based out of Vance Air Force Base.

Mrs. Ohman: We have talked about this a few times. Our original agreement with the Training Wing was in 2005. They stopped coming here because of the golf course and people traveling across the runway. They were concerned about liability issues. And, they stopped sending a renewal agreement to us. Now, they are asking again to consider an agreement with them. I think it's a really good thing to consider.

I know that sweeping runway surfaces is something that's a concern right now. I have talked with the Street and Alley Superintendent Justin Woldridge about this. I do know that the City's street sweeper is broken at this time. But, there are other options that we can consider, for much less money, that can be used just at the airport. Mr. Woldridge is concerned that we need one for the entire town, that is something for Council to decide.

After the last time the cracks were filled our runway is in pretty good shape. There is not a lot of foreign debris on the runway and after the runway reconstruction we will be in great shape. Now, there are some taxiways and areas around the hangars where I would not feel comfortable if they were to use these locations for taxiing and turning around. The engines on these aircraft create lots of suction and wind and it only takes a small piece of debris to cause problems. The Street and Alley had swept these areas for us in the past, but have not been able to since the Street Sweeper has been out of service. But there are some options we can look at.

As for the full agreement, anytime we are shut down, if there's snow or ice on the runway, or if we are under construction, All I do is make a phone call to let them know we are shut down and why. There is also a hot-line we call anyway when we a shut down.

Mayor Seitter ask, what's wrong with the truck and what are the other options for cleaning the debris?

Mrs. Ohman: I'm not sure what the problem is with the truck (Street Sweeper).

Mr. Mitchell: The truck is an old unit and is out of service. It would cost less to replace than try to repair.

Mrs. Ohman discussed what her and Mr. Woldridge had talked about previously trying to put something together that would work for the streets and the runway but these options are also expensive.

I have talked to Guthrie Airport and the Perry Airport. At Guthrie they have a sweeper that is pulled behind a pickup or other vehicle and seems to do a decent job. This is a much less expensive option. I would guess less than \$10,000.

Mr. Mitchell noted, a new street sweeper is about \$75,000 to \$80,000.

Mrs. Ohman; If we signed the agreement at this time I would just need to ask the Training Wing to avoid the taxi ways or hanger areas.

Mr. Bradt asked, how often would they land here?

Mrs. Ohman: On nice days the Training Wing will use the Guthrie Airport multiple times a day. They come in quite a bit.

Mr. Bradt: What about the noise? Will it be any louder with that helicopter?

Several commented about aircraft noise complaints.

Mrs. Ohman: That is just part of having an airport next to town. The Airport was here before most of those homes were built. The noise will not be any louder than an overhead helicopter.

Mayor Seitter asked, this will be for daytime training use?

Mrs. Ohman replied yes, they will use there own facilities for nighttime training.

Mrs. Ohman continued, but what the Military is trying to do right now, is expand to different airports so that these pilots get exposed to a larger variety of runways.

Mr. Cowan: You may have mentioned this before, but what is the benefit to Watonga with this agreement?

Mrs. Ohman: I have seen the Training Wing purchase fuel at El Reno and Guthrie, we might sell a little fuel, but it is hard to put a dollar amount on the benefit of increased air traffic. The FAA ranks airports by the number of aircraft served and by types of aircraft. We see some traffic here but very little Military aircraft. To use Watonga for Military training would increase that percentage for us and raise our overall ranking for other air traffic. This helps with FAA grants in the future. As example, we have the property to extend the runway, but the FAA hesitates to fund this extension because of the lower number aircraft that use our runway. As we expand and grow, FAA will notice and expand the grants. All the while we are selling fuel. The more we can do the more the FAA will notice and this agreement with the Training Wing is a good start.

Mr. Cowan asked, is there a airport tax?

Mrs. Ohman: There is but that money goes to the Aeronautics Commission and we do not see this money unless it comes back as grants.

Mr. Jacks added, we do get the fuel sales and we are making about 75 cents a gallon right now. Mr. Jacks discussed the fuel sales and that we were profiting from this and slowly but surly we are paying for the expense of the fuel tanks.

Mrs. Ohman added, the fact that we put in our own fuel tanks has been noticed by the FAA when it comes to grants. We are showing that we are doing what we can to expand and improve our Airport. The Community does benefit from this also.

Mr. Bradt: Do you feel like we can get this done if we agree to this?

Mrs. Ohman: I feel comfortable signing that agreement. I talked with a Training Officer and explained that we were not getting any sweeping done because our equipment is down. He was fine with us signing the agreement, knowing that we will work on getting the taxiways cleaned up as soon as we can. Once that happens, and I'm good with it, I will let them know, and we will have the agreement already in place.

Mr. Bradt asked, who will actually do the work?

Mrs. Ohman: I hope the Street and Alley Crew can help with this. If not, I will be the one doing this.

Mr. Bradt asked, how often do you think it will need to be done?

Mrs. Ohman: Right now, there is some water drainage issues that Mr. Woldridge is working on. This area is a mess and we think it has not been properly cleaned for about 6 or 7 years. Maybe longer. The runway is in good shape. We did the crack seal a short time back, we do not have a lot of loose debris. Once we do the reconstruction and we open back up, I'm sure they will be using it a lot more often because it will be new shiny.

There was more discussion about sweeping equipment and concerns with the budget.

Mrs. Ohman: Guthrie Airport reported that they only spent about \$5,000 for their pull behind sweeper about 5 years ago, so I was trying to err on the side of caution when I mentioned \$10,000. We have recently received \$13,000 more in COVID money and there may be some more COVID money coming in shortly. Some of that money may have restricted use, but we should be able to afford this for the airport. At least it is an option to start working with.

There was more brief discussion about the Airport COVID Money. Mrs. Ohman assured Council that she did or will have some funds available.

Mayor Seitter asked for a Motion.

Allen Cowan made the motion to approve a Letter of Agreement between Watonga Regional Airport and the 71<sup>st</sup> Flying Training Wing based out of Vance Air Force Base. Ladina Willis seconded the motion.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye    A. Cowan aye    L. Doyel aye    L. Willis aye    Mayor B. Seitter aye.

Motion carried.

## 8. **Comments:**

Mayor Seitter asked Council when they would like to call a Special Meeting to interview candidates for City Manager.

Mr. Mitchell suggested some guidelines for determining dates and times.

After some discussion all agreed to June 24 and June 25 at 6:00 PM for Special Council Meetings depending on the candidates availability.

Mr. Harrison wanted to address the Counsel before proceeding with interviews about what would and would not be appropriate questions.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that he and the City Clerk could make contact with the candidates selected and select an exact time.



9. **Adjourn:**

Motion to adjourn was made Lindsey Doyel and seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Bill Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote;

T. Bradt aye    A. Cowan aye    L. Doyel aye    L. Willis aye    Mayor B. Seitter aye.

Motion carried 8:53 PM.

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Mayor Bill Seitter

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City Clerk, Verlen Bills

**Notice:**

Governor Stitt ended the State's COVID-19 Emergency effective May 4, 2021. The amendments to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act will be allowed to "sunset" 30 days hence. So, after June 3, 2021 we will revert back to the Open Meeting Act (less the emergency amendments) and Council Members must be present in person.