



Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

10:00 a.m., Thursday, March 27, 2025

Stephenson Cancer Center

800 NE 10th Street, Conference Room 5058 (5th Floor)

Oklahoma City, OK 73104

AGENDA

1. **Open Meeting Act Announcement and Call to Order** – Chairman Ken Rowe called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and announced that all requirements of the Open Meeting Act had been met.

TSET Board Members present were Jennifer Needham, Ken Rowe, Runako Whittaker, Bruce Benjamin, Marshall Snipes, and Aaron Harmon. Jack Allen arrived at 10:09 a.m.

TSET staff members present were Julie Bisbee, Susan Yingling, Kelli Brodersen, Jonas Mata, Jessica Davis, Taylor Verkler, Kelly Parker, Laura Matlock, Thomas Larson, Tonia Lowrey, Britt Chapman, Sjonna Paulson, and Lance Thomas.

Other attendees present included Liz Stevens, Assistant Attorney General; Lindsey Funk, VI Marketing; Bill Fournet, The Persimmon Group; Katy Fabrie, Gooden Group; Mitch Drummond, Activate Oklahoma; Lauren Szmuto and Carter Campbell, Freestyle Creative.

2. **Approval of Minutes** – Chairman Rowe asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 30, 2025 Regular Board Meeting. Needham moved approval. Whittaker provided the second. The motion passed.

Aye: Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe

Allen was absent for the vote.

3. **Executive Director's Report**

- a. Executive Director, Julie Bisbee, introduced Assistant Attorney General Liz Stevens who was in attendance as board counsel. She thanked the board members for attending the OU Lung Bus unveiling event on February 14th. She said TSET helped make the bus possible through a \$1.7 million grant to the Stephenson Cancer Center and the bus would provide mobile lung cancer screenings. She said the bus would also make an appearance at the TSET 25th Anniversary event on April 1st.

Bisbee said TSET had closed three Requests for Applications since the January board meeting including Youth Media, Built Environment, and Discovery grants. She reported the RFAs were currently in the review process and awards would be decided at the May 2025 board meeting. She said the Built Environment and Discovery grants were accepted through the new Salesforce system, which was a milestone for TSET.



Bisbee reminded the board that TSET will celebrate its 25th Anniversary on April 1st at the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She showed everyone a copy of the TSET history book that she, Bob Burke, and Marshall Snipes co-authored.

She reported that the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline ran a limited time offer in February for Oklahomans to get additional nicotine replacement therapy resources at no cost. She said there were 3,705 registrations during that time. She also mentioned the Talk About Tobacco campaign that was currently running in the media including television commercials and billboards, as well as the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative.

She told the board the TSET offices were currently having HVAC renovations, so staff had been moved to a temporary location at the MC Connors building while the work was being completed.

- b. Bisbee recognized Bruce Benjamin, who served on the Oklahoma Center for Adult Stem Cell Research Steering Committee, to update the Board on the OCASCR grant review process and his role in that. Benjamin reminded the Board that TSET had established OCASCR in 2010 in order to support the emerging field of adult stem cell research in Oklahoma. Benjamin reported that OCASCR had done a good job meeting that initial mission. He said OCASCR expanded its focus in 2019 to include regenerative medicine which was designed to restore normal function to tissue and organs damaged by disease, specifically damage caused by smoking cigarettes.

Benjamin explained that the steering committee he serves on reports to the Governing Board. He said the steering committee is composed of scientists who evaluate the research grants. Benjamin said he serves dual roles – one as a scientist and one as a steward making sure the TSET mission is met with the grants. He said the steering committee receives research grant applications as well as shared equipment grant applications. The grants are reviewed and triaged and reviewed again before final awards are recommended. Bisbee thanked Benjamin for his service. There were no questions.

- c. Bisbee introduced the TSET Director of Public Information and Government Affairs to provide a legislative update for the Board. Larson directed the Board's attention to the handout listing several bills. Larson reported that the current legislative session had reached its midway point and several bills listed on the previous meeting's handout were no longer active. Larson delivered a high-end overview of the handout. After a brief discussion, Larson encouraged Board members to contact him with questions.

4. Governance Committee Report

- a. Bisbee gave an update on Board Retreat saying it would be held on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University for a full day on September 10 and a half day on September 11, 2025. She said the Secretary of State calendar would be updated to reflect the change.



5. Agency Operations Committee Report

- a. Bisbee reviewed the Financial Reports from the Board packet including the FY25/FY24 Budget to Actual reports for Operating and Programs, the Fund Balance Comparison report, and the Estimated Earnings Certification through December 31, 2024 supplied by the TSET Board of Investors. She reminded the Board that TSET's target spend rate was 95% and said the data so far indicated the likelihood of TSET meeting that for FY25. There were no questions, and no action was necessary.

6. Program Committee Report

- a. Bisbee recognized TSET Senior Program Manager, Laura Matlock, to provide an overview of the proposed changes to the FY26 Healthy Incentive Grant School Districts and Communities Funding Criteria. Matlock said that since the Communities program began in 2012 and the Schools program began in 2013, TSET had been awarded more than \$9 million. Matlock reported that a comprehensive study was conducted after a downward trend in applications. The study found that some of the reduction in applications was due to outside funding opportunities, but it was also determined that there were areas where TSET could simplify the process to encourage more applicants. Matlock explained additional program changes would include larger overall budgets, strategic outreach and technical assistance, as well as more advertising to bring awareness to the funding opportunities.

Rowe asked if the projects included a TSET branding requirement, so people knew where the funds came from. Matlock said that was something being considered. Rowe suggested it should become a requirement for a grant recipient to include TSET branding when TSET funds were involved.

When Matlock concluded her presentation, Rowe asked for a motion to approve the FY26 Healthy Incentive Grant School Districts and Communities funding as presented with the added requirement to add TSET branding to each project as discussed. Allen moved approval. Benjamin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Aye: Allen Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe

- b. Bisbee reminded the Board that contract changes under \$100,000 were authorized under policy to be signed by the Executive Director with notification to the Board at the next meeting. She presented the FY25 contract updates as required by policy. There were no questions or comments. No action was necessary.
- c. Bisbee referred the Board to their packets for a copy of the overview of the TSET Legacy Grant timeline. She reminded the Board of the goal to create one-time funding opportunities for shovel-ready projects using the excess reserve funds. She said the plan was to open the funding application period for the Legacy Grants on April 15, 2025 with a deadline of noon on June 16, 2025. She said the timeline included approved by the



Board of Directors at the September Retreat for applicants who would move to phase 2. Stage 2 applicants would present to the Board at a special meeting on October 27th and October 28th. She said the final awards would be named at the regular Board meeting on November 20, 2025, with grant agreements in place for funding to start to January 1, 2026. After some discussion, Chairman Rowe called for a motion to approve the Legacy Grant timeline as presented. Snipes moved approval. Whittaker provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Aye: Allen Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe

7. **Consent Agenda** - Bisbee reminded the Board that the Consent Agenda combines routine approvals into one collective item for vote to streamline the board meeting process. She said Consent Agenda items were presented during committee meetings and recommended for approval. She told the Board members they could pull any item from the agenda for further discussion prior to approval of the final agenda. Snipes asked that Item 7.d. be tabled so that the Strategic Objectives could be more thoroughly discussed at the Board Retreat in September. Rowe called for a motion to approve items 7.a., 7.b., and 7.c. on the Consent agenda and table item 7.d. Whittaker moved approval. Benjamin provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Aye: Allen Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe

- a. Discussion and possible action to approve funding requests for Healthy Incentive Grant Program – Schools and Districts

Organization	County	Intended Use of Funds	Recommended Amount
Charter Oak Elementary	Logan	Funds will be used to purchase climbing wall materials, safety mat, locking system, and installation.	\$10,000.00
Pershing Elementary	Muskogee	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for kindergarten students to build healthy relationships and healthy and creative minds.	\$4,500.00
Will Rogers Elementary School	Oklahoma	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for physical activity before, during, and after the school day for teachers, parents, and students by installing a running track around the elementary playground.	\$12,500.00
Howe Elementary	LeFlore	Funds will be used to begin development of a walking path on the schools grounds.	\$4,000.00
Wheeler Middle School	Oklahoma	Funds will be used to enhance lifestyle physical activity opportunities for students, by purchasing yoga mats for use in the school yoga program.	\$4,000.00
Dahlongeah	Adair	Funds will be used to improve the health and well-being of students and the community with outdoor activities with a Gaga Ball Pit or pickleball court.	\$10,000.00
Smithville High School	McCurtain	Funds will be used to combine all school site funds to implement an ADA compliant sidewalk project at the softball/baseball field complex to be used by students and public during non-school hours.	\$10,000.00
Smithville Elementary	McCurtain	Funds will be used to combine all school site funds to implement an ADA compliant sidewalk project at the	



		softball/baseball field complex that is utilized by all students and the public during non- school hours.	\$10,000.00
Smithville Middle School	McCurtain	Funds will be used to combine all school site funds to implement an ADA compliant sidewalk project at the softball/baseball field complex that is utilized by all students and the public during non- school hours.	\$10,000.00
Tuskahoma Public Schools	Pushmataha	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for students to be physically active by purchasing playground equipment.	\$2,000.00
Stilwell High School	Adair	Funds will be used to enhance outdoor eating and physical activity student hub center to include gravel for improved water drainage, additional seating, & nine square game.	\$12,500.00
Okeene Elementary School	Blaine	Funds will be used to improve to purchase handicap-accessible playground equipment, ice maker, CPR equipment and education, health and physical education equipment.	\$5,000.00
Tahlequah High School	Cherokee	Funds will be used to enhance students' access to fitness resources by purchasing new workout equipment for physical education classes to include support for strength training, cardiovascular exercises, and overall physical wellness.	\$9,000.00
Northwoods Fine Arts Academy	Tulsa	Funds will be used to increase water consumption by purchasing and installing a water filling station for students and staff.	\$4,000.00
Rock Creek High School	Bryan	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for physical activity during the school day by purchasing equipment to add to the exercise facility available to students and staff.	\$5,000.00
Glenpool Lower Elementary School	Tulsa	Funds will be used to improve students' physical, emotional, and mental health by establishing a nature-based playground.	\$15,000.00
Bennington High School	Bryan	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for physical activity by purchasing physical education equipment.	\$5,000.00
Bennington Elementary School	Bryan	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for physical activity by purchasing Physical Education equipment.	\$5,000.00
McCloud Early Childhood Center	Pottawatomie	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for students to be physically active by installing a shade structure, as well as new playground equipment, and turf.	\$15,000.00
McCloud Intermediate School	Pottawatomie	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for students to be physically active by installing shade structures over playground equipment.	\$15,000.00
Muskogee High School	Muskogee	Funds will be used to increase water consumption by purchasing and installing water filling stations on campus. Will also purchase walkie talkie radios to support emergency and safety responses.	\$6,000.00
Oaks Mission Elementary Schools	Delaware	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for physical activity through purchasing physical education and weight room equipment.	\$5,000.00



Oaks Mission High School	Delaware	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for physical activity by purchasing weight room equipment for student use.	\$5,000.00
Wellston Elementary School	Lincoln	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for physical activity by students, teachers, and the local community by paving a walking trail around the existing elementary playground.	\$3,000.00
Eisenhower Elementary School	Comanche	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for students to learn about nutrition and healthy foods through providing horticulture experiences.	\$4,000.00
LeFlore High School	Le Flore	Funds will be used to create an outdoor commons area for high school students to include covered seating and a hydration station.	\$10,000.00
LeFlore Elementary School	Le Flore	Funds will be used to enhance outdoor play space by providing area with shade, seating, and hydration station for students.	\$10,000.00
Hugh Bish Elementary	Comanche	Funds will be used to enhance opportunities for students to be outdoors by purchasing picnic tables for use in outdoor learning and at lunch.	\$3,000.00
Red Oak Elementary	Latimer	Funds will be used to invest in playground equipment to provide students areas to engage in various types of physical activities.	\$10,000.00
Eisenhower High School	Comanche	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for students to be physically active by installing workout stations in the cafeteria courts.	\$6,000.00
Cleveland Elementary	Comanche	Funds will be used to enhance nutrition education by starting a school garden.	\$3,000.00
Carriage Hills Elementary	Comanche	Funds will be used to support nutrition education during the afterschool Farm to Table Club with gardening and cooking supplies.	\$3,000.00
Comanche Academy Charter School District	Comanche	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for students to be physically active by purchasing playground equipment.	\$10,000.00
Osage Public School	Mayes	Funds will be used to diversify opportunities for engaging in physical activity for students and staff, by purchasing fitness equipment and creating a workout room within the existing gym.	\$15,000.00
Paden Public Schools	Okfuskee	Funds will be used to expand opportunity for physical activity by updating playground equipment, including added safety features such as rubber mulch.	\$8,000.00
Glencoe Public Schools	Payne	Funds will be used to enhance safety of outdoor physical activity by purchasing sun shades and replacing borders.	\$7,000.00



Kremlin Hillsdale Public Schools	Garfield	Funds will be used to continue providing opportunities for physical activity through swimming during physical education class and purchasing additional equipment.	\$8,000.00
Pawnee Public Schools	Pawnee	Funds will be used to foster physical activity and wellness by purchasing fitness equipment.	\$20,000.00
Clinton	Custer	Funds will be used to increase staff wellness by providing local gym memberships and a health incentive program.	\$14,500.00
Tipton Public Schools	Tillman	Funds will be used to increase opportunities for physical activity for students, faculty, and staff by purchasing exercise equipment, weights, and weight machines.	\$8,000.00
Pioneer Public School	Grady	Funds will be used to ensure access to safe and healthy food by using funds to purchase a new stove and heating buffet.	\$8,000.00
Texhoma Public Schools	Texas	Funds will be used to purchase recreational equipment and provide shaded seating with tabletop in outdoor areas to encourage socialization and healthy habits.	\$15,000.00

- b. Discussion and possible action to approve grantee FY25 budget reductions
- c. Discussion and possible action regarding the parameters for the Social Support for Physical Exercise/Activity; Nutrition and Access to Healthy Food; and Preventing Youth Access to Tobacco Products Requests for Applications
- d. **Discussion and possible action regarding the FY26-30 TSET Strategic Objectives - tabled**

End of Consent Agenda

8. Public Information and Outreach Committee

Bisbee referred the Board members to the information in their packet and told them they could find an overview of the Youth Focus Brands and Adult Focus Brands, the FY25 Sponsorship Report, the Public Information and Government Affairs Report, and an overview of the Upcoming Events and Training. There was no further discussion. No action was needed.

9. Personnel Actions

- a. Chairman Rowe asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 25 O.S. §307(b)(1) to discuss the potential hiring of candidate for position of Director of Finance and the performance evaluation of the Executive Director. Benjamin moved to enter into Executive Session. Needham provided the second. The motion passed unanimously. The board entered into Executive Session at 11:08 a.m.

Aye: Allen, Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe

Chairman Rowe asked for a motion to return to Open Session. Needham moved to return to Open Session. Benjamin provided the second. The motion passed. The Board returned to Open Session at 12:37 p.m.

Aye: Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe
Allen was absent for the vote.



- b. Harmon moved to direct the Executive Director to make an offer of employment to Candidate A for the position of Director of Finance. Needham provided the second. The motion passed.

***Aye: Benjamin, Harmon, Needham, Snipes, Whittaker, Rowe
Allen was absent for the vote.***

- c. Chairman Rowe said there would be no action taken regarding the evaluation of the Executive Director and that compensation would be discussed with the budget at the regularly scheduled May 2025 Board meeting.

10. New Business – There was no new business.

11. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

The above Minutes were approved by the Board of Directors.

Kenneth Rowe, Chair

Susan Yingling, Board Secretary