

BUDGET WORKSHOP
SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY PARK BOARD
Friday, February 14, 2020
Park Board Administrative Offices
1923 N. Weller, Springfield, Missouri

1. ROLL CALL

Ms. Carolyn Gerdes called the Budget Workshop to order at 8:07 a.m.

Members Present: Scott Bailes, Randy Blackwood, Mike Chiles, Carolyn Gerdes, Cynthia Lipscomb, Tammy Mast, Michele Risdal-Barnes

Members Absent: Sidney Needem

Park Board Staff Present: Bob Belote, Jon Carney, Tim Carpenter, Matt Coats, Mike Crocker, Jenny Edwards, Jim Fisher, Anders Kropp, Karen Mellinger, Anne-Mary McGrath, Jerry Mitchell, Miles Park, Kim Reser, Diana Tyndall, Lana Woolsey

II. REVIEW OF FY 2020-2021 PROPOSED BUDGET DOCUMENT

Mr. Bob Belote, Director of Parks, stated that he appreciated our Business Operations staff's assistance in gathering information to prepare the budget document and scenarios that we will review today, along with Jim Fisher's guidance in working to make the information more user-friendly. Mr. Belote explained that we will review any new proposed fees and charges line by line, along with other budget documents, to answer any questions Board members might have.

Special Emphasis Areas

Mr. Belote reviewed our FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal priority areas, including our number one challenge, for the fourth year in a row, which is a long-term sustainable funding source. We will continue to support our trail-building partner, Ozark Greenways. We must reinvest in our sports infrastructure to remain a viable entity in the highly competitive sports tourism industry. We are in the process of completing a comprehensive Economic Impact Study for our Parks and Trails System in conjunction with the Springfield-Greene County Health Department and other partner organizations. The Park Board and the City of Springfield have chosen to adopt the Minimum Wage standards to be a quality employer and remain competitive in the seasonal employment marketplace. During the 2020-21 fiscal year, Parks staff will be actively working towards the five-year renewal of our departmental accreditation status. As a requirement for the CAPRA accreditation renewal process, we will work with the City's Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan team to develop a new Parks and Greenspace Master Plan. We will continue to make it a priority to restore older and more under-utilized neighborhood parks within the park system. In FY 2020-21, Parks and the City of Springfield are working to introduce additional security cameras at designated park sites. As always, the Park Board will continue to seek out new collaborative opportunities wherever possible.

Departmental Funded Priorities

Mr. Belote reviewed the Parks Department funded priorities, which includes the compensation for temporary and seasonal employees under the new Minimum Wage standards totaling \$534,976. We will continue to address a minimal amount of park infrastructure needs and ADA-compliant site deficiencies. In the Golf Enterprise Fund, we will fund the loan payment for the new Rivercut Golf Course bridges that were installed in 2018.

Revenue Sources

Mr. Belote reminded the Board that we receive no City General Fund allocation and no general operating revenue from Greene County. When the initial Parks Sales Tax initiative was first approved by voters in 2001 and 2006, it was part of a 20-year plan. However, after the first two successful Parks Sales Tax initiatives, the Greene County Commission chose to present other important issues to the voters, and we were not given the opportunity to renew the sales tax and continue with the 20-year plan. We have had many recent discussions regarding our financial challenges, especially the impact of the new Minimum Wage standards, with the Greene County Commissioners over the last 18 months. We again have requested the opportunity to allow voters a chance to show their continued support through a ballot initiative, but these discussions have produced very little in the way of tangible results.

Expenditures

Mr. Belote mentioned that historically, we have been significantly low in our budget allocation for personnel services. The impact of the new Minimum Wage standards has caused a slight increase in this area. The number of Contractual and Full-Time Employees has predominately flattened out since 2012. We do not have any new proposed Capital Development projects for FY 2020-21, but we appreciate the opportunity to partner with donor groups to add new amenities in our parks.

Proposed Program Fees and Charges

Mr. Belote stated that we will review the proposed program fees and charges line by line to answer any questions. Ms. Lana Woolsey, Assistant City Attorney for Parks, explained the first new item is to include a statement that continues to allow for Administrative staff to reduce or waive certain fees for non-profit or charitable donation purposes. Mr. Belote mentioned that much of our partner groups fund-raising efforts benefit our parks. Mr. Belote stated that we have raised fees incrementally over the last several years, but we may now have reached a point where we could experience a decline in participation in our programs if the fees continue to increase. It is not reasonable to raise fees enough to accommodate the significant impact of the minimum wage rates or to address deferred maintenance projects. Mr. Belote stated that during the budget process, it is always a challenge to keep our fees and charges as a good value to our patrons while still recovering a majority of our costs to do business.

Mr. Belote stated that as in the past, we reviewed budget requests from our staff in the field, which are submitted to the appropriate Supervisor, Superintendent, and Assistant Director. Additionally, we try to be responsive to citizens' requests when possible. The changes in the proposed fees and charges are further supported through actual costs and market comparisons. Mr. Belote, along with appropriate staff, reviewed the fees and charges recommendations within the document, which includes the following:

- *We propose to offer a range in fees for small garden areas within the Botanical Gardens to offer more flexibility and meet patron's requests.
- *We propose to increase the Chesterfield and Doling Family Center seasonal pool rates by \$1.00 and .50 cents for adults and youth/senior citizens respectively, which allows the indoor pool admission rate to match the outdoor pool admission rate during the outdoor pool season.
- *We propose to increase the range for tennis programs/lessons at Cooper Tennis Complex to accommodate our guest tennis professionals who occasionally offer programs/lessons at our facility such as our Springfield Lasers professional coach.
- *At Jordan Valley Ice Park, the adult hockey league fee was increased, and a new proposed range was included for hockey tournaments.
- *The Lake Springfield Boathouse community room rental price range was increased but remains under the market price for similar venue rental space.
- *We have proposed a new admission fee for children at the Mizumoto Stroll Garden.
- *We have increased the range for transportation costs for the Northview Center to accommodate when additional drivers are required for a trip. We propose a range for senior enrichment activities and adult dances to offer more flexibility in programming.
- *We have increased the fee for the rental of the Tom Watkins facility.
- *Outdoor swim rates will go up \$1.00 for adults and .50 for youth/seniors. The swim pass rates were also adjusted to accommodate the increase in admission rates.
- *The pavilion rental rates were increased for the first time since 2005. The portable stage and bleacher rental rates were also increased.
- *We propose to increase the ballfield rental fees as the standard of field preparation and care have gone up significantly since 1996, when some of the rates were last increased.
- *We propose to add a half-day and full-day summer camp rate at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park.
- *We have included a range for use of the fishing pond at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park.
- *We have increased the classroom rental rate at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park.
- *We have increased the full-day camp and Summer Quest day camp ranges in the School-Park area.
- *We have proposed a range for volleyball leagues to offer more flexibility in programming options.
- *We have increased the range for Turkey Trot/running events to offer more race opportunities.
- *We proposed new rates for facility rentals, family programs, and school programs at Timmons Hall.
- *We have updated the rates within the range to cover staffing and certified instructor costs, outdoor arena rental, and meeting room rental space, and increased the range for the arena floor preparation at Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center.
- *We propose to raise golf course rates \$1 for 9 holes and \$2 for 18 holes at Rivercut, Bill and Payne Stewart, and Horton Smith Golf Courses. When our new golf point of sale system is installed, we will modify our patron plan to one investment level that will also include a loyalty card system for patrons to build up equity to spend in the pro shop.
- *Ms. Woolsey mentioned that we cannot pass along the online processing fee to our customers as a separate transaction, so we will incorporate our usage cost into all of our program fees. We recently renegotiated the contract with the online vendor which reduced our annual subscription fee and the online transaction fee amount.

Mr. Chiles stated that he appreciates the Park Board staff efforts to review every fee individually and adjusting the fee, as long as it remains a good value and covers our costs, instead of an across the board fee increase.

Funded Priorities for Budget FY 2020-21

Mr. Belote reviewed the Funded Priorities for the proposed FY 2020-21 Budget which includes mandatory or required items such as the reimbursement payment to the City for Internal Services, funding parks portion of the City Self-Insurance Plan, the Parks Department software licenses, and increased utilities cost. We will continue to make our \$100,000 investment to the Parks Reserve account, neighborhood park improvements in need of ADA compliance, safety supplies, materials, equipment, and training resources, and additional Zoo operating costs of animal food and medical supplies. Funding for personnel items such as prospective cost of living, merit and occupational series increases, the minimum wage increase and nominal wage compression above minimum wage, and the mandatory increase in LAGERS retirement contributions are also included. Currently, there are nine unfunded proposed capital equipment lease purchase items, along with over \$60 million Unfunded Priority items.

Debt Issuance Summary

Overall, we have minimal debt for a park system of our size. Mr. Belote mentioned that we are working with Greene County on refinancing the Dan Kinney Family Center that will save us money annually, without extending the length of the loan term. Park Board member, Tammy Mast, is also assisting us with grant opportunities, including one grant for upgraded field amenities at Meador Park ballfields.

FY 2020-21 Proposed Budget Summary – Liabilities and Revenues

Mr. Belote stated that we have updated our proposed revenues to more closely reflect actual historical data. Mr. Belote stated that we may also have to review our comp time practice to meet City policy and collective bargaining guidelines. Mr. Belote mentioned that three years ago, we reduced much of our divisional operational budgets by five percent. This year, we had to revisit this practice with an approximate five percent budget reduction in most divisions. We also updated our proposed revenue to more closely reflect actual revenue collection.

Summary of Possible Budget Scenarios

Mr. Belote stated that Administrative staff have reviewed possible budget scenarios to achieve a balanced budget and present the proposed budget cuts that will need to take place if additional resources are not identified for FY 2020-21. These budget cuts, in the amount of \$501,992, include deferring capital equipment purchases, reducing seasonal employee availability, discontinuing special events such as Snowfest, the closing of two outdoor pools for the season, reducing the hours of operation at our three Family Centers, Cooper Tennis Complex, and the Skate Park, discontinuing several SPARC programs, reducing the number of Harvest Fest weekends offered and hours of operation at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, reducing the kayak/canoe rental season at Lake Springfield Boathouse, and reducing the department-wide advertising and marketing budget.

Discussions with Elected Officials

Mr. Belote provided a brief summary of recent conversations he has had with the Greene County Commissioners about our financial challenges and our request to move forward with a county-wide parks sales tax allowing voters an opportunity to continue their support of parks

and trails in the community, but this has been to little or no avail. Mr. Belote mentioned that he is having similar discussions with the City Manager's office, which includes a formal request to forgo our reimbursement payment to the City for internal services in the amount of \$610,000. Should the City grant this request, we may not have to move forward with all of the budget cut scenarios presented. If the City or Greene County is unable to assist us for next year's budget and for future budget cycles, we will need to share this information with our patrons as soon as possible including how we have exhausted all possible scenarios to continue offering our current programs, activities, and facility operations. The Board members all agreed that we should begin educating the community about our financial constraints as soon as we can, so they understand the history of the Parks sales tax, the community benefits received from the 2001 and 2006 initiatives, and how a future Parks sales tax would benefit and enhance our community. Mr. Belote also mentioned that the recent Sports Commission report findings and the Forward SGF forums have determined that enhanced and new sports facilities are wanted and needed in the community, and our patrons would like to see an increase in trail opportunities, as well, which mirror our projects that we would like to pursue with a new funding source.

Mr. Belote stated that he will meet to provide a Parks overview and budget information to the City Manager's office on February 28 and to City Council on March 24, 2020. Park Board members are welcome to attend the March 24th meeting with City Council.

Food and Beverage Considerations

Mr. Belote mentioned that when we began offering alcohol permits at selected park locations, we developed a stringent process and strict policies. After two years without any reported incidents, we will likely review the policies to simplify the process in some instances and increase opportunities for patrons and partners, along with a recommendation for other park facilities where we can offer enhanced food and beverage services, which would require Park Board approval. Mr. Belote also explained that alcohol beverage sponsorship opportunities have not been as impactful as we had hoped, which is due mainly because we have not offered exclusive vendor options. We have seen an increase in golf tournament play with the choice to include alcohol, but what we truly need are expanded facilities for additional hospitality options, so other private rentals can occur that are not weather dependent. Mr. Chiles suggested that perhaps in the future, requests for alcohol permits and facility tours would funnel to one person. Mr. Belote agreed that would be a highly beneficial position, but he did not think it would be possible to add to the budget, along with a Grants Coordinator, until we had a new long-term funding source.

Formal Adoption of FY 2020-21 Budget

The Park Board agreed to defer formally adopting the FY 2020-21 budget but provided approval for the Administrative staff to enter the budgetary information as required to meet the City's budget process timeline and the February 28 meeting with the City Manager's Office. The Park Board will again discuss the FY 2020-21 Budget at the March 13, 2020, Park Board meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Michele Risdal-Barnes made a motion to adjourn the workshop; seconded by Mr. Randy Blackwood. Motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am.