



WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT
Minutes of Regular Meeting of the
Board of Park Commissioners

Monday, April 13, 2020
Virtual Meeting via "Zoom"

Present

Commissioners: President Amy Wolfe, Vice President Gordon Anderson, Bryan Abbott, Cecilia Clarke, Julia Goebel, Mike Murdock, Todd Shissler

Secretary/Executive Director Steve Wilson

Staff: Emily Guynn, Liz Cox, Kristi Solberg, Sheila Foy, Marlon Rodas, Lindsay Thomas

Absent

None

I. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

A. Roll call taken

II. Communications and Correspondence

President Wolfe read an email she received prior to the meeting from Steve Brown. He expressed concern with his perceived lack of social distancing and enforcement at Gillson Beach. He feels the current guidelines are insufficient, and asked for the park district to close the parks. The email also included pictures taken at Gillson on April 11.

Director Wilson acknowledged Mr. Brown's comments and stated that although not everyone is following the guidelines, staff's experience has been that most people are doing what they should be doing and we will consider shutting down if we find that the majority of people are not adhering to the guidelines.

Commissioner Clarke commented on a message received questioning whether parks are going to be closed. She responded that the parks are being monitored and that for now parks would remain open.

III. Approval of Voucher List

Commissioner Anderson moved and Commissioner Goebel seconded a motion to approve the Voucher List in the amount of **\$1,184,323.34**, a copy of which is to be attached to and become a permanent part of the minutes of this meeting.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Goebel, Murdock, Shissler, Anderson, and Wolfe. Voting No, none. Absent, none; **motion carried.**

IV. **Committee Reports**

A. Lakefront Committee:

Commissioner Abbott reported on the following topics:

- No report - committee did not meet

B. Parks & Recreation Committee:

Commissioner Murdock reported on the following topics:

- No report - committee did not meet

C. Golf Operations Committee:

Commissioner Goebel reported on the following topics:

- The committee did not meet, but the course is open

D. Financial Planning & Policy Committee:

Commissioner Anderson reported on the following topics:

- No report - committee did not meet

V. **Unfinished Business**

None

VI. **New Business**

A. COVID-19

i. Staff Update

Director Wilson reported the following:

- Effective March 13, all programs and facilities were closed in line with the Governor's Executive Order
- Communication with the community about closures, refunds and operations has been ongoing
- Staff has started crediting household accounts due to the cancellation of several programs
- Began a rotation of facilities to monitor maintenance
- Most full time staff began working remotely
- Signage was added to playgrounds and facilities about closures; in line with the Governor's orders
- Along with the police, continue to monitor use of parks; instituted a rotation of staff to monitor parks and beaches
- With the Governor's order extended to the end of April, additional part time staff were laid off effective, April 6
- Worked with Human Resource Manager Liz Cox, to be as responsive as possible regarding unemployment benefits
- Working to streamline the process of hiring back staff when it is feasible
- Liz Cox worked with the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) to make our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to part time staff at a nominal cost
- Spring session of programs was cancelled

- Programs linked with the schools (ASR, KE, PS, ASC) are on hold
- Putting plans in place so District is ready to re-open when it is allowed
- Very active on social media
 - Outdoor scavenger hunt, at-home craft projects, at-home workouts, camp outs, art projects, neighborhood egg hunt
- Planning continues on capital projects
 - Engineering for storm water
 - Engineering for golf cart path project
 - Shoreline protection planning - toured lakefront with Superintendent Solberg and the engineers; discussed goals and possible outcomes
 - Lakefront comprehensive plan - may be worth moving forward with this as grant money may become available and “shovel ready” projects may take precedence

In response to a question from Commissioner Anderson about Gillson Park, Director Wilson responded that there is a Set staffing schedule for now; we will react as situation dictates. He added that all staff are wearing official staff clothing, have an official script to use when approaching individuals that are not following the guidelines, and are equipped with the police non-emergency number.

Commissioner Shissler commented that several people have reached out to him expressing their concern about lack of social distancing. He stated that he feels like people are being responsible.

Commissioner Abbott suggested that no picnics or ball playing be allowed and patrons should be asked to limit their time at the parks.

Commissioner Goebel commented that the majority of the people she sees are doing the right thing. She thanked Director Wilson for the insight on how staff is working with police, and the staff for their efforts with the social media programs

ii. Board Discussion

a. Financial Operating Impact

Commissioner Director Wilson shared the interactive financial model with the Board and noted that it now includes line items for the impact that the pandemic has had on operations. He reviewed projections based on spring and summer closures, and responded to questions about programs and events. Director Wilson mentioned that he met with superintendents Gynn and Solberg to review the capital plan and created a list of items they feel can be deferred.

Director Wilson began the discussion by asking the Board what

they feel should be the target for the bottom line fund balance for the end of 2020, as it will guide the discussion for deferring capital projects.

At the request of Commissioner Wolfe, Director Wilson provided the history of how the District arrived at the \$4,000,000 target fund balance. He explained that previously the District had an unofficial fund balance policy of 25% of the total operating budget. Several years ago, when there was approximately a \$9,000,000 fund balance, and many facility maintenance needs, the Board looked at the policy, fund by fund. Since the Recreation Fund is mostly supported by user fees, the 25% threshold did not make sense so we reduced requirement in that fund. Then the budget was looked at and did the calculations on a fund-by-fund basis and the aggregate came to about \$4,000,000 so we set that as the target.

Commissioner Anderson shared his opinion that given the uncertainty of the coronavirus and the revenue flow, money shouldn't be spent if we haven't yet committed to a project, or unless it is to protect our assets. He suggested to continue planning and obtaining quotes and to re-assess the capital list as things change.

Commissioner Murdock also shared that part of the reason the fund balance was looked at was to improve the District's bond rating and get feedback from the rating agencies. Although the Board felt the District was over-funded, the rating agencies said we were under compared to other park districts. As a result, the Board ran several sensitivities about what might happen during trying times, such as a recession, and found that during the last recession revenues held up, and where they eroded, cuts were made. This information allowed the Board to arrive at the \$400,000,000 target fund balance.

b. Capital Projects

Director Wilson introduced the revised capital plan and explained the new columns of "complete", "keep" and "possible", and the reasons items were placed in the categories.

Each line item was reviewed and discussed with a plan to assess the capital list each month. Consensus was reached for categorizing each project, keeping safety and operations in mind. There was considerable discussion regarding the golf course cart path and lighting at Centennial projects, but no decision was made.

President Wolfe closed out the meeting by saying Director Wilson was given good direction and the list will be revisited monthly until we have better handle on financials.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Abbott moved and Commissioner Goebel seconded a motion to adjourn the Regular meeting at 9:31 p.m.

Secretary

President

Minutes Approved on _____