

**MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

May 13, 2020

Electronic Meeting - Zoom

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Heller, Lewis; Director Black, Recreation Superintendent Dials; Senior Services Superintendent, Manager Flora, Analyst Kiewel, Assistant Sullivan

Absent: Commissioner Bell; City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Gardiner read an opening statement regarding the general impacts felt by the community due to COVID-19. The Commissioners have not met since February. Small businesses and community organizations are struggling to stay solvent. Local governments will be called upon to make many difficult decisions. Steps taken by APRC as a result of COVID-19 impacts include the following:

- 6 permanent employees were laid off
- All part time staff have been laid off
- Many parks facilities have been closed to comply with state mandates
- Job duties have been altered to meet new demands
- Staff continues to work on strategies to re-open activities as permitted by the state

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Special Meeting – February 10, 2020

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from February 10, 2020 as presented. Lewis Seconded.

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Regular Meeting – February 24, 2020

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from February 10, 2020 as presented. Lewis Seconded.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Staff confirmed that the public was provided the opportunity to submit comments via email. No public comments were received.

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Subcommittee Minutes Acknowledgement
 - Ashland Senior Advisory Committee, January 13, 2020
 - Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance Subcommittee, January 21, 2020
2. ASAC Member Appointment Acknowledgement

Motion: Landt moved to acknowledge the subcommittee minutes and approve the ASAC member appointment. Heller Seconded.

Vote: The vote was all yes

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Ashland Fire and Rescue Drone Monitoring Program (Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) and provided a [PowerPoint presentation](#) (pg. 2-4). The following items were discussed:

- Ashland Fire and Rescue (AFR) was unable to attend the meeting, but provided information that is included in the packet

- AFR is planning to continue to operate drone monitoring in the areas previously approved by Commissioners on August 19, 2019
- Permission to operate was granted by the Commissioners through October 2020
- The 2019 drone monitoring pilot program has been reported as successful by APR. No public complaints were received and offers to give permission to fly over private lands were made by landowners. The 2019 pilot program resulted in the following:
 - 22 Days/39 flight hours from July 17, 2019 to September 19, 2019
 - Nine incidents that required follow up were detected
 - Eight illegal camping incidents (seven on City property and two on USFS property)
 - One suspected fire incident
- The City of Ashland funds this program
- Staff supports the continuation of the program. Unless there are objections from Commissioners, the program will continue and AFR will be prepared to present to Commissioners after the 2020 fire season in October
 - There were no objections from Commissioners

2. Q2 Budget Update (Action)

Kiewel reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). The following items were discussed:

- Kiewel reported on APRC YTD finances as of March 2020 & provided the City of Ashland 2nd quarter financial report for acknowledgement
- The 2nd quarter is from October – December
- The target for expenditures through March is 75%. At the end of March expenditures came in at 73.9% or \$75,000 under budget
- General Revenue for APRC includes property taxes, maintenance agreements, grants, donations and revenue generated from facility rentals and recreation programming
- For FY20 general revenue was estimated to be \$7,116,848. Currently, 70.60% (\$5,022,812) of revenue has been collected.
 - These reports do not reflect the loss of revenue that we are anticipating due to COVID -19. Recreation revenue compared to March of 2019 is down 26.80% (\$8,721). Staff will closely monitor and adjust revenue projections for the coming weeks / months
- Black stated when the Q1 budget report was provided to Commissioners, expenditures were trending above budget. Staff successfully responded and reduced expenditures slightly below budget
- Updates on the current financial situation as a result of COVID-19 impacts will be presented by Black later in the meeting

Motion: Landt moved to acknowledge the quarterly report. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes

a. COVID-19 Response and Anticipated Re-opening Plan (Information)

Black reported on response efforts undertaken by APRC include the following (information included in the [meeting packet](#)):

- Placement of 24-hour portable toilets and hand-wash stations around town and in proximity to feeding locations for homeless
- Creation of a car camping system at three location in town to address homeless needs
- Working with OHRA (Options for Helping Residents of Ashland) to operate their shower trailer for homeless
- Coordinating and providing staffing for Ashland Adopt a Neighbor
- Coordination with regional homeless groups in developing a homeless service response to the pandemic
- Creation and dissemination of public health announcements and signage related to physical distancing guidelines, closure of facilities and programs, and public assistance services
- Creation of remote recreation opportunities through the “Find Your Space” program that has been highlighted by the National Recreation and Parks Association

Glatt reported on the response efforts by the Senior Services Division (information included in the [meeting packet](#)). The following items were discussed:

- Senior Services has taken a lead role in the City's response efforts, which include the following:

- Information and referral via phone/email/website and help linking seniors to current community services
 - An information page was created by Senior Services Division staff: <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=17928>
- Phone outreach to vulnerable seniors
- Senior Phone Buddy program, which matches seniors to another senior for phone/video chat check-ins and socializing
- Collaboration with Adopt a Neighbor Ashland, which matches volunteers to at-risk neighbors for help with shopping and errands
 - This program was up and running less than two weeks after the Governor issued stay at home orders
 - Approximately 75 people are receiving services from this program
 - Masks are being made by volunteers and are being distributed through this program
- Community service assistance from YMCA staff for seniors with special needs not currently met by other community resources
- Remote computer tutoring by a volunteer on issues related to staying at home, such as setting up a Zoom account, figuring out online food delivery programs, or accessing online learning content
- Food and Friends continues to use the Senior Center for food preparation and scheduled pick-ups

Dials reported on reopening efforts (information included in the [meeting packet](#)). The following items were discussed:

- Dials is the President of the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association (ORPA). ORPA has been working with the Governor's office and has been creating resources and best practices for Parks & Recreation organizations throughout the state
- APRC will use these resources to help steer re-opening and communication plans
- Facilities and activities will slowly re-open as Jackson County and the City of Ashland move through Phases:
 - Phase 1 examples:
 - All indoor sports, recreation facilities remain closed (The Grove, Nature Center, Golf Clubhouse)
 - Parks remain open with restrictions in place
 - 10 and fewer people who arrive together are allowed in groups in an outdoor setting
 - Phase 2 examples:
 - Indoor facilities, limited-opening (The Grove, Nature Center and Golf Course Clubhouse -signage regarding distancing and masks. Increased disinfection. Reduced visitation)
 - Playgrounds COULD open with mitigation efforts in place: (signage, disinfection, staff monitoring and physical distancing in place)
 - Final Phase: Because of the vulnerable population served, the Senior Center would be the last facility to open to the public with increased mitigation efforts in place
- Splash pads & pools will not be allowed to be opened until Phase 2
- It is unknown when basketball courts and other "physical impact" activities will be allowed to open
- It is unclear when Nature Center programs, such as the school programs, will be able to re-open
- Sports courts, including tennis courts/pickleball courts, will be re-opened in Phase 1
- Community Gardens have remained open with physical distancing requirements in place
- Black stated that a significant number of signs will be going up to educate the public on what is allowed during Phase I/Phase II

b. COVID-19 Anticipated Operations and Budget Impacts

a) Operations (Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) and provided a [PowerPoint presentation](#) (pg. 5-9).

- Black reported that the Emergency Operations Command (EOC) first met regarding COVID-19 on March 15
- The Governor began issuing closure orders the following day. APRC then canceled classes and closed many park facilities
- Recreation revenue was budgeted at \$876,100 or 12.3% of the entire APRC budget
 - Approximately 42% of this revenue was expected to be earned Mid-March through June 30 (current fiscal year)
 - Staff is projecting up to \$375,000 in lost recreation revenue this fiscal year due to COVID-19 restrictions

- Jackson County is expected to go into Phase 1 later in the week. However, this phase is still restrictive, which is why staff is projecting the loss in revenue. Phase 1 is likely to last until the middle of June
- In response to the loss in revenue, staff has done the following:
 1. Staff who can be assigned to direct COVID-19 response efforts have been redeployed whenever possible
 2. All line items in the current biennial budget have been re-evaluated, and the following line-item reductions have been made: Park Patrol – (\$29,000); Park Improvements – (\$40,000)
 3. No realistic alternative revenue sources during the COVID-19 restrictions have been identified
 4. All part-time temporary staff have been laid-off
 5. The following full-time positions/staff were also laid-off through FY 19/20, at least
 - Recreation Office Assistants – 2.75 FTEs
 - Parks Custodial Workers – 2.0 FTEs
 - Parks Superintendent – 1.0 FTEs
 - Total projected savings of items 1-5: approximately \$181,451
- Black recapped:
 - FY19/20 projected loss in revenue = \$375,000
 - FY 19/20 reductions in expenses (1-5 above) = \$181,451
 - FY 20/21 carryover loss in revenue = \$190,549
- Landt stated that it is likely that there will be additional losses to revenue in FY20/21 and staff should take that into consideration
- Black stated the City of Ashland will likely decrease the amount of general funds provided to APRC. The specific amount is currently unknown
- The following factors will continue to negatively impact recreation activities
 - Unclear timelines make planning for recreation activities, such as hiring temporary workers to staff the pool
 - Physical distancing and group size restrictions
 - Additional staffing would be required to monitor activities. Restricted group sizes would result in less revenue
 - Unknown comfort level of the public in recreation program participation

Dials presented on the staff recommendation on pool operation, which included the following:

- Pools are not allowed to open in Phase 1
- The following factors were considered when reviewing whether to reopen the pool (see the pool memo in the [meeting packet](#) for specifics)
 - Public health agency direction
 - Staffing and training timelines
 - Management and enforcement of guidelines
- Due to the increased resources necessary to operate the pool due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions and timeline complications to hire and train temporary staff, APRC staff is recommending that the Daniel Meyer Pool remain closed for the summer
- Lewis stated that the complicated logistics required to operate the pool safely make it difficult to see how it would be possible to open the pool
 - Black stated that not opening the pool will have a net savings of \$60,000 in expenses due to the subsidies provided to operate the pool
 - Heller mentioned that the City of Portland is not opening their pools
- Lewis stated that if health guidelines in a later phase allow the splash pad to open, that staff should review reopening it

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the recommendation from staff to keep the Daniel Meyer Pool closed for the 2020 swim season. Seconded by Heller.

Discussion: Heller expressed reluctance to close the pool, but realistically there is no way to open it under the current situation

Vote: The vote was all yes

Black stated that the action to not open the pool has started to address the short falls projected into FY20/21 and that staff is also requesting that the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) not be issued for APRC employees as another action to address the FY20/21 budget.

- 2% was budgeted for COLA in FY20/21
- The City of Ashland is not issuing a COLA to non-represented employees
- Not issuing a COLA would save \$50,000
- Black also stated that staff is looking into contracting services for custodial activities and will look to limit temporary employees in FY 20/21

Motion: Heller moved to approve as staff recommends that there be no COLA increase this upcoming fiscal year. Seconded by Lewis.

Discussion: Landt stated the following:

- This is a serious move and one that would not be made in normal times
- It is important to support staff
- It is because of these extraordinary circumstances that these measures are necessary

Vote: The vote was all yes

Black stated that this is being taken very seriously, and that staff was informed that he would be making this recommendation to Commissioners.

b) Capital Improvement Projects (Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) and provided a [PowerPoint presentation](#) (pg. 9-11). Subsequent to the meeting packet being publicly posted, the CIP spreadsheet found on the last page of the meeting packet was replaced with a [new spreadsheet](#). The following items were discussed:

- Some Capital Improvement Projects are funded through Food & Beverage Taxes (F&B), which are now projected to come in lower than originally budgeted for as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Black stated that it is now necessary to reprioritize the CIP due to a decrease in available funds to complete the projects
- Projections for loss in F&B Tax revenue is below:
 - FY19/20: Budgeted \$756,900; New Projection \$462,655 (\$294,245 less than budgeted)
 - FY20/21: Budgeted \$753,844; New Projection \$265,447 (\$488,397 less than budgeted)
- Black presented the [new spreadsheet](#) that replaced the spreadsheet on the last page of the packet. The projects are listed randomly and are not prioritized
 - Most of the projects were planned to be paid for with F&B totaling approximately \$5.2 million for the biennium
 - Staff is now projecting F&B revenue to total approximately \$1.7 million for the biennium
 - Black included the full cost of the pool, \$2,750,000, into the F&B line even though it was not planned to pay for the entire pool in this biennium. Black wanted to show what it would take to complete all the listed projects with money on hand
 - SDC (System Development Charges) revenue was conservatively budgeted at \$90,000 for the biennium and are not likely to decrease
 - Projects that will mainly be funded through grants include the Kestrel Bridge and the skills park. APRC was planning on using \$60,000 for design and would work with third parties who would undertake responsibility for raising funds
 - The Japanese Garden is also grant funded and this project will move forward as planned
 - The Other column includes funds from real estate sale revenue
 - The Priority columns identify Black's priorities. Black considers the following projects as critical to complete
 - Operations Transfer
 - Oak Knoll Irrigation
 - Pool Rebuild
 - Mace Trail
 - TID Improvements
 - Debt Payments
 - Lincoln Park & ACP (Ashland Creek Park) Public Works requirement are not moving forward and do not need to be prioritized
 - Black stated It is unclear if the grants will come through under the current financial situation
 - Landt inquired why the entire cost of the pool rebuild is listed here since the project will not be paid in full this biennium

- Black stated the full cost is included because the plan for a revenue bond will likely need to be changed since there is now not enough F&B revenue coming in to secure the bond. If Commissioners would like to proceed with a bond, the worksheet can be changed to reflect that funding strategy
- Heller stated his understanding that money from previous years have been allocated to Pickleball Courts and inquired allocated funds from previous years is not listed
 - Black responded that every two years Commissioners adopt the CIP budget resulting in the possibility of previous years allocations being changed. In this case the funds previously allocated for Pickleball remained and additional funds were allocated, totaling \$285,000. Black stated that the project is not critical to the operations of APRC and was therefore not identified as critical in the spreadsheet. Black stated if the revenue bond does not move forward, there is a shortfall of approximately \$150,000 for this project
- Black is asking for direction from the Commissioners on pool funding, E Main Park design process and the reprioritization of all CIP projects based on new revenue projections
- Gardiner stated that individual Commissioners should take the spreadsheet and individually prioritize the CIP
- Black asked Commissioners to act on staff's recommendations to reconsider the revenue bond for pool funding and to delay design work for E Main Park

Motion: Landt moved that the pool bond be reconsidered based on the current state of finances. Lewis Seconded.

Vote: The vote was all yes

Landt stated that it would be possible to reprioritize the pool by allocating the available funds of approximately \$1.7 million if additional funds could be secured to equal the budgeted cost of \$2.75 million. Gardiner added there could be ways to look to the future for funds, so it is not necessary to pay the entire cost of the pool this biennium. Black stated if the pool is a priority for Commissioners, staff will look for different ways to fund the projects. Black asked Commissioners to send a prioritized list of existing Capital Improvement Projects.

- Landt stated that there are three main constituencies advocating for projects, which include the skills park, pickleball courts and the pool. Landt suggested that grant funded projects, such as the Japanese Garden, should be removed.
 - Black stated he will send out an updated spreadsheet that lists projects funded by F&B
 - Black stated the list will include critical projects that are far enough along that it makes sense to continue funding them to completion as well as obligations such as debt payments and the operations transfer
- Black asked for direction on delaying the E Main Park design process
 - Landt stated that this could be done at the staff level and does not require a motion. There were no objections
- Lewis suggested that staff investigate potential reductions in General Funds allocations by the City of Ashland
- Lewis inquired about in person meetings
 - Black stated that staff will review possibilities based on State orders and City of Ashland EOC directives
- Black stated the City if looking into funding through the Federal Disaster Relief Fund

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Black, Gardiner and Landt commended staff for their efforts during the emergency declaration.

Gardiner inquired if APRC is prepared to engage in monitoring requirements. Black stated that agencies are required to do everything in their power based on personnel and resources. APRC will be signing areas to inform the public on the closure status of facilities and best practices for reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Dials stated that APRC is engaging the public through surveys on how to move forward with reopening recreation programs. Dials added the pollinator tour and the July 4th Run will be canceled. The July 4th Run will be held virtually. Gardiner added the Lithia Park Nature Walks have been canceled for the season.

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. APRC Study Session—June 3, 2020
 - Location TBD—6:30 p.m.
2. APRC Regular Business Meeting—June 10, 2020 (*Note: the agenda included a typo listing the 13th as the meeting date*)
 - Location TBD —6:30 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Sullivan, Executive Assistant