

BRANSON ADVISORY PARK BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

August 18, 2020

5:15pm

Branson RecPlex

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Candy Sullinger, Andrew Brown, Clark Harrison, Scott Wuest, Scott McCaulley, David Parrish, Mica Farley, Julie Wolfe, Jamie Whiteis, Jennifer Holder

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Cindy Shook, Jamie Rouch, Jim Cartright, Marsha Fulton

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

1. Approve Minutes

July 21, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion made by Clark Harris and seconded by Andrew Brown to approve the July 21, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion unanimously carried.

2. Review of Financial Report

Cindy shared with the board that Finance Director Jamie Rouch would be providing the park financial report for the board.

Jamie thanked Cindy and opened the financials by reminding the board how COVID had affected the financials and how the report was a comparison year to date from the previous year. Jamie drew the board's attention to the revenue totals, reporting that as of July 31, 2020, the total facility revenue is \$710,303 compared to last year's total of \$1.1 million; the ball programs total is \$36,000 compared to \$61,000 for 2019; with revenue totaling \$1.2 million compared to \$1.4 for 2019, for a difference of \$505,000. She explained the effects on COVID to the budget meant that the parks subsidy in addition to public safety subsidy has been reduced by 25%.

Jamie then moved on to expenditures. Facility expenditures are \$844,900 compared to last year's total of \$1,028,284; ball program expenditures are \$75,133 versus \$93,000 for 2019. Jamie stated that while expenditures were declining, she wanted to point out to Cindy and her staff have done a really great job of cutting expenses.

Cindy asked if Jamie would elaborate more on how the subsidy is determined. Jamie explained yearly that they balance the revenues versus expenditures and are required by city code to maintain a 10% reserve in the Parks fund, meaning that 10% of the operating expenditures has to be in a reserve. Jamie explained that any excess may be transferred to an internal service fund for emergencies or capital replacements.

Clark asked Jamie about the Cares Act and if any of that money had made it way to the Parks Department. Jamie explained that the Federal government distributed money to the states and then the states, based on population, distributed it to the counties. Jamie stated that Taney County was given \$6.4 million, explaining that couldn't be used for anything within your normal budget, it could be used for anything related to COVID. Jamie stated that they were able to submit for the first phase through June, and that she expected the Parks Department to reimburse for some expenses and staff time related to activities such as the grocery shopping and virtual programming that the park staff did during the shut-down. Jamie continued that the second phase will be offered that extends the time frame past June.

Jamie stated one of the hardest things, financially, is that there is not a provision for revenue loss, therefore the city cannot go out and spend money over their budget. She complimented the city staff for pulling together, especially the IT Department, who had really done a great job with getting technology up to where it needed to be to continue to operate during COVID. Clark inquired if Cindy knew if any area parks departments had requested items from the CARES Fund. Cindy responded that she would reach out.

Scott M. asked if there is an application process, and Jamie responded the application was submitted by phases. Jamie confirmed that they already submitted the first one and were now waiting on second phase. She added that there may be an amendment to the application, so right now they were waiting on the county to see what we can be submitted for phase two. Scott M. thanked Jamie for the update and thanked Cindy and the Parks Department for all their hard work.

3. Campground Occupancy Report

Cindy reviewed the campground report through August 6 that compares revenue and occupancy from 2019 to 2020. Cindy reminded the board that she asked the campground manager to track this information due to see how Covid might be impacting the occupancy. Cindy reported that for the month of July, we were only down \$3,761.54 compared to last year. She indicated that the average occupancy for July was 80% with 3,734 site nights. Scott McCaulley stated that going by the eye test, everyone has been coming out and enjoying the campground. Cindy agreed stating being outdoors has been very popular. Cindy went on to say that she had a recent meeting with the manager, who has several good ideas about additional features and sources of revenue, including kayaks and bikes.

4. Parks Update

Cindy introduced Park Maintenance Supervisor Jim Cartright to the board. Jim reported that staff has been very busy with ballfield maintenance this summer during the tournament season, and are now transitioning to overall planning maintenance items and projects for the rest of the year.

Jim provided a review of recent projects in the maintenance area, including annual remulching of playgrounds at the RecPlex, Murphy, Eiserman, and Branson North Parks, with more playgrounds planned next week. He added that they were fortunate to have a group, Future Men, that volunteered to assist with mulching. Jim continued by saying that they had been working at the Dog Park mulching trees and doing general clean-up. In addition, a project to add concrete disc golf pads, which was funded through a neighborhood grant, was completed at Sunset Park.

Cindy reported that Landscape Specialist Amy Jackson is working on flower bed maintenance at City Hall, downtown, the RecPlex and Lakeside Forest. Clark injected that the Tree Keepers had met last Thursday at Lakeside Forest and that Amy had provided training on watering tree and the and Tree Keepers were assigned to certain parks. Clark added that upkeep for new tree plantings is critical for three years. Clark then asked Jim at what height the mowing was being done, explaining if less than 3 inches it dries out the ground when the rain slows down. Jim agreed, stating that they usually had the mowing decks at three inches but he would double check. Clark added that the maintenance crew was always efficient when he saw them and he appreciated it. Andrew inquired if they had taken over some of the mowing could they apply for the Care funds. Cindy explained that her understanding is that the Cares Fund is only available for items outside your normal budget, so the mowing would not be eligible.

Cindy went on to say that the Park's staff had taken over mowing for most of the City due to the cancellation of the mowing contract. Cindy added that while this was a lot to take on, she was grateful that her staff continued to work in lieu of being furloughed. Cindy concluded by stating that the fall months are the time staff is able to focus on park and trail maintenance.

Mica inquired about Arbor Day. Clark confirmed that Amy was working on a celebration this fall were a memorial tree would be planted.

5. Program Update

Cindy shared that they were currently signing up for fall youth programs, including soccer, flag football, and volleyball, in addition to the doggie swim and garage sale. She added that all programs have modifications planned with proper social distancing and masks. Cindy reminded the board they were prepared to shift quickly, if needed, to alternate plans for programs and even virtual programs.

David asked if the modifications were available on the website and if they had they been included in press releases. Cindy confirmed that the modifications for the sports programs were available online, and wording had been included in all press releases alerting the public to masks and social distancing requirements.

Scott McCaulley inquired to Jamie as to if the mask ordinance would be up for a vote in September. Jamie confirmed it was for vote again on September 8th.

Mica stated that she had been in communication with her family doctor, who indicated that the kid to kid transmission was much lower than that of adult to adult. Mica stated that in her opinion, focus should be placed on social distancing between spectators and adults. She stated she personally felt comfortable with the schools' plans, along with the City's and Park's departments. Cindy stated she appreciated Mica's input.

6. Member's Reports

Jennifer shared that recently a client of hers said pretty much what Mica had said regarding contact. She stated she was excited to see what the fall would be this year.

Scott Wuest asked if Cindy had heard about the upcoming Trails Summit with MPRA, and if anyone was attending. Cindy stated she had not seen that but she would be sure to check it out.

Andrew shared that he had inquired about coaching youth soccer this fall if coaches are needed.

Candy welcomed Jennifer Holder to the Park Board and stated she looked forward to getting to know her.

David shared that he had heard a lot of positive feedback for the time slots at the AquaPlex this summer. He wondered if it would be possible to continue offering sessions in the future. Cindy responded that she was happy to hear that positive feedback, and can take a look at that. She stated that this year was difficult because by restricting the number of people on the pool deck, we did depress our revenue, so we were not able to offset our expenses at the same level as in the past, so that would be a major factor.

Mica inquired what the cap was at the pool and what the daily average attendance was previous to COVID. Cindy stated that the daily cap at the pool was 150 and that previous average attendance number during the week was 300 and 400 on a weekend day.

Jamie shared that the business at Tanger Outlets was up 13% last week, with at least half a dozen stores that were top stores in the nationwide, so that was great to see.

Julie agreed that a lot of people enjoyed the time limits at the pool. She agreed if they could find a way to continue it, she would like to see it. Julie also thanked Cindy for all her hard work, especially with Jason being gone.

Scott Wuest added that Spinnaker was up 58% last month, which he knew was good compared to some hotels that are struggling.

Jennifer stated that her employer, Big Cedar, had seen an influx and that they had been sold out since reopening. She also stated that their marketing department had really pushed that the outdoors was the place to be.

ADJOURN

Motion was made by Scott Wuest, and seconded by Julie Wolfe, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 6:30pm