

Reading Recreation Commission
7:00PM
3rd & Spruce Recreation Center
Minutes of the November 19, 2019 Meeting

The Reading Recreation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 7:00PM by Donald Taddei, Jr.

The board performed the Pledge of the Allegiance and Daphne took the roll call of the members. There were seven of nine board members present and they included: Bernardo Carbajal, Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, Joseph Kelleher, Jesse Leisawitz, Donald Taddei, Jr., Tyler Washington & Patricia Wright (entered at 7:01PM). The following board members were absent Ralph Johnson & Brian Twyman. Staff in attendance: Daphne Klahr, Executive Director and Rebecca Swoyer, Business Manager (recording secretary).

New Business

Daphne reported that today we received the Park and Rec Master Plan. The Resolution that Donald Taddei Jr. is going to read is what we have to pass as a board in order to receive reimbursement for what we have already paid to the contractor. The Resolution states that we have received the Park and Rec Master Plan, all expenses incurred have been paid and we will use it to guide future recreation decisions.

Resolution 2019-1

Donald Taddei Jr. read Resolution 2019-1 A Resolution Closing out Community Conservation Partnerships Grant Project (BRC-TAG-19-143). Donald asked if there were any questions. There being none, *Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz made a motion to accept Resolution 2019-1. Patricia Wright seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.*

2020 Budget Presentation/Approval

The 2020 budget was e-mailed to all board members and copies were provided at the meeting. Daphne held a budget workshop in which the following board members attended: Jesse Leisawitz, Donald Taddei Jr. & Tyler Washington. She reported that we will end the year with a \$42,000.00 deficit. She reported that she had to take money from our reserve account in order to cover payroll because of a late payment from the Reading School District. We received payments on a quarterly basis. This last quarterly payment was billed in August and only received yesterday, November 18, 2019. She also informed the board that we have requested an increase from the City of Reading or the Reading School District in 8 years. We are going into our 9th year with flat funding which is an issue as we face escalating costs to operate. We have increased programs and programs need staff to run them. Funding sources are not willing to cover operating costs. When donors make donations they want it to go to programs that support our kids and not necessarily to support administrative costs. . We have had some donations, for example, John Gilmore cover staffing costs for the playground program that he is funding. As we try to add new programs, like Lacrosse, we need more staff to support them. Daphne stated that the way the agreement is set up it states that we need to request an increase from the City of Reading and Reading School District by October 1st and the budget must be approved. She stated that we have never had the budget completed and approved by October. For next year in order to request an increase the budget would need to be completed and approved by September. Part of the issue is that we still have a quarter left and would not have finalized numbers. Daphne does review back to the prior year's budget. She wanted to bring this to the board's attention. Daphne noted the 2020 budget has a surplus of \$50,740.00. She went through the budget and cut costs in all areas possible. There will only be a few pay raises this year. Daphne's personal goal is to get the reserve back up to where it was and an additional cushion of about \$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz stated when you have an audit there is a requirement to have a certain amount in reserve. Daphne stated there is another issue with the Reading School District that she is going to discuss with Jesse Leisawitz.

The notable items which were presented to the board members that attended the budget workshop are as follows:

An increase in the daily admission rate to Schlegel Pool. It is being increased from \$6.50 to \$6.75. There has not been an increase in years.

An increase in building/field house/gym rentals. A study was completed with all the building rentals around us and we are by far the least expensive. We are renting most buildings every weekend. We pay park attendants to make sure the buildings are clean for rentals and that has really taken up a lot of the profit from rentals. We are increasing \$25.00 for city residents and \$50.00 for non-city residents. Again, there has not been an increase in years. Daphne will be submitting the fee schedule to the City for approval. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz asked what needs to happen in order to submit the increase. Daphne stated that we have a form with all of our rates which is submitted to Michelle Katzenmoyer at the City. The City requires that it goes into an ordinance and that gets approved every year. Daphne informed the board that we are going to start renting Baer Park field house as well. We get a lot of requests for rentals at this location. A discussion followed regarding Baer Park.

There is a decrease in the summer playground programs. Our summer playground program is typically an 8 week program. Next year it will be a 7 week program based on the Reading School Districts start and end dates. With the school year going later into June next year our playground program will be pushed back a week. We do have some flexibility if we would be able to have an 8 week program if school would end early. Daphne stated that playground leaders are one of our biggest expenses for the time period. We operate on a 1 to 10 ratio. She stated we also supplement with Career Link teen/youth summer employment. Patricia Wright stated that we could reach out to BCAP. Sometimes they have grants and pay for teen/youth summer employment. Patricia stated she would have a conversation with Larry on the BCAP board.

There is also a decrease in health benefits. For years we have had Capital Blue Cross with a yearly increase ranging from 8 to 13%. We have also had more employees take advantage of our health care due to changes in their lives. Our health insurance carrier reached out to us and stated that UPMC was a comparable plan coming in at a much lower rate. We compared the plans and decided to change carriers from Capital Blue Cross to UPMC health plan. This is a 22% decrease in health care costs. Daphne asked if there were any other questions regarding the 2020 budget. There being none,

Joseph Kelleher made a motion to accept the 2020 budget as presented. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz seconded the motion. The Board performed a roll call of members: Bernardo Carbajal – yes, Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz – yes, Joseph Kelleher – yes, Jesse Leisawitz – yes, Donald Taddei Jr. – yes, Tyler Washington – abstain, and Patricia Wright – yes. Motion passed 5 – 0 with 1 abstention.

Minutes

The minutes from the October 8, 2019 meetings were reviewed.

Patricia Wright made a motion to approve the October 8, 2019 minutes. Tyler Washington seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Daphne stated that we already talked extensive about the budget and asked what the board's thoughts were about approaching the City of Reading and Reading School District for additional funding. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she thinks we need to revisit the agreement because it was originally drafted with the thought process that the Reading Recreation Commission would be self-sustaining. She believes everyone is aware that cannot happen. She feels it needs to be addressed and why it is important to have sustainable funding from both resources to maintain these services. Daphne agreed. She also stated about bringing in a 3rd funding source. She stated that we are the only commission that does not have a 3rd funding provider. In every other commission the County is the 3rd funding partner. Daphne stated that she would be reaching out to Senator Schwank to discuss options.

Daphne again stated by the end of the year we will be at a deficit of \$42,000.00. We have receivables of about \$90,000.00 in food services; \$27,500.00 in Radsport Sponsorship, \$28,000.00 from DCNR and a playground grant. So we have quite a bit of money still owed to us. The following reports were available for review: Balance sheet Previous Month Comparison which compared months September & October 2019; Programs Profit & Loss budget vs. actual; Administration Profit & Loss budget vs. actual; Pool Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual; Tennis Profit & Loss budget vs. actual; Income Detail Report & Expense Detail Report. Daphne asked if there were any questions, there being none, *Bernardo Carbajal made the motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Joseph Kelleher seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.*

Old Business

Daphne met with Tom Gombar from Judy Schwank's office. He wanted to take a look at the soccer field at 11th & Pike which was a project they funded. He also wanted to look at the 11th & Pike building and talk about our needs for that building. He asked that a wish list of needs be compiled. They have some funding that is going to be available for that specific area next year. We will be applying to their office for more funding to help improve 11th & Pike. The priorities are the gym floor and ceiling & windows.

Per Brian Twyman's request at the last meeting Daphne provided board members with a printout of what it costs to run a Lacrosse program. Daphne met with Jesse Leisawitz regarding Lacrosse. Jesse stated that one issue with US Lacrosse is that they need a commitment from the school district where the community would be based. That would be the Reading School District. They would like to see that lacrosse become part of the elementary school curriculum. To make sure that whatever community activities are being done outside are then being reinforced in the school and ramping up to have a club in middle school, etc. Jesse spoke with the curriculum director. She said there are plenty of units of study we could put Lacrosse in. She is looking now into curriculum for Lacrosse for the elementary schools. One of the issues that she is concerned about is equity among the buildings if we would need to buy some materials how do we make sure there is enough students throughout the district that are being exposed to this rather than just picking one school vs another school. She is looking into that and then at what point we would need to start padding students. It is cheaper to buy a stick and some balls rather than having to go full on with gear. That is what she is looking at but part of that idea would be to get that curriculum in place for next school year. She is working with Helen Stevenson at 13th & Union. She is in charge of physical education. Jesse stated that is how the school district can help get some funding from US Lacrosse. Daphne added that she had lengthy conversations with US Lacrosse & email correspondence with Joe Bialek, the Wilson Lacrosse coach. Joe is a Reading High School graduate who is interested in getting Lacrosse started in the City. Wilson has a program with 3rd & 4th grades that scoop candy and stuff animals. She stated that the rec could start a program similar to that. Patricia Wright stated that Joel Iswalt is a parent of Berks Catholic children who are in Lacrosse. He goes and buys equipment wherever he can & is interested in helping the city wherever he can. A discussion followed.

Daphne is meeting with the walk-in company, contractor, electrician, etc. to look at the spaces again. They are going to look over their drawings and make sure all their T's are crossed and I's are dotted.

The façade program is all but finished. We are just doing doors and windows yet. Just today Daphne received the cost to replace all the sidewalks and curbs. The cost is \$108,000.00 to do the entire block. The South of Penn Taskforce is looking at all options to get the sidewalk project completed.

Executive Director's Report

Daphne gave a verbal Executive Director's report for October 2019

Highlights:

1. Daphne stated that DCNR has requested to meet the new mayor, state what their position and view is and to work together. They met with Mayor Scott. Daphne stated that they give a lot of money to the City of Reading.
2. We are in the heart of our programming. We are having Thanksgiving dinner for all the kids at each rec center next Thursday if anyone would like to attend.
3. Our basketball open gym programs are going extremely well. We have added a second night. We are doing Mondays and Wednesdays. Starting in January we will have our basketball league with the Olivet's. They would like to start a girls open gym basketball program. We are more than willing to support that.
4. 3rd & Spruce gym is busy. During the week we have Pickleball for the seniors during the day and Volleyball for adults at night. One the weekend we have a basketball league and tennis. We also have Heroes for Autism renting the 11th & Pike gym.
5. Heather, Matt, Adonis, Rebecca and Daphne attended the Pennsylvania Urban Parks & Recreation Exchange in Fairmount Park. One of the round table discussions was LGBTQ. We discussed bathrooms, pools and swimming facilities. We are still looking to modify some things at Schlegel. The trend is to go to single door facilities.
6. Daphne attend the St. Joe's Ball. St. Joe's was the initial sponsor of the RRC's Girls Leadership Program and has continued their support with curriculum development.

Executive Session

At 7:52PM the board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. The session was resumed at 8:06PM.

Public Comment

Marcia asked Daphne about priorities for projects. Daphne stated our #1 priority is Schlegel Park swimming pool. The other major priority is 3rd & Spruce's HVAC system. It has been a capital project for several years but they haven't have the bandwidth to get the projects done. Per Ralph Johnson, Public Works has so many things going on and they did not have an engineer. We have 4 units and only 2 are working, sometimes just 1. This side of the building is heated. The gym and cafeteria have no heat & sometimes the art room has no heat. A discussion followed.

Daphne gave kudos to Ralph Johnson and the Public Works Department for improving the lighting around the building. The neighbors are happy about the improved lighting in the park and it has contributed to a decrease of criminal activity in the park.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be brought before the board,

Bernardo Carbajal made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10PM. Tyler Washington seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Upcoming meetings:

February Recreation Commission Meeting – Tuesday, February 11th at 7:00PM, 3rd & Spruce Recreation Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Swoyer
Recording Secretary