

## **Park Board Meeting November 13, 2023**

Pursuant to due call and order, the Board of Park Commissioners, Dickinson Park District, met for a Regular Meeting at 4:00 pm on Monday, November 13, 2023, at the West River Community Center.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners Scott Karsky, Tim Daniel, Zach Keller, Jo Marie Kadrmas, Nic Stevenson. Also present were Executive Director Benjamin Rae, Director of Buildings/Grounds Craig Pearson, Director of Recreation/Facilities Caleb Burgard, Legal Counsel Randy Sickler and Clerk Leah Hoenke.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Nic Stevenson to approve the agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA – MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the Consent Agenda items of Park Board meeting minutes from October 6 along with October Claims in the amount of \$709,870.72, Pledged Securities, and Sprinturf Pay Application in the amount of \$36,499.00. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

### **BUILDINGS/GROUNDS**

Director of Buildings/Grounds Report – Director Craig Pearson provided a written report and said that they have filled the facility maintenance specialist position at the ice center, the new employee will start on December 4. Commissioner Nic Stevenson asked Craig about replacing trees and how successful the new trees are. Director Craig Pearson said we are 90-95 percent success on our trees for replacement. Commissioner Tim Daniel asked about the status on winterization of the greens at HRGC. Director Pearson said they put down 2-3 apps of fungicide first, and then add hydro mulch which is all finalized with irrigation blown out. Executive Director Benjamin Rae added that the staff really hustled the week before the snow, and they were able to get it done before it stormed – the staff deserves a lot of credit for that work.

### **RECREATION/FACILITIES**

Director of Recreation/Facilities Report – Director Caleb Burgard provided a written report. He added that there was a lifeguard certification that was held in November, and we were able to retain 3 lifeguards. He also reported that the staff has been exploring limited hours for the pool, possibly reducing hours on weekends. He explained that we are exploring every avenue and tracking usage to help gauge the affected areas, as well as offering another lifeguard training in December. Director Burgard then reported that the Halloween party brought in about 400 participants. The old pro draft is being held tonight. He said the men's basketball league has 10 teams and women's only had 2 teams and so we will not have a women's league. He said we will explore a 3x3 league for women's next year. Director Burgard reported that the youth programming is seeing an increase in participation, tennis and sports mixer seeing increases and the new youth volleyball for K-2 has 47 enrolled. Discussion followed on adult leagues with Commissioner Zach Keller asking if we've received any feedback. Director Burgard said the biggest feedback is quality officials and the nature of adult rec sports in general. People are aging out and have younger children involved in activities. Discussion was also held on lifeguards. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas asked about staffing for lifeguards, how does Christmas break look. Director Burgard said we may have some returning college students.

Badlands Big Sticks Agreement – Director Caleb Burgard reviewed the Badlands Big Sticks Agreement and said they have transitioned into the Northwood League. He said we have had our legal counsel review the agreement. Director Burgard stated that with the Northwoods League they are requesting a longer-term agreement and currently we are recommending a 6-year agreement with an opt-out option in place. He said rent will be a \$1,000 increase for first 3 years, will be a 36-home game season as opposed to a 32-game season. He said we are also giving them opportunities to bring in additional revenue from advertising. Regarding the scoreboard, currently we have exclusive rights to it, including advertising but it is near the end-of-life expectancy. Director Burgard says the Big Sticks see a value in putting in a video board. President Karsky asked if we are willing to put in the replacement cost of scoreboard. Executive Director Benjamin Rae said if we were to replace, it would be through existing sponsorships. He said you are probably looking at \$400,000 to \$650,000 for a video scoreboard. Discussion followed. Director Caleb Burgard said Big Sticks pay us \$12,000/year for lease agreement plus \$5,000 for maintenance or upgrade costs. He said the staff is comfortable going to the 6-year agreement now that the league is well established. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the lease agreement for the Badlands Big Sticks as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

### **BUSINESS/FINANCE**

October Financial – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the October financial. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

2024 Project Plan – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the Capital Improvement Projects for 2024 showing the projects for 2024 and past encumbrances. He reported that we will replace the electronic sign on State Avenue which is past its life expectancy. Also, will purchase a new copy machine that is currently 8 years old. He reviewed parks and said for the baseball field turf he noted that we are \$16,000 short for the turf that we will need to fund at some point. He said for the playground replacement we will be replacing Pleasant Valley Park and enhancing swings at other parks. He reviewed the fleet vehicle replacement, ballpark groomer, park restroom locks and cameras along with the sports complex playground and DSU tennis

renovation and other park, property and trail improvements. Director Rae then reviewed Patterson Lake, saying we have a \$1.2 million grant for the Crooked Crane Trail bridge connection at Patterson Lake. He said we've hit a roadblock and are now working with the state to find out what we can do with those funds. He said he is also working with Marathon Petroleum on a \$50,000 grant for Crooked Crane Trail improvements. Director Rae reviewed the projects at the West River Ice Center, showing a Zamboni replacement, floor scrubber replacement, benches and other improvements. Discussion followed on the Zamboni cost and possible annual payments from the Hockey Club for facility improvements. Director Rae showed the projects earmarked at Heart River Course, saying we committed \$50,000 towards irrigation replacement that is on year 2 of a 3-year commitment along with a new range ball machine, Ventrac and Hole #17 bridge replacement which brings our total to \$350,000 that includes \$175,000 currently funded and an additional \$175,000 for 2024 to have replaced by fall. He then went over the debt payments/future projects of the district that includes the infrastructure payment of \$110,000 and will keep 20% unused funds for future projects. Director Rae explained that we drained our resources for projects, and he feels like that is a good amount to start setting aside. Director Rae also reviewed the WRCC Improvement Fund showing repairs to HVAC system, fire system updates, leisure pool upgrades, saying that in 2024 we will focus on the leisure side and 2025 will focus on lap pool side. He also said there are plans to upgrade landscaping at the front entrance. He then reviewed the total capital betterment fund balance of \$541,666 saying that we have \$300,000 for previously approved ongoing items and includes the 20% set aside for future projects. He also showed the Quality-of-Life funding which is funds from the city and ARPA funds along with \$439,000 set aside in the WRCC Improvement Fund. Director Rae also provided a playground installation list and project lists for each facility. He reviewed how the projects are broken down specifically by fund. His recommendation is for the board to approve the 2024 Project Plan funding and to spend funds that are already available. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmars said she appreciates the detail and asked if the outside sign is necessary, saying that \$40,000 is a lot of money to put into something that is not necessarily needed. She said it may not be the best way to market our programming. Discussion followed on social media and if that is primarily the place that most people get the information. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said the social media presence has been outstanding and far better than he's ever seen it. Commissioner Zach Keller agreed that he is okay to take a pause on the sign and see if it has value or not. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmars to approve the 2024 Project Plan as presented except for the outside sign and to also expedite the WRCC expenditures as recommended. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Trinity Sidewalk Survey & Easement – Executive Director Benjamin Rae said this Scope of Services provided by APEX Engineering is to survey the site for us to get the official easement. He is asking for approval not to exceed the amount presented. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the site survey services provided by APEX Engineering not to exceed \$4,500 as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Hole #17 Bridge Survey – Director Rae reviewed and said this is part of the Hole 17 replacement, a site survey is required. Wheeler Bridge recommended it be done locally rather than them sending their own engineers. He said APEX has been helpful and has an existing relationship with Wheeler Bridge. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the site survey services by APEX Engineering as presented.

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae added a couple of things he wants the board to be aware of. He said the City Commission has put on hold any additional funding for the ice sheet at Legacy Square, given the challenges with staffing and maintenance. Director Rae said he doesn't feel like we can commit additional resources based on what we have at the ice center, but he wanted to give our board an opportunity to discuss. President Scott Karsky said he agrees with that and said there is a consensus from the board as well. Director Rae also reported that Lakeview Park is a Stark County park that the county park board would like us to take over the maintenance of. He has asked legal counsel Randy Sickler to put together an MOU in that respect. He said the county is committed to any capital improvement costs. Commissioner Zach Keller said if our maintenance staff agrees that they can take it on, he doesn't see a problem with that. He also said there is potential for a 40-acre park included in the South Town Development likely over the next 5 to 10 years and it would be prudent for us to have funds available. This will be a mixed-use area with a possible cemetery. He also stated that it is time for annual evaluations, he gave the board his evaluation that will be part of the December meeting. He then reviewed a request from the Stark County Veterans Memorial Association to change the name of Memorial Park to Veterans Memorial Park. It will require us to spend funds to update signage. He said we maintain the park, but it is held in title by the city. He asked if the board wants to provide a resolution to recommend the change of name. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said he thinks we should make a resolution. Director Rae said he will work with legal counsel on the resolution.

Legal Counsel Report – Legal Counsel Randy Sickler had nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to adjourn the meeting at 5:14 pm. Upon vote, all aye. Motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
President