

**Park Board Meeting
December 11, 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, December 11, 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: Jo Marie Kadrmas; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the agenda. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA – MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Nic Stevenson to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented, which includes the Park Board meeting minutes from November 13; November Claims in the amount of \$528,248.73 and the Pledged Securities. 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. He added that the park's crew is trying to get the soil saturated for flooding of outdoor rinks.

RECREATION/FACILITIES

Director of Recreation/Facilities Report – Director Caleb Burgard provided a written report. He added that we have an LGI training course with five participants signed up which will give us more flexibility to offer LG courses. He also said the WRCC staff had customer service training with Dr. Deb Dragseth that included 26 employees from WRCC and WRIC. Director Burgard reported that we have two personal trainers starting, Natalie Hall and Karen Boswell, both very reputable trainers. He said we are in the process of putting a batting cage in the personal training room for baseball/softball user group use and reported that he and Benjamin met with Guy Fridley and Dr. Lewton from the public schools regarding programming at the high school. He reported that he is working on a USTA grant for the college tennis courts with the intent of a possible spring project with the grant providing up to \$25,000 for 50% of project cost. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas asked about the personal trainers. Director Burgard said the active trainers are Ashley Barry and Ryan Fink and then we'll have two additional with Natalie and Karen. Commissioner Nic Stevenson asked about batting cages – is there any opportunity to repurpose the racquetball court. Director Burgard said the insurance claim for that court was denied and now we are looking at what can be done with the space. We talked about multi-use, youth programming and preschool play. As far as the cage, size is an issue with racquetball court along with noise issues. Discussion followed. Director Burgard stated that the training space is just a band aid for batting cages and more long-term planning needs to be done. Commissioner Tim Daniel asked about the meeting with high school. Director Burgard said for the North Complex, all programming will remain for 2024 – the construction of high school will begin in 2025. He said one or two fields will become a construction staging area. Discussion followed.

BUSINESS/FINANCE

November Financial – MOTIONED BY: Tim Daniel; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the November financial. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Dickinson Parks & Recreation Foundation Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed and said staff have been working towards establishing a charitable foundation to support the mission of the district. He said he has worked with legal counsel to prepare the documents required by the state to be officially recognized as a charitable entity. The foundation will seek private donations and grants, and support building committees for future capital development. It is intended that the foundation will operate independently of the Park Board, but it is bound by its bylaws to support the mission of the district under the direction of the Park Board. Director Rae recommended approval to move forward with the incorporation of the DPR Foundation. He said once approved we will submit the paperwork to the State of North Dakota and then will schedule a first meeting in the first quarter of 2024. MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas; SECONDED BY: Nic Stevenson to approve the Foundation Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Part-Time Staff Pay Raise Policy – Executive Director Benjamin Rae said this is something that was started a few years ago and is what is needed to progress and encourages our part-time staff to stay longer. He reviewed and said returning seasonal staff will be reviewed at re-hire and will receive a maximum of \$.50 each year they return for their seasonal position. Part-time staff will be reviewed mid-March and mid-September for raises. Employees will be eligible if they have worked six consecutive months and are in good standing with a maximum raise of \$.30 and employees may receive two increases per year. Commissioner Kadrmas asked if there would be more allowances for lifeguards. Director Rae said the pay scale is already at a higher wage due to certifications; there is a way for lifeguards to make more money if they are committed. Director Burgard added that we are now paying the lifeguard for their time in training along with paying for the certification. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the Part-Time Staff Raise Policy as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

HRGC Hole 17 Bridge Engineering Proposal – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed and said Erickson Engineering will provide the engineering for the abutments and piers for the selected Wheeler Bridge. Erickson Engineering will subcontract with

Braun Intertec for the soil boring. The engineering work should be complete by March 2024 allowing for time to order the bridge, contract with a construction company, and schedule construction for the fall of 2024. The recommendation is for approval of the engineering and geotechnical survey from Erickson Engineering for Hole 17 bridge in the amount of \$35,200. Commissioner Nic Stevenson asked if this is a longer-term fix on the bridge. Director Rae said the warranty is 8 years, but the life expectancy is 50 years. Discussion followed on the process involved. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas to approve the engineering proposal from Erickson Engineering Co, LLC in the amount of \$35,200. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Administrative Calendar – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the calendar showing the pay periods, holidays, and park board meetings. He said there were some adjustments to the regular park board meeting in October and November and added a few other workshop meetings to prepare for the budget process. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the 2024 Administrative Calendar. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Personnel Manual 2024 – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the changes to the manual. The recommended updates are redlined throughout the manual and are as follows: Clarification of policy for sections 3.3, 4.20 and 5.23; Employees will now be required to take harassment training annually; addition of employee referral program; clarification of compensatory time; employees driving district vehicles will be required to take a 1-time defensive driving course; updates for the new insurance plan and updates to state per diem amounts. Director Rae recommended approval of the personnel manual. MOTIONED BY: Tim Daniel; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the 2024 Personnel Manual as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reported a few items outside of his written report. He said the digital sign is still up in the air – we did some polling and had more discussions but are not ready to move forward. He stated that we are going to re-apply for the gold medal through AAPRA/NRPA and have submitted our annual report to the state. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas asked Benjamin to expand on the Crooked Crane Trail Phase 2 expansion. Director Rae said it is to extend the trail along the railroad track to State Avenue. Because of difficulties with railroad easement, the plan was to put in a boardwalk along the lake. Funding was denied but is still tied to the original concept. Right now, we have the money but no ability to do the construction. He said we will ask permission for a variance from the original plan for work on the project and we have until May to determine how to best utilize the funds. He said we have already applied for 3 extensions on the funding.

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

Executive Director Annual Review – President Scott Karsky said reviews from commissioners were extremely positive; he said things are going great and Benjamin has established good relationships within the community. Commissioner Zach Keller said as a board member, he appreciates Benjamin's dedication in getting information to the board. He also said that he has done a great job of preserving the positive culture, and he appreciated how the team has responded to Benjamin. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said he appreciated the thoroughness Benjamin gives, he presents both sides and puts it on paper and for us to make decisions. Commissioner Stevenson said his challenge is that Benjamin is hesitant to offend and for him to be willing to follow the right decision and not worry about having someone not agree. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas echoed the comment from Zach Keller about Benjamin being very thorough, she said they have a high level of trust in him, and she appreciates the fact that he has invested funding, appreciates transparency in funding and the budget committee. She said he has created a friendship with the city on the half cent sales tax that has brought us back funding to maintain the facility. Commissioner Tim Daniel echoed everything that other board members have said as well. He said the fact that Benjamin said he was a numbers guy in his initial interview, that has been a huge benefit to us as a board. He said his work ethic is very positive and has established relationships with other public entities. Commissioner Daniel said we know as a board that there have been difficult decisions, he appreciates Ben's willingness to deal with the difficult situations. President Scott Karsky said we thought we had the right guy when we hired Benjamin, and he has done an outstanding job. Executive Director Rae said one thing that means a lot is that we have staff here that want to be here, and he wants to see passion and ownership in the staff. He said his goals for 2024 are professional development and customer service, pride in ownership in the Park District, continue to work on policies and have very specific actions in how we respond and define expectations. The second goal is to maintain our current infrastructure and third goal is to develop his business relationships further out into the community. Commissioner Tim Daniel proposed a 2% increase in raise for the executive in addition to the 3% percent that was already approved. He said Benjamin should be rewarded for his accomplishments. MOTIONED BY: Tim Daniel; SECONDED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas to approve an additional 2% raise for the Executive Director. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 pm. Upon vote, all aye. Motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Clerk

President