

**Park Board Meeting  
July 10, 2023**

Pursuant to due call and order, the Board of Park Commissioners, Dickinson Park District, met for a Regular Meeting at 4:00 pm, Monday, July 10, 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.

MINUTES: MOTIONED BY: Tim Daniel; SECONDED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas to approve the June 12 meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

CLAIMS: MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Nic Stevenson to approve the Claims in the amount of \$991,826.70. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried. Executive Director Benjamin Rae commented that Friendship Park and the baseball turf payments account for the difference between last year's payments.

#### **BUILDINGS/GROUNDS**

Director of Buildings/Grounds Report – Director Craig Pearson said they did the first mowing on the Sanford Sports Complex now that it is under our control. Simpson Park playground is being installed tomorrow. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas asked if there is something that comes up with maintenance on the parks who she should contact. Director Pearson said she could contact him. He said most of breaks and repairs for Friendship Park are covered for one year.

#### **RECREATION/FACILITIES**

Director of Recreation/Facilities Report – Director Caleb Burgard reported to the board that we had the Patterson Lake Beach Party with 350 in attendance and there is a disc golf tournament that is being held on Sunday, August 6. He reported that Personal Trainer Natalie Hall will be coming back to WRCC in August. The Bravera Bank Splash Bash was held and had a very good attendance of 480. Miller Lite Softball Tournament had 45 teams compared to 43 last year.

Sanford Sports Complex – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the agreement and said this has gone through quite a bit of work between us, DSU and the School District. DSU will take care of the championship field, restrooms, locker room, and concessions. Scheduling will be split between entities depending on time of year. Our staff will take care of the soccer field and outer softball field mowing and minor irrigation if needed. He said the staff recommends approval. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve Sanford Sports Complex Agreement as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

#### **BUSINESS/FINANCE**

Pledge Securities – Provided for informational purposes only.

June Financial – Executive Director Rae said overall things look very well for the financial in the month of June. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the June financial. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Friendship Park Pay App – Scott Schneider with APEX presented a pay request from Tooz Construction for work completed. He said they are holding back \$4,000 due to a warranty item for lights that aren't turning on correctly. He said they also need lien waivers from Tooz before we issue final payment. He recommends approval. MOTIONED BY: Nic Stevenson; SECONDED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas to approve payment of \$53,653.14 to Tooz Construction. Roll call vote: Ayes-5; Nays-0; Absent-0. Motion carried.

Mid-Year Financial Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae presented a mid-year financial report showing we are \$1.8 million dollars to the positive in the first half of 2023. He said that is to be expected with the mill levy coming in the first half of the year. He reviewed each of the fund balances and said coming to the end of 2023 he'll make recommendations for the simplifying of funds. The current project fund is low with the vast majority coming out for Friendship Park. For the Park & Facilities Replacement Fund, a good portion is committed to turf replacement. The WRCC Fund is in a negative balance of -\$92,905.86 which is about where he expected but will keep an eye on it. President Scott Karsky asked about turf replacement. Director Rae said \$375,000 will be paid out this year. Director Rae then reviewed the General Fund, revenue, and expenses through mid-year. He stated that revenue was high in 2021 due to lot sales. 2022 is when we paid the Bureau of Reclamation for those lot sales. He reviewed the West River Ice Center, saying we are doing well this year in controlling expenses, and he's happy with where the utilities have been this year. For HRGC, revenue is strong this year with more rounds this year compared to last year. The staff is doing well at keeping expenses under control. Commissioner Kadrmas asked about the bridge bill. Director Rae said they will not be billing us for any expenses, and they do not wish to have any other recognition other than what we have already done. Director Rae went on to review Patterson Lake saying that we are not bringing in revenue for cabin lot rental and so will see more of a deficit at Patterson Lake. One project will be done this fall with riff raff at

the main entrance. President Karsky asked about remaining cabin lease holders. Director Rae said there are 4 lease holders remaining who have not expressed interest in purchasing. He said there won't be a reason to keep Patterson Lake separate; it will be rolled into the general fund. Commissioner Kadrmas asked about the largest expense for that area. Director Rae said staffing is the main expense. He showed facilities, the Heart River Retreat and Stark County Veterans Pavilion, both are doing well financially. For WRCC, Director Rae noted that total expenses were slightly up from last year due to the staffing wage increases. All the increase in revenue is in annual memberships, which is the biggest driver. The deficit is \$30,000 less through the mid-year and he anticipates it to be better in the second half. He showed member totals are trending well; consistently we have about 200 memberships at any given time more than last year, saying he's cautiously optimistic. He then asked if the board had any questions. President Scott Karsky commented that things look excellent.

Budget Discussion – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the 2024 Budget. He reviewed the district assumptions saying that for personnel there are 5 areas that he prioritized. 1. Fund benefits at the current level, meaning, no change to existing benefits except for exploring adding an HAS option. 2. Fund current FT employee pay increases at a 3% annual increase to match the 100-year inflation index. 3. Bring employees up to the market driven value for their position over time. 4. Fund part-time employee increases. 5. Fund new positions as recommended by staff. He also wants to prioritize funds in employee wellness and professional development. Director Rae then reviewed the golf course with 3 areas of focus. 1. HRGC should cover all operating and maintenance expenses with revenue from the golf course with zero subsidy. 2. Capital projects will be funded as needed in line with all other projects in the district. 3. Golf carts will be replaced on a 4-year rotation schedule. Commissioner Nic Stevenson asked about other facilities, is it our goal to run it without a subsidy. Director Rae said the golf course may be the only facility that could stand on its own. Ballfields and parks because there is not a strong revenue stream that comes in so those are usually run on a subsidy. He said for the golf course there are some unknowns in 2024 but still feels confident on where the revenue will be. He believes this is reasonable if we are willing to fund capital projects as needed and make sure the course is in good condition. Commissioner Kadrmas asked if WRIC falls under the half cent sales tax. Director Rae said there are still some questions about if that is possible. He said we are going to make it a priority to better fund that building, not necessarily out of half cent sales tax. He then reviewed Recreation goals. 1. Program fees for adult programs will cover all direct operational costs. 2. Tournaments will cover all direct operational costs. 3. Program fees for youth programs will cover the majority of direct operational costs. 4. Events will cover the majority of operational costs. 5. Program offerings will be adjusted based on community input, registration, and staffing ability to oversee quality programs. 6. Priority will be given to add programs for currently underserved groups such as teens and seniors. 7. WRCC equipment will be replaced on a 5-year replacement schedule. 8. Youth programming will balance offerings with those offered by community user groups. Director Rae moved to Mill Levy, saying the goal is to increase on an incremental schedule rather than larger increases. He showed the effects of mill levy adjustment on homeowners. Represents a 4.9% valuation increase from 2023 to 2024. He showed if we stayed at the same mills, we would increase by \$85,000 due to the valuation increase. The max amount that we can go up is a 12% increase in dollars, not mills. He showed the max amount that we are allowed to take in the general fund. He said we are about 40% of what we are allowed to take by the state. He reviewed the comparisons and said his recommendation today is to pursue the 12% increase and keep valuation the same. He then showed the mill levy comparison showing the history of previous years. He said he took a 5-year inflation increase. In the past 5 years, inflations have increased 19.7%. President Scott Karsky asked if we know what the school district and city are doing. Benjamin said the school will be going out to a bond vote and he doesn't know about the city. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas commented saying her request would be to look at areas to eliminate spending in areas that aren't getting productivity back. President Karsky also said we should be careful on fees and look at keeping our services affordable. Commissioner Stevenson asked about the capital on where are we at percentage wise. Director Rae said we are at 3.3% and we are allowed 5%. He said of the 9 largest Park District's, we are on the low end when you look at property tax.

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae said we have some special meetings coming up – we'll meet on July 26 at 7:30 am to discuss the preliminary budget and go through the last details. August 2 at 7:30 am we will meet to approve the preliminary budget and will give a first look at fees. He said he's also working now to send notices to Patterson Lake residents on boat docks and reported that the Kostelecky Park playground is in – we will add additional benches there as well. He said for the survey, 1500 completed with a little over 2000 that had some portion completed. He'll present information to the board in August. There are about 700 open comments to sift through.

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

Adjournment – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 pm. Upon vote, all aye. Motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

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Clerk

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President