

Park Board Meeting September 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, along with a Public Hearing at 4:45 pm on Monday, September 11, 2023, at the West River Community Center.

ROLL CALL: Present were Commissioners Scott Karsky, Tim Daniel, Zach Keller, Jo Marie Kadrmas. 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. Commissioner Nic Stevenson was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmas; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to approve the agenda. Ayes-4; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Stevenson). Motion carried.

GUEST APPEARANCE – Dr. Marcus Lewton, Superintendent of Dickinson Public Schools was present to speak on the school district bond referendum that will be brought to a public vote on October 24. He said since the last referendum enrollment has increased and has hit its highest threshold. Enrollment is an issue along with aging facilities. He reviewed the DHS building challenges: Aging systems, kitchen and cafeteria upgrades are needed, electrical upgrades, ADA accommodations, safety, and security with four different buildings. He showed the capital maintenance plan and the results from the community survey. He said the solution will provide classrooms with better heating systems, cafeteria and provide a secure entrance to the high school and elementary schools where needed. He showed what is included in the \$69 million plan and the tax impact. He provided documentation and said there is information on the school district website as well. He said it will be very challenging to do business as we do now if this fails. Commissioner Zach Keller asked about what the backup plan is if it fails. Dr. Lewton said there will have to be changes made to programs, activities, and transportation. Commissioner Keller stated that this is a key component to our quality-of-life goals, the possibility of diminished programs and activities would be detrimental to what we are trying to accomplish. President Scott Karsky said he agrees and added that when people look at moving to Dickinson, schools are critical. President Karsky thanked Dr. Lewton for presenting.

CONSENT AGENDA – MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the Consent Agenda items of Park Board meeting minutes from August 14 along with August Claims in the amount of \$666,988.55, Pledged Securities, and Friendship Park Pay Application from Tooz Construction in the amount of \$4,000. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Stevenson). Motion carried.

BUILDINGS/GROUNDS

Director of Buildings/Grounds Report – Director Craig Pearson reported and said outside of his written report, we have started laying turf at the ballpark, making good progress. He also added that Tolman has broken ground on Heroes Park and installation of the new irrigation system at Heart River Golf Course will begin tomorrow.

Snow Removal Contract – Executive Director Benjamin Rae reviewed the snow removal contracts saying that we received four proposals. He said the priorities are getting the snow removed as early as possible in the day with the early opening of WRCC. He said the staff would eliminate Tooz Construction based on pricing and Winn Construction based on prioritization. He said the other two applicants are present for questions if needed. Reece Mack from Premier Fencing was present. He said he would have two loaders coming in if the snow is 2 inches or above and shouldn't be a problem to get done within an hour. He said he's had a snow removal contract for the hospital for the past 2 years. He explained their process. Russ Heiser was also present. He said he's just getting into snow removal – he has another contract with Sanford. He said he has 2 loaders with 10-foot snow pushes. Director Rae said our staff handles the sidewalks and entrances. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas said both proposals are very similar. Director Rae said this is a contract and so this would be a board vote that is needed. MOTIONED BY: Tim Daniel; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to accept the low bid from Russ Heiser at \$170/hour and in the event we need additional snow removal, we would use both vendors. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Stevenson). Motion carried.

RECREATION/FACILITIES

Director of Recreation/Facilities Report – Director Caleb Burgard elaborated on his written report and said the Punt, Pass & Kick and Pooch Pool Party both were very well attended events. The first cross country meet was well attended but air quality probably made a difference in attendance. He added that at the upcoming NDRPA conference, we'll have 7 full-time employees attend. He said Caroline Wood's last day is today and the position has been posted. He said the HRGC year to date rounds are 20,995 compared to all last year at 22,133. Most likely exceed that this year. Karsky asked about flag football, Caleb said it is declining, trending downward year to year. Commissioner Zach Keller asked about the facility supervisor, is there anything to analyze. Director Burgard said with that position you see a lot of burnout with staffing issues for the year round part-time employees at WRCC. He said discussions have been held on ways to better support that position.

TIMETABLE AGENDA – 4:45 PM – PUBLIC HEARING

Executive Director Benjamin Rae gave a presentation on the 2024 budget. He reviewed the preliminary budget numbers – total to be levied is \$2,447,764. He showed the impact on home value, for a home of \$268,800 the estimated park taxes will be \$219.68. He showed the sample property tax statement, showing with the evaluation change there would be a little less than 1% of property tax change for the average home. He then showed the mill levy history with mills levied of 18.37 equating to 4.67% change from previous year. He showed the 9 largest park districts showing each of their mill levy, dollars levied, and budget, saying that we the lowest for mill levies. Director Rae said statewide we are only allowed to levy 38 mills and 5 on our projects fund. He said we are ranked 37 smallest increases out of the 50 districts statewide – we are on the more conservative side. President Scott Karsky thanked Benjamin and asked if anyone was present to speak or give a written comment on the 2024 budget, he asked 3 times. With no one present to speak he closed the public hearing at 4:45 pm. President Karsky said the final budget will be approved at 7:30 am on Friday, October 6.

BUSINESS/FINANCE

August Financial – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmass; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the August financial. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Stevenson). Motion carried.

Gress Complex Electrical Upgrade – Director Rae reviewed his executive summary saying that the lights for diamond 3 run from the control panel in the concessions building. The lights need to be moved from that panel to the panel with the other field lights. The concessions building and lights for the fields will then be on separate meters. He said the change is required by MDU and if the change is not made, the meter will be run at a higher rate and the expected monthly bill would be approximately \$2,000. Director Rae said the electrical upgrades are well justified to pay the \$20,000 rather than include in additional electrical costs. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Tim Daniel to approve the Gress Complex Electrical Upgrade as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Stevenson). Motion carried.

Employee Health Insurance Discussion - Executive Director Benjamin Rae gave a presentation on employee health insurance. He said the biggest challenge over the past few years has been increasing costs to premiums. The biggest priority of the employee committee is the out-of-pocket premium and keeping that low. He showed the current benefits vs. proposed benefits of a high deductible plan with an HSA. He said we are trying to control costs and keep flexible, putting more decisions back on the employee. He said by doing this, the bottom line was that we would be able to stay within the preliminary budget to accommodate this change along with more flexibility for employees. Discussion followed on deductible and out of pocket maximums. Director Rae said that this falls within the budget but he's looking for a consensus on direction. President Scott Karsky said the board is in agreement with the staff recommendation.

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Benjamin Rae stated that he is working with Prairie Engineering out of Bismarck on an HVAC review of this building. He said HVAC is our number one priority for use of sales tax dollars. He also added that he is meeting with Marathon Petroleum on a donation that will go toward the Crooked Crane Trail.

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

ADJOURNMENT – MOTIONED BY: Jo Marie Kadrmass; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 pm. Upon vote, all aye. Motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Clerk

President