

**Park Board Meeting
August 2, 2023**

Pursuant to due call and order, the Board of Park Commissioners, Dickinson Park District, met for a Special Meeting at 7:30 am, Wednesday, August 2, 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. Commissioner Jo Marie Kadrmas was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Approve Preliminary Budget – Executive Director Benjamin Rae said yesterday we received our health insurance information. We put a 5% increase in the budget and the increase came in at 16%. We want to make commissioners aware that we will have to move things around to work on that and we've started to discuss alternative options. We must decide on insurance by September 20. He said he recently spent time at the City Commission meeting to present and made requests for funding and the commission made recommendations which he thought were good for the district. He said last night they passed these things for 2023 as a budget amendment. For 2023, amendments include transferring \$50,000 in ARPA funds and \$500,000 of half cent sales tax dollars to the Park District. Future funding in their 2024 budget they agreed to up the project funding dollars to \$325,000 as requested. They agreed to transfer \$100,000 in ARPA funds for 2024 projects and \$450,000 towards operations and maintenance and an additional \$500,000 for WRCC projects. For 2025, they will transfer \$100,000 in ARPA funds, \$500,000 for operations and maintenance and WRCC projects and an additional \$350,000 for other projects. Starting in 2026 our plan is once bond is paid off the city will transfer half of the half cent sales tax dollars to the district that we can use for quality-of-life projects. It would equate to \$1.5-1.7 million dollars each year. Director Rae said the City Commission was very receptive. He put out the numbers and a plan moving forward, and they took the plan and used it as a basis and added additional. The first year without the bond payment will be 2026. He would like to prioritize projects for WRCC and have a laid-out plan of when and how to do those projects next year. He said he feels we should put 20 percent of the capital levy into projects. Commissioner Keller asked if the half percent sales tax is tied specifically to WRCC. Director Rae said yes, it is tied to WRCC but he will meet with legal counsel to discuss what we are allowed to do with those funds. Director Rae stated that we have presented information on the preliminary budget that will go to the county by the August 10 deadline. We'll have a public hearing in September and approve the final budget thereafter. Commissioner Tim Daniel asked about insurance premiums, what year are we. Director Rae said this is year 3. Finance/HR Manager Patty Riely said it was good premiums that were locked in for 2 years and the 3rd year it was evaluated and increased. Discussion followed on the increases and how they are determined. Benjamin said by joining the trust we understood the goal was to spread risk across the entire trust, however, they are breaking down the risk by entity. He said our claims level has put us in the highest tier. Patty Riely said she put out calls to Sanford and Blue Cross for quotes. She said we may need to give one year's notice to get out of the trust and we will lose our buy in to the trust if we opt out. More discussion followed. President Scott Karsky asked if there were any other questions on the preliminary budget. He entertained a motion. MOTIONED BY: Zach Keller; SECONDED BY: Nic Stevenson to approve the 2024 Preliminary Budget as presented. Roll call vote: Ayes-4; Nays-0; Absent-1 (Kadrmas). Motion carried.

Review Fee Schedule – Director of Recreation/Facilities Caleb Burgard reviewed the proposed 2024 fee schedule that will be on the agenda in August. He said we've considered the cost of supplies and wage increases, along with facility usage. We also tried to coincide with what has been done in previous years. We usually go on a two-year cycle for programs and facility increases. He reviewed each item that is recommended to increase. Programming recommended increases were aquatic lessons and lifeguard certifications. Director Rae noted that we waive lifeguard certification fees for our staff. Director Burgard said other programming increases are the tennis tournament, increased by \$5 to line up with other tournaments; play park, art classes, sports mixer, and safety city, all due to the cost of supplies and wage increases. He said they identified Safety City for an increase as a youth program that loses more than 60% of its direct costs. He said Patterson Lake daily fee increased by \$1 and cabin lease payment by \$300 as well as park shelter reservations are due to increase. Director Burgard then reviewed adult programming. Recommended increase for adult basketball that has higher expenses due to officials, increase by \$5. He explained that the Coca-Cola Blue Hawk Tournament was as adult tournament that no longer brings in a lot of revenue and so the

conversation went to move to a youth basketball tournament to become more profitable as requested by Pete Stanton from Dickinson State University. The fee goes to \$200 to coincide with other youth basketball tournaments. He said racquetball lessons will be discontinued due to low enrollment. He recommends a \$5 increase for the self-paced triathlon along with the lazy river 5k recommended to increase by \$5. He reviewed WRIC, Heart River Retreat and Veterans Pavilion saying that the ice center going up by \$50 for a daily rental along with an increase of clean-up cost by \$25. Private ice facility rental recommended to increase by \$10 and school ice rental to go up by \$1 along with skate rental. Heart River Retreat and Veterans Pavilion recommended to increase by \$20. Commissioner Nic Stevenson said his only comment is to make sure we are being profitable; we are well below what others charge for rentals in Dickinson. Director Burgard reviewed the user group recommended fee changes. He said for Badlands Big Sticks we have not increased since they started, recommended increase of \$1,000. Adult hockey league increased to \$70, Dickinson Dolphins recommend going up \$1/lane/hour; DSU baseball recommended increased by \$5 per game; Green 19 to go up by \$350. He went on to review Heart River Golf Course saying that we wanted to stay consistent with what has been done in the past, we left green fees alone for 2024, increased cart rentals by \$1 and \$2 due to cost of fuel and servicing of carts, handicap increase to \$40, golf storage increase by \$50, Heart River Shootout increase of \$50 and Labor Day Classic, recommending going to option of 2 fees rather than broken down the way it is now. Discussion was held on golf tournaments. Commissioner Tim Daniel said the Club Championship when it was match play was greater attended, in his opinion match play is what more people want instead of stroke play. Commissioner Zach Keller said getting more involvement in sponsorship might be helpful as well. Director Caleb Burgard then reviewed the WRCC fee schedule. Daily fees going up by \$1, haven't raised since 2018. Punch card admissions increase by \$5. He reviewed 3-month, semester and annual, all increasing by \$5 for 3-month and \$20 for annual. He reviewed drop ins and other fees saying there are no checks and balances on what a person is doing when they come in, i.e., they pay for a lap swim but then use the facility for other things. The goal is to charge a daily fee or membership only for the facility except for youth activities like kids fit. He said he and Executive Director Rae have been working on the financials to give an idea of how many people pay a daily fee versus a drop-in fee. Director Rae said, the overwhelming majority is paying the daily fee instead of drop-in fee. Commissioner Stevenson said standardizing is the way to go so you don't have to regulate and it will simplify for staff. Director Burgard said ultimately, we want to entice people to get a membership as well. He said on the adverse side there could be kick back from patrons. He also recommended an increase in room rentals and birthday party packages. He reviewed personal training and dietician services, no increases recommended. He stated that this is for review only – we'll ask for approval at the regular meeting in August. President Scott Karsky said he doesn't see anything too drastic and thinks it is in line with what is needed. Commissioner Stevenson asked about the golf course fees if we are in line with other courses. Commissioner Daniel said we are very reasonable and compared to other courses we are cheaper but not out of the ballpark. Director Rae said keeping in line with what our cost to do business is, we try to balance and be competitive in the market. He said for the last 2 years we've been ahead of our revenue expectations. Commissioner Zach Keller said he believes we can charge more if the environment gets better, if we provide a better customer experience, he would be more comfortable charging a higher rate.

President Scott Karsky said there is some social buzz about the water on the Eagles Park Trail. Director of Buildings/Grounds Craig Pearson said normally it is dry, the small bridge was put there to help with the times when water collects there. President Karsky asked for that to be looked at as the area is highly used. Director Pearson said he will look into the issue.

Adjournment – MOTIONED BY: Tim Daniel; SECONDED BY: Zach Keller to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 am. Upon vote, all aye. Motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Clerk

President