

VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, May 14, 2019 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida

PRESENT: Chairman, Richard Yemm; Vice Chairman, Sue Dinunno; Members: Judy Jones, Bobbi Burdick, Brooke Malone and Alternate Member Garrett MacMillan **Also Present** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak; Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Excused Absence: Greg Holtan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yemm called today's meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) March 12, 2019

Mrs. Dinunno made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2019, Recreation Commission meeting. Mrs. Burdick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Review of the Recreation Departments Proposed Budget

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, stated that the Recreation Commission members received a packet of information he prepared (on file in the City Clerk's office). For the General Fund, he was asked to provide a flat budget. He said he will go over the budget worksheet first and without going through each line item, it is about the same as last year. They adjusted a few items up or down depending on the category. The biggest increase was for the lifeguards, because several of them are, or have become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Another item with a significant increase is the playground maintenance, which includes adding new mulch, repairing some slides, etc.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if they use rubber mulch. Mr. Slezak replied no, they use more of a plant mulch, which is recreational grade and it meets the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Ms. Jones stated that based on what she sees it does not look like they will be hiring any additional staff. Mr. Slezak replied that is correct, the staff will remain the same.

Mr. Yemm asked what will happen with the utilities. Mr. Slezak replied that the utilities were already lowered in the 2018/2019 budget and they expect that figure to remain the same.

Mrs. Burdick asked if they will be operating the fountain at Royal Palm Pointe this summer. Mr. Slezak replied yes. He reported that it costs the City an average of \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year to run the fountain. Mr. Yemm asked how many pumps are operating now. Mr. Slezak replied hopefully all seven (7).

Mr. Yemm commented that he believes the \$17,000 listed for the janitorial services is low. Mr. Slezak explained that the Purchasing Department puts all the Recreation facilities out for bid and this is what they got. They get what they pay for and depending on the site, most of them are cleaned every night.

Mr. Yemm said that some of the new rates are now kicking in. Mr. Slezak said that is correct, some of them started in October and others started in January.

Mr. Slezak explained that the covered pavilion rentals at the three (3) beach Parks are becoming interesting. They were going to start charging a fee to use the covered pavilions, but that did not work out. Now people can rent them and the numbers keep going up every weekend. The most popular Parks are Jaycee and Humiston and there are a total of 16 pavilions at these two (2) Parks. They average four (4) to seven (7) rentals per day on the weekends. Mr. Yemm asked if they are half day or full day rentals. Mr. Slezak replied that they only offer full day rentals, because they do not have enough Park attendants to clean up between rentals. He said most of the rentals are on the weekends and every Friday afternoon a list is posted at each of the Parks indicating what pavilions are rented and when. The people who rent them usually want specific pavilions and some are very popular. Mr. Yemm asked if there has been any confrontation. Mr. Slezak replied absolutely none and that is because they have signs posted telling people to look at the list to see if the pavilion is being rented or not. Humiston is a lot tougher, because there are only two (2) covered pavilions. Jaycee Park has a number of pavilions that are being utilized, but they might not have been the ones people specifically wanted. Ms. Jones asked about the big pavilion at Riverside Park. Mr. Slezak replied that both the Grand Pavilion and the picnic pavilions are being rented. He explained that this will really start to increase as they expand out into Riverside Park with the rentals. They are taking it slow, so that it does not overwhelm the public, the Recreation Department, or the City Council. Mr. Yemm said that he understands that ultimately they want to hire someone to oversee the pavilion rentals utilizing the proceeds from the rentals. Mr. Slezak replied that is correct. Right now, they have a permanent part time employee who does clerical and administrative work who would fit in to that position.

Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, stated that the pavilion rentals have been crazy, but she believes they need to hire another maintenance person.

Mrs. Malone asked if that figure for a maintenance person is included in his reports. Mr. Slezak replied yes. Mrs. Malone asked Mr. Slezak if she is correct in seeing that there is a \$571,000 deficit from where he is expected to be and what he currently has. Mr. Slezak replied yes that is correct. Mrs. Malone asked what figure does he anticipate for next year with the increase of rental facilities. She knows it is not \$500,000, but would this increased revenue cover an employee's salary. Mr. Slezak replied that he was looking at the overall figures and comparing it to what he anticipates for this time next year. If the pavilion rentals grow as he expects there might be enough income to cover a full time and a part time employee.

Mrs. Bursick asked if Pocahontas Park can be rented out for birthday parties. Mr. Slezak explained that how they handle it is if groups have 50 or more people, then they can get a permit to use the Parks, but they do not rent the Parks. They have recently had some issues downtown and around Pocahontas Park and until those issues are resolved, the parties will probably be at other locations.

Mr. Yemm stated that it looks like the items at the end of the list are mostly lifeguard related. Mr. Slezak replied that these items are considered smaller capital equipment and some of this equipment might be moved to a five-year capital account, but he will utilize the expertise of the Finance Department to sort this out. Mr. Yemm asked if the lifeguard radios are a priority. Mr. Slezak replied that all of the radios used by their emergency services and even Public Works will need to be changed over to the new megahertz system by the 2020/2021 budget year. Some of the lifeguard radios are wearing out and it is not worth having them repaired, so they are replacing them as needed. Mr. Slezak said the communication system is county wide and that is very important especially for the first responders and Law Enforcement.

Mr. Slezak said that the five-year capital plan list is somewhat bland, but it is work that needs to be done. He explained that Mr. Brian Heady, City resident, visited many locations in the City, he took pictures, and then made a very good presentation to the City Council. He saw a lot of things that have been neglected and he raised some good points. The City Council asked for the City Manager and the Recreation Department to go around to all of the Recreation Department sites and do a full report on what they deem necessary to be taken care of that would not be considered a five-year capital project. He believes that just about everything on the list will be done in the next five (5) years even though this is a big list. As they go through the list, they will prioritize the items by importance and by time frame. There were even some items they determined could be done now and they are on a separate list that the Public Work's department will be working on.

Mr. Yemm asked what is ProViewer. Mr. Slezak explained that it is a special program used by the Public Works and Engineering Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department. It is an aerial mapping program that allows them to create maps of City properties, which can show how many trash receptacles, pavilions, benches, parking spaces, lights, etc., there are. Prior to 2007 the Public Work's department use to take care of all the repairs and maintenance work, but due to the economy and staff cut backs a lot of these projects will need to be done by the private sector.

Mr. Yemm asked if there is a recommended number of trash bins at each of the Parks based on the density or size. Mr. Slezak replied that he does not know that answer, but he would assume that the Parks Department has some type of formula they go by.

Ms. Jones said at one of their meetings a guest spoke about individuals or clubs adopting Parks and she asked if anything has become of that suggestion. Mr. Slezak explained that occasionally they get assistance from schools, service clubs, and non-profit organizations, such as the United Way's Day of Caring, or cleanup projects, and the Eagle Scouts who do community projects. Mrs. Howard said that they definitely take advantage of people who are willing to help.

Mrs. Dinunno said that on page three (3) for the Riverside Park projects it lists benches. She asked if there are benches in the area Under the Oaks. Mr. Slezak not in the area Under the Oaks, but other parts of Riverside Park like the exercise/walking trails and Veterans Memorial Island Sanctuary. Mr. Yemm asked if any of the organizations that use the area Under the Oaks ever donate benches to the Park. Mr. Slezak said that people have donated benches to Riverside Park, but in the area Under the Oaks benches might interfere with the larger community events if they

are placed in the wrong spot. Mrs. Dinunno agreed that Under the Oaks is not conducive to having permanent benches.

Mrs. Malone said there is nothing new on the list for the (5) year capital improvements except for an expansion of the Center Stage building. Mr. Slezak said that is correct. Mrs. Howard said the expansion to the Center Stage building is to make more room for the parent's viewing room.

Mrs. Malone asked Mr. Slezak if he had any other items he did not put on this list especially after Mr. Heady made his presentation to the City Council and showing the neglect. She said it would be encouraging to her that while the attention is on Recreation to try to incorporate something even bigger. She asked if the Recreation Department has tossed around anything new for the future that is innovative and forward thinking. She is talking about something more than a maintenance project to bring everything back to where it should be. There are multitudes of other options they could look at for recreational play that other beach towns in Florida are currently providing. She asked if they could add something new to this five (5) year list. Mr. Slezak said there are a couple of things he knows of that could be added to this list right now. The first item is the four (4) acre extension to Charles Park, which would provide recreational opportunities. The second item would be to expand the Center Stage building, which would allow for more participation. Mrs. Howard said that when she thinks about recreation her thoughts go to Leisure Square. She would like to incorporate some type of splash pad at Leisure Square to attract more families. The skate park is still in the works and she would like the gym/exercise facility expanded and have a window added.

Mrs. Malone stated that Leisure Square is still a huge hot button for many people and it is a struggle for the Recreation Department. Leisure Square is receiving a lot of attention right now, so they need to take advantage of that. The Recreation Department is creating some new financial opportunities for itself with the new rental program and that income could make its way back to Leisure Square. They need to look at Leisure Square as more than just a community pool, a community space, and a summer camp and find ways to put it in front of the City Council and have them fix it. Leisure Square is in one (1) of the most demographically defined middle and lower income areas and it is within walking or biking distance from anywhere in the City. She would love to see a plan of attack to turn Leisure Square into something great and take the target off it. If they add a new area for gymnastics that is only one (1) small part of the entire facility that is being targeted. There is a possibility that some cash flow could be designated to Leisure Square. If they do not want to give up on Leisure Square then they need to be prepared to fight for it and make some dynamic changes as part of the plan, or be prepared to go down the same path they have been traveling.

Mrs. Dinunno asked what ever happened to the idea of a mural going on the long wall at Leisure Square. Mr. Slezak replied that the mural idea is still out there, but it has not progressed.

Mr. Yemm asked to move onto Mr. Slezak's priority list. Mr. Slezak explained that this list is just about the same as the previous list, but with a little bit extra. The extra items are Charles Park, Center Stage, Riverside Park, the splash pad, and the Skate Park.

Mrs. Dinunno asked what is the status on getting lights installed at the Pickleball courts. Mr. Slezak replied that Pickleball University is currently raising money to make that happen. Mrs. Dinunno explained that she got an ear full from an individual who does not even play Pickleball. This person has lived in Vero Beach for 50 years and knows that there used to be lights there and

they believe it should be up to the City to replace them. Mr. Slezak said philosophically and economically at this point in time with the Pickleball University group the opportunity needs to come from the private sector to make that happen. Mrs. Dinunno commented that the City is willing to put \$200,000 into tennis, but nothing into pickleball. Mr. Slezak stated that some of the figures on his report are a little high, but the work will need to be done. He stated that they are working on a public/private partnership with a group to help with upgrades to the Riverside Tennis facilities, so they will see what happens.

Mr. Slezak reported that last year, across the board there were \$5.6 million dollars of unfunded capital projects in the City's General Fund. In addition to the items they just discussed and getting the basic times back to where they should be, they will need people to help maintain these items. If they start looking at the boardwalks, pavilions, benches, trash bins, etc. they all have to be weighed and it all comes out of the General Fund. He said that he missed a couple of items, which will also be priority items. One (1) of them will be the replacement of the portable stage. It will need to be replaced really soon and it will cost \$100,000 to \$120,000. Another item will be the sand filtration system for the pool, which will be about \$100,000. It was replaced back in 2000 or 2001, but it will need to be replaced again.

Mrs. Malone asked if the days are gone with children being able to take a few dollars to go hang out with friends at the community pool. Mr. Slezak replied that during the summer they get some activity at the pool, but if children are under the age of 17 they need to have a consent form signed by a parent and if children are under the age of 15 they need to have a parent with them.

Mr. Yemm asked to move onto the page of information for future possible personnel and operations. Mr. Slezak stated that they will not see much growth within the City, but the growth of tourism in the County is increasing. Once the work is completed on the boardwalks and the Recreation facilities, they will need personnel to handle the general maintenance, such as touch up painting, fixing lights, and keeping up with things when they start to show wear and tear. He estimates in the next couple of years that they will need to hire a maintenance person. He can also see having a permanent part time person brought up to a full time position in order to handle the pavilion rentals and the new programs.

Mrs. Burdick asked how did the City justify cutting the Recreation departments maintenance and custodial staff. Mr. Slezak replied that they told him he had to eliminate a certain amount of full time positions. Mrs. Burdick said but the same amount of work was still there. Mr. Slezak replied yes, the work was still there. The City looked at the budget and determined what the highest priority was and at that time, that is what happened. They have gotten some of those positions back, but he knows that the private sector is going through the same thing.

Mr. Yemm suggested they do an economic approach to the two (2) positions he is forecasting. He asked if a full time maintenance person would cost \$60,000 to \$70,000 per year with salary and benefits. Mr. Slezak replied yes. Mr. Yemm asked what does it cost the City per year by not doing the maintenance. Mr. Slezak said that is a hard figure to know, but he would think it is about \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year. Mr. Yemm said so they will be paying \$60,000 for an employee who will be doing \$25,000 worth of work, or possibly more. Mr. Slezak replied yes, but this person would also help with the community events and it will help cut down on the overtime they are currently paying. He said he does not believe they will get the full \$60,000 back from a maintenance person, but if they look at the other permanent part time employee for the pavilion rentals, they might be very close at covering that cost if not more. He stated that their number one

(1) position to fill is a maintenance person. If they keep their facilities looking good, the more rentals they will get. Mrs. Dinunno asked if they would ever share their maintenance employees with other departments. Mr. Slezak replied that is a possibility. He stated that right now they have two (2) maintenance employees.

Mrs. Malone said realistically they would not have had half the amount of repairs on that list if they would have had the maintenance staff to maintain them. She said they need to start tracking and creating a revenue stream to show how it can work over the years. Mr. Slezak said he agrees with her about creating a revenue stream. Mrs. Malone said that he has already started that with the pavilion rentals.

Mrs. Malone asked if the tower and equipment listed in the last paragraph is the Humiston Beach Lifeguard tower. Mr. Slezak replied no, that is for an additional tower to go either at the end of Jaycee Beach or Sexton Plaza. He explained that the Vero Beach Lifeguard Association (VBLA) has a private donor for the Humiston Beach tower.

Mr. Yemm said that all of the Recreation Commission members need to make suggestions that are outside of what has already been discussed. He would like their thoughts on what they would like to see in the Recreation Department and provide some innovative ideas for them to explore.

Mrs. Malone stated that the City has one (1) year to prepare for the Sean White phenomenon, because in the summer of 2020 street skating is going to be in the Olympics. It does not have to be what the Skate Park Alliance is trying to do, but they will need something. Once this hits, all the children will be skating anywhere they can with or without approval, because it is urban street skating that is being featured. She is not sure if any of the Commission members have seen the new types of skate parks, but they combine urban sports and art that are designed for skating, jumping, and climbing. It might be an opportunity for artists to design climbing structures that children can interact with, but also have an artist look. People will come to see something odd, neat, and interactive and parents will not yell at their children for climbing on it. They are made of concrete and steel, so they are indestructible and maintenance free. She has seen other cities that are designing stationary trash and recycling receptacles that are made out of concrete and they are maintenance free. She said splash pads normally require a lot of maintenance, but there are commercial grade water play centers that do not require an underground pump system. They could design smaller interactive water play areas with a few hose bibs that have protective coverings so people do not trip on them. As a Recreation Commission, they need to advocate the City being bike friendly. It will start with the City providing safe places for people to park and store their bikes, because people should be able to get anywhere in this town on a bike. That is something much bigger than where they are at, but it is something they need to think about for the future.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if the bike rental idea ever took off. Mr. Slezak replied that the Live Like Cole Foundation is still working on it. Mrs. Burdick asked if they are for the beach area. Mr. Slezak stated that there will be multiple locations.

Mrs. Malone stated that there are a lack of places for families to go that are somewhat contained. They have the beaches and parks, but not air-conditioned rental areas that are versatile. If they do not think forward, they will be scrambling to catch up with other communities, especially with being a bike friendly community. They need to look at other towns like ours and see what they

have done. She would love to see them make the changes to Leisure Square, but if they cannot get people on board to make it happen then they will need to dump it.

Mr. Yemm said he agrees that the facilities need to be improved in order to attract people.

Mrs. Malone praised Mr. Slezak for the great job he has done over the past six (6) months. For him to make this type of shift in how he is handling his department is wonderful. He can use that to his advantage and take it to the City Council.

Mrs. Malone asked Mrs. Dinunno if there are any local artists who might be interested in creating more public artwork like three dimensional moving sculptures and innovative designs to grab people's attention. She suggested that the artists do some research to find ideas. Mrs. Dinunno said that there are many people in the art community that are interested in doing murals, which are popping up everywhere. There are also a number of young artists in the community who still work, so they do not have the time to volunteer except for on the weekends.

Mr. Slezak stated that the budget hearings with the City Council will be the week of July 8th.

Mr. Yemm said they discussed holding their next meeting to get input from the Recreation Department staff. Mr. Slezak stated that meeting will fall in the middle of summer camp and they are so busy. He said they have talked with their staff and their ideas are already included in this list, so he is not sure if that meeting is necessary.

Mrs. Dinunno said that the Recreation Departments energy is lacking and the "just trying to survive" mentality is eating them alive. There is a loss of forward momentum due to a lack of support by the City Council and a lack of funding. Mrs. Howard said that is true. Mr. Slezak said that this group is trying to move forward and it is more challenging for some. Mr. Slezak said that he looks at recreation a little differently and there is one (1) big positive thing that he sees. The Recreation staff brings happiness to all the people and he loves watching how those people come back year after year. They appreciate it and are thankful for the opportunities they had with the Recreation Department. Mrs. Dinunno suggested that they make a video to show the City Council, so they can experience the happiness and the energy that the Recreation Department brings. Mr. Slezak said that some City Council members will come and see the facilities, and others will not, some will see the happiness and some might not, and some will only look at the money.

Mr. Yemm said that the cutbacks in 2008 did significant damage to the City and it hurt everything going forward. They are still feeling it and the challenge is how do they recover. The big battle has always been is do they raise taxes to provide services.

Mr. Slezak said he has found that the most influential information being directed to the City Council comes from the public.

Mr. Yemm said it sounds like they do not need to meet next month. Mr. Slezak replied that what they normally do is have this budget discussion and then they meet again in August or September to go over what took place at the budget hearings. He said if anyone has any additional ideas, suggestions, or recommendations in the meantime to let him know.

Mrs. Malone asked Mr. Slezak if all these items will have estimated costs attached to them and somewhat completed by the budget hearings. Mr. Slezak replied yes. He explained that all the

estimates and the completed lists will be put together by May 30, 2019. He will be meeting with the Department Heads from the General Fund group, the Finance Director, and the City Manager to go over all the capital projects.

5. OLD BUSINESS

None

6. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S MATTERS

These items were not discussed.

- A) Recap of the Spring Break Cheer Camp**
- B) Recap of the 59th Annual Easter Egg Hunt – April 13, 2019**
- C) Summer Camp Registration**
- D) Gymnastics Registration – June 15, 2019**
- E) July 4th Event**
- F) 45th Annual Aerial Antics Circus**

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. MacMillan said that with the idea on the bike rentals he would recommend putting stations at Jaycee Park and Humiston Park. Due to the parking issues in that area he believes that bike rentals would be income generating, because people do not want to move their cars and lose their parking space. Mr. Slezak stated that he will check with the Live Like Cole group to see if those are areas they are looking at.

Mrs. Burdick said that she recently attended an event at the Dog Park. She said that the Mayor was invited and he praised the Dog Park repeatedly for all the support they receive from the community. While she was there, several big donations were announced and the Dog Park group makes sure that the City Council knows what they are doing and the amount of support they are receiving.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

Mr. Yemm announced that they will not meet again until August, unless something comes up and they need to hold a Special Call meeting.

- A) Next Recreation Commission Meeting Date – June 11, 2019**

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

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