



**Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District Special Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, April 28, 2022 5:30 pm**  
**In Person at the Hood River Fire Station Community Room –**  
**1785 Meyer Pkwy. Hood River, OR 97031**

**Minutes**

Hood River City Council, Hood River County Board of Commissioners, the Port of Hood River Board of Directors, and The Hood River County School Board have been invited to participate in this meeting. A quorum of these boards may be present. No binding decisions will be made.

**In Attendance:**

**Board:** Ana Cavaleri, Nan Noteboom, Suzanne Cross, Mike McCarthy,

**Staff:** Mark Hickok, Marcie Wily

**Government Agencies:** Arthur Babitz, Mike Oates, Les Perkins (Hood River County BOC), Mike Fox (Port of Hood River), Mark Zanmiller, Megan Saunders (Hood River City council), Kate McBride (HR Mayor), Michael McElwee (Port of Hood River), Rich Polkinghorn (Hood River County School District Superintendent)

**Call Special Meeting to Order**

**1. Strategic Discussion Regarding Future Funding Strategies**

Cavaleri (90 mins)

**Action:** Provide feedback

Cavaleri gave recap of some of the major goals of the Parks Master Plan: rebuild the aquatic center; develop a sustainable long-term operation for funding; extending and connecting trails; acquire land on the Westside of Hood River; and partner with other agencies. The Parks District has implemented quite a few of these goals, like extending trails, purchasing land on the Westside of Hood River, and taking on recreation programming, but some other items, like finding sustainable funding and rebuilding the pool, remain a high need and priority. Cavaleri presented some of the Parks District's options for funding a pool and long-term operations and welcomed feedback from the group on the various options.

**Option A: Dissolve this Parks District and Reform into a new District and Pass a Capital Bond in the same election**

This option creates a new permanent levy rate which could create significant funding for parks and recreation. Revenue could be used for operation and maintenance purposes. It would require an additional step to dissolve and reform and there's the risk that voters would elect new board members with a shift in vision and strategy. Capital needs would be met with a separate bond. All three would need to pass and they could compete against each other and be confusing for the voters.

**Options B: Local levy and Capital Bond in same election**

A local option levy would establish maintenance and operation funding for parks and trails and may be imposed for five years. Levies are the first to be affected by compression. Levies can be imposed in addition to the current permanent levy rate the District imposes. If the levy is not renewed by voters, then funding for essential services is lost.

A capital bond raises funds for capital investments. Costs are spread out over a long period of time, allowing for current and future residents to help fund the projects. Capital bonds may not be used for maintenance and operations. The risk for bonds is that the new projects may not have adequate operational funding. This option may be easier to pass than redistricting, it has a later timeline. Details would have to be solidified by mid-August for a November election. However, both options must pass and might compete against one another with voters.

**Options C: Capital bond first then levy or redistricting**

Only one item is on the ballot at a time, when both items are needed. Voters might be confused on why they are seeing a second ballot measure. If the second measure does not pass it could lead to the district not having enough funds to operate the new facilities.

**Options D: Levy or redistricting first then capital bond in separate election**

Operations are stabilized and ready to take on new infrastructure, but voters might be confused on why they are raising their taxes again on the second ballot.

The panel deliberated on the options. Some suggested focusing on building a new pool only and keeping the pool build out simple. They expressed concern about the District not being able to operate their parks and trails if the focus would be on the new pool.

Mayor McBride expressed interest in consolidating all the parks, which was a recommendation in the Parks Master Plan. Other leaders expressed support, saying that it would show the public that their government agencies are working together to use their tax dollars efficiently by streamlining the service to the public. Others voiced that all the agencies are facing similar funding struggles of financing the operation of their facilities and trying to keep up with the need for new facilities and expanding services. Consolidation would require time to gather the necessary information from participating agencies and perform a study of the best, most efficient way to consolidate.

A Sales tax (Prepared Food Tax) was another key option but may be difficult to pass with voters since there was a lot of opposition to it when the County tried to pass something similar. Arthur Babitz, County Commissioner, stated that since this tax increase will be for parks it will be more palatable to the voters. There is a bigger constituency of voters who want to improve parks in their county, and he believed that this would be a way to tax the tourist coming to Hood River. Oregon tax law is very limited. A prepared food tax is a way to bring outside money in to help fund parks. There would opposition for a food and beverage tax, particularly from local restaurants, as well the food and beverage associations, so messaging and obtaining feedback would be crucial. If this tax is passed and we could borrow against it, there would be no need to re-form the district, so this could be one of the simpler solutions where we just need to ask the voters once for support.

The Parks District thanked all the other groups for participating and giving them such thoughtful discussion. They agreed to consider the conversation and keep the agencies updated on next steps and agreed that meeting was beneficial to work towards common goals.

Adjourn

Approved

Attest

Date

Date

15 June 2022

6/15/2022