



**Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District
Budget Committee Meeting 1
Wednesday, March 21, 2016 5:00 pm
Minutes**

Call Meeting to Order

In attendance Board Members Greg Davis, Matt Rutledge, Glenna Mahurin; District Director Mark Hickok, Interim Assistant Director Marcie Wily; Contract Accountant Monica Morris; Budget Committee Members Anna Cavaleri, Bill Mellow, Paige Rouse; Members from the Public, Heather Staten and Susan Crowley

Davis called the meeting to order at 5:06pm.

1. Welcome/Attendance

Davis introduced Hickok and thanked people on the budget committee for joining the committee. Budget committee members introduced themselves.

2. Review timeline

Hickok reviewed the timeline and packet. Hickok said that he hoped that budget committee members would help inform the decisions about how the Parks Districts budgets.

3. Appoint budget Chair and vice Chair

Hickok stated that it was time to appoint a budget chair and vice chair. He asked Morris to describe the duties of those specific chair members. Morris stated that Budget Committee members are part of a lawfully recognized board. Everyone has equal value. They have to have a quorum to have a meeting and make decision. It is independent of the Parks District Board, so there needs to be an elected chair and vice chair on this lawfully elected board.

Davis asked for nominations. Paige Rouse nominated Bill Mellow. Matt Rutledge seconded. Cavaleri nominated Paige Rouse for the Vice Chair position. Mahurin seconded. Mahurin moved that to appoint the nominated budget committee members. Cavaleri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Budget 101

Morris presented the general premise of government budgeting of balancing resources and requirements. She showed how many governmental agencies can have different types of funds and went through areas of budgeting that are often confusing for people, like transfers in and out of funds. She encouraged questions and said the goal was to have an approved financial plan that is reflective of the goals. She reminded members that this meeting is a quorum, which means that members cannot discuss the budget outside the quorum.

5. Goals, Priorities, and Budget Review

Hickok began by reminding members of the mission of the Parks District. In addition, he presented the District's Guiding Principles, pointing out Guiding Principle number two – that the Parks District will maintain its facilities – the skate park, trails, parks, and that new or other projects wouldn't take away from the operations and maintenance of the existing facilities.

Hickok reviewed the goals of board members from the November session, which included increasing aquatic center seating, aquatic center strategies and funding, exploring partnerships, communication strategy, strategy to acquire Westside Park, trail connectivity, and examining staffing levels.

Hickok reviewed other budgetary item considerations, including staffing and health care. He cited the need to reorganize staffing, while considering possible partnerships with other agencies, growing administrative

needs, cost of living increases and minimum wage impacts. Hickok also wanted the members to examine the District's health care. He compared a sample of like sized districts health care packages to the Parks District and found that the Parks District was at the bottom in terms of benefits. Rutledge asked for revenue structures between some of the other municipalities that were in the comparison to see a full comparison. Rouse wanted to see what the pay rate was of the other comparable municipalities to get a big picture of the overall benefit package. Rouse suggested that if the stipend continues that it would be important to figure in the annual adjusted increase, as health care costs increase every year. Cavaleri asked about the other types of plans that might be available, like governmental pool plans, that would be appropriate for a District like our, especially since the Parks District is small. Morris also pointed out that an employer requirement is to make sure that the plan is affordable for employees, but she stated that the numbers are hard to determine.

Hickok reviewed the System Development Charges balances, District Priorities, and requests from other agencies. The District is planning to spend SDC funds for Golden Eagle Park, the Dog Park, and the Multi Agency Master Plan Update. He reported that the city is requesting funds to replace Children's Park due to the aging and deterioration of the structure. In addition, the Port has requested funds to expand Nichols Boat Basin, purchase modular floats and widen the Port trail by the Best Western. Hickok encouraged members to think about future SDC needs, especially with the Westside Community Concept Plan and the planning that is going on future. The concept plan includes a few neighborhood parks and the cost of those parcels will be expensive, so how the District will be able to acquire this land will be challenging.

Hickok talked about the maintenance level of service and how various agencies try to deal with maintenance issues. Hickok stated that the Parks District is often reactive versus proactive in terms of maintenance and used the west wall of the aquatic center facility as an example. Due to heavy winds and age, the west wall received a large tear a year prior that was repaired with patches and a zip ties. He questioned a proactive maintenance strategy in this particular example in light of the fact that the Parks District is undergoing a pool enclosure study and there is a potential for renovation or a new building. Cavaleri questioned whether we had talked to any of the wind sport companies to see if they could engineer a fabric tensioning product that could fix or repair the wall until renovation or expansion was possible.

Morris gave the budget worksheet overview, which she changed some from years' past. The first page is the governmental budget, but those numbers don't say a lot without the detail behind it. General Fund is where the property taxes go, and this fund has three categories: the district, pool and capital outlay. Morris said that to help clarification in the budget, parks and maintenance will be itemized into its own category, effective July 1st, the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Morris reviewed the Aquatic Center funding history by way of a graph to show how much the tax base is helping to support the pool, covering almost half the pool expenses. The rest is being covered by pool revenue.

Cavaleri asked for a distinction between Capital Outlay and Expenditures. Morris explain that Capital Outlay is anything greater than five thousand dollars and has and a useful life longer than a year. Capital Expenditures can fall under outlay. The expenditures would be anything five thousand dollars or greater.

Morris reviewed the SDC Funds and said there will be items to talk about at the next budget meeting.

Morris said that purpose of the Improvement Fund is to act as a savings. Morris said that there doesn't appear to have a directive from the board about how much to save for the Improvement fund. The money coming into this fund comes from General Fund.

The Debt Fund is the final fund Morris reviewed, and it will expire at the end of this year.

Rouse requested what the objectives of the board members and determining her role as a budget

committee. Morris said that budget committee members have equal value to the board of directors. Cavaleri said she felt like the budget committee members were like a checks and balances to the board of directors. Davis said that Hickok’s initial presentation was reflective of what the board had expressed. He expressed that current board priorities included completing current park projects and a plan for the pool upon the completion of the pool enclosure study. Mahurin concurred with Davis’ assessment. Rutledge added as a whole the board is also interested in exploring new partnerships with other agencies that will further benefit the community. In addition, he talked about working with other agencies to develop a multi-agency master plan. Hickok talked about developing a financial strategy for the improvement funds that is disciplined and clear. He also mentioned that along with the pool will be a priority, land acquisition, specifically on the Westside, will be important in the future.

Rouse asked what guidance the staff might need from the budget committee members. Hickok asked if staff was on track with budgeting, particularly around the SDC requests from other agencies. Hickok pointed out that other agencies have helped the Parks District, like the city supporting the use of SDC funds collected in the city to be used outside the Urban Growth Boundary for Golden Eagle Park.

Cavaleri had three questions. She asked about the multi-agency master plan and what the funds allocated in the budget would pay for. Hickok said the Parks District has a master plan that is fairly recent but never adopted by the city or county and that plan could be updated. He said that the scope of work had not been completed yet, but that such a plan would include surveys and new statistics. He also said that there is a Land and Water Conservation Grant that the Parks District could apply for to go towards the plan. Cavaleri asked if the Parks District has polled the community to see whether or not they see the pool as top priority for the District. Davis said that a survey was conducted and it was that confirmed strong interest in maintaining the pool, strong interests in expanding the parks, and no interest in changing or increasing the tax rate. He said that as a result of that survey, the board regrouped and went down the path of undergoing the pool enclosure study. Cavaleri asked for clarification on approving the budget and tax levy. Morris clarified that it’s a legality that required by Oregon to post. It will be an approval the current tax rate for the District to be able to collect next year.

Rouse asked what the main priorities are for the District – pool planning, SDC requests, to the big picture parks project – so that budget committee members can have an idea on what the multi-year approach plan is. Davis concurred by saying that the Parks District budget represents current needs, but that developing a plan for the development of parks in the future would be important, such as the planning for parks in the Westside are.

Rutledge asked if it would make sense to have a budgeted line item for budgeted partnerships and setting a limit for those partnerships. Hickok said that perhaps going forth there should be a standardized format for how the board approves projects and how various municipalities apply for SDC funds.

Mahurin moved to adjourn the meeting. Rouse seconded the motion. All approved.

_____, **Board President**

_____, **Date**

_____, **Attest**

_____, **Date**