

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MINUTES

February 11, 2020

12:00 PM

Currents

600 Cregg Lane

Missoula, MT 59802

Members present: Dale Harris (chair), Johnna Eisenmann, Ross Mollenhauer, Chris Ryan, Sonja Verlanic, John O'Connor

Members absent: Wendy Ninteman

1. Administrative Business

1.1 Roll Call

Staff Present: Donna Gaukler, Ryan Applegate, Shirley Kinsey, Morgan Valliant, Neil Miner, Cassy Gladwin

Others Present: Alexander Camacho, Hanna Siler, Jed Dennison

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

Johanna Eisenmann moved to approve the minutes. Sonja Verlanic seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

1.3 Announcements

John O'Connor announced that he had attended his first Conservation Lands Advisory Committee meeting. John noted there is a lot of passion and interests on the board.

1.4 Public/Guest Comments

No public/guest comment.

2. Action Items

2.1 Enterprise Request Little League

Shirley Kinsey introduced the request to purchase decomposed granite for the softball and baseball infields at Playfair Park. Shirley noted that the fields are managed under a user agreement, separate from the master fee schedule.

Under this agreement, both Mount Sentinel Little League and Garden City Softball Little League receive a reduced rate. Fees generated in the enterprise account are generated from user fees.

Sonja Verlanic - how much is in the enterprise account now?

Shirley Kinsey - fund balance is about \$3,800.

Johann Eisenmann - how much in funds are generated every year?

Shirley Kinsey - around \$2,000 a year.

John O'Connor - how long has it been since their last request?

Shirley Kinsey - it has been a couple of years. This request comes as a safety concern; granite will maintain fields and infrastructure.

Sonja Verlanic - do you anticipate any other requests coming?

Shirley Kinsey - no, only this request.

John O'Connor - will the department bring organizations into the master fee schedule or will they remain separate?

Donna Gaukler - the little league fields are in need of significant redesign; there is an agreement in place to extend current user agreement until master park plan for Playfair Park gets us to the same level of Fort Missoula Regional Park (FMRP). FMRP was developed for user groups. The current delay is from other number of internal projects that department has ; the plan will start with the public process.

Moved by: Johnna Eisenmann

Seconded by: Sonja Verlanic

approve use of enterprise money earmarked for Playfair Little League fields to purchase \$3,200 worth of decomposed granite.

Vote results: Approved

2.2 Enterprise Request for Ropes Course Inspection

Shirley Kinsey introduced the request to expend funds for the annual rope course inspection and potential replacement of belay cables. Replacement of belay cables will not be determined until inspection takes place. Shirley noted the cost for travel is ballpark; shared with other organizations and only if belay cables fail inspection.

John O'Connor - is the inspection required?

Shirley Kinsey - yes, needs to be completed for our liability.

Sonja Verlanic - will funds remain in the account if belay lines do not need replacement?

Shirley Kinsey - yes, but we will still have to pay for the inspection. Total ask for request is \$10,404. Amount for travel could be less because cost is shared; no fee for last year's travel. If belay lines do not pass, company will remain on site after inspection and perform work.

Moved by: Ross Mollenhauer

Seconded by: Chris Ryan

approve the use of ropes course enterprise funds for the annual inspection in the amount of \$1,154. In the event that the belay cables do not pass inspection approval, an additional \$9,250 can be used for replacement cables.

2.3 Enterprise Request for Recreation Program Equipment

Shirley Kinsey introduced the request to purchase recreation equipment for programs (rafts, life jackets, strider bikes, etc.). Revenue in this enterprise fund generates from each program. A percentage from each program registration contributes to this fund; percentage amount varies per program. This enterprise fund was created to help fund equipment that is hard to put on a cyclical maintenance schedule.

Ross Mollenhauer - where are the rafts bought from?

Shirley Kinsey - we are currently working with a local business for costs less than NRS. Trailhead is looking to partner with department on purchase; quotes will be acquired before purchase is made.

Ross Mollenhauer - where does the old equipment go?

Shirley Kinsey - old equipment goes to auction. Donna Gaukler - we are required to surplus it out.

John O'Connor - is the new equipment an upgrade to what department has now?

Shirley Kinsey - yes and no. Purchases will be in addition to what we already have. Equipment will range from new to used (varying number of years old).

Donna Gaukler - purchases will not be made based on brand name.

Ross Mollenhauer - how many years does a raft get? Are there warranties?

Shirley Kinsey - rafts have about a 10 year life span.

Morgan Valliant - its important to note that we receive donated boats; some are already at the end of their life cycle.

John O'Connor - is there concern about the public feelings when spending this amount of money?

Donna Gaukler - the gear will be quality but not shiny; goal is to get gear on cyclical maintenance. The equipment purchased will have the same quality as our older boats when they were purchased; purchases will be standard for industry.

John O'Connor - do you need to spend this much money; same quality out there but less money?

Shirley Kinsey - boats purchased will be commercial; built to withstand use.

Moved by: Chris Ryan

Seconded by: Johnna Eisenmann

approve use of equipment enterprise fund in the amount of \$13,200 to replace needed recreation equipment for programs.

2.4 Request for Special Use Permit Exception

Morgan Valliant introduced a special use permit exception for the 2020 Grizzly Duathlon. Morgan provided background information on special events occurring on conservation lands and the creation of the conservation lands special event use permit.

Morgan noted the conservation lands special event use permit is restrictive; only 4 large events are allowed per year and money from fees is used for restorative purposes.

Dale Harris - how was the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee (CLAC) involved in this permit process?

Morgan Valliant - CLAC developed the permit system but it has been managed by staff. Exceptions to permit rules are referred; do not go through CLAC if the department staff deems event manageable with little impact to conservation lands.

Morgan noted the request today was for allowing use for a single track trail race and fee waiver. Morgan recommended a fee reduction of 15% of entry fees.

Jed Dennison provided background of the Grizzly triathlon and noted the Missoula Athletic Club (MAC) acquired this event. With triathlon numbers down over past years, MAC will hold a duathlon (run, bike, run) this year. Jed provided details of the proposed event, and presented course for run portions and bike portion. Jed provided detail on closures (if any), how routes would be marked, and protocols being set in place to minimize damage to conservation lands.

Ross Mollenhauer - how many participants are you expecting?

Jed Dennison - event will be capped at 300 total.

Jed presented the bike route of the event. Morgan noted the bike portion of event does not require use of conservation lands or special use permit.

John O'Connor - will the Kim Williams trail be closed during race?

Morgan Valliant - no, we will not close the trail.

Jed Dennison - only 20 to 25% of race will take place on city land

Chris Ryan - with a no passing rule; will people be in place to monitor this doesn't happen?

Jed Dennison - yes, individuals will be staged at various points along bike route.

Chris Ryan - what portion of the Mo-z trail will be closed?

Jed Dennison - the lower portion.

Morgan Valliant - the gravel pit section will be closed as well; only a 30 minute closure. The Mo-z trail was constructed 4 feet wide, now roughly 3 feet wide; no concern for damage. The no passing zone restrictions came from MAC and not department. The \$2,000 damage deposit was also set by MAC; our permit only requires \$600.

Ross Mollenhauer - how many events a year do we hold?

Morgan Valliant - 5 large events; 1 is reserved for the City.

Moved by: John O'Connor

Seconded by: Sonja Verlanic

approve the use of the Mo-z trail on Mt. Sentinel for the 2020 Grizzly Duathlon as per the resource plan developed by Missoula Aquatic Club and approved by City Parks Staff.

Vote results: Approved

Moved by: John O'Connor

Seconded by: Chris Ryan

approve a fee reduction for the 2020 Grizzly Duathlon of 15% of entry fees only. As justified by the fact that only 23% of this race is being held on Lands covered under the Conservation Lands special use permit.

Vote results: Approved

2.5 Recreation Scholarship Income Eligibility

Ryan Applegate introduced the request to support increasing eligibility limits for recreation scholarships (grants). The request stems from the department's work on inclusion; using different methods and ways for individuals to participate in our programs. Ryan shared the department is proposing a reduced grant for families and individuals that need assistance but do not qualify for government assistance, or meet the income guidelines used by the Montana Free and Reduced Price School Meals program. The department proposes a reduced grant awarded at 50% of full grant.

Ross Mollenhauer - how many people does the grant cover; how long?

Shirley Kinsey - one grant is issued per family for fiscal year.

Ryan Applegate stated the balance of the fund is currently between \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year. He reviewed sources of funding and noted the department spends/issues between \$15,000 to \$16,000 in grants a year. Last year saw more funds issued/spent than what was brought in. The department has about a 1 to 1.5 year balance reserve and is actively working with the county and searching for other partners to increase funding. Increases to this fund would allow department to reach out to more families and individuals. Research has found cities around country have been increasing income eligibility

John O'Connor - does department have any financial data on number of people this would affect; makeup of users who would be impacted/ number of people who would be eligible?

Ryan Applegate - department only has current number of grants awarded

John O'Connor - where did the 250% come from?

Donna Gaukler - the number is based on research; looking at peer departments for best practices. Department is researching ways to remove barriers, changing forms and policies; going above WIC and SNAP requirements.

John O'Connor - does department have an estimation of impact this will have?

Ryan Applegate - programmatic fees will pay for program now.

Sonja Verlanic - how many people are turned away from grant?

Donna Gaukler- no one is turned away.

Donna Gaukler noted barriers that prevent access for resources. The department examined mapping of program services and found department has broad coverage.

Sonja Verlanic - can the department cover funds if more people come in and request grants?

Ryan Applegate - department has about 2 years of fund balance and funding is increasing a bit. Department needs to look at ways to increase the fund, will have time to act on response of interest and make decisions.

Morgan Valliant - with the increase in programming have you seen an increase in donations?

Ryan Applegate - no.

Morgan Valliant - is there an option to donate when registering?

Ryan Applegate - yes. During research there was the suggestion of creating a committee for grants. There would be a deadline to submit request and committee would review for greatest needs; grant contribution would be applied to user account and accessible when time came to register.

Johanna Eisenmann - review needs to happen more than once a year.

Shirley Kinsey - department receives funds from specialty license plates. There are new State requirements to maintain plates; department is not at risk of losing specialty plate under new requirements.

John O'Connor shared he supports the reach to serve more but additional information needs to be collected. The most vulnerable needs to be protected; not sure department can do that with current information.

Discussion took place regarding remaining fund balance if an increase of grants were awarded; possibility of capping the number of reduced grant amounts awarded the first year; ways to protect the fund for those who need it most;

Alexander Camacho - where does the majority of donations come from?

Ryan Applegate - the largest donations come from specialty plate registration, and city and county contributions.

Donna Gaukler - there are some individual donations as well.

Johanna Eisenmann suggested taking the first year to gather information so it can be reviewed in the second year. John O'Connor suggested the possibility of creating a survey to gather information.

The motion was amended after further discussion took place regarding ways to protect the program fund balance and the percentage used to calculate reduced grant funds awarded.

Moved by: Ross Mollenhauer

Seconded by: Sonja Verlanic

support Missoula Parks and Recreation request to increase income eligibility limits for grants up to 225% of current federal poverty guidelines with a cap of \$7,500 a year.

ABSENT: (1): Wendy Ninteman

3. Presentations/Discussions/Updates

3.1 2020 Priorities; Park Board and Advisory Committee Roles

Item was not discussed.

3.2 Day in the Life - Parks, Trails, Design and Development

Neil Miner introduced himself and provided information on current and upcoming park, trail design and development.

Neil shared there are several master park plans underway. The following master park plans are at various stages: North Riverfront Parks (Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed), Mullan Area, Westside Park/ Lowell School, Redfern Park, Koly Park and Playfair Park. Neil reviewed near complete/ complete projects and highlighted the Drift/ Riverfront Triangle and Mullan (BUILD Grant) projects.

Neil noted the committees he represents the department at: Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Ross Mollenhauer - will roadways and trails be omitted in the Mullan Area since the BUILD grant awarded was less than what was submitted?

Neil Miner - the master plan will be complete at the 30% review. Final decisions based on size of grant received will be made at that time. Initial request was for \$30,000 and \$16,000 was awarded.

Dale Harris - what positions report to you?

Neil Miner - Nathan McLeod reports to me. He is the Parks, Trails, Design and Development Coordinator.

John O'Connor - how long have you been with Parks?

Neil Miner - I have been here 6 years. In my first 4-5 years there was only one subdivision development; rate of current development has increased significantly.

Donna Gaukler noted that due to the level of development occurring it has been difficult advancing the department's projects. Neil has been attending more meeting outside the department than in. He is the department representative for numerous projects.

Dale Harris - what is Nathan working on?

Donna Gaukler - Nathan is actively designing parks, master plans, and neighborhood parks.

Dale Harris - what is your involvement with river access project.

Neil Miner - we are currently waiting on the inter-local agreement, as it is a bond project.

Nathan will take the lead on this project.

3.3 Projects/ Initiatives to Watch

Community Center, Downtown Parks & Trails Planning, Mullan Area Planning, BUILD Grant

Item was not discussed.

3.4 Open Space Update

Morgan Valliant provided an Open Space update on behalf of Grant Carlton, Open Space Program Manager.

Projects current progressing include: Milwaukee Trail extension, finalizing Knife River Ponds parcel transfer, Mount Dean Stone potential parcel acquisition, finalization of the Interlocal agreement for the 2018 Open Space Bond, and updating project evaluation process for Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC).

Morgan noted an environmental assessment (EA) is being conducted on the Knife River ponds parcel. The property does not currently have direct access; working with landowners and the University for access.

Morgan also noted that Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT) will be presenting information to OSAC this month for a potential parcel acquisition located on Mount Dean Stone. FVLT has committed to donate the cost of trail construction on the property, and will build the trail in conjunction with the City. The project looks to be presented at March's Park Board meeting.

Donna Gaukler - government funding may be an option once the EA is completed.

Sonja Verlanic - what is the status for water rights?

Donna Gaukler - we do not have the water rights. The rights were for mining and do not transfer the same way.

3.5 Staff Report - Parks, Trails, Design and Development

4. Future or Held Items

No future/held items were discussed.

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 2:04pm