

Park Board Minutes
May 19, 2020

Members Present: Candy Sullinger, Jamie Whiteis, Bob Simmons, Clark Harris, Andrew Brown, David Parish, Garrett Vanderpool, Scott McCaulley and Scott Wuest

Members Absent: Clark Harris

Staff Present: Cindy Shook, Jason Reinsch and Marsha Fulton

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Candy Sullinger. Andrew Brown made a motion to approve the Park Board minutes dated January 21, 2020. Garrett Vanderpool seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Business:

1. The first item on the agenda was the April financial report. Cindy reported that due to the COVID-19, most revenues were down across the board as some programs had been postponed or cancelled and facilities were closed for nearly six weeks. She indicated that the campground had taken a big hit after getting off to a really good 2020. Overall, campground revenues were down \$87,000 year to date. Another big area that had been affected was spring soccer. The season was cancelled and nearly \$21,000 in revenue was refunded. Cindy added that the department was fortunate that 2019 had been a great year and allowed \$100,000 to be transferred into the internal service fund for the Parks Department. Andrew then asked if the department would be able to get a refund for fees paid to local schools for the soccer season that didn't happen. Cindy explained that the department did not use any outside fields and all practices and games were held at the RecPlex or at city parks.
2. The next item on the agenda was the presentation of the campground occupancy information. Jason opened this by giving a brief overview of the spreadsheet that had been provided to the board that compares revenue from last year to this year starting in March. Jason pointed out that the campground was considerably up in January and February, then started to see a decline in March due to COVID-19. Jason indicated modifications were put in place that included closing the shower house and allowing only self contained units, closing the office to in person check-in and spacing out RV's. Jason closed by saying that the campground lends itself to social distancing and that they were starting to see a significant increase in inquires and stays.
3. The next item on the agenda was the update on the new pickleball court project at Eiserman Park. Cindy stated that the Branson Pickleball Club had raised over \$10,000 to construct the new courts with the Parks Department providing the labor. Cindy noted that the largest expenditures were fencing and paint. In addition, the Parks Department was fortunate to secure a grant to upgrade to LED lighting. She indicated that the three new dedicated pickleball courts had been a very positive project and well received by the community. Candy thanked Cindy for the update and stated she was glad to hear how successful it had been and offered kudos to Cindy and everyone involved.

4. The next item on the agenda was the update on the status of several programs impacted by COVID-19. Cindy stated that a lot had happened over the last few months, including the decision to close parks, trails, facilities and cancel programs. Cindy reported that the Branson RecPlex reopened to the public on May 5 with modifications in place that allowed for social distancing. She notes that the CoxHealth Fitness Center remained closed at this time. Cindy reported that staff had worked hard and stay connected with people around the state to inform themselves as to recommendations and best practices moving forward. A difficult decision was made to cancel the summer day camp program as Cindy felt that under the current CDC guidelines, we could not provide a quality experience. In lieu of summer camp, the staff will be offering a once a week “One Day Fun Day” camp for smaller groups. A series of sports clinics for small groups was also being offered. Plans to offer youth baseball and open the pool in June were in the works with modifications including additional rules and recommendations, safety measures and limited occupancy. Candy remarked that this was a difficult and stressful time for everyone and it was important for everyone to be patient and flexible with the necessary changes.

5. The next item on the agenda was the update on the aquatic center operations plan. Cindy stated that they had looked at many different options for a quality and safe experience at the pool that would allow for social distancing and limited occupancy. She indicated that they would be making the following modifications to the pool this season:

- The pool will be open to the public Tuesday – Sunday.
- Two sessions of open swimming will be provided from 11:00am-2:00pm and 3:00-6:00pm.
- The pool furniture and bathrooms will be sanitized between sessions.
- There will be a limited number of people allowed on the pool deck.
- Chairs will be spaced 6 feet apart.
- Pool session tickets may be purchased online to provide for a touch less entry.

Cindy concluded by saying that a discount would be provided this season due to the reduced time allowed for open swim to the public. She encouraged the board to view a video that was created on Facebook to better explain the pool modifications.

Member’s Report

1. Scott shared that he had gone for a walk during the shut down and that the trail leading into Stockstill did not have a barricade or anything to let people know that the park was closed. Scott suggested that could be needed if this ever happens again. Cindy agreed and thanked Scott for the feedback

2. Garrett asked if there had been an increase in damage done to parks. Cindy responded that thankfully that had not been an issue.

Julie Wolfe made a motion to adjourn. Jamie Whiteis seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 6:00pm.