

**Riverbanks Park Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
26 September 2024**

*In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda is available to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and persons requesting notification; was posted in the lobby of Riverbanks' administration building and was uploaded to Riverbanks' webpage.*

**Attendance Report**

**Commissioners Present:** Bob Davidson, Alana Williams, Deneen Shockley, Cliff Bourke, Jeff Reeves

**Commissioners Absent:** Mike Velasco

**Staff Present:** Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Christie Vondrak, Ashley Harris, Jessica Austin

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The August 15, 2024, Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Shockley motioned to approve the minutes, Davidson seconded, m/c unanimous.

**Chairwoman's Remarks:**

- Welcome back to staff who were in Calgary for the yearly AZA Conference. Proud that Riverbanks was represented in several presentations.

**Finance Report:**

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- August Dashboard Report:
  - Running 20% under anticipated attendance and 10% below prior year. Largely due to July's rain volume and school starting back early. Attendance is improving in September.
  - We ended August with 42,412 member households – 3% below budget and 9% below prior year. We anticipated a dip in membership due to the rate increase that went into effect in Oct-23 and no longer offering free Wild Lights visits with memberships.
  - Earned revenues under budget by 2%, offset by upside in interest income.
  - Expenditures as a whole are in line with budget.
- August Balance Sheet:
  - The average earning interest rate in LGIP for August was 5.5%
  - The first \$40M of bonds sold closed on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Submitted for reimbursement for \$5.8M that did not deposit until September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Will see asset receivable balance reported on line 5 of the Balance Sheet reduce in September financials.
  - The District is carrying a \$6.6M unassigned fund balance into FY25. \$4.8M is State dollars earmarked for capital projects. Chairwoman Williams will request a motion to approve to move \$4.8M to Committed: Capital projects.
  - Proposing a \$1M increase in operational reserve from \$3M to \$4M.
  - Yesterday Society committed \$4M of their unrestricted fund balance to designate to capital reserve for the district. The capital reserve fund balance is now up to \$8.4M, which will be transferred over to District and reflected in September.

Davidson motioned to move \$4.8M from the unassigned fund balance to committed capital projects,

Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous.

Reeves motioned to move \$1M from the unassigned fund balance to operational reserve, Shockley

seconded, m/c unanimous.

Davidson motioned to approve the financials, Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous.

**President & CEO Report:**

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Lexington county is still in the process of choosing the new commissioner
- The State House is back in session, and discussions are ongoing for recurring educational dollars
- AZA Calgary went well – lots of interesting discussions around new USDA standards.
- Committee review:
  - Chairwoman Williams appointed Reeves and Shockley to the Finance Committee
  - Vondrak suggested forming a Compensation Review Committee. Will revisit appointments in the future.
  - We will review the Executive Committee rotation schedule in October for the Commissioner's feedback.

**Chief Administrative Officer Report:**

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Dates and Reminders
  - ZOOfare is tomorrow evening from 7pm to 10pm
  - Next Commission meeting is October 17
  - Boo at the Zoo – October 18 – 30
  - VIP Wild Lights – November 14 6pm -8pm
  - Leadership Holiday Social – December 4 6pm – 8pm.
- Lexington County Resolution for Jan Stamps
- Highlighted some changes to Lorikeet facility to work on better interactions between the birds and guests
- Calgary recap:
  - Received lots of positive feedback on our DEAI and ERG programs
  - Looking forward to growing the programs that make Riverbanks special.

**Chief Operating Officer Report:**

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Penelope the babirusa's annual checkup. One of the many new strategies across all social media outlets.
- Attendance update. Happy to report that the downturn at the beginning of the fiscal year is now trending up in the month of September.
- Online vs. In-person sales comparison
- Membership is doing well from a revenue standpoint
- Brew at the Zoo – sold 1,850 tickets and grossed \$153,000
- Boo at the Zoo tickets on sale now. Have sold about 2,700 tickets. New trick-or-treat dinner party package for October 25-26.
- Capital projects update including gondola, birdhouse HVAC system, Rivermont building renovation, education building, and outer fence
- Presented gondola rendering images.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 17 day of October 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secretary