

Park Board Minutes  
January 21, 2020

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

Members Absent: Garrett Vanderpool, Scott McCaulley and Julie Wolfe

Staff Present: Cindy Shook, Jason Reinsch and Marsha Fulton

The meeting was called to order by Candy Sullinger. Scott Wuest made a motion to approve the Park Board minutes dated November 20, 2019. Jamie Whiteis seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Business:

1. The first item on the agenda was the November financial report. Cindy reported that the November report was for 91% of 2019, and once again the campground was positively influencing the overall department budget by having a banner year. Cindy went onto to share positive feedback from Assistant Finance Director Stacy McAllister as related to the report:

- RecPlex revenues increased \$35,463.
- Tournament revenue increased by \$11,396 with expenses only increasing by \$1,608.
- Campground revenue increased by \$87,595 with expenses decreasing by \$4,754.
- Cigarette tax revenue increased by \$4,660.
- In total, revenues increased by \$133,692 with expenses decreasing by \$25,368.

2. The next item on the agenda was the presentation of the 2020 Activity Guide. While Jason handed out guides to everyone, Cindy stated how pleased she was with the guide, pointing out that the picture on the front of the guide was of Jason's daughters with Santa. Cindy went on to share that the guide was already available digitally on the Parks and Recreation website in full color. Cindy then briefly discussed the different sections of the activity guide pointing out the numerous new items including the Doggie Easter Egg Hunt and youth fishing clinics. Jason stated that the guide is a great reference for not just sports but also community events. Cindy directed the board's attention to page 13 of the activity guide, highlighting all the new additions at Eiserman Park, including the new dedicated pickleball courts. Cindy reminded the board that the Park's Department has been collaborating with the Branson Pickleball Club since last year to fundraise to provide the new pickleball courts. Cindy also pointed out the parks and trails page and noted the descriptions of future trail improvements. Clark congratulated Cindy on a job well done with the activity guide, stating that it looked great and was easy to read. Bob asked about the distribution of the guide. Cindy replied that they no longer did a mass mailing of the guides, as more people opt to use the digital version that is available on the website, although a hard copy can be picked up at the RecPlex. She stated that a press release was done highlighting the options to view the guide online or pickup at the RecPlex. Scott inquired if the hiking trails were available on an app. Jason stated that in addition to the interactive map located at Lakeside Forest, there were apps available that included the local trails, but that in his experience those

apps were really driven primarily by the hikers themselves. Scott then stated that it may be worth drilling down into the information on the apps to be sure that they were correct. Cindy agreed that it was something they should review.

3. The next item on the agenda was the year end campground information. Cindy opened this item by reminding the board that the campground went live with new web-based software in March 2019, and it allowed the campground to take online reservations. Jason then shared a handout that compared RV site occupancy from 2018 to 2019, noting percentage of occupancy, nightly fee, and total revenue for the sites. Jason stated that some of the take a ways from the report include:

- The campground continues to trend up in occupancy and extend the season.
- The increase of some RV site fees have caused some campers to use the underutilized back in sites.
- The new software system allows for better utilization of each site. Towards the latter part of 2019, over 33% of park reservations were occurring online.
- The changes on the front row of the rally section to upgrade to premium sites did cause some sites to be eliminated and resulted in a slight decrease in revenue but should ultimately cause revenue to increase long term because of the improved guest experience.

Jason stated that it is very exciting going forward to have faster and easier access to data due to the new software. In addition, survey opportunities have been enhanced and a survey is now sent out 48 hours after a guest leaves the park, thanking them for staying and asking a few questions. The second survey option is also available online through Trip Advisor and Google. Scott asked who was managing social media for the campground. Jason stated that social media is mostly handled through Campground Manager Chad Glaser. David then asked if there were lower rates for the winter and Jason responded yes, that there are winter rates as well as weekly and monthly options. Bob then stated that he had his doubts about the decision to eliminate some of the sites to install premium sites, but that he was pleased to see that it had worked. He then congratulated Cindy and Jason on another great decision.

4. The next item on the agenda was the introduction of the TreeKeeper program. The board members were provided a brochure for the new program and then Cindy reminded the board that Landscape Specialist, Amy Jackson, had discussed the TreeKeeper's program at the November Park Board meeting. Cindy explained that this program will help support Amy with tree maintenance including planting, watering and pruning trees in city parks and properties. Jason added that after Amy had recently done training with the maintenance crew, she was pleasantly surprised when one of the staff had come in and stated that "someone had topped a tree they shouldn't have, and they didn't cut it at an angle". Jason added that with the tree inventory, they are now able to keep notes on every tree in relation to trimming, pruning, etc., thanks to new map integration created by Curtis Copeland in the Engineering/GIS Department. Cindy then added that they would be getting the information out to the public about the new TreeKeeper program in different ways, which will include a media release. Bob added that it would be a great opportunity for kids programs as well.

5. The next item on the agenda was the update on winter projects. Cindy stated that they were very busy with multiple projects from pickleball courts at Eiserman Parks to LED lights at Alexander, Stockstill, and Lakeside Forest parks. Jason added that they had also added lights at the Murphy Park pavilion and had cleared ten feet back on the lower lot. Bob shared that he had recently spoke to the Chief of Police, who indicated that they are patrolling more often and that they were seeing an impact. Cindy stated that more and better lighting, along with brush clearing, would hopefully deter negative issues. Jason mentioned they were also doing work on the Taneycomo Trail at Lakeside Forest due to the bottom of the trail has becoming very steep and slick. New earthen steps and handrails were being added to provide stability to users.

6. The next item on the agenda was the update on recent special events. Cindy opened this item by stating that the Adopt-A-Senior program for 2019 was the largest to date, with over 250 seniors adopted. Cindy stated it went really well with a lot of people volunteering to deliver gifts. Jason added that he was at the Community Center when three bucket trucks and staff from White River Electric pulled up to load up gifts to deliver. Cindy shared that Breakfast with Santa had over 100 people at each of the three sessions, the recent archery tournament hosted 160 archers and the December pickleball tournament raised over \$4,000 for the Fogle Family Foundation's Benefit the Badge. Cindy concluded by saying it had been a busy December.

#### Member's Report

1. Andrew stated that he had been substituting at the Branson High School and had noticed some trap team signs and wondered if that was something the Parks Department could partner with.
2. Clark shared that in mid-December he along with Amy Jackson and Rick Davis had planted 150 milkweed plants at the north end of Sunset Park.
3. Jamie shared that he had decided to run for Ward 3 Alderman.

David Parish made a motion to adjourn. Jamie Whiteis seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 6:20pm.