

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

AUGUST 18, 2014

The North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order by Mrs. Vicki Stephens at 5:00 p.m., on August 18, 2014, at the North Little Rock Community Center.

**Commission Members Present:** Randall Bradley, Neil Bryant, Tom Davis, Otistene Smith, Vicki Stephens and Bruce Waller. Charles Jones had to work.

**Staff Members Present:** Bob Rhoads, Jan Eberle-Wilkins, Tina Worrell, Jeff Caplinger and Paula Jones.

**Others Present:** Alderman Debi Ross, Deanne Hubbard, Gary Davis, Gayle Smith, Phil Duerr and Deanna Garretson.

**Financial Report - Second Quarter 2014:** Mr. Waller reported that revenues are down 6%. Expenses have been reduced almost 12% from projections. Overall everything looks good.

Mr. Rhoads thanked the staff for keeping costs down.

**Utility Report - Second Quarter 2014:** Mr. Rhoads reported that utility costs have increased. A gas line had to be capped off at Burns Park due to a gas leak. The golf course and part of maintenance II changed to propane gas then the cost of propane increased.

**Disposition of Minutes:** Mrs. Stephens presented minutes of the June 23, 2014, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. There was no July 2014 meeting.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to accept the minutes as presented. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

**Vote for Excused or Unexcused Absentees:** Mr. Bradley was absent for the June 23, 2014, commission meeting due to the date change.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to excuse this absence. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Jones has to work and cannot not attend this commission meeting.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to excuse this absence. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

**North Little Rock High School Athletic Field Use 2014:** Mr. Rhoads stated that the North Little Rock High School baseball agreement is normally approved at this time. Staff would like to do an agreement that includes baseball, football and soccer.

Due to the recent unavailability of the schools place to practice and play football, the school athletic department is using the rugby and two (2) Burns Park softball complex fields for practice. The athletic department will pay for use of such fields under similar terms and conditions as their soccer and baseball agreement. The school district will pay for practice and game time as in the past. Fifteen dollars will be charged for each unique player and for each sport, and cost for field prep and markings.

**North Little Rock High School Athletic Field Use 2014 (continued)**: Mr. Caplinger stated that the following changes would be made to the proposed agreement:

Page 1, Replace the word DEPARTMENT with the word SCHOOL.

Page 2, Article IV Access to Facility, Section 4.02 Add:

*Cancellations – Games and practice cancellations must be made prior to the day before the scheduled game or practice to avoid penalty. Game cancellations made after 12:00 p.m. on the day of the game and the field has been prepared, there will be a penalty fee of \$25. Practice cancellations made after 12:00 p.m. on the day of the practice or failed to show for scheduled practice, there will be no refund and may additionally incur a penalty fee of \$25 (if practice was scheduled with use of lights).*

Page 3, Article IV Access to Facility, Section 4.05 Add:

*Parking for field use must be in designated areas only (parking lots, etc.). Vehicles parked in non-designated areas (such as inside complex fencing, grass areas, etc. will be subject to citation and/or towing.*

Page 4, Article V, Section 5.02 (b) Access to Facility Add:

*Parking – School buses for football will be allowed to park alongside Funland Drive near the west entrance to the Softball Complex; football coaches will be allowed park in the Park Ranger parking lot with a permit and must not block access for the coming and going of the Park Ranger and their vehicles. One Emergency Vehicle (also used for equipment) will be allowed, by permit, to park inside the Softball Complex.*

Page 4, Article VI Baseball Program, Section 6.02 (a) Access to the Facility, Add:

*It is the responsibility of the SCHOOL to ensure the DEPARTMENT has an accurate schedule of practices and games prior to use of the fields. The DEPARTMENT needs to have schedules by the following dates to ensure preferential scheduling; otherwise, field use will be subject to availability.*

Page 7, Article 10 Insurance and Indemnification, Section 10.01 Remove:

*The ASSOCIATION shall indemnify and hold the DEPARTMENT, the City of North Little Rock, commission members, and all of its employees harmless against losses, claims, causes of action and liabilities on account of damage to property or injury to or death of persons arising out of negligent acts by the ASSOCIATION, its agents, employees, or program participants.*

Page 7, Article 10 Insurance and Indemnification, Section 10.02 Remove:

*The ASSOCIATION as a public school and government institute is self-insured and is responsible for liability associated with their programs. The ASSOCIATION understands their program participants are in no way covered by insurance by the DEPARTMENT.*

Replace with: *The SCHOOL as a public school and government institute is responsible for liability associated with their programs. The SCHOOL understands their program participants are in no way covered by insurance by the DEPARTMENT.*

**North Little Rock High School Athletic Field Use 2014 (continued):** Mr. Caplinger stated that the North Little Rock High School legal department has also reviewed this agreement.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to approve the agreement with deletions and additions as stated. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Gary Davis said that on behalf of him and the school district, he appreciated the commission, staff, Jeff Caplinger, Bob Rhoads, Jason Rhodes and Warren DeBusk that helped with working to find a place to practice. The fields look great.

**Request to Serve Alcohol at Burns Park Tennis Center Function:** Mr. Rhoads reported that in appreciation to all of the participants, volunteers and financial supporters of the United States Tennis Association Arkansas and Burns Park, permission is being sought from the Arkansas Tennis Association to serve alcohol (beer and wine) at an appreciation event. Adult participants will be able to play tennis, have snacks, soft drinks, beer or wine. This is being done to show appreciation to all those who have helped make Burns Park Tennis Center a successful operation. Approximately 50 people are expected.

It meets the guidelines established by the commission for alcohol consumption at special functions in the park.

Deanna Garretson said this will be the First Annual Players Appreciation Event that will be held Friday, September 26, 2014, from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. A police officer will be present. This event is for adults only and identification will be checked.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to approve this request. The vote was:

Mr. Bradley:	Yes	Mrs. Smith:	No
Mr. Bryant:	Yes	Mrs. Stephens:	Yes
Mr. Davis:	No	Mr. Waller:	Yes

The motion passed.

**State Soccer General Agreement:** Mr. Rhoads said that staff is asking permission to execute association agreements for 2014-2015 with the Arkansas State Soccer Association.

Last year the agreement dates were changed to be in line with the soccer season, and so this agreement is for the 2014-2015 season. The overall agreement has stayed the same but dates have been changed.

As a note, the association just pledged \$45,000 toward the purchase of lighting one (1) additional soccer field. The association was also instrumental in getting the adult soccer association to donate \$20,000 to make it possible to light one (1) field. Now three (3) more fields will have lights by late fall of 2014. This will bring the total to seven (7) lighted fields.

**State Soccer General Agreement (continued):** Mr. Caplinger stated that the new agreement would be based summer to summer. Added was an item regarding fees for tournaments starting on Friday night through Sunday to use published rental rates for the Friday portion instead of tournament rates due to the fields not being needed for all day use.

Also, changed was the request to pay regular fees for all of their tournaments except for the Arkansas State Cup tournament where they are asking for the fees to be reduced by one-half. The normal cost could be as high as \$2,200 but the agreement would allow a reduction to \$1,100. These two (2) items were not written in the agreement, but will be added.

Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mr. Waller, to accept the agreement with these two (2) changes/additions stated by Mr. Caplinger. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Phil Duerr stated that their association is working in the soccer community to raise money to light soccer field #11 in Burns Park

Mrs. Stephens said the commission appreciated them and their work.

**Closing Hours for Moss Street, Crestview, Witkowski and Emerald Park:** Mr. Rhoads reported that aldermen, police and citizens have complained of vagrants in the parks and requested that these parks close earlier. There have been problems in both Moss Street and Crestview parks with extended hour use including transients living in the parks. Police are encouraging earlier closure for these two (2) parks.

Also, Witkowski and Emerald Park both have signs indicating closure is at 10:00 p.m. No formal request has been found for these changes. For continuity of other park hours that have been set, the hours should be 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. for closure.

Alderman Debi Ross said she is requesting that Crestview Park close at either 8:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley, to accept the recommendation to close these four (4) parks from 9:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. and post signs. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rhoads said he would look at closing at all neighborhood parks at 9:00 p.m. and bring a recommendation back to the commission at a future date.

**Operation Budget for 2015:** Mr. Rhoads presented a balanced budget for 2015 that is recommended for approval and forwarding to the Mayor, Finance Director and City Council for final review and approval.

The Hamburger Tax is currently running significantly behind projection. Normally 2.5% to 3% increases are budgeted for this tax but only 1% is budgeted for 2015.

**PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
**BUDGET SUMMARY 2015**

**REVENUE**

The total budget for 2015 is less than the budget for 2014. The Hotel/Motel Tax for prepared food taxes have not kept pace with increases as in the past. Usually a 3% increase can be expected each year. For 2014, the taxes are running behind the actual in 2013. Additional special events such as the US Soccer Southern Regionals are being held in central Arkansas in 2015 and are expected to have an impact on the taxes. For the 2015 budget, a modest 1% increase was budgeted for the Hotel/Motel and Prepared Food Taxes.

**EXPENSES**

Overall, each budget is about the same as in 2014. Fortunately, some higher paid individuals have retired or left for other jobs and money has been saved due to the newer employees receiving less pay. This has made it possible to stay within the budget in 2014 and for 2015 in spite of the decrease in the tax revenues.

**Administration (33)**

For the administrative budget, \$9,000 has been added under professional services in an attempt to get a Master Degree Major in Public Administration to work as an intern in the Human Resources Department to do all of the Parks and Recreation Department recruiting and hiring in the spring. The load of 100 summer new hires by the Human Resources Department each year causes a near gridlock that makes it impossible to get the employees needed by the department.

Staff is seeking joint support from city funds for this intern endeavor to pay one-third or one-half of the cost. At this time, 100% of the position is budgeted in the Parks and Recreation Administration budget (\$9,000). This would be tried for one (1) year to see if benefits on getting better and faster would be realized.

**Park Maintenance (34)**

For park maintenance, one (1) full-time Parks Supervisor I (currently vacant) and three (3) Intermittent (summer) Laborer positions are being dropped to provide money to add two (2) full-time Park Maintenance Workers. The Parks Superintendent has had trouble filling the summer laborer jobs and feels the division could be served better with two (2) direct service staff instead of a supervisor.

Delete: (1) Park Supervisor I	\$ 48,249
(3) Intermittent Laborers	<u>14,925</u>
	\$ 63,174
Add: (2) Park Maintenance Workers	<u>\$60,684</u>
Net Savings:	\$ 2,490

Note: All salary numbers include employee benefits and taxes

**Operation Budget for 2015 (continued):**

**Emerald and Burns Park Golf Courses (36 and 39)**

For 2015, there will be no expenses related to the Emerald Park golf course. Filled positions that include one (1) fulltime Park Maintenance Worker and one (1) parttime Laborer are being moved to Burns Park. The parttime Laborers fill vacant positions at Burns Park. By dropping two (2) parttime Laborers, one (1) Intermittent Laborer, and losing and hiring a new Golf Superintendent at a lesser pay rate at Burns Park, these changes were able to be done within budget.

Delete: (2) Parttime Laborers	\$ 20,673
(1) Intermittent Laborer	4,337
Salary Saving on Supervisor	<u>9,662</u>
	\$ 34,672
Add: (1) Park Maintenance Worker	\$ 32,840
Net Savings:	\$ 1,832

Note: All salary numbers include employee benefits and taxes

All other budgets remain basically the same. Still under consideration for the Concession Budget (40) is consideration of concessions being contracted out. If this occurs at a later date, the revenue and expenses for this area would cancel each other out. Revenues would be significantly less, but cost of goods sold and salaries would not occur.

Mr. Waller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to approve the corrected version of this 2015 operation budget and forward to finance, mayor and city council for approval. All voted aye and motion passed unanimously. See budget attached.

Mr. Waller stated that in light of the budget, the commission needs to look at entities that are being subsidized by the department including the Lakewood Property Owners Association and Central Arkansas Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Rhoads said he is already looking at this.

**Director Reports:** Mr. Rhoads reported the following:

The city has stopped subsidizing the state **Health Department**. The state's Women's, Infants, Children's Program staff is now moving (as renters) from the North Little Rock Community Center to the Health Department building effective October 1, 2014. The contract with the state will be brought back to the commission for revision as the state still wants to continue using the former Parks and Recreation Administration Office area.

The **rock quarry and proposed Burns Park lodge area land appraisals** have been revised and submitted to the state. The city is still pursuing the lodge concept.

**Director Reports (continued):**

The proposed **memorial wall construction and design at Conley Park** was not approved by the commission at the June 23, 2014, commission meeting. Mrs. Doris Allen with Dixie Days Celebration, Inc. was told in that meeting that if Entergy (land owner) approved her request, then she is to bring her request back to the commission for consideration. Entergy initially refused her request to build on their land, but then changed their mind. Mrs. Allen did not come back before the commission, but started the wall construction. The construction is now complete.

Mr. Waller asked Paula Jones to send a letter to Mrs. Allen notifying her that protocol was not followed nor was the wall design approved by the commission. This property is leased by the city from Entergy. Mrs. Allen was clearly told at the June 23, 2014, commission meeting that her request was being tabled by the commission.

Mr. Bryant said he felt that she understood what the commission told her because she left the June 23, 2014, commission upset that her proposal was not adopted at that time. If policy is not followed, then this could happen in the future with other groups that just go in and construct anything they want. He asked Mrs. Jones to state in the letter to Mrs. Allen that the department would not accept any maintenance or other responsibility regarding the wall.

Mr. Caplinger stated that not all of the Entergy staff working on this was notified of this construction either.

Alderman Ross stated that the Dixie Days Celebration, Inc., would have to have a maintenance agreement with the commission to keep the area maintained (by Dixie Days Celebration, Inc.).

Mr. Rhoads said that staff would get a maintenance agreement ready for Mrs. Allen (representing Dixie Days Celebration, Inc.) and bring this before the commission at the next regularly scheduled commission meeting.

**Calendar of Events:** Mrs. Stephens stated that the next commission agenda deadline is Tuesday, September 2, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. Any items need to be called in by that date and time to the Parks and Recreation Administration Office.

The next regularly scheduled commission meeting is Monday, September 15, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. in the North Little Rock Community Center.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Bryant made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to adjourn at 5:52 p.m. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comments:** Mrs. Stephens opened the meeting for public comments but there were none.

Submitted by,

Otistene Smith, Secretary