

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
March 4, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners was held on this day remotely by video conference. Commissioners present: President Brad Lindner, Vice President Jim Goetz, Commissioner Susan Castellini, Commissioner Linda Lee Thomas, and Commissioner Molly North. President Lindner called the meeting to order at 1:02 P.M. Attendance was confirmed by roll call.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

President Lindner announced there were no public comments submitted for this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval and Acceptance of State Capital Grants

Craig Sherman presented funding has been appropriated from Ohio House Bill 529 for three park projects: Kyle Plush Pavilion (\$80K), wi-fi at Ault Park (\$46K), and expansion of Smale Riverfront Park (\$1.7M). He presented the staff recommendation to accept funds up to \$1,826,000 and approve entering into funding agreements.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the staff recommendation. Vice President Goetz seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

FY 2022 All Funds Budget - First Reading

Director Kish presented the preliminary FY 2022 All Funds Budget for the Park Board's consideration and discussion. She introduced the recommended budget which encompasses Parks' operational budget and aligns with operations of the department. Ms. Kish acknowledged the work of staff on the budget and needs assessment, explaining the budget will be a tool for staff empowerment. Ms. Kish provided an overview of the needs assessment and how the budget was formulated.

Director Kish presented elements of the All Funds Budget, beginning with the summary of the recommended budget at \$25,660,600, a 12% increase from the approved FY 2021 All Funds Budget. She described where the budget increased and explained the decrease in restricted funds.

Ms. Kish presented the recommended Commissioners Fund Budget request at \$1,601,715, which is a \$60,000 decrease from FY21 primarily due to the increase in reimbursements needed to pay salaries in FY21.

Director Kish informed the Board that Parks has been asked by the City's Budget Office to participate in an 8% reduction exercise and referenced the possibility of an additional future reduction exercise as a result of a proposed Affordable Housing Charter Amendment that would

require \$50M of City funds annually. She described the service and staff impacts of the 25% budget reduction exercise Parks completed last year in response to the pandemic.

Director Kish presented the 8% budget reduction exercise, totaling \$766,564. She described the impact of the reduction and how it was achieved, including Position Vacancy Allowances (PVA), additional Smale staff reimbursement from Fund 329, and a one-time credit in response to Parks paying the Urban Forestry Assessment for non-Park Board controlled property. She described the Urban Forestry Assessment of City, County, State, and federal lands which is funded from Parks' budget and the request to remove the assessment from future reduction targets.

Director Kish presented the 4% budget reduction exercise of Fund 302, totaling \$68,917, accomplished by one PVA.

Director Kish presented exceptions to the budget, including the addition of two Facility Maintenance Specialist positions to the General Fund Budget, a Greenspace Laborer position to Fund 301, and two Recreational Specialists to Fund 326. She explained the reasoning for each.

Commissioner North asked for detail of what is encompassed within the General Fund budget total to understand operational impacts from the previous year. She also asked for further context regarding PVAs, and for a framework of the current status, what is being added and reduced, and the budget impact of those changes. Director Kish commented this documentation can be provided. She clarified the PVAs are only present in the 8% reduction and described plans for them should the reduction exercise not be accepted.

Director Kish provided clarification on how elements of the presentation, including the reduction exercise and exceptions, fit within the recommended budget and budget process. Mr. Sherman explained the target and reduction requests from the City Administration. The purpose of the reduction exercise was explained further and the information provided to the Board as part of the presentation was defined.

The original target amount of approximately \$9.6M and reductions were discussed. Mr. Sherman explained the recommended budget of approximately \$9.06M varied from the original as it was the target minus reductions. Director Kish corrected her previous statement that the recommended budget was not reflective of the 8% reduction. The one-time credit for the Urban Forestry Assessment was discussed and Mr. Sherman clarified the assessment for non-Parks properties will not be calculated in the City's budget target for Parks moving forward. The general fund calculation and total, as well as the reflection of the 8% reduction in the budget recommendation were discussed further.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Lindner announced the plan to move into Executive Session. He explained the public livestream would be discontinued for the session and would continue when the public meeting reconvenes for the purposes of continuing discussion.

President Lindner motioned to enter into Executive Session pursuant to ORC Section 121.22(G) to consider the employment and discipline of a public employee. Vice President Goetz seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The Board entered Executive Session at 1:40 P.M.

The Board entered back into public meeting at 2:17 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

FY 2022 All Funds Budget - First Reading (cont.)

The General Fund and Restricted Funds were discussed. Vice President Goetz asked what revenues are assumed for FY22 Restricted Funds and Mr. Sherman explained revenue is based on historical revenues and the inclusion of Lot 23 funding. The impact of salary reimbursement on restricted funds was discussed. Mr. Goetz commented next year's budget would be at risk if Parks does not return to pre-Covid revenue levels in July. This point was discussed further.

Vice President Goetz commented the Operating Budget has increased year to year, even after the proposed 8% reduction for FY22. Mr. Sherman explained staff furloughs and no part-time seasonal hires in FY21 both produced savings and impacted expense levels. Mr. Goetz commented on the increase trends from 2017-2019 as well. Director Kish explained identification of additional resources (i.e. additional Urban Forestry Assessment dollars) may have contributed to additional spending. Mr. Sherman mentioned the needs assessment made staff aware of additional funding available to them and also contributed to the increase.

Tracking head count and communicating this information to the Board was discussed. Mr. Sherman expressed this aligns with staff's work on personnel assessments and correcting the locations of staff. Mr. Sherman provided the current head count of 231.2.

President Lindner identified an inconsistency in salary among two position levels. Mr. Sherman clarified those inconsistencies have not yet been corrected for this preliminary budget but will be. The accurate tracking of other staffing changes within the budget was briefly discussed.

Commissioner Thomas asked how revenue is projected and used Krohn Gift Shop as an example. Mr. Sherman explained in this instance, online gift shop and plant sales, and the operation of the Butterfly Show for two additional months contributed to the projected revenue increase. The success of the online plants sales was discussed.

Vice President Goetz requested head count information and open positions and how that impacts the FY22 budget. He also asked staff to consider consistency among formats of the budget attachments and previous budget reporting. Mr. Goetz suggested revisiting the Commissioners Fund Budget when Parks receives a final recommendation from the City, as well as thinking more critically about those funds before it is finalized. Commissioner Castellini echoed Mr. Goetz's comments and expressed she questioned the 5% distribution unless there are definite plans to utilize

the funding. Mr. Sherman agreed expenditures should be considered in determining the distribution and a Trust attorney has been hired to assist.

Director Kish thanked the Board for their feedback, which will be included in the All Funds Budget presentation at the regular March meeting.

Director Annual Evaluation

President Lindner explained the Park Board met in Executive Session over the past few months to discuss the Director's annual performance evaluation. He explained their discussions encompassed goals and objectives set for Director Kish and overall performance in the past year, as well as her participation in the evaluation.

Commissioner North provided highlights of the Board's discussions regarding Director Kish's evaluation. She mentioned the expectation for the Director to provide leadership to the Board and staff, build a relationship with the Parks Foundation, establish credibility with City Council and Administration, as well as the opportunity for Director Kish to work with an executive coach. Ms. North expressed the need to enhance Board reports and create a 3-5 year plan. She commented over the next six months, Director Kish should begin positioning the department for long-term transformational change, and the Board will reconvene to discuss. President Lindner added another objective was the creation of a succession plan for the department and positions. Commissioner Thomas acknowledged Director Kish's work during the uncertainty of the pandemic and commended her for aiding the significant contribution of the city parks to during the last year. Commissioner Goetz expressed his excitement moving forward and recognized Director Kish's accomplishments. He mentioned the need to make a decision regarding salary increase.

Vice President Goetz motioned to provide a 1% salary increase for the year retroactive to January 16, for Director Kish. Commissioner Castellini seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Director Kish thanked the Board for their feedback and her intention to produce a plan for accomplishing goals. President Lindner thanked Director Kish, as well as the Commissioners for their time, input, and support of the Director.

ADJOURNMENT

President Lindner announced the next regular meeting date of March 18, 2021 at 9:00 A.M.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:56 P.M.

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT



DIRECTOR