



Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 19th, 2023, at 6:00 pm
Hood River Aquatic Center

In Attendance:

Board: Suzanne Cross, Nan Noteboom, Mike McCarthy, Martha Ortega-Verduzco

Staff: Mark Hickok, Marcie Wily, Marcos Gonzalez

SDAO Consultant: Bob Keefer

City of Hood River: Abigail Elder (City Manager)

Port of Hood River Executive Director: Kevin Greenwood

Public: Debbie Dennis, Matt Althoff, Mike Howard, Keir Bryerton

Regular District Board Meeting

Call Regular Board Meeting to Order

McCarthy Called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

Comments from the General Public (3 minutes per person, per subject, Maximum 30 minutes public comment taken)

Kevin Greenwood, Port of Hood River Executive Director stated that he was joining this meeting to learn more about the district.

Review Minutes

1. **March 15, 2023 – Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Action: Consider a motion to approve the March 15, 2023 meeting minutes

Ortega-Verduzco made a motion to approve the March 15, 2023 board meeting minutes. Cross seconded. All approved

Regular Business

2. **Strategic Planning**

Action: Review and Provide Direction

Hickok gave an overview of the district's strategic planning with Bob Keefer, SDAO Consultant. Hickok presented the updated scenarios for what the district will need if they go for a bond and levy. The estimated bond rate may be \$0.86 per \$1000, and the levy would be \$.037 per \$1000 which would cost homeowners about \$23 a month increase in their taxes. This would all go towards a new pool, Westside Park construction, park shop and park land fund. Then Hickok gave the board three different scenarios for a bond and prepared food tax (PFST) at 5%. The first was a bond for \$36.5 million with a lower tax rate at \$0.66. This option is more palatable to the taxpayer since the bond rate is lower and would slowly phase in other district needs with a loan against the revenue from the PFST. The next option is going for the full capital amount for a bond at \$47.8 million which would fund all the capital goals of the district. The extra amount from this option would also allow the district the flexibility to take on other agencies' parks and trails. The last option is the middle ground between the other two options. The bond would be for \$40 million at a tax rate of \$0.72. This would

fund the new pool and only phase one of Westside Park construction while other districts capital goals will come in later as the PFST revenue comes in. The board deliberated over these options.

Looking at the property where the pool is located now, Mark presented to the board a potential reconfiguration of the government agency's facilities that are located there. The pool would be relocated to Collins Field as a new community center with a pool and a gym. This would allow the current pool to be open while construction is going on. Once finished the district would give the old pool to the city to turn it into a public safety building and the city would be able to align the intersection of 17th and 18th streets while the Tsuruta Tennis courts would turn into addition parking for the 3 government agencies that are located there. With the removal of the baseball field and tennis courts, they could be relocated to Golden Eagle and Westside Park. The problems with this option would be getting the city on board to swap locations and it would cost the district more to build the new facility and the new parking lot on the tennis courts.

All board members agreed that this is a great idea and asked Mark to move forward with reaching out to the city.

3. **FY 2023/2024 Budget Check in**

Action: Informational/Provide Feedback

Hickok wanted to check in with the board members on the next budget and get some of their feedback before presenting them the proposed budget. He displayed the consumer price index to show the average change throughout the United States and how much the cost of living (COLA) has gone up. Hickok also reached out to other agencies around Oregon to see how they were budgeting for the COLA. Hickok stated that most agencies are going for a 5% increase and asked the board if he was on track or would they like more information. Cross stated that it would be helpful to see the full cost to the budget of increasing employees' wages with a couple scenarios.

Hickok next presented the district's health insurance to the board. The district has lost some potential employees because their current health benefits are better at their place of employment when compared to the district's. Hickok proposed that the district instate a health care flexible spending account (HCFSA). A HCFSA allows employees to set aside money from their paychecks pretax to pay for out-of-pocket health care expenses. Upgrading to the next insurance plan level would be more expensive than implementing a HCFSA. Having an HCFSA would improve the district's employee attraction and retention. The board would like to see how the new health insurance would affect the budget with or without it.

Reports (*informational, no action needed*)

4. Finance Report

Hickok presented the finance report. In the System Development Fund, the district is seeing less money because the county is not developing as quickly as they have seen in the past. There is a large hotel project planned which will boost the district's SDC revenue. The Recreation Fund is doing quite well, but the district will possibly have to come to the board for a budget adjustment. The General fund is also doing well with expenditures only at 79%.

5. Directors Report

Hickok presented the director's report. There was a ribbon cutting for the new Southside Extension of the Indian Creek Trail on Earth Day. This ribbon cutting was also a volunteering event to help remove all the old

tires along the trail. The maintenance staff has been re-graveling and fixing a retaining wall along the Indian Creek Trail between 7th street stairs and Hazel Ave. The district has entered into a 3-year options agreement to purchase Parkdale Park. Hickok and Wily decided to pull the grant for Parkdale Park this year because producing the dollar match for both Campbell property and the Parkdale Park grant would be too much for the district. This would give the district more time to look at all the funding options for Parkdale Park before applying for the grant next year.

Hickok presented Pauly Rogers and SingerLewak contracts to the board as possible auditors for 2023. The board deliberated over which auditor they should award the contract to.

Ortega-Verduzco made a motion to approve of SingerLewak as the district's auditor for 2023. Noteboom seconded. All approved

There was a directors retreat that Hickok and Wily attended in April. Many parks and recreations directors attended the event, which was great for Hickok and Wily to network and listen to what other directors were discussing at the event.

6. Aquatics & Recreation Report

Wily presented the recreation and aquatics report. There are many programs going on this spring like youth soccer, ultimate frisbee and track and field. The district's summer camps registration has also been open, with the last week of camp already full. The recreation department has been looking to hire a summer camp coordinator but has been able to hire an assistant coordinator and fellow camp counselors to run the program.

The lifeguard certification course is being held in June to help the pool's staffing needs during the summer months. The school swim lessons are more than halfway done with about 400 kindergartens through fourth grade students taught how to swim. The district has received a grant for an adult learn to swim class again in August. The pool will be open later, on May 15th to do the annual cover removal.

Adjourn

Noteboom made motion to adjourn the meeting. Cross seconded. All approved.

Approved

Date

Attest

Date

17 May 2023

5/17/23

