

**Riverbanks Park Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**20 August 2020**

**Attendance Report**

Commissioners Present (via Conference Call): Deneen Shockley, Bob Davidson, Phil Bartlett, Alana Williams, Mike Velasco, Jan Stamps

Commissioners Absent: Mary Howard

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Christie Vondrak, Lochlan Wooten, Katie Eaton

**Call to Order**

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The July 16, 2020 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

Velasco motioned to approve the minutes, Stamps seconded, m/c unanimous.

**Chairman's Remarks**

Davidson shared that rhino exhibit preview visit last week was very nice. Davidson extended his appreciation for the staff for the opportunity and to the Commissioners who made it out to show their support.

**President & Chief Executive Officer's Report**

President and CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- July Financials:
  - Household membership number is artificially inflated due to the membership extension offered because of COVID closure. Membership revenue is down about \$218,000
  - Down about 46,000 visits based off forecast that was made pre-covid
  - By freezing all expenses staff were able to temporarily offset revenue losses
  - Bartlett motioned to approve the financials, Williams seconded, m/c unanimous
- A resolution for bond refinancing was presented to the finance committee (Davidson and Velasco) in advance of this meeting. The committee made a motion to the full Commission to approve an RFP process. The motion allowed chairman Davidson and President Stringfellow to determine the winning bid, provided it meets the minimum requirements in the RFP. Velasco inquired that by refinancing through a bank we are not shifting liability structure of the payback of these bonds. Dubose confirmed that to be true.
  - Velasco motioned to adopt bond resolution, Bartlett second, m/c unanimous
- 2019-20 Fiscal Year End Review- Ended the fiscal year with about \$1.4 million down to projections. Attendance for the fiscal year ended with a loss of 369,711 to budget for a total of 880,289 in attendance.
- Federal Funding- the federal delegation adjourned prior to approving any relief funds. They will meet back in September and the hope is that they will pass legislation that will allow for Riverbanks to receive funding.

- State funding- we know the Governor has not allocated out his \$1.9B in funds yet. Working with PRT to receive state funds when they are released.
- In conversations with both counties to advance the approved county funds allocated for the 2020-21 budget.

### **Chief Administrative Officer's Report:**

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- We have seen a decrease in positive covid cases in staff. We currently have no positive cases and are even seeing a trend in exposures. Staff are being responsible with wearing their masks and social distancing both at work and at home.
- Had a staff preview day for the new rhino exhibit yesterday and staff were very excited about the new additions.
- We are seeing trends of turnover in staff. This is for many reasons; staff are moving back home to be closer to their loved ones, retirement announcements, etc.
- The education team has created an innovative program to support staff with childcare during the school year with varying covid school plans. The Riverbanks education team will allow Riverbanks and SSA staff children to attend a "ZooCare" program which will assist students in completing their virtual schoolwork and supplement their days with zoo activities.
- Scott and Company is virtually conducting the audit this year. The finance team is doing a great job in assisting the auditors with their requests

### **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Animal update-
  - Two female rhinos have been intermittently having access to their exhibit since Monday morning and will have all day access today. They are doing amazingly, and credit goes out to their keeper team. Conversations have begun about transporting the male rhino in the fall.
  - Penguin chicks should be out on exhibit soon
- Connect magazine this month features the sustainability index which was created by our own Colleen Lynch. Please congratulate her if you see her around!
- In regards to our attendance, other attractions in our state and other zoo colleagues are also experiencing the same attendance trends at Riverbanks, almost to the percent. As schools return, we expect to see a trend of more than normal weekday attendance due to the atypical school year.
- Education is continuing to work on innovative ideas with zoom and virtual learning options.
- Zoofari this year will be virtual. The auction will be virtual to anyone and everyone. The ticket pays for a dinner for two with signature cocktail and different digital content.
- Society update- July membership revenue is down 50% to year prior. Will do an all-digital fall campaign this year.
- In levels of membership the patron membership will no longer be an option as of September 1st. The membership department will be changing some price points and condensing membership levels and options along with assessing perks.
- Operations update- Kangaroo and Koala exhibits have been opened.

At the conclusion of the officer reports, Commissioner Bartlett inquired about the request from former Commissioner Bud Tibshrary regarding emeritus discussions. Chairman Davidson tabled the discussion until next meeting.

Stamps motion to adjourn, Williams second m/c unanimous

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 17 day of September 2020.

Michael Velasco, Secretary