

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
15 August 2024**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda is available to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and persons requesting notification; was posted in the lobby of Riverbanks' administration building and was uploaded to Riverbanks' webpage.

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Jan Stamps, Bob Davidson, Alana Williams, Deneen Shockley, Cliff Bourke

Commissioners Absent: Mike Velasco, Jeff Reeves

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Christie Vondrak, Ashley Harris, Jessica Austin

Guests Present: Lander Hiott

Call to Order

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

Reading of the Minutes

The July 18, 2024, Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Davidson motioned to approve the minutes, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chairwoman's Remarks:

- Excited to begin tenure as Chair. Thank you to former Chairwoman Stamps for your hard work the last two years!
- If anyone has suggestions for the flow of meetings, please let Chairwoman Williams or Stringfellow know.

Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- July Dashboard Report:
 - Memberships are trending down at 42,620 households, which was expected due to the rate increase in October of 2023.
 - Began FY25 under projected attendance. Expect to see attendance come back up throughout the fiscal year.
 - Earned revenues are 2.7% under anticipated revenues.
 - Governmental support is up over budget due to earlier Richland County appropriations received.
- July Balance Sheet:
 - Cash is lower than prior year due to payments for Gondola and other capital projects. Will see bond reimbursement to offset Due from Bond Fund asset account
 - The average earning interest rate in LGIP for July was 5.50%
 - Committed to capital fund balance was reduced by \$1.5M capital transfer recorded in June.

Shockley motioned to approve the financials, Davidson seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten proposed the purchase of a new Tram system.

Bourke motioned to approve the purchase of a new tram system up to \$650,000, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- 14 bidders came forward for the bond sale. Bid was awarded to Key Bank.
- Stringfellow, Harris, and Theo DuBose of Haynesworth Sinkler Boyd will meet with the Richland County Treasurer on August 16.
- DuBose and Robert Hobson of First Tryon Advisors recommended the Zoo hire a project manager or consultant for Bond reporting and record keeping.
- Society Board nominated Stamps to serve on the Society Board beginning in January. Congratulations!

Special Presentation:

Lander Hiott, Deputy Principle of Parker Poe Consulting

- Will have a new senator for the Zoo's district this year. The election is between Russell Ott and Jason Guerry.
- Provided a report on last year's progress at the State House.
- Will continue to make Deferred Maintenance funding requests.
- Working on potential recurring funding from the Department of Education.
- Legislative Family Day 2025 is May 7th.

Chief Administrative Officer Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Next Commission Meeting – September 26
- ZOOfare – September 27
- Town Hall Celebration Recap
 - 4% Raise
 - Bonuses
 - Prizes
- National Zookeeper Week Recap
- Town Hall Benefits Fair Recap

Chief Operating Officer Report:

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Welcome Huntington, the newest Green Sea Turtle to the Zoo. Pleased to continue partnering with SCDNR and the State Parks in conservation.
- Strategic Plan is still in progress. Focusing on 12-month plan. Two major keys are growing partnerships and increasing guest satisfaction score.
- Wrapped up Toucan Tuesday drive. We collected over 50,000 pounds of food.
- Brew at The Zoo had a great turnout. Returned to pre-covid ticket sales level.
- The Education and Conservation team was awarded a federal IMLS Grant to fund research for a community-wide wildlife trafficking awareness program.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 26 day of September 2024.

 _____, Secretary