

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
21 November 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: Cliff Bourke, Bob Davidson, Chip Huggins, Jeff Reeves, Deneen Shockley, Mike Velasco, Alana Williams.

Commissioners Absent:

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

Call to Order

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

Chairwoman Williams issued the oath of the office to newly appointed Commissioner Chip Huggins (Lexington County).

Reading of the Minutes

The October 17, 2024, Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

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

Chairwoman's Remarks:

- Williams welcomed Huggins. The Commission looks forward to serving with him on the Riverbanks Park Commission.
- Commissioners decided not to have the December meeting. Will resume in January of 2025.

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Stringfellow welcomed Huggins to the Commission. Each Commissioner introduced themselves.
- The Society Board elected four new board members at their November 20th meeting:
 - Jan Stamps, past Riverbanks Parks Commissioner
 - Dr. Corinne Goldman from Endeavour Veterinary Group
 - Dr. Mark Allen Jones from Prisma Health
 - Kaleb Unverfehrt from Colonial Life | Unum Group.
- Working on scheduling meetings with new Lexington and Richland County members
- Velasco inquired about possible DOT involvement for the Greystone Boulevard exit. Huggins will reach out to his contacts at the DOT to revisit the possibility for exit improvements.

Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- October Dashboard Report:
 - Through October we're running 13% under anticipated attendance and 12% below prior year. We came a little closer to meeting budgeted attendance. As a reminder, through September YTD we were running 17% under anticipated attendance.
 - Earned Revenues are down consistent with attendance but seeing some upside in sponsorship revenue and interest income. With that, total earned revenues are down by 2.6% from budget.

- Expenditures are over budget by 2%. Hurricane Helene damage repair costs factor into the overage. We have filed an insurance claim with the IRF and hope to recoup some of those costs.
- Received \$1M in non-recurring state funds for deferred maintenance in November.
- October Balance Sheet:
 - Society's Designated for District Capital fund balance of \$8.4M was transferred over to the District in October therefore on Society's Balance Sheet, the Designated for District Capital fund balance account has been zeroed out and on District's Balance Sheet, the Committed for Capital Projects fund balance has increased to \$24.4M.
 - Operating Reserve discussion – Stringfellow recommended putting a written policy in place detailing Operating Reserve guidelines.

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

Chief Administrative Officer Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- AZA Finance Conference recap
- Dates and Reminders
 - December 4 - Leadership Holiday Social 6:00-8:00pm.
- King Cobra training program
- Energy Team Survey
- All teams are moved into new spaces at Rivermont. Will have a drop-in in December.

Chief Operating Officer Report:

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Shared information on Susan the Octopus approaching the end-of life phase
- Welcomed first Toco toucan chick to Riverbanks in 12 years
- Bruce the bear went viral with his new tire enrichment toy – 50K likes on Facebook and counting
- Hired Jordan Ward for Director of Construction and Planning position
- Presented Saluda Skyride rendering and education center images
- Boo at the Zoo was a great success – generated revenue outpaced projections
- Wild Lights is underway. Added more lights and new lanterns, in addition to igloo rentals. Revenue is up compared to Wild Lights sales last year.
- Presented finding from the 2024 Member Survey Report:
 - Primary Motivations for Joining:
 - Unlimited admission - 67% join for both unlimited admission and to support the Zoo
 - Member discounts
 - Members come for the animals first, rides and attractions second, and visiting the garden third.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 16 day of January 2025.

 _____, Secretary