

**Riverbanks Park Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
16 May 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, Jeff Reeves, Bob Davidson, Alana Williams, Deneen Shockley, Cliff Bourke, Mike Velasco

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

**Call to Order**

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

**Reading of the Minutes**

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

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

**Chairwoman's Remarks**

- Nothing to report.

**Executive Session**

- Commissioners and Christie Vondrak entered executive session to discuss personnel.

Following the executive session, Stamps motioned to include the President & CEO in an across the board 4% salary increase for all staff effective July 1, 2024, and issue a 15% merit bonus, Williams seconded, m/c unanimous.

**Finance Report:**

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- April Dashboard Report:
  - We are not meeting projected attendance goals through April but general admission revenues are over budget and prior year.
  - Other earned revenues are also over budget and prior year including concession & retail commissions, facility rental & group admission fees, rides & attractions, and interest income.
  - Governmental support – we appear \$5M over budget because we did not account for the \$5M we received in state deferred maintenance funding due to the state's budget timing.
- April Balance Sheet:
  - The average earning interest rate in LGIP for April was 5.50%. Earned \$776,000 in interest income through April.

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

- Tentatively scheduled Audit Committee meeting for June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2:30pm. Will present Audit and the FY25 budget at June meeting.
- Submitted budget to Lexington County in early February. On April 23<sup>rd</sup> they had their first reading that kept our \$1M appropriation. Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> is their first general fund public hearing. Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> is the second reading, and Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> is the third and final reading.
- Submitted budget to Richland County in early May. On May 14<sup>th</sup> Stringfellow and Harris attended Richland County Budget Workshop. Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> is the first general fund public

hearing. Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup> is the second reading, and Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> is the third and final reading.

**President & CEO Report:**

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Presented Annual Operating Budget to Richland County Council on May 14th. We receive 1.4 millage from Richland County, which adds up to about \$3M. There are discussions about switching funding sources from property taxes in Richland County. Hospitality tax was proposed as a viable option but it would be an annual discussion.
- Provided document at with county council seats who are up for reelection and who is running against them.
- Preliminary state funding of \$1M for deferred maintenance is in the budget discussions, will go through more rounds of review. Still discussing an opportunity for state education funding.
- Gave presentation at Columbia Chamber Breakfast.
- A record number of lawmakers attended Legislative Night. Thank you to everyone who came out. It was a great night!

**Chief Administrative Officer Report:**

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- 50th Anniversary Day/Staff Celebration evening recap.
- Governor's Press Conference recap
- Riverbanks Day Proclamation at State House went wonderfully!
- Peak Drift Partnership Press conference was a success despite the weather. Thank you to Deneen for braving the storms!
- Dates & Reminders
  - Members Night Out - May 31, June 14, June 28
  - ECHO Conference - June 4-6
  - June Commission Meeting – June 16
  - Bond Ratings - July 16
- Leadr platform launch – performance management tool to improve communications, directory/organizational structures, staff engagement, teambuilding/culture building, coaching & development.
- Congratulations to Lochlan Wooten for being nominated for the South Carolina Women in Business Leaders award!

**Chief Operating Officer Report:**

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Komodo siblings Dutch and Anna passed away. The process is ongoing for the Komodo barn reopening. We have a female Komodo, Orochi, arriving in the next few weeks.
- The first voluntary plasma collection from Bruce the giraffe was very successful. Was a two-year effort.
- Attendance to-date was holding strong with an upward trend.
- Spring break saw \$520,000 in new memberships and \$850,000 in total revenue.
- Wine Tasting was a huge success. The silent disco was very popular!
- Turtle Survival Alliance & Riverbanks: Manatee & Fanning Springs conservation work. Camped at Manatee Springs Park and performed 4 sessions of catch-and-release to collect data on turtles.
- Looking forward to ECHO Conference in June. Honored to have everyone come to Riverbanks!

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 17 day of July 2024.

 \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary