

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
19 January 2023**

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Deneen Shockley, Jan Stamps, Jeff Reeves, Bob Davidson, Mike Velasco, Alana Williams, Cliff Bourke

Commissioners Absent: n/a

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Ashley Harris

Call to Order

Chairwoman Stamps called the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes

The November 17, 2022 Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

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

Chairman's Remarks

Chairwoman Stamps remarked that there are a lot of exciting things coming up in February and March, to include the Leadership Social and the opening of the Aquarium and Reptile Conservation Center.

VP of Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- Harris reviewed the December financial statements:
 - While memberships are down from prior year, they are up over budget, so we anticipated that drop in FY23.
 - Total attendance is down through December, but we are seeing strong attendance so far in January. Paid admission fell short in the first half of the fiscal year, however we have met our paid admission budget to date in January and are optimistic that this continues.
 - Our cash investment in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) managed through the State Treasurer's Office is currently earning at an interest rate of 4.59%.
 - Events revenue attributed to Boo and Lights is over budget. The budget was based on a 5-year average. With a strong FY23, we plan to increase the budget in FY24.
 - We received \$2,000,000 in non-recurring State funds which was not budgeted, as this State funding had not yet been confirmed at the point that the FY23 budget was finalized.
 - Richland County property tax revenue has increased and we expect that to continue into March, as that has been the trend in past years.
 - Facility & life support management was over budget through December as there were several large repairs that arose in the first half of the fiscal year.
 - Bourke motioned to approve the December financials. Velasco seconded; m/c unanimous.
- Currently finalizing the draft of the annual financials for the FY22 audit. Committed to submitting the completed draft to the audit firm, Scott + Co. by the end of next week, 1/27/23. The firm will aim to complete their review within two weeks, in an effort to be ready to present the audited financials to the audit committee, as well as the full board in February. If the firm's review extends beyond two weeks, the presentation to the full board will mostly likely be pushed out to March.

President & CEO Report:

- Stringfellow shared that he and Rebecca Best, with Rebecca Best Consulting, recently had the opportunity to meet with Jason Branham, Richland County Council Member, representing District 1.
- Stringfellow indicated that he continues to have conversations with First Tryon to discuss the possibility of alternatively securing a loan through a financial institution.
- Stringfellow shared the names and professional biographies of three new Society board members.

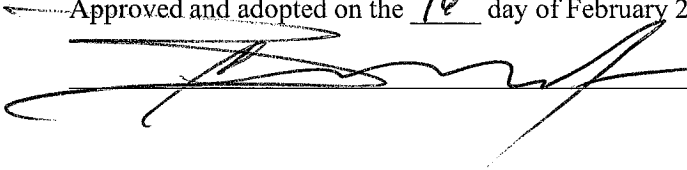
Operating Officer Report:

Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Staffing updates: Wooten informed the board that Director of Animal Care & Welfare, John Davis, has submitted his notice of retirement. Wooten shared that RBZ is also recruiting for VP of Operations.
- Wooten talked through the various phases of the overall \$200M master plan already in motion, which includes the \$80M bond request as Phase II. The Aquarium and Reptile Conservation Center that is soon to open, the existing Rhino exhibit and two other future exhibits were all part of a self-funded \$32M Phase I. Phase II, which encompasses the proposed Bridge to the Wild project, will require Richland and Lexington county support. Plans for Phase III are still in discussion.
- Strategic Planning Update- Wooten shared a “Wordle” that was derived of words that employees would desire guests to use when describing Riverbanks Zoo & Garden. This was developed in the first all-hands meeting, or Town Hall meeting, with Canopy, our new strategic planning partner. The next step is to send out an Employee Engagement survey, in which to gather staff insight.
- Animal updates – Chase, the black footed cat passed. Chase was unique for his species, with an inquisitive, social personality. Kirra is the name that won the public vote for the new Koala Joey. Riverbanks has its first-ever meerkat pup.
- The herpetology team planted foliage in several reptile exhibits in the newly renovated Aquarium.
- Save the Dates: Zoo Camp - registration opens 2/1, Leadership Social - 2/2, ARCC Member Previews - 2/27 & 28, ARCC Grand Opening - 3/2 (around 10AM), Breakfast with Bunny - 4/2, Wine Tasting - 4/28, Midlands Gives - 5/2 & Staff preview night of ARCC - 2/23 from 5:30-7:30
- Wooten shared that we plan to implement an admission adjustment when the ARCC opens. We are currently working on a program to offer a discounted admission to eligible families.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 16th day of February 2023.


_____, Secretary