

PARKS BOARD MEETING

March 10, 2009

Attended by:

Park Board Members: Kevin Verlanic, Dale Harris, Janet Sproull, Pat King, Tim Bechtold, Heidi McDonald

Staff: Donna Gaukler, Shirley Kinsey, and Rob Thames

Approval of minutes of both meetings from February 10 and February 19, 2009.

Minutes from two meetings February 10, and February 19 were approved as submitted.

Presentations: Parks and Recreation Video (Shirley Kinsey)

Staff has created a Parks and Recreation Video to be used for staff orientation, presentations and linked to the web site. The video provides a summary of all the things done by the Department. The video has other components which include citizen interviews.

Action Items:

Election of new chair

Motion: It was moved and unanimously approved to elect Dale Harris as new chair and vice chair Janet Sproull.

Bonner Band Shell Policy change to better manage sound (Shirley Kinsey)

Staff had requests from neighbors in the Bonner area and support by Ward Council members to review the amplification policy for the band shell due to issues in the past with user groups. The proposed changes include not allowing amplification until 10 am rather than 9 am and a deposit of \$1000 rather than \$200. If for some reason there is police intervention with violations the user could lose half or all of the deposit. Staff is researching putting in a timer in the band shell to be programmed for two hour increments. Only one amplification permit will be allowed per day. An appeal can be made through the Parks Board.

Motion: It was moved to approve the changes in the amplification policy with all board members voting in favor

Budget Priorities – recommendation to Administration (Donna Gaukler)

- Budget priorities- the budget process this year included a request by Administration for all departments to cut 3.7% of its' general fund allotment.
- Each park's division provided a prioritized order for review and feedback from the Parks Board. Managers will meet after this review to finalize the priority order. Each cutback included a description of the actual service or good reduced and then the impact of that cut. It may be easier to see and measure cutbacks to care of facilities as opposed to cutback in recreation which deals mostly with mental and physical health of citizens. Staff's primary focus was to protect the core resource which is staff.
- Administration will cut back on the number of hours and length of time for the hiring of a part time receptionist during the spring and summer months. This position was funded to provide support to answer phones and registration for programs and is staffed by an intermittent employee. This does not affect the job of any current employee. Other reductions include a reduced budget for travel and trainings and contract services.
- In Recreation the cutbacks were to the Five K Race Series, supplies and purchased services and special event budget. These cutbacks will affect programs that are free or almost free to the community, with a high attendance from low income, and a good forum for education and outreach. The Department has always had a policy to not turn any youth away from a program. Limiting special events which are traditional fund raiser for scholarships may affect that policy. A reduction on staff wages was a last priority.
- In Operations the first priority was the elimination of the surplus vehicle account, reduction in port a john rentals and cleanings, contract services for backflow preventers. The proposed reduction in renting

port johns will limit the early and late season rentals for park shelters and fields along with not having port johns in parks which do not have any restroom facilities. User groups will be asked to provide for their own port johns at tennis courts and ball diamonds. The backflow preventer program has normally been contracted out, but the Department will try this year to get one staff certified to run the program.

- The reduction will affect business in Missoula by reducing spending for supplies and contracting services. Deferring maintenance or supplies can have a spiral effect on facilities which already have a limited allocation for repair and rebuilding.

Recommendation from Park Board:

Kevin – I would like to compliment the staff on the proposed series of cuts, as it is easy to cut big ticket items that you don't get back. I agree if cuts go deeper we will have to identify park and services to be eliminated. I would implore you to not target programming for the low income group but look for reductions in other areas or putting more of the burden on user groups. In the past the low income programs are subsidized.

Donna – we may include an option for adults to sponsor a youth players.

Janet – I would like to see special events continue especially Kids Fest and perhaps look at getting a donation for the event.

Shirley – we will work on additional donations or try to charge a booth fee for Kids Fest along with using more volunteers and not staff.

Pat – you may want to approach the Missoula Downtown Association for help with Kids Fest.

Kevin – I would rather see a reduction in maintenance in parks or closing parks rather than drop low income programs.

Donna – we have focused on keeping people employed and will include in our decisions the recommendation from the Park Board to maintain our low income programs so families don't suffer from the cuts.

Motion: It was moved to support the Department reduction's with the focus on staff and maintaining low income programs as priority and with more cuts to park maintenance or other areas.

Updates:

Donna – the first Conservation Lands Working Group meeting was to introduce the members, establish goals, and develop the framework for the group. The first open house will be held on March 19 to ask citizens for their input.

Dale – as for the process with this board and the conservation land working group, I would like some time to digest the material before final recommendations are made.

Jackie –there are several public open houses and then more working group sessions before anything is drafted. Staff can provide feedback as to what is coming from the public and from working group.

Staff report:

Jackie –I gave a presentation at the monthly luncheon meeting for the Missoula Downtown Association to talk about master park plan annual update. They are interested in trail expansion both east and west.

City Council approved the parkland regulations which will require small subdivisions or lots with multifamily to have parkland dedication. The next open space acquisition to be considered will be the fifty-nine acres on East Jumbo and I am working with OSAC and the County Commissioners going through process outlined by the 2006 Open Space bond.

Jackie was the lead in getting a City wide Green Team established. The team came up with a list of ways for employees to reduce, reuse and recycle. The Mayor has sent out his letter of support.

Dog leash laws are in the press and under review by Council.

Adjourned at 1:50pm