

**PARKS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

In-Person and WebEx

Location: Government Center, 2001 S. State Street SLC, Utah 84190

June 12, 2024 | 11:00AM-12:45PM

In Attendance

Board Members: Chris Hill, Courtney Peterson, Connie Burgess, Jason Malczyk, Dan Schoenfeld, Shauna Ayres, John Warnas, Lisa Dean, Robynn Masters, Jaren Cooper

Absent: Nate Salazar, Collin Dumke

Staff: Patrick Leary, Callista Pearson, Jerry Brewster, Walt Gilmore, Brent Laulusa, Adam Johnson, Julie Peck-Dabling, Taylor Abegglen, Eliza Fesola'i, Robin Chalhoub, David Johnson, Danielle Calacino

Citizen Participation: Steve Van Maren

Call to Order

Chris Hill calls the meeting to order and for everyone present to introduce themselves.

Public Comments:

No public comments made.

Business Item – Approval of April and May 2024 Minutes

Chris calls for a motion or any discussion on the April and May 2024 meeting minutes. Robynn Masters motions to approve, John Warnas seconds, all approve.

Division Director Recruitment Update

Robin Chalhoub, Community Services Department Director, gives the board an update on the Division Director recruitment. She says they have held several rounds of interviews and are at the end of the decision process. They hope to have a final decision by the end of the week.

Interim Director's Report

Julie Peck-Dabling, Interim Division Director, updates the board on the airsoft gun ban in County parks that the board recommended to make to the Mayor and Council at the last meeting. Julie says that they have written the letter of recommendation that will go to the Mayor, and it is currently sitting with the District Attorney's office for review. Julie quickly gives a summary of the airsoft gun ban the Advisory Board voted to support to the new board members.

Jerry Brewster, Interim Division Director, quickly touches on how great the Parks & Recreation team has pulled together while there hasn't been a division director. He says he's enjoyed working with everyone more closely and appreciates Julie for all her hard work.

Salt Lake County Parks & Recreation 101

Julie introduces Parks & Recreation 101 to the board, which is an in-depth look at the division, broken into three parts: Organization, Statutory Authority, and Funding.

Julie explains the structure of the Parks & Recreation Division, which is broken down into 6 sections with the Division Director overseeing them all.

The 6 sections are: Parks, Trails, and Open Space, Admin and Finance, Community Engagement, Golf, Planning & Development, and Recreation.

Patrick Leary, Associate Director of Parks, Trails, and Open Space first explains his section to the board and how they manage the operational side of things as well as Wheeler Farm. The operations side consists of 5 areas: Trails and Open Space, Athletics Fields, Grounds, and Arborist, Trades, Irrigation, and Pools, Mowing and Mechanic Shop, and Regional Management and Caretaking.

Connie Burgess asks about parks that have been given to the individual cities, and if the County still maintains them. Patrick tells her it depends, as the County has been trying to give smaller, neighborhood parks back to the cities they're located in and switching focus to maintaining regional parks. Parks we do still maintain for cities we are paid to do so, and the MSD (Municipal Services District) also maintains many parks within the six townships that recently became cities.

Jason Malczyk asks how much staffing makes up each area, and Patrick tells him they have 89 full time employees and seasonally they try to add 30-45 employees on their grounds crew and caretaking teams. Patrick confirms they have increased the hourly rate to help with retention, but overall, they do not have enough staff to keep up with what they must maintain.

Robin tells the board that there are many discussions about the level of personnel across all divisions and admits that Parks & Recreation is understaffed. She says that there are long term goals to do some workforce analysis to better identify appropriate workloads but there are many budget constraints in place that cause these sections to under expend in personnel and go without filling vacancies.

Eliza Fesola'i, Recreation Section Manager, presents for the Recreation section as Doranne Pittz, Associate Director of Recreation could not attend. Eliza explains the Recreation section to the board and the breakdown of their positions. Their administrative team is made up of 8 positions starting with their associate director, the recreation section manager, special services manager, four regional recreation managers that oversee all 22 recreation centers, and the outreach program manager that oversees the My County Rec Pass program. Eliza tells them that their section manages the 22 recreation centers which offer ice sheets, fitness rooms and classes, tracks, rock walls, adult and youth sports, indoor and outdoor pools, lessons, and four full-time licensed childcares. She says they have about 286 full-time employees and, depending on the season, can have up to 3500 seasonal employees.

Connie asks if we continually hire lifeguards or if we keep lifeguards on. Eliza tells her we do continually hire lifeguards, but we do have lifeguards that we retain and either stay on year-round or come back each season.

Jason asks about training and if we do it all internally, and Eliza tells him that yes, all our training is internal, and we partner with associations and follow their best practices and guidelines.

Robynn asks if maintenance of the facilities is part of their section's responsibilities, or if it's separate. Eliza tells her that we do have full-time employees that are Building Operations Managers, which can handle many minor things based on their certifications. Otherwise, facility maintenance is taken care of externally through Salt Lake County's Facility Management, our Parks team helps with the pools as a trade, and the Planning Team helps with many major maintenance projects at the numerous facilities. Robynn voices some concerns she has with the cleanliness and the lap lanes at the Salt Lake City Sports Complex, and Eliza thanks her for the feedback and lets her know they will look into it. Eliza also gives clarification that the Salt Lake County Health Department goes out and tests the facilities once a month, and we work hand in hand with them making sure we're up to code.

Brent Laulusa, Associate Director of Fiscal Operations tells the board he oversees the finance operations team which consists of accounting, IT (information technology), human resources, and payroll. He says that these functions have a central County counterpart, but due to Parks & Recreation being such a large division, we require our own internal staff to provide these services. His team is broken down into those four functions, and each function is a team of their own ranging from 2 – 5 full-time employees. Brent mentions that they undergo audits from the County Auditor's Office quite frequently and currently have four active ones. He explains that the audits point out areas that need improvement, but they don't help with any resources or sometimes exactly how they can improve the situation. He also informs the board about one of the reasons we have our own internal IT team is because of the many business systems the division uses. Recreation and Golf use different software programs for different uses such as registrations, booking tee times, etc., and the IT team is crucial in choosing those systems and implementing them across the division. Brent says that the division has about 3000 employees currently, both full-time and part-time, and again, due to the size of the division we use our own timekeeping system which is why we also have our own payroll and HR teams to keep track of it all.

Jerry Brewster, Associate Director of Golf quickly tells the board about his section, which consists of their own fiscal coordinator, golf cart mechanic, and 6 golf courses. Each golf course is managed by a PGA golf professional and an IGCSA golf course superintendent. He says they have 36 full-time employees, and between 200 – 350 seasonal employees. He mentions that previously they did not operate for four months out of the year, but it's turned into a year-round sport due to the change in weather. They have seen a huge increase in rounds and revenue, going from a \$6.5-7 million revenue a year to now about an \$11 million revenue a year.

Callista Pearson, Communications and PR Manager tells the board about the Community Engagement team, which consists of their associate director, communications and pr manager, communications manager, officer supervisor and their team, and a part-time web content specialist. She tells them that they oversee all marketing, external, and internal communications which consists of patron emails, advertising, social media, and the website. The Office Supervisor and her team oversee records requests and the five advisory boards the division has. Callista says they have been focused on creating a brand, working on brand control, and creating consistency with the brand throughout all Parks & Recreation facilities and programs. She mentions they handle all media requests the division receives as well.

Walt Gilmore, Associate Director of Planning and Development tells the board about his section and how his team consists of one senior project manager and 7 project managers. They oversee capital improvement projects and capital maintenance projects, with his project managers being assigned anywhere from 10-12 of them within a year's time which they oversee from start to finish. They work on projects ranging from the golf courses to the recreation centers, over to parks, trails, and open spaces. Walt mentions that they work on master plan projects to keep their park master plans reflecting the current needs of the community, and they work closely with the Community Engagement team to go out and talk with the public about what their wants and needs are. He mentions that they are currently working on their 2025 Facilities Master Plan, which they do every 10 years, and they are nearing the completion of that draft and hopes to share it soon. Lastly, Walt tells the board that he is also involved with open space acquisition and leads the Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Committee.

Lastly, Robin Chalhoub, Community Services Department Director tells the board about her department and how she oversees all the quality-of-life services the County offers which consists of Arts & Culture, the Clark Planetarium, Discovery Gateway, Zoo, Arts & Parks (ZAP) Funding, the County Library System, and Parks & Recreation. She says her department includes herself, an associate director, an executive assistant, and a fiscal administrator. She reports directly to Deputy Mayor Erin Litvack, who oversees County Services, which consists of Human Services, the tourism industry which is convention and Visit Salt Lake, Community Services, and Homelessness and Criminal Justice. Robin informs the board of the other two deputy mayors, one oversees internal services and regional development, and the other is the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). She goes onto explain that Deputy Mayor Erin Litvack reports to Mayor

Wilson, and the Mayor is the administrator of all County services and is responsible for their operations at-large. Robin says that she really plays that liaison role between the divisions and the Mayor's office and helps communicate what the needs are of the division and helps those request get sent up through the chain of command to get the funding they need to operate. She tells the board that they are already starting to talk about next year's budget, and beginning today, talking about what capital projects the Parks & Recreation team wants funded next year.

Robin clarifies that the County's fiscal year operates on a calendar year from January through December.

Julie quickly mentions the County Council, and how they hold the purse strings and approve county ordinance.

FIF Projects

Brent Laulusa explains the facility improvement fee (FIF) to the board, which started in 2020, and is essentially a fee collected off the sale of recreation memberships, rounds of golf, pavilion rentals, field rentals, etc., which gets saved and used on projects that don't rise to the top of the list when it comes to prioritization criteria. These projects range from anything like replacing carpeting, repainting, or refinishing different amenities in a facility. He shows the board how much has been saved up through the years, how much is available to be used, and what they are requesting to be used in 2025.

Brent has worked with the sections to create a list of projects that would benefit from the money collected from the fee, and the prioritization of the projects are directly reflected from feedback we have received from patrons. The improvements made, if approved, would go directly back into the experience a patron has at the facility.

Jason asks if open space and trails fall under recreation or parks, Patrick tells him they fall under parks, and there currently isn't a facility improvement fee tied to those yet but says that's a great suggestion and something they can look into on the parks side of things. Jason says his concerns lie with how heavily used the Butterfield Trail system is and how we are balancing the maintenance needs with that. Robin clarifies that although we do not currently have a FIF going towards that trail system, all events that take place there and are heavily using the trail system do pay a special event fee to do so.

John Warnas says he likes the FIF because it's so patron driven and improves the patron experience. He asks what happens to FIF money allocated to a project if it's not completely used, and Brent tells him that the money gets rolled back into the account for the following year and gives him examples from previous FIF projects.

Chris calls for a motion to approve the proposed FIF project list. Robynn motions, Lisa Dean seconds, all approve.

Section Update

Taylor Abegglen, Outreach Program Manager, gives updates for the My County Rec Pass program by telling the board that they have seen an increase of facility use since the program started on June 1 with 43,000 children officially signed up. She says their top five facilities they've seen the most pass swipes at in the past week are: West Jordan Outdoor Pool, JL Sorenson Recreation Center, South Jordan Recreation Center, Dimple Dell Recreation Center, and Magna Recreation Center.

She tells the board that they are seeing a lot of first-time swimmers, so they are emphasizing the importance of their safety practices with everyone and making sure lifeguards are all on the same page, so all patrons are having a great experience. She thanks IHC (Intermountain Healthcare) for donating 250 life jackets to use at our pools and says the challenges they're facing are hitting capacity and not including 3- and 4-year-olds which they are working on remedying.

Patrick gives updates for the Parks section by telling the board that his teams are out there mowing 1100 acres of lawn daily and they are having a hard time keeping up with it as summer is their busy season.

Walt Gilmore gives updates for the Planning section by telling the board that they're focusing on all the master plans they've been working on and getting them completed.

Brent Laulusa gives updates for the Fiscal section by telling the board the two big things they're working on are the RFP (request for proposal) for the new point of sale system and June and post-June budget adjustments along with starting on 2025 requests.

Adam Johnson gives updates for the Golf section by telling the board about the large irrigation system project taking place at Mountain View Golf Course. They are facing some supply chain issues but hoping they can get the main line up in August. He also mentions that junior golf is in full effect at all 6 courses and the sessions are at full capacity. Jerry quickly adds that golf is \$900,000 over goal, and \$800,000 over where they were last year, which all goes into their enterprise fund and funds capital projects.

Callista Pearson gives updates for the Community Engagement section by telling the board that they will send out the link to the 2023 Annual Report, and where to find it on the website. She mentions that the National Association of Counties awarded the division with an achievement award for the completion of the Parley's Trail bridge connecting 300 West to the Jordan River Parkway, which a ribbon-cutting was held for last September. Lastly, she mentions that she likes to include the board members on the distribution list for press releases and to look out for those.

Eliza Fesola'i gives updates for the Recreation section by telling the board that they have their outdoor pools up and running minus a few that are still undergoing some maintenance. She highlights that the Redwood Recreation Center ran Spanish swimming lessons last summer, and due to the great turn-out they had and with the My County Rec Pass program this year, they are offering them again. She says that their full-time licensed summer camps and their half-day recreational summer camps are all filling up and running as well. She mentions a challenge they are facing due to the increase in people using the facilities are more saves at the pools, and they are seeing upwards of 2-3 saves a day where it used to be 1-2 a week. Reiterating what Taylor mentioned earlier, Eliza says they are doing their best to make sure all the staff is knowledgeable and comfortable, and encouraging the use of life jackets which are always available. Robynn asks if staff know who can and can't swim when patrons come to the pool, and Eliza tells her there is a system in place where children 5 and under wear matching wristbands with their parent/guardian and must be within arm's length at all times. Eliza tells the board that they are very thankful for their staff for being so vigilant and it's really been a huge learning experience for everyone.

Board Business

Julie asks the board if any of them are interested in being the board chair and to give her a call if so. Chris says he is happy to be the new board chair, but he wants them to look at diversity and more when it comes time to select the board chair again.

Chris also says that he thinks it's important for himself and the board members to educate themselves and get to know all the facilities and is going to start doing so. John says he thought it was helpful when their meetings were hosted at other facilities around the County and proposes to do that for August's meeting. Julie agrees with that idea and Robin also suggests hosting it at Park Operations.

Adjourn

John Warnas motions to adjourn, Connie Burgess seconds, all approve.