

Bristol Parks & Recreation Budget Public Hearing
Ellingwood Information Center
January 28, 2020

Commissioners present: Clyde Pendleton, Laurie Mahan

Also present: Lara Sargent, Terry Lowd, Chuck Hanson, Patricia Porter, Candy Congdon, Chris Hall, Mike Cheney, Alfred Ajami, Alex Beaudet, Karl McLetchie

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Parks Budget Public Hearing:

The Parks Department met with the Budget Committee to give them a preview of the 2020 Parks Budget. Clyde thanked everyone for coming and started the meeting. He began by going through each expense line of the budget. Some Capital Improvements would be the railing installation at the swimming hole and ledgeback for the driveway at Ellingwood. He explained that Parks would be transferring \$30,000 from the 2020 budget to Capital Reserves along with \$90,000 from prior surplus. Clyde explained that a sign would be purchased for Hanna Landing that was for a Land and Water Conservation Fund project many years ago and should have had a sign. The Beach Pavilion grant is through the same LWCF program. Alfred pointed out that merchandise expenses are more than revenue for 2020. Lara explained that merchandise sales is something that Parks needs to improve on since there is not a great place to sell merchandise currently. Chris pointed out that the timing of merchandise sales should be considered too since often things are purchased one year but sold over a few years. A discussion about the rubbish removal began with a question about Parks bringing trash to the transfer station rather than using a rubbish company with dumpsters. Clyde talked about the liability of having staff handling all trash and Lara pointed out that the Parks Department is charged to bring trash to the dump. Chuck thought the Workers Comp might go up as a result of having staff handle all the trash as well. Alex asked if Parks had looked into having the elver fishermen pay for the port-a-potties or trash and Clyde questioned how this could be done. Lara explained that Parks wants to keep the area clean for everyone so providing these services are important. Mike asked about the lighthouse apartment expenses and if it was profitable with having to pay for fuel, insurance, etc. The revenue is \$19,000 and the expenses are typically much less. The new fire escape was around \$8,000 but this is a one-time expense. Chris pointed out that Parks would be paying for the expenses if the apartment wasn't rented so the revenue helps defray those costs in addition to providing additional income. There was a discussion about Parks taking out a Line of Credit to finish the Beach Pavilion. Chris explained that the interest rate for the town is very good and it makes sense to take out a line of credit for the worst-case scenario. The group discussed the likelihood of the income increasing as a result of the new pavilion. Alex asked if Parks thought the admission increase would deter people from coming. The group felt like the new pavilion would increase the number of visitors because of the new accessibility. Alex asked how it turned into a \$900,000 project. A breakdown of the finances for the project was distributed showing the original construction contract being \$776,987. Alex asked how much lower the low bidder was and Clyde said \$71,000. The highest bidder was \$1.2 million, and Chris explained that there were various reasons the Commission went with the middle bidder. The group recognized that the cost to build is very expensive and it is amazing to have raised so much to only need around \$100,000 to finish this facility. There was a discussion about the admission fees increasing to pay for the line of credit. Lara explained that the beach admission price is on the low end of other beaches in Maine and the fee would've likely gone up anyway, without the new pavilion. The group discussed that prices for resident park passes will remain unchanged and that the discount park passes would still be available at the same price. The group discussed how the pavilion project is on schedule and that the architects commented on the excellent workmanship. Clyde talked about how extremely well the pavilion construction is and the builders have a lot of pride in their work and their town. Karl pointed out that if there is a rainy summer then the line of credit being paid out of capital reserves would mean the payment would still be covered.

Clyde went through each line of revenue. The group discussed that Maine was rated the 4th place to visit in the world so this could help increase the visitors to the Parks. Alex thought the snack shack rent was cheap at \$3500

for the summer. It was pointed out that it is only rented for 2.5 months and that the people running it now do a great job and probably help draw people to the beach. The group discussed weddings and that the fees were very cheap even though they were slightly increased this year. Parks wasn't sure why the wedding revenue was down but going forward the expenses would be less since Lara was absorbing much of the work of the wedding coordinator. The group also discussed that alcohol would no longer be allowed so this might deter receptions. The Park Commission felt that the liability posed from allowing people to drink at a place that could be very dangerous (the rocks) just wasn't worth the risk to the town. There was a discussion about Special Events that include the triathlon, fireworks barge, youth and adult sports/recreation and bands. Chuck asked why the expenses were more than the revenue. Lara explained that part of the Parks mission is to offer services to the town so much of the special events expenses (bands, fireworks barge, Yoga, Tai Chi) are not money makers. Laurie pointed out that by raising the beach admissions price, it allows Parks to put more money into these types of services. Alex suggested that having local artists create something for shirts might help increase merchandise sales. The community room at the beach was discussed and that the new covered eating area has a kitchenette that might encourage people to rent the space for parties. The group discussed the capital reserve accounts with a breakdown that was distributed showing each account. The start of year cash amount is currently 271k according to the town hall calculations, but Parks is waiting for the cash amount calculated from the town auditor before fully committing how much to put in capital reserves. The group discussed Parks going to the Budget Committee on February 10th.

Public Comments:

Laurie made a motion to end the meeting at 8:02, Clyde seconded, and motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.