

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING**

Thursday, May 28, 2020 APPROVED JUNE 25, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Chair Kirkwood

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Vincent Kirkwood
 Treasurer Merv Aronoff
 Secretary David Barash
 Commissioner Robert Brooks
 Commissioner Michele Hembree
 Commissioner Sally Wenczel

Staff Present: Jennifer Tucker, Executive Director
 Joe Ketchum, Parks Superintendent
 Kelly Hyer, Recreation Superintendent
 Administrative Assistant Patricia Helson
 Township Liaison Warshay
 Gregory Need, Esq.
 Pamela St. Peter, Recording Secretary

Absent: Commissioner Sukenic

Public: None

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Hembree, to approve the agenda, as presented.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Hembree, Kirkwood, Wenczel

Nays: None

Absent: Sukenic

Motion Carried 6-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Items A through C are Consent Agenda matters considered to be routine by the Commission and enacted by one motion unless a member of the Commission wishes to discuss one of the topics.

- A. Approval of Minutes from the April 23, 2020 Regular Commission Meeting.
- B. Approval of the April Financial Reports.
- C. Approval of Prepaid expenditures in the amount of \$235,004.09. Expenditures in the amount of \$83,076.94. Credit card refunds totaling \$10,839.50 for the month of April 2020.

Motion by Secretary Barash, second by Treasurer Aronoff, to approve Items A through C on the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Hembree, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: Sukenic
Motion Carried 6-0

STAFF REPORT

Executive Director Tucker said the park amenities start reopening on May 28th; park restrooms, Fit Trac at Drake Sports Park; tennis courts, pickle ball courts; skate park, dog park and basketball courts. The playgrounds and shelters remain closed. As of June 15th, all staff will be back in the office. Public appointments will be received after June 22nd. They will be closing Marshbank Park and Drake Sports Park once a week until 11 am to do mowing and any other maintenance. They will not be renting pavilions until the gathering restriction is moved to 100 people or less. The Connect facility will remain closed until further notice. Staff remains diligent in being on calls with Oakland County Health Division and the executive office to follow their guidance as far as senior facilities. Modifications are also being done in an effort for staff to come back and for buildings to be open to the public. Plexiglas partitions are being installed at the RAC. Also, the electrostatic disinfectant machine is being used to disinfect offices and public areas. There have been garlic mustard pulls along the trail and preserve; 58 bags have been pulled.

Recreation Superintendent Hyer reported that events have been cancelled through June 30th. This includes Kids Komotion, Go Fish and Summer on the Bank. Staff has been working on free virtual events such as Bingo with West Bloomfield Police as well as launching a virtual recreation campaign which is taking the existing programs and moving them to a virtual platform. Staff has added a dedicated page for virtual recreation programs as well as a dedicated virtual recreation registration page. Virtual programs have included Animal Habitats and a virtual Coffee Hour. Naturalists have been hard at work with Nature Breaks, Live with Lauren and Zoom Calls with a Naturalist. The Animal Habitats program has been a way to help teachers out and still maintain appointments albeit virtually. This program is with Naturalist Lauren Azoury. Every Thursday at 9 am there is a Virtual coffee hour with a theme. The annual Native Planting sale had a curbside pickup this year. This was in combination with a Native Planting 101 virtual class. There were 75 pre-orders and there were 17 people in the virtual class. Even though Earth Day events were cancelled the Township was still able to give away hundreds of Oak Tree seedlings. National Trails Day has been cancelled this year. There will be curbside pick up for the shirts the Friday before.

Upcoming virtual programs include Campfire Sing-along, a travel series and Zoom with a Naturalist and the Oakland Astronomy Club is offering Taking Up Space. Seniors Celebrating Seniors has been launched and this is where the Township's senior citizens are celebrating high school graduates from West Bloomfield Township and surrounding communities. Live with Lauren debuted in April and May and Live with Annabelle will be debuting in June. This is a 10 minute show every Tuesday at 11 am.

Parks Superintendent Ketchum thanked the Parks staff for their dedication and hard work. Full time staff has been back to work since the order from Governor Whitmer was lifted allowing landscapers to go back to work. Seasonal staff will start June 1st and that will only be about half of the normal seasonal staff. During the closures of the restrooms staff did spring cleanups. Parking lots have been blown, professionally swept and vacuumed, flower beds have been blown out, and leaves have been picked up. Playground maintenance has been done as well. Staff removed a poured in place safety surface at the Drake Sports

Park playground and replaced it with engineered wood safety surfacing. The previous rubberized safety surface had become worn out and unrepairable. Staff had the opportunity to grade the trail. Warning track renovations were completed on the baseball infields at Keith Sports Park. This renovation included removing sod and adding infield material to bring the warning tracks back to their original dimensions.

Water systems have been recharged at all the seasonal restroom facilities. This also includes chlorinating wells and performing water testing to make sure the water is safe for drinking. All seasonal restrooms have been deep cleaned as well as disinfected and are ready for public use. The parking lot was paved at Splash Landing and a waste water treatment device was installed. This reduces the amount of detention pond area that is needed.

Chairman Kirkwood asked if Recreation staff has considered a virtual concert series. Superintendent Hyer said it is on the list but they are just holding out a bit longer to see what the options will be as far as restrictions on group gatherings. Chairman Brooks suggested that even if restrictions are lifted there will be people who will not return to activities or parks for many reasons. This is a real opportunity to add to Recreation programming virtually and he would suggest that they continue to keep that at the forefront, especially as it concerns senior programs and relative to people that have a number of children at home. He also asked if playgrounds will be able to be sanitized when they reopen. Superintendent Ketchum said they have found out from the CDC that while they have concerns about the virus being on surfaces, they are not seeing any evidence that that is where the main infection outbreaks are coming from. They are seeing that the virus is killed at certain temperatures. He doesn't know if they want to get into the practice of disinfecting the playground on a daily basis as he doesn't know what the effect would be.

Commissioner Hembree said she loved the Virtual Coffee Hour. She said there is a mental health peak that is really affecting people and she suggests people get outside and get their Vitamin D but there also needs to be a connection. She asked if the Commission is requiring people wear masks when they are on the trails or in the parks. Director Tucker said that if people are outdoors and maintaining 6' distancing, it is their choice if they want to wear a mask. Commissioner Hembree said she also noticed a lot of people riding bikes but knows most people don't know how to correctly size a bike. She suggested that be added to one of the online segments. As far as Seniors celebrating Seniors, she would love to see some words of encouragement coming from the senior citizens to the graduating seniors. Superintendent Hyer said that they have communicated that everyone should bring a mask with them in case they encounter a situation where they need to get close to other people and there are also signs that masks must be worn inside the buildings. Commissioner Wenczel asked if the Parks staff will be opening drinking fountains. Superintendent Ketchum said they are not opening drinking fountains nor are they opening up the fountains at the dog park.

Presentation of the 2020 Financial Audit – Plante Moran

Stacey Reeves, Plante & Moran made a presentation to the Commission of the 2020 Financial Audit. She was accompanied by Kyle Vieth. Ms. Reeves stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission received an unmodified auditor's opinion on its financial statement, meaning it is without any qualifiers or modifications. It is the best that you can get from your auditors and means that it is free from material misstatements. There is an Emphasis of Matter paragraph in the opinion which reflects a new standard which was implemented this year and this standard is being implemented throughout local governments and it changes some of the presentation within the financial statements; the retiree healthcare vehicle fund through MERS had not previously been reported within the Commission's financial statements and this standard requires it be reported within the financial statements. As it relates to the pandemic, there is a disclosure within the financial statements to make the readers aware of the fact that subsequent to year end the pandemic has impacted the Commission's operations. It is not known at this time what the actual financial impact will be for the year but some of the revenue streams have been impacted by the pandemic.

Mr. Vieth provided an overview of the graph package. The graphs are a pictorial statement of the Parks and Recreation financial statements. Mr. Block said that General Fund revenues are segregated out by category and go back four years for trend analysis. The largest revenue source continues to come from property taxes. Property tax revenue has continued to increase in the current year but overall they have remained pretty consistent since 2013. In 2009, when the economic crisis occurred, the Commission was able to obtain the Restoration Millage of 2013 and the Commission could be in a similar situation due to Covid-19.

The Active Recreation Millage is set to expire this year, therefore the Commission will need to find a replacement revenue if this millage is not renewed. Total expenditures increased in the current year by about \$1.3 million which is primarily due to the capital outlay work on the Splash Landing project. Admin expenses in 2019 are lower than they were in 2016 which is not seen often; the Commission has done a good job of keeping these costs down. Personnel costs continue to make up the majority of the Commission's expenditures which is not surprising since governmental work is people driven.

Fund Balance – General Fund resembles the Commission's savings account. In the current year operating expenditures remained relatively consistent. Committed and assigned categories have specific uses determined by the Commission and the unassigned amount is not committed and is available for the Commission's general operations. The unassigned fund balance is approximately \$3.5 million which will help the Commission through the current Covid crisis.

The pension plan is about 93% funded. With the market in its current situation, the Commission can expect this percentage to be lower next year however compared to other municipalities the Commission is very well funded. Retiree Healthcare Funding Status is approximately 77% funded. That percentage is also a lot higher than typically seen in other municipalities.

Commissioner Barash asked if there will be an extension of the Active Recreation Millage. Director Tucker said it is going to be on the August ballot.

Ms. Reeves referred to the End of Audit Report. She said the Commission shares a pension plan with the Township which is still in the process of finalizing the audit related to the pension plan. As soon as that is finalized the Township issues their audited financial statement, Plante Moran will update the Commission's report and finalize the audit. None of the information within this audit report is expected to change though. Ms. Reeves said the audit went extremely well. Plante Moran has developed a Covid Resource Center on their website which gives information and guidance to their clients. She also recommended the Commission assess their risk for cyber attacks and ensure controls are in place for this new virtual operating environment. She thanked the Parks and Recreation team; a couple of weeks before the audit was to start they pivoted to an entirely remote audit. The Parks and Recreation team was extremely well prepared and responsive throughout the entire process. They appreciate the responsiveness and professionalism of the entire Parks and Recreation team.

Director Tucker thanked Plante Moran as well as Ruth Lyons for their exemplary work and she appreciated how hard everyone worked on this audit.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A) Items from the Chairperson

Chairman Kirkwood thanked Director Tucker, Superintendent Hyer and Superintendent Ketchum for their hard work and leadership to their staff. He also thanked everyone for accommodating the needs during the financial audit.

B) Items from the Secretary

Secretary Barash also thanked everyone for their hard work.

C) Items from the Treasurer

Treasurer Aronoff said there is an interesting website for those interested in hiking and the trail network, it is Trailink.com. Every trail in the United States is listed and you can upload photographs for individual trails.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive: Chair Kirkwood

Chair Kirkwood stated that the committee met on May 12, 2020 via Zoom. They talked about the May 28, 2020 Commission meeting agenda. This included the COVID-19 update including date for staff to return to work changing due to Governor Whitmer's extension of the Stay at Home Order. There was a Splash Landings Update. They also talked about Covid-80 which is an internal staff program that is covered under the Cares Act.

B. Finance: Report from Treasurer Aronoff

Treasurer Aronoff stated the committee met before tonight's meeting and discussed and reviewed the April invoices, vouchers and the monthly budget status. They also discussed the agenda items for tonight's meeting include the upcoming audit. The next meeting is scheduled in June prior to the regular Commission meeting.

ITEMS FROM TOWNSHIP LIAISON

Township Liaison Warshay reported that on May 1st the Township Board held a special meeting just to approve procedures for resuming operations at Town Hall pursuant to the Governor's order. He thinks Parks and Recreation will be following much of the same procedures as well. The Township Board also had a regular meeting on May 11th. They approved a fireworks display at Walnut Lake on June 27th; that will be subject to any federal or state order about gatherings. That is also a condition they put on all fireworks approvals this year. The Township Board adopted the recommendations from the Hazardous Compensation Committee which basically gives some extra money to Township employees who have been more at risk for Covid-19 due to the nature of their activities. It is a way of recognizing the hazardous work that they have been doing. There was another special meeting on May 19th for Fiber Ring to replace what the Township has been using for internet and communications. This enables the Township to get a bid.

The Township will be moving the election precinct to Township offices because the schools where they would be held are closed. Commissioner Hembree expressed concern about the use of illuminating lanterns.

NEW BUSINESS

- A) Consideration to Approve the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority Insurance Renewal for 2020-2021.

Director Tucker stated that Renewal of the Michigan Municipal Risk Management Association Insurance comes up in May or June of each year. The policy is effective from July to June on an annual basis. After an evaluation of assets, MMRMA has indicated that the 2020-2021 financial year premium is \$60,730. This is a minor increase over 2019-2020. The injury from 2014 should be falling off soon.

Commissioner Hembree asked if this can be bid out to other companies to see what the rates would be. She also asked if there is a projected amount of what the payment will be reduced to once the injury falls off. Director Tucker said she does not have a projection. About two or three years ago staff did look at other potential companies. The Township is in a pool with other municipalities. At the time, they did not see any savings. MMRMA does pay Parks and Recreation dividends if the collective pool does good during the year. MMRMA also has a risk management aspect that has been proven to be very helpful to staff if they have operational questions. So they have considered other companies in the past but it would not have proven beneficial and the injury would follow them. Commission Hembree said the Commission has to be cost effective in their decisions, especially in light of Covid-19. She thinks the Commission should look at bidding this out again just to see what the feedback is. Director Tucker said that if the Commission would like staff to look into this for the following year, they can definitely do that.

Motion by Secretary Barash, second by Treasurer Aronoff, to approve the renewal of MMRMA Liability Insurance Policy for the 2020-2021 financial year in the amount of \$60,730.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Hembree, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: Sukenic
Motion Carried 6-0

PUBLIC FORUM

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Barash said he has seen signage around the Township for Splash Landing. Chairman Kirkwood advised the Commissioners to keep an eye on their emails because a lot of virtual events are taking place this summer. Commissioner Wenczel thanked staff for thinking outside the box.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Treasurer Aronoff made a motion to adjourn, and unanimously supported. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Secretary David Barash

Pamela St. Peter
Recording Secretary

(As a permanent record, an audio tape of this meeting in its entirety is on file and will remain at the Parks and Recreation offices where it may be heard.)