

**Canon City Area Metropolitan Recreation and Park District  
575 Ash Street  
Canon City, CO 81212  
(719) 275-1578**

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
July 9, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER** The Canon City Area Metropolitan Recreation and Park District Board meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Board President, Nick Sartori, in the board meeting room located at 575 Ash Street.

**ROLL CALL**

Board Members:

Present: Nick Sartori  
Joel Dudley  
Andrew Palmasano  
Melissa Smeins

Staff: Kyle Horne Executive Director  
Dawn Green Finance Director (*via Teams*)

Attorney: Dan Slater

Guests: Pat Grette  
Randi Esquibel

**ACCEPTANCE OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Board member Joel Dudley made a motion, seconded by board member Andrew Palmasano to accept the consent agenda as written on the July 9, 2024 regular meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously, all present voting aye.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

None

**ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Board member Melissa Smeins informed the board that she is signing up for the issue committee for the pool. The issue committee will work alongside Citizens for a Pool during the campaign.

Board member Andy Palmasano spoke about the public meeting for the pool, stating those that attended were in support of the project. He has talked to younger people

in the community who aren't able to attend the public meetings, but who express support for the pool.

Board member Nick Sartori asked about the lack of seating for spectators at youth volleyball. Kyle responded that the school does not allow any chairs on the floor as it has recently been refurbished.

## **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

Executive Director – Kyle Horne reported:

Work on the lean-to is progressing. The structure will use material recycled from the roof replacement project which is scheduled to start on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Matthew Parker has resigned from the District effective July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Although no reason was given, Kyle commented that when the District's salary scale was benchmarked with other Recreation Districts in the state, our District employees are lower paid.

Two people submitted letters to be the Director of the Bighorn Round Table. It is a very part time position to help the local round table entities organize their efforts for grant opportunities.

The District is looking to purchase a truck and staff members are watching potential vehicles on a current Roller auction ending tomorrow. Kyle has spoken to local car dealers who will also be on the lookout for a truck which meets the District's needs. He stated that due to the District's tight budget, a new truck for us is a used one with eighty to one hundred thousand miles.

The District should hear within the next couple of weeks if the El Pomar grant application for improvements to the dog park is successful.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Street underpass of the Arkansas Riverwalk Trail is open after the high-water flows have receded. The maintenance crew cleaned it out today.

The SDA conference is coming up. Nick Sartori, Dan Slater, Dawn Green and Kyle Horne are scheduled to attend. If any other board member is interested, please let Kyle know. As the conference is September 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, the September board meeting will have to be moved to the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Kyle thanked Dawn and Carly for their work on remediating the website. Its ADA accessibility score is now 100%.

Board member Melissa Smeins asked how long Matt Parker has worked for the District and Kyle responded eight to nine years. He said that it is hard for the Recreation District to compete for labor as our employees are paid less than those at the City, County, School District or DOC.

Dan Slater:

Dan Slater had no report.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Update on Pool Feasibility Study and Survey Work**

Kyle showed a slide of the survey results as of 5:17 p.m. Currently there are 477 answers, and his goal is to get over a thousand. Pool option three is clearly in the lead and option two is second. Some people have chosen not to rank the no pool option. Option one is the third choice. As more surveys have come in, Councilman-Hunsaker informed Kyle that option three has extended its lead. On the survey, participants are required to leave a comment. Councilman-Hunsaker will share those responses next week. The survey closes at 11:59 p.m. on Monday. District staff will continue to do a social media push to urge people to take the survey. Board member Nick Sartori asked the other members to share these posts.

A scientific study will be launched the week of July 22<sup>nd</sup> by Magellan Strategies. The survey will poll options two and three with registered voters within the District. The District has approximately 7,000 more voters than the City. The sales tax question is a city question. The survey will measure voter views on tax impacts, their trust level of the District, the partnerships with the City and the School District, and if a pool question is likely to pass with which option. The survey is conducted using text messages. The initial results should be available by the August board meeting.

### **Update on Tax Impacts for Potential Ballot Questions**

Todd Snidow with RBC joined the board meeting remotely. His task as an underwriter is to help determine how to finance the pool project. Having worked on projects in the area, he stated that he understands the voters in our community. In a slide, he reviewed potential tax impacts. A property tax only option would require approximately six mills to generate \$24 million for the project. This equates to \$39 per \$100,000 of assessed value. An option with sales tax in partnership with the City would remove the tax burden for the bond. Pool option three would require a .3% sales tax for 25 years. Sales tax revenue for the City has been increasing.

Mr. Snidow stated that using a split of property tax and sales tax was successful in Montrose. He went on to state that the Magellan Strategies polling will provide a scientific read on what people think regarding the taxing issues and it will mirror likely voters in November.

For the District, a 2.8 mill increase is \$18.67 per year per \$100,000 in assessed value. A 3.75 mill increase is \$25 per year per \$100,000 in assessed value.

A mill increase for the bond is only a backstop if the sales tax can't cover the bond payment. The general obligation bond question can be designed to state that the sales tax is adequate to support the bond payment. (The language does have to conform to Tabor regulations.)

Mr. Snidow stated that polling will be important regarding the mill levy question to support operations for the District. There is a crowded ballot. He used residential property owners in his examples for tax impacts, but the tax impacts on business owners will be much higher (about four times the homeowner rate.) He also cautioned the board to make sure to go for enough. Kyle spoke about the changes coming to property taxes, stating that

the District is looking at reduced revenues in the future as assessment rates are slated to drop and the exemption rate increase in the near term. This is the case even if (Initiatives) 50 or 108 do not pass.

Included in the board packets was an informational packet on a mill levy increase for the aquatics center compiled by Pat Grette. Ms. Grette spoke to the board and a discussion followed. She expressed concern that doubling the property tax would jeopardize the project, questioned what portion of the increase would be going to the pool and how the District would spend the other portion. Kyle Horne responded saying the District has to use reserves to balance the budget; there are upcoming increases in insurance cost: the cost of the deferred maintenance needs is increasing, and property tax revenue is expected to drop in the future. He stated that the pool is only one part of the District, and all parts need attention for ongoing operations. Board member Nick Sartori stated that the District has never had an increase in the mill levy and inflation is an issue. Ms. Grette had a question on how the ballot language would be worded, expressing that it may seem that the District is holding the pool hostage. She would like to see specifics in addressing the needs of District as regards to the proposed mill levy increase. Kyle responded that the revenue would be used for deferred maintenance, salaries for additional employees to manage the properties and capital improvements. The discussion veered towards the projects of other Districts in the community which resulted from successful tax ballot questions. It was stated that the Recreation District should not add wants on top of needs when going to the voters by taking advantage of the need for a pool. Board member Joel Dudley responded that the District is still on the same paycheck as in 1967 and that we need people helping us.

The discussion continued, focusing on the pool concepts including the issues of year-round vs. seasonal, water temperature, and multipurpose use. Kyle pointed out that the community will be voting on a concept. If the vote is positive, the District will have to go back out to bid for the facility. Then discussions about bodies of water, temperature and amenities will occur. Board member Nick Sartori suggested that the facility be built to provide recreation to our community and include amenities that will drive revenue. Todd Snidow stated that the Board has to do what is right for the community, amenable to the voters and addresses the survey results to get everyone from your community on your side.

The Magellan Strategies survey will focus on the voters and there was discussion about which numbers to poll. Board member Nick Sartori asked that the mill levy increase be phrased as the monthly cost for a home valued at \$300,000. The board directed to poll a 3 mill increase and a 4 mill increase. Using the average home value of \$285,000, Mr. Snidow calculated that 4 mills would be \$76 per year or \$6.37 per month.

Kyle shared some information he received from Councilman-Hunsaker on the cost of building commercial pools. In 2014 the cost was \$180-\$200 per square foot. In 2024 the cost rose to \$488 per square foot, and by 2034 it is anticipated to be \$772 per square foot.

Kyle also stated that attorney Dan Slater will continue to be involved with counsel on the bond questions. Mr. Slater has been through three (property tax question) elections with the Recreation District.

### **Discussion on Joint Meeting with City Council**

The results of the survey and draft language for the questions will be available at the District's August 13<sup>th</sup> regular board meeting. There will need to be a joint meeting with City Council to approve the ballot language. The City Council meets on August 19<sup>th</sup>, and the District board members will need to be there to vote on it. The City Council meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m.

### **Discussion on Use of Backfill Funding**

Kyle reviewed estimated costs of the items on the list. The roof on the office building is approximately \$50,000; the network upgrade is \$6,500; the locks for park bathrooms are \$5,500 and the estimate for battery operated equipment is \$30,000. Board member Andy Palmasano asked if the District could add a truck. Other uses for the backfill funding discussed included ADA concrete work at Pathfinder and Harrison parks, and ADA trail work on the Riverwalk. Board member Nick Sartori suggested including seating and picnic tables near the ropes course site. Kyle informed the board that currently there are discounts available to purchase battery-operated equipment.

The Recreation District will have to amend the budget. District staff are moving forward with the bathroom locks and network upgrades.

Kyle stated that he has been approached by the City for help with funding a ranger for the Riverwalk, and that the District can explore that with the mill levy increase.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Discussion on Submitting a Letter to Fremont County about being on the November 5, 2024 Ballot**

The board packets included a copy of the letter. It is a place holder to be on the ballot.

Board member Melissa Smeins made a motion, seconded by board member Joel Dudley to approve the letter. Motion carried unanimously, all present voting aye.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, Board Chairman, Nick Sartori adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

Submitted by:

*/s/ Dawn Green*

Dawn Green, Finance Director

Approved as written or amended:

*/s/ Nick Sartori*

Nick Sartori, Meeting Chair