

**MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015**

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of the October 5, 2015 Minutes**
- 3. Developing Accessible fishing pier in Bukolt Park Lagoon (Prime Water Anglers)**
- 4. Update of 2016 Budget**
- 5. Director's report**
- 6. Adjournment**

1. Roll Call

Present: Bahling, Freckmann, Glodosky, Hall, Ald. McComb, McDonald, Ald. Oberstadt, Okonek,
Excused: Ald. Slowinski, Sorenson
Also Present: Director Tom Schrader, Corey Ladick, Ashley Steadman, Brandi Makuski, Steve Hill

2. Approval of the October 5, 2015 Minutes

Motion by Okonek, seconded by Hall, to approve the October 5, 2015 minutes and place them on file.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

3. Developing Accessible fishing pier in Bukolt Park Lagoon (Prime Water Anglers)

Director Schrader reported that he has been approached by the Prime Water Anglers back in 2010 when they proposed installing a handicapped accessible fishing pier in Mead Park, which would tie into the KASH playground. After working with Consolidated Water Power Company and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, it was determined that the dike in that area could not be breached to install the footing for the pier. Since then the Club has been working on trying to find an alternative site to construct the pier somewhere in Portage County. This past summer after observing the Cops and Bobbers "Take a Kid Fishing" event, they noticed the lack of opportunity for accessible fishing around the lagoon in Bukolt Park. With the lagoon being a favorite spot for people to take kids fishing, the Club approached the Parks Director again about placing accessible fishing pier(s) in the lagoon. The Club is looking to donate the labor and most of the costs associated with the construction of the pier. Two different types of piers are being studied. The pier(s) would either be supported with posts in the water or cantilevered over the water. We are looking at locating the pier(s) adjacent to the existing walkway bridge between the two lagoons. By locating it here, there will be easy access to the parking area and level ground to the pier.

Director Schrader stated he would be more in favor of the cantilevered pier(s) vs. the pods because ice tends to shift the posts in the water.

The Prime Water Anglers are working with KI Mobility who will be sponsoring the work with providing the material for the project.

Motion by Hall, seconded by Glodosky to approve the recommendation of the Park Director to work with the Prime Water Anglers Club to construct handicapped accessible piers in the lagoon at Bukolt .

Ayes all, Nays none; Motion carried.

4. Update of 2016 Budget

Director Schrader distributed the latest 2016 Capital Improvement list, which will be provided to the Common Council for approval in November. Director Schrader indicated all of the parks items, which have been approved by the Finance Committee. The Commission has reviewed this budget before which shows mostly repairs/maintenance for the Parks Department.

In regards to the 2016 operating budget the staff proposed a \$1.00 increase for seasonal wages from \$8.50 to \$9.50. This \$1.00 raise would cost \$40,000.00 and with \$20,000.00 saved in FICA program the City could only find another \$10,000.00 to put towards the rate increase so the increase is only 75 cents. Otherwise, the remainder of the budget stayed the same because of budget constraints.

The other proposed change in the budget was how the room tax funding would be allocated. In the past, the money came to the Parks through a resolution to be spent for parks improvements and tourism. The

break-down of room tax was broken down as follows: 65% for major projects, 15% for plan maintenance, 10% for special events and 10% for arts. The arts was split one-half for the Arts Center and one-half for endowments. In the past few years, \$100,000.00 was taken out the room tax account for the general levy and this year the proposal is for an additional \$200,000.00 of Room Tax funds being used to offset the general levy. Of which \$80,000.00 will go to offset expenses at the Willett. By transferring this additional \$200,000 to the general levy, all of the Room Tax funds previously set aside for major projects, plan maintenance and the arts endowment would be used to offset the general levy. Only the Special Events and the Arts Center would receive funding from room tax money. With all of this money shifted to the general levy, future funds for improvements and planned maintenance will need to come out of capital improvements instead of segregated funds from room tax.

CT Corey Ladick was asked to explain and/or answer questions of the Commissioners. Corey explained that the City has started the budget process with a significant challenge this year because of the loss of more than \$460,000.00 in state aid. This amount is the lowest since 1994.

How do we continue all of the services we have given the restrictions on how much we can raise property taxes from operations. Our end goal was to preserve all of the city services we have intact without making any cuts. With state restrictions and levy, limits our operations are tightly restricted however, capital is not. Property taxes can be raised to repay debt. This is where the discussion started about prioritizing room tax to use it where we really need it, which are operations. In the past Planned Maintenance room tax funds were used at the Willett for capital improvements, but it serves us much better to use these Room Tax funds for operations and then borrow money to do major improvements. This is our financial strategy and this is where the State has put us as well as many other municipalities. The capital budget no longer has to compete with the operational budget, so it allows us to move more money into debt free payment so we can beef up our capital budget. This was our way of coming up with the needed \$200,000.00 of the \$460,000 we needed.

Commissioner Liz McDonald asked why room tax money is now accessible where it wasn't before and CT Ladick stated it would always have been accessible but the City really didn't take advantage of it. By City ordinance, 53 percent of room tax goes to the general fund but the City hasn't taken advantage of it in the past. According to the State split up to 30 percent goes to the municipality's general fund and 70 percent goes to projects that support tourism and generate paid hotel stays in the community not just parks and recreation.

Schrader stated that the reason the funds haven't been used in the past for general levy was that the Common Council in 1980 passed a resolution earmarking the funds for recreational use only. In order to place the funds in any other account, it will need a 2/3 council vote to do so.

Commissioners asked what will happen to new/future groups coming in asking for money. Previously room tax money was segregated and accessible for new projects. Plan maintenance money was used to fix things at Willett and Goerke. Now there won't be money in a segregated account for new projects and they will need to go to the capital budget for approval.

CT Ladick reported a change in State Statutes for 2017 the City will need to appoint a Tourism Commission, which will make the room tax fund recommendations. The City will still keep their 30 percent and the Tourism Commission will have the 70 percent to work with for tourism, promotion and development. Of that 70 percent, 2/3 of the money goes to the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Ald. McComb asked who comprised this Tourism Commission.

CT Ladick stated that the Mayor will appoint the Commission if the city chooses to have one. There could also be an Urban Commission.

Ald. Oberstadt likes the idea of that the current use of Room Tax funds would allow groups to leverage funds with Room Tax funds. She didn't see that happening if the requests need to go through Capital Improvements process.

President Bahling stated his opinion that he's disappointed that room tax money is going into the general levy. He referred to the list of major projects/improvements that were developed through the used room tax money. All of these projects helped make Stevens Point special. And now we're taking away that money that makes our place so special, and it's a shame that it has to offset the levy. He's aware that 2/3 of the parks requests amounting to \$160,000.00 were approved in capital projects in this budget. Looking at the capital improvement budget he sees that at least 90 percent is for maintenance of streets and roofs.

We need our money for special projects, and if they have to compete against repairs/maintenance in the annual Capital Improvement process, I don't see them happening.

Director Schrader stated he's been attending capital improvement meeting for 30 years and department heads have been instructed each year to stay within the parameter of 1 million to 1.2 million each year. Is the 200,000.00 from room tax part of the 1 million dollar base or will it be added on top of the 1 million or the 1.2 million base.

CT Ladick stated that capital improvements averaged about 3 million for the past 5 years. The plan is to continue increasing the capital improvement budgets each year to cover maintenance/repair and new projects.

Schrader stated that the 3 million dollar number CT Ladick is talking about is adding in all the major street/water/sewer repairs, not the basic Capital Improvement requests.

Public hearing for the budget will be on November 9th during the Finance Committee meeting and during the Common Council meeting on November 16th. Residents are urged to attend.

5. Director's report

- Reported that a level 3 playoff game is scheduled at Goerke on Friday at 7 p.m. Amherst vs. Southern Door
- Forestry finished planting trees today and planted approximately 100, refer to Todd's report
- Winter staff is being hired
- 105.9 our radio station received the final FCC license
- Bukolt Park house negotiations are continuing
- Koziczkowski Park new playground equipment has been installed

6. Adjournment

Motion by Okonek, seconded by McDonald, to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried, 7 :20 p.m.