



**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MAY 18, 2020**

PRESENT: Aaron Pointer, President  
Tim Reid, Clerk  
Andrea Smith  
Erik Hanberg  
ABSENT Jessie K. Baines, Jr.

PLACE: Remote Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Reid at 5:30pm.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

February 3, 2020

It was moved and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented; approved unanimously.

**STATUS OF COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING**

The following guests were introduced, Jen Covino- federal lobbyist, TK Bentler- state lobbyist, Anita Gallagher, governmental relations City of Tacoma.

Shon Sylvia opened the discussion noting that the District is projecting at \$13M shortfall over the next 6 months. He stated staff has been working on available funding as special purpose districts like Metro Parks have not been included in any of the federal stimulus packages.

Joe Brady was then introduced. Mr. Brady stated that Metro Parks Tacoma has been hard hit both on the revenue side and tax side leaving a major funding gap. He stated that he is working with the District's lobbyists to help identify and advocate for funding.

Jen Covino, federal lobbyist commented that the CARES Bill in March did provide state and local funding to the State of Washington. She reported that Pierce County did receive \$157.9M while the State received \$2.95 Billion. She noted that when the CARES Act was written it did not allow for state & local revenue losses. Since the City of Tacoma did not qualify for a direct allocation of the federal funding through the CARES Act they have since negotiated with the State of WA for \$6M.

Ms. Covino then commented on the House Bill 6800, HEROES Act which passed in the House on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The bill as written provides \$3Trillion in COVID related relief, it was noted that the Senate Republican leadership has publicly stated that they will not consider the HEROES Act, as passed by the House. Ms. Covino stated that she continues to work with Senator Kilmer's office and others to keep Metro Parks Tacoma top of mind for finding a legislative solution to combat the District's funding issues due to COVID. Other sources of money that may come by

means of others such as a housing authority or LWCF were briefly discussed. It was also highlighted that the District may benefit through the employee incentives through the CARES Act as well as proposed employee tax credits through the HEREOS Act. She noted that there appears to be some momentum over the past couple of days around the HEREOS Act although Senate Republicans and the White House have indicated that they will refrain from participating in formal negotiations on the next stage of COVID-19 relief in order to have time to evaluate the impact of funding under previous legislative package. It is likely that no action will be taken until after Memorial Day. Ms. Covino suggested continued work with the State and County to make them aware of the District's needs.

Anita Gallagher commented that like MPT the city of Tacoma is facing a budget gap of \$64M this year and projected revenue short fall of \$60 M for the next biennium. She commented that we don't actually know what the economic recovery might look like in Tacoma.

Conversation about strategies of working with State Legislators then ensued. TK Bentler suggested educating Rep. Schumacher, Rep Fey & Senator Conway and the States Office of Financial Management on the budget circumstance of the District as a result of COVID.

Joe Brady commented that the City and MPT have a very healthy relationship and will continue to work together for the community in order to get access to State and Federal COVID funding. Mr. Brady suggested additional conversation via the Joint Municipal Action Committee ( JMAC) to educate and work with other electeds in including member of County Council on budget impact facing Metro Parks. Ms. Covino recommended that Metro Parks continue to let the community know what the District's COID costs have been and begin to have the community advocated to the County for reimbursement.

Ms. Gallaher commented that of the \$64M budget gap for the City for 2020, \$40M is at the general fund level. Through lay offs, postponing projects, using reserves and canceling contracts that gap is down to about \$10M. She noted that the City Council is not ignorant of issues facing Metro Parks. Ms. Gallaher commented that the City is continuing with Federal level advocacy as well as making sure that as the State beings to fill its revenue shortfalls that it does not pull back revenue share from the cities. It was highlighted that the City has snapped into action during this crisis providing things like a rental assistance program, halting utility shut- offs, expanding shelter capacity & small business loan programs. Ms. Gallaher also pointed out the formula being used to disburse funding provided to the State that will then be shared with cities and towns in the state for Corona relief efforts. It was noted those funds will not be directly given to the cities and towns but invoices will have to be submitted to the State Department of Commerce for reimbursement and would need to be submitted by November 15<sup>th</sup> because the money needs to be spent and accounted for by the end of 2020.

Commissioner Smith suggested educating members of JMAC on the information shared at this meeting with the committee in June. Shon Sylvia indicated that governmental relations staff from a variety of agencies would be working on scheduling meetings of this nature to discuss relief efforts.

Joe Brady closed the meeting by stating that the District is working this at all angles and leaving no stone unturned to make sure we can fill the budget gap and get the District back up and running.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business, President Reid adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

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President

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Clerk

Submitted by:  
Jennifer Bowman, Secretary