



**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
AUGUST 15, 2022**

PRESENT: Andrea Smith, President  
Aaron Pointer, Clerk  
Tim Reid  
Rosie Ayala  
Michael Liang

IN THE CHAIR: Andrea Smith

PLACE: MPT Headquarters 4702 S. 19<sup>th</sup> St.

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

July 27, 2022 COW Minutes

Commissioner Reid moved adoption of the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Ayala and passed unanimously.

**BUDGET STATUS**

Shon Sylvia opened the meeting by noting that the information discussed at the meeting tonight is meant to provide a status of the 21-22 budget.

Debbie Russell was then introduced. Ms. Russell reminded the Board of the Budget workshop schedule between August and October.

Ms. Russell then reviewed the 21-22 budget context including the following factors:

- Conservative Budget Assumptions:
  - Sales tax—10% less than actual 2019 levels
  - \$10M less than 2019-2020 budget
  - At the time of adoption, staffing at 51%
- Budget management elements: Spending plans; Qtr. focus; Fund balance
  - Budget reflected upcoming matrixed reorganization with defined business units
  - Uncertain of COVID 19 duration; most facilities still closed
  - Regional Parks—transitioning to full Regional Enterprise

Ms. Russell reminded the Board members that the budget is adopted as a 2-year budget with a developed spending plan for each year, with staff monitoring monthly and reporting quarterly. Ms. Russell further stated that during 2021 the District had a significant gearing up of operations, staffing along with reorganization, while the 2022 budget status reflects continued momentum, with more known about needed capacity.

A financial table highlighting the 21-22 adopted budget was reviewed as was a current organizational chart.

Staff then reviewed financial tables that gave a summary of the District-wide operating budget summary by department through December of 2021. The Board was then given a summary of the revenue sources and expenditures through 2021. Staff noted that following highlights regarding the District's major revenue sources:

- Property Tax continued to be close in line with projections – favorable position by \$203,284.
- Sales Tax continued to perform strong compared to projections which was budgeted conservatively due to COVID-19 – favorable position by \$2,176,794.
- Shortfall on earned revenue district-wide was balanced by grants and donations, mainly “one-time” COVID-19 funding.
- Earnings in property and sales tax represents about 70% of the total favorable variance of \$3.4M compared to projections

Staff noted that following highlights regarding the District's 2021 expenditures:

- District realized about a \$1.1M favorable variance
- Most of the savings were realized in salaries and benefits (\$3,646,654) as the District continued to have challenges in recruitment, as well as adjusting staffing needs based on operational and business demands.
- Transfer of about \$4.2M more than budget of operating funds to Capital Programs, especially expenses for trams at Northwest Trek. Staff noted the original timing of tram expenses was budgeted to 2019-2020 biennial budget, but the manufacturing and delivery of the trams was delayed beyond expectations.

Graphs of 2021 sales and property tax revenues were then briefly reviewed. Staff noted that property tax exceed projections by \$203,284, while sales tax exceed projections by \$2,176,794.

Highlights of each department for 2021 were then highlighted as follows:

Office of the Executive Director:

- Launching the Parks Rx Task Force
- Launching the multi-site organizational childcare license pilot project
- Capital appropriations for Gas Station Park and Green Schoolyards project
- Joint Municipal Action Committee (JMAC): Helped facilitate a major update to the mission and vision; hosted the Summit of 60
- City of Tacoma Shared Services Study: analyzed and prioritized 20 potential services

## Business, Administration & Planning:

### Finance Division

- Filled key positions of CFAO, HR Manager, IT Manager, Budget & Payroll Supervisor
- Continued recruiting/hiring challenges for vacant positions

### Marketing/Communication Division

- Developed Beyond the Bell brand and launched the marketing and communications
- Outreach and engagement team developing and nurturing partnerships with underrepresented communities

### Planning Division

- Completed capital projects including Dickman Mill Headsaw Renovation, Meadow Park Driving Range Improvements and the Norpoint Roof Replacement project
- Implemented Major Maintenance Program through PAM District Team with projects including roof and sprayground repairs, building access controls and vehicle gates
- Filled key positions of Strategic Planning Manager; Sustainability & Asset Mgmt. Mgr.

## Parks & Recreation:

### Regional Parks Division

- Implementing 100% organic turf management program for all park landscapes
- Transitioned to new Point Defiance Marina management & point of sale software
- Record visitor-ship and revenues at Meadow Park Golf Course; also launched new program for First Tee

### Community Parks & Programming Division

- Implemented new Community Center membership model - membership passes include all 4 centers; youth under age 18 are free
- Successful start and operation of Beyond the Bell and Club Beyond in collaboration with partners to provide out of school time programming and daycare to youth in Tacoma Public Schools in a “pay as you choose” model (21/22)
- Equity Emphasis Team installed park furniture (21 tables, 13 benches and 6 garbage receptacles) in 5 of our parks in the SE and Central areas (21/22)

### Administration Division

- Successfully reorganized administrative functions of the department through the development of the Business & Admin Services workgroup and Rentals & Sales workgroup

### Zoological & Environmental Education (ZEED)

- Initiated an update to the ZEED strategic plan
- Initiated both PDZA and NWT Pride themed celebration
- Added 3% of budget to operational reserves
- Began Wildlife Champions program at Lister Elementary

## Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium

- Coordinated this year's City Nature Challenge
- Closed South Pacific Aquarium for renovations
- Hired first ZEED ranger position to enhance security and safety

## NW Trek

- NW Trek won top honors in AZA Exhibit Award for Eagle Passage
- In collaboration with WDFW, participated in Fisher Release program at Olympic National Forest, and began head-start program for endangered northern leopard frogs
- Continued study on bat colonies, in partnership with WCS and WDFW

Ms. Russell then presented the Board with information and a financial table related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2022 including the general fund summary by department. Ms. Russell commented that tax collections are continuing to track higher than projected. She also commented that for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter revenues and expenditures are bit ahead of budget targets.

Staff then commented that they would like to bring a budget amendment forward for Board consideration at an upcoming Board meeting. The Board was informed the amendment is being requested for the following reasons:

- Anticipated increased costs over the summer/fall
- Workforce costs increasing to be competitive
- Inflationary increases
- Increased costs for safety and security
- Hiring pace and need for additional staff
- Enterprise funds poised to exceed adopted budgets
- Sales tax and earned revenue at a higher rate than budgeted
- Increased revenue above forecasted require increased authority for high demand programs
- Need to realign carry-forward balance from 2021
- Potential to change 2021-2022 General Fund Fund Balance target

Commissioner Reid stated he wants to make sure community priorities align with Board priorities.

Commissioners briefly engaged in discussion about new programs that were developed during COVID and the associated funding moving forward, including the impact to budget depending on the outcome of the levy lid lift ballot measure in November.

Commissioner Ayala spoke of the need to work compassionately with community to honor the past legacy of the programs that may need to shift in 2023. She noted the importance of communication around this issue.

Commissioner Pointer inquired about one-time federal funding for the next biennium. Mr. Sylvia commented that most funding MPT received for programs during the 21-22 biennium was one-

time dollars, but there could be opportunities working with other partners as they sometimes have access to federal funding that is not available to MPT.

Commissioner Reid asked for a future meeting for the Board to express their thoughts around budget priorities for 23/24.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business, Commissioner Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

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President

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Clerk

Submitted by:  
Jennifer Bowman, Secretary