

Recreation District #1 of St. Tammany Parish



Chairman: Nixon Adams
Vice-Chairman: Shearn Lemoine
Commissioner: Rick Danielson

Commissioner: John Neill
Commissioner: deShea Richardson
Commissioner: Barrett McGuire

Commissioner: Ed Bee
Executive Director: Suzanne Reeder

Recreation District #1/Pelican Park Board of Commissioners Budget Hearing and Monthly Meeting November 20, 2024

Board present:

- **Nixon Adams**
- **Shearn Lemoine**
- **Rick Danielson**
- **Ed Bee**
- **deShea Richardson**
- **Barrett McGuire**

Board absent: John Neill

Staff present:

- **Suzanne Reeder – Executive Director**
- **Doug McLemore – Assistant Director**
- **Scott Goodwill – Finance Director**
- **Louissette Scott – Park Planner/Environmental Education**
- **Niki Butler – Marketing & PR Administrator**
- **Carly Arthur – Recreation Supervisor**

1. Call to Order:

The Board of Commissioners Budget Hearing was called to order by Chairman N. Adams at 6:31pm. N. Butler, Board Secretary, called the roll. Six out of seven of the current appointed Board Members were present, which represents a quorum.

2. Budget Presentation:

Scott Goodwill provided a second overview of the 2025 budget, highlighting key sections that are important for comparison with the 2024 budget and addressing any questions. The proposed operating budget for 2025 is approximately \$6.7 million, reflecting a 15% increase from the current year. This increase is primarily driven by the Ad Valorem and higher costs related to staffing and insurance.

One notable change is the renaming of the "Environmental" department to "Planning and Natural Resources," following legal counsel's advice to better align the title with the department's focus. The summary sheet outlines these changes, along with a Grand Recap that shows an expected 20% increase in Ad Valorem revenue. Given the potential

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growth rate of 1-2% per year, we will need to supplement our revenue through additional sources such as sponsorships and grants.

The 2025 staffing budget reflects changes in the new organizational chart, with some positions being added in 2025 and others slated for 2026 and 2027. Insurance costs are projected to increase by 20-28%, with further discussions planned in the future. Employee insurance will also be adjusted based on discussions with staff and Insured Partners. A proposed renewal for 2025 is included in the packet for the board's approval later in the meeting.

Board members R. Danielson and N. Adams commended Scott Goodwill and Suzanne Reeder for their excellent work in organizing the budget in a way that is easy to understand and follow. N. Adams also wants to proclaim their approval of the exceptional changes to the board packets, meetings, staff and policies as well as Suzanne's dedication over the past six months. N. Adams proposed a budget adjustment for 2025 to include a 5% salary increase for Suzanne Reeder based on her performance. To maintain a balanced budget, the Board agreed to include this item under New Business in the Regular Board Meeting to be voted on.

Motion by B. McGuire to approve the 2025 Budget as presented. Second by S. Lemoine, and a roll call vote was conducted by the Board Secretary, N. Butler:

- Nixon Adams – For
- Shearn Lemoine – For
- Rick Danielson – For
- John Neill - Absent
- deShea Richardson - For
- Barrett McGuire – For
- Ed Bee - For

With a unanimous vote of 6-0 in favor, the motion passes.

Motion by B. McGuire to adjourn the Budget Hearing. Second by S. Lemoine, vote of 6-0 in favor, the motion passes.

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Recreation District #1/Pelican Park Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting November 20, 2024

Board present:

- Nixon Adams
- Shearn Lemoine
- Rick Danielson
- Ed Bee
- deShea Richardson
- Barrett McGuire

Board absent: John Neill

Staff present:

- Suzanne Reeder – Executive Director
- Doug McLemore – Assistant Director
- Scott Goodwill – Finance Director
- Louissette Scott – Park Planner/Environmental Education
- Niki Butler – Marketing & PR Administrator
- Carly Arthur – Recreation Supervisor

1. Call to Order:

The Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman N. Adams at 6:57pm. N. Butler, Board Secretary, called the roll. Six out of seven of the current appointed Board Members were present, which represents a quorum.

2. Open agenda to propose new items:

- **2a.** Motion by B. McGuire to add agenda item 6I. to approve the Executive Directors salary increase to the rate of \$126,000 effective immediately, with an additional 5% raise in 2025. Second by E. Bee Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

3. Welcome Visitors: No Visitors

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4. Proclamations/Resolutions: None

5. Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes:

- **5a. Board of Commissioner Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2024.**
 - Motion by B. McGuire to approve the previous month's Budget Hearing Minutes as presented with no changes, Seconded by S. Lemoine. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **5b. Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2024.**
 - Motion by E. Bee to approve the previous month's Commission Meeting Minutes as presented with no changes, Seconded by B. McGuire. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

6. New Business:

- **6a. Athletic Coaches Volunteer Policy – REC006.2.1**
 - S. Reeder reads the policy and outlines its purpose to make sure that each coach has a background check and other policies in the past and this policy will formalizes the process for application and background checks.
 - Motion by B. McGuire to approve the Motion to approve the Volunteer Coaches Policy (REC006.2.1) as presented with an effective date of 11/21/2024, Second, by S. Lemoine. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **6b. Reporting Abuse: Molestation, Elder Abuse, and Abuse of Individuals with Disabilities Policy – RM008.3**
 - S. Reeder presents the policy and outlines its purpose.
 - Motion by B. McGuire to approve the new Reporting Abuse Policy (RM008.3) as presented with an effective date of 11/21/2024. Second, by S. Lemoine. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **6c. Distracted Driver Policy R 208.4.2**
 - S. Reeder presents the policy and outlines its purpose.
 - Motion made by B. McGuire. to approve the new distracted driver policy (R 208.4.2), which covers issues related to cell phone use and other distractions while driving. The policy includes provisions for disciplinary actions, including termination, and will be acknowledged upon onboarding and annually thereafter. This policy applies to all employees operating vehicles, including UTVs and ATVs, and mandates the use of seat belts. Second, by S. Lemoine. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **6d. Non-Travel Reimbursement Policy – FP005.6.1**
 - S. Goodwill presents the new policy regarding non-travel reimbursements. This policy establishes that only business-related expenses can be reimbursed, and it provides guidelines for approval and submission. The policy is intended to supplement the existing travel reimbursement policy.

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- Motion by B. McGuire to approve the new Non-Travel Reimbursements policy (FP005.6.1) as presented with an effective date of 11/21/2024. Second, by d. Richardson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **6e. Investment Policy (FB005.3)**
 - S. Goodwill gave an overview of the slow history of investments and what the future objective is for investments. The policy restricts investments to treasuries, CDs, and municipal bonds, with a priority on safety, liquidity, and then return. The objective is to ensure the safety of funds, followed by easy access when needed, and finally maximizing returns where possible. Discussion. The Board agrees there is a need for an investment advisor, which is required by statute. The process of selecting an advisor will be initiated through an (RFP) Request For a Proposal. The Board will evaluate the proposals with a goal to ensure that funds are managed efficiently, especially considering the current interest rates. Discussion. The Board emphasized taking a cautious approach, ensuring all steps align with best practices and statutory requirements with a local financial advisor.
 - Motion by S. Lemoine to approve the investment policy FB005.3, with an effective date of 11/21/2024. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
 - Motion by S. Lemoine to approve the amended investment policy FB005.3, with the amended inclusion of a local in District financial advisor. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **6f. Budgeting Policy – FP005.8.1**
 - S. Goodwill recommended maintaining the same process used this year for procuring the budget. This policy will formalize the framework based on the government agency's statute, allowing us to continue this process in the future.
 - Motion by S. Lemoine to approve the Budgeting Policy (FP005.8.1) as presented with an effective date of 11/21/2024. Second by B. McGuire. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.
- **6g. Debt Service Policy – FP005.1.1**
 - S. Goodwill researched and never found a Policy on Debt Service. He believes it is important enough to have a policy, especially since there are many restrictions by law. He clarifies that debt should not be used for operational purposes, it can only be used for acquisition of property, construction of facilities or renovation, update or expansion of already existing facilities. There is a very high legal limit on the amount of debt we can accrue, it's only 10% of the assessment value taxable property of the Recreation District, which is 92 million dollars. Scott added, "As the Financial Director, I would like to add a clause in the policy stating that I am responsible for monitoring the debt level and reporting to the Finance Committee on any effects of the future debt the issues that are being considered."

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- Motion by E. Bee to approve the Debt Service Policy (FP005.1.1) as presented with an effective date of 11/21/2024. Second by R. Danielson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

- **6h. Employee Benefits – Insurance (Medical, Dental, Vision, STD, LTD and Life)**
 - S. Goodwill explains the issues with the employee insurance plans and the struggles that the staff have had. Since the plans need to be renewed, the staff have reviewed over 20 different options, the final plan presented is a revised version of an initial proposal. Feedback was gathered from employees to address previous concerns, particularly regarding high deductibles and unpredictability in medical costs. The selected plan offers a lower deductible compared to the current policy and eliminates the health reimbursement account in favor of a simpler structure. The new plan aims to reduce financial uncertainty and encourage staff to seek necessary medical care without hesitation. After receiving positive feedback on the revised options, the staff is asking to approve this plan moving forward.
 - Motion by R. Danielson to grant authority to the Executive Director to sign the contract for the Premier Blue Copay 90/70 \$500F plan, as well as the Mutual of Omaha dental, vision, life, short-term disability, and long-term disability plans as presented with the new plans having an effective date of January 1, 2025. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

- **6i. New Water Well**
 - L. Scott updated the Board and staff on the Water Well Project. Neil Shaffer provided the final plans for the water well in mid-September. There were some initial questions regarding the necessity of the well, which prompted a meeting on October 4th with staff and board members who were available to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to better understand the purpose and benefits of the new well. During the meeting, it was clarified that the new well is not only intended to provide redundancy but is also essential for allowing the existing well and, most importantly, the well pump to have a necessary break. This redundancy is crucial for the system's long-term reliability. The funding for this project is already allocated. This motion will be used to accept the incoming bids.
 - Motion by B. McGuire to authorize staff to proceed to the next phase of the New Water Well project by soliciting competitive bids, in compliance with Louisiana Public Bid Law (La. R.S. 38:2211 et seq.) Second by S. Lemoine. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

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- **6j. Pickleball Court Expansion**

- L. Scott presented the proposal for the Pickleball Court and Food Truck expansion area. Following a review of the space after the last event, staff has recommended adjustments to several handicapped parking spaces, along with modifications to the existing plans. These modifications include relocating an electric box near the pavilion to support vendors, installing additional outlets, and creating a designated area for food trucks to the east of the shuffleboard courts. The revised plans have been submitted, and no changes to the budget are necessary, as the costs remain within the previously approved contingency amount. The staff is asking to proceed with the revised plans and authorize the project to go out for bid.
- Motion by B. McGuire to authorize staff to proceed to the next phase of the Pickleball Court Expansion project by soliciting competitive bids, in compliance with Louisiana Public Bid Law (La. R.S. 38:2211 et seq.) Second by d. Richardson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

- **6k. Vehicle Operation Policy**

- S. Reeder recently met with employees from Travelers Insurance, who recommended updating the current Vehicle Operation Policy 1.7. This update aims to formalize and reinforce safe vehicle use standards within Pelican Park. The revised policy will clarify expectations for all designated drivers, ensuring consistent adherence to safety protocols, operational efficiency, and public welfare.
- Motion by R. Danielson to approve the Vehicle Operation Policy (RM008.4) as presented with an effective date of 11/21/2024. Second by S. Lemoine. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

- **6l. Added Agenda Item to raise the salary of the Executive Director, Susanne Reeder.**

- N. Adams expressed appreciation during the Budget Hearing for the significant improvements in the board packets, meetings, staff, and policies, highlighting Suzanne Reeder's dedication over the past six months. N. Adams proposed an immediate adjustment to Suzanne Reeder's salary, to bring her yearly salary up to \$126,000 with an additional 5% increase in 2025.
- Motion by S. Lemoine To increase the Executive Director's salary to \$126,000, effective immediately with another 5% increase in 2025. Second by B. McGuire. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

7. Financials

- **7a. Monthly Summaries:**

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- The financials were reviewed, and as Scott noted, October's figures simply confirmed that the organization is in good shape with no significant changes. The overall financial position is strong, with an estimated balance of around \$800,000. Additionally, it was noted that the reserve checking account, which was established earlier, was finally accessed today after several months. The current balance is expected that further additions will be made to this account as per the reserve policy.

- **7b. Bank and Credit Card Statements:**

- The necessary credit card statements for the account have been reviewed, and everything appears in order.
- Motion be R. Danielson to approve the financials as presented. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 6-0. Motion passes.

8. Committee Updates:

- **8a. Personnel Committee – 11/7**

- S. Lemoine gave a brief update on the recent personnel committee and mentioned that it was very productive and there will be a lot of great policies that are being written by LyKinda Thibodeaux at this time that will need to be approved at the next Board Meeting on December 11th. Preliminary Organizational Chart is in the Board Packet for the Boards review.

- **8b. Legal Committee – 11/12**

- d. Richardson reported that they had a few legal litigations that we spoke about at the meeting as well as several of the above policies that we have approved tonight.

- **8c. Finance Committee – 11/15**

- E. Bee updated the Board and staff about the discussed policies that we adopted tonight as well as the budgets.

9. Division Monthly Reports

- **9a. Administration (Presented by Suzanne Reeder):**

- S. Reeder gave an administrative update. With the recent meeting with Travelers, held on the 15th, it was reported that there were no significant findings or major recommendations anticipated. This is expected to positively impact the renewal rate. Additionally, a site visit with Westchester Chubb was conducted, which proved to be a completely different experience compared to the one with Travelers. The Westchester Chubb team arrived, conducted their initial site review, and then did not return for approximately 3.5 hours before answering any questions. This contrasts with the 4.5-hour visit from Travelers, who conducted a more detailed walkthrough and review. No follow-up has yet been received from Westchester Chubb.

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- Next week, the STEM Quest Innovation Day bus will be at the facility in coordination with the Children's Museum of St Tammany (CMST). The event will take place on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, with Carly and Niki handling the coordination. They will have a bus that will take the patrons from our Brown Gym to
 - In terms of ongoing projects, the fan installation is currently underway, with the project scheduled for completion by Friday, December 19th.
 - S. Reeder will be participating in an upcoming trip scheduled for tomorrow, from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Several representatives from St. Tammany Parish and surrounding areas that will be traveling by bus to Gulf Shores, Alabama, to visit the Gulf State Park as part of the "Envisioning Potential Conference Centers Tour." The goal of the trip is to explore the possibility of developing a similar facility in our area. During the tour, the group will meet with Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser, who will provide insights into upcoming future plans and development.
- **9b. Master Planning/Environmental Education (Presented by L. Scott):**
 - **Event Stage Project Update:**
 - The event stage project is substantially complete. The Fire Marshall has issued a temporary Certificate of Occupancy (CO). Staff requested that Seasoning Construction provide an estimate for constructing a ramp on the east side of the stage to meet ADA compliance. The ramp will connect to the existing sidewalk, and work is being done to ensure access from the testing center parking lot, which will improve loading and access. The ADA compliance issue requires the construction of a ramp on the east side to meet 21 feet of the 31 feet needed. The Fire Marshall issued a temporary CO, and plans have been resubmitted and approved. The final plans have been completed, and no further payment will be made until confirmation is received that the contractor has fulfilled all requirements. The project is still awaiting confirmation on the timeline for completing the ADA-compliant ramp.

Upcoming Event:

- There is an event scheduled for December 14th A Jazzy Creole Christmas performance by Dr. Ben Redwine and Friends. The timeline for completing the ramp in time for the event is uncertain, but staff is working to ensure the stage is ready. If the ramp construction is not completed in time, the temporary CO will allow the event to proceed.

Skatepark and PumpTrack Update:

- Phase 1: The first construction meeting for Phase 1 was held on November 5th. The notice to proceed was issued effective December 2nd. The skate park closed on Sunday, marking the end of operations before construction begins. Coordination is underway with Recreation District 4 for the relocation of the equipment, which is scheduled to take place tomorrow. On Friday, the

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slab will be scanned for structural elements, such as rebar, to finalize plans for Phase 2.

- Phase 2 Plans and Bidding: The plans for Phase 2, including specialty contractor work, are being finalized. A bid advertisement for the project will run from December 12th through January 9th, with a pre-bid meeting scheduled for January 9th (virtual). The bid opening will take place on January 30th.

Volleyball Update:

- The draft schedule for the volleyball project is being worked on, including the completion of the design and bidding process. A rough construction timeline has been submitted, and more details are expected in the next three weeks.

Wayfinding Sign Package and Trails:

- There were no significant updates on the sign package or the trails. At the last meeting, three different design options for the sign package were discussed: a natural design, a contemporary design, and a classic design. The contemporary design was favored by everyone. A final confirmation will be sent out to all involved, and once confirmed, the design will move forward.

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program Grant:

- Regarding the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Grant Program, we are still waiting for the sub-award agreement from the EPA. While it has been confirmed that we are funded, no further details have been received yet.

Pontchartrain Astronomy Society:

- We are coordinating with the Pontchartrain Astronomy Society for a spring event.

Native Plant Rescue Project:

- In partnership with The Wild Ones, a native plant rescue project has been initiated, including the start of a nursery at the maintenance area. Doug has assisted in setting up the nursery, and the project focuses on rescuing native plants, primarily along the northern edge of the ponds. The group has also worked at the Northshore Nature Center.

The Iris Conservation Initiative:

- The Iris Conservation Initiative is hosting a volunteer planting event this Saturday, November 23rd, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. The focus will be on planting along the area from its current state up to the bridge, with a goal of planting approximately 400 plants. The project is expected to enhance the area, and the plants should bloom beautifully by March.

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• 9c. Parks

- Turf Staff are overseeding fields with Lesco Double Eagle winter ryegrass seed @ 500 lbs. per field and top-dressing with 26 yards of mason sand per field. disc golf holes are being moved and the numeric order of the others are being rearranged to accommodate the upcoming skatepark expansion and Sand Volleyball court construction. A small, wooded area on the northside of silver field #6 has been cleared by Staff and disc baskets are being installed to replace the closing holes. R. Danielson wanted to recognize the helpful post on Facebook and Instagram about the overseeding of the fields and why they are closed during this time. Thank you for informing our public. Also, S. Lemoine mentioned that his friend from Slidell had a lot of great comments about the quality and maintenance of the grounds at Pelican Park.

9d. Recreation

- Basketball season began a few weeks ago, and Bidy letters have been sent out to mark the end of the season. For the first time, Volleyball All-Stars have been selected and will be traveling to Coquille to compete with other Recreational District All-Stars. Additionally, surveys have been a valuable tool for gathering feedback from parents and players. Recreation hired another Recreation Supervisor for Evening time.

9e. Castine Center

- An update was provided on the Castine Center's upcoming events for December, let just say it will be a busy month. The most recent event, this weekend was Comic Con. It was very successful with full parking lots and attendance, although there were recurring Wi-Fi issues. The IT committee of one, led by our dedicated member at the end of the table, has been instrumental in addressing these issues. A plan will be presented soon to improve Wi-Fi not only at the Castine Center, but throughout the entire Park.

9f. Concessions

- An overview of the week-over-week totals for October through November was provided. As the Fall season comes to a close, concession sales have naturally decreased as well. For instance, the first week of October, we saw \$7,000 in sales, while the first week of November we only brought in between \$1,800 to \$1,900.

10. Old Business:

10a. Flock Camera Installations

- As of now, five of the 9 permanent cameras have been installed, excluding the tilt-zoom cameras, which are still to come. The dashboard has been set up, and it has provided valuable data. In the past month, 71,000 registered cars have passed through the license plate readers, representing 36,000 individual vehicles. The system tracks these vehicles through the front camera and registers them. The key

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benefit of this system is its ability to pinpoint high-traffic days and specific vehicle types.

For instance, during Midnight Madness, over 16,000 unique vehicles were recorded, highlighting the impact of certain events. While the system doesn't track the exact number of people in each vehicle, it provides an accurate count of cars. Based on current estimates, we are on track to reach a billion visitations annually. This data is incredibly valuable, as it allows us to analyze traffic by day, camera, and location.

The system has proven to be an excellent tool for monitoring traffic and is essential for our operations. Additionally, the mobility data for the year can now be fully analyzed, providing a clear view of entrance congestion, particularly on busy days. This data helps us quickly address any issues and ensures our operations are running smoothly.

- Big CONGRATULATIONS to William Reed, Park Foreman at Pelican Park, for achieving his Certified Playground Safety Inspector Certification (CPSI)! This prestigious certification from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) showcases his expertise in playground safety, hazard identification, equipment certification, and risk management.

11. Public Comments:

- None

Next Board of Commissioner Meeting, Wednesday, December 11th, 2024

12. Meeting Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn at 7:53pm by B. McGuire. Second by S. Lemoine Vote 6-0 in favor.

***All attachments, item lists and Reports in Brief documents are included in the official minutes.**