



MINUTES
Recreation and Community Services Commission
Adjourned Regular Meeting
July 10, 2024

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Veronica Lucio.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner Anitza Valles.

OTHER - REORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Nominations were opened for commission chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Ted Spaseff motioned to nominate Vice Chairperson Veronica Lucio to serve as chairperson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dave Allen. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

Nominations were opened for commission vice chairperson for a term of one year. Commissioner Dave Allen motioned to nominate Commissioner Anitza Valles to serve as vice chairperson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kristie Larison. Upon unanimous roll call vote, the motion was carried.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Chairperson Veronica Lucio
 Vice Chairperson Anitza Valles
 Commissioner Dave Allen
 Commissioner Kristie Larison
 Commissioner Ted Spaseff

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of June 12, 2024. A motion was made by Commissioner Dave Allen and seconded by Commissioner Kristie Larison to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 12, 2024. Upon a unanimous roll call vote, the minutes were approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Director Valarie Frost began her announcements by informing the commission that at a recent City Council meeting, a resolution was approved deeming July as Parks Make Life Better! month. Ms. Frost shared that on Thursday, July 11, the Summer Concert in the Park would include the added feature of a pledge of allegiance to the newly hung American flag at the Veteran's Memorial Plaza at Del Valle Park. It was said that members of City Council would be present, a Boy Scout Troop would lead attendees in a color guard, and a vocalist would sing the National Anthem. The commission was invited to attend.

Next, Ms. Frost provided the commission with information regarding the Lakewood Equestrian Center. She shared that a Lakewood Equestrian Center Community Committee had been created, per City Council direction, to review, revise, and promote to the public, a Request for Qualifying Information (RFQI) to secure an investor and operator for the Lakewood Equestrian Center. Their first meeting was said to be taking place on Thursday, July 11.

Ms. Frost reminded the commission that the August commission meeting would consist of the annual commission tour of RCS facilities. The commission was asked to email their secretary a list of sites they are interested in visiting.

Ms. Frost informed the commission that the RCS department was part of the next phase of the City Hall renovation plan, and as such, department staff will be temporarily displaced to the Pan Am Room, the Sycamore Room and The Centre lobby. The south side of City Hall will not be assessable to the public beginning Monday, July 15 and through the duration of the construction. It was said that RCS front counter staff would serve the public from The Centre lobby. Signs will be placed outside of City Hall directing the public to The Centre for their RCS needs.

Lastly, Ms. Frost shared that there was just over three weeks remaining in the LYS baseball, softball and t-ball season. She shared that staff were busy planning for LYS Family Day and Awards, scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 3 at Bolivar, Del Valle, Mayfair and Palms parks. Ms. Frost noted that the event would begin at 9:30 a.m. She asked that the commission RSVP to their secretary if interested in attending to assist in handing out awards.

The commission received and filed the RCS Department Annual Budget Report.

REPORTS:

1. RCS Department Annual Budget Report

Assistant Director Kevin Bright presented to the commission the Recreation and Community Services Annual Budget Report for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Mr. Bright noted that all staff in attendance at the meeting had played an integral role in the development of the budget report. He shared that in February, the budget development process was initiated and the entire RCS team spent the next several weeks evaluating operations and costs to arrive at an effective tool to direct spending throughout the 2024-2025 fiscal year. It was said that although staff were not given an explicit direction to develop a “status quo” budget, they were asked to maintain the standard of fiscal responsibility and conservative budgeting for the two-year budget. As such, Mr. Bright noted that the budget reflected only a modest increase for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The commission was informed that at the regular meeting of the City Council on June 11, the two-year budget was adopted.

Mr. Bright then highlighted a few items within the budget report. He noted that the department had been allotted a budget of \$18,329,452. It was said that this sum was an increase of \$2,354,728, and mentioned that it was important to note that this number was slightly misleading as a simple budgetary increase. Of the \$2.3 million, Mr. Bright pointed out that \$1,252,468 were directly attributable to the city’s operation of the Lakewood Equestrian Center, which was not a line in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget at time of development, since management and operations initiated in November 2023.

Mr. Bright mentioned that otherwise, in comparison to the prior year, only modest increases were made, generally to account for new procedures or rising costs, which have affected the marketplace as demonstrated by inflation and increased personnel costs, largely attributed to state minimum wage laws.

The commission was informed that new operations included covering costs of Water Safety Instructor Certifications for incoming lifeguards and swim instructors. Mr. Bright explained that this was a function to increase the city's position in the recruitment market for these skilled and important employees. He noted that costs for this certification were upwards of \$350 per person with the American Red Cross, and shared that this allocation would keep Lakewood pools competitive in the hiring process.

Mr. Bright also noted that minimum wage increases have affected part-time ranks, specifically at the bottom end, but also creating compaction throughout some work groups. In particular, he mentioned that aquatics staff, Maintenance Services Aides and Maintenance Trainees have shown difficulty in recruitment due to this. Following a salary survey of 25 other cities and an internal review of the city's pay scale, \$45,000 was approved to alleviate the compaction and low-ends of these job classes.

Mr. Bright reported that a capital purchase for new chairs at park and community centers would start in the current fiscal year and continue over the next several years to complete the update of inventory at all facilities. Currently \$30,000 is allocated in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Next, Mr. Bright pointed out that continuing in March 2025, an allocation of \$17,500 was included in the 2025 budget for the LeadHer Lakewood Series following the inaugural success of the event.

Additionally, Mr. Bright noted that \$10,000 was added for the upcoming fiscal year to manage maintenance of Department of Water and Power sites. It was said that the funds support rental equipment, which allows staff to maintain these sites three times annually, managing weed and grass growth.

Mr. Bright informed the commission that the department would project revenues in the amount of \$2,599,705. He shared that this was an anticipated increase of \$1,057,080 over the previous year. However, he pointed out that yet again, assumption of Lakewood Equestrian Center operations had a significant impact on these projections. It was said that the LEC would bring in an estimated \$976,000 in revenues for boarding, feed and other fees and contractual payments. The remaining moderate increases were said to be largely attributable to a fully operational aquatics program with two functioning pools and catering concessions at The Centre.

Lastly, Mr. Bright pointed out that the budget report provided the commission with an overview of each budget division within the department and demonstrates how and where funding is allocated. He noted that he thinks it important to highlight that within virtually every division Employee Services is the most significant allocation. He said that is a tribute to the fact that our department invests heavily in human resources; drawing on the professionalism, experience, passion and drive to serve the Lakewood public, which staff demonstrate daily; from the director, through each level of management and down to our newest Maintenance Trainee, Sports Official, Day Camp Counselor or Recreation Leader.

Moving forward, Mr. Bright announced that the second portion of the annual budget report—where the commission gets to annually reacquaint themselves with the entire

RCS management team—would begin. The RCS Department Supervisors Caitlin Cariaso, Lorraine Delarosa, Kelly Garnetti, Jonathan Gorne, Jessica Johnson, Teneale McCullough, Noel Munoz, and Brianna Tavera; Park Maintenance Lead Workers Kevin Arias and Ed Salas; and Recreation Coordinator Catherine Schad each presented slides and shared stories about their mentors, and how they have mentored others. Mr. Bright explained that staff’s presentations would provide the commission with insight into the RCS team.

Commissioner Dave Allen thanked staff for their presentations and all of their hard work throughout the city. He affectionately labeled them the “Lakewood Dream Team.”

Commissioner Ted Spaseff expressed his appreciation for all staff in attendance. He mentioned that the presentations were great, and said that the annual All-Hands July Commission Meeting was a favorite of his. He also pointed out that it was amazing to see how small the sports program budget was in comparison to the participant numbers. He mentioned it was a testament to the many program volunteers.

Commissioner Kristie Larison commended staff for a fantastic job. She commented that it was great to hear about each staff member’s story and the impact they have made on so many. Ms. Frost confirmed for Commissioner Larison that budget reports were made available online and were updated annually.

Chairperson Veronica Lucio thanked all staff in attendance. She stated that they were the definition of “paying it forward.” She commended them for their great leadership and flexibility.

2. Commission Newsletter No. 1

A written report of the Recreation and Community Services Department programs, events, services and maintenance activities for the month of June and a listing of upcoming activities for August 2024.

The Commission received and filed the report.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Letter to Malia Talavou, Employee of the Month for May 2024.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business brought before the Recreation and Community Services Commission, Chairperson Lucio adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m. to Wednesday, August 14 at 5 p.m. at the Nixon Yard.

Michelle Williams, Administrative Secretary
Recreation and Community Services Commission