

FOREST PRESERVE BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
AUGUST 13, 2019

PRESENT: Committee members - K. Maranda, E. Sowards, L. Moreno, K. Swanson, D. Cremeens, A. Normoyle.

ABSENT: R. Simmer.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Craver, District Director; Ben Mills, Loud Thunder Ranger; Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo Director; Mike Petersen, Illiniwek Ranger; April Palmer, Auditor; Louisa Ewert, Treasurer; Cheryl Jenkins, Treasurer's Office; Scott Lohman.

President Swanson called the meeting of the Forest Preserve Budget Committee to order at 3:35 PM on Tuesday, August 13, 2019, in the Rock Island County Building on the second floor Rock Island, Illinois.

President Swanson called on Mr. Craver to go through the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021.

Mr. Craver stated that there were a couple changes to what was sent out originally. Looking first at the Schedule A in the budget packet. The fiscal year 2018 and prior are all audited fund balances. The fiscal year 2019 year unaudited, and the current year fund balance is an estimate. There are seventeen more days in which to back date revenues and expenses to the 2019 fiscal year. The revenues are likely to go up from what is shown for fiscal year 2019. Then listed is the overview of the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget numbers. As a reminder, the District makes up approximately 1.3% of the total property tax bill for Rock Island County tax payers.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the fund balances as presented. Mr. Maranda seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver moved on to the revenues pages of the budget packet. The revenue estimates are much the same as in years past. Estimates are kept conservative for the revenues due to years like this one where weather played a big role in people not coming out to the parks. These numbers do include a fee increase.

President Swanson asked if the notable increase for the Loud Thunder revenues were due to the camping improvements that will begin soon.

Mr. Craver answered that, yes, it was because of the new sites and improvements. On the Niabi Fund revenues, there is an increase there also due to an anticipated parking fee increase.

Ms. Normoyle asked how much the anticipated increase would be.

Mr. Craver stated that it would be raised from three dollars to five dollars. With the minimum wage increases happening over the next several years, it will mean raising fees in order to be able to make those expenses even with the cut backs in seasonal staff that are planned. On to IMRF. The IMRF people provide rates for the calendar year, so there is some estimation in what the District will need to expend in that fund in a fiscal. At the end of 2019 fiscal year there were funds left over in the IMRF fund, and an additional payment to the ERI. In the Liability fund the IPARKS costs are paid out of that fund, and any workers' comp costs. The District does try to build that fund balance a little each year due to having a cushion for possible unforeseen litigation. There is no open litigation for the District at this time. However, there are some workers' comp bills that will be coming soon. FISSA fund, also known as FICA, is also a part of the salary expenses. That leaves the Development of Forests and Construction of Improvements Fund. The District has been saving up in this fund because in the past the District has suffered from not having funds available for deferred maintenance. For example, Illiniwek's septic system is thirty-five years old, and that will need addressed in order to keep the park functioning and able to take on campers. There are projects needed at each of the preserves, and a list is included in the packet.

President Swanson stated that having a written up Deferred Maintenance Plan that included the small maintenance items as well would be a benefit to the District.

Mr. Craver stated that staff anticipates putting together a plan for these projects in the future.

MOTION: Mr. Maranda moved to approve the expenditure budget requests as presented. Ms. Normoyle seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver stated that next in the packet was the expenses. There are a couple of bond payments falling off, and that money can be put toward the other bond payments. Staff is always looking for grant opportunities, but there are none rolling over or guaranteed. That is why there is nothing budgeted there. Illiniwek has a shower building renovation planned for the current year, and has applied for a reimbursable grant. Loud Thunder has a budgeted purchase of a dump truck. The current dump truck is showing its age, and needs to be replaced. Dorrance Park improvements continue. Zoo fund in the Education sub-department went down due to removing a position. Animal Care vet costs continue to increase. Staff will be looking into whether or not there are savings to be had if the District had a vet tech on staff. This is in an effort to keep costs to a minimum while providing appropriate care to Niabi's collection. Equipment at the zoo lacks funding, but staff is always chasing leads for funding to help with the expenses of operating Niabi. In the Liability fund, the budget is determined by taking the cost of the IPARKS program and adding in \$30,000.00 for possible workers' comp bills. There is no outstanding litigation at this time. The budget for DFCI consists of a couple planned projects.

MOTION: Dr. Moreno moved to approve the proposed expenditures as presented. Mr. Cremeens seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Mr. Craver stated that in the DFCI fund is shown more as a cash balance outlook than a fund balance outlook to give a better picture of what could really be accomplished with those funds. The planned projects listed go out to about 2027 and is a very fluid list. The Golf Course Improvement Fund is mostly for carts, but funds can, and have, been used for emergencies that come up at the Golf Course. The Marvin Martin Fund has a list of planned projects associated with that as well.

Adjourned the meeting at 4:30 PM.

Submitted by:
Cassie Sullivan
Forest Preserve Administrative Assistant