

# VASHON PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## MEETING MINUTES

Teleconference, 7:00 pm  
**DATE: Tuesday, May 26, 2020**

Commissioners attending: Hans Van Dusen, Bob McMahon, Doug Ostrom, Karen Gardner, Abby Antonelis.  
 Staff attending: Elaine Ott-Rocheford

ISSUE	DISCUSSION AND OUTCOME	FOLLOW UP
<b>Call To Order</b>	Hans called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.	
<b>5.12.20 Minutes; 5.9.20 – 5.22.20 Preliminary Vouchers, April Vouchers</b>	Abby: I move to accept the minutes and vouchers. Bob: Second. Pass 5-0	<b>Motion to accept 5.12.20 Minutes; 5.9.20 – 5.22.20 Preliminary Vouchers, April Vouchers Pass 5-0</b>
<b>April, 2020 Financial Report</b>	<p>Elaine: It is getting difficult to do projections with all that is coming and going, but it is as accurate as I know with the information at hand.</p> <p>Admin – ahead \$6500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misc Income up \$5k from higher interest + the copier lease payout</li> </ul> <p>Maintenance – at budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue down \$5k due to cancellations</li> <li>• Offset by odds and ends</li> </ul> <p>Commons – ahead \$7k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue down \$8k</li> <li>• Payroll costs down \$3k</li> <li>• Saved \$11k on the Interlocal fee; there will be more savings in October, since the closure has been extended for so long.</li> </ul> <p>Programs – ahead \$6300; plainly stated, there is no programming going on, so no expenses</p> <p>Pool Summer – ahead \$21k. This is tough to project, not knowing the requirements for pools in Phase 3 and 4. I assumed Randy’s lap swim only goes to the end of July, then a modified open swim August and September. This is consistent with what other pools are doing. Assumes Seals hourly use resumes in July.</p> <p>Bob: Is the main savings here the lifeguarding?</p>	

Elaine:

- \$37k loss in revenue
- Offset by a \$57k drop in payroll costs (Randy, Madi, Derek + 1)
- Other expenses don't change too much other than a slight drop in supplies, but utilities remains relatively fixed.

Pool Winter – over by \$1200. I anticipate by October, normal pool operations should be manageable, so nothing much has changed here.

- Revenue down \$7k
- Labor down \$2k
- All else odds and ends.

Pt Rob – over \$3700

- Revenue down \$13k, although Eric says reservations are picking up again
- Payroll costs down \$10k

Fern Cove – over \$8k

- Revenue down \$11k
- Payroll down \$2k

RFA/Other – at budget

CIP - \$16k over; \$12k for Agren retainage and \$3500 for Ober architects

Ending Cash \$636k

Budget to Actual

Admin –

- Levy dollars did come in lower than projected in April by about \$123k, so let's hope that is due to payments due extended to June 30. The ending cash of \$636k assumes we receive all our projected levy dollars for the year.
- All else is timing.

Maint – Revenue down

Commons – Revenue down

Programs – revenue and transportation is timing relative to Ski School; professional fees is timing relative to COVID.

Everything else is pretty self explanatory.

Doug: What is the projected date that the pool is opening?

Elaine: June 22 is Phase 3, which is when pools can open. That is the date we are shooting for. My sense, though, is that both phases 2 and 3 will be later than originally planned for King County. It depends on the governor. Even if on time, it will probably be a few days later, since the announcements from the governor come at short notice.

Doug: What assumptions are you making about levy dollars in terms of another potential delay in October?

Elaine: I'm sure that is possible. Nothing has been said to that effect.

	<p>Doug: It seems odd that a tax bill would be due first of July then another in October.</p> <p>Elaine: That's a good point, Doug. I guess we will see! I don't know how else we can prepare for that. This is why we have reserves. I suppose if we find our levy dollars are not coming in as anticipated, and a delay is allowed for October, we may have to consider making adjustments. Certainly, we are making some pretty big adjustments right now, the pool being a great example.</p>	
<p><b>Staff Reports:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Local Taxing Districts</b></li> <li>2) <b>Fee Increase 2021</b></li> <li>3) <b>RFA Funds</b></li> <li>4) <b>Jason – Leave of Absence</b></li> <li>5) <b>Ober Playground</b></li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Local Taxing Districts</u></b></p> <p>Elaine: I heard back from Rep Fitzgibbon just today. We have a bill for 2021! It will be a different number but will be effectively the same. He feels we will get more traction this time around, since it is a longer session, and we have more time to work it. To that end, I forwarded the new information to our WRPA lobbyist to start work promoting through the State. I forwarded all the P&amp;R agency contacts I reached out to in January to aid in his outreach.</p> <p>Heard back from Senator Nguyen separately last week. I don't have a sense whether or not he is supporting the bill. He asked what other sustainable funding options there might be. I explained that the only other options at our disposal are Excess Levies every year or a Buy-Down Agreement from King County, both of which are highly problematic on a number of levels – Excess levies NOT sustainable and extremely difficult to plan around, and what is the likelihood of KC agreeing, given the world of hurt they are in from decreased tax revenue. At the last meeting, Hans asked what my sense is for the Senate side. My sense is his support is lukewarm, but they may have changed with Fitzgibbon's support.</p> <p><b><u>Fee Increase 2021</u></b></p> <p>Elaine: During the 2020 Budget process, we discussed notifying all sport groups to plan ahead for a fee increase in 2021 to be announced in June. We discussed a 5% increase. Do you want to move forward with that?</p> <p>Karen: It would seem to be unwise at this point in time.</p> <p>Elaine: That is my thinking, too. It would yield around \$14k in additional revenue for us, but I think the timing is pretty bad.</p> <p>Bob: You could use it as a PR opportunity by notifying all of the intended fee increase but that we decided to hold off. As a practical matter, since we're doing these virtual board meetings, we couldn't vote on it, anyway.</p> <p>Elaine: I could hold off until we do meet, and we can discuss it then. Or do you want to just table it altogether?</p> <p>Karen: I think we simply table it. It's bad timing. It gives the wrong message, looking for more money. But I agree with Bob that we tell the sport groups we are not going to do it out of awareness to the financial predicaments people find themselves in.</p> <p>Doug: I think you should tell everybody – not just the sport groups. People should know we are reacting to the financial situation.</p>	

## **RFA Funds**

Elaine: Back in March, we discussed changes I proposed to the RFA Policy (scholarship fund) which got way-layed by the COVID crisis, and that we will pick up once public meetings resume. But one topic concerned why the scholarship fund must be funded by donations and cannot use levy dollars. This came from a number of years ago the District receiving a Management Letter from an audit where they were budgeting levy dollars to the scholarship fund, and it was determined to be inappropriate gifting of public funds. In March, I was tasked with reaching out to the WA State Auditors Office questioning why this is so, since the State Constitution states “except for the necessary support of the poor and infirm.” I asked, “Wouldn’t providing reduced fee assistance to vetted low-income families qualify as supporting the poor and infirm?”

Auditors said: We defer any such questions to the government's legal counsel for advice. For audit purposes, we expect governments to have done appropriate legal research to resolve any questions on legal interpretation or authority and have support for conclusions on unusual or disputable matters. She suggested I refer my question to MRSC. They also said no park agency in the state uses public funds.

MRSC Response: The exception to the “gifting” prohibition is for the necessary support of the poor and infirm. It is possible that at the time, the SAO made a determination that the services you provided (while indisputably valuable) were not “necessary.” One option may be to revise your fee schedule to include a “low-income” rate that is tied to recognized criteria, but in doing so, we should consult our attorney for assistance in formulating our position. This, no doubt, would be an audit item.

Do we want to spend the money on an attorney to guide us on formulating a low-income rate, or just leave it as donation based?

Karen: I am satisfied with it being donation-based.

Elaine: I think it would be tough to support anything other than donation-based, but it’s your call.

Hans: That was my initial question. That most agencies propose a low income fee. It wasn’t about the donations per se. A low income fee structure is common. You confirmed that THAT is allowed, but use of public funds is not allowed. It’s the same outcome.

Elaine: I did some initial research back in March and found examples of low income rates. The vetting process was like our former policy where it asked for tax returns. I find that to be invasive. Personally, I don’t like it. That seems to be what backs that up.

Hans: Your intuition is that to have a low income rate, the customer needs to send in a lot of paperwork.

Elaine: Yes, that is my intuition. It is easier and less invasive to do it as we do – keep it donation based.

Abby: I agree. It’s a burden having to provide documentation to prove you are poor enough.

Doug: The issue is whether or not the donations are ample.

Elaine: We can always cross that bridge when we have problems with the funding.

Karen: Or we can try to get more donations.

Elaine: We currently have about \$7k. Most is typically used for the pool, which won’t be an issue this year.

Hans: That sounds fine to me. It seems like we were trying to limit participation by low income participations. The donation piece is fine. I don’t think we know that basing it on other program’s criteria eliminates our ability to offer low income fee if we choose to. We may want to spend another time

pursuing that, but I don't think we know that. The simple criteria is great. We are in good shape in the near term for scholarships. But my main question seemed like we were not comfortable offering every opportunity to participate to low income families. I wanted to understand that a little better.

Elaine: In our discussion before, you had concerns about one scholarship per individual in a year. We can revisit that when we delve into the policy again. I remember Abby suggesting an allocation to each opportunity, and somebody who received a scholarship for another activity might be lower priority. That is certainly something we can talk about. We can revisit that when we can regroup.

### **Jason Leave of Absence**

Elaine: Jason has requested a one year leave of absence based on a general medical need (which is required per policy) he characterizes as a "mental health leave." Quite frankly, I think the policy is silly – a leave of absence should be granted for any reason if deemed appropriate. But per policy, it must be for the reasons stated.

Although this will be in the minutes, and Jason is fine with me discussing this, I wanted to respect his privacy to a certain extent by not getting into too much written detail in advance of us discussing this. The thing is this – Jason and his wife had a baby when they were 16 years old. They raised that child beautifully, then had two more children in their twenties. His wife put herself through college and graduate school. All three kids are now grown and out of the house, and they need a break. They have purchased a trailer and wish to travel the country for a year. In all honesty, Jason is sincere in stating he needs a mental health break to rejuvenate his mind and soul.

The policy does not state it requires Board approval, but I do feel we should all be supportive. Ultimately, I believe this is my decision, since it is operational.

Karen: I think it's wonderful, but who would take his place?

Elaine: The obvious plan is promote in-house, and Shawn is the most obvious candidate, since he is the lead and given his skills, seniority, and small business background, although we will open it up and fairly consider any internal candidate. We have discussed this with Shawn, and he is fully on board with making this happen. We will replace Shawn with a one year temporary maintenance person.

Karen: Whomever takes his place for a year, does that person's salary increase to Jason's then go back to what it was?

Elaine: Yes. Jason wants to do this effective September 1, but we have been talking about it for months. He has been very forthcoming. It should be a smooth transition.

Hans: How long has Jason worked here?

Elaine: I think since 2011. He moved into his management role in 2012. He is a valuable asset. I would love to have him back.

Hans: And he doesn't get paid or benefits, retirement during that period? But he gets to return to his position.

Elaine: Correct.

Hans: It's more like a sabbatical. We just don't have a sabbatical policy. The mental health thing is more like trying to make it fit a policy.

Elaine: He does have some vacation time we would be paying out, but we would have to do that if he left

altogether anyway.  
 Bob: How do you feel about it? It sounds like you have it all figured out. If you're good with it, I'm all for it. Hopefully he doesn't like being away too much!  
 Elaine: I think Shawn would step in permanently if that is the case.  
 Hans: He is a great resource. We certainly support your decision on it.

**Ober Playground**

Elaine: Almost there! Today I received the exercise equipment in the three pods. I anticipate rolling it out maybe next week.  
 Bob: How will it be presented?  
 Elaine: Our website, FB, VISD email list, our email list, notice in the BC. I mentioned it in my Op-ed. It will be through Survey Gizmo as a link. The feedback will all come to me.  
 Hans: You can do an email. Doug mentioned combining it with a COVID update – this is where things are, just following the state. In regards to our financial situation, we chose not to increase fees (just to create awareness about that). The lead story can be the playground.

Bob: Back to the Local Taxing District, is there anything new coming from their Board?  
 Elaine: Nothing since I sent the info about their rate in the RFP on May 8. They said their starting point is 45 or 50 cents. That's all I need to know! I forwarded that to our elected reps.  
 Doug: Concerning the Library District and KC Roads, there was an article in the Seattle Times. It gave the impression they are only on hold because of COVID 19. If that's true, they could be really hit.  
 Elaine: Fitzgibbon even said in his email back to me that the silver lining to COVID for us is that it kicked those two lid lifts down the road. We are saved for 2021. Otherwise, we would be completely demolished next year. This buys us another year where nobody on Vashon gets hurt.  
 Hans: The update on Paradise Ridge where the truck got in there reminded me of Agren. How is the gate coming along?  
 Elaine: Jason is working on it. I think he has actually ordered it. The problem is that the manufacturers were all closed. He got on it immediately, then heard nothing for a couple months. He is also digging into the camera issue.  
 Bob: And the gate will go where the chain is?  
 Elaine: yes. And hopefully Rotary will pay for it through a grant.

**Adjourn  
 7:40 pm**

Bob: Motion to Adjourn  
 Karen: Second  
 Pass 5-0

Minutes by: Elaine Ott-Rocheford