

**Riverbanks Park Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
17 August 2023**

**Attendance Report**

**Commissioners Present:** Jan Stamps, Jeff Reeves, Deneen Shockley, Bob Davidson, Alana Williams, Cliff Bourke, Mike Velasco

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Ashley Harris, Christie Vondrak, Katie Eaton, Jessica Austin

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Stamps called the meeting to order.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The July 20, 2023 Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Davidson motioned to approve the minutes, Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous.

**Chairman's Remarks**

- Chairwoman Stamps welcomed Rebecca Best of Best Consulting and Damon Jeter of Jet Corp Consulting and thanked them for all of their hard work on behalf of Riverbanks. Stamps also introduced newly onboarded Executive Assistant, Jessica Austin to the team.

**VP of Finance Report:**

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- Harris reviewed the July financial statements:
  - (insert dashboard report)
  - LGIP investment is earning at 5.4% average earning rate
  - Settling the due to society liability intermittently- net overall is \$1.7M over prior year
  - Up over general admission revenues
  - Society operating contribution- monthly was \$200K in FY23 and will be \$250K in FY 24
  - Miscellaneous revenues is up over budgeted revenues due to interest income
  - Department expenditures through month one are in line with budget
  - Velasco motion to approve the financials, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

**President & CEO Report:**

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Stringfellow welcomed Damon Jeter and Rebecca Best. Both Best and Jeter have assisted Stringfellow with County Council relations.
- Stringfellow shared a report of the recent conversations with the councils. Stringfellow, Best and Jeter met with the PR firm to discuss a media plan should Riverbanks decide to deliver the petition for bond.
- Lexington County has asked for a bond petition to be delivered before September 1<sup>st</sup> with a potential first reading on September 12. Best and Jeter will be meeting in the next week with various council members on Richland County to determine best timing.

**Chief Administrative Officer Report:**

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Dates and reminders-
  - AAZK Bowling for Rhinos will be on August 27

- Riverbanks' Employee Resource Groups have been working hard to implement staff treats and
- Zoofari will be September 29
- Vondrak shared some results from the most recent Inclusion and Belonging Survey. Some highlights:
  - Strengths (highest scoring)
    - 88% of our staff see the value in DEAI
    - 82% feel like they belong at Riverbanks
    - 84% feel they can share their opinion within their team
    - 87% feel like their direct supervisor values DEAI
- Last week we hosted a virtual Town Hall and the staff had the opportunity to name a baby penguin. The name "Fig" was the was chosen by the staff.

**Chief Operating Officer Report:**

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- The name "Piper" was voted on by the public for the baby harbor seal
- This year the bird team had 3 flamingo chicks hatch. The chicks will continue to house in the bird center overnight and walk to their exhibit in the morning.
- The bird team had 4 penguin chicks hatch this year, which is a record for Riverbanks.
- Recently transitioned to a new ticketing system with Gateway. Very proud of all of the work that went into the new system implementation.
- This year will work with a revenue share production company on a new product for Wild Lights at Riverbanks Zoo. This event will be fundamentally different from Lights Before Christmas. Registration will be required and there will be a capacity limit. The lanterns will have a mission focus and be different from any other lights in Columbia.
- Brew at the Zoo was on August 4 and hosted about 1600 attendees. The event will gross about \$130,000 which is on track with budget.
- Membership revenues are on pace with budget, and member households are holding at 47,000.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 21 day of September 2023.

, Secretary