

*City/Parish Recreation Advisory Commission
Finance Committee
June 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes*

Present: Timothy Sensley, Matt Hulin, Larry Lanclos, Joseph Tidwell, Patti Carter, Harold Porter, Johnafort Bernard, Raymond Mallery, Brandon Miller, Nourine Lanerie

Committee Chairperson Matt Hulin calls the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Opened with a Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition of Guests/Staff Members

Committee Chairperson Matt Hulin welcomes all of the commissioners and staff members in attendance.

Correspondence/Announcements

Committee Chairperson Matt Hulin advises that this is the semi-annual financial review meeting. It is a chance to look at the budget seven months into the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year.

Mid-Year Budget Status:

Matt reviews the operations and maintenance budget and asks if there is anything out of the ordinary that needs to be discussed. Tim advises that he had his first budget review meeting with the Administration earlier today. He will meet with them again in a few weeks before the budget is presented to the councils. The council budget review meeting for the department will be held on August 13, 2024. Larry asks what "PO" Encumbrances are. Brandon explains that it is what has been tied up in a Purchase Order (PO), but the bill has not been paid yet; the "commitments" is on its way to being a PO and just needs to be approved by Purchasing; and, "total obligations" is what is in a PO and has been encumbered for a specific purpose. Joseph asks if "total obligations" is what is expected and the remaining column is the variance. Brandon explains that "total obligations" is what has been encumbered to be spent, and the remaining column is what is left over in the account. The first line is the actual budget and the remaining is the "total obligations" from the budget. Larry asks for an explanation of the line item for pickleball, which shows \$50,000 in encumbrances. Brandon explains that a PO has been put together and that amount has been encumbered to pay the invoice once the job is done. Tim adds that a certain amount is pulled out to pay the professional services bill. Larry asks for an explanation of what the \$50,000 is actually for. Brandon advises that the PO in the billing system has a listing of what it is on the PO, including the vendor and the nature of the work. Matt asks if the capital document has already been approved and if the \$500,000 amount for pickleball courts is accurate. Brandon explains that it was approved in the last fiscal year and carried over; however, it has not yet been spent. Matt asks if there is a timeline to spend the funds. Brandon advises that the accounts are reviewed with Budgeting and the Director to determine if the account can be closed. Larry advises that the Moore Park Project had \$10.7 million in the account, and the budget shows that 0% is remaining. The budget shows two additional accounts for \$2 million; he asks if these accounts are for the final phase. Brandon explains that some are grant funds; therefore, that money can only be used for what is specific for that grant. Harold asks for confirmation that funds approved in 2022 are still carried over. Brandon explains that it can carryover for multiple years; however, they might not receive additional funds each year. Matt asks if the big capital expenses at Moore and Brown show over \$8 million in actuals. Tim explains that the Brown Park Project has been downgraded from eight fields to four fields. Matt asks for an update on what is included in the scope of the \$10.7 million. Tim advises that there will be four fields. The infields will be turf, the foul territory will be turf, and the outfields will be celebration bermuda grass. The walking trails will be fixed, lighting will be updated, a new batting cage, new playground equipment, a larger dog park, three additional pavilions, solar lighting, and a basketball court southeast of the pickleball court.

Larry asks Brandon to get back with the commission on the details of the \$50,000 for pickleball. People may think there is still \$500,000 in the account; however, the balance is down to \$450,000. Larry advises that the Brown Park pickleball courts could use some lighting. Tim explains that it has not been discussed, but he will bring it up. Matt asks if there are any specific plans for the \$500,000 for pickleball. He suggests that additional pickleball courts be added at Beaulieu Park, especially if the funds are just going to sit there from year to year. Larry adds that the new pickleball courts in Youngsville were around \$454,000 for eight lighted and gated pickleball courts. Matt asks if there was a plan when the \$500,000 was initially allocated for pickleball. Tim confirms that there was no plan.

Larry asks for an update on the \$2.5 million allocated for Heymann Park in 2019. Tim explains that the Heymann Park Amphitheater project is moving along and is currently in the design phase. Patti asks what for an update and details on the final plans. Tim advises that it will be an amphitheater, but no final decision has been made on what it will look like. The goal is to be able to host a national act; however, there are certain specifications that have to be met. Johnafort asks if additional property was purchased for the project. Tim confirms that it was.

Matt reviews the golf course budgets, specifically revenue versus expenses. He advises that as of May, Hebert has spent \$505,000 with \$404,000 in revenue; Les Vieux Chenes has spent \$612,000 with \$567,000 in revenue; and, The Wetlands has spent \$766,000 with about \$748,000 in revenue. Tim explains that January was a tough month for the golf courses due to the weather; however, all three golf courses had a great month of April. There were some tournaments that were scheduled in May, but had to be rescheduled due to the weather.

Larry asks if the golf courses keep track of the Lafayette Parish residents versus non-Lafayette Parish residents? Tim advises that they do not track it by residency. Matt suggests that it be looked at since the city of Lafayette residents pay for the LCG general fund which is used to subsidize the golf courses. Harold advises that it would be a logistical nightmare to track it that way. Larry asks if the sales tax revenue is included in the LCG general fund. Matt advises that it is included; however, the millage is paid for by the city of Lafayette residents. Joseph asks what the deficit is. Matt explains that the subsidy is usually around \$500,000 for the golf courses. Les Vieux Chenes has come close to being profitable, but all three golf courses have to be balanced from the LCG City General Fund.

Matt reviews the revenue summary sheet and asks why the projected revenue for Hebert was \$339,000 and \$404,000 in revenue has already been accrued. Larry adds that there was also nothing budgeted for cart rentals. Brandon explains that a new fund was created for cart rental revenues and the funds will be moved at the end of the year. The funds are being put aside to purchase new golf carts in a few years. Tim adds that they are looking to pull out \$16,667 per month and put it in that account. After a five-year period, there will be around \$1 million to purchase new golf carts for all three golf courses. Joseph asks if inflation was taken into consideration. Tim advises that there will be a credit issued for the trade ins, so that should offset the cost. Matt advises that more will have to be made up from the LCG general fund, since they are pulling out the cart revenues. Hebert had a budgeted expense for this fiscal year of \$811,000; however, their budgeted revenue for the year is only \$339,000. Therefore, the difference is around \$450,000 for just one golf course. Harold advises that you have to look at the whole aspect of a golf course versus a pickleball court. The expenses on a golf course will always be more. Matt advises that pickleball is fully funded by the millage; however, there is a fee to pay golf. Brandon explains that the projected budget for the golf courses are undervalued; the amount collected year to date is \$404,000 for Hebert, which is half of the projected amount. Larry asks if the cart rental revenues that are put aside are coming out of the expenses. Brandon explains that all of the revenue generated goes into the LCG general fund and the expenses are approved on what is needed. Matt adds that the cart rental revenues are now going into a separate account for golf carts, and not into the LCG general fund. Therefore, each golf course will be hundreds of dollars off. Brandon explains that any excess cart rental revenue funds over \$1 million will go into the general

revenue fund. The projected amounts to be transferred into the account are \$233,537 for Hebert, \$428,633 for Les Vieux Chenes and \$404,607 for The Wetlands.

Matt asks if any rate increases at the golf courses would have to be approved by the council. Harold confirms that it would have to be approved by the council; however, the golf course fees are in line with the other golf courses in the area. Joseph asks if the golf course fees were increased recently. Nourine advises that they were increased in 2017. Joseph asks if any research has been done to see what an increase now would generate, based on historical utilization. Tim advises that no study has been done; however, it would be a slippery slope to increase the fees without providing additional amenities. Matt advises that fees have gone up everywhere. Patti suggests that the tournament fees be increased. Harold advises that Lafayette has more people than Lake Charles; however, they have more golf courses than we do and their golf courses are probably in the negative, too. Matt adds that the golf courses simply need to break even. Joseph advises that the utility of increasing the rate versus the participation needs to be looked at to decrease the deficit of \$500,000 yearly. Larry suggests that more be charged for the non-city of Lafayette residents, since they do not pay the millage. The citizens of Lafayette should be benefiting. Tim advises that it would be counterproductive and a lot of revenue would be lost. He will run a report to see how much additional revenue would have been generated from January 2024 until now. Larry adds that the point of sale company should also be able to run a report on the different zip codes. Patti suggests that the annual pass fee be increased and it would also be helpful to track how often the annual pass holders play golf. Raymond explains that the golf course software is able to track that information. Discussion follows regarding the annual membership.

Next Fiscal Year's Budget Preparation

Brandon advises that the budget will be introduced at the council meeting on July 16, 2024, and the department's council budget hearing will be on August 13, 2024. Matt asks if there is any major deviation from last year's budget. Tim explains that there is a little increase in capital to purchase equipment for Brown Park and Moore Park. The type of grass that will be planted requires a specialized mower. Larry adds that there are certain types of weeds that grow in the grass; he asks if there will be a groundskeeper assigned to monitor the fields. Tim advises that Thomas Eschete, the Golf Course Superintendent at The Wetlands Golf Course, will be overseeing it. The lawn mower will only cut the bermuda grass and that should help with the cross-pollination issues.

Current Capital Projects

Tim advises that Brown Park is projected to be complete in October. Moore Park is projected to be done in September, the Thomas Skate Park is 65% complete, and the resurfacing of the Thomas Park tennis courts is nearing completion. Matt asks if that includes both sets of the courts at Thomas. Tim advises that it was just one set of courts. The total amount allocated was \$250,000 and the cost to resurface one set of courts was \$60,000. The cost would be over \$400,000 to completely redo the other set of courts.

Tim advises that LCG will take over the maintenance and upkeep of the new Parc San Souci park downtown. The MLK Pool Enclosure, Heymann Park Amphitheater and Picard Park projects are in the design phase with the Professional Services Committee.

Joseph asks for an update on the indoor recreation facility at the Comeaux Recreation Center that was discussed last year. Tim advises that he has no information on that project.

Matt asks for an update on the upgrades to Picard Park. Tim advises that the project is currently in the hands of Public Works and there is \$1 million allocated for the upgrades. Joseph advises that Senator Page Cortez had allocated \$1 million in the state budget last year for Picard Park. Tim adds that an extension was granted to use the state funds. Joseph asks if the initial plans have been scaled back. Tim advises that he met with Councilman John Guilbeau and the Milton Civic Club to see what they want to see out there.

There is also another gentleman who would like to take over Picard Park for travel baseball. Larry shares the verbiage that was posted on a sign at Picard Park last year as follows:

- \$1 million for Picard Park Improvements: 8 pickleball courts, new ballfield and walking track lighting, covered seating, upgraded concessions and bathrooms, expanded and upgraded parking, and dog park.
- Walking path and recreational component to be built at Homewood Detention Ponds.
- Increased mosquito control treatment.

Tim advises that there are a lot of things that were stated without enough research done on the cost of the project. Joseph advises that he lives close to Picard Park and the Milton Civic Club was working with the department regarding Picard Park; however, they are not the voice of the entire community. He appreciates Senator Page Cortez for allocating \$1 million for the park; however, there are no funds allocated for the upkeep and maintenance of the park. He would like to see some of that \$1 million set aside for the upkeep. Tim advises that the goal is to get feedback from the entire community once the plans are finalized. Joseph adds that a lot of people in the community utilize the park.

Capital Project Wishlist

Matt reviews the budget document that was submitted with the top 23 capital projects, ranked in priority order. Tim advises that some of the Heymann Performing Arts Center projects are listed. They are part of the PARC Department; however, they have a separate advisory commission. Brandon adds that the Arts and Culture Division projects are listed on lines #1, #13 and #17. Larry advises that a sidewalk needs to be put around the pickleball courts at Beaulieu Park. It becomes a huge mud puddle when it rains and people track mud onto the courts. If it is not addressed now, it will become a huge maintenance issue down the road. Matt asks about the funding of close to \$1 million requested to repair a water leak at the Comeaux Center. Tim explains that it includes multiple repairs at the Comeaux Center and the project is more like a remodel. Joseph asks about the \$40,000 requested on line #22 for a rake. Tim explains that it is a specialized rake that hooks up to a golf course tractor to rake the bunkers. Brandon adds that it is actually considered a vehicle.

Matt advises that there are no big-ticket items included. He asks why there are no major upgrades planned. Tim explains that he is working on a master plan for the parks. Matt advises that he would like Tim to consider upgrades to the Lafayette Little League Park at Broadmoor. The concession building needs major upgrades and Lafayette Little League is very popular and they put a big spotlight on Lafayette when the All-Star Team does well. Joseph adds that they charge a fee to play and they keep all of the concession revenue. Tim advises that he met with them a few weeks ago regarding turfing the fields and they would like LCG to cover the cost. Matt adds that this park is no different than any other park that receives upgrades. There are a lot of Lafayette residents who participate in the park. Tim advises that Lafayette Little League has autonomy of the park and no one else can use that park. All of the other parks within LCG allow all citizens to have access. Matt asks if they are paid a fee to maintain the park. Tim explains that it is part of the agreement that they maintain the park and they also pay LCG an annual fee. Joseph advises that upgrades are needed for sure; however, some negotiations may need to take place regarding who pays for what. Larry adds that it is the commission's role to ensure that the private entity within the public-private partnerships are getting what was promised to them. The public private partnership with the tennis association allowed for a certain number of courts; however, that has not been honored by LCG. If upgrading the concession stand is part of agreement with Lafayette Little League, it needs to be done. Tim advises that he will review the contract and consult with the legal department.

Committee Chairperson Matt Hulin opens the floor for questions from the commission; no questions noted.

Next Commission Meeting: June 10, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

Next Finance Committee Meeting: November 11, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

Johnafort Bernard motions to adjourn, seconded by Harold Porter; no opposition; motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.