

MINUTES OF THE
UNIFIED GOVERNMENT WY
CO/KCK BOARD OF PARK
COMMISSIONERS

Wednesday, June 9th, 2021

The June 9th, 2021 meeting of the Unified Government WyCo/KCK Board of Park Commissioners was held via ZOOM Online

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of the Unified Government Board of Park Commissioners was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Billy Brame, First Vice Chairman. Angel Obert, Assistant Director stated proper meeting notice had been given.

ROLL CALL:

Members present were recorded for the minutes.

Board Members Present:

Carolyn Wyatt, Member

Faith Rivera, Member

Micah King, Member

Patricia Gates, Secretary

Billy Brame, First Vice Chair

Jeff Sachen, Second Vice Chair

Board Members Absent:

Ty Collins, Chairman

Bridget Holton-Deere, Member

John McTaggart, Member

Craig Howell, Member

Tammy Romstad, KCKPS

Administration Present:

Jack Webb, Parks and Recreation, Assistant Director

Angel Obert, Parks and Recreation, Assistant Director

James Bain, Counselor

Nichole Marlowe, Administrative Support Supervisor

I – PRELIMINARIES

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Patricia Gates to adopt the June 9th, 2021 Agenda, was seconded by Jeff Sachen Motion Carried (Ayes 6, Nays 0)

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Wednesday, May 12th, 2021 regular Board of Park Commissioners meeting are presented for review and consideration for approval.

A motion was made by Jeff Sachen, seconded by Micah King to approve the minutes of the Wednesday, May 12th, 2021 regular meeting. Motion Carried (Ayes 6, Nays 0)

II - PRESENTATIONS, HEARINGS, COMMUNICATIONS

1. Visitors

Visitors may speak to the Board at this time.

As a general rule, the Board will not enter into discussion, but will direct Administration to take under advisement, make necessary response and bring items to a future agenda as may be appropriate.

- No Visitors

2. Correspondence

- No correspondence was given

III – OLD BUSINESS

- Discuss Future In Person Meetings –
 - Emerick Cross stated that at this time the meetings would remain as ZOOM until the Unified Government's technology was capable of offering hybrid meetings that would allow in person and ZOOM for preference by all attendees.

IV - NEW BUSINESS

- No New Business to Report

V - OTHER BUSINESS

1. Staff Agenda

- Jack Webb –
 - a. Mowing Update – At this time mowing is behind, there has been a lot of rain, the mowing crews have had to skip mowing hills and other saturated areas that have not been safe to attempt to mow otherwise the crews have tried to keep up as much as possible.
 - b. Project Updates –
 - The West Shop replacement is back out to bid, the original contractor that was awarded the bid has now declined the project due to supply price increases.

- The Clifton Park/CDBG has been brought back to the table and a spray park is being added and the project and the plans are being redrawn to add the spray park system, new playground system sidewalks, a shade structure at the field #3 playground which will make it safer for children to play there, this may all be done in two parts.
 - The City Park Field #3 project is coming to completion, we are installing a light pole that had to be replaced, that will be done this week and it should be connected next week. There was an issue with the irrigation system affecting the grass growth, this problem has been resolved and the field should be up and running in a few weeks.
 - The inclusive restroom at the Wyandotte County Park was installed and available for use. They are installing a concrete skirt surrounding the restroom and connecting it to the inclusive playground and the parking lot.
 - Getting ready to start working on the five restroom replacements, working on the logistics for the utilities.
 - Waterline phase four at Wyandotte County Lake, was scheduled to start earlier this month and that contractor has backed out due to material price increases. Public Works is putting that project back out to bid. Phase five of that project is scheduled to start in early August, hopefully we will get one of those phases done this year.
- c. Christmas in July – This is scheduled for July 17th, this is also Overnight Fishing. We are teaming up with the Snackle Box this year, they will be having a band, we are excited to partner with them. We have all our sponsors coming back. The fireworks are being extended.
- d. MOSAIC Fishing Event – Want to thank Tyrone Weaver, our Special Populations Coordinator, for teaming up with MOSAIC to teach some young men in their program how to fish. We agreed to four Tuesdays to hold the events at the Kiddy Pond at Wyandotte County Lake Park. Cabela's sponsored by providing fishing poles. MOSAIC would like to extend this program. Thank you to the staff that helped on these events, it was a lot of fun.
- Angel Obert added that there is a video with highlights from this event on the Parks & Recreation Facebook page if anyone would like to see them. It was a great event and nice to be able to offer services for this inclusive program was really great.
- e. Introduction of the Program Coordinator Stephanie Bell – Stephanie Bell is replacing Kristen Love who moved to a new position in a different county. Stephanie is working with the Abatement Team, Noxious Weeds and the Mowing Program, would like to welcome her to the Parks & Recreation Department.

Angel Obert –

a. Parkwood Pool – Angel stated “I’m going to add something to the agenda just want to start off and address an incident that occurred at Parkwood Pool on Saturday. I’m sure many of you have heard that. So I just want to start off by you know just kind of updating the Board on what we know and where we’re at. Some kids did jump the fence at about 6:55pm and I’m sure, as you heard one of those kids jumped in the pool unable to swim and the fire department showed up and the Police Department and they took over from there. I know that this isn’t something we ever want to deal with, and so we’ve been working with County Administration and Commission and Parks and Recreation as a team to make a decision, and find a solution on how we’re going to move forward with that. So, as you know, we went through the process very early on in the beginning of the year January, February, having conversations about what summer 2021 looked like for aquatics. We had many conversations with the County Administration and Commission as well as presenting to them, our proposal on the 29th of April, so you know a lot went into the decision making, on where we were at with aquatics for the summer season. We were really hopeful and optimistic about being able to offer some new programs that we hadn’t before like the Lifeguard Work Study Program and also some swim classes and we’ve been trying to get applicants into those programs, but, as you have heard Jack, and I say every month it’s been really hard to get people into those positions so you know we’re trying to make a good situation out of something that we were unable to offer the summer, with the pool being closed. I just wanted to address that, and let you guys know that we’ve been working on that and it’s never something that we want to see happen, and unfortunately. We deal with kids breaking into the pool often. I know that this happens every summer I did it as a kid I’m sure many of you might have too and that’s just certainly not something we ever want to see. Before I move on, are there any questions regarding that?”

- Billy Brame stated – “Okay, I was hoping to problem solve around it, but if it is a Commission decision that we don’t have any sway on in it’s not just lifeguards there there’s less that we can problem solve. I know the community wants the pool to be open, what steps would have to happen, would it have to be a board like a board decision.
- Angel Obert responded – “Yeah at this point you would work through your Commissioners and relay that information. And, like I said that decision was made with Administration and Commission and I will say you know at this point in the year it would be extremely difficult to get guards, as even other area pools around us are having trouble opening because of lack of guards.”
- Carolyn Wyatt stated – “ Yeah um to me, you know the pools need to be open, I think that there are plenty of people who are lifeguards and I think that, I think we need to try harder. Usually they used to have lifeguards, they used to take

swimming in the schools. And there's some place in Missouri, what is that place that trains the lifeguards, the Red Cross, so I think we need to start sending people to the Red Cross in Missouri and getting them ready, you know what like 17 and 18 year old's in the summer I mean, I think we need to start a little harder and send them to the Red Cross to get them qualified to be a lifeguard because, I think, if any pool can open anywhere, our pool can open too. It's just that they get prepared or we just need to work at it a little harder and stop not trying to open it, but try harder to open it. That incident happened, they need to keep covers over it when those nobody is swimming nobody's there. They need to keep the covers over I think you've got a fire department right next door I think it's no problem to them walking around and just checking out things, since there are no fires anyway, I mean you know I just think we could do better.”

- Angel Obert responded – “I certainly appreciate that feedback and again it was a decision made by the Commission and we on a normal year start recruiting for lifeguards in February, and I think we offer a really nice training program and we’ve got a great instructor. We actually partner with the city of Kansas City Missouri and train our guards too. If you know people that are lifeguards, certainly send them our way Ms. Wyatt, we’ve got plenty of openings for the opportunities with the Lifeguard Work Study and obviously for summer 2022 we’re going to need all the guards that we can get.
- Carolyn Wyatt responded – “I think we need to partner with District 500 Schools and the colleges, I think we need to partner with the colleges and schools and I think we can get what we need because, I think they need to offer swimming at those schools. So, I’m saying I think we need to partner with District 500 and the colleges to get what we need.
- Faith Rivera stated – “Also too, when this all happened I posted the information about us not having our pools open, and Roland Park Jan Faidley, who is a good friend of mine, she stated that you know that we have the ability to, there is no residential restrictions or anything like that at Roeland Park and that they’ve had no issues, from what I understand, with lifeguards, maybe not because, I think maybe even getting the lifeguards that they are not hiring, maybe we can work on that maybe partnering with Johnson County maybe seeing if we can you know partner with them, I can definitely try and do my diligence with my friends over in that area, I would because I swam, I learned how to swim and the YMCA, I went to unfortunately, I was you know born and raised here, just like all of you. I went to Roeland Park pool and I swam on swim team and stuff like that, and our kids, my kids did not have that opportunity, but these other kids that are growing up need this and so I would like to be an advocate and do my due diligence to do whatever I can for these kids, so let me know whatever I can do, and I will reach out to others, Thank you.”

- Jeff Sachen stated – “I just remember that we talked about a Work Study Program for lifeguards and how there is one currently in place, and that this year was kind of interrupted by the pandemic. So, am I wrong in saying that most years this issue would be more alleviated because there would be a better Work Study Program but this year was kind of in limbo due to the pandemic going on? So, that is the reason why we do not currently have pools open? It doesn’t necessarily have to do with funding or anything such as that. It’s just the fact that, the constant, change of everything going on I guess as a parks department we just weren’t able to get the final decision made. But, I will go back and I believe that the Unified Government has had a plan that has partnered with the local YMCA in years past, to train lifeguards to work at Parkwood Pool specifically, and if you were going to work at Parkwood Pool you would not have to pay for the training you had, so I don’t think that this is an oversight by the Parks Department. I think that this is just one more of the uncertainties that came due to, you know, the unprecedented events of the past year and a half.”
- Angel Obert stated – “Jeff you make a very good point there, and I’ll just add, it was a very dynamic year and as you guys know being in Wyandotte County we were one of the more strict counties with the guidelines and restrictions regarding COVID, and that did affect access to facilities and amenities. In years past we’ve had access to USD 500 pools, we were told very early on in the year that that wouldn’t even be a possibility until May, so we got to keep in mind that it was a very dynamic year and still a dynamic situation and we are dealing with some challenges with COVID as well as far as recruiting but, ultimately the decision on the pool was made by Commission.”
- Jack Webb stated – “Also on the news, every city is hurting for lifeguards. Olathe I believe it was Monday put out that they are going to have to shut some pools down due to lack of lifeguards, they have a training program going on now and I believe we had a training program scheduled but, we only have what? One applicant so far. We need to probably look at what these lifeguards make I’m sure funding has something to do with it. But yeah if anybody knows anybody that wants to be a lifeguard we have the training we will send them to.
- Billy Brame asked – “What is the pay currently?”
- Pat Gates stated – “One of the reasons that our guidelines have been a little more strict here in Wyandotte County Unified Government area is our vaccination rate is low, were not at 1/3 yet. If we could get up to 1/3 of our people vaccinated I’d more comfortable with open pools.”
- Angel Obert responded – “Yes, that is a good point, and I’ll answer Billy’s question real quick. Our lifeguards salary is \$12.00 per hour. In 2019 we recognized the need to raise that, before to be competitive with surrounding areas. Commissioner Townsend was a big advocate and helped push that forward, so now our lifeguard salary is \$12.00 an hour, and if I’m not mistaken, because I do

have a form on this, we were the highest paid lifeguards in the metro, and that might have changed maybe this year due to COVID, I'd have to update my research, but when we made that decision to make it \$12.00 an hour in 2019 we were the highest paid in the metro area. Any other questions before I move on?"

- Carolyn Wyatt stated – “I’m saying that so we won’t have this problem again, I think that we need to partner with the school district, if they have swimming in the schools, I think we need to partner with them or the college’s, somebody you know. We need to open it up a little bit more to Wyandotte County, open it up to colleges and to the school district, District 500, just open it up and see what you know, what we can do different than we usually do.”
- Angel Obert responded – “I absolutely agree, I think it’s a bigger problem and is going to take more than just us and that why, like you said Ms. Wyatt, to get our kiddos and our community the skills of swimming and I know previously, before the recent change in leadership in USD 500, County Administrators and Commissioners were in conversations with the school district and their management team about how important this was to bring back into their curriculum, so when we have those conversations again with the school district as the new leadership comes on we will definitely keep you guys informed and that might be an opportunity for you guys to be some big advocates there.”
- Carolyn Wyatt stated - “Sounds good.”
- Billy Brame stated - “The School Board last night passed an update for their facilities use. The board is interested in opening the schools to more options and that may or may not include pools.”

- b. Reservations – James Bain gave a presentation regarding rental’s of Parks & Recreation facility rentals. James Bain stated – “So, we wanted to go over our policy regarding political events, this is an election year and anytime there's an election year there's always misinformation and I heard this and I heard that, and so we just wanted to make it clear for not only the board, but also the public that may be watching exactly what the policy is regarding political rentals at on Wyandotte County or Unified Government Parks & Rec facilities. So, as I talked about this is an election year and with any election year comes misinformation, so the big question is can political candidates or organizations rent UG Parks and Rec facilities. So, a few weeks ago Parks and Rec staff heard there's this rumor out there, maybe from years ago that political candidates could not rent facilities and that that that is wrong. The bottom line simple for everybody to see is that, if a Parks and Rec facility is available to rent, then the facility can be rented for political purposes, so there should be no more rumors or misinformation. The facilities can be rented and when I say that we're renting reason it's highlighted here is because I want to make clear that facilities are not provided for free for political events. They've got to be paid for I know there's some exceptions made for community meetings for neighborhood meetings, a political event is not a neighborhood meeting. If a candidate is coming to meet and greets the neighborhood that's a political event and needs to be paid for so, that's kind of another

piece of misinformation that they're available for free. Definitely not true, bottom line is facilities can be rented for political purposes. I want to kind of go through the reasoning for this, and where the law comes from. Facilities that are able to be rented are considered a public forum, and so a public forum is divided kind of into two groups one group is traditional public forums it's called traditional public forums are sidewalks parks. Traditional places where people can gather and meet that is a traditional public forum nontraditional public forums or nontraditional spaces can be turned into public forums, by the government renting the facility by the government hosting public events there are things like that it. To determine whether a nontraditional space is a public forum look at the use of the facility, and so you know in our situation, the spaces that Parks and Rec rents are deemed public forums, because they are rented for groups to meet on rented for groups to gather and so the use turns them into this public forum, and because it's a public forum contents of the gathering cannot be regulated, no matter what we think of the content. In a public forum content cannot be regulated, there are allowable regulations and those deal with time place and manner and so some examples of time place and manner, our traffic control, though a street. Maybe a public forum where people can gather. A gathering cannot block traffic, so we've seen that with you know protests over the last year, the protest is fine, but when it blocks traffic is when it crosses the line into a place where the government can restrict on governments can restrict gatherings at the courthouse and court proceedings. Even though the courthouse may be a public forum where people meet that's true, there are spaces in the courthouse that are public forums. Public gatherings cannot disrupt court proceedings and that's another example of time place and manner the time place and manner restrictions must be narrowly tailored and serve a compelling government interest and so it's not often you can find restrictions that are valid restrictions that are constitutional, but I hope I gave a few examples there that that makes sense that it really is very narrow traffic, courts things like that um that are allowable. And then the final item I wanted to talk about on this topic is the Unified Government code of ethics Section 2-265 the prestige of office section says that a Unified Government representative shall not intentionally use "prestigious" office for their own gain, and the reason, this is important in this context is it goes to, gets back to using Unified Government facilities for free or using Unified Government facilities that normally would not be rented, an elected official cannot be treated any different than a member of the general public, you as the Park Board cannot be treated any different than a member of the general public. If a space is not available to be rented by the general public it's not available to any UG employee or any Member of this Board. If the event requires rent or requires insurance for a special event there's no special treatment for a UG employee or a Member of this Board and so that's kind of the last item I had on this topic I'm here for questions I know angel may have a couple things to add but I can certainly answer questions."

- Angel Obert responded – “Thanks James yeah I'll just add real quick, thank you for that presentation and just keeping us on track. We are working on a form to have available at our rec centers we have one that community groups used to fill out to reserve space for meetings so, we're just working on updating that form, so we can

just collect some better information and have a better idea of how to accommodate certain things happening in our centers.”

- c. Dog Park Grant – The Parks Department is applying for the same grant they received a few years “Bark for your Park”, the grant is for \$25,000.00 and if the grant is awarded to the Parks Department again they will be able to put another dog park in one of our parks similar to the St. John’s Dog Park.
- d. Summer Camp - Summer camps officially began Monday, June 7th. There are two sites, being run by Parks and Recreation, one at the Patricia Diane Kane Community Center that camp is full for the first week at 40 children. The second camp is at Eisenhower there were 20 children enrolled in that camp for the first week.

- BOARD MEMBER’S QUESTIONS OR COMMENT

- Carolyn Wyatt stated – “I have a question, but it’s on the summer summer camp. I know I’ve had this question for a number of years about summer camp I think summer camps are nice, I think all summer camps, need to be run the same way. If we hire people to run the summer camps from our community from our city, to run those camps, I don't agree with the YMCA run at a summer camp, if they want to donate something that's fine, but I think that we need to run our summer camps cause I don't want it to go into the YMCA running this camp this year next year run another camp if these if these are our centers and we can give, \$47,000 whatever we can give to the golf, Sunflower Golf we can give all that much money to Sunflower Golf we can hire people to run our camps and we got to charge an arm and only \$40 for six weeks for kids that's not a summer camp that may be a different kind of camp but that's not a summer camp. Summer camp was when I go for the whole six or eight weeks and I pay, maybe \$20. And that way you get kids who can afford to go. You get the community, what you want is the community you want kids in the community, that goes to those schools to be able to come to the summer camp. We're not about money, for profit if we about for profit, we need to close down because we give them money to everybody, except for our youth we can't have a decent summer camp where kids can pay. I mean, I know what someplace to go they pay \$5 if they can pay \$20 to six weeks I don't think that's bad because we can give to our kids and our seniors. What do we therefore we got all these people running the Unified Government the Parks and Rec Department, making all this money well we can't afford to open up those recreation centers for youth in the summer and give them a decent pay, you know pay a decent price for summer camp. Where we're not doing it right we're not doing it right we're just thinking about making money it's not about making money it's about giving, giving creating we would create it for our youth we build a big prison over there, you know and they've got to go put somebody in there. It is not a recreation center it's a

reformatory or something we got to put kids in there, why not put the money in front, at the centers, and work with the kids with their parents and do what we need to do. As citizens of Wyandotte County. So, I'm saying, next year we start now if we need, you need, to write a grant whatever you need to write. But, I'm saying that we need to get kids when a community and we gotta charge and \$40 for six weeks I every kid that's almost \$400 \$300. For six weeks \$20 a kid, that's not summer camp. And, anyway I'm leaving it there, but I just want to express myself. I'm done. You might have sent me off.

- Micah King – Stated that he received a grant for \$6000.00 and wanted to know if the time restriction could be lessened for special events to less than 60 days, due to the need to follow the restrictions set by the grant that was awarded. He asked if it were a possibility to put locks on the trashcans at Emerson Park and Vega Park, he stated that there has been a problem with people dumping household trash in the parks. He asked about he processes of mowing vacant lots.

- ADJOURNMENT

Billy Brame requested a motion to adjourn, Patricia Gates made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jeff Sachen, Meeting adjourned at 6:59PM

Motion Carried (Ayes 6, Nays 0)

Billy Brame, First Vice Chairman