



Board of Park Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes

Tuesday, September 1, 2020
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Kathleen Mills at 4:00 p.m.

Board Present: Kathleen Mills, Les Coyne, Israel Herrera and Ellen Rodkey

Staff Present: Paula McDevitt, Becky Higgins, Julie Ramey, Kim Clapp and Jess Klein.

A. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A-1. Approval of Minutes - None
- A-2. Approval of Claims Submitted - None
- A-3. Approval of Non-Reverting Budget Amendments - None
- A-4. Review of Business Report -None
- A-5. Approval of Surplus - None

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/APPEARANCES - None

B-1. Public Comment Period - None

B-2. Bravo Award – None

B-3. Parks Partner Award – None

B-4. Staff Introductions - None

C. OTHER BUSINESS

C-1 Review/Approval of Partnership Agreement for Public Health in the Park with IU Health, Centerstone, and Monroe County Health Department.

Jess Klein, Health and Wellness Coordinator the purpose of this agreement is to establish and support the new Park’s initiative know as Public Health in Parks. The program will come together as the result of a partnership among Bloomington Parks and Recreations, I.U. Health Bloomington, Centerstone and the Monroe County Health Department. The partnership will support the creation of a new part time position within the Parks Department, community health and hire reduction programing in the parks, support from Centerstone Street Outreach and a cohesive and innovative approach to addressing public health. The initiative is to begin in mid-September 2020 and continue through November 2020. The respective teams will meet in December 2020, to evaluate the program and reallocate the use of funds as necessary moving forward. All groups acknowledge the importance of this project and the innovation required to implement and sustain the program, and the effect it could have on the collective Bloomington Community.

Board Comments: *Israel Herrera requested; information on Centerstone Outreach.* Jess Klein responded; in terms of this agreement, Centerstone will have one Street Outreach team member dedicate 75% of their working hours to supporting this program. 75% of their time will be in the park assisting Park's staff member. The Street Outreach member would be more specialized in connection to social services, as well as interacting with individuals that may be in the middle of a mental health crisis, or substance use addiction. Centerstone Outreach staff would be a supplemental to Park's staff, if or when a situation would go past Park's staff area of expertise.

Kathleen Mills inquired; if the program would be focused on the downtown parks. Jess Klein responded; the agreement is mostly focused on Seminary Park, with allowance for some time at Switchyard Park, Butler Park and Buildings and Trades Park.

Israel Herrera inquired on the contract stating August, and if an addendum will need to be made. Paula McDevitt, Director responded; in Section 7.1 the agreement states "in August 2020 the partnership was finalized", representing the advance work that took place to create, and have the partnership ready for presentation.

Kathleen Mills inquired; if this person would come from a social work background, or if the qualifications have been determined. Jess Klein responded; the search is not being limited to just a social work background. A variety of options is being considered.

Les Coyne inquired if this program has previously been discussed with the Board of Park Commissioners. Kathleen Mills responded; we have not previously discussed this item.

Les Coyne requested; the FTE breakdown of the position. Paula McDevitt responded; total number of hours for the position is approximately 60 hours per week. The hours will be covered by two or three seasonal staff members.

Les Coyne inquired; if there is a job description for the position. Jess Klein responded; a job description has been created.

Les Coyne requested; a copy of the job description be sent to his email. Jess Klein responded; it would be sent.

Les Coyne inquired; on the funding of the program. Paula McDevitt responded; there is a budget of \$50,000. Parks is working with other departments for funding.

Les Coyne inquired; on the type of task the Centerstone staff would be performing. Greg May responded; staff will be providing street outreach services, offering treatment or connecting individuals with treatment. The program about getting people connected to care, should there be a service need. There may be instances where 15 or 20 contacts need to occur before individuals accept assistance. A rapport must be built before trust is established, and staff is able to help them move forward in a way that is helpful to them.

Les Coyne commented; basically, a type of social work with referrals will be provided. Trying to figure out what their needs are, and trying to get individuals to that resource.

Greg May responded; that is an accurate description.

Les inquired; if specific goals and measurements have been established. Jess Klein responded; there is a statement in 7.6 of the partnership on how the program will be evaluated. It will be based on collected data, number of syringes collected, number and type of public comments received, input from the community partners, and overall engagement of park users. The information will be reviewed by the partners in December of 2020.

Les Coyne inquired; if it would be more antidotal than quantitative. Jess Klein responded; both, quantitative as well as antidotal.

Les Coyne suggested; having a protocol sheet for interactions.

Les Coyne inquired; if the partnership was building a social platform for the homeless in several parks, primarily Seminary Park. Paula McDevitt responded; Parks has been challenged for several years and has tried several approaches. Including the Centerstone Partnership, that is a good program. This park is well maintained, but there are several people that spend time there that have a lot of needs that need to be met. This pilot program is Park's approach, as to how to make the park safe for the people, and bring public health resources to them. Everything Parks does has a public health component. The Department has never provided this type of program before, Jess Klein, Health and Wellness Coordinator is trained in public health, and the best partners and resources have been included in this pilot program. Data will be collected and reviewed in December 2020.

Les Coyne commented; he does not have a problem with what is trying to be done, he is concerned this partnership leans towards a mission in social work area, and the Department is not in the social work business.

Les Coyne requested the Board of Park Commissioners be included in the December meeting, when the pilot program is reviewed and discussed.

Les Coyne requested; the program be considered an experimental program, not a pilot program.

Ellen Rodkey inquired; as a new member of the Board, is Public Health in the Park just a descriptive for this program, or if this is part of other park programs. Jess Klein responded; it is a descriptive for this new initiative,

however there are previous programs and partnerships that could possibly fall under this umbrella. That is something that could be discussed as a later date.

Kathleen Mills commented; there are certainly other things Parks does that fall under public health. They are just a different type of program.

Kathleen stated; she is supportive of building relationships and getting help and referrals to those individuals in need. Evaluating the program in December is a good idea. This is a good response as to what typically happens in some communities. A lot of police calls, that does not lead to any long-term solutions.

Les Coyne commented; he is concerned in the direction this partnership is taking, and recommends this should be a larger city program that we assist in. We need to be fully aware of where we are going with this type of program. Paula McDevitt commented; Jess Klein has been working closely with the Bloomington Police Department's Social Worker and with the DRO. There is internal city department support. Greg May commented; one of the things that makes this more complicated and visible this year, is there are so many more homeless people coming to Bloomington that are not from Bloomington.

Les Coyne commented; do we give over our parks. If we continue with these types of programs, it needs to be included in our mission. There needs to be a comprehensive approach to the issue.

Kathleen Mills commented; it is a bigger problem to be solved. It's not just a problem with that park. An ideally it would be a city-wide focus on what we can do for these people.

Les Coyne commented; he is concerned Bloomington will experience the same issues that Portland, Oregon is currently dealing with.

Les Coyne made a motion to proceed with the Public Health in the Park Partnership with I.U. Health, Centerstone, and Monroe County Health Department as outlined, with the stipulation the Board of Park Commissioners is included in the December collective meeting for program evaluation, and it is named as an experimental program not a pilot program. Israel Herrera seconded the motion. *Kathleen Mills* any public comments or questions, seeing none. Vote taken; motion unanimously carried 4-0.

C-2 Review/Approval of Addendum with Cornerstone.

Paula McDevitt, Director on March 24, 2020 the Department entered into a partnership with Centerstone to provide an opportunity for Centerstone clients to work for Centerstone in Parks and Recreations Department locations. Both parties wish to expand the number of crew members to the partnership. The project received \$50,000 from Recovery Forward funding, to use to expand the program from September through November of 2020. Staff recommends approval of this addendum.

Israel Herrera made a motion to approve the addendum with Centerstone. *Ellen Rodkey* seconded the motion. *Kathleen Mills* any public comments or questions, seeing none. Vote taken; motion unanimously carried 4-0

Paula McDevitt, Director the next Board of Park Commissioners meeting will be Tuesday, September 22, 2020.

D Reports

D-1 Recreation Division – None

D-2 Operations Division – None

D-3 Sports Division – None

D-4 Administration Division - None

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kim Clapp

Secretary Board of Park Commissioners