

# SPOKANE PARK BOARD

Regular Monthly Study Session - 3:42 P.M. – May 10, 2012 – City Hall Conference Room 5A

## Notes

### 1. **Roll Call:** *Jacki Faught*

Park Board Members Present: Randy Cameron, President; Jim Quigley, Vice President; Leroy Eadie, Secretary; Andy Dunau; Ross Kelley; Jim Santorsola; Sam Selinger, Susan Traver; Ken Van Voorhis (excused at 4:30 p.m.); Chris Wright

Park Board Members Absent Excused: Martha Lou Wheatley-Billeter; Councilman Mike Allen

Staff Present: Jacki Faught; Jerry Unruh; Scott Niemeier; Craig Butz; Mike Aho; Tony Madunich; Taylor Bressler; Nancy Goodspeed

Others Present: Bonnie McDade, Southside Senior Center; Hal McGlathery, SYSCA & NEYC; Luella Cantalini, PVCC; Patt Earley, ALTCEW; Marjorie Tomes, Corbin Senior Activity Center; Kim Ferraro, West Central Community Center; Kate Green, NEYC

### 2. **Discussion Items:**

A. Centers Stakeholder Report was reviewed:

1. Copies of *Spokane's Community, Senior and Youth Centers FUNDING AND STRUCTURE STAKEHOLDER REPORT, May 1, 2012* and *Summary Stakeholder Report on Center Funding and Structure For Mayor Condon and Staff, May 7, 2012* were distributed.
2. Four Park Board members were involved in the stakeholder process Ross Kelley, Sam Selinger, Chris Wright and Andy Dunau. They have already reviewed the reports and have sent comments to Fulcrum.
3. The amount of funding provided individually to centers through the General Fund, CBDG – Non-Capital and Park Fund were reviewed.
4. The Centers issue is very complex as very pots of money are used for very different things by the different centers.
5. Today's purpose is to talk about the issue from a Park Board point of view. The board needs to know we are going to get at least dollar of recreation for each dollar invested in recreation services.
6. The Board appreciates the issues the centers are facing in terms of fundraising and dollar allocations.
7. ECCC, currently supported by Mayor's office, be taken out of the City and converted to a non-profit. Parks has a senior center in ECCC however their role in this transition would be minimal.
8. There needs to be a person or entity in charge of the collaborative efforts discussed. City representatives should be available to attend meetings when necessary but should not lead or facilitate any of these meetings.
9. The current method of funding may be obsolete. It is possible that establishing a single board and allocation guidelines for the City's General Fund, Human Services and CDBG funding may allow stronger direction for program funding. Due to City Charter restrictions Park Board may not participate in this process.

10. There was a lot of discussion regarding alternate methods of funding including creating a special district like the PFD, a levy lid lift, or selling off excess City or Park property to produce sufficient money to start an endowment fund.
  - a. The last time Park property was sold was for the 2008 Park Bond.
  - b. It would be imprudent to sell off property without having a proper inventory. The City as a whole has been working on an inventory since the first of the year, determining what could be considered as excess property and looking at our legal options.
  - c. The June Park Board Study Session to explore the Board legal options with regards to Park property.
  - d. Parks property cannot be sold without a public vote.
11. Concerns were expressed regarding considering collateral damage should funding be cut. When you look at it from the point of view of the seniors being the fastest growing demographic or the point of at risk youth it, clearly the centers are providing valuable services that reduce the overall cost of living in Spokane. The actual effect of even incremental funding cuts on the centers should be considered. There is really no way to measure the collateral damage.
12. It is critical that the centers receive preliminary budget targets from the City administration and the Park Board as early in each budget year as possible. Leroy Eadie has worked on some initial numbers and the Board will be talking about those today.
13. Several smaller ideas for City support were allowing the use of City Utility bill mailers & a check box on utility bills to solicit donations; help in producing Public Service Announcements for the Centers; Mayor providing visible support for fund raising or business connections opportunities; and providing prominent display on City and Park websites regarding center activities.
14. City administration should continue to assist the Peaceful Valley Community Center through its organization transition process.

B. Discussion:

1. Leroy's initial budget proposes approximately an 11% cut to the Centers amounting to an \$80K overall reduction. This is based on indications from the stakeholders at the meetings that they could live with around a 10% reduction. The recommendation from Fulcrum was a 21% reduction, around \$151K.
2. Overall departmental cuts in the budget proposal are approximately \$1M, this includes the elimination of nearly 8 full time positions and some programs. The General Fund contribution to Parks budget remains flat or declining.
3. We have a general idea of what Parks funding will be from the General Fund for the next three years. There is also an anticipated 6-7% annual increase in payroll benefits.
4. Suggestion was made that the Board should look at how center funding can be strategically and incrementally reduced. Parks faces increased numbers in the user group as the baby boomer generation ages.
5. The Board acknowledges that the history of Center funding is not consistent.
6. Pursuant to the ground rules set up by the facilitators of the task force the scope of was not to get into the details of how to fund centers for 2013 and beyond. These rules also kept some key questions from being answered that included if we can sustain all of the centers from a funding standpoint.
7. Two options for administering cuts are across the board cuts or strategic cuts. The Recreation Committee needs to know if the Board wants to look at cuts in a

strategic way. The Recreation Committee Chair is in favor of a strategic application as a budget reset for the centers just as the department as a whole is doing a budget reset.

8. Suggestion was made to do strategic cuts over a 2-3 year period by setting strategic goals allowing centers time to anticipate and adjust.
9. Acknowledgement was made that the centers do a really good job of raising their own money and leverage their funds quite well.
10. Suggestion was made that the centers collaborate among themselves with fundraising efforts and possibly approach the County as many county residents use the centers. It was noted that the Park Board should not participate in these collaborative efforts as it would be interference in the operational detail of the centers.
11. Suggestion was made that centers should be viewed more like vendors providing recreational services with Parks recreational dollars, coming back to tell and show us what they provided with those recreational dollars.
12. Acknowledgement was given that the dollars given to centers are truly used for recreation and the impact of these funds is multiplied by the number of hours from volunteers. Centers have better opportunity to use dollars more efficiently than within the constraints of City system.
13. An inquiry was made asking if the process considered demographics where certain centers might be in more affluent neighborhoods and might be able to absorb cuts with less effect on their overall services than others. He stated that he is aware there is an impression that a certain large center in an area of more affluence than other areas could withstand the cut more because the center could generate \$1 - \$5 more a year on membership fees where as another more financially challenged area could not.
14. It was noted although Park funding does not fully support centers they rely on this funding to make things work. If you were to pull 100% of Park funding some of the centers will be forced to close.
15. Board members agreed that for the purposes of this study session they will assume that \$700K for the centers fits within the priority structure of the Board and will look at how to best invest that \$700K.
16. Agreements with the centers are currently done on a contract basis. The Board can either stick with the contracts they have or they can modify any number of the contracts to try to get the best value for their recreational dollar. If used this strategy would not be about managing the centers, but would be about vendor selection based on performance, scope of work, etc.
17. The Board could go to a strictly grant funding basis for centers where centers would have to apply for funding. It was emphasized that if grant funding is chosen it should be done on a multi-year basis and transition to this process may need to be done over a several year period to minimize possible negative impact on the centers' stability. Several Board members noted that a grant program is a lot of work.
18. It was noted that all parties in the stakeholder meetings supported NECC being converted from a City run and managed facility to an independently managed non-profit. There are currently two senior centers with directors who are employed by Parks, several others centers manage themselves. It was suggested that with the support the City received for moving towards a model of a self managed center with ECCC, Parks could easily strategically make this kind of

change. Staff advised self managed centers has been trend in Parks for the last couple of years, as with NEYC. Human Resources and Civil Service both recommended Parks not to provide staff to centers. The Board needs to consider how hard they want to push a move from having salaried Parks employees running centers to providing dollars to the centers for the centers to decide how they are going to fill their director positions.

19. PVCC is currently the only community center that is in a Parks facility where we have additional facility management responsibilities.
20. Fleet transportation is another item to be taken under consideration. There is no equity among centers with regards to Parks support of transportation.
21. When asked, no Board members expressed support of status quo with regards to funding.
22. One Board expressed concern that one center is underrepresented in the funding.
23. Staff noted that the stakeholders process did not delve deeply enough for the conversation at today's meeting. The center director's are an amazing resource and their input and professional training would be of great value in helping to solve the issues at hand. The process we are going through is heading in the right direction in terms of allocating the funding fairly and creating a much needed measurement tool.
24. Chris Wright, Recreation Committee Chair, stated that he believes the Recreation Committee has enough information to say that the committee has the latitude to explore strategic cuts. He noted that he also understands that the board feels the committee needs to think in terms of 2013 and beyond.

3. **Adjournment:** 4:55 p.m.

- A. Next Park Board Study Session will be: June 14, 2012, 3:00 p.m. or as soon as possible thereafter directly following the Regular Park Board meeting, City Hall Conference Room 5A.