

**Riverbanks Park Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**18 March 2021**

**Attendance Report**

Commissioners Present (via Zoom): Bob Davidson, Deneen Shockley, Jan Stamps, Mary Howard, Alana Williams

Commissioners Absent: Mike Velasco, Phil Bartlett

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Christie Vondrak, Lochlan Wooten, Katie Eaton

**Call to Order**

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The January 21, 2021 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

For the record, there was no February 2021 meeting.

**Chairman's Remarks**

Chairman Davidson introduced and welcomed new SSA General Manager, Gary "Chad" Chadwick. Davidson remarked that the financials are improved and hopeful for the future.

**President & Chief Executive Officer's Report**

President and CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Stringfellow introduced Gary "Chad" Chadwick. Chadwick has a background in amusement parks, entertainment, food & beverage and was most recently the General Manager at Kings Dominion in Virginia.
- February Financials:
  - Membership- trending positively. Still down from budget but have recently seen single day membership sales records and are optimistic.
  - Membership revenue is strong- seeing purchases at a higher level in gold circle, which is encouraging.
  - Attendance- still down to budgeted attendance, but admissions revenue is up due to the ratio of members versus nonmembers purchasing tickets.
  - Concessions are up \$93K over budget which is strong.
  - Ride and attractions- attractions that are open are coming in above budget.
  - Events- Boo at the Zoo, Lights, etc. are in the positive despite capacity restrictions. Events worked hard to reduce expenses.
  - Guest services savings are very strong due to lower expenses in staffing with lower attendance but will start to see those numbers increasing.
  - Stamps motioned to approve the February financials, Shockley second, m/c unanimous.

### **Chief Administrative Officer's Report:**

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Riverbanks is continuing our hiring efforts and welcoming new members to the team. The HR Team has been doing weekly onboardings to accommodate staffing for upcoming busy spring days. If you see staff in the park with orange lanyards on- that indicates that they are newly onboard. Please feel free to introduce yourselves and welcome them!
- Will be welcoming a VP of Finance in April. Jessica Johnson has accepted the position. She will be coming from ICRC (Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission) and has previously conducted an audit of Riverbanks, so we are very excited to welcome her on board.
- The directors participated in an onsite retreat this month and reflected upon the last year at Riverbanks and what the future looks like. It was a very successful meeting.
- Currently have 0 positive and 0 pending covid cases. Overall, our team has done a great job of keeping themselves and each other safe. Many of our staff have gotten vaccinated and are feeling positive.
- Met this week with the Society Board to review and approve the audit. Hoping to get the Commission side audit ready to be approved at the April meeting.

### **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

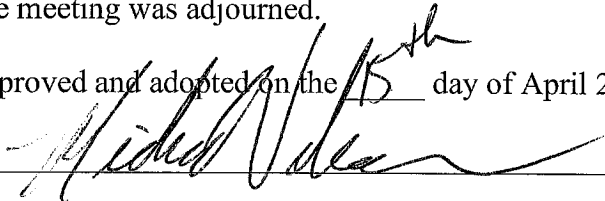
COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Andy Cabe and Melodie Scott-Leach with horticulture came up with a creative idea of selling pollinator plant packs online. They sold out in a matter of 48 hours and made over \$8,000. They would like to do another one as well.
- Martha Weber and Lochlan Wooten met with a company called Zoetis- a veterinary medicine company developing a vaccine that would be appropriate for our collection. If they do manufacture small quantities, we would be able to use them on our most susceptible animals.
- Animal update:
  - The siamang shelter construction is well underway. Bob and Jane Davidson graciously donated the funds to make this exciting project possible.
  - Other projects underway: hospital flooring, aquarium roof project, etc. are all wrapping up and we are now looking ahead to more impactful projects.
  - Rhinos are doing well and next week will begin the introduction process between the three.
  - Aquarium will be closed in July due to the renovations.
  - Last 3 lion cubs will be transferring out to another organization in the spring
- Wooten shared updated renderings of the Aquarium. She will do a refresher presentation when the design phase is completed.
- Operations update- Buildings are still at capacity and will continue to have staff monitor. Planning on opening Waterfall Junction in May and bringing tram back this summer.
- Will have Richland County Sheriff's Department on site to monitor spring break week traffic flow and provide a presence in the park

- Trends- adding back Riverbanks Run this year on May 1. Will have an onsite and virtual option. Evaluating future events.
- Did a price increase at the gate (but not on membership) on March 1. This keeps us on target to do a 2022 increase when the aquarium opens.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 2021.

, Secretary