

**Riverbanks Park Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**17 February 2022**

**Attendance Report**

**Commissioners Present:** Bob Davidson, Deneen Shockley, Jan Stamps, Cliff Bourke, Alana Williams, Mike Velasco

**Commissioners Absent:** Jeff Reeves

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

**Guest Presentation:**

SSA General Manager, Gary “Chad” Chadwick presented SSA’s annual business review.

**Call to Order**

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order.

**Reading of the Minutes**

The January 20, 2022 commission minutes were approved as distributed.

**Chairman’s Remarks**

Chairman Davidson remarked that he enjoyed learning more about Riverbanks’ partnership with SSA and that he continues to be proud of the hard work demonstrated by Riverbanks staff and leadership.

**VP of Finance Report**

VP of Finance, Jessica Johnson provided the following report:

- Financials are looking strong. Attendance is still doing very well. Currently attendance is tracking at about 53,000 ahead of budget. School groups are starting to return. Earned revenue is up by \$2.4M. Cash balance is reflective of projects and expenses that are earmarked. Available cash is about \$2M.
  - Velasco motion to approve the January financials, Stamps seconded, m/c unanimous.
- Audit RFP- Four audit firms responded for bid and after committee review, Scott & Company were the winners. Their contract will be a 3-year contract with two additional optional one-year contracts.
- Directors and Officers Insurance- Johnson shared and explained the core duties of Commissioners. The D&O Insurance is designed to protect the personal assets of the directors and officers should they be personally sued for actual or alleged wrongful acts in managing an organization.

**President & CEO Report:**

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- City of Columbia Retreat- City of Columbia recently held their annual three-day retreat on site at Riverbanks.

- County Council Update- Recently Stringfellow had the opportunity to meet with Lexington County Administrator Lynn Sturkie. Stringfellow will continue to communicate with the counties and will continue to update the Commission on how budgets are progressing.
- Legislators Night- Save the date for Wednesday, May 4 for a family evening event at Riverbanks for State Leaders. Riverbanks will be sending out formal invitations through Lander. The Commission will also be invited to attend a proclamation event at the State House with the governor.
- Save the date for Commissioner and Board social event on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. This will give the Board and Commission an opportunity to meet each other and Riverbanks senior leadership team in an informal capacity.

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

CAO Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Riverbanks is currently in the thick of spring hiring. We are starting to see great results with applications. Since January 24<sup>th</sup> we have had 270 applications for 16 open positions. If you visit and see staff in orange lanyards, that means they are new and in training- please introduce yourselves and welcome them to the team.
- Yesterday we moved to an optional mask wearing policy for staff members
- Riverbanks gave out 154 bonuses for staff who shared their booster vaccination status
- The Conservation Advisory & Action Group recently met for their second all day workshop. This group supports the Conservation Committee by brainstorming and workshopping conservation matters. The group is comprised of staff from a wide range of departments and perspectives with the common goal of keeping conservation at the forefront of Riverbanks' mission and work.
- Rachael Bashor was recently promoted to VP of Mission Engagement. Rachael has been dedicated to driving Riverbanks Conservation efforts, along with DEAI initiatives in addition to continuing to lead the education department. Riverbanks is thrilled to have Rachael as the newest VP.

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

COO Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Wooten shared the passing of Riverbanks' male baboon, Bubba. Bubba is survived by his sister Baffles, who the staff have taken amazing care to introduce into the other baboon troop members. She is doing well, and her care team deserves all the credit for their dedication.
- A baby armadillo was born yesterday. It is doing well and will be cared for in the Discovery Center.
- January of 2020 Riverbanks shifted conservation to a committee-based effort. The Conservation Committee has been working hard to define and identify conservation efforts at Riverbanks. Recently the committee launched the third round of staff nominated organizations to fund through the Satch Krantz Conservation Fund. It was very well received this round and the committee was able to award funds at varying levels to each organization nominated.
- Ops Updates- Currently, the intention is to have all pre-covid operations up and running by mid to late summer. This includes bringing back animal encounters in the park,

running the tram, hosting scheduled talks again, etc. This is dependent on staffing and training.

- Tomorrow will launch an online auction for the “RZ00001” specialty license plate. The auction will be open online until midnight on March 2.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 17 day of March 2021

Jon H. Stamp, Vice Chair