

---

# 2020 BUDGET HEARING – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO COUNCIL QUESTIONS

---

## Budget Hearing #3: August 14, 2019 Venues Parks & Arts

### Unanswered Council Questions

1. Council Member McBride asked for a clarification of the total debt outstanding for Parks. She stated also that she would follow up with a written question.

**Answer:** *Will look for a written question here if there are more details requested. In general, there are two major debt obligations in the Parks budget portfolio. A 2015 bond that was originally for \$5M and a 2017 bond that was originally for \$14.075M.*

2. Council Member Scott described a youth program to employ many kids to mow grass and pick up trash. He was wondering what that would cost and how it would be administered.

**Answer:** *We share the vision for having more meaningful employment for youth and we're working towards this within our current budget and also through new partnerships.*

#### *Greater Impact / Mentored Mowing Lawn Care*

*We're working with this organization to continue to grow and expand its partnership. We hope to add additional properties in 2020. This non-profit organization was founded by Kory Lantz, who's vision is to see the next generation of South Bend youth better equipped, trained and mentored to be great employees or business owners, and positive members of our community. In addition to mentoring, the youth are also taught invaluable life skills such as the importance of remaining positive, being proactive, provide quality work, timeliness, and integrity. Some of the services provided are mowing, weed trimming, fence installation, clean-up and landscaping. The goal was to help relieve some of the financial and economical stains that face the South Bend communities. Roughly four years ago, we heard about this mission driven organization and found it imperative to build a bridge by reaching out to offer additional opportunities to further the progression of the youth. The crew goes out into the community and help us maintain over one hundred of the city's vacant properties. This added a sense of value to the workers and the community, to see the beautiful fruits of their labor. "Change Your Lawn, Change Your City".*

#### *Juvenile Justice Center & COSB Diversity and Inclusion 2020*

*We have started preliminary conversations with the COSB Office of Diversity and Inclusion to help place up to four "high potential but at potential risk" juveniles in the Facilities & Grounds 2020 summer workforce. Here we can provide solid work experience, a positive environment, and an opportunity for financial benefit to our community's young adults.*

#### *Drucker Institute – High Potential Employee Program*

*We've developed a delightful partnership with the Drucker Institute. This is an organization devoted to helping the most underserved and economically vulnerable community members acquire skills so that they may find employment. We work as ambassadors to their High Potential Employee program. By employing four participants of this program we're strengthening our organization and the community simultaneously. We attended a workshop on Bridges Out of Poverty/Workplace Stability. This was a chilling, eye opening experience. A glimpse into poverty through the lens of economic class at the individual, organization, and community level. Awareness through this view helped us identify and remove barriers as well as gain understanding in the resources, sustenance, and strategies needed to help the High Potentials succeed in life and work.*

3. Council Member White added on to Council Member Scott's question, and expanded it to talk about hiring neighborhood kids for the Centers.

**Answer:** *See above. Also, The CBC and MLK Centers have recently started a summer youth internship program by employing 25 minors (across both centers) for 8 weeks this summer. Besides receiving compensation for their work, they also took part in mentorship and leadership development.*

*In addition, this summer at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, we hired four college students to help lead our first ever I Have A Dream Leadership Academy, an extensive 8 week mentorship and leadership training program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls. This was a partnership with Beacon Health System that sprouted through the My Brother's Keeper initiative.*

*This type of employment and programming remains in the 2020 budget.*

## Questions from the Public

- Sue Kesim
  - What is spend down in reserves for 5 years by year?
    - *ANSWER: Page thirty-five of the presentation package combines Fund 201, 203 & 405. Funds 203 & 405 were closed in 2018 and the cash balance transferred to Fund 201. This statement shows the operating results for Parks & Recreation plus the cash balance and reserve requirement. The bottom of the schedule shows the Ending Cash Balance compared to the Cash Reserve Target for 2017, 2018, 2019 Amended Budget, 2020 Proposed Budget, and a Forecast for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.*
  - How much of park bonds are spent / how much remaining?
    - *ANSWER: Fund 452-2018 TIF Park Bond Capital is shown on page 38 of the presentation. It shows \$11,007,782 of bond proceeds received in 2018. As of July 31, 2019, the cash balance in the Fund was \$7,416,433. Based on the 2019 Amended Budget, there will be \$203,195 of cash on hand at the end of 2019.*
    - Fund 471-2017 Park Bonds Capital is shown on page 39 of the presentation package. It shows \$14,081,478 of bond proceeds received in 2017. As of July 31, 2019, the cash balance in the Fund was \$10,646,421. Based on the 2019 Amended Budget, there will be \$6,523,637 of cash on hand at the end of 2019.*
    - Fund 751-2015 Park Bond Fund is shown on page 32 of the presentation package. The Bond proceeds of \$5,605,000 were received in 2015. As of July 31, 2019, the cash balance in the Fund was \$201,546. Based on the 2019 Amended Budget, there will be no cash on hand at the end of 2019.*
  - Have we looked into Park police?
    - *ANSWER: The South Bend Police Department is the only authorized police force in the City of South Bend and all of the parks are within their jurisdiction. There was formerly a Parks Police program, however, it was disbanded in 2014 at the direction of then Police Chief, Ron Teachman. There are now Parks Ambassadors who oversee minor safety patrols, locking/unlocking of facilities, and hospitality services throughout the parks system.*
  - Security for parking garages - is there funding for this?
    - *ANSWER: There are 24/7 patrols by DTSB Ambassadors in all of the parking garages.*
  - What funding exists for parks outside downtown?
    - *ANSWER: A comprehensive list of all park improvements, happening throughout the city, can be found at [www.mysbparcsandtrails.com](http://www.mysbparcsandtrails.com). In addition to the park improvement projects, every park receives a regimen of four season care and maintenance standardized by mode (not defined by geography): pocket, neighborhood, regional, and specialized. Parks recreational programming dollars are more than 90% dedicated to areas outside of downtown, including the CBC, MLK, O'Brien, Centers, Rum Village, the Byers Complex, Kennedy Water Playground, Potawatomi Pool, and Camp Awareness.*
  - What is the wisdom of issuing bonds for projects like Boomer or a giraffe in a party room?
    - *ANSWER: Boomer is being paid off over 5 years through a lease purchase program, similar to the way we purchase most vehicles in the city. There were no bonds issued for this.*
    - The "giraffe in a party room" appears to be a Potawatomi Zoological Society expense, funded by private donations. There were no bonds issued for this.*

- \$200,000 for Beam for Phantom of the Opera – was it reimbursed?
  - *ANSWER: This was a structural change to the building designed to accommodate the needs of larger touring concerts and events. It was paid for by Broadway Theater League, not tax dollars.*
- Arborist licenses: can we make them take an annual class on how to do landscaping?
  - *ANSWER: Ongoing education for our landscaping community is something we're currently exploring alongside our Ecological Advocacy Committee.*
- Council: use Needs vs. Wants analysis: We have huge deficits, and make sure that we are only funding needs, not wants
  - *ANSWER: Prior to the My SB Parks & Trails initiative, there was a significant amount of effort put into various community needs assessments.*
- **Isaac Hunt**
  - Charles Black / King CenteAnswer: Who is cutting the grass? Seems to be that there is less maintenance there than at O'Brien
    - *ANSWER: Occasionally crews get behind due to weather or other nuances, however, the lawn care maintenance standards and schedule is the same for all of the Community Centers.*
  - There seems to be more maintenance personnel at O'Brien than at King Center?
    - *ANSWER: There are no maintenance staff assigned to a particular facility. There is a shared staff among all the parks and recreation system made up of several skilled trade personnel who are dispatched according to work orders as submitted. Center Staff is responsible for submitting their work orders. Several facilities share custodial services, however, O'Brien, MLK, and CBC are the exceptions which have full-time staff. These levels are being evaluated, alongside a recent change to the custodial staff reporting structure. Among some of the evaluative tools is size, operating hours, and traffic. For example, it is worth noting that the O'Brien Center is nearly 3x as large as the MLK Center, has higher foot traffic, and has significantly longer operating hours.*
  - The weight equipment at the King Center is used - why did we get new equipment at O'Brien instead of new equipment at the King Center?
    - *ANSWER: The Charles Black Center and the O'Brien Center both received new fitness equipment last year. As with all city resources, we try to redeploy items that may have some remaining useful life – this is the case with the equipment that went to the King Center. The King Center recently saw the addition of air conditioning, a new computer lab, new front doors, and a new plaza. There is \$5,000 in the 2020 budget for the MLK fitness center equipment. While a full replacement set isn't immediately in the plans, new fitness equipment will inevitably be a part of the King's Center's on-going set of improvements.*
  - Asking for more intentionality about taking care of the Centers
    - *ANSWER: We're constantly striving to improve our levels of care for all of our properties. A change within the past 8 weeks includes the reporting of custodial staff directly to the community center directors – for better control and coordination.*
- **Mark**
  - Is the cost of liability budgeted for Howard Park? Seems to be a liability magnet. How are we going to protect the City and the taxpayers?
    - *ANSWER: We have not been made aware of any evidence to suggest that the ice trail concept is more or less dangerous than a traditional ice skating arrangement which has been a tradition in South Bend since 1958. The City of South Bend is self-insured. Our risk management director has been on-site throughout the design and build process. Department staff has visited similar ice-skating facilities, including Maggie Daley Park in Chicago, to learn best practices and understand how to mitigate potential problems. Our consultants and staff have designed the park with safety in mind, but we understand that some activities are inherently risky. Directly related to skating, we will have policies in place, rink guards to help enforce, and optional safety equipment available at no charge (such as helmets).*

- In June, Parks are facing a \$700,000 deficit in 2020, now saying that there is a \$100,000 surplus - how is this reconciled?
  - *ANSWER: Several adjustments were made after the June Park Board meeting. The major items included an increase in property tax revenue projections, a reduction in inter-city allocations, and a commitment to contribute \$400,000 from the general fund to support operations.*
  
- It is too late to talk about overspending on Parks, only way is to make sure that the money is wisely spent, and the cost to maintain the new parks equipment is not exorbitant.
  - *ANSWER: According to the National Recreation & Parks Association metrics, our system is average, per capita and per acre, when it comes to the dollars spent on operations and capital. Our Facilities & Grounds Department is involved in every level of design to ensure amenities are sustainable and maintainable.*