



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Wednesday, November 15, 2017

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

Budget Session - Parks and Recreation

Special Council Meeting - Parks and Recreation Budget Review

Call to Order: Chairperson Mota

Rollcall

Present: 6 - Ray O'Connell, Daryl Hendricks, Candida Affa, Roger MacLean, David McGuire, and Cynthia Mota

Excused: 1 - Julio Guridy

Parks and Recreation Budget

Parks Maintenance, Golf Course, Recreation Bureau, Swimming Pools, Trexler Fund, Capital, Equipment

Ms. Lindsay Taylor introduced her management team: Christy Alvord, Rick Holtzman, Jeff Wambold, Chris Reverie, Rob Rhoads, Chris Hendricks, and Ryan Griffiths. We are joined by members of the Recreation Board. She started off with some statistics stating the Allentown Parks and Recreation is a vital community asset. Our Parks and Recreation Program promotes physical and mental health and wellness. They help to attract investment and location to the city. We work very closely with the Parks and Recreation Board. The department meets monthly. The Board of Recreation provided to Council their 2018 Statement of Priorities. They have 51 full-time employees and eight part-time and seasonal employees that are responsible in maintaining 40 parks covering 2,000 acres. The 2018 initiatives are to increase tree pruning and remove hazardous trees in our parks, to continue implementing park signage programs focusing on primary park identification signs, to continue WPA and masonry repairs, and install picnic pavilions in Daddona Park, Union Terrace, and Trout Creek Park. They have seven full-time and 120 part-time and seasonal employees that operate a variety of programs and special events. They operate several special events. They partner with the Chamber of Commerce on the Blues, Brews, and Barbeque, Allentown Beerfest, Tree Lighting and the New Year's Eve Celebration. The Special Events team is responsible to permit all block parties, street closures, parades, road races, and festivals. The initiatives under aquatics are to expand free youth

swim lessons programs, to implement birthday outing packages, to increase revenue, to partner with the YMCA and the school district, to rebuild the city's baseball program, and continue to develop partnerships with various community organizations: the police department and the fire department. Special Events - we want to run our first Allentown Car Show, orient and train a new part-time clerk. Therapeutic Recreation - we want to hold an inclusive sports day that will be focused on the enjoyment of sports for all individuals. The Allentown Municipal Golf Course - we have four full-time and 34 part-time seasonal employees that are responsible for operating the pro-shop. Under administration, we are proposing to install an automated driving range ball machine which will increase revenue. We will be introducing a Learn to Play program for junior men and women. Under maintenance - we will continue our pursuit auto bond certification and removal of trees for air flow and course conditions and continue to improve course drainage and irrigation. The Proposed 2018 Parks and Recreation Budget is \$4,513,601. We are proposing that a new part-time clerk be employed. This will be a budget neutral addition. Lights in the Parkway will have new displays. The total proposed revenue for the Golf Course revenue is \$1,480,112. There is no Trexler Fund transfer proposed for this year and a little bit lower rent expected from Jack's Slice due to improvements the business made to the restaurant. The Golf Course Budget is \$1,456,924 which is down two percent. The proposed Trexler Fund appropriation is \$2,009,271 up 2.5 percent. In 2018 Capital Improvement and Planning - completing the Dixon Street Dog Park and will open in mid Spring. We will be completing the design of the Skate Park in Jordan Park, completing the design and construction documents for the Jordan Creek Greenway Trail which will be totally grant funded. For Planning Projects - we will be completing the Master Plan for Valania Park and Andre Reed Park. The Plan is for a park and industrial complex on the former incinerator and Basin Street sites largely funded by DCED grants. They will begin the planning process for Franklin Park that is also being funded by a DCNR grant.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that you said you need a part-time staff. Why do you need a part-time staff and where is the money coming from.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that the request for a part-time staff can be provided by Christy which is due to the increase in Special Event Applications. We believe having Christy focus solely on Special Events and with the addition of a part-time clerk they will be monitored and collected fees, and working with city staff and the Special Events Committee to develop new events. It is budget neutral due to cuts in our Special Events budget and increase fees that we will collect. The gate fee is being increased by \$3. Our revenue will be significantly higher. We had more attend last year and believe it will grow.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any other questions from the dais. She asked how much of an increase fee.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that Lights in the Parkway is going from \$12 to \$15, if you pay in person. There are online discounts and a greater discount if you buy at City Hall or the Allentown Federal Credit Union.

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked about Playground instructors and lifeguards. He asked what do we pay them per hour.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that there are 60.

Ms. Christy Alvord stated the Playground Instructor starts their first year at \$8.50. They get a .50 cent raise each year up to \$10 per hour. The lifeguards start at \$8.75 and they get a .50 cent raise every year.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that it seems like it is harder to get Playground Instructors and Lifeguards. That is not a lot of money. He asked if they can increase the rate.

Ms. Christy Alvord stated that they have competition with indoor jobs that pay higher than what we can pay. We try to get people that are on an educational track who might have an interest and really build towards their career.

Mr. Ray O'Connell asked how many hours are we talking about a week for the part-time clerk. The Golf Course fees will remain the same. He asked about Basin Street Park. Whose brainstorming was that?

Ms. Christy Alvord stated 30 hours.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated the Basin Street Park is flat at the intersection near the incinerator. When the Connecting our Communities was done that property was identified.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that he hear from the golfers that there is not a lot of inventory in the Pro Shop. We have a person very interested in the WPA projects. Do we have money put aside for the WPA Projects.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that there is an increase for this year and we will continue to raise that number and build back up the Pro Shop. She stated that we have funds that we initially would like to set aside.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked about the summer program and having swimming

programs for inner city kids for free. She stated that Ms. Taylor gave statistics about children drowning. She asked can you talk about that a little bit. She stated that she would love to see more Center City children learn how to golf.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that Jeff runs the programs at the Golf Course. He can expand on that for you.

Mr. Jeff Wambold stated this year we tried to do a little bit more for the Parks and Recreation playground. We had a transportation issue getting the kids to the Golf Course. We are still going to offer the first tee program. We are trying to utilize the course.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked how do they go about that.

Mr. Jeff Wambold stated that the first tee program is a nationally known program. They come into our course. They sign themselves up through the high school and middle school. We started with Dieruff High School. We are pushing for Trexler to have a smaller program.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked about the swimming program.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that it is a free program that we are running with the playground program. It is tough with transportation. Our program is free and we are looking for scholarships. We did four playgrounds last year.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if people showed up and if it was well attended.

Mr. Ryan Griffiths stated that they incorporated water safety. There are ways that individuals across the city can find safety around water. The way to feel safe around water is to have formulized swimming lessons.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any other questions from the dais.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that in looking across all areas the reduction of training and development. He stated that he has seen that decrease of more than \$4,000.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that if that was in the General Budget some training was shifted to Trexler.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if the training was coming out of the Trexler Fund. He asked about temporary wages and an increase of \$20,000.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that the training in the Trexler Fund was proposed to increase from \$4,575 in 2017 to \$7,010 in 2018. There was no reduction in the training cost. She stated that it is proposed for the part-time clerk.

Ms. Candida Affa asked about the lifeguards. How are we comparable in paying of the lifeguards with Bethlehem and other cities. The lifeguards work hard and save the city a lot of money. How many worked per shift.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that we are comparable. Our challenge is the other employment opportunities. Our competition is not with other pools.

Mr. Ryan Griffiths stated that most of the lifeguards are on a full-time work week for seasonal employment. They are working 40 hours. We actually have people that we recruited and talked to. He stated \$8.75 and \$8.50 needs to work. They are eight hour shifts.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked how are we doing with our Parks permits. Are we having any problems and asked about the insurance?

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that our parks during the summer are extremely popular. We have policies and procedures for returning leagues. After a certain amount of games, they have to secure insurance. We need more of a facilitator.

Mr. Roger MacLean asked Mr. Griffiths about how many people attended. Are they well attended?

Mr. Ryan Griffiths stated that it depends on the number at the playground lessons on any given day. Those playgrounds run an average 40, 50, 60 to 70. You may be looking at 80 coming to visit. The large group visits is a couple of hundred. We added quick safety components. One partner that helps us out is an Allentown USA base called the Parkland Aquatics Club based out of Allen High School. They use Mack pool in the summer.

Mr. Roger MacLean asked about equipment going down. Is this a transfer to the Trexler Fund? He asked about Other Contractual Services being in the Trexler Fund.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated yes.

Mr. Roger MacLean asked if the city is getting a good representation or bang for the buck. It sounds like we are getting a good turnout. He asked Ms. Taylor about fuels, oils and lubricants in the 62 Fund. He asked if that was transferred to the Trexler Fund. Permanent wages, temporary wages

or premium pay have all increased. Longevity has gone down. Has someone retired?

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated yes. She stated that they did have some retirements.

Mr. Brent Hartzell stated that the only reason we would have if in deed someone retired from the department. We calculated all the ones that were shifted over. There was a senior person that did not retire, but moved to another department.

Dr. David McGuire talked about Page 182 - 183 Park Maintenance, Lights in the Parkway. It follows Special Events. If I wanted to know how much the city was spending on lights in the parks would this be the right location. He stated that he is interested in trees. He stated that he talked with Public Works and Ms. Taylor. The city has an ordinance if any tree between the curb and sidewalk is on public ground. The public is responsible for picking up the leaves. He asked the cost to have trees in the public right a way. He asked about the dog park. He asked about the planning of stormwater events and the stormwater fee. It is not unique to Allentown. All towns and cities are doing it. It is our collective responsibility. He asked what is the drainage plan for the dog park. He asked Ms. Taylor if she has a three year plan. He asked about plans on Cedar Beach Park program for the summer that bring children to the playground. He asked if it is porous and about the income from pools that is projected at year 2018 and how much different than it was this year.

Mr. Brent Hartzell stated yes, in Bureau 709 - Program 8. He stated that they talked about it on more than one occasion. His understanding is that there is a staff person in Public Works. He stated that he understands that Cedar Beach pool is being drained for preparation for the winter.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated in mid Spring they will open the dog park. We are planning to build a riparian buffer and planting trees from Trout Creek to the parking lot to filter the stormwater. We will continue to seek grant funds. We have to gauge the success of the dog park. We are anticipating that it will be successful. Our plan is to get the dog park up and running. She stated no, we don't have a program for the playground. We have an event with our Playground Program that offers a variety of sports activity. She stated that it is not being drained. It is being drained below the fill line so we can winterize the pool. The cover is due in the next week or two.

Mr. Rick Holtzman stated that it is a standard pool grade cover.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that it is porous. It allows water to flow through,

but not leaves and dirt. She stated that the 2017 estimated was \$111,000. It is on Page 2 - Revenue, General Fund Summary Report.

Mr. Rick Holtzman stated that it lays on the water. The water is brought back up to the tile line and the pool cover lays on it.

Mr. Brent Hartzell stated that it is in the Revenue Category 3430.

Mr. Roger MacLean stated that this pool cover is like most standard pool covers. There are springs on those so it won't rip.

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Mr. Jeff Glazier stated that he submitted to Ms. Taylor in advance. He talked about Lights in the Parkway and having a discussion last year about proper accounting of credit card fees. He asked about the Pool in the 006 Account split between Parks employees and Police oversight. Was the Police pay straight time or premium. How much went to parks employees? He asked about the Trexler Trust in the 46 Account. They have been paying pest control, but it is not budgeted in 2018. Are you going to continue to utilize those services in 2018. He asked about the stonewalls and Trexler Trust budgeted \$28,000 for WPA walls and stone and masonry work. We budgeted money again, in 2018. What is on the top of the list to work on? Is there a priority?

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated that they did a budget adjustment. There was an accounting process that was different than what we were supposed to be using. We made an estimate on the Event Brite fees. By the 2018, Lights in the Parkway we would have moved to credit cards and looking at re-investigate to continue with Event Brite. The Police time was \$20,000 and that was premium pay. She stated that the balance went to parks employees, \$2,500. She stated that pest control is management by Building Maintenance. We turn the bills over to them. They are looking at Union Terrace, the Rose Garden, Trexler Park, Lehigh Parkway.

Mr. Rick Holtzman stated the Bridge at the Rose Garden is the priority.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked what seems to be the problem. Is it money?

Mr. Rick Holtzman stated it is always money. It is the process of doing this type of work and getting all of his people on. In the future, we will ask for a stone mason as a full-time employee for the Parks Department to help maintain what we have.

Mr. Jeff Glazier stated that the city has a tremendous amount of stonework. The facility like Union Terrace is a great facility and needs some work not only to look good, but be safe. he stated that he notices that the payments from the Trexler Trust is credited in an irregular manner throughout the year. What would it take to bill the Trust on a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

Mr. Brent Hartzell stated that we are doing it more frequently than in the past. Your advice is well taken.

Dr. Tom Batts, 8th Street, stated that right outside the door there is a memorial of a young man, Parris Lane that was murdered and the need for a community center within Center City Allentown to provide opportunities for the youth to have access to other activities. He stated that he works for the Promise Neighborhood and they are constantly talking to the community on what are some of the needs and it comes up that there is nowhere where our children feel safe. We want a place that they can establish relationships with adult figures that can contribute to safety and opportunities in their lives. He asked for the Parks and Recreation department to provide the space will they will meet.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that she would like to see that too.

Mr. Shane McPherson, 701 Harrison Street, stated that he currently works for the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation office and is a native of Allentown. He spoke of the need for a community center. He spend time at the Boys and Girls Club, as well as, the Salvation Army. Those two spaces were a safe haven for him. The community center is imperative that our community has a recreation center. He stated that he would love to see a community center that offers different types of programs for people. He stated afterschool programs and mentorship programs. I am almost certain that if we had a space, a community center, or recreation center I think it would reduce crime and it would give young people the opportunity to stay out of trouble.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked where would you like to see that happening and where in the city.

Mr. Shane McPherson stated that there are a few spots. He stated that he sees vacant buildings and old warehouses. He thinks about the basketball community and the athletic community. We could use that space for so many different things.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked Mr. McPherson and Dr. Batts to give Mr. Hanlon their phone number to see if they can collaborate.

Mr. Ken Laudenslager, 721 W. Cumberland Street, asked how much money is in the budget for restoration of WPA structures.

Ms. Lindsay Taylor stated \$10,800.

Mr. Laudenslager stated that is ludicrous. The condition of these structures need more. We should do a moratorium. He stated not only the WPA structures, but even the pathways. He stated that anyone who bikes the Parkway, it is getting more and more dangerous every month. He asked for a hold on any new park construction until we bring our current parks up to standards.

Ms. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any other questions from the public.

Mr. Ray O'Connell stated that department of Parks and Recreation is very critical to any city. We all know that. He stated that he believes it is a quality of life issue. We need to continue to provide opportunities for our families, our kids and keep them off the streets. He stated that he appreciates the Parks staff on their dedication and commitment to the city. He thanked Bob Smith and Dave Snyder for being at the Council meeting. The future of Allentown is our youth. The recreation department is doing a great job.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated yes, they really do.

[15-1994](#) City Council 2018 Budget Presentation

Attachments: [11-15-17 City Council 2018 Budget Presentation](#)

[15-1979](#) 2018 Budget Memos

Attachments: [BUDGET MEMO 1 - PERSONNEL \(002\)](#)
[BUDGET MEMO 2 - EQUIPMENT - STORMWATER](#)

[15-1970](#) Bill 69 Trexler Fund

Attachments: [2018 TREXLER FUND ORD.doc](#)

[15-1963](#) Bill 70 Golf Course Fund

Attachments: [Bill 70 2018 GOLF COURSE ORD.doc](#)

[15-1962](#) Bill 72 Equipment Fund

Attachments: [Bill 72 2018 Equipment Fund](#)

[15-1958](#) Bill 76 Capital Projects Fund

Attachments: [Bill 76 2018 Capital Projects Fund](#)

[15-1969](#) Bill 79 Tax Rate

Attachments: [Bill 79 2018 Tax Rate](#)

[15-1956](#) Bill 78 General Fund

Attachments: [Bill 78 2018 General Fund](#)

[15-1961](#) Bill 77 EIT Tax Rate

Attachments: [Bill 77 2018 EIT TAX RATE.docx](#)

ADJOURNED: 6:42 PM