

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission

WORK SESSION MINUTES

April 23, 2025
Saluda Shoals Park
River Center
6:00pm

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Laura Huggins, Michael Cromer, Dr. Akil Ross

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Andrea Harris, Ashley Smith, Lindsay Hudson, Mike Hudson, Jay Downs, Lori Shaffer, Adrian Wright, Christina Bickley, Alfred Comfort, Patrick Shealy, Allen Lindler, Jason White, Sidney Wilson

Mark Smyers began the meeting with introductions of the management team members and distribution of information pertaining to funds 10 – operating, 20 – special revenue, and 40 – capital projects / short term bond. Mr. Smyers outlined the budget process timeline, also stating the operational budget process began ahead of the capital budget process this year. This adjustment provided management with additional time to evaluate each line item before presenting it to the Commission. A public hearing is set for May 21, 2025, during which staff will collect public feedback and share with the Commission at the May meeting.

Mark Smyers presented a balanced budget including a \$1.65M transfer from Special Revenue Fund to the General Fund for the fiscal year of 2025-2026. Mr. Smyers shared the program related grant revenues include an Accommodations Tax grant for \$30K, a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the scholarship program for \$22K, a second CDBG grant for the therapeutic recreation program for \$82.2K, an Older Americans Act grant for \$215K, a long-term care (CLTC) grant for \$8K, and Saluda Shoals Foundation grants for \$58.5K. Mr. Smyers explained that the FY 25/26 revenue sources are 39% tax based and 54.41% non-tax based.

Mr. Smyers presented the capital projects related to grant revenues which include the Saluda Shoals Foundation art project of \$30K and an additional CDBG grant for athletic equipment of \$5K.

Mr. Smyers presented the FY 25/26 short-term general obligation bond projects for a total of \$1.2M. The capital budget projects and items include workstations, firewall hardware, Saluda Shoals Park East tennis gate access, access control hardware and software, Crooked Creek Park gator, district wide dump trailer, district wide forestry mulcher, Melvin Park Ztrac and Ventrac mowers, a train that includes an ADA compliant car, Crooked Creek Park paint robot, Crooked Creek Park Ztrac mower, district wide skid steer, Melvin Park mower contour attachment, two vehicles, a campground feasibility study, a land purchase, new roof for ICRC tower located on Chapin Elementary School property, Crooked Creek Park gutters, Crooked Creek Park storage building, Seven Oaks Park dance studio ceiling renovation, Seven Oaks Park utility field automatic lighting, Seven Oaks Park awnings, Seven Oaks Park gym floor full sand down, Saluda Shoals Park East soccer field storage building (half of which the adult soccer league will purchase), Saluda Shoals Park Holiday Lights items, Saluda Shoals Park River Center interior painting, Saluda Shoals Park road and parking lot restriping, Saluda Shoals Park River Center roof, Saluda Shoals River Walk utility vehicle, Melvin Park infield irrigation, Mungo Park small walk bridges, and Meech House Tea Olive room floor replacement.

Mr. Smyers also shared FY 25/26 budget points of interest that include a 3% merit pool based on CPI and EPI, one new FTE in the accounting department, continuing to provide \$100K in contingency funds, and continuing to build the reserve fund with a \$500K transfer from the operating fund. The budget reflects \$0 being forwarded from the previous year's fund balance. Commissioner Huggins inquired about the historical use of the contingency fund. Mr. Smyers stated that the full amount is not always required, while in other years \$100K has been necessary.

Commissioner Ross spoke about the minimum reserve fund and expressed his appreciation of the agency's practice. Commission Huggins inquired about the goal of the reserve fund. Mr. Smyers explained what was discussed during strategic planning focus groups. Alfred Comfort interjected that the agency began putting money away due to Covid. Mr. Smyers added that the agency has now pivoted itself to setting a long-term goal. Commissioner Huggins inquired whether due diligence was being conducted in comparison to the practices of other parks. Mr. Comfort also stated that there is a policy in place that addresses the reserve fund. Commissioner Huggins questioned the reduction of the merit pool. Mr. Smyers confirmed this was accurate, attributing it to the CPI and EPI figures. Mark Smyers shared that the FY 25/26 budget will be on the May 28, 2025 agenda for approval.

There being no further discussion, the Commission moved into General Session.

Respectfully submitted,
Sidney Wilson
Recording Secretary
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission
GENERAL SESSION

April 23, 2025
Saluda Shoals Park
River Center
7:00pm

Members Attending: Dr. Akil Ross, Michael Cromer, Bill Harmon, Laura Huggins

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers, Sidney Wilson

Bill Harmon called the meeting to order at 7:20pm. Chairman Harmon delivered the invocation.

I. REQUIREMENTS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The news media was notified of the meeting; it was posted on the website, and a notice and agenda were posted at the park sites one week prior to the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO ACCEPT THE MARCH 26, 2025 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. DR. AKIL ROSS RECUSED. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. LWCF Grant – Property Conversion

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO APPROVE UTILIZING THE 7.05 ACRES PURCHASED ON GARDENDALE TO BE USED FOR THE LWCF PROPERTY CONVERSION. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

B. FY 24/25 Budget Amendment – FTE and PT Funding

A MOTION WAS MADE BY LAURA HUGGINS TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AMENDMENT TO INCLUDE THE ADDITIONAL LABOR FUNDING IN THE CURRENT BUDGET TO MOVE FORWARD WITH ONBOARDING AND STAFFING AS NEEDED. SECONDED BY DR. AKIL ROSS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mark Smyers thanked the Commissioners and stated that at the conclusion of the meeting, the plan was to tour the new property and discuss the vision. Mr. Smyers encouraged the Commissioners to review the staff reports provided in the packet to gain insight into the great things staff are undertaking for the community, including upcoming Easter events and other activities. Mr. Smyers thanked the staff for their effort throughout the last several months building the budget, especially around the large unknowns of future costs, but is confident in where the agency is at to tackle the upcoming year. Mark Smyers shared his excitement for the Saluda Shoals Riverwalk Groundbreaking Event. Mr. Smyers explained that the project is moving forward quickly and is presently in the final stages of sorting out easements and lease arrangements with Dominion, in order to progress into construction soon. Mr. Smyers communicated that the preconstruction meeting for Phase 1 will be held next Wednesday. Mr. Smyers also shared that permission has been gained from Vertical Bridge to complete design work for Phase 2; this will allow for completion of design and finalization of property easements needed to begin contracting

for construction. Mr. Smyers hoped to provide additional information at the next Commission meeting.

V. COMMISSION RESPONSE

Commissioner Ross shared his appreciation for the work staff put into creating the budget, being inclusive, and prioritizing needs. Commissioner Ross recognized the agency's financial position regarding reserve funds and recommended starting conservatively and continuing to add to it. Commissioner Ross commended the flow chart of the budget timeline and the philosophy of building the budget. Commissioner Cromer agreed with Commissioner Ross regarding the effort involved in preparing the budget and presenting it in a way that is simple and easy to understand. Commissioner Huggins echoed Commissioner Ross and Commissioner Cromer's comments, especially the focus on the reserve funds. Commissioner Harmon expressed gratitude to the entire team, highlighting the balance between tax and non-tax fees, commending the staff for their effective management of resources, and acknowledging Mark Smyers for his leadership in presenting information clearly and preparing the Commissioners for successful meetings.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO ADJOURN. SECONDED BY MICHAEL CROMER. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sidney Wilson
Recording Secretary
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION

**IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING**

April 23, 2025
Saluda Shoals Park
7:23pm

Members Attending: Bill Harmon, Michael Cromer, Dr. Akil Ross, Laura Huggins

Members Absent: Dr. Gerrick Hampton

Non-Members Attending: Mark Smyers

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

Items related to personnel matters were discussed, but no action was taken during the Executive Session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY DR. AKIL ROSS TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION. SECONDED BY LAURA HUGGINS. VOTE TAKEN. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dr. Akil Ross
Recording Secretary
IRMO CHAPIN RECREATION COMMISSION