



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Council Session

Item G13

#2009-57 - Approving Changes to Operation of Stolley Park Train

Staff Contact: Steve Paustian

Council Agenda Memo

From: Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director

Meeting: December 5, 2006

Subject: Approving Changes to Operation of Stolley Train

Item #'s: G-13

Presenter(s): Steve Paustian, Parks and Recreation Director

Background

With the inception of the Heritage Zoo in the early 1980's a train was included as one of the features. This train operated for many years under the guidance of the Zoological Society. When the Zoo closed it was determined that the train would remain as a feature of Stolley Park. At that time proposals were solicited for the operation of the train. One proposal was received to operate the train and a 5 year contract was entered into between the City and Mr. James Culver dba the Stolley Park Line. The contract included the operation of the train and Sweet Tooth Shoppe (concession operation) at the Park. Under the current contract Mr. Culver was obligated to repair and upgrade the tracks and the train itself. These items have been completed and the rail and train are in much better condition than they were 5 years ago. This contract paid Mr. Culver \$30,000.00 annually to operate the train and Sweet Shoppe and is set to terminate March 31, 2009.

Discussion

A request for proposals was released several months ago to see if there was any interest in operating the train once Mr. Culver's contract expired. Once again Mr. Culver submitted the only proposal. That proposal called for \$35,400.00 per year, an increase of \$5,400.00 annually and all revenues generated by the train and Sweet Shoppe would be his. After much research Park and Recreation staff has come to the conclusion that the City can effectively operate the train at Stolley Park at a greatly reduced cost to the citizens of Grand Island. We anticipate that after all expenses and revenues are compiled for the operating year the City will be able to operate the train and Sweet Shoppe for less than half the cost of the \$36,000.00 proposal provided by Mr. Culver. One item required to take over train operation is to add 3/4 of a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to the current Recreation Department staffing level. These employees would be seasonal and receive no benefits. They would be used to operate the concession, sell tickets and operate the train.

Existing staffing would provide all oversight and the Park Maintenance Division would be involved in the maintenance associated with the operation.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move to approve
2. Refer the issue to a Committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council authorize the addition 3/4 FTE and direct staff to operate the train and Sweet Tooth Shoppe in Stolley Park.

Sample Motion

Move to add an additional 3/4 FTE to the Park and Recreation Department, Recreation Division.

RESOLUTION 2009-57

WHEREAS, the budget process requires a projection of the personnel costs; and

WHEREAS, because of the city's expansion of city services and operations, additional staffing is necessary; and

WHEREAS, the net result would be an increase of .75 Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTE).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that the budget be prepared to include the .75 FTE's in the general fund and the same city wide.

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, March 10, 2009.

Margaret Hornady, Mayor

Attest:

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk

Approved as to Form _____
March 6, 2009 City Attorney