

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
15 May 2025**

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda is available to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and persons requesting notification; was posted in the lobby of Riverbanks' administration building and was uploaded to Riverbanks' webpage.

Attendance Report

Commissioners Present: Cliff Bourke (via phone), Chip Huggins, Deneen Shockley, Mike Velasco, Alana Williams.

Commissioners Absent: Jeff Reeves, Bob Davidson.

Staff Present: Tommy Stringfellow, Lochlan Wooten, Christie Vondrak, Ashley Harris, Jessica Austin.

Call to Order

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

Reading of the Minutes

The April 17, 2025, Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Velasco motioned to approve the minutes, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chairwoman's Remarks:

- Williams attended House & Senate's resolution for the garden's 30th anniversary. Applauded garden staff and all their hard work.

Finance Report:

VP of Finance Ashley Harris provided the following report:

- April Dashboard Report:
 - Through April we are running 12.2% under anticipated attendance and 8.3% below the prior year. Saw lower attendance during spring break this year.
 - Earned revenues are still reporting over budget. Primarily due to the \$3.00 general admission fee increase when purchasing tickets at the gate and strong retail and concession sales.
- April Balance Sheet:
 - Cash balance is invested in the local government investment pool (LGIP) with the State Treasurer's Office. The average interest rate for April was earning 4.52%.
 - Due from bond fund will continue to reduce as we draw down on the bond. To date have liquidated \$12.5M against the bond.
- April Statement of Revenues and Expenses - General Fund:
 - Classes & Programs net in current year is reporting below budget and prior year. This is due to adding Conservation Engagement staff; wages will be moved to report within the Education line.
- Wrapping up FY26 budget. Will present to Finance Committee the first week of June.

Velasco motioned to approve the financials, Shockley seconded, m/c unanimous.

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- Starting conversations to negotiate a reduced water rate
- Harris presented budget to Richland County last week. Final budget hearing will be in June.
- Anticipating \$1M in operating support from Lexington County

- Department of Education notified of one-time \$750,000 grant and a multi-year \$750,000. Grant to support free admission for children on district-approved k-12 field trips.
- Spending time with legislators and their local staff to encourage support of conservation issues at the federal level.

Chief Administrative Officer Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Dates and Reminders
 - June 7th – Public Garden 30th Anniversary Celebration
 - June 10th – Staff Garden 30th Anniversary Celebration
 - June 13th – Members Night #2
 - June 19th – Next Commission Meeting
 - June 26th – Town Hall Department Showcase
 - August 1st – Brew at the Zoo
- Garden anniversary proclamation recap
- May Town Hall recap
- Legislative Family Day recap
- Overview of Saluda Skyride Evacuation Training

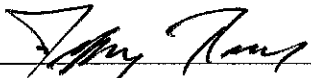
Chief Operating Officer Report:

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Welcome Riverbanks' newest residents:
 - Malayan tiger, Succi will join Riverbanks this summer
 - Cinerous vulture chick
 - Two harbor seals, Jerry and Cecil.
- Discussed Spring Break attendance
- Saluda Skyride construction update
- Education center construction update
- Membership trajectory is trending up
- Wine Tasting recap

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 19 day of June 2025.

, Secretary