

Audubon Commission and Audubon Nature Institute Board Joint Executive/Finance/Audit Committees Meeting

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 9:00 am
Presidents' Room, Audubon Zoo

President Kelly Duncan from the Audubon Commission and Chairman Poco Sloss from the Audubon Nature Institute Board called the meeting to order. In attendance from the Commission were Linda Baum, Brent Wood, Sally Shushan, Beth Lambert, and Bruce Hoefer. From the Audubon Nature Institute Board were Willard Dumas, Wil Jacobs, Quentin Messer, Bart Farris, Vincent Palumbo, Leslie Gottsegen, and Tommy Westfeldt.

One member of the public was in attendance and invited by Mr. Duncacn to make a statement. Mr. Keith Hardie stated that he heard about this meeting from the City of New Orleans website. He requested Audubon expand notification efforts for public meetings. He further requested that the Commission be cautious of rolling the millage rate forward when voting next week . He expressed concern for the cost of living increases in New Orleans. The increases are making it difficult for some to continue to reside within the city. He also mentioned Audubon should remain revenue neutral and that rolling forward may make it more difficult to pass other millages.

Ms. Laurie Conkerton, EVP and CAO, presented the proposed 2020 Audubon Nature Insitute budget.

2020 BUDGET (AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS) PROPOSED								
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:								
FACILITY	BUDGET 2020	BUDGET 2019	<i>BUDGET VARIANCE</i>		FORECAST* 2019	<i>FORECAST VARIANCE</i>		ACTUAL 2018
Aquarium/EGST	7,492	6,839	653		6,741	751		6,949
Zoo & Park	(6,344)	(5,702)	(642)		(6,269)	(75)		(6,032)
Butterfly Garden & Insectarium	368	387	(19)		392	(24)		597
FMASSC	(615)	(828)	213		(754)	139		(591)
Louisiana Nature Center	(551)	(349)	(202)		(309)	(242)		(343)
TOTAL	\$350	\$347	\$3		(\$199)	\$549		\$580
Excludes capital revenues and expenses.								
SELECT CATEGORIES:								
	BUDGET 2020	BUDGET 2019	<i>BUDGET VARIANCE</i>	%	FORECAST* 2019	<i>FORECAST VARIANCE</i>	%	ACTUAL 2018
Overall revenue	\$57,325	\$55,664	\$1,661	3.0%	\$52,913	\$4,412	8%	\$52,176
Overall expenses	\$56,975	\$55,317	\$1,658	3.0%	\$53,112	\$3,863	7%	\$51,596
Attendance	2,218	2,216	2	0%	2,122	96	5%	2,085
Admissions revenue	\$18,670	\$18,408	\$262	1%	\$17,266	\$1,404	8%	\$17,957
Admissions revenue Per Cap	\$8.42	\$8.31	\$0.11	1%	\$8.14	\$0.28	3%	\$8.61
Tax Millage Revenue	\$4,500	\$4,000	\$500	13%	\$4,000	\$500	13%	\$4,000
Salaries	\$27,608	\$26,659	\$949	4%	\$25,625	\$1,983	8%	\$24,514

During the presentation, Ms. Conkerton expressed ANI's conservation, education, inclusivity, and branding focus. Mr. Forman made a comment about conservation being a global effort. He also mentioned increased security needs based on recent parking lot break-ins. Ms. Conkerton then mentioned Audubon will also be focusing on vision and core values.

Ms. Conkerton further explained some of the key assumptions for 2020. Medical benefits are up 8% over 2019 budget, property/liability rates are up 20% over 2019 budget, millage allocation is up 12.5% over 2019 budget, and there's a new expense of \$566K for wage adjustments from Living HR analysis and FLSA. The proposed 2020 budget also includes an increase in pricing for some ticket categories and an increase in membership prices.

After discussion, Mr. Duncan asked for a motion to recommend the proposed 2020 Operating Budget to Audubon Commission. Motion carried. (Baum/Lambert/Unanimous)

Mr. Sloss asked for a motion to recommend the proposed 2020 Operating Budget to the Audubon Nature Institute Board. Motion carried. (Dumas/Messer/Unanimous)

Ms. Rebecca Dietz, EVP and General Counsel, explained the millage rate roll back/roll forward process. It must be voted on every 4 years by the Commission. There was much discussion from various board members. Mr. Forman reminded members of the importance of attending the meeting on the 14th. A super majority is needed in case the Commission votes to roll forward.

Ms. Dietz further noted that the OIG has been working with Audubon for several years and a report of their findings may be completed soon.

Dr. Kyle Burks then spoke about the possible need for emergency wharf repair in front of the Aquarium. Estimated cost is \$800K-\$1.4M depending on scope of work. Roughly 25% of the pilings are in need of repair or replacement according to a recent engineering study by Waldemar S. Nelson. The unprecedented river height led to accelerated damage and a more urgent need for repair. The nature of the emergency declaration is the need to complete the work before the river's typical rise in the spring. In order to expedite the bidding process, a motion will be needed at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Forman finished up the meeting with some highlights for 2020. With upcoming state funding, the Tropical Bird House renovations should begin at the Zoo. Public meetings will begin soon for Audubon Tennis courts, Gov. Nich. Wharf, and Aquarium renovations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:11 AM