



# Audubon Commission

## PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

## PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2019

A public hearing was held by the Audubon Commission on Thursday, November 14, 2019 in the Presidents' Room at Audubon Zoo. The hearing was called to order at 4:06 pm.

Present were: Kelly Duncan, Leila Eames, Frances Fayard, Brent Wood, Ashley Francis, Coleman Ridley, Sally Shushan, Norma Jane Sabiston, Linda Baum, Field Ogden, Storey Charbonnet, Bruce Hoefer, Alexander Kelso, Freddie King, Beth Lambert, Gayle Benson, Catherine Morrell, and Charles Teamer

Excused were: Daniel Conwill, Boysie Bollinger, Olivia Manning, and Minh Thanh Nguyen

President Duncan opened the hearing on millage roll back/roll forward and welcomed the members of the public. There were 2 members of the public present.

Mr. Duncan then introduced Ms. Laurie Conkerton who gave a brief overview of the millage numbers. In 2019, the estimated collection was \$11.9M. She further explained that the Commission has three voting options for collection in 2020. The first was to not roll forward. That would have no impact on homeowners, but Audubon could still see an increase of \$686K over 2019 due to new construction. The second would be to roll forward 100%. That would mean a collection increase of approximately \$1.67M over 2019 and an impact of an additional \$5.18 for a home valued at \$300K. The final option would be to roll forward 50%. That would increase collections \$1.19M over 2019 and increase of \$2.70 for a home valued at \$300K.

After Ms. Conkerton's presentation, Mr. Duncan invited members of the public to speak. Mr. David LaBreche chose to speak. He stated that as an Orleans Parish tax payer, he doesn't mind his tax dollars going to Audubon. However, he believes that Audubon is not as forthcoming with the public as he would like them to be. He requested that Audubon be more open with their communication with the public. He was then directed to Audubon's website where he can find more information about the Commission and Institute.

Mr. Duncan thanked Mr. LaBreche for his comments then asked for a motion to adjourn the hearing. Motion carried unanimously and hearing was adjourned at 4:17 pm.

The Audubon Commission public meeting was then opened by Mr. Duncan immediately following hearing adjournment. He then invited members of the public to comment on anything other than the millage. The public declined. Ms. Conkerton then gave a brief overview of the millage vote process.

Mr. Duncan then asked if Audubon staff had a recommendation. Mr. Ron Forman stated that although there is always a need for money and infrastructure improvements, staff's recommendation was to not roll forward, based on several considerations.

After much discussion, Mr. Duncan asked for a motion to roll rates back. Motion carried (Baum/Ogden/Unanimous). Mr. Duncan then asked for a motion to roll forward, Mr. Lex Kelso motioned to roll forward 50%. Ms. Shushan seconded the motion. Motion received three votes, fifteen opposed rolling



# Audubon Commission

forward 50%. Motion did not pass. Mr. Duncan then asked if there was a motion to roll forward 100%. There was no motion to do so.

Ms. Laurie Conkerton read the resolution to roll back as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Audubon Commission of the Parish of Orleans, Louisiana, in a public meeting held on November 14, 2019, which meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and the additional requirements of Article VII, Section 23(C) of the Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 47:1705(B), that the following adjusted millage rates be and they are hereby levied upon the dollar of the assessed valuation of all property subject to ad valorem taxation within said Parish for the year 2020, for the purpose of raising revenue:

### MILLAGE

Audubon Aquarium of the Americas	2.78 mills
Audubon Zoo	0.30 mills

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assessor of the Parish of Orleans, shall extend upon the assessment roll for the year 2020 the taxes herein levied, and the tax collector of said Parish shall collect and remit the same to said taxing authority in accordance with law.

Resolution to roll millage rates back was passed (Kelso/Ogden/Unanimous).

Ms. Conkerton then read the resolution to authorize transfers from the Board of Liquidation:

At a meeting of the Board of the Audubon Commission held on November 14, 2019 pursuant to public notice, at which at least two-thirds of the Board's total membership was present and acting throughout on motions duly made, seconded, the following resolutions were adopted by two-thirds of the total membership:

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Audubon Commission in a public meeting held on November 14, 2019, that collections of the aquarium tax millage in excess of that needed to service the bonds shall be transferred in 2020 from the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, to the Audubon Commission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that collections of the zoo tax millage in excess of that needed to service the bonds shall be transferred in 2020 from the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, to the Audubon Commission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that L. Ronald Forman or the President of the Audubon Commission be authorized to act on behalf of the Commission in all matters pertaining to these transfers.

Resolution was passed (Ogden/Francis/Unanimous).



# Audubon Commission

Ms. Conkerton then presented Audubon facilities' 2020 operating budget.

2020 BUDGET (AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS) PROPOSED								
NET OPERATING RESULTS BY FACILITY:								
FACILITY	BUDGET 2020	BUDGET 2019	BUDGET VARIANCE		FORECAST* 2019	FORECAST VARIANCE		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)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$350</b>	<b>\$347</b>	<b>\$3</b>		<b>(\$199)</b>	<b>\$549</b>		<b>\$580</b>
Excludes capital revenues and expenses.								
SELECT CATEGORIES:								
	BUDGET 2020	BUDGET 2019	BUDGET VARIANCE		FORECAST* 2019	FORECAST VARIANCE		ACTUAL 2018
<b>Overall revenue</b>	<b>\$57,325</b>	<b>\$55,664</b>	<b>\$1,661</b>	3.0%	<b>\$52,913</b>	<b>\$4,412</b>	8%	<b>\$52,176</b>
<b>Overall expenses</b>	<b>\$56,975</b>	<b>\$55,317</b>	<b>\$1,658</b>	3.0%	<b>\$53,112</b>	<b>\$3,863</b>	7%	<b>\$51,596</b>
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

After some discussion, Mr. Duncan presented a motion to approve the 2020 Audubon Nature Institute operating budget. Motion carried (Wood/Lambert/Unanimous).

Ms. Conkerton read a motion to approve a resolution from JPMorgan Chase Bank to remove William Kurtz as an authorized signer for all JPMorgan Chase Bank Commission accounts. Motion carried (Charbonnet/Wood/Unanimous).

Ms. Conkerton read a motion to approve of a resolution from Whitney Hancock Bank to remove William Kurtz as an authorized signer for all Whitney Hancock Bank Commission accounts. Motion carried (Sabiston/Charbonnet/Unanimous).



## Audubon Commission

Ms. Dietz presented a motion to authorize the President of the Audubon Commission or the President & CEO of Audubon Nature Institute to execute a contract and any related documents with the contractor who provides the lowest qualified quote for Louisiana Swamp Exhibit electrical upgrades. Scope of work includes thermal inspection of panel and transformers, repair and update of aged equipment, conduit, and outlets to new code standards, replace and add feeds to main distribution panel, and replace and upgrade lighting and controls over exhibits and in staff areas. The estimated cost is \$125,000. Motion carried (Sabiston/Francis/Unanimous).

Ms. Dietz then presented a motion authorize the President of the Audubon Commission to execute a resolution declaring that the current condition of the Bienville Street Wharf constitutes an “emergency,” as defined by LSA R.S. 38:2211(5)(a), requiring immediate repair to the Bienville Street Wharf, absent compliance with the formalities of the public bid law, in order to avoid the destruction of public property or imminent threat of such destruction in light of the current condition of the wharf and the seasonal rising of the Mississippi River, which may impact the ability to access and repair the wharf in a timely manner. Motion carried (Teamer/Baum/Unanimous).

There being no further official business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 pm.

Linda G. Baum  
Secretary