



## Board of Directors

September 19, 2023

District Office Building | 799 SW Columbia | Bend, Oregon



**A video of the regular board meeting can be viewed on the website:**

<https://www.bendparksandrec.org/about/board-meeting-videos/>

### **BOARD PRESENT**

Zavi Borja  
Nathan Hovekamp  
Donna Owens  
Deb Schoen  
Jodie Barram (virtual)

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Don Horton, Executive Director  
Michelle Healy, Deputy Executive Director  
Julie Brown, Manager of Communications and Community Relations  
Kristin Donald, Administrative Services Director  
Matt Mercer, Director of Recreation  
Brian Hudspeth, Development Manager  
Kelsey Schwartz, Planning and Property Specialist  
Eric Baird, Finance Manager  
Sue Boettner, Recreation Manager  
Jen Padilla, JSFC Center Supervisor  
Brian Hames, Enrichment Supervisor  
Kathya Avila Choquez, Latino Community Outreach Specialist  
Henry Stroud, Planner  
Jen McGee, Community Outreach Supervisor

### **VISITORS**

Larry Waters - Mr. Waters from Connect Bend and a River Rim resident, expressed his desire for the board to continue their attention to the South UGB bridge. He said there is still support for this project and Mr. Waters shared a story of how difficult it was for him to ride his bike from forest service property from his home.

### **WORK SESSION**

1. Family Swim Lessons Short Film – *Jenny McGee and Kathya Avila Choquez*

Ms. McGee shared the opportunity to be a part of a movie series for Hispanic Heritage month and Welcoming Week here in Bend that Vamanos Outside presented district staff. The video showcased the Latino Family Swim Lessons developed by the outreach team in 2017. She and Ms. Avila Choquez will present the video at NRPA this fall.

Ms. Avila Choquez shared how the program began and said the video not only shows the result of this initiative, but a glimpse into what parks and recreation can do when it engages in opportunities to serve our community.

After the film, the board members praised the efforts of everyone who played a role in the program and making the video. Director Borja additionally complimented the amount of heart and love Ms. Avila Choquez has put

into the district and this family swim program truly shows the power of relationships as programs like this can take years to develop. Director Barram noted how impactful the video was and how it confirms that the district's priorities are being met.

## 2. Recreation Annual Report – *Matt Mercer and Michael Egging*

Mr. Mercer and Mr. Egging prepared a slideshow to share the annual recreation data. The report date is based on a September 1 through August 31 calendar year. Mr. Mercer noted that behind all the data and numbers they will share, it is stories just watched in the Family Swim Lesson video that are at the heart of recreation.

Overall, the number of facility drop in use has increased dramatically. He said since the COVID years ended, there has been continual growth, which also coincided with the Larkspur Community Center opening. Staff ambitiously planned for the goal of 5.5 visits per resident per year before Larkspur opened, and the current year numbers are 6.2 visits. The type of visits tracked in order from highest to lowest are: pools, fitness centers, fitness classes, and the Pavilion. Although the lowest, the Pavilion has seen growth over time with increased seasonal activities.

Mr. Mercer shared that passholders have grown to almost 1,000 over a year, which is a 35% increase. Director Schoen asked if there was a targeted marketing campaign that led to this dramatic increase. Mr. Mercer said that there was not, but there has been a lot of overall marketing from the district's Community Relations team and believes the rest is due to experience and word of mouth.

Next, Mr. Egging shared programming numbers for enrollments versus capacity. This past year, enrollments were near 87%. Enrollments by type and in order from highest to lowest are: sports, aquatic, enrichment and art, summer/no school day camps, pavilion programs, and therapeutic recreation. Director Schoen asked if most of this programming occurred at the schools, and Mr. Egging said many do, but some are at other organizations' facilities, the Pavilion, or other district facilities. Director Hovekamp inquired about district capacity now versus the future and how do we know when we will need another facility. Mr. Mercer said things like waitlists are not always a great indicator, and some capacity issues are based on time of day. Director Horton added that subsidies are required to build a facility, so decisions are also based on when the district can afford that addition. Director Schoen wondered if some of the capacity is based on caretakers who are there watching and not using the facility themselves. Mr. Egging said those numbers are accounted for in drop in visit data.

For the Kids Inc program, the district served 1,215 unique students throughout the entire school year. Per month, there were over 1,000 students using Kids Inc. over 14 school sites.

Lastly, the key data shows that the total unique individuals in district programs have almost doubled since 2020 and 2021. The largest age group using our programs are children with the older generations slowly growing. For Spanish speaking participants, the highest use was in 2022 due to the grant the district received that allowed for free family passes. Without the free passes available, the use numbers dropped in 2023, but they were still higher than 2021 before the grant program which shows promise for increased use in the future.

Mr. Mercer said that moving forward, the district will ask for individual's race in program registration, so staff can have improved data next year for a clearer make up of district patrons. Mr. Mercer also shared that scholarship use was more than anticipated this year, so staff will need to look at how the scholarship program is managed and shared some strategies staff is considering. Director Barram asked if staff knew the number of scholarship recipients in each program in relation to capacity. Mr. Mercer said while staff does not have an exact number, they know Kids Inc had the highest use at 15%.

Lastly, Mr. Egging showed a slide of expenses and revenue. He said subsidies fill in the discrepancy, but the amount of the subsidies are staying similar since the revenues and expenses are growing equally together.

### 3. Future Art Station Facility – *Matt Mercer, Brian Hudspeth*

Mr. Mercer and Mr. Hudspeth shared the history of the Art Station since its creation in 2016 after the district took over for Arts Central, and how it exists today in the multiple locations after losing use of the train depot in the Old Mill District. Mr. Mercer discussed the facility needs long term, including items like square feet, types of amenities inside the space, and connections to outdoor space. After reviewing all search options for the Art Station, it was concluded that constructing a new building on an existing district property was the best option for the district due to lower development and operating costs, proximity to complementary facilities, connection to the outdoors, and the district's control over the property and project schedule.

He said multiple properties were considered based on the criteria and Larkspur Park is recommended for the Art Station. It will be built on the opposite side of the lawn from the community center natatorium, next to the existing basketball court. The property has existing parking, offers ample outdoor and natural space, has other facilities, and is an underutilized area of the park. Mr. Mercer showed board members a simple drawing of the envisioned space. The project is estimated to cost \$2.5 million and be completed over a 2 ½ - 3-year timeline. If the board approves this direction, a request for proposal (RFP) will be issued in October 2023, with an estimation of the Art Station opening summer 2026. Jason Powell will be the project manager.

Mr. Hudspeth reviewed considerations and concerns determined by district staff. These include parking capacity during peak times, the future needs of the community and expansion capabilities for the building, and budget. He explained that the district can increase parking at this site per the existing preferred concept plan and staff is already tracking parking use in anticipation of this project. Staff may need to figure out a drop off/pick up/delivery zone for the building to aid in parking. Director Hovekamp expressed his appreciation of the thought toward expansion capabilities for the next decade as that was also a concern he shared. He thanked district staff for their time and consideration of other properties to determine the best location option.

Director Owens asked if there are prefabricated options for the building to aid in the timeline of the project. Mr. Hudspeth said that most prefab buildings are smaller in size and block shaped, which would not provide the needs for this building. Additionally, while prefab buildings can reduce construction time, most of the items on this project that will create the most time are earthwork and non-building construction items. Director Owens also asked about the number of trees that would be removed for this project and Mr. Hudspeth said that there will be a fair number, but staff will work save what trees they can. This discussion also prompted Mr. Hudspeth to share that due to project type and existing land use decisions, this project should not require a land use process, or offsite responsibilities. He said it is possible a traffic impact analysis will be required, but staff believes this is unlikely since the Larkspur Community Center was built overparked per city code.

Lastly, Director Hovekamp asked if alternative funding, like grants, has been considered for this project since arts are often underfunded. Mr. Hudspeth said it had not, but project staff can look to see if there are opportunities available. Director Owens asked if the current locations being utilized for programming could be used until the new Art Station is complete. Mr. Mercer confirmed that they are and added that due to money spent to revitalize the Hobby Hut, it may continue to host some art programs and other types of programming in the future.

The board members expressed support for the direction of the project and did not have any additional suggestions or comments for district staff.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Director Horton thanked Julie Brown and her team for the creation of the video presented at tonight's meeting.
- The Needs Assessment statistically valid survey is expected to go out in another week or two.
- Last week, the district hosted the SHIFT conference. The focus of the conference was health and nature. Multiple district staff were involved in presentations and the experience offered to attendees. Director Horton received a lot of positive feedback about staff involvement, and said it confirms the work the district does and what it provides for the community.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- Director Owens asked how the tree ordinance committee is progressing. Ms. Healy shared that Ms. Anselment said staff members did not need to worry about at this time as the committee is moving slowly. Director Owens emphasized the importance of this issue and encouraged staff to continue to be a voice in the discussion.
- Director Schoen said she will email the executive director recruitment information to other board members in the next few days and requests they each hold December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> for presentations. She also attended the State of the City event at Alpenglow Park and heard many positive comments about the park.
- Director Hovekamp thanked all the staff members who attend the board meetings. He asked Mr. Stroud about the new chain link fence that had been installed at the River's Edge Golf Course to prevent users from trespassing. Mr. Stroud shared information about the trail and said staff has some early concepts for routing the trail through the golf course and addressing safety after the homeowners association reached out. He shared that the city has proposed replacing the gravel shoulder on Mt. Washington to help with this area and he has a meeting scheduled next week with city staff.

**ADJOURN:** 7:24 pm



Prepared by,

Kelsey Schwartz  
Planning and Property Specialist

  
Nathan Hovekamp, Chair

  
Jodie Barram, Vice-Chair

  
Donna Owens

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Zavier Borja

  
Deb Schoen