



Board of Directors

January 21, 2025

District Office Building | 799 SW Columbia | Bend, Oregon



The board met in Executive Session prior to the regular meeting pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e) for the purpose of discussing real property transactions. This session was closed to all members of the public except for representatives of the news media.

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

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

BOARD PRESENT

Donna Owens
Jodie Barram
Cary Schneider
Deb Schoen
Nathan Hovekamp

STAFF PRESENT

Michelle Healy, Executive Director
Matt Mercer, Director of Recreation
Kristin Toney, Administrative Services Director
Julie Brown, Director of Community Engagement
Sheila Reed, Assistant to the Executive Director
Sasha Sulia, Director of Park Services
Kathleen Hinman, Director of Human Resources
Brian Hudspeth, Director of Planning and Development
Henry Stroud, Principal Planner

VISITORS

Craig Lacy: Mr. Lacey shared his knowledge of the history of the Deschutes River and fish statistics. He shared his concern for the fish passage design and asked that the board to urge two-way passage by ODFW.

Jerry Freilich: Mr. Freilich spoke of his expertise and advocated for upstream and downstream passage for fish. He recommended that Pacific Power be brought to the table to contribute financially.

WORK SESSION

1. UDWC Fish Passage – *Kris Knight*

Mr. Knight, Executive Director of the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC), provided an update on the Mirror Pond Dam fish passage project. He reminded the board that fish passage at the Newport Avenue dam was a goal in the 2015 Mirror Pond Vision, developed by the district, the City of Bend, and other partners. Since then, Pacific Power has decided to maintain the dam, making it the last remaining fish barrier in Bend.

Knight highlighted past fish passage improvements, including the Whitewater Park and the fish ladder at the North Canal Dam. In 2021, the district and the City of Bend established the Mirror Pond Fish Passage Advisory Committee, which supported a feasibility study and alternatives analysis. The study was funded by contributions from the district, Pacific Power, and a grant secured by the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council.

In 2023, the committee selected a nature-like fishway as the preferred solution, which was supported by both the district board and the Bend City Council. Mr. Knight reported securing nearly \$400,000 in grants from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to fund engineering design, which will begin in 2025 and be completed by 2026.

UDWC, ODFW, and Pacific Power are finalizing roles and responsibilities for design and construction. While the project primarily focuses on upstream fish passage, efforts will be made to encourage downstream movement. Knight acknowledged challenges posed by the hydro facility's turbines and noted potential design solutions.

Board members expressed appreciation for the project's progress and community collaboration. Director Schoen asked about downstream passage, and Mr. Knight explained that turbine screening would be a separate effort. Director Owens confirmed that the district's role is to support the project, while Director Barram offered letters of support for future grants. Director Hovekamp stressed the need to consider potential dam removal in the design, which Mr. Knight confirmed was a key factor in selecting the nature-like fishway.

Board members reiterated their support for the project, recognizing its importance in restoring fish passage in Bend.

2. Snow Removal Update – *Mike Duarte and Sasha Sulia*

Mike Duarte provided an update on snow removal, emphasizing the district's objective to ensure public access to parks and facilities in a safe and timely manner while complying with the City of Bend ordinances.

Sasha Sulia shared data on snow removal operations, noting that staff clears 45 miles of sidewalks and maintains 35 parking areas, covering nearly 35 acres. In total, snow removal efforts span 84 parks and trails.

Mr. Duarte discussed the district's snow removal strategies, which include thorough planning and coordination, the use of technology, and real-time monitoring. He outlined the equipment utilized for these operations and explained that crews are composed of staff from the landscape, trails, and natural resources teams, with additional support from the facilities, shop, and building recreation facilities teams.

He stated that when snowfall reaches two inches or more, all district parking lots are plowed, sidewalks are cleared, and ice melt is applied as needed. Post-storm operations continue for several days to address any lingering snow and ice.

Ms. Sulia reviewed the process for determining delays or closures, referring to the Recreation Facility and Program Snow and Ice Procedures. This process includes assessment protocols, decisions on delayed openings or early closures, and communication strategies to inform the public.

Mr. Duarte highlighted the challenges of snow removal, which include unpredictable weather, poor road conditions, traffic, labor and scheduling constraints, and the need for seven-day-a-week coverage with on-call staff.

Director Schneider inquired about prioritization, to which Mr. Duarte responded that recreation facilities, the district office, event rental locations, and high-use parks and trails receive priority. The board expressed their appreciation for the teams' efforts in maintaining accessibility and safety.

Director Hovekamp asked if any measures could be taken to address the issue of soft-surface trails becoming icy from use, particularly in conditions where ice persists beyond the snowmelt.

Director Barram inquired about the adequacy of equipment storage for snow removal. Mr. Duarte explained that various pieces of equipment are housed at different facilities, and the current arrangement meets operational needs effectively. Additionally, he noted that some buildings are heated, which helps keep adjacent sidewalks clear.

3. Board Stipends – *Sheila Reed*

Ms. Reed presented a proposal for board stipends, citing best practices to reduce barriers to participation, particularly for individuals with financial constraints. She referenced research from other park districts, particularly Tualatin Hills, and proposed a stipend of up to \$50 per meeting, capped at four meetings per month (\$200 total), with a quarterly reimbursement process.

Board members discussed the logistics, including tax implications and the option for members to donate their stipends. Director Schoen asked whether the stipend would be issued as a W-2 or 1099, with Ms. Toney confirming it would be a 1099. Directors also discussed the flexibility of stipend use, allowing members to allocate funds at their discretion.

Director Schoen emphasized her desire to make board service more accessible, particularly for working parents and young professionals. She noted that child care assistance had been ineffective in the past at other agencies, as parents preferred not to bring their children to board meetings. Other board members supported the stipend as a modest but meaningful step toward increasing participation.

Discussion also covered the possibility of simplifying the stipend process by offering a flat rate instead of tracking meetings. Ms. Reed clarified that special districts must follow Oregon statute, which specifies stipends as "per meeting" and expressed concern of a flat amount exceeding the actual participation of the b. The board also reviewed flexibility in setting meeting limits and the option to reassess the stipend amount in future budget cycles.

The board expressed general support for the proposal and agreed to bring it to a future business session for a formal decision. Director Owens voiced personal reservations but acknowledged the potential benefits for increasing diversity and accessibility on the board.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes 1/7/2024

Director Schoen made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Director Schneider seconded. The motion was approved unanimously, 5-0. (Hovekamp, Schneider, Schoen, Owens and Barram)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Executive Director Healy provided the following updates:

- Matt’s Retirement – Matt will retire on July 1 but will remain part-time to assist with project work. Recruitment for his replacement is set to begin in late February.
- Sylvan Park Playground Outreach – An email was sent with details on the current outreach efforts for the Sylvan Park playground project. A community survey is available online until January 31, marking the start of the outreach process.
- HOA DRT at River’s Edge – Park Services is in discussions with the HOA regarding puddling on the trail caused by water runoff from the golf course. A community member attempted grading work, which did not resolve the issue. Plans are in place to conduct surfacing work to improve drainage.
- Transportation Fee – Kristin and Executive Director Healy met with city staff on Friday to discuss Phase 2 of the transportation fee, which the city aims to adopt in April. Efforts are underway to determine how to manage the portion of the system maintained by the district. Any financial offsets will be addressed through the intergovernmental agreement (IGA), with further updates to come.
- Bend Whitewater Park Maintenance – A report was received detailing maintenance needs for Bend Whitewater Park. The district is currently reviewing the report and will provide additional information after completing the review and addressing outstanding questions.

GOOD FOR THE ORDER

- Director Barram highlighted an upcoming Wildfire Home Protection Strategy class for City of Bend and BPRD staff on February 4, the course covers wildfire mitigation strategies. She encouraged staff to participate, emphasizing its value for both home and work environments.

ADJOURN: 6:53 pm



Prepared by,
Sheila Reed
Assistant to the Executive Director




Jodie Barram, Chair



Donna Owens, Vice-Chair



Deb Schoen



Cary Schneider



Nathan Hovekamp

