

**Riverbanks Park Commission
Meeting Minutes
25 September 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, Bob Davidson, Chip Huggins, Jeff Reeves, Alana Williams.

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

Call to Order

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

Reading of the Minutes

The August 21, 2025, Commission Meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Huggins motioned to approve the minutes, Davidson seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chairwoman's Remarks:

- Welcomed Chiefs back from Annual AZA Conference in Tampa
- Looking forward to seeing everyone at ZOOfare tomorrow night

President & CEO Report:

President & CEO Tommy Stringfellow provided the following report:

- City and county are coming back into session. Expect to have more conversations in the coming months.
- Lander Hiott and Stringfellow have been working together to form a possible partnership with the Department of Commerce. Will be hosting a small group to showcase what the zoo has to offer for families and business owners considering a move to South Carolina.
- Will have a visit from the Department of Education in October to see the zoo's facilities and education programming
- DNR meeting also in the works
- Presenting to Central SC Alliance on October 23rd
- Elections for mayor and governor are approaching. Please take the opportunity to reach out to candidates you may know and establish rapport.

Finance Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- August Dashboard Report:
 - Attendance was 8.5% lower than budgeted, but 6.4% over prior year. Possibly due to schools starting back earlier in 2025 and a rainy first half of the month.
 - Per cap is ahead of budget and last year.
 - Expenditures running under budget due to an unexpected credit from the City of Columbia from an overread meter. Investigating this further and will provide more information in October.
- August Balance Sheet:
 - LGIP's average interest rate for August was 4.46%
 - Final capital transfer not yet recorded, will lower balance in Due from Capital Projects in the coming months.

- August Statement of Revenues and Expenses:
 - Rides and attractions revenue is down, due to price increase delay. Should see uptick in October.

Davidson motioned to approve the financials, Reeves seconded, m/c unanimous.

Chief Administrative Officer Report:

Chief Administrative Officer Christie Vondrak provided the following report:

- Dates and Reminders
 - September 26 – ZOOfari
 - October 14 – Town Hall
 - October 17 – 30 – Boo at the Zoo
 - November 20 – Wild Lights VIP Preview
- Inclusion and Belonging Survey results
- RBZ Gun Team training overview
- Saluda Skyride Staff & Family Preview Night was a big success with over 400 in attendance
- September Town Hall recap

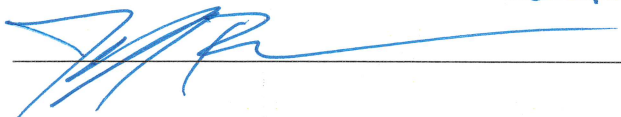
Chief Operating Officer Report:

Chief Operating Officer Lochlan Wooten provided the following report:

- Bandit the wallaby underwent successful arm amputation. He is back in the habitat and doing well.
- Kamari the giraffe is expected on October 16th
- Sneak peek of September attendance. Promising upward trend.
- Membership trajectory is trending up
- Secret shopper score was a remarkable 95.5 in August
- Projects timeline overview
 - 09.2025 – Lego Nature Opens
 - 10.2025 – Boo at the Zoo
 - 11.2025 - Wild Lights
 - 01.2026 – Food and Bev RFP Awarded
 - 03.2026 – AZA Accred App Due
 - 07.2026 – Lion Construction Begins
 - 09.2026 – Learning Center Open
 - 01.2027 – West Campus Construction Begins
- ZOOfari is nearly sold out with 84% of tickets purchased by members
- Bridge to the Wild capital campaign planning is underway
- Seeing an uptick in memberships through August.

The meeting was adjourned.

Approved and adopted on the 16 day of October 2025.

 _____, Secretary