



**Clark County Park District  
Special Board Meeting  
April 27, 2020  
6:00 p.m.**

**1. Call To Order**

- a. Commissioner Richards called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

- a. Commissioners in attendance were Joey Ewing, Roy sweet, Randy Blankenship, Jeff Trefz, Jeff Wallace, and John Richards. Also in attendance was Executive Director Jeff Tippett.

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Approval of Agenda**

- a. Wallace motioned to approve the agenda. Blankenship second. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

**5. Public Comment**

- a. Kent Waltz commented that as a member of the camper's committee, he has prepared a statement representing the majority of the campers of this district. As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, some parks in Illinois will be open with social distancing in place. You will be voting to decide whether overnight camping will be allowed. He submits that being overnight is the most isolating part of distancing as we will be in our campers the same as being at home. He believes that the campers will follow the safety guidelines while in the park. If not, you can give the people one warning and the second time they can be asked to leave the park. He thinks we could close the playgrounds and the bathrooms, leaving no risky areas left in the park. Primitive camping can bring their own portables facilities with them. The facts are to flatten the curve, but we have no curve. Clark County has 4 cases, Edgar County has zero has 3 cases, Vigo County Indiana has 62 cases out of a population of 107,000 people which is 0.058%. The conditions that we are in now are the conditions will be in two weeks, month, and the rest of the summer. So please vote to allow the customers in the district the use of this park for their mental health, well-being, and enjoyment. Thank you.
- b. Sharon Piper commented that she can tell them that the seasonal campers, all of them that are here, they will respect whatever they say. If they say they have to be indoors by 9:00, they will do it. They don't have a problem with any of that. They don't want to see the park suffer as you have to have income coming in and she thinks that the majority of the income is the campers. She thinks that you need us as much as they need you. She hopes that they take all of that into consideration and they are good with whatever, and this is coming from all of the seasonal campers. They are good with whatever the Board tells them.

**6. New Business**



- a. Discussion and Vote Regarding Housekeeping Personnel**
- i.** Tippett commented that this is just a little housekeeping in general. We have contract labor which cleans the cabins, and the offices and they are not going to, they went out of business this year. He put out a service contract in and didn't get a response and everyone is pretty busy here. He would like to take that housekeeping contract and put it into salary and hire someone to do the job. Blankenship asked how much they put into Housekeeping to which Tippett responded about \$10,000. Blankenship asked if we could hire someone for the year for \$10,000 to which Tippett responded that they took the cabins into an hourly rate and what it would cost and yes they have enough money.
  - ii.** Wallace asked if they don't get anyone then would they use park personnel to which Tippett commented that they will be hiring someone as park personnel. Wallace clarified that what Tippett was saying is that he is going to hire someone for \$10,000 to which Tippett responded approximately yes. Wallace then asked what if they can't get someone to do it, what will we do once we start opening the cabins and everything and nobody has applied to which Tippett responded that we have an application in, we have a person who is going to do it, otherwise we would be using maintenance to do it.
  - iii.** Ewing commented to just to be clear, you are wanting to use in house service because we cannot find anybody to facilitate that like we did last year. We are going to move housekeeping funds into maintenance and we will hire somebody to do it in house. Are we still actively seeking housekeeping as of now that way if someone does apply will we reverse this back to which Tippett responded that he would always like to contract that part of it out, it seems to work out really well, but if no one is applying then we can't do it. Ewing stated so with the situation we are in right now, you are wanting to move those funds into maintenance to which Tippett responded yes.
  - iv.** Ewing motioned to approve the \$10,000 to come out of Contract Labor into Maintenance Housekeeping. Blankenship second. Sweet aye, Blankenship aye, Trefz aye, Wallace aye, Richards aye, Ewing aye. 0 nays. Motion carried.

## **7. Old Business**

- a. Discussion and Vote Response to COVID-19 Virus**
- i.** Richards commented that after the governor's order came out, he and Tippett reached out to the bodies that govern the park. We like to think that we are independent and we can do things on our own, but we do have to answer to governing bodies. The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Clark County Health Department being two of those. The



other one that we reached out to was our insurance carrier and our attorney. We received responses from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that we should not open the campground until the governor's stay at home order is over. We have received response from the Department of Public Health until the governor's stay at home order is over and probably most importantly we were told by our insurance company, PDRMA, that if we operated outside the governor's order that we could find ourselves without insurance. I understand exactly what they want to do and what they are saying and he believes that the majority of the people would abide by the social distancing guidelines and rules. I don't see how we could operate without insurance. Those governing bodies like the IDNR and the Health Department regulate us. He is also not trying to stick his thumb in their eye and go against what they are telling us what we should be doing either. So despite our personal feelings about it, what we think is right or what we think is wrong, whatever, our hands are essentially tied on this decision because we cannot operate without insurance coverage.

- ii. Lisa Thomas asked if they expect this to change with the ruling that his executive order was unconstitutional. She wouldn't expect it to change right now, but possibly something to be revisited. Richards commented yeah, the whole situation is fluid, everything is day to day. What we were told is as long as that stay at home order is in place and is legal and as it is currently. If there is an injunction that has been filed and has been accepted and it stands up to which Thomas commented it has, Richards continued with then we will have another Board Meeting and we will have camping in his opinion. Thomas stated that sounds fair.
- iii. Sharon Piper commented that as of Friday, that was supposed to be the go ahead date go through, as of Friday there was nothing in place, just so you know. Richards commented if that is true, then they will have to go through and speak to those bodies again to insure that we do not open up prematurely or put ourselves, expose ourselves essentially, to that kind of risk. He thinks the majority of the people on the Board would like nothing less than to see you out there camping today. The fact that we are trying to stay open as much as we can with the boating and the fishing, trails, bikes, things like that to give people recreational opportunities, we just can't do that. One accident could end this park, forever. He doesn't think that is something that they can take lightly at all or exposed ourselves to that. He understands their point of view, we do need you as much as you need us. Fortunately we are in a position to weather this storm fairly well, but we can't do that indefinitely.



- iv. Piper asked but what if Pritzker came back, like today he was talking about the kids not being able to go back to school, he is going to have a fight.
- v. Steve Brown commented that there are a couple of things going on that he can't understand. Clinton Lake and Kickapoo and all of those are opening on May 1<sup>st</sup> yet the County, Clark County that has 4 cases and Edgar has one and you have Lincoln Trail that is not going to open on May 1<sup>st</sup>. He is kind of wondering... to which Wallace commented that he thinks that the facilities they are opening don't have camping. Lincoln Trail has camping and they can't open. That was his initial take on it, how can they open some and not the others. Piper commented that Lake Sara never closed. Brown continued by saying and the other thing is if it goes back to the original stay at home order until June 1<sup>st</sup>, which he realizes is out of their hands, one of the biggest weekends of the year, you are going to miss which is Memorial Day. He thinks if it goes past Memorial Day Weekend, you are going to have a lot of campers who are going to say forget it. If it does go to that he hopes that somebody will come to some common sense and say let's open this for Memorial Day weekend the last weekend of May.
- vi. Sweet commented that this is bigger than us, this is bigger than Memorial Day holiday, this is bigger than us firing off fireworks. We have to do, it's just like Richards told you, we have guidelines that we have to follow. He will echo what he told you, he wishes that they could go camping tonight. He wishes he could go hug his granddaughter tonight, but he can't. He feels the pain. They are just doing what is regulated and dictated to them, not only for their health, but for the health of everyone else. Their hands are tied and this is where they find themselves. It is nothing to take personally it is just where they are at. \* There were two voices coming from the audience at the same time which made them inaudible.
- vii. Georgann Welsh commented that they have already brought their camper out, they needed to do it before he is in the field all of the time. Can they go out periodically to check things, they spray for weeds, can they do that?
- viii. Richards stated that brings up a very good point that they need to discuss while they are there. Tippet allowed that as a courtesy to people, to do exactly what she is talking about, to get set up or if they needed help doing it, he doesn't think that anyone has a problem with you being out there doing maintenance on your camper if you need to do so. But what we don't need is people out there making a day of it or picnicking or making fires or having few beers. If you need to do something, he



doesn't think it is a problem, everything else will eventually lead to congregation and potential trouble.

- ix. A lady from the audience commented that on site A17, there were people over there right now who are picnicking right now to which Wallace commented that he saw that as well and he wasn't real happy about that.
- x. Piper stated that she thinks that people sometimes were confused because you can walk and use the trails and stuff. We were under the understanding that if we were doing things to the camper then we could be there for a little while.
- xi. Richards commented that he doesn't think that anyone has a problem with that. If you have to perform maintenance or whatever, make an improvement or whatever, he doesn't want to set a time limit of 2 hours. Some things may take less time and some things may take more but it shouldn't be an all-day affair or a family affair. People should not be congregating.
- xii. Kent Waltz commented that if you allowing people to be out here walking and boating, there was 20 some trailers in the lot today, but your insurance is good for all that is that correct? It's just the only think that you can't have insurance for is you have people staying here. Richards commented that the order will be that there will be no open campgrounds in the state parks or anything like that. The state parks will be open, a limited number of them will be open Sunrise to Sunset, and that is what we are essentially doing with the rest of the park. It specifically says that the campgrounds will be closed or should be closed. When we reached out to the governing bodies, the DNR, the Health Department, and our insurance company, they essentially said that if you violate that there is a fairly good chance you can find yourself in very hot water without insurance coverage.
- xiii. A gentleman in the audience asked is there not a waiver that could be signed that the insurance company would accept as far as your own health to which Richards commented most of the time those waivers aren't worth the paper they are printed on, to be honest. The gentleman asked if they could reach out to the insurance company to which Tippet responded that he spoke with the CEO of the insurance company this morning and he said no, it would be in violation of the governor's order.
- xiv. Richards stated we are trying, there is nothing that they want more than to let them camp.
- xv. Piper commented that maybe with what is going on with the governor right now maybe it will all be rescinded to which Richards commented



that if that happens they will be having another meeting like this and they will be camping.

- xvi. Wallace commented that wasn't there something that you mentioned if maybe you kept the bathrooms closed, he doesn't think they can even operate with the bathrooms closed, is he right? They serve as a storm shelter so we can't even do that. Tippet and Richards have been doing a lot of research on what they could possibly do and as the rest of the Board has said, they are just tied by the restrictions. Wallace addressed Thomas, that was filed in the 109<sup>th</sup> district, right to which Thomas responded yes. Wallace further commented but that covers state wide to which Thomas commented that is the way she understood it. Wallace commented that they are going to appeal that, he assumes, to a higher court to which Thomas responded yes.
- xvii. Piper stated but that won't go until the following week, that's what she is saying, as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, there is nothing in place.
- xviii. Thomas stated that what is in place now is unconstitutional, it has exceeded 30 days. Right now, it is invalid, until he appeals it and it is overturned, if it is overturned. Wallace commented that he bets if Tippet calls PDRMA tomorrow, Tippet commented that he is going to call PDRMA and he is going to call the attorney as well. Thomas stated that they will be in violation of your constitutional rights as well.
- xix. Richards commented that it probably both fortunate and unfortunate as well that that came out, that recently obviously we wouldn't have time to prepare for that or respond to that. We will do our best to reach out to those bodies again to see what their recommendations are. Again, we will have to follow that. He doesn't know what is better, to wait until the process is over, until the appeal process is over, he doesn't know how long that could be. He doesn't know what is better, to have you guys out there camping for 4 or 5 day and then have to tell you to get your stuff and get out, or if it is better, he doesn't know. That is going to be a difficult decision to be made, because that could go back and forth he supposes.
- xx. Thomas stated that she thinks it will take about 30 days before it is decided.
- xxi. Richards asked if that is something that Tippet is willing to do is reach out to those people again with the information to which Tippet responded yes.
- xxii. Wallace asked if it becomes possible that we can open back up, can you talk to legal counsel to see if we can have an emergency meeting because of that or if we have to give 48 hours' notice to which the response was



they believe it has to be 48 hours' notice. Thomas commented that she doesn't see that as an emergency under the Open Meetings Act.

xxiii. Richards motioned that as long as the governor's stay at home order as currently stated is deemed legal and in place that the campground remain closed. Sweet second. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

b. Discussion and Vote Regarding Recreational Activities and 3<sup>rd</sup> of July Events

i. Tippett commented that this is recreational activities in general and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. The activities person will not be camping here this year so we are going to be stuck without anyone to run the recreational activities, and with all that is going on, he feels it would be good to just forego it, other than the Halloween activities at the end of the year. As far as the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July goes, he has had responses from vendors, but the fireworks guy is not responding and the band is not responding, the DJ's are not responding. For this year, scrap the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July event and come back strong next year. Richards commented that the major issues is getting ahold of the vendors and making sure of their availability to which Tippett responded that the vendors are all available prior to COVID, but anybody who would entertain, such as the fireworks guy, is now not returning phone calls and not returning contracts. Blankenship commented that he just sent a message to another fireworks guy just to see if anything would be available.

ii. Ewing stated that for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July we rely on donations and we have not received any, it probably is not the best time to go ask for donations from small businesses at this time unless we want to fund it all from the park. To go ask a small business here in town who has been closed for a month or two, he doesn't want to ask that question.

iii. Richards commented that he agrees that the band and all of that would be a bad idea, but he still don't see what would be wrong if we can get in touch with the guy for the fireworks. He believes that we have enough in the budget to at least do that. Tippett commented that is \$6,500. Richards stated that is something that everyone can enjoy and still keep a reasonable distance and not have to congregate. Tippett asked if he is not going to allow congregation to which Richards responded that by that is the hard thing to determine what will happen by that time, if we are not going to be under the same circumstances we are now. That is predicting the future and he doesn't want to give up on that because he does believe that people do need some normalcy.

iv. Wallace asked what is going on with the Federal Guidelines for the phases, phase 1, phase 2, and phase 3? Who is calling the shots at the state level saying you are past phase 1, you are past phase 2. Thomas commented that the Federal government is taking the stance that those



are just guidelines, they are not orders. Wallace commented that he doesn't know, once again he doesn't know what PDRMA or IDNR is going to tell us if we decide to have a 3<sup>rd</sup> of July Celebration and they say that certain guidelines haven't been met at the Federal level.

- v. Richards stated that not much of this has the force of law behind it to be honest.
- vi. Trefz asked what is the lead time for the fireworks show to which Tippet commented that the contract was signed and done by now the past 3 years. He will make another try to get ahold of him and maybe clear this up. Richards asked if Tippet could contact that guy and get a drop dead date to which Tippet responded that he would.
- vii. Wallace commented that as far as recreational activities go, not only the financial cost of it and now you are saying that we don't have anyone to help with that now, so is the ongoing things going on throughout the year which he assumes that he assumes maybe they are going to start working on some of the big projects, is that just the fact that you really don't have the manpower to do the recreational side of it to which Tippet responded yes.
- viii. Wallace motioned that we cancel any recreational activities that we have on our calendar for this year and we will make an effort to continue to try to contact the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July vendor for the fireworks and we will base a decision on the event pending on the fireworks vendor.
  1. Blankenship commented that he would like to add Halloween to that because it is a long way away to which Richards commented they could always reschedule it. There is not a whole lot that goes into that that would need to be planned out months ahead he would think.
  2. Blankenship asked if that was all fishing events to which Wallace commented that he called all recreational events that we had scheduled, which we may have not had scheduled.
  3. Tippet commented that this would be anything that Veda would have handled as recreational director. Wallace stated that list is what he is referring to. Tippet commented that it is a lot of breakfasts, ice cream socials, however we are probably going to keep the ice cream socials, we will just ask We-Li-Kit to come in and supply the ice cream.
  4. Ewing second.
  5. Wallace commented that even if we can't get ahold of the fireworks guy, nothing says that they can't have a big to do later.
  6. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

## **8. Executive Session 5ILCS 120/2 C-1, C-3, C-11, C-21**



- a. None
- 9. Adjourn**
- a. Ewing motioned to adjourn. Blankenship second. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.
  - b. Meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.