



MONTGOMERY PARKS

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive | Wheaton, MD 20902
MontgomeryParks.org

MCPB Date: 12/08/2022
Agenda Item # 6

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 23, 2022

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MR*
Miti Figueredo, Deputy Director of Administration *mf*
Gary Burnett, Deputy Director of Operations *GB*
Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division *S.V.*

FROM: Nancy Steen, Budget Manager *NS*
Kate Bentley, Assistant Budget Manager *KB*

SUBJECT: FY23 Budget Adjustment for the Department of Parks

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the request for an FY23 Budget Adjustment for the Department of Parks.

BACKGROUND:

All budget adjustments over \$100,000 require Planning Board approval.

The budget resolution approving the Department of Parks operating budget is appropriated at the divisional level. The Planning Board has authority to transfer appropriations between the major object codes (personnel, supplies, services, capital outlay) as long as each divisional appropriation is not exceeded by ten percent.

The recommended transfers do not exceed ten percent in any division.

The department requests approval to adjust the FY23 divisional line-item budgets, as shown below, to accommodate specific needs of the Department.

REQUEST APPROVAL:

Staff attrition and a competitive job market have contributed to a record number of vacancies in our department. Staff are actively working to fill all vacant positions; however, we are already projecting to having significant

savings in personnel costs due to these vacancies. Therefore, we are coming to the Planning Board now to request to reallocate savings in personnel funding to non-personnel to utilize this available funding. We want to also provide sufficient lead time for our purchasing staff to be able to competitively source these goods and services to ensure that we maximize our buying power. In addition, the sustained inflationary increases in the current economy are impacting departmental costs for acquiring goods and services, so we wish to utilize this available funding prior to incurring further cost increases. Typically, we package our funding reallocation requests and defer them until later in the fiscal year. However, because of these factors, we are coming to the Planning Board now to make this request. As we continue to progress through this fiscal year, we will continue to monitor spending and availability of funds, so we may return later in the fiscal year requesting further reallocation of funding.

DETAILS OF BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS:

The Department of Parks is seeking the Board's approval to transfer \$2,138,786 from Personnel Services to Non-personnel to fund the following needs. For ease of presentation, we have grouped our requests by category. We identified many of these funding needs as we developed our FY24 budget proposal, but because they are one-time costs, we thought they were better suited to be funded with anticipated savings in FY23. As we move through the fiscal year, we will continue to assess our needs and capacity to fund other unbudgeted requests within our current budget.

Vehicles and Equipment – \$697,227

- \$9,069 for the purchase of materials for the new Community Gardens at Black Hill Regional Park and Edgewood Local Park. Funds will be used to purchase materials for garden boxes, accessible beds, propane tanks, tools, and signage.
- \$538,158 to replace existing equipment approaching the end of its useful life with electric park maintenance equipment for the Northern and Southern Regions. Both divisions are taking steps to transition to become compliant with the Montgomery County 2035 mandate of a fully electric fleet. Although initially electric mowers cost about 125% more than comparable internal combustion mowers, they reduce fuel, noise, and maintenance costs over time. This funding will outfit four trim crews with electric equipment, purchase four electric mowers and purchase enclosed trailers that are pre-wired to charge electric equipment.
- \$150,000 for an additional trash truck for the Department. Our current trash trucks are old and frequently break down with long wait times for repairs. Having an additional trash truck will keep the Department functional when one breaks down and will allow us to keep up with increased demand. The additional trash truck can also be dispatched to handle increased demand needed after large events.

Technology – \$611,655

- \$258,947 for software licenses and program updates. Included are updates to one of the fleet management systems, FuelMaster. Upgrading FuelMaster in conjunction with the upgrade already underway for the FASTER system will allow for seamless communication between the two systems and provide better management of the Department's fleet. Also, included in this total is the implementation cost for SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) cybersecurity software which is needed to maintain the reliability of the Department's system security. In addition, funds will be used to renew the Department's Adobe Cloud Licenses. A multiyear license was procured several years ago using available divisional funds. That initial contract has expired. The renewal cost for the new contract plus the number

of licenses needed for the department have significantly increased, so additional funding is needed for staff to continue to use this critical software.

- \$104,000 for computers and related technology equipment. This includes replacement laptops for Park Police and other additional information technology equipment (e.g., laptops, monitors, docking stations, headsets) required for staff. Costs for technology equipment have been severely impacted by inflationary increases. In addition, supply chain delays also mean that we must plan ahead to make sure that we have sufficient inventory stockpiled to meet our needs.
- \$150,000 for contracted services to support a redesign of the Parks' website. Both the Montgomery Planning and Planning Board websites were last updated in 2016. After the FY23 proposed budget was submitted, our current vendor changed their business model to move away from website design and support, and our support contract with them ends June 30, 2023. To keep up with equitable engagement best practices, industry standards and to foster a greater user experience, the templates for the two websites need to be updated. This redesign will improve navigation hierarchy, overall site map, site speed, optimization of pages, design format consistency, and information organization. The total estimated cost is \$250K and is a collaborative project with MC Planning and the Commissioners' Office.
- \$88,708 for security upgrades at Brookside Gardens Maintenance Yard and Visitor Center. Current systems are outdated and are no longer supported by the manufacturer. This funding will enable the department to update the current burglary systems, replace old cameras plus add additional cameras and to replace doors currently secured by keys with automated door access controls panels.

Contractual Services – \$587,199

- \$187,199 for contracted and temporary technology and administrative support staff for understaffed departmental programs including management of our Fleet Management systems and information technology support. These two programs have been hard hit by staff attrition from retirements. Contracted support allows these critical programs to continue to move forward. In addition, since these two programs are heavily understaffed, these transfers are using divisional personnel savings to cover the cost of contracted services within the same division.
- \$400,000 for the demolition of the National Tire and Battery (NTB) building. The land on which the NTB building sits was recently acquired by the Department of Parks. The demolition is the first step in redeveloping the parcel as part of the newly created South Silver Spring Urban Park. Unfortunately, because of the industrial structure of the building, demolition costs greatly exceed original estimates, so supplemental funding is required to complete the work.

Park Activation – \$150,000

- \$150,000 for activating the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Park. This Pilot Park will build on the Parks' Open Parkways Program to repurpose lanes of parkways to provide additional recreational space for patrons. Funds will be used for installation of decorative pavement painting, bistro and table seating, signage including welcome signage and banners, active play spaces including ping pong, corn hole, and other games, planter boxes with shrubs, perennials, and trees, and essential park amenities including temporary restrooms, trash and recycling bins, and pet waste stations.

Maintenance and Repairs – \$92,705

- \$92,705 for additional repairs and maintenance to park facilities. These include repairs to two production greenhouses at Brookside Gardens. This funding will repair the side vents in the Fritz Greenhouse and repair and clean the gutters of the O'Rourke Production House. It also includes additional funding to reduce the backlog of maintenance needed for county-wide playground maintenance. Additional funding will be used to perform dig-outs to make playgrounds more inviting and CPSI (Certified Playground Safety Inspector) compliant. This work is vital to ensure that our playgrounds are safe for children.

The Planning Board's approval of this transfer is requested.

Approved by the Planning Board: _____ Date: _____