1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair Abele called the Meeting to Order at 5:30pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Laura Ballantoni.

2. ROLL CALL – Director Freeman, Johnson, O’Brien, Vice Chair Dennert, and Chair Abele were in attendance. Staff in Attendance included: Laura Ballantoni, Miguel Chavez, Sandee Covone, Douglas Duran, Tracy Engel, Paul Friedeborn Danielle June, John Krieger, Lee Martin, Wayne Nakaoka, Theresa Pennington, Brian Reed, Gina Vieco, and Lisa Weagley.

Guests included: representatives from various Simi Valley Youth Sports groups. Those who made comments via the Teleconference are listed under the appropriate Item below.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – Item 6.c will be heard after Item 4, before the Closed Session.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA) – NONE

5. CLOSED SESSION – Chair Abele announced the Meeting to Closed Session at 6:14pm.

    a. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6
       Conference with Labor Negotiator:
       Agency Negotiators: District Manager and Director of Administration
       Employee Organization: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District -Middle Management Association

    b. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6
       Conference with Labor Negotiator:
       Agency Negotiators: District Manager and Director of Administration
       Employee Organization: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District - Employees Association (“Bargaining Unit”)

    c. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6
       Conference with Labor Negotiator:
       Agency Negotiator: District Manager & Director of Administration
       Employee Organization: Unrepresented Employees

    d. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.95
       Claimant: Mr. Ben Tavakkoli
       Agency Claimed Against: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
e. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.95

Claimant: Mr. Tim Needham
Agency Claimed Against: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District

Chair Abele called the Meeting back to Open Session at 6:36pm and reported the Board gave Staff direction on Closed Session Items 5.a thru 5.e.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. FY 2020-21 BUDGET WORKSHOP: Review and discussion of the District’s draft preliminary budget for fiscal year 2020-2021, significant changes from the previous year’s budget, and the District’s proposed projects. The Staff Report was presented by Dan Paranick, District Manager. The current document is a draft and not the final budget, this workshop is the first step in the 2020-21 budget process. After feedback from tonight’s meeting, a Final Preliminary Budget will be brought back to the Board at the June 18th Board of Directors Meeting. Paranick provided an overview of District funds and the current Budget.

Director Johnson asked how the District is doing Budget wise with the effects of the Pandemic. Paranick responded so far, the District has been operating without dipping into fund balance or CIP proceeds, we should be sustainable for up to 6 months.

Director Freeman asked if the District has received any Prop 68 Per Capita funds. Paranick responded we have not received funds yet.

Chair Abele asked what a realistic timeframe is for repairing the pool building and how it would compare with other projects such as BMX or RSSCC. Nakaoka responded the temporary pool repairs may last 2.5 years.

Director Dennert asked what if construction costs go down because of wage decreases, could some projects move along faster. Nakaoka responded it’s possible, but decreases in construction costs are difficult to predict. Dennert questioned projects in the Budget for Valley View and Frontier Parks. Paranick responded Valley View is located in Oak Park, currently there are no funds available for this project. A prior Board had voted for the renovation of Frontier Park, it is one of the District’s oldest parks. Dennert added this is an isolated park and currently it attracts trouble, he suggested adding some type of element that would bring people to the park, something not available at other locations such as corn hole. Dennert is also wondering if the Board can remove items for the Capital Projects. Paranick responded at the direction of the Board items can be modified. Dennert asked about the Battery backup for the Activity Center. Nakaoka responded the system is currently inoperable and needs repair, this is a safety issue.

Paranick would like to hear from all Board Members as to what Projects would be most important to them.

Johnson feels the next Phase of the Activity Center is the first priority, there is income to the District with this completion. He would like the Pool Building ahead of the BMX track.

Freeman stated there is an offer to purchase the BMX property, the new owners would build the track during development. Any track built now would be temporary (5 years.) If the plans
are really scaling back, the cost would be half the price. Paranick added the Catholic Church is interested in building a K-12 School with a heavy emphasis on athletic programs. If the School project moves forward, the concept is for the District to give up the lease to the School and they will build the track when and if their project is moved ahead. Abele asked what the chances are this project moves ahead. Paranick responded, first they want site control, at this point it is a proposal and would likely take at least 4 or 5 years to be built. At this point in time, Abele has an issue with so much money going towards BMX.

Freeman likes the idea of maintaining what the District currently has, as opposed to adding new projects. Her priorities would be Rancho Madera Community Center, The Pool Building would be important, and paying off the Guardian Building. Freeman is also interested in keeping the BMX Project.

Director O’Brien would like to see the Guardian Building paid off first. She is leaning towards items that increase revenue: completing the Activity Center, Rancho Madera Community Center on the west side of Simi, and the Pool Building. She does not like the idea of putting more money into the BMX track.

Dennert would like to finish the Activity Center. He likes the idea of possibly adding solar panels at the Guardian Building location. Regarding lights at the Dog Park, the people who did not want them previously may not live in the area now. He’s not saying to light up the entire park, possibly some solar or LED lights. It is dark at 5pm in the Winter and hot during the day in the Summer, lights would allow people to walk their dogs later. He is not sure Rancho Madera needs an actual Community Center but does feel the central area should be completed, possibly re-evaluate the plans without a building. Dennert asked how long it would take to complete the pool repairs and the likelihood of the Church building the BMX track. Nakaoka responded the Pool will be a long project to fix, 6 months if planned in advance. Paranick responded the discussion with the Church has been only verbal, at this point it is hard to say. Dennert feels abandoning the BMX project feels like breaking a promise to a lot of people in the Community.

Abele agrees with paying off the Guardian Building, it seems wise now to payoff. He would like to see the Activity Center completed, this is a focal point and should be a showcase for the District as well as bringing in revenue. The Pool Building should be addressed, he feels this is one of the Stars of the District. The completion of RSSCP is also important to him. He feels it is time to let go of the BMX track, it has gone on too long. The operators continue to be uncertain on who will be running this and there are many uncertainties. He doesn’t view it as a promise not kept, it just did not work out, as a Board they have worked hard to have it built. He doesn’t feel Rancho Madera is a high priority, it is a beautiful park the way it is. He feels Staff should at least explore the options for lighting at the Dog Park.

Based on the Board comments, Paranick stated the priorities appear to be paying off the Guardian Building, completing the next phase of the Activity Center, renovating the Pool Building, and the Rancho Santa Susanna Community Park completion. Paranick asked if the Board would like the funds allocated for the BMX track to go towards the Pool instead. Abele, Johnson, and O’Brien felt this was a good idea, Dennert and Freeman did not agree. Paranick added there was a previous study on solar panels, it did not make sense financially at the time. This could be added to the 2nd year projects, if there is grant money for solar then it makes sense. Johnson suggested having SCE review the possibility of adding panels to the
building. Dennert added the School District does not own the panels, so there is no maintenance for the panels. Paranick will have a consultant review the options available.

Freeman asked if the Budget should include something new for Oak Park. Paranick responded he can bring a list of project options for the Board to consider.

Chair Abele called a recess at 8:36pm. Chair Abele called the meeting back to order at 8:41pm.

b. FY 2020-21 BUDGET WORKSHOP: Review and discussion of golf fees. The Staff Report was presented by Brian Reed, Golf Course Manager. Reed provided an overview of the current fees and the performance of the Golf Courses. Overall, the last 3 years of revenue is up at the Courses.

Freeman and O'Brien would not be comfortable increasing the rates at this time.

Johnson noticed the actual number of rounds that went down, he was wondering how Reed felt about that. Reed responded profit is the bottom line and right now the Courses are in a surge as Ventura County allowed Courses to be opened before L.A. County. Revenue is a bit under from last year, mostly due to carts and services such as the Pro Shop and Restaurant being closed. Sinaloa Golf Course has been up 80 to 90%, people have recently discovered it and have kept coming.

Abele is pleased with the previous rate increase and feels it has increased revenue. While the cart fees are a one-time increase for the life of carts, he would like to review raising the fee for the rounds. Reed responded that is possible, but it is an overflow course and he is not sure how much longer people will continue to golf there. Abele would like to take the opportunity to increase revenue whenever possible, especially to capture the increased business at Sinaloa. He does have mixed feeling with the COVID-19 situation. However, he feels it would be a mistake to not at least look into it further.

Paranick responded that due to the impact of COVID-19 it could be better to keep the rates the same now, to keep the new golfers. Sinaloa appeals to the learners and the current economy may not support the increase for casual players. Paranick will bring this discussion back at the June 18th Board Meeting.

Freeman stated she would be uncomfortable raising rates right now with unemployment rates so high.

Dennert asked if the Birdie Bar is open. Reed answered it has been closed with takeout only, currently starting to re-open now. They have done well and have plans to expand the patio for dining.

c. CORONAVIRUS / COVID-19: Discussion and direction regarding District support for the Re-Opening of District and District related facilities, programs, and activities, including discussion of support for Youth Sports Leagues and other youth activities. (Item Added 5/22/20) - This item was discussed after Item 4. before the Closed Session, as noted in the
Agenda Review. The Staff Report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. This item was added at the request of the Board at the previous Board Meeting.

Nathan Sadowsky from Santa Susana Baseball stated they have notified parents the Spring/Summer Seasons has been cancelled. They are now interested in what the Fall Season would look like and the possibilities of getting back to practicing.

Abele stated the District is bound by current State and County Rules. Currently no organized team sports activities are allowed. He personally does not agree, but there is nothing that can be done. Paranick added while the District shares this frustration; we are bound by State and County rules right now. The District will keep the public updated with developments as they happen.

Eric from Santa Susana Baseball inquired about any type of credit to the Leagues due to the time lost. Paranick responded that sounds fair and will have Staff look into this.

There were 3 additional callers from Simi Valley Girls Softball, Santa Susana Baseball, and Simi Valley Baseball who were in support of previous statements.

Freeman suggested it could be beneficial for the local Sports Leagues to get together with other Cities in Ventura County, there is power in numbers.

O’Brien agrees with Freeman, she suggested the Special Districts could write a letter to the County.

Johnson stated the District is bound by what the County is doing. He suggested as a Board they could possibly talk to the Supervisors and express concerns.

Abele intends to contact Supervisor Huber personally. The question is if the Board wants to do something together as a group. Abele also requested the volleyball nets and basketball hoops be put back up right away.

Freeman suggested sending a letter from the District Board to the Board of Supervisors requesting Ventura County reconsider opening up Youth Sports.

Dennert is in favor of the letter, with a consensus as to the content. What needs to happen to get youth sports back and will it be only practices or games and tournaments. He suggests each Youth Sports group submit a safety plan.

Paranick added California has 4 stages of re-opening. Right now, team sports are part of Phase 4 but it is not clear regarding Youth Sports since there is still an anti-gathering clause in effect that would affect gathering for a game.

Johnson agreed with Dennert, he would like to see the letter before sending it. The Board discussed when to review the letter.

Abele re-stated he would like the volleyball and basketball nets put back up. After the success of the Glow Event he would like to see at least a bare bones 4th of July Event. He is also wondering about the Concert in the Park series this Summer. Paranick responded the nets and rims are already scheduled to be replaced. The City of Simi Valley will be
discussing fireworks at their June 8th meeting. The District can contribute to whatever the City might plan, there is already money in the Budget for a 4th of July event. Paranick can act administratively up to $25K, if more money than that is needed, he will come back to the Board. The Board Members were fine with this. Staff is planning an event for later in the Summer if a concert is possible at that time.

Paranick added he is happy to walk anyone in the Youth Sports community through the current orders issued by the State and County for COVID-19 procedures.

Motion: Director Freeman moved to schedule a Special Board Meeting on Thursday, May 28th at 5:00pm for discussion of a Board of Director’s letter to be sent to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. Vice Chair Dennert seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

7. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Vice Chair Dennert attended the Hot Air Balloon Event, it was a long wait but great. He is looking forward to the upcoming Drive-In Movie, he would like to see more of these.

Director O’Brien stated it is good to be back at a meeting and it’s nice to see everyone.

Director Freeman agreed with O’Brien, it is really good to be back. She reported the Ventura Fair is planning a drive-in concert, this could possibly work for concerts in the park. The CSDA Conference will be held online.

Director Johnson stated this Thursday and Friday are the days for the CARPD Online Conference, login 15 minutes early if you are not sure what you’re doing. Anyone from the Board can join.

Chair Abele would like Paranick to follow up on the likelihood of a 4th of July Event. After the success of the Glow Event, he feels the 4th would be great for the community.

8. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Comments were provided by Dan Paranick. Next phase of Ventura County re-openings will include Churches, Beauty Salons, and Restaurants. Brian Reed is working to re-open the Birdie Bar at the Golf Course. Outdoor gatherings and Team Sports are still limited. The City of Simi Valley will be opening City Hall mid to late June, planning the same timeframe for District locations.

9. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Abele adjourned the Meeting at 9:07pm.

Dan Paranick, District Clerk