

## Director's Report: February 2025

**Quote of the month** "You know, a low budget, you have to work harder. You have to plan well; you don't have much time to rehearse." Hector Elizondo

### **Budget Shortfalls & Program Evaluations**

For the 2025 fiscal year, we are working to meet a significant ask of reducing total operating and program costs by 10% overall (around \$180,000). In response to this ask the Parks Leadership Team is conducting a thorough evaluation of all programs to determine where adjustments can be made. Programs under review include:

- **Baseball:** Given its high operating costs, we will assess the feasibility of maintaining current league structures, facility usage, and equipment expenses.
- **Summer Camp:** While a staple of our seasonal offerings, Summer Camp requires extensive staffing and facility resources, making it a program we need to evaluate for sustainability.
- **Lower-Margin Programs:** Programs that consistently operate at a loss or with minimal cost recovery will be assessed for potential restructuring or discontinuation.

We understand that any changes to these programs will impact the community, and we will work to balance fiscal responsibility with our commitment to recreational opportunities.

### **Need for Additional Revenue Sources**

To mitigate these financial challenges, we are actively exploring new revenue streams, including expanded sponsorship opportunities, grant applications, and facility rental fee adjustments. Additionally, we are in the early stages of planning a **Community Satisfaction Survey** to gauge resident priorities and ensure that any program or funding adjustments align with public needs.

### **Staffing Challenges & Adjustments**

From a staffing perspective, we recently conducted stay interviews with full-time staff to identify key areas for improvement. Feedback indicated a strong commitment to Willard Parks but highlighted a need for more structured management, improved communication, and clearer career development paths. We are taking these insights seriously and will implement strategies to make Willard Parks a more effective and well-managed organization.

On the seasonal and part-time staffing side, the upcoming minimum wage increase presents a significant challenge. In addition to the already increasing minimum wage, the approval of across-the-board salary increases for all part-time and seasonal employees has had a significant impact on the budget of the parks department. Adapting to these rising labor costs will be difficult without either increasing program fees or reducing offerings. We will continue evaluating options to balance fair wages for staff while maintaining accessible programs for the community.

### **Conclusion**

Despite these financial hurdles, our focus remains on serving the community while making fiscally responsible decisions. We appreciate the Park Board's continued support as we navigate these challenges and work toward sustainable solutions for Willard Parks.