



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Minutes of a Retreat of the Board of Directors

A Retreat of the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Board of Directors was held at 4:30 pm on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at the Tualatin Valley Water District Headquarters, 1850 SW 170th Avenue, Beaverton, Oregon.

Present:

Barbie Minor	President/Director
Alfredo Moreno	Secretary/Director
Miles Palacios	Secretary Pro-Tempore/Director
Felicita Monteblanco	Director
Tya Ping	Director
Doug Menke	General Manager

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order

A Retreat of the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Board of Directors was called to order by President Barbie Minor on Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at 4:35 pm.

Agenda Item #2 – Strategic Plan Update

Deputy General Manager Aisha Panas and Holly Thompson, Communications director, provided an overview of district highlights and achievements over the past year, as well as upcoming focus areas in relation to the district's Strategic Plan, via a PowerPoint, a copy of which was entered into the record.

Agenda Item #3 – District Values & Priorities

General Manager Doug Menke welcomed the board members to their annual retreat and introduced facilitator Thomas Bruner with Bruner Strategies.

Thomas referenced the three core values and value statements adopted by the board last year:

- Leading with Equity with special attention to Racial Equity
 - THPRD values all dimensions of equity including ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other identities. We see it as an essential core value that we prioritize all aspects of equity. A commitment to equity means looking at individuals' needs and understanding that people need different things to achieve equitable outcomes. THPRD recognizes that to achieve meaningful equity we must prioritize investments in activities to reach those most marginalized, therefore we support a comprehensive investment in equitable outcomes for the most impacted people and at this time, due to disparate impacts, a special focus on activities to advance racial equity is an important component of our overall equity strategies.
- Environmental Stewardship
 - THPRD values the environment and demonstrates this through how we acquire, plan for, and maintain lands. Environmental stewardship extends to the way we build and maintain our facilities, and the practices we use to procure goods and services. THPRD is committed to protecting and improving the environment and to hold ourselves accountable to reducing our carbon footprint and addressing climate change. We commit to continuing to be an active ally and leader on environmental education, natural resource protection, and by adopting practices that uphold environmental stewardship, to ensure we pass on a healthy environment to future generations.

- Commitment to Community Vision
 - We are committed to honoring and realizing the community feedback captured through the district’s visioning process and see this work as foundational to our ongoing community engagement work. We will integrate the visioning feedback into our planning and operational efforts to honor the four visioning goals to be Welcoming and Inclusive, provide Play for Everyone, to be Accessible and Safe, and to practice Environmental Stewardship. The community vision serves as a beacon to illuminate ongoing community engagement efforts, infused with a deep commitment to actively engage underserved and historically marginalized voices.

Thomas opened the discussion for the board’s consideration of reaffirming these values or to consider changes. General Manager Doug Menke added that district staff is comfortable with the values as-is, noting that the values were adjusted slightly last year.

Value: Leading with Equity with special attention to Racial Equity

- Miles Palacios expressed satisfaction with this value as-is, noting that it is important for government to continue to lead with equity as a priority and that he appreciates the emphasis on racial equity especially in terms of the community served by the district.
- Felicita Montebianco noted that as a board with a majority of BIPOC members, this value shapes everything the board does, and she couldn’t be prouder of the emphasis on racial equity and how this is reflected in the district’s budgets and priorities.
- Alfredo Moreno commented that this is a core personal value of his, as well as a board value, and that he is happy to see the district living it.
- Tya Ping expressed support for this value but wondered if there is a way to specifically include those within our neurosensory community and others facing unseen disabilities.
- President Minor expressed agreement with the previous comments and referenced her attendance at the recent Northwest Public Employees Diversity Conference and the work being done in addressing the past in a truthful manner as a way to lift up the entire community. She confirmed the board’s satisfaction with this value, with no changes needed other than that which was suggested by Tya.
- Staff will return with proposed updated language for the board’s consideration at the November 13, 2024, Regular board meeting.

Value: Environmental Stewardship

- Miles Palacios expressed satisfaction with this value as-is, noting that he loves the intentionality and thoughtfulness around the district’s procurement process.
- Tya Ping expressed support for the value as-is.
- Felicita Montebianco described the district’s role to play in setting the tone on this topic and linking the district’s responsibilities and actions around environmental stewardship to our patrons’ varied and specific connections to THPRD programs and amenities.
- Alfredo Moreno expressed support for the value as-is, noting that this is a core value that the district does its best to live and center.
- President Minor wondered if there is a way to incorporate the district’s Climate Action Plan into this value, which speaks very directly to environmental stewardship.
- Staff will return with proposed updated language for the board’s consideration at the November 13, 2024, Regular board meeting.

Value: Commitment to Community Vision

- Alfredo Moreno expressed satisfaction with this value as-is, noting that as ambassadors of the community, it is important that the board members stay connected to the community and that retaining this as a value helps with this. He added that it is important to also pay attention to those who did not support the district’s operating levy request, as well; not just the desires of those who supported the district.

- Felicita Montebianco expressed support for the value as-is, noting that there were so many voices that spoke into the Vision Action Plan and that it represents an amazing tool to which the board needs to hold itself accountable. She added that one of the top priorities heard through that process is a new registration system.
- Miles Palacios commented that he loves the language of this particular value as it beautifully articulates the important job the district has in serving its constituents.
- Tya Ping expressed support for the value as-is, noting that the Vision Action Plan is the gold standard that has won awards, and both justifies the decisions made by the board and provides direction on what the community wants.
- President Minor expressed agreement with the previous comments, noting that this value is not stagnant and reflects the ongoing work of the district as the dynamics of the community and environment changes, adding that she appreciates and respects how this value brings the other two values together in the district's service to the community.

Thomas congratulated the board on re-establishing their values and observed that a common sentiment expressed throughout this evening's discussion was around the reality that they serve on behalf of, informed by, and in service of hundreds of thousands of community members.

Thomas opened the discussion for the board's consideration of the budget priorities as proposed by district staff:

- Focus on Long-Term Funding
 - Prepare for upcoming bond measure renewal in 2026 and levy replacement in 2028. Expand efforts to diversify revenue opportunities through grant strategy, mutually beneficial strategic investments with government partners, and continue to evaluate the district's resource allocation model. At the same time, continue to expand efforts to invest in financial aid and equity initiatives to ensure THPRD is welcoming and accessible to everyone, regardless of race, or economic status.
- Enhance Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience
 - Incorporate environmental sustainability into all aspects of our operations, programs, and capital improvements. Protect natural areas, enhance green spaces, and implement climate resilience practices. This includes adopting strategies to reduce our environmental impact, conserving natural resources, and aligning future development with long-term sustainability goals. Pursue opportunities to integrate sustainability in facility planning, maintenance, and programming, ensuring that we are adaptable and resilient to environmental challenges. Invest in social justice partnerships to create opportunities for collaboration on environmental work.
- Investing in Efficient Technologies
 - Invest in technology to improve service delivery and efficiency. Work toward updating the district's legacy technology systems such as the website and registration systems to improve accessibility to English Language Learners and people experiencing disability. Invest in technology upgrades to improve safety and user experience.

Budget Priority: Focus on Long-Term Funding

- Deputy General Manager Aisha Panas and Communications Director Holly Thompson provided a brief overview regarding the thoughts behind this proposed budget priority, noting that it represents the natural next step from last year's budget priority of "Develop Sustainable Operating and Financial Models for the Future." Important progress has been made in identifying efficiencies and revenue areas that could be grown, as well as getting the levy in place, but there were some important messages heard through that process around taking care of what we have and preparing for the future.

- Felicita Montebianco commented that she likes that the resource allocation model is mentioned, noting that she is looking forward to learning more and being able to better communicate about it with the community, especially in relation to what their property taxes do and don't pay for. She referenced Alfredo's point made earlier about being mindful of those who did not support the district's operating levy request and the need to continue to be good stewards of the district's resources and maximize what we have.
- Tya Ping suggested reference be made to the district's community partners in relation to the district's journey toward financial sustainability and wondered if more detail is needed in relation to financial sustainability overall, especially if the levy renewal request fails.
- Miles Palacios commented on the need to continue thinking about how to communicate with the district's constituents regarding how their taxpayer dollars are being used and reinforcing that the district is being good stewards of its resources. He referenced the previous year's important budget priority around investing in district staff and noticed that it is missing from this year's budget priorities.
 - Holly Thompson, Communications director, respectfully noted that more information regarding supporting and investing in staff would be provided under the third budget priority for discussion this evening.
- President Minor referenced the component of this priority around preparing for a levy renewal and wondered if there is a way to better articulate and take into account the percentage of people who were not supportive of the district's levy request in light of the discussions already taking place around a renewal effort.
 - Holly commented that she loves the intention around this idea and would appreciate some time to give it more thought. She provided detailed comments around past decisions the district has made that have impacted its current financial state and the need to learn from those past decisions in moving forward, including how to communicate with the community that the district is not just being good stewards of today's budget dollars, but is also planning for the future in taking care of our assets and resources so that our people, buildings, and amenities will be there for us in the future at a lesser expense than waiting until things are critical.
- Miles expressed agreement with President Minor's comments, adding that this is an opportunity for transparency and education in that unless something drastically changes with Oregon's tax structure, additional funding requests will be forthcoming, and it will help if the district is able to clearly communicate why.
- Alfredo Moreno commented that this is a timely budget priority on the heels of the levy as the district needs to be able to show all of the tools needed in order to fulfill the community's vision of what they want this park district to be, which in Oregon is increasingly inclusive of local option levies and bond measures. He wondered whether reference to the Tualatin Hills Park Foundation is needed in this priority.
 - Felicita acknowledged that while the foundation is critical to the district's success, she is unsure of calling this out within a budget priority unless the district is intending to increase its investment, which is another conversation.
 - President Minor suggested that the foundation could fall under the term "community partners" as suggested earlier by Tya.
- Tya referenced President Minor's comments around the preparation for a levy renewal request and suggested adding reference to an educational component around this effort.
- Staff will return with proposed updated language for the board's consideration at the November 13, 2024, Regular board meeting.

Budget Priority: Enhance Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

- Deputy General Manager Aisha Panas provided a brief overview regarding this proposed budget priority, noting that it builds upon what has already been done and recognizes that the district is now better poised to move forward in implementing its Climate Action Plan.

- Felicita Monteblanco commented that she really likes the sentence “Invest in social justice partnerships to create opportunities for collaboration on environmental work,” noting that climate change disproportionately impacts BIPOC communities and that the sentence also alludes to giving others the chance to lead the conversation. It also aligns very well with the board’s values.
- Alfredo Moreno expressed agreement with Felicita’s comments and appreciates the framing that staff believes that this is the right time to move forward.
- Miles Palacios expressed agreement with Felicita’s comments as well and appreciates the intentionality of looking both backward and forward, acknowledging that updating older infrastructure is more challenging than new improvements.
- Tya Ping suggested removing “Pursue Opportunities to” at the beginning of the fourth sentence in order to formalize the intent, instead of making it sound optional.
- President Minor inquired whether there are specific actions or categories within the Climate Action Plan that should be pulled forward and referenced within the priority itself.
 - Aisha described how specific actions in relation to the board’s budget priorities show up in greater detail through the budget process.
- Staff will return with proposed updated language for the board’s consideration at the November 13, 2024, Regular board meeting.

Budget Priority: Investing in Efficient Technologies

- Holly Thompson, Communications director, provided context in terms of how this proposed priority morphed from the last few years’ priority of “Invest in our Employees and Technology” noting that the prior years’ focus had been heavily weighted toward investing in staff and that now it is time to focus on investing in technology. She provided an overview of the upcoming large technology-related projects on the horizon for the district, such as the website redesign and new registration system, all of which when completed will help and improve staff’s work districtwide.
- Miles Palacios described how the district’s technology expertise is important for both the safety of the district itself and its community members in relation to cyber security threats. He sees the intentionality behind this effort and in celebrating the staff support that has taken place leading up to this.
- Felicita Monteblanco expressed confusion around the term “English Language Learners” and wondered if it could be rephased to “regardless of language ability” or similar.
- Tya Ping expressed support for the proposed budget priority as stated, especially knowing that the district is successfully sustaining the improvements previously made for its staff.
- Alfredo Moreno expressed support for the proposed budget priority as stated and likes how specific it is in calling out the user experience, noting that community members will directly experience tangible improvements from this investment.
- President Minor expressed agreement with Alfredo’s comments regarding the focus on user experience, adding that the improvements will benefit both our patrons and those behind the scenes, as well.
- Tya wondered whether a reference to equity is needed in terms of user experience and described improvements she would be happy to see in the Centro de Bienvenida and financial aid registration processes, as well.
- Staff will return with proposed updated language for the board’s consideration at the November 13, 2024, Regular board meeting.

Thomas congratulated the board on establishing their budget priorities and respectfully reminded them of the resources required to pursue these opportunities, which can be relationship heavy.

- ✓ General Manager Doug Menke noted that the resources needed will be clearly called out during the upcoming budget process, as well.

Agenda Item #4 – Adjourn

There being no further business, the retreat was adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Barbie Minor, President

Alfredo Moreno, Secretary

Recording Secretary,
Jessica Collins