

# With no summer job applicants, Parks & Rec buys equipment instead

By Katherine R. Dougan

An agenda item at the Board of Aldermen's July 20 meeting raised a question about equipment purchases in a lean budget year; however, a lack of applicants to fill three seasonal jobs at Parks and Recreation freed funds to purchase two John Deere Gator TX's instead.

"We've talked about lean budgets with vehicle purchases," Ward 2 Alderman Jim Martin said, adding that he was confused that the items for purchase were not listed as an agenda item, but rather were listed as an item to approve as part of the regular spending.

"That would be on me," City Clerk Russell Wall said, adding that it should have appeared as an agenda item for discussion/action. However, he assured the Board that Parks and Recreation did have the funds to purchase the two John Deere Gator TX's, for a total of \$14,623 for both.

"We were budgeted to hire three summer seasonal employees to work

with our maintenance staff assisting in tournaments and daily duties during our busiest time of the year," Adam Wade, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained. "After advertising the jobs for months, we only received five applications. From those five applications, only one person showed up for the interview, and that person did not make it through the pre-employment process.

"At the same time, we had two older carts break down, putting a strain on our employees' ability to get around the park and do their jobs. We decided, since we couldn't get them the help needed, it would be better to use those funds to give them the equipment they needed to do their jobs more efficiently," Wade explained.

He met with City Clerk Russell Wall to make sure the funds were sufficient for the purchases.

"We determined taking the salaries from two of the summer seasonal employees would pay for the carts we are purchasing."

Sometimes, according to the chang-

ing needs of a city, it is a necessary practice to move funds within the City's budget for purchases. Since the cost savings from the salaries for seasonal workers was not used, moving the funds within the Parks and Recreation Department solved the unexpected cost of failed equipment by spending unused funds to replace the equipment.

The City holds yearly meetings for the City departments to bring budget ideas being considered or budget items up for discussion before the

Board. This year, the series of budget meetings begins on August 4.

Once the budget meetings are concluded, a public hearing on the budget will be held at 7 p.m. on September 7, which is the first regular Board meeting in September. The budget will be adopted at a specially called meeting at 7 a.m. on September 15 in the Municipal Courtroom, 305 Monroe Street.



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