

## NEW BERN PARKS AND RECREATION

### Visitation Report Response

Submitted: December 17, 2020

#### **1.4.2 – PERSONNEL INVOLVEMENT**

**Standard: The agency shall have an established process for acquiring and considering input from personnel at various levels of the organization in the development of goals and objectives.**

As stated in the original Narrative, opportunities for staff input is made available during staff meetings, through email correspondence, program proposals, and one on one meetings with the Division Supervisor or Director of Parks and Recreation. Evidence provided included: **Personnel Involvement Statement**, which describes how staff provide input. **Program Proposal**, which a staff member submits when proposing a new program. **Vision Statement Input**, which was an email correspondence to all staff seeking input on the updated vision statement process. **Management Staff Meeting Agenda**, which includes items for Division Roundtable Discussion, Questions, and General Comments.

During the visit, the following additional information was uploaded to Google Drive.

**Staff Vision Statement email**, which provides additional email information provided to staff on Vision Statement Input.

Additional evidence being submitted includes: **Employee Information Supplement**, which gives the opportunity for each employee to provide goals and means of measurement during the annual evaluation process. Goals are reviewed and considered for the Department Goals and Objectives. **Management Agenda (December 12, 2019)** which includes Budget Discussion and Goals and Objectives from each division. **Fulltime staff handbook table of contents and staff sign off sheet**, which lists goals and objectives. Full time staff review this as part of annual training. The Goals and Objectives are also listed on our website at the following link <https://www.newbernnc.gov/Parks%20and%20Rec/1.4.1%20-%20Agency%20Goals%20and%20Objecives.pdf> for staff and citizens to review.

Moving forward, the Division Supervisor is responsible for compiling the minutes of meetings they have with staff. These minutes will be sent to staff and will also be available for review on Sharepoint. For Management Staff meetings, the Director has appointed the Special Projects Coordinator to take minutes and distribute as stated above.

#### **4.1.4 – SELECTION PROCESS**

**Standard: There shall be comprehensive procedures for hiring personnel. The agency shall also have a role in determination of skills and the personal attributes required for positions.**

In the original narrative, the **Employee Appointment and Qualifications Standards** (Ordinance), which elaborates on the procedures that are in place for a fair process, in accordance with state and federal law.

During the September visit, additional evidence uploaded to Google Drive included: **Pre-Employment Screening and Testing Procedures**, which comes from the City of New Bern Handbook and describes the steps in that process. **Candidate Email**, inviting participants for an in-person interview. **Criminal Background Check**, which all new employees must go through before being hired. **Request for Position Advertisement**, which is generated by the Department, and approved by the City Manager to advertise a position. **Employee Selection Process**, which includes the steps that Human Resources follows with new hires. **Interview Questions (In Person)** for a full-time position. **Interview Questions (virtual)** which are normally done with a large candidate pool to help narrow down candidates before inviting for an in-person interview. **Staff Involvement**, which includes an email seeking input from staff on the interview process. The visitor makes no mention of that evidence submitted during the visit. Based on the Visitor response, it appears the reviewer did not look at this evidence.

Additional evidence submitted in this report includes: **Hiring Process Checklist (Human Resources)**, which Human Resources uses for all new hires.

Moving forward, our Department has implemented a **Score Sheet**, which is attached for review, and was used during our most recent hire. We are continuing to work with Human Resources on improving the Selection Process.

#### **4.1.7 - SUPERVISION**

**Standard: There shall be constructive and effective supervision of all personnel to help them grow professionally and improve programs and services. Supervision is an on-going and systematic process that is helpful for the well-being of the individual and agency. Important characteristics of effective supervision are the ability to communicate expectations, delegate authority commensurate with the assigned tasks, provide feedback, and motivate. There should be supervisory processes, procedures, or tools that highlight staff orientation, staff coaching, mentoring, and training, performance review, and human resource policies affecting supervision of such as those dealing with harassment and discipline.**

In the original narrative, we provided the **Probation and Supervision Ordinance** as evidence. This ordinance lists guidelines for the staff probation period and Supervisor responsibilities to the staff during probation.

During the September visit, we uploaded the following additional information in Google Drive: **Aquatic Staff Orientation and Staff Handbook Table of contents**, which listed Personnel Policies, Disciplinary Action, Handling Suggestions and Concerns, and General Staff Guidelines. **Employee Goals and Accomplishments**, which enables the Supervisor to provide feedback on areas where employees can make improvements. **Parks and Recreation Staff Handbook Sign-Off Sheet and Table of Contents**, which listed Department Goals, Keep the Director Informed, Golden Rules of the Workplace, Workplace Ethics, General Expectations, Reporting to Work on Time, Work Schedule, Professional Development, Responsibility, Confidentiality, General Rules and Regulations, Questions, and Handling Suggestions and Concerns. Based on the Visitor response, it appears the reviewer did not look at this evidence.

Additional evidence submitted in this report includes: a **Disciplinary Action Form**, which is used from time to time to document counseling as needed as well as to record disciplinary action. An **Email**

correspondence as a follow up on field inspections. An **Email correspondence** on program proposal suggestions.

#### **STANDARD 4.5 – WORKFORCE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM**

**Standard: the agency shall have an employee health and wellness program showing periodic evaluation of the program status.**

In the original narrative, we provided the following evidence: **Wellness Program Information**, which includes an overview of the wellness program. **A Statement of Evaluation** from the Human Resources Department indicating the Wellness Committee evaluates and makes adjustment to the program as needed. **Wellness Program Examples**, such as Maintain, Don't Gain, Weight Loss Challenge, Gym Membership benefit, and Project 640.

During the September visit, additional evidence uploaded to Google Drive included: **Wellness Committee Program Participants and Review**, which provided participation results on programs offered.

As additional evidence, an evaluation, **Wellness Program Evaluation** was sent out to all City Employees to evaluate the wellness program. That information was used by the committee to address employee needs for future programming.

#### **4.7.2 – VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ORIENTATION, TRAINING, AND RETENTION**

**Standard: There shall be an on-going function within the agency for the recruitment, selection, orientation, training, and retention of volunteers, including procedures on background screening. Background investigations shall be made for all volunteers who work routinely with vulnerable populations, especially youth, senior adults, and persons with disabilities.**

In the original narrative, we provided the following evidence: **Volunteer Program Guide**, which includes our procedures for Recruitment, Screening, Selection, Placement, Record Keeping, Orientation and Training of Volunteers. This information was highlighted in the document.

During the September visit, additional evidence uploaded to Google Drive included: **Completed Volunteer Application**, which volunteers are required to complete, and helps staff with selection of volunteers for programs/special events based on a volunteer's interests. **This application also includes the background check authorization form.** **Volunteer Evaluation from staff**, which is used to evaluate the performance of the volunteer, and it will also inform staff if additional training is needed for the volunteer(s). **Volunteer Liability Waiver**, which all volunteers complete before performing service. **Volunteer Program Guide Sign Off Sheet**, which indicates that the volunteer has received the Volunteer handbook and general training.

The Visitor states *"there is no evidence of recruitment other than staff stating the recruitment happens by word of mouth"*. The **Volunteer Program Guide**, which was submitted as evidence during the self-assessment, clearly states – **Recruitment** – Parks and Recreation staff recruit volunteers through word of mouth, special events, youth groups, civic clubs, churches, scouting, non-profits, press releases, city

website and social media.” Social media has been our most effective means of attracting volunteers. The evidence attached includes Social Media posts seeking volunteers for the following activities: Kidsville 2.0 Community Build, Easter Egg Hunt, New Year’s Eve Block Party, and Pop Warner Football coaches.

The majority of our volunteers are used for community-based projects such as park clean-ups, special events, community service hours, and community build projects. Background checks are conducted when volunteers work with youth sports, camps, and ongoing programs. Background checks are not conducted for one-time activities, unless volunteers work directly with youth, seniors, or individuals with special needs.

#### **4.7.3 - SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEERS**

**Standard: Agency volunteers shall be monitored, shall receive supervisory visits, and be evaluated regarding performance. Supervision and evaluation of volunteers is important to ensure adequate training is provided and to verify satisfactory conduct and performance. The degree to which the agency supervises and evaluates volunteers may vary depending on the role of the volunteers.**

In the original narrative, we provided the following evidence: **Volunteer Evaluation**, which allows volunteers to evaluate their volunteer experience, and let New Bern Parks and Recreation know what they liked and what they would like to see improved. **Volunteer Evaluation for staff**, provides information on each volunteer and documents if there is additional need for training or if they have a good understanding of their task.

During the September visit, additional evidence uploaded to Google Drive included: **Volunteer Evaluation form filled out** and **updated narrative for supervision & evaluation of volunteers**, this narrative further explains how volunteers are monitored and evaluated. Full time staff provide on-site supervision at all times for group and individual volunteer experiences. Volunteers who work with youth athletic programs or seniors also have a full-time staff member providing supervision at all times.

#### **4.7.4 – RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS**

**Standard: There agency shall recognize volunteers for their contributions. Recognition may take many forms, depending on the nature of volunteer roles.**

In the original narrative, **Volunteer Recognition** included a general statement of recognition to volunteers for a Community Build Playground Project and Social Media posts, which recognized individuals, groups, and companies who volunteered their time. Meals were provided and t-shirts were given out as recognition.

Additional evidence being submitted are **social media posts** of volunteer recognition from 2019. This included the annual Toys for Tots Christmas distribution (*Lunch and snacks*); Keller Williams Realty – Park Clean Up Day – (*Snacks and Social Media recognition*).

Historically, our Department has used volunteers for single day park projects and special events. Moving forward, we will recognize volunteers by awarding a certificate at the end of the year for their dedication and service to the department.

### **5.5 STANDARD – BUDGET CONTROL PROCEDURES**

**Standard: The agency shall have procedures for budget control with periodic reporting of revenues and expenditures, and continuous management review.**

During the self-assessment, we provided **Budget Control Policies and Procedures**, which supported general accounting policies, procedures, and guidelines.

During the visit, we provided **Financial Procedures Best Practices, Petty Cash Policy, Financial Close and Reporting, Petty Cash Reporting and Auditing, and Systems Understanding Documentation**, all which support general accounting policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Additional evidence being submitted, includes the **Director of Parks and Recreation Job Description**, which provides detail of the following functions: “Prepares, implements and administers departmental budget; maintains appropriate budget records; approves purchases, new programs and major facility changes”. All Division Supervisors have access to our Munis Accounting Software. The Supervisors have the ability to review division budgets on a regular basis and print off full division or line-item reports for their use. The Supervisors work with their staff on budget requests and needs. A **Budget Report** is attached, which includes the monthly expenditures for all divisions. The Director of Parks and Recreation reviews the budget, expenditures, and revenues on a daily basis.

### **5.5.2 – INVENTORY OF FIXED ASSETS CONTROL**

**Standard: The agency shall have established procedures for inventory control of property, equipment, and other assets to prevent losses and unauthorized use, and to avoid both inventory excesses and shortages. There shall be a complete and current listing of agency assets.**

In the original narrative, the **Parks and Recreation Fixed Assets (6/30/20)** was submitted. This showed all **Real Property** owned by the department.

During the September visit, ten additional documents were uploaded to Google Drive. Those documents were **Athletic Inventory, Shoulder Pad Inventory, Camp Equipment Inventory, Fire Extinguisher Inspection, Inventory Procedures, Park Amenity Inventory, Parks and Acreage Inventory, Parks and Grounds Equipment Inventory, Swimming Pool Concessions Inventory, and West New Bern Recreation Center Equipment Inventory.**

These documents identify additional inventories of general recreation equipment, maintenance equipment, park amenities, and concessions, which is not included in the Parks and Recreation Fixed Assets. All documents combined, provides complete and current lists of controlled agency assets. The process for maintaining control of property, **Inventory Procedures** was also provided, with proof of staff in-service on the procedure.

Additional evidence being submitted includes **Fixed Asset Replacement Guidelines**, which provides estimated useful lives of assets. Use of **City Property Policy** from the City employee handbook, which discusses the proper use of city equipment, tools, materials, and supplies.

### **7.7 – AGENCY -OWNED EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS, TOOLS, AND SUPPLIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**

**Standard:** There shall be policies and procedures for the management of and accountability for agency-owned equipment, materials, tools, and supplies, including procedures for purchase and distribution to authorized persons, proper training of appropriate personnel in use of equipment, safe and secure storage of equipment, and maintenance of all equipment in operational readiness and working order. Such property includes supplies, materials, tools, expendable items, vehicles, installed and mobile equipment, and personal wear items used by agency personnel.

Initially, the department provided the following pieces of evidence. The **City Fuel Card Policy**, which provides the purpose, policy, and procedures for issuance and use of city fuel cards for refueling of city-owned vehicles and equipment. **Uniform Policy** that identifies the regulations and requirements for uniform use as it pertains to each discipline, and issuance and required replacement procedures. **Use of City Vehicles and Property Ordinance**. This ordinance identifies the proper use of city vehicles and property, and consequences for misuse as governed by city council. **Vehicle Policy** which informs employees of all policies for use, maintenance, acquisition/disposal, assignment, and operator qualifications of city vehicles.

Additionally, during the September visit, the following documents were uploaded to Google Docs. **Equipment Check-Out Sheet**, an accountability sheet to monitor use of city equipment by outside agencies. **Vehicle Sign-Out Sheet**, a form used by staff to track use of city vehicles assigned to the department. **WNRC Equipment Check-Out Check-In Sheet**, a worksheet to track use of recreation center equipment by citizens. **Recreation Center Rules & Regulations**, that identifies the general rules and regulations for the use of recreation equipment at the recreation center. **Standard Operating Procedures – Facility Equipment**, which provides standard operating procedures staff must follow when loaning equipment to other city departments, outside agencies, and private citizens.

The evidence provided displays the numerous policies and procedures followed by the department to ensure proper management and accountability for department and city owned vehicles, equipment, uniforms, materials, and supplies.

### **10.2 – OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS**

**Standard:** The agency shall use evaluation results to assess the outcomes of park and recreation programs, services, and facilities and assess the operational effectiveness of the organization. **Outcomes show the relationship between resource inputs and the resulting impacts and benefits of the outputs. Outcomes are measurable changes in behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, conditions, or skills.**

In the original narrative, we provided the following evidence: **Outcomes Assessment, Bear Bunch Camp Participant Evaluation, Bear Bunch Staff Evaluation report, and Colorsplash Evaluation-Supervisor recommendations.**

During the September visit, additional evidence uploaded to Google Drive included: **Survey results for the Down East Dog Park, Swimming Lessons, and Youth Basketball.**

Statements made by participants/guardians on survey results were highlighted prior to submission. Not all statements were positive, but each statement gave participant input needed to obtain the outcomes desired for our department. Examples of responses given are listed below as well as some improvements/changes that were made as a result. These statements are clear evidence that New Bern Parks and Recreation met this standard.

- **Bear Bunch Camp Participant Evaluation**

Based on participant, parent, and staff evaluations, it was determined the Bear Bunch Camp did not need any specific changes prior to the next camp cycle beginning. Supervisors were satisfied with planning and implementation of the program based on participant, parent, and staff responses.

- **Colorsplash**

The Colorsplash art program was highly rated. Participants were most satisfied with the program personnel. The instructor reported the program met its purpose by students experiencing new forms of art as well as working with artist grade materials. The supervisor stated, "The program met the determinants. Emmitt was very well planned out with the program and made sure he met all determinants."

- **Down East Dog Park Survey**

Comments made on the Down East Dog Park Survey resulted in changes/improvements being made to the dog park. Some comments, were, "*It's dirty! Very little or no grass.*", "*More grass area so dogs don't come away so dirty.*", and "*It was almost all dirt.*". These statements, resulted in the following changes: the addition of Bermuda sod, two new water filling stations on concrete pads with drainage, and an enlarged entrance pad.

- **Swimming Lessons Survey**

Survey responses made by parents of children who participated in swimming lessons indicated desired outcomes were being obtained. Such responses include, "*child was a better swimmer after lessons!*", "*The kids learned a lot and were involved the whole time.*", and "*They saw my younger grandson (who age wise fit the younger class but experience wise fit the older class) could handle the older class and moved him before I even asked. He was so happy and did so well.*"

- **Youth Basketball Survey**

Comments made on the Youth Basketball Survey resulted in the following changes being made to improve the program. Scheduling league games for weeknight play as well as weekends, allowing for more games to be played, and earlier recruitment and training for volunteer coaches, to increase the number of qualified coaches. Comments contributing to these changes were, "*I think there should be more games and practices during the week.*", "*Not enough games and teams.*", and "*I would like to have seen games on Saturdays and a practice day during the week.*"

An area of concern for the agency on evaluation of this standard, is a comment made by the reviewer. The reviewer commented, “the agency notes numerous times that they tie evaluations to the budget process, but no evidence has been provided.” While in other standards, evaluations tied to the budget process may have been discussed, within the narrative and EOC provided for this standard there was no mention of evaluations being tied to the budget process. The reviewer’s evaluation of this standard appears to be subjective. There is no requirement for evaluation results being tied to the budget process in Standard 10.2 or its Suggested Evidence of Compliance.

Moving forward the agency has implemented the following techniques to ensure evaluation results are used to determine levels of performance and effectiveness in the agency, and to determine if specific programs, services, or facilities are achieving planned or projected results.

- Pre and Post Participant Evaluations
- Identify desired program outcomes in the program proposal
- Write specific measurable participation goals in the program proposal
- Added probing questions to evaluations and surveys

### **10.6 – RESEARCH INVESTIGATION**

**Standard: The agency shall conduct at least one experimental exploration or research investigation each year related to park and recreation operations. These are demonstration or pilot projects where performance data are collected before and after the test to determine effectiveness.**

In the original narrative, we provided two research projects. Those were: **King Tides Project (2019/2020)**, which is used to determine king tides, the low and high-water areas of the coastal basin of New Bern and how the water levels affect our area. **Greenwood Cemetery Project (2019)**, which focused on a controversial mass grave re-internment over 100 years ago.

During the September visit, three additional research projects were uploaded to Google Drive. **(Middle Street Tree Canopy Project (2018))**, which assessed the health of 59 street trees in the historic downtown district. **Healthy Eating Research (2017)**. This research was conducted for a grant to provide exercise opportunities to low-income residents at risk for lack of exercise and increased health disparities. **Fees and Charges Research (2016)**. This research looked at benchmark cities in North Carolina and compared resident vs non-resident rates. This information was presented to the Board of Aldermen to help determine and justify new non-resident fees for Parks and Recreation programs. It appears the Visitor did not review additional evidence uploaded. These projects are included in the evidence attachment.

In closing, we appreciate the Visitor’s pointing out areas that we need to improve on. We have already started implementing strategies for improvement for all standards. Some of those include:

- Having a designated staff member from each division be responsible for taking minutes at all meetings.
- Improving on how we implement volunteer training.
- Working with City Departments in improving Human Resource procedures, and Fixed Asset Policy updates.

- Improving evaluation by implementing pre- and post-evaluation assessment and including more probing questions with our surveys.