

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS & REVENUE**

## **Budget Review Subcommittee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Protection**

### **Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2022 Interim**

**July 6, 2022**

#### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The 1st meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Protection of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations & Revenue was held on Wednesday, July 6, 2022, at 9:30 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Lynn Bechler, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Lynn Bechler, Co-Chair; Senators Morgan McGarvey, and Wil Schroder; Representatives Al Gentry, David Hale, Nima Kulkarni, Brandon Reed, and Russell Webber.

Guests: Russ Meyer; Commissioner, Department of Parks; Ron Vanover, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Parks; Michael Swatzyna, Division Director, Department of Parks; Rob Richards, Division Director, Department of Parks; Jennifer Linton, Executive Director, Office of Facility Development and Efficiency, Finance and Administration Cabinet.

LRC Staff: Sara Rome, Kevin Newton, Joseph Holt, and Amie Elam.

#### **Kentucky State Parks**

Russ Meyer, Commissioner, Department of Parks, testified regarding the current needs and wants at Kentucky State Parks. Jennifer Linton, Executive Director, Finance and Administration Cabinet, testified on the status of capital projects authorized for Parks from the 2018-2020 budget through the 2022-2024 budget.

In response to a question from Representative Hale, Mr. Meyer said that the Department of Parks would provide performance data on the three state parks in Representative Hale's area. He added that since COVID-19, attendance at Natural Bridge has increased, and the park has become one of the busiest parks in the system. Mr. Meyer said that the time to invest in Kentucky State Parks was 13 years ago during the recession, but during the fight to get out of the recession, the parks system was left

behind. He said that reinvesting in our park system is money well spent for our state. Mr. Meyer said that golf reached its peak performance in 2003 and had been on a downtick until roughly 2019 when the sport started to become more popular again. Mr. Meyer said that Golf Digest ranked a Kentucky state park golf course among the top ten courses in the state. Mr. Meyer agreed to provide Chair Bechler with a copy of the golf digest ranking.

In response to a question from Representative Gentry, Mr. Meyer said that golf is an amenity and another tool in the toolbox used to attract visitors.

In response to a question from Chair Bechler, Ms. Linton said there is \$23.7 million remaining to be obligated to projects from the \$50 million appropriated in 2019 Regular Session HB 268. Of that \$50 million appropriation, \$21.1 million was allocated to wastewater treatment and infrastructure upgrades, and \$17.8 million of that remains unexpended. \$5 million from 2020 Regular Session HB 352, and \$5 million from 2021 Regular Session HB192, appropriated for wastewater treatment and infrastructure upgrades, remains unexpended.

Ms. Linton said there are 66 active projects at Kentucky State Parks. Mr. Meyer said the department has met with Senate leadership regarding the report on the \$150 million in bond funds that is due to the General Assembly by December 1, 2022. He added that the department would meet with House Leadership in the fall.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.