

PARK

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ey from parks programs and facilities and then pays for program expenses. During Wilt's 33-year tenure with the department, the city set up the fund so that the parks programs could be self-sustaining.



CHUCK WILT

"The success of the parks department has been based on the mutual trust of the City Council and the citizen members of the parks board," Wilt said.

Appropriations from the fund have been controlled by the parks board since 1979, when only money from concessions and programs went into the fund, City Attorney Jeff Logston said. In the 1980s, the fund was expanded to include revenue from the Hamilton Center Ice Arena, Donner pool and Lincoln Park.

Wilt said the current setup has worked well under four previous mayors and numerous City Councils. He said he

At issue Parks nonreverting fund

What: A fund in the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department that gathers money from parks programs and user fees and then pays for those programs and associated employees. A non-reverting fund, unlike other city funds, does not go back to the general fund at the end of the year, if all of its funds are expended.

Who: Unlike other city funds, the spending from the fund is set only by the city parks board. City Council appropriates the money for all other city funds.

The issue: Mayor Kristen Brown wants the City Council to take over appropriation of the fund to get a better understanding of parks department spending. She said the department needs to find more than \$1 million a year to pay for large maintenance projects just to maintain existing facilities.

Where it stands: City Council declined to take any action at Tuesday night's meeting, leaving the fund under the parks board control.

appreciated the mayor's push to see the capital expenditures properly funded. When members of the public made donations of property and facilities, Wilt said the city made the promise to maintain those facilities.

Brown said that the parks department has millions of dollars in capital expenses that have been deferred over the

years. Instead of the \$1 million to \$1.2 million the department needs to spend every year to keep up with those projects and to maintain existing facilities, the department only had \$76,000 budgeted this year.

Expenses such as a new roof at Hamilton Ice Arena are being paid for from money left over from a failed outdoor sports complex bond and from

Other business

Also Tuesday, City Council:

■ Approved a tax abatement for Sunright America. The company plans to invest \$34.7 million to build two additional manufacturing plants in Columbus and create another 103 jobs.

■ Approved a change to recently enacted ethics rules for city employees, elected officials and volunteer board members. The council raised the amount of money that can be accepted as a gift from companies doing business or considering business

with the city. Council approved a \$50 one-time limit, a \$250 annual limit from all sources combined and a \$500 annual limit for spouses who work for companies doing business with the city.

■ Approved on first reading of an ordinance setting rules on children under the age of 18 displaying or discharging weapons such as BB guns, paint guns or pellet guns in public or removing orange identifying marks on such weapons. The fine for first offenses was set at \$150. Ordinances require two approvals from City Council.

money in the city's general fund that remains from two state tax errors that led to windfalls for the city. Brown said that the city needs to consider other options, such as raising fees, privatizing some parks functions and finding more efficient ways to operate.

She said that every aspect of the funding for the department should be considered

because the ability of the city to take on debt for those projects will run out.

"We are at our constitutional limit on our debt on the city side," Brown said. "I don't think it is very financially responsible to continue to finance regular maintenance items with debt."

Jamie Brinegar, director of business services for the

parks department, said the balance of the fund ebbs and flows as large programs start and registration fees come in, and money goes out to pay for those programs. In March of 2012, the fund dropped down to about \$243,000, he said.

Brian Russell, president of the parks board, said that the board looks closely at spending from the fund and is constantly evaluating which programs are successful and how much should be charged for programs. He said the board works closely with the leagues, teams and associations whose events go through the parks department.

Council President Ryan Brand said the money in the nonreverting parks fund has nothing to do with capital expenses and he did not see how more oversight of that fund would help overcome those funding shortfalls.

Council member Frank Jerome said the system has been working well for years and he did not want to try to squeeze money out of the fund for capital expenditures.

NUSUN

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He asked the council to allow the company "to prove that we are creating jobs and let us finish what we started. We are on the upswing now, and I see nothing but good things for us in the future."

Mayor Kristen Brown and City Attorney Jeff Logston said the agreement with Nusun requires the council to determine if the company is in substantial compliance, which required 80 percent of those promised 80 employees — or 64 workers — to be on the payroll by the end of 2012. The employee total increases each year under the agreement.

However, Logston said the agreement allows the city to take into account whether factors beyond the Nusun's control were the cause of its non-compliance.

The company has not paid

property taxes last year or so far this year and owes about \$22,000 in taxes. It did not file compliance reports required with the city by May 15 this year or last year. Stout told the council that he would pay the back property taxes by the end of the month.

At the urging of council member Frank Miller, Stout will be asked to meet with the council's incentive review committee and the Columbus Economic Development Board to get help and to establish a reasonable timeline going forward.

Miller stressed that he did not feel his measure would let the company off the hook. However, Miller said he does not understand the logic that banks use, in which someone who is in financial trouble and misses a payment receives an

interest-rate hike, making things even worse.

Council President Ryan Brand said the city should begin discussing whether the employment benchmarks set for Nusun are still appropriate and whether the council should consider adjusting those based on the current circumstances.

Stout said he believed he would have 50 employees by the end of the year but doubted he could meet last year's 80-employee benchmark or this year's 160-employee benchmark.

He told the council that his company got into the solar panel business just as the Chinese began flooding the market with panels that had artificially low prices because of financial backing from the Chinese government. Unlike

some other companies that tried new, untested technology to compete with the influx and then failed, he said Nusun works with technology that has been stable for more than 60 years and held off on hiring and investment until the market improved.

The glut of Chinese-produced panels has been sold, and the market now has room for his company to succeed, Stout maintained. The market upheaval has put the company about 18 months behind where he hoped it would be. But part of the reason he can compete now is because of the low prices he can charge because the city is forgiving the mortgage payments, he said.

"We are on the upswing," Stout said. "We are starting to produce jobs."

Brown said the city should

not be in the business of acting as a venture capitalist. She said the company was not remotely close to being in substantial compliance with the agreement and the City Council should be protecting taxpayers' money. She said that there are many struggling companies in the community and the city cannot help them all.

The agreement with Nusun was made during the previous administration.

Council member Jim Lienhoop said the council already is embroiled in the agreement and now must consider the most prudent course of action.

"The die is cast. What we are trying to do is make the next right decision," he said.

Council member Frank Jerome agreed.

"If I was involved in writing

this deal in the beginning, I probably would not have been for it, but we are where we are," he said. "Let's at least give it one shot, one attempt to see if we can make it work for the city and for Ryan Stout."

Laura Arnold, president of the Indiana Distributed Energy Alliance, said she has known Stout for about five years and praised his company for its ability to stay in business. She said it has been difficult for the renewable-energy industry since about 2008.

She said that if the city leaders want to see a resurgence in American manufacturing, they should support Stout in his efforts.

The vote to accept Miller's plan passed 5-2, with council members Aaron Hankins and Dascal Bunch voting against it.

<p>2006 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER LTD LEATHER, SUNROOF, GAS SAVER! #P2021A \$6,700</p>	<p>2009 CHEVY IMPALA LT 3.5L V6, ALLOYS, PWR SEAT, KEYLESS, HWY MILES, NOT A MISPRINT. #P2105 \$7,627</p>	<p>2007 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5 AUTO, 4CYL, ONE-OWNER, FUEL SAVER! #P2076A \$8,900</p>	<p>2004 PONTIAC GRAND AM GT ONE-OWNER, 50K, 29MPG, AUTO, LOCAL TRADE. #3C235A \$10,720</p>	<p>2008 FORD ESCAPE XLT POWER SEATS, ALLOYS, REMOTE ENTRY. #P2130 \$12,654</p>	<p>2006 MINI COOPER S MOONROOF, LEATHER, ALLOYS, ONLY 61K. #P2067 \$12,758</p>	<p>2008 CHRYSLER 300 TOURING SIGNATURE SERIES, PWR MOONROOF, NAV, HTD TWO-TONED LTHR. #3C415A \$13,207</p>	<p>2010 DODGE CALIBER SXT AUTO, ALLOYS, REMOTE ENTRY, SATELLITE RADIO. #P2128 \$13,317</p>	<p>2008 VOLVO V50 2.4i AUTO, LEATHER, ALLOYS, LOCAL TRADE. #3T3388 \$13,691</p>	<p>2005 SUBARU FORESTER 2.5XS AWD, ONE-OWNER, 4CYL, 28MPG. #P2107 \$13,874</p>
<p>2005 LINCOLN TOWN CAR SIGNATURE LTD PWR MOONROOF, PEDALS, HTD LTHR, BACK-UP SENSORS, ONLY 59K. #P2127 \$14,631</p>	<p>2010 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA WOLFSBURG ED ONE-OWNER, 31MPG, LEATHER, MOONROOF. #P2094 \$14,860</p>	<p>2006 FORD F150 EXT CAB, LONG BED, 4X4, WORK TRUCK, AUTO, CD, READY TO ROLL. 79K. #3H3148 \$14,891</p>	<p>2005 LEXUS RX 330 HTD LEATHER, MOONROOF, WOOD TRIM, NAV. #3C359A \$15,416</p>	<p>2010 DODGE JOURNEY SXT V6, AUTO, 24MPG, 6 DISC CD, ALLOYS. #P2022A \$15,597</p>	<p>2006 FORD MUSTANG GT V8, LEATHER, SHAKER AUDIO, PERFECT SUMMER CAR. #P2138 \$16,513</p>	<p>2008 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE LAREDO 4WD, ALLOYS, POWR PKG, IT'S A JEEP THING! #P2136 \$16,580</p>	<p>2009 TOYOTA PRIUS HYBRID ALLOYS, PWR PKG, 45MPG, ONLY 35K. #P2098 \$16,803</p>	<p>2011 HYUNDAI TUSCON GL XM RADIO, PWR PKG, RARE MANUAL TRANS, 21K. #3H370A \$16,888</p>	<p>2008 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY TOURING LOCAL TRADE, STONNGO, DUAL PWR SLIDING DOORS \$17,009</p>
<p>TOO NEW FOR PHOTO</p> <p>2010 HONDA CIVIC LX-S ONE-OWNER, AUTO, 36MPG, ALLOYS. #P2141 \$17,386</p>	<p>2010 FORD TAURUS LTD CHROME WHEELS, MICROSOFT SYNC, WOOD TRIM, LEATHER, AFFORDABLE LUXURY #3C136A \$17,659</p>	<p>2012 JEEP PATRIOT SPORT FWD, AUTO, FOG LIGHTS, 27MPG, ONLY 8K! #P2137 \$18,126</p>	<p>2010 TOYOTA RAV4 SPORT 4WD, ONE-OWNER, 27MPG. #P2117 \$18,681</p>	<p>2011 TOYOTA CAMRY SE V6, MOONROOF, HTD LEATHER, NEW TIRES, TINTED WINDOWS, PUSH BUTTON START. #3H353A \$19,151</p>	<p>2011 HYUNDAI SONATA SE TINTED WINDOWS, LEATHER TRIM, PUSH BUTTON START, ONLY 18K. #3H225A \$19,659</p>	<p>2008 DODGE RAM 1500 ST 4X4, QUAD CAB, 1 OWNER, WORK TRUCK, TOW PKG & MORE! #P2103 \$19,978</p>	<p>2009 FORD FLEX SEL LOCAL TRADE, LEATHER, 3RD ROW SEAT, 24MPG, REAR AIR. #3T427A \$20,249</p>	<p>2010 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA TDI DIESEL, ONE-OWNER, ONLY 21K, WON'T LAST. #P2106 \$21,071</p>	<p>2009 DODGE RAM SLT QUAD CAB, 4X4, MATCHING TONEAU COVER, BF GOODRICH TIRES, VERY NICE, RARE COLOR. #P2092A \$21,547</p>
<p>2011 FORD ESCAPE LTD ONE-OWNER, 22K, 28MPG, LEATHER, SUNROOF, MICROSOFT SYNC, WON'T LAST! #P2142 \$21,897</p>	<p>2010 HYUNDAI TUSCON LTD NAV, PANORAMIC ROOF, HTD LTHR, ONLY 17K. #P2131 \$22,169</p>	<p>2006 FORD MUSTANG AUTO, ONLY 10K, ONE-OWNER, RED LEATHER, ONE OF A KIND! #P2140 \$22,522</p>	<p>2010 FORD MUSTANG GT TINTED WINDOWS, GREAT SOUNDING, READY TO ROLL. #P2070 \$22,764</p>	<p>2011 TOYOTA SIENNA LE DUAL PWR DOORS, PWR SEAT, HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE, PWR CAPTAIN CHAIR FACTORY OPTION, ONLY 30K. #P2087 \$23,536</p>	<p>2010 DODGE RAM 1500 SLT HEMI, 4X4, QUAD CAB, CHROME WHEELS, BEDLINER, PWR PKG, 20K. #P2065 \$23,571</p>	<p>2011 KIA SPORTAGE EX ONE-OWNER, AWD, 14K, 29MPG. #3H306A \$23,595</p>	<p>2011 KIA SORENTO EX V6, 4WD, MOONROOF, HTD LEATHER, 3RD ROW SEAT, PUSH BUTTON START, NICE! #P2082 \$23,809</p>	<p>2010 FORD MUSTANG GT ONE-OWNER, 16K, MANUAL, V8, SPORT TUNED. #P2072 \$23,979</p>	<p>2011 DODGE CHALLENGER AUTO, 20" RIDDLER WHEELS, CUSTOM STRIPE PKG, ONLY 3,500 MILES. #3T3758 \$24,213</p>
<p>2010 HONDA ODYSSEY EX-L, MOONROOF, PWR SLIDING DOORS, HTD LEATHER, PWR LIFT GATE, ONLY 33K. #P2080 \$24,769</p>	<p>2013 TOWN & COUNTRY TOURING DVD, REAR ENTERTAINMENT, LTHR, STONNGO, PWR SLIDING DR, LIFTGATE. #P2135 \$24,877</p>	<p>2009 DODGE CHALLENGER R/T 20" WHEELS, 2 TONE HTD LEATHER, HEMI, V8 #P2081 \$24,978</p>	<p>2006 DODGE RAM 2500 ST CUMMINS DIESEL, AUTO, CUSTOM WHEELS/TIRES, HURRY! #3C200A \$25,232</p>	<p>2011 JEEP WRANGLER UNLIMITED SPORT, AUTO, A/C, PWR WIN, PWR LOCKS, HARTOP, KEYLESS. #P2113 \$25,269</p>	<p>2011 DODGE DAKOTA BIG HORN CREW CAB, 4WD, AUTO, ONE-OWNER, TOW PKG. #P2146 \$25,978</p>	<p>2013 TOWN & COUNTRY TOURING DVD, 3RD ROW SEAT, LEATHER, LOADED. #P2133 \$26,638</p>	<p>2012 DODGE JOURNEY R/T AWD, LEATHER, 2ND ROW SEATING TILT/SLIDE, ALLOYS. #P2147 \$28,976</p>	<p>2011 FORD F350 XLT 4X4, OFF ROAD TIRES, ONLY 5,800 MILES! #P2095 \$30,829</p>	<p>2012 JEEP WRANGLER UNLIMITED SAHARA ALTITUDE PKG, ONLY 9K, NAV, LEATHER, ONE-OWNER, PAINTED HARD TOP. #P1076 \$36,626</p>

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