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Foothills Board approves 2009 budget

At a regularly scheduled board meeting on Tuesday, December 9 the Foothills Park & Recreation District's Board of Directors approved the 2009 budget. The balanced budget for 2009 didn't come easy to Foothills as they struggled with a failed mill levy in May 2008 which would have generated an additional \$2.8 million per year. Without those funds, a \$4.4 million shortfall was projected for 2009. Executive Director, Ronald Hopp stated that the cost-cutting exercise was accomplished through numerous meetings and suggestions from staff of all levels in the organization. He also credited the Hopp in the Park sessions, a series of meet and greet days with the public, as an outlet for great ideas in cost savings.

Hopp excluded \$2.7 million out of the \$4.4 million immediately by grossly reducing the amount of money that should have been budgeted for capital repairs and capital projects. Hopp stated that the challenge in reducing this large amount puts Foothills in a bind as infrastructures are aging and some are simply not efficient, costing the District even more in expenses.

The remaining savings needed to balance the 2009 budget was resolved through other cost-cutting measures. Major items altering the 2009 budget include;

- 2009 fee increases for classes, programs, entry fees and field rentals.
- Decreased work force, full time staff count reduced by nine employees.
- Full time staff working additional hours to fill roles that would otherwise be filled by a paid part time employee.
- No employee wage increases in 2009.
- Evaluation of all staff positions that are vacated to determine if rehiring is necessary.
- Utilities costs have continued to increase. 2009 projects a 22 percent increase.
- Various service level reductions in all areas of the organization, examples include; reduced frequencies of mowing, snow removal, watering in greenbelts and fertilizing in neighborhood parks.

Foothills Park & Recreation District board meetings will commence after the holidays on Tuesday, January 13. Board meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. at the Peak Community & Wellness Center (6612 S. Ward St.). For board meeting information, visit www.ifoohills.org.

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Foothills Park & Recreation District, founded in 1959, serves a community of 90,000 residents in a 28 square mile area of unincorporated Jefferson County generally bounded by Hampden Avenue south to C-470 from Sheridan Boulevard west to the Dakota Hogback. The District operates the Ridge Recreation Center, Edge Ice Arena, Lilley Gulch Recreation Center, Peak Community and Wellness Center, four outdoor swimming pools, Indoor Sports Arena, Foothills Golf Course complex, Meadows Golf Course, and 70 park sites totaling more than 2,400 acres and including four regional parks, 42 neighborhood and

community parks and 24 greenbelts. In addition Foothills manages six regional trail corridors for public use, which, combined with park trails, total more than 31 miles. For more information visit www.ifoohills.org ,or call 303.409.2100.