

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS  
536 EAST AVENUE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS**

**MARCH 13, 2023**

**President Opyd called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Chvatal, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis  
Director of Finance & Human Resources Cassandra Todd  
Direction of Recreation Kevin Miller

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price  
Becky Lorentzen, Nancy Bramson  
Marian Honel-Wilson, Harold Gibson, Charles Gilbert

\*Commissioner Lacey arrived at 6:07 P.M.

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda. Director Bechtold stated that the recording secretary is out tonight and asked everyone to please use the microphones, so everything is picked up on the recorder.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

*Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)*

Becky Lorentzen, 103 E. Cossitt, La Grange, stated that she is in attendance as part of the Community Diversity Group to answer any questions on the agreement.

**Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 13, 2023; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of February 13, 2023; Item 3.3 Approval of the Financial Reports dated February 28, 2023; and Item 3.4 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for March dated March 13, 2022. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal, seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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AYES: Commissioners Chvatal, Vear, Posey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Executive Director Jenny Bechtold**

- Director Bechtold reminded everyone that the next meeting is April 17<sup>th</sup>, which is the third Monday of the month. It was scheduled so that we can meet at the Community Center at 200 S. Washington Ave. There will be a Parks & Facilities Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m., then the public hearing followed by the regular board meeting. Commissioners Vear and Opyd should be there for their committee meeting at 5:30 and the remaining commissioners can choose to come for the committee meeting or be there at 6:00 p.m. for the regular meeting.
- Jenny reported that The LeaderShop is doing their CMP and strategic planning and they contacted her regarding their lease for Denning Park. It is a rollover 1-year lease that we renew each year. We have been holding off since we are also in our planning process and are not sure of the state of the aging facility. We had hoped our CMP would give us some direction on repairs but unfortunately it did not. Blake is working to obtain quotes on a cost benefit analysis of the facility. It is a great relationship, and we plan to provide them with another lease, but it will be pending some of these other items. The current lease requires that we give them a year's notice if we are not renewing to enable them to find a new location, and we do not want to kick them out but want to be sure we are in a good position to keep them there.

Commissioner Vear asked if there are any safety issues with the facility. Blake stated that based on a recommendation from a structural engineer we will do an in-house repair to shore up a 4X4 in the basement, but there are no current safety concerns.

#### **Director of Finance & Human Resources Cassandra Todd**

- Director Todd reported that now that the bulk of the budget is complete, she is putting on her HR hat and developing an onboarding and offboarding process for the District.

#### **Director of Recreation Kevin Miller**

- Director Miller reported that we hired Daniel Schaffer as the Facility and Operation Manager. He comes from the Plainfield Park District where he was an athletic manager and previously worked at the Park District of Oak Park in a similar capacity. Prior to that he worked for the Bulls/Sox Academy for 15 years running their facility in our recreation center from its opening through 2015, so he has knowledge of our district and facilities. He will start on the 27<sup>th</sup> and is excited to have him.
- Kevin stated that we are planning a recycled art sculpture project in April for Earth Day and will request submissions from the public. He is

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working with our Marketing Coordinator, Christine, to develop the criteria and they should have the information out next week. Submissions will be due by April 21<sup>st</sup> and be displayed for the month of May. People can vote for people's choice awards and there will be small prizes.

- He reported that he has been working with the Hinsdale Parks & Recreation Dept. for the last five months to get our residents a deal with aquatic programming, and it was finalized today. We will have a co-op agreement that will give our residents Hinsdale's resident rate, which is a 20% discount, on swimming/diving lessons and their swim team. It will not apply to pool membership, but this is a good first step.

President Opyd commented that this is great news and asked if the pool was run by their village, and Kevin confirmed it is. Commissioner Posey agreed and asked if it was the closest pool and, if not, were there discussions with other pools, possibly Brookfield. Kevin stated it is not the closest, but Western Springs is landlocked with wait lists for their pool and not willing to work on a co-op, and Brookfield does not have a pool. We tried working with LT in the past, but they also had many users and wait lists. He added that we tried a co-op with Max Aquatics when they first opened but the programming was not popular and it fizzled.

Commissioner Vear asked for details on the Nerf Wars activity. Kevin stated it is an event we hold in the gymnasium where we divide the kids into teams and set up obstacle courses and play games like capture the flag, with skill based targets for the older kids. We have run two of them, and the kids bring their own guns and we supply the darts, and we have safety protocols in place.

### **Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis**

- Director Ertmanis reported that we are doing an event in cooperation with our preschool for Earth Day/Arbor Day to plant a tree at Gilbert Park and two trees at Sedgwick Park. He will let the Board know when it is finalized in case they want to attend.
- Blake provided an update on capital items:
- He stated that we hit a snag with the parking lot and are waiting for a permit from Cook County. WT and Cody/Braun submitted all the plans, and the County came back requesting minor sidewalk changes and four additional inches of gravel on the apron area. WT submitted revised plans to the County, and we are waiting for the permit which the Village of La Grange requires before we can start. He thinks the latest start would be the first week of April.
- Replacement of three RTU's for this facility was budgeted for this year but an HVAC contractor he trusts indicated they do not need replacement and can be repaired, extending their life another 5-8 years. The two units over the gym would have been approximately \$100,000 to replace. We may consider replacing the unit serving the IPRA offices.
- There is approximately \$14,000 left for fencing which will be spent on a

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new splash pad fence at Gordon Park. It will be a sturdier, rubberized chain link fence with an ADA gate that will last 10-15 years.

- The park field maintenance funds have all been spent for repairs at Gilbert, Waiola and Gordon. The contractor will go back to Waiola to complete minor repairs.
- The allocation for picnic tables, garbage cans and benches has been spent on new picnic tables for the Denning Park shelter and the purchase of 50 green metal garbage cans to replace half of the District's cans. We are phasing out the plastic units. The metal cans and metal framed picnic tables can be brought in over the winter and painted. Staff will also install 6 new drinking fountains this summer.
- New LED lights have been installed at Sedgwick and Gordon, and we will pay for them once we receive training from the rep.
- In response to resident input, we obtained quotes for repaving the area of the community center that we had planned to replace with turf. We budgeted \$5,000 for turf conversion, and the cost for repaving would be approximately \$10,000 plus and additional \$1,000-\$2,000 for sealcoating the remainder of the lot. The decision should be made soon if asphalt is selected so it can be scheduled.

There was Board and staff discussion regarding the turf and repaving options. Commissioner Vear stated he was in between and wondered whether grass was a detriment to the space being used as a gathering area, as residents have indicated, or whether the area could be half turf or a grid installed. He questioned whether any work done would have to meet ADA requirements and thought that the artwork planned for the community center wall might be prone to more damage with asphalt adjacent to it. Commissioner Chvatal confirmed that the cost difference would be \$6,000 plus additional maintenance. Commissioner Posey stated that her recollection is that the resident that previously spoke said the asphalt makes the outdoor area more accessible for people in wheelchairs, and we need to consider that and listen to what the users of that park are telling us. President Opyd stated that he understands the public's request for asphalt to have an area for outdoor tables and chairs, which looked nice in the renderings, and questioned if there were other alternatives such as pea gravel.

Director Ertmanis stated that in the past people have hopped the curb and used the area for parking which increases maintenance. He did not recommend pea gravel because it is less accessible. Pavers or a grid would be expensive. He added that since it is not technically an access point for the building it is not subject to ADA. There is currently a ramp to the entrance which is ADA grade but it tapers off on the side where the asphalt is currently located. Turf would allow plantings at the edge near the wall.

President Opyd asked Commissioner Lacey for her opinion as she is often at the community center. Commissioner Lacey agreed that asphalt is better for strollers and wheelchairs, which she sees a lot, but would take away from the

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beauty of the area that grass would provide. She would like to go to the center to take a good look at it. President Opyd suggested that everyone look at it next month when they are there for the April board meeting. Director Bechtold stated that the capital budget can be adjusted depending on what the Board decides. She added that staff thought grass would improve aesthetics and reduce maintenance, and there is another asphalt area on the south side that could be used as an alternate gathering space.

President Opyd stated that there was Board consensus to table the topic for tonight and decide after looking at the area next month.

### **Attorney Report**

Attorney Price spoke about the lease with The LeaderShop at the Denning facility. He stated that we should not send the wrong message to them and need to give ourselves options by conveying an end date now, which can always be extended later. We are renewing year to year, but the 12-month notice is long, and we do not want to surprise them with relocation. We recently ended the lease with the Sox Academy and renegotiated, and he suggested doing the same with this lease. Director Bechtold added that the lease ends in October.

Director Bechtold reminded the Board that action on the Decennial Committee must be taken by May and residents recruited for the committee.

### **Treasurer Report**

Director of Finance Todd had nothing to add to her previous report.

### **Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of a Renewal of the Affiliate Agreements for Babe Ruth and La Grange Little League*

Director Bechtold stated that the new Little League agreement distributed to the Board was received today and contains some edits they requested. On page 4 under 1B for Gordon we are going to strike that LLG has always been responsible for lights fees, however the fee has increased by \$5, because the cost is stated right before that. On the next page they requested seeding and fertilizing for the infield. Blake spoke with staff, and we have not been doing that. We can give them quotes for pricing, but we are going to leave that in. On the next couple of pages, we will assist with fencing, gates, and dugouts. We have always been responsible for the weedkiller on the warning track, and we will continue to do that. Under G they requested to go down to 30 days for notice of a temporary construction license, but because Board approval is required, and we only meet once per month, we want to stick with 60 days. Commissioner Vear asked if an exception to the 60 days should be added for emergency work. Attorney Price did not recommend it as it could create a gray area on what constitutes an emergency. He added that we have a process if we need it, and Jenny will make it work.

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Director Bechtold stated that Little League would also like to add “provided that prevailing wages are required by law.” She referenced previous discussions indicating that if the District does not put a dollar in, they do not have to pay prevailing wages, and requested consensus from the Board and legal that it can be added. Attorney Price concurred that it is fine as long as it is their money, even if we make revenue on the properties. He added that if we deliver a dollar to them and they spend it then they become the government according to the Department of Labor.

Director Bechtold reported that the last change they requested is enhanced roofing over the dugouts. Director Ertmanis stated that Little League will be responsible for any additional items to the fencing such as racks and ball holders, as well as the roofing because none of our other fields have roofing over the dugouts and it is not something we would normally put in.

Director Bechtold stated that she communicated all the comments to Little League. They agreed to the user fees in the agreement for Gilbert, Gordon, and Waiola which can be found under 1B for each field. She would like to obtain Board approval on the agreement tonight with final approval of any last minute edits with this most recent information from Little League.

Commissioner Vear questioned if Little League’s priority field use is only at Sedgwick and whether the section on maintenance stating that in the event of damage due to human or weather related causes LGLL will assume responsibility for its equipment and supplies is clear enough. Director Bechtold stated that page 2 under Gilbert indicates shared use, with Little League having priority only during their season, and that Sedgwick is exclusive use. Attorney Price stated that the maintenance clause is good as is.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the contract pending final approval by the Executive Director, La Grange Little League, and legal. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Chvatal, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Chvatal, Lacey, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: None

Director Bechtold stated that the Babe Ruth agreement was approved last April but when Blake came on board and reviewed it, he recommended several updates. The red-lined agreement contains minimal changes. On page 1 we are adding that adult league and travel teams will operate under Babe Ruth during the 2023 seasons but 2024 must fall in line with all other external users and come through us. Page 2 has some updates to maintenance to remove redundancies from another section, and the final update is that lights will be charged at \$20 per game based on their schedule.

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Commissioner Chvatal stated that last year we agreed that groups had to rent through us and questioned the change that it is now alright to go through Babe Ruth. Director Bechtold confirmed that we will allow them to operate as they have been for this year and next year they must go through us, which was always the requirement.

Commissioner Posey moved to approve the agreement between the Park District of La Grange and La Grange Babe Ruth as drafted, subject to revisions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Chvatal, Lacey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: None

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Contract for Work and Installation of Mosaic Art Panels at the Park District of La Grange Community Center*

Director Bechtold stated that the Community Diversity Group is here tonight and expressed appreciation for all their hard work and the partnership with the Park District. She added that they constructed this agreement and did a great job utilizing the previous agreement that we presented. Legal has reviewed the contract and we are happy to move forward, and staff recommends approval by the Board. She opened the floor to any questions.

Commissioner Lacey stated that she cannot make a motion for approval. Attorney Price confirmed that she should abstain, but she does not have to recuse herself and may discuss it.

Director Bechtold stated that the Community Diversity Group is still working on their agreement with Green Star Movement and that the agreement being discussed tonight is between us and them. She added that they are still fundraising for the project. Commissioner Lacey inquired about safety measures.

Becky Lorentzen and Nancy Bramson from the Community Diversity Group responded that their fundraising is almost there, and they have enough funds to start the project. They reported that the plan is that the mosaics will be 3-5 foot panels and will be installed at window level and not easy to reach so they will not be disturbed by people. Green Star has a number of similar installations in the city, and many have been up for 17 years or more with no need for maintenance but should there be any graffiti or maintenance required on our mosaics they will take care of it. They also clarified that the benches on the drawing are not part of the project but if there is enough money for benches, they could be added with our approval. They hope to sign the contract with Greenstar in the next week or so, which will dictate the timetable, but the project is going according to plan.

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Commissioner Posey motioned to approve the contract for work and installation of mosaic art panels on the Park District of La Grange Community Center. Commissioner Vear seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Chvatal, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSTAIN: Commissioner Lacey  
ABSENT: None

### **Board Business**

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **New Business**

*First Reading of the General Operations Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, Allowing the Budget to be Put on Display (Minimum 30-Day Requirement)*  
Director Bechtold stated that she would turn this over to Cassandra Todd, Director of Finance & HR, who worked very hard with staff on the new budget process.

Director Todd explained the budget document. She stated that Section 1 of the document includes information for the District describing the purpose of the budget, who was involved in the preparation, how to read the documents, and our accounting structure. Section 2 contains the financials as a summary and the traditional format by fund, as well as the Executive Director's letter. Section 3 includes our budget by department which is tied to the department directors with supporting narratives. Section 4 is the overall capital improvement plan.

Director Todd reviewed the details of Section 1 and Executive Director Jenny Bechtold; Director of Recreation Kevin Miller; and Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis each reviewed their areas of the General Operations Budget.

Following the presentations Director Bechtold opened the floor to questions. President Opyd stated that he was impressed with the very concise budget and saw Cassandra's fingerprints all over it. He spoke with Jenny earlier in the day and she was able to answer all his questions. He thanked staff for all the work and the team's support.

Director Bechtold explained that the main reason other revenues are up is because of interest income. In May the rate was between .44%-.84% and now we are at 2.59%-4.58%, which resulted in a significant increase of \$132,000.



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### *Discussion of the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024*

Director Bechtold explained that we are presenting a 5-year plan and stressed that it is a very fluid plan. The 2023-24 budget is being recommended with the adjustments discussed for the community center paving. The cash flow analysis on the first page indicates that we have \$1,042,601 available for capital projects next year, which is amazing, and projects a general fund balance of about 1.4 million after this year. We will move \$650,000 from General to the capital budget. \$250,000 of this amount and \$250,000 from a transfer to the capital budget from the Special Recreation fund is for Waiola Park where we will apply for a matching OSLAD grant of \$500,000 for an ADA project. Jenny reviewed the remainder of the allocations for 2023-24 and opened the floor to questions.

Commissioner Chvatal stated that based on the plan it appears that we do not anticipate installing any pickleball courts or addressing the conditions of some of the tennis courts next year. Director Bechtold explained that we did explore a project at Gilbert Park, however, it would be a significant project ranging from 1.5-1.8 million dollars and we did not have the funding. If the Board approves a referendum scenario, we could be strategic with what we include and do it at that point. Blake added that pickleball courts alone could be between \$250,000-\$300,00 not including the infrastructure around them. Director Bechtold highlighted the replacement plan for the parks included in the budget and reviewed the challenges posed by substantial deferred maintenance. She stated that a referendum scenario would help get the District back up to par and allow us to implement a Reserve Fund with transfers from our Operating Fund for larger projects such as the roof, and make funds available for the fitness center, which is a money maker. Our goal is to implement better planning for the future.

Director Todd stated that the last budget item is the Ordinance which states the expenditures to be budgeted and the figures we are requesting to be appropriated. All our expenditures, including debt service and capital are included and we are proposing 9.5 million in appropriations. She concluded the budget presentation which she stated was a collaborative effort. It was a challenge to learn in such a short amount of time, and she hopes the Board appreciates it.

*Reminder of the Public Hearing Meeting to be Held on April 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Prior to the April Board Meeting (Important Notice: The April Board Meeting will be held at the Community Center, 200 S. Washington Ave., La Grange)*

President Opyd reminded everyone of the Public Hearing Meeting to be Held on April 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Prior to the April Board Meeting (Important Notice: The April Board Meeting will be held at the Community Center, 200 S. Washington Ave., La Grange).

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### **Committee Reports**

#### *Administration Committee*

Commissioner Vear stated there was not much to add regarding the budget presentation. They met in February regarding the entire process with the changes which are remarkable, and it was a great presentation overall.

#### *Parks and Facilities Committee*

President Opyd stated that they will meet April 17, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. prior to the board meeting. Jenny added that the tree management plan will be sent out for discussion.

#### *Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee/ Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee*

Commissioner Posey had no report at this time.

### **Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)**

Nancy Bramson, 4246 DuBois, Brookfield, stated she is speaking on behalf of the Community Diversity Group and expressed thanks to everyone for approving the project. It will be really nice for community engagement and will be a lasting reminder of how everyone came together on this project.

A member of the public stated that he could hardly hear the meeting and asked that the microphones be used.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Posey thanked the Community Diversity Group for all their efforts and attention to detail in putting the contract together. She expressed appreciation for the collaborative effort in putting the budget together and taking the time and care to make sure the Board is fully informed. She appreciated the way it was presented tonight.

Commissioner Lacey agreed and thanked the Community Diversity Group for the hard work they put forward to improve the Park District. She stated that the budget was impressive and was very clear in telling you what you need to know, and she appreciates the hard work of the staff. She added that the annual June parade is right around the corner and encouraged everyone to visit the First Baptist Church in La Grange to visit their educational museum for Black History Month.

Commissioner Chvatal expressed thanks for the budget presentation. He stated he is looking forward to the artwork display and congratulated the athletic department for a great basketball season. It was nice to see the place packed and great that the community is using our services.

Commissioner Vear stated exclamation marks on what was already said. To create a budget with the changes the team has gone through must have been difficult and he commends staff. He thanked the Community Diversity Group for their efforts getting the murals put together and congratulated them on acquiring funding.

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President Opyd thanked staff for their work on the budget. It aligns with a lot of the challenges we have talked about and it is clear that this team wants to take new directions that the community is asking for, which is wonderful for the residents.

President Opyd asked for a motion for the Board to move to executive session for Item 12.2 Acquisition of Real Property and Item 12.4 Personnel.

### **Executive Session**

At 7:34 P.M. Commissioner Lacey motioned for the Board to convene to executive session pursuant to Item 12.2 Acquisition of Real Property , 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(5) and Item 12.4 Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Lacey, Chvatal, Posey, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: None

At 7:47 P.M. Commissioner Posey motioned the Board arise from Executive Session and Commissioner Vear seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 7:47 P.M.

### **Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session**

*Approval of Employment Agreement for PDLG Executive Director*

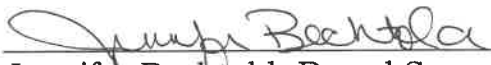
Commissioner Posey motioned to approve the employment agreement for the PDLG Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Chvatal, Lacey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: None

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Vear moved for adjournment at 7:49 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

  
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Brian Opyd, President

  
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Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary  
Approved April 17, 2023