

**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 14, 2022**

**President Vear called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Opyd, Lacey, Lawrence, Vear

ABSENT: Commissioner Posey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej  
Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn  
Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller  
Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung  
Park Foreman Claudia Galla  
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price  
Elias Lopez, David Bryant, Bernadine Sims  
Jimmy Janevski, Bob Sherman

\*Commissioner Posey joined the meeting at 6:03 P.M.

President Vear welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

David Bryant, 40 S. Ashland, La Grange, stated he is in attendance on behalf of the La Grange Citizens Council, along with Jimmy Janevski, 827 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, La Grange, who is the current chair of the Council. Jimmy Janevski stated that many of our board members have gone before the Council, which was formed in 1941. They have been engrained in La Grange for a long time as a non-partisan group of citizens working to find good people to run for office on boards of the library, village, and park district. Participation in their activities has been dwindling over time and they are at a crossroads. They are at their best when they have many members and asked that anyone interested in joining the Council email [jjanevski@aol.com](mailto:jjanevski@aol.com). David Bryant added that they need young, talented people willing to serve.

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Bob Sherman, 735 S. Brainard, La Grange, stated that he is the vice-president of School District 105 and is here with their board president, Elias Lopez. He understands it is important to evaluate how tax money is spent and how open spaces are programmed for the community. The long-standing agreement between the Park District and school board is on the agenda tonight, and he asked that no action be taken tonight. Delaying it will allow their board to have a discussion about it at their next meeting. He would like to keep communication open between the boards and administrative teams of both organizations to best meet the needs of user groups and community members. Elias Lopez, 6515 Kane Ave., Hodgkins, thanked the Board for their time and hopes to collaborate on an agreement.

President Vear thanked the public for their comments and stated we can delay action on the District 105 agreement.

### **Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Opyd motioned to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 14, 2022; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of June 28, 2021; 3.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meetings of June 14, 2021; June 28, 2021; July 12, 2021; and February 14, 2022; Item 3.4 Approval of the Financial Reports dated February 28, 2022; Item 3.5 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for March dated March 14, 2022. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Staff Reports**

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

- Director Bechtold reported that she will discuss the action items and board business items later in the meeting.
- Jenny stated that she received a new draft of the CMP over the weekend which includes some of the items previously discussed. She expects to receive the survey section by the end of the day and will then forward both to the Board.

### **Staff Comments**

#### **Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej**

- Superintendent Kuniej reported that we received an additional \$200,000 in tax money.
- Leynette stated she is working on the property insurance schedules for PDRMA.

#### **Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller**

- Superintendent Miller reported that we have a Touch-A-Truck event on

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Saturday at Sedgwick Park and encouraged the commissioners to stop by.

- Kevin stated that the Park District is the presenting sponsor for LGBA's summer art project which will be rain barrels this year.

Commissioner Opyd stated he was glad to see the marketing list is up a couple hundred users. Commissioner Posey asked Kevin if he works with the La Grange Newcomers group, which he does not. She will get a contact name to him, and she also suggested reaching out to the PTC's at each school. They have their own mailing lists and send out blasts. President Vear encouraged Kevin to display trophies, banners, or other recognitions for our basketball teams when they win tournaments.

### **Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung**

- Superintendent Hartung reported that 147 students are registered for full-time BASE for next year. She expects the numbers to rise significantly when part-time registration begins on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

President Vear asked about staffing the program for next year. Leanna stated she has received a couple of inquiries from past staff that are supervisor qualified. Commissioner Opyd inquired if there are still capacity limits due to COVID. Leanna answered that registration is currently based on COVID numbers, but she hopes to be able to open additional spots in July or August. The schools have not yet changed the spacing of students at six feet apart.

### **Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn**

- Superintendent Finn stated that there are more people in the parks with the weather changing.
- Chris reported that Babe Ruth will run a preseason camp in a couple of weeks and that Little League begins their season in April. One of the soccer groups will begin field use in early April, and AYSO begins after Easter.

President Vear asked if the meetings with our user groups went smoothly. Chris stated that they did. AYSO takes the bulk of soccer fields and everyone else fills in. He went through the schedule at Gordon Park with a fine-tooth comb to make sure everyone had the space they needed since Gilbert and Sedgwick fields are being rested.

Commissioner Opyd asked if the affiliate agreements have been updated and if we use a master agreement. There was discussion of the various user groups and their field use, including lights, field irrigation, and pricing. Chris stated that there are two agreements for each group. There is an existing agreement, and another being developed to clarify in writing the nuts and bolts that have been verbally agreed upon for a long time. Director Bechtold added that policy section 728 contains the general affiliate agreement, and we are now breaking it out further.

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### **Park Foreperson Claudia Galla**

- Foreperson Galla reported that the date for fertilizing athletic fields has been changed to April 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> because of our Easter Egg Hunt, with the following week as a rain date.
- Claudia stated that the event (MWRD monarch presentation) on June 3<sup>rd</sup> will be at the Denning Park shelter at 6pm.

Commissioner Posey commented that the Pet Parade and carnival weekend will be held the same weekend and could impact attendance. President Vear stated that the community center looks nice in the photos provided. Claudia stated that they finished cleaning and painting the kitchen there, which was the last project.

### **La Grange Fitness Report**

- Director Bechtold reported that there has been an uptick in members with the loosened COVID restrictions. There are exciting events coming up, including an open house.
- Jenny stated that it looks like the fitness center will have its best year yet. The bottom line in 2019-2020 was \$171, 525 and the current year-to-date is at \$168,870.
- Dom Adjoumani reached out to 700 past members regarding the March special to join with no initiation fee.

### **Attorney Report**

Attorney Price stated that he will have comments during executive session.

### **Treasurer Report**

Supt. of Finance Kuniej stated she is working on changing all the bank accounts.

### **Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval (Ratify) Temporary Construction Permit for Little League to Execute Contracted Work at Sedgwick and Waive Bidding Process*  
Director Bechtold explained that Little League does the work on the Sedgwick fields they use. They would like to have maintenance work done by Simmons, a contractor that works with the “sod father” from the White Sox. The work is over \$25,000 which requires a bid process, but they have already signed a contract. They have asked to have the bidding process waived, which the Board has the legal option to do.

There was Board and staff discussion that moving forward Little League must follow our policies and the affiliate agreement, and they need to communicate with us regarding any work that impacts the fields or our grounds. It has been made clear to them that this would be a one-time exception and that the new agreement requires 90-day notice to, and approval from, PDLG. Their president has been told that we want to see their paid invoices to monitor work and to measure what has been done. If it continues to happen, we will need to talk

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about ramifications.

President Vear asked for a motion to ratify waiving the bidding process for the proposed project from Simmons to be completed at Sedgwick fields A and B in the amount of \$31,300. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Opyd, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

President Vear asked for a motion to ratify the Temporary Construction License for La Grange Little League to complete the Simmons project during the spring of 2022. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Opyd, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Board Business**

#### **Old Business**

*Board and Staff Discussion on General Operations Budget for 2022-2023  
(A draft copy of the 2022-2023 General Operations Budget is currently on display as of March 2, 2022)*

Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej stated that the budget was a very thorough process, and everyone did their best looking at changing things and being more efficient. The recreation department considered the CMP comments when reviewing programming for this year. Staff looked at things that needed fixing and places that needed repairs and came up with a good budget that projects a profit, which we want to do so it can be carried over to capital projects. She explained that some special revenue funds show deficits, but there is money from prior years. Taxes are two years behind and will take time to hit. We planned to make extra payments for IMRF, and our pension plan made a great profit resulting in over 100% funding, so we have a fund balance to reduce. We are also working down an overage in FICA since we laid off staff. We made sure we were properly balanced and have a solid operations budget that is achievable. Leynette stated that the projection for this year is good with a net revenue over expenses of \$651,000.

Commissioner Opyd stated that he is pleased with some of the line item changes, including increased spending on park landscaping, and he is glad that the whole organization challenged their thinking on the budget.

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President Vear stated the reports indicate that next year's projection of \$294,000 includes the rollover bond issue. After subtracting capital of \$136,500, there is a revenue projection of \$158,218. The budget looks great and is very efficient, and he likes the movement in some of the funds which indicates more programming.

Director Bechtold added that in years past recreation capacity was budgeted at 100% so revenue was inflated; this is a more realistic budget. Leynette agreed and stated that this is better for staff and gives them an achievable goal.

### *Discussion of MBO's and Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023*

Director Bechtold stated that the MBO's are in the budget binder, and part of the MBO's is \$134,000 for items within the capital plan facility assessment. After diving in further it appears we may have doubled budgeted for HVAC which is in the capital plan and the CMP, and we need to revisit the capital budget. She would also like to determine if the money for Stone and Gilbert basketball courts are the best places to use it. We did not have the CMP so we may want more time to evaluate capital.

Jenny stated that most items are on course, including paving and lighting, carpet at Denning, and the work at Gilbert. Although capital needs further evaluation, the general operations budget is good. Leynette added that we are doing the right thing to replace RTU's in the recreation center and water fountains in the parks. We are starting to make a dent in the plan.

Commissioner Lawrence stated she would like to see a focus on park master plans. Each park should have a long-range vision, and grants should be considered, to evaluate the full potential of our land holdings.

The Board and staff discussed the proposed Gilbert building renovation including its current condition and use, potential for increased programming after renovation, and parking availability. They also discussed replacement of fencing, drinking fountains, and RTU's at the recreation center to be replaced in clusters.

Director Bechtold reviewed the items on the MBO chart that have been on the list for many years but not funded. They will not be forgotten, but she recommends they be removed from the list. MBO's for investigating an item will now be included in goals and objectives where they will get more attention. Staff have submitted many MBO's each year in the past, but this year we limited them to what is needed or in the CMP.

Bernadine Sims, a member of the public in attendance, asked if the budget includes a new bathroom at the community center. She lives in that area, uses the center, and the need there is more than what is spoken of. Director Bechtold stated that a new bathroom is not in this budget but that the community center was just painted and there are more items in the CMP over

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the next 10 years.

### *Reminder of Public Hearing Meeting to be Held on April 11, 2022 at 6:00pm Prior to the April Board Meeting*

President Vear announced that a public hearing meeting will be held on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm prior to the April board meeting.

Director Bechtold stated that she has an item to add to her director's report earlier in the meeting. She has received inquiries on whether we are interested in selling 610 East Ave. and has responded that we have an agreement with the Village that we will add more parking in this space. Nobody has made a number offer, but she wants the Board to know about the inquiries. The Board indicated they were not interested in selling the property.

### **New Business**

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Part-Time Marketing and Sponsorship Coordinator Job Description*

Director Bechtold stated that this is a new part-time position, and Supt. of Recreation Kevin Miller developed the job description. We are looking for someone to compliment current staff working on marketing that has more expertise in this area. It has been budgeted for this fiscal year and we want to post it and hire. Kevin explained the position would focus on social media, website, digital marketing, banners, signage, and press releases. Since coming out of COVID, programming and events are picking up, and there are other items needing attention that staff is unable to dedicate time to including nature programming, the foundation, and Adopt-a-Park. They have been learning on the fly with marketing, and a skilled individual could teach them to do things better.

Commissioner Opyd stated that it is a great idea, and he supports it, especially since staff wants to try new things. It will make a big difference to have these skills in-house. It would be great to find a local person looking to get back in the work force. He encouraged everyone to tap into their networks for anyone that may be interested.

Commissioner Opyd motioned to approve the part-time marketing and sponsorship coordinator job description. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Johnson Controls Radio Fire Alarm System Agreements*

Director Bechtold stated that she has been working with Supt. of Facilities Chris Finn on this. Chris explained that we currently have an Advanced Fire &

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Security system run through a phone line at the recreation center. When an alarm is pulled it goes to a third party that then calls local 911. The phone systems at our satellite buildings have been removed so they need a different type of system. A radio system could be used at all our facilities that would go directly to 911 dispatch. We have a relationship with Johnson Controls because they manage our current alarm system at the recreation center, and we would like them to service all our facilities on the same system. The La Grange Fire Dept. has indicated that Johnson Controls is the only company they work with to allow a direct connection to 911.

Director Bechtold explained that legal does not advise entering into the contracts, as presented today, due to limitation of liability, and Johnson Controls is not willing to change the contract. PDRMA is evaluating the contract and will make suggestions that we will present to Johnson, which we think they will reject. We will then need to find a different company or determine what risks we are willing to assume. It is also a risk not to have this system in place, and we know of many other districts that have signed with them with the contract we presented.

Attorney Price stated that we were able to change the contract term from five years to three years and that the fire department has created a monopoly in La Grange by refusing to work with other vendors. Their service reduces risk to patrons and property, however, if Johnson messes up, we have no recourse. Their point is that they are not an insurance company. Given what the Village has done, it is probably best to go with the system that talks to the Village and the first responders for the shortest response time and enter into the contract with our eyes open knowing the risk. Tonight's vote would be subject to final approval of the contract by Director Bechtold and legal.

The Board discussed moving forward with the approval as the least worst option and that, as residents, they could make an appeal to the fire department to approve more systems in the future.

A motion was requested to approve the contracts with Johnson Controls subject to the executive director's final wording. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Opyd, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

*Discussion and/or Approval of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) By and Between the School Board of Education, District 105 and the Park District of La Grange Regarding Open Space*

Director Bechtold stated that we have been reviewing all contracts within our agency and came across this IGA from 1992. It was a surprise to both parties



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that it existed, and tonight we are just looking for discussion and Board feedback. We have been maintaining the fields and grounds, and we met as staff to identify if we are using it, how Little League uses it, and whether the IGA fits with the future of the Park District.

The Board and staff discussed whether the agreement and land are of value to the District. Jenny stated that we need to update or dissolve the agreement. The school district owns all the land, including the tennis courts. We have signage on the courts with rules but do not offer programming there. Our annual cost for turf maintenance is approximately \$4,200, which does not include gas or equipment wear and tear, and tennis court maintenance is expensive. We have our own infrastructure needs to focus on. The school district will bring the agreement to their board at their next meeting and then reconnect with us on where they stand.

Supt. of Recreation Miller stated that he showed the site to our athletic supervisor. Overall, they agreed that we could not run adequate programming there to justify maintaining the space. The last time we ran programming there was a summer day camp in 2019. We would have liked to run it there this year, but they did not return our phone calls or emails.

Commissioner Opyd stated he read the original agreement, which may have been a good idea in 1992, but maintenance is being paid by taxpayers. If our name is on the tennis courts, we want them to look good, and they need resurfacing which Supt. Finn added could cost approximately \$75,000. Commissioner Lawrence stated that if we leased the land, we could partner with the school district to improve the land with grants. It is important to know what amenities we are providing to our community and keeping them open and accessible. President Vear felt that the schools and residents would continue to use the land in the same fashion regardless of the IGA. Commissioner Posey stated there is value in the fact that residents perceive the land as Park District property.

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Administration Committee*

Commissioner Lacey had no report at this time but encouraged the Board to review the administration goals in section 8 of the board packet.

#### *Parks and Open Lands*

Commissioner Lawrence had no report at this time.

#### *Finance & Capital Project Committee*

President Vear had nothing to add to the discussion of the budget earlier in the meeting.

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### *Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee*

Commissioner Posey had no report at this time.

### *Marketing/ Social Media Committee*

Commissioner Opyd reported that his committee met recently, and the key takeaway was to increase digital marketing, and the new job description is a key part of making that happen. The new position fits in with the strategy of Kevin and his team.

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

Bob Sherman, 735 Brainard, La Grange, stated that he appreciates the Board's time and their frank and honest discussion on the IGA.

Bernadine Sims, 117 Washington Avenue, stated that she has not attended a meeting before and came tonight to observe. The District's budget designates areas to improve, and she is here to speak for the east side of La Grange. She does not see a lot of improvement there compared to the increased taxes she pays and is looking for new things to come their way.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Opyd thanked Mrs. Sims for coming. He stated that last year we spent quite a bit on 200 Washington, substantially more than other facilities, and he hopes we can continue. There are new doors, glass, and paint and lots of sweat equity on improvements. He knows it may not be what the residents expect, but we are chipping away. He thanked Bob for coming and sharing his comments as a representative of the school district. It is great to see members of their board here; both boards want what is best for the community.

Commissioner Lacey thanked the public for their comments. She stated the budget binder was easy to read and understand. The work at the community center was well done and she looks forward to spring flowers there. It was good to see Bob here, and she encouraged Bernadine to let us know what she sees in the parks. We need comments from the community.

Commissioner Lawrence stated she was happy to see the MBO's and rebranding. She likes the ADA rotation plan and the Touch-a-Truck event, and that we are spending more money on outdoor parks.

Commissioner Posey stated that she appreciates all the information in the comprehensive budget. The process was pleasant, and she thanked staff. She is happy to see members of the public here tonight and encouraged others to attend; their feedback is important.

President Vear stated that he is happy to see everyone's faces again. He likes that the goals have been separated from the MBO's, and appreciates the description changes in the budget. The budget is impressive and is easy to understand for new board members. He is looking forward to the marketing hire, and he encouraged the public to get involved in our Adopt-a-Park program.

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### Executive Session

At 7:59 P.M. President Vear asked for a motion 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 so moved by Commissioner Lacey, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

At 8:52 P.M. Commissioner Opyd motioned the Board arise from Executive Session and Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 8:52 P.M.

### Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session

President Vear made a motion directing legal counsel and the executive director to notify the donor that we are terminating the contract. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

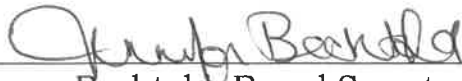
AYES: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Lacey, Opyd, Lawrence  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: None

### Adjournment

Commissioner Opyd moved for adjournment at 8:53 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Robert Vear, President



Jenny Bechtold, Board Secretary  
*Approved April 11, 2022*