

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

**MAY 8, 2023**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Chvatal, Posey, Vear, 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  
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Erin Monforti  
Becky Lorentzen, Marian Honel-Wilson  
Nancy Bramson, Harold Gibson, Michael Buttron

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda. He announced that work has begun on the new parking lot and that the timing is good with it being our slower season. It is one of our greatest improvements and will be ready for the residents this fall.

**Administration of Oaths**

Director Bechtold congratulated President Opyd and Commissioners Posey and Chvatal on their election to the Board for another term and thanked them for their service. They were sworn in and read the Oath of Office.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

Michael Buttron from La Grange Little League introduced himself as a 12-year resident of La Grange. He stated that he served on the Community Economic Commission, was president of the Citizens Council for six years, and he shares our love for La Grange. His goal is to begin as president of Little League next month. He knows their relationship with us hasn't been amazing as of late but he looks forward to working with PDLG and making it right. He said he has talked with some of our Board members and looks forward to speaking with all

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of them. He also spoke with Blake, Zach and Kevin and has a vision for cosmetic improvements that they can put their money behind. Little League understands there are many areas in town that need just as much work. He submitted changes to Blake today for Sedgwick including ADA accessible dugouts and improved scoreboards and will investigate improvements at Gordon so that the girls that play there have a better experience with facilities that match what the boys have. He hopes to make it a good partnership going forward.

### **Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Public Hearing of April 17, 2023; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 17, 2023; Item 3.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of April 17, 2023; Item 3.4 Approval of the Financial Reports dated April 30, 2023; and Item 3.5 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for May dated May 8, 2023. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Staff Reports**

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

- Director Bechtold reminded everyone that June is the annual meeting when board positions will be voted on and committee assignments will be reviewed. She encouraged the commissioners to think about where they would like to be.
- Jenny stated that the disaster proclamation and executive order will expire on May 11<sup>th</sup> which means we can no longer hold fully remote meetings, and a quorum on-site will be required. A commissioner may still participate remotely if the absence meets the exclusion criteria.
- She reported that the quarry reached out to Blake last month to inquire about placing a seismograph at Sedgwick which started a conversation. Lockport has one at one of their parks and we tried to mimic their license agreement but ran into a stumbling block with the FOIA guidelines. FOIA requires that data be provided within five business days and the quarry said that it was too burdensome for them to adhere to, and they also could not indemnify us for injury. Based on those issues we did not move forward. Safety and FOIA are necessary for any Park District agreement.
- Jenny stated that we have been in communication with Nancy from LGBA regarding fireworks at the fest. They are trying to find an alternative and have not received much feedback from their board, who have asked for more information. We have not received responses to our inquiries on light shows or drones and are waiting for the Village to

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provide their requirements for a drone show. There are concerns about exposed wood with fireworks with the new La Grange Park property behind Gordon.

- She reported that it came to our attention that AYSO did not sign the affiliate agreement from last year. We have been in communication with them and Blake and Zach met with them on Friday.

Blake stated that they had a productive conversation which was not combative but that there was a negative Facebook post from AYSO. We had a meeting scheduled two weeks prior and their president did not come as planned, but we met with two of their other board members and told them about our plans for the fields going forward which includes closing the fields at Gordon next year, and we do not know if that information was passed along to him. There are hiccups but we hope to be productive going forward. Commissioner Chvatal stated that the only way to preserve the fields is to not allow practices during the week when it rains and the fields are wet. Blake stated that he also met with the Celtics about field conditions and both organizations are pointing fingers at each other for not staying off the wet fields, and it will be a process to get the groups to do this.

Jenny stated that when she first started, we had two consultants out to look at our fields and she was surprised that their opinion was that they are in good condition for recreational fields. We want to improve them the best we can and are headed in the right direction. One of the items that came up was the Countryside fields, which is the next topic.

- Jenny explained that we can give feedback to Countryside on their field conditions but we have no control over their maintenance and we are not checking them. We are in a 25-year IGA with Countryside and will be in the third 5-year term in June. We are essentially their rec department and we rent out their fields and collect fees for Countryside, yet we are not able to put that money back into the fields. AYSO has raised questions about this practice, while La Grange Little League is not allowed to play there since they have no Countryside residents. We are looking at the agreement and want to program the fields but are not sure it benefits us to schedule and rent them if we cannot control how they are used or fixed. Jenny stated that she wanted to start a conversation and see how the Board feels.

President Opyd asked what the expectations are with the current agreement which grants Countryside resident rates for our services. Jenny explained that in return we have access to their fields, and we can utilize La Grange District 105 facilities but we have to go through the Village. Resident rates for Flagg Creek are supposed to be included but Countryside said this was not possible. Kevin added that only Ideal School applies to District 105 use. He reported that the first year we signed the agreement in 2012 or 2013 we programmed the

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fields with sports camps to reduce the wear and tear on our fields. This did not work out well because programs had to be brought inside due to the heat since Countryside Park has no shade, or we were running to the park to keep the kids hydrated. Vendors did not want to hold classes there. Countryside's other parks are not large enough and they do not program City Park because of soccer and baseball.

Commissioner Chvatal stated that it is a benefit for us to receive fees for renting the fields while having no cost to maintain them but we should ask Countryside to maintain them better. Jenny stated that we have asked but we have no control. Blake added that AYSO has questioned why we charge user fees but do not maintain the fields. Jenny stated that we can continue doing this if everyone is aware that it is an administrative fee we are charging the users.

There was a brief discussion of which towns the participants come from as players in AYSO and Celtics soccer.

Commissioner Vear stated that we are dealing with scheduling problems for Countryside, which is not a free service but like what Ticketmaster does. President Opyd agreed that we are providing a service and asked what the current fees are. Jenny stated that current hourly field rates range from \$6-\$12 and that spring fees totaled approximately \$3,000; we do not have the fall numbers yet.

Commissioner Chvatal suggested providing a formal response indicating that we would like the fields in safe condition and expressed concern with the significant cost if we took responsibility for maintaining the fields. He added that the pictures seem to indicate the field conditions are similar to those in Western Springs with dirt and patches everywhere due to overuse, which could only be alleviated by allowing games during the week but no practices, especially when raining. Jenny and Blake agreed that we do not want to take on responsibility for Countryside fields as we struggle to maintain our own fields. The soccer groups also have high expectations for fields which they are using for recreational soccer.

President Opyd stated that there is interest from the commissioners to understand the situation and communicate with Countryside but it sounds like staff has more investigating to do. Jenny answered that we should review the language in the 25-year agreement so that staff have options to operate efficiently and then have a conversation with Countryside. Flagg Creek is in the agreement and we do not have that benefit. Commissioner Vear asked for clarification of the 5-year agreement option and how work is done on Countryside fields since they do not have a park district. Jenny answered that the agreement is up 5 years from the contract date to be renewed for five successive 5-year terms with a 90-day notice to terminate but added our

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intention is not to terminate. She stated that their village has a hierarchy of priorities with the top tier including items such as police, fire, and maintenance of streets, and recreation is not at the top.

President Opyd asked that staff report back next month with their recommendations.

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

- Director Todd reported that the 2023-2024 budget was installed on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Cassandra stated that she is preparing for the audit which will begin in June.
- She stated that we received additional tax money and have received approximately \$878,000 and we are in good shape.

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

- Director Miller stated that the Pet Parade is June 3<sup>rd</sup> and we will have a vehicle in the parade but have not been assigned a slot yet. All commissioners are welcome to walk the event with staff.
- Kevin reported that we are a sponsor for the LeaderShop 5K on June 9<sup>th</sup>.
- He encouraged everyone to view the recycled art submissions on display downstairs through the end of May. We received nine submissions and it was an exciting first year.
- Kevin stated that BASE registration was held for the next school year and it went fairly well. There were some hiccups we are looking at, and we are investigating moving it online.
- He passed out copies of the FY report for the end of the season and explained that the residency report breaks down total participants and unique participants with enrollments by zip code.

Director Bechtold added that the report is fantastic and our success rate has increased significantly. Commissioner Vear agreed that it has been a great year. President Opyd stated that it is wonderful that we are homing in to target the programs that the community wants and knows it will continue.

Commissioner Vear referenced the chart in Kevin's report detailing the year to date parties by room and suggested including the max number so we can gauge the use. Jenny stated that use is down due to parking limitations during construction of the new lot.

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

- Director Ertmanis reported that he should know by tomorrow when the lot closure will be and it will be posted and e-blasted.
- Blake stated that the asphalt has been completed at the community center and an eight-foot buffer strip was left for the sewer and gas lines.

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After the sewer is repaired, we will install plants and benches for people to sit and look at the mosaic art or converse with others. The buffer will allow for easier plumbing repairs in the future if needed.

- He stated that communication with Little League has improved and he looks forward to working with Mike.

### **Attorney Report**

Attorney Monforti had no report at this time.

### **Treasurer Report**

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

### **Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of the Community Diversity Group Design for the Mosaic Art Panels to be Displayed on the Exterior of the Community Center*

Director Bechtold stated that the Community Diversity Group is here tonight. They were under a time crunch when they provided the first round of drawings that are in the packet. She added that they have since held another meeting and presented the edits on the AV screen.

Nancy Bramson explained that two design workshops were held. The first was a brainstorming session and then Green Star took the ideas to create the designs, and the group made their design choices at the second workshop. The mosaics tell a story with the theme of past, present, and future. The tree mosaic represents roots followed by hands planting a seed. The great migration from the south to La Grange is depicted by the train with the role of Electromotive highlighted. The next mosaic is a family with a heart followed by the sun with eyes and a bird to represent faith. There used to be a field at the community center where baseball was played which the sports mosaic signifies. The next panel depicts an older hand pulling up a younger hand, and the diversity fruit tree represents the future and what is now a mixed community. Nancy stated it was a wonderful experience and that the feedback was very positive with participants saying they felt uplifted, enlightened, and encouraged. Older residents said they felt like they were home again.

Becky Lorentzen added that there were about 15 people with historical ties to the east side at the first 2-hour workshop and they shared incredible stories and positive experiences. Those not from that area were grateful to hear the stories and an LT teacher said it gave her an understanding of the experiences of the people that grew up in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Posey stated that she loves the joyful and colorful panels and the idea of them telling a story. President Opyd suggested that this is a great opportunity to update the signage on the building. Marian Honel-Wilson encouraged that we not hurry to replace the sign and proposed getting public input to rename the building in honor of someone from the community.

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President Vear suggested adding Americana to the art with a flag or emblem on the train mosaic. There was a brief discussion on the challenging logistics of altering the design.

Becky Lorentzen recommended doing something outside or inside to explain what each panel means with a possible plaque for large donors. She stated that PDLG approval is needed tonight in order to finish the project this year since it takes three months to get the panels. Minor tweaks could be considered but the last day the panels could be attached to the building is September 30<sup>th</sup>. They would like to hold the tile workshops from mid-August through mid-September.

Commissioner Chvatal confirmed that the Board's approval was for the design and not for additional plaques.

Commissioner Posey motioned that the Board approve the mosaic design approved by the community as it is. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution R23-03, A Resolution Forming a Committee on Local Government Efficiency*

Director Bechtold stated that per previous discussions a new bill requires that we form a committee consisting of two residents, the Board, and herself. Three residents have agreed to serve and we included their names in the resolution: William Lanspeary, Todd Vancleave, and Eric Weirab. Approval is required by June 10<sup>th</sup> so the Board must act tonight.

Commissioner Chvatal motioned to approve Resolution R23-03, A Resolution Forming a Committee on Local Government Efficiency. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution R23-04, Declaring Surplus Property*

Director Bechtold stated that Blake has been working with his department to operate efficiently and came across extra equipment. Blake stated that his goal is to have the seasonal staff do the mowing but the two newest motors we have are cabs which are cumbersome to operate and do not have good visibility. They are \$50,000 per unit brand new. A zero turn mower is easier to use and

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more efficient so he explored the trade-in of the units with John Deere. The other item is the tractor which was approved in the last budget.

Commissioner Vear asked if the exchange was part of the surplus and if the mowers would be sold on the open market. Blake stated that the exchange is included in surplus and that only the tractor would be sold on the open market. President Opyd stated that this helps us to pay for equipment to reach our tactical goals in getting things looking great. Blake added that this will allow full-time staff to engage in more projects rather than spending three days a week mowing.

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve Resolution R23-04, Declaring Surplus Property. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Revisions to the 2023-2024 Capital Budget*

Director Bechtold stated that it pained us to include this memo but emergencies happen and we had a plumbing problem at the community center that we did not budget for. The new Explorer is not currently in the best interest of the District and those funds will be reallocated for plumbing and the mowers Blake spoke about, as well as the surplus previously budgeted for a new utility cart. There is a capital adjustment due to a price increase of \$5,231 for the utility tractor and surplus will cover the rake. We have old infrastructure and recommend raising the capital contingency from \$15,000 to \$50,000 so we are prepared for any unforeseen expenses. These changes keep the bottom line very similar to where we were at, and Fund 36 remains the same. Blake added that there currently is no state bid for the Explorer and other districts have said they have had to pay retail which means we would not have been able to purchase the model we need.

Commissioner Vear motioned to approve the revisions to the 2023-2024 Capital Budget. Commissioner Posey seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

## **Board Business**

### **Old Business**

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Affiliate Agreements*

Jenny explained that this item was included on the agenda because we were



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not sure if we would have anything from Babe Ruth, which we do not. We may bring it back next month with AYSO as they did not sign their agreement.

### **New Business**

None

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Administration Committee*

No report at this time.

#### *Parks and Facilities Committee*

No report at this time.

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

No report at this time.

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

Nancy Bramson, 4246 DuBois, Brookfield, thanked everyone for last month's meeting; it was so nice to be at the community center. She stated that she attends four board meetings in the community and complimented everyone on having the best run meeting. She loves the personal touch at the end. She appreciates the openness to their project and tonight's approval.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Posey thanked Nancy for bringing more public art to La Grange and stated their vision for the community center is very special. She is excited to know that the community is already embracing it. She added that she was also happy the Board met at the community center last month; it is good to engage the public and meet them where they're at.

Commissioner Chvatal congratulated the other two elected commissioners. He looks forward to continuing to work with them and appreciates the Park District's support.

Commissioner Vear thanked Nancy for the murals which will be a great addition to the community center. He thanked Blake for dealing with the plumbing issue and the asphalt installation there. He welcomed back his fellow commissioners.


President Opyd thanked the Community Diversity Group. He is excited about the project and the personal touch to the building. He thanked Michael for coming out tonight and for the amazing communication. He looks forward to doing great things together and the future partnership. He congratulated staff on the amazing Touch-A-Truck event which had many people there despite the weather. It was a great success and is becoming a cornerstone for the community.


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President Opyd announced that there would not be an executive session tonight and asked for a motion for adjournment.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Posey moved for adjournment at 7:06 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 June 12, 2023*