

**PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE
DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON EFFICIENCY MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024, 6:00PM**

The Decennial Committee on Efficiency of the Park District of La Grange will meet at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024, at the Park District's Administrative\Recreation Facility in the De Sitter Room located at 536 East Avenue, La Grange, Illinois

1.0 CONVENING THE MEETING

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS & DECLARATIONS

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

3.0 APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Decennial Committee Meeting of February 12, 2024

4.0 ACTION ITEMS

4.1 Discussion and/or Approval of the Decennial Committee Local Government Efficiency Report

5.0 BOARD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

6.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

7.0 COMMITTEE COMMENTS

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

8.1 Simultaneous Motion to Approve Minutes of the Decennial Committee on Efficiency for March 11, 2024, Adjourn the Meeting and Dissolve the Committee

3/8/2024
Jennifer Bechtold
Board Secretary

*Parks & Recreation... The Benefits are Endless!
Remember to Take Time for Fun and Enjoy Life to the Fullest!*

**MINUTES OF THE DECENNIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS
536 EAST AVENUE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS**

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

President Opyd called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

COMMITTEE

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Opyd, Commissioner Chvatal, Commissioner Vear, Todd Vancleave, William Lanspeary

ABSENT: Eric Wierab
Commissioner Posey, Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger
Direction of Recreation Kevin Miller
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: None

President Opyd announced the committee meeting at 5:30 P.M.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/ Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

None

Approval of Committee Minutes

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the Decennial Committee meeting minutes from November 13, 2023. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal, seconded by Representative Lanspeary, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Chvatal, Rep. Lanspeary, Commissioner Vear,
Rep. Vancleave, President Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Lacey and Posey

Action Items

None

Board Business

New Business

Old Business

Discussion of Draft Report for Decennial Committee on Efficiency

Director Bechtold stated that the first draft of the report was reviewed back in November and we have since received feedback on unfunded mandates. She referenced the revised report and stated that page 23 has the most updates in addition to page 24 beginning with item E. She added that it is difficult to put a dollar amount on unfunded mandates because they are constantly issued. If the Cook County paid leave act goes through, which dictates that all part-time staff must receive 1 hour of paid leave for every 40 hours worked, it will cost us \$20,000 annually. This number is based on an evaluation of last year's budget, and it would increase every year. An amendment to the bill exempting park districts is being considered right now, and we hope it goes our way. Jenny stated she attended the Cook County board meeting and spoke to them about our part-time staff. For many individuals it is their first job, and we offer them the flexibility to work when they can. As the mandate is written, they can take time off at any time with no notice. If our camp counselors tell us they are not coming in for the last week of camp we would have to shut down programs. The County is meeting on February 28th to consider the amendment, and it will be decided by their board on February 29th.

Director Bechtold explained that the unfunded prevailing wage requirement forces us to pay higher wages to laborers and is a big strain on our budget, but there is no way around it. Minimum wage is also constantly rising. The requirement for a competitive bidding process for projects over \$30,000 also results in costs to do bids and limits who we can work with. The mandated annual audit and financial report costs \$14,000 with a \$500 increase each year per our current contract and could rise higher. We must maintain files and the local records act requires us to apply for approval and a certificate of destruction to destroy old records. Last year we spent \$2,000 for a company to shred documents, which does not include staff costs. We have destroyed almost 400 boxes of documents over the last two years.

Director Bechtold stated that IAPD is an advocate for park districts and they lobby for us, watch bills, and protect us from many unpaid mandates. They were able to get the State of Illinois to exempt park districts and schools from the Decennial requirements but Cook County created its own mandate. IAPD created the report template for districts to use for their Decennial report.

President Opyd commented that some of the language in the report is too opinionated and it feels like a lobbying document. He would like to strike section B, paragraph 2, which suggests a political position on background checks and strike a sentence from the third paragraph in section A which states that we have to drop everything for FOIA requests. He is happy to hear what our residents think. He added that he has no problem with competitive bidding which adds value on larger projects.

Rep. Lanspeary asked for details on the \$30,000 bidding requirement and how

many projects require this. Director Bechtold answered that it is dictated by park district code and was increased in the last year or so to \$30,000 from \$25,000. The frequency of bids depends on where we are. There are co-op groups that work to secure the lowest prices and are already approved, which enables us to omit bidding and know we are getting the best price possible.

Rep. Lanspeary asked about the cost to shred documents and whether it could be done in-house. Director Bechtold stated that we could look at that and the cost to purchase a larger shredder. Commissioner Vear asked if the certification is free. Jenny stated that outsourcing includes the certification of destruction at no extra fee. We also contact multiple vendors for the best pricing.

Director Bechtold asked if there was consensus to strike “burden to have to drop everything” and section B, paragraph 2 on page 23. Rep. Lanspeary questioned whether the language in the report is a message to the state. Jenny stated that this section was expanded for the second draft and everything else remained the same. She did not receive any updates from the committee.

There was consensus to remove the sections discussed. Director Bechtold stated that the final report will be approved at the next meeting.

Public Comments

None

Committee Comments

Rep. Vancleave asked if the Park District was looking to add any green spaces. Director Bechtold stated that La Grange is landlocked which makes it very difficult, in addition to the cost to purchase land. There is a lot on Bluff for sale for 7 million dollars, which is our entire budget. There were some homes across from Denning Park that reached out to us, but they were a million dollars. It is difficult to purchase new land when we have 16 million dollars in deferred maintenance. The CMP indicated that residents want us to take care of what we already have.

Commissioner Vear stated that when we investigated a potential donated parcel two years ago we found the cost to remediate the land was quite expensive and we were not able to accept the donation. We purchased Denning land two decades ago and purchased Spring Park in the 90’s through a referendum. If there is a good opportunity we definitely investigate it. President Opyd added that the Board investigates and explores opportunities but has not found anything. Jenny stated that we always remind people that we take donations. Rep. Vancleave stated that the Bluff land would be amazing to have to connect to this building. Director Bechtold reported that it was investigated, and we are always looking.

DECENNIAL COMMITTEE MEETING – FEBRUARY 12, 2024

Adjournment

President Opyd asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear at 5:50 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Chvatal, and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Brian Opyd, President

Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved March 11, 2024

EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE

**APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY
ON MARCH 11, 2024**



I. Purpose

The **Park District of La Grange** (“Park District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 8th, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Brian Opyd, President

Robert Vear, Vice President

Lynn Lacey, Second Vice President

Stephanie Posey, Commissioner

Michael Chvatal, Commissioner

William Lanspeary, La Grange Resident

Todd Vancleave, La Grange Resident

Eric Weirab, La Grange Resident

Jennifer Bechtold, Executive Director

III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

Meeting Date	Meeting Time and Place
<u>November 13, 2023</u>	<u>5:30 PM, 536 East Ave, La Grange, IL</u>
<u>February 12, 2024</u>	<u>5:30 PM, 536 East Ave, La Grange, IL</u>
<u>March 11, 2024</u>	<u>6:00 PM, 536 East Ave, La Grange, IL</u>

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District's website or upon request at the Park District's administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in 1929. All Illinois park districts, including the Park District of La Grange, are governed by the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 *et seq.*

Operating with a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which functions apart from general purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The Park District is governed by a board of five commissioners. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the park district and are elected at the Consolidated Election in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.
- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives and allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.
- **Increased transparency.** A dedicated unit of local government to provide park and recreation services also improves the relationship between the Park District and its residents due to the transparency and openness related to the board and Park District operations. The District's detailed agenda and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services as park districts do, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are provided in greater detail. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to increased scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.
- **Protection of revenues.** Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for Park District purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general purpose governments including cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues that are generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited, if any, input from voters.

- **Protection of assets.** Public parks and other real property owned by the Park District is held in trust for the residents of the Park District, and, subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by a referendum. This is contrasted with general purpose units of government, which have authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.
- **Providing the Community More with Less.** The Park District does more with considerably fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding, and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District share is only 4.68% of the local tax bill.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- Board Policies and Procedures Manual
- Operations Manual
- Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual
- General Conduct Ordinances
- Personnel Policies/Employee Manual or Handbook
- Safety and Risk Management Policies
- Comprehensive Master Plan

V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the lowest possible cost. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the lowest possible cost to our community.

1. Membership in SRA if Any

The Park District is part of the South East Association for Special Recreation Association ("SRA"). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code. Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

Through partnerships local communities are able to effectively and efficiently deliver increased successful program opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in the SRA, the Park District networks with **eleven** other participating local governments to provide many more program opportunities for our community members who have special needs and offers a choice between participating in the SRA's programs or in programs that are provided by the Park District.

The Park District and the SRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by the SRA's members, including the Park District. Utilizing these existing facilities allows the SRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost. Currently the Park District provides the SRA access to the following facilities for their program offerings:

- The Recreation Center
- The Community Center

The SRA also provides the support needed for participants with special needs who choose to register for Park District programs or inclusive programming. The SRA collects information on the registered participant and determines what support is needed for that participant to be successful in this inclusive setting or the Park District program. This may include additional training of the supervisory staff, additional support staff, the use of adaptive equipment, behavior management, and/or other measures that will assist in the successful participation of this individual in the Park District program. Although success may not look the same for everyone, the SRA works with the Park

District's staff to ensure the best possible results for all the participants in the program. The Park District's cost of providing these services would be much greater without its participation and partnership in the SRA.

In 2023, SEASPAR successfully served 29 Park District of La Grange residents in 130 programs. The SRA also supported 3 participants in inclusive programs that were provided by the Park District.

The Park District is proud of the ongoing collaboration with the SRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, not only are we better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we are able to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies

- Co-Op recreation programs with the Community Park District (La Grange Park), the Western Springs Park District and the Hinsdale Parks & Recreation Dept.
- The Village of Hinsdale offers La Grange residents a discounted pool pass rate
- PDLG utilizes LTHS South Campus for gymnastics classes

3. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government

- School District 102
- The City of Countryside

4. Intergovernmental agreements with the State of Illinois

- Central Management Services (CMS) Joint Purchasing Program

5. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues

- La Grange Little League
- Babe Ruth Baseball
- AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization)
- Celtics
- Lyons Township

6. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

- LeaderShop
- Interfaith Community Partners
- IPRA
- La Grange Business Association

7. Partnerships with for-profit organizations

- Meadowbrook Manor
- White Sox

8. Informal cooperation with other units of local government which save taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancy

- The Village of La Grange has stored vehicles/equipment at PDLG, i.e., vac truck, firetruck, etc.
- Village of La Grange Public Works has assisted with general maintenance tasks

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. Last year, 200 individuals volunteered 5,000 hours of service to the Park District.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed 17 youth. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Joint purchasing . The Park District participates in joint purchasing cooperatives pursuant to the Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (30 ILCS 525/0.01 *et seq.*) thereby saving taxpayer dollars through economies of scale. These include:

- Sourcewell
- Suburban Purchasing Cooperative (SPC)

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. Because park districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, although the Park District is an economic engine for the community and generates much revenue for the state and our community in the form of hotel/motel, sales, and motor fuel taxes, our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), our Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the Park District provides all of the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of funding from property taxes and from **non-tax sources** such as memberships, program registrations, and other user fees as well as private donations and grants.

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location listed.

Document	Location(s) Available (website, administrative offices, county clerk, state website, etc.)
• Annual tax levy	https://pdlg.org/about-us/district-publications
• Annual budget and appropriation ordinance	https://pdlg.org/about-us/budget-financial-information
• Agenda and minutes	https://pdlg.org/about-us/meetings-minutes-agendas-monthly-board-packets
• Comptroller's annual finance report (AFR)	https://pdlg.org/about-us/budget-financial-information
• Annual audit	https://pdlg.org/about-us/budget-financial-information
• Statement of Receipts and Disbursements	https://pdlg.org/about-us/meetings-minutes-agendas-monthly-board-packets
• Conduct Ordinances	https://pdlg.org/about-us/district-publications
• Comprehensive Master Plan	https://pdlg.org/about-us/mission-statement

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

- The Board of Commissioners meets the second Monday of each month. Meetings sometimes fall on the third or fourth Monday of the month due to holidays or special events. Please visit our website at <https://pdlg.org/about-us/meetings-minutes-agendas-monthly-board-packets> for our annual board meeting listings. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.
- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy. The Park District's annual levy is also subject to the limitations of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law.

- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at (708)352-1762 or email at pdginfo@pdlg.org.
- In 2022 the Park District of La Grange shaped its future through the development of a Comprehensive Master Plan and conducted public and stakeholder meetings to gather public input. The key objectives were inclusivity, to ensure everyone's voices were heard, a needs assessment and public input guided future plans and transparency. Frequent updates kept the community informed. We hosted multiple meetings, both in person and online with skilled facilitators to ensure all voices were heard. Community participation was sought through surveys, forums and social media. The community actively participated in shaping our Comprehensive Master Plan and future.
- Surveys are collected throughout the year for programs, events and more.

VII. District Awards and Recognition

The District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways.

Best of the Best Suburban Life 2020 Readers Choice – Best Park District

Best Indoor Playground Kids List

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association)

PDRMA Accredited Annually

OSLAD Grant 2024, \$600,000 matching grant for Waiola Park Improvements

Staff Recognition

Director of Recreation

- SSPRP Young Professional of the Year (2014)

Staff Credentials

- Certified Park and Recreational Professional (CPRP) – 3 Staff
- PDRMA H.E.L.P Essentials of Human Resources Curriculum – 2 Staff
- Medic First Aid/AED/CPR Certified Instructors – 2 Staff
- IPRA Leadership Academy – 2 Staff
- Professional Development School – 1 Staff Graduate, 1 Currently Attending
- Director School – 1 Staff
- Certified Playground Safety Inspector – 1 Staff
- On-Site Notary – 1 Staff
- Certified Personal Trainers – 6 Staff
- Certification in Exercise Nutrition – 3 Staff

VIII. Benefits and Services

The Park District serves the entire community from the youngest child to the oldest adult and all ages in between. It does so in a variety of ways.

1. Facilities

The Park District offered the following facilities to the community last year:

- The Recreation Center
- La Grange Fitness
- Gilbert Park & Activity Center
- Sedwick Park & Activity Center
- Stone Park
- Spring Park
- Elm Park
- Community Center Park & Facility
- Meadowbrook Manor Park
- Rotary Centennial Park
- Denning Park
- Waiola Park
- Gordon Park

2. Programs

The Park District offered the following programs last year.

3-on-3 Recreational Basketball
7th-8th Grade Basketball – Games Only
Adorable Christmas Puppies
Adult/Teen Jujitsu
Advanced Beginner Pickleball
Amazing race
American Girl Summertime Fun

American Girl Valentine's Day
Angry Birds
Animation Workshop
Artists Dream
Awesome Adventure Robotics
Back to School in Style
Ballet Fitness for All
Ballet/Hip Hop
Ballet/Tap Combo
Barre Sculpt & Core
Basketball Skills
Beach Volleyball Camp
Beach Volleyball League
Beginner Engineering
Beginner Guitar
Beginner Pickleball
Beginner Voice
Beginners Lacrosse Camp
Boys Beginner Gymnastics
Breakfast with the Easter Bunny
Brick Art & Design Camp
Bullseye Archery Camp
By-Gym-Mini
Camp Apollo
Camp Little Explorers
Camp Mighty Munchkins
Camp Quest
Castles, Kingdoms & Wizards Camp
Chair Yoga, Strength & Stretch
Challenger International Soccer Camp
Chess
Chess Camp
Chicago White Sox Baseball Camp
Chicago White Sox Baseball Camps
Combat Robots/Games
Commit Dance Fitness
Community Garden Plots
Core 360 Workout
Crazy Messy Art Camp
Creature Creations Robotics Camp
Cycle, Sculpt & Yoga

Dad & Me Fun w/ Football
Daddy and Me Sweets & Treats
Dance Parties
Dinosaur Dig
Discover Dance Kids
Discover Dance Tots
Discover Dance w/ Me
Dog Obedience – Beginner
Dog Obedience – Intermediate
Doggie Egg Hunt
Donuts with Santa
Double the Fun Drawing
Double the Fun Drawing Camp
Drop-In Class Pass
East Ave. Lacrosse Camp
Easter Egg Crawl
Easter Egg Hunt
Energy Medicine
Fall Fest Sweets & Treats
Family Archery
Family Bingo Night
Father & Kids 1st Flight
Fiesta Time- Make Your Own Pinata
Flag Football Skills
Floor Hockey
Flow Yoga
Fun w/ Stardust the Unicorn
Game Exploration Week
Gentle Yoga
Girls Beginner Gymnastics
GNO Get Pampered Spa Divas
GNO Pajama Summer Spa Night
Golden Barre Above
Grandparent/Grandchild Bingo
Green Ball Tennis
Gymnastics 101
Gymnastics 102
Halloween Hunt
Harry Potter Science Camp
Hip/Hop Jazz Combo

Holiday Etiquette
Holiday Reindeer
Holiday Social
Holiday Time w/ your American Girl
Holiday Train
I Speak Spanish
Improv Comedy: Character Development
Improv Comedy: Scene Work
Jingle Bell Time w/ Tiny Toes Music
Jujitsu Juniors
Jujitsu Juniors Advanced
Jujitsu Mighty Mites
Junior Golf Camp
Junior Hoops
Junior Lacrosse
Junior Multi Sports
Junior Soccer
Junior T-Ball
Junior Tennis
Kid Rock
Kid Rock III
Kiddie Kollege
Kidnastics
Kids First Basketball
Kids First Basketball Camp
Kids First Flag Football
Kids First Flag Football 7-on-7 Camp
Kids First Flag Football Camp
Kids First Multi Sports
Kids First Multi-Sports Camp
Kids First Soccer
Kids First Soccer Camp
Kids First Track & Field
Kids First Track & Field Camp
Kids Karate Club
La Grange Endless Summerfest
La Grange Lions Basketball Camp
La Grange Lions Travel Basketball
Lego Engineering
Lego Engineering Camp
Lego Masters: Extreme Sports

Lego Masters: Structures & Creative Challenges
Let's Code It
Lions Jrs. Skills Camp
Lions Jrs./1st Alliance Volleyball
Little Actors Club
LOL Improv
Magic Class
Mahjong
Manners Matter-Boot Camp
Masquerade Glam Night
Mega Machines Robotics Camp
Minecraft Camp
Model Ship Building
Move, Tone & Stretch
Movie in the Park
Music Together w/ Tiny Toes Music
Nerf Wars
Orange Ball Tennis
Parent & Child Dance
Parent & Child Golf
Parent & Tot Gymnastics
Parent & Tot Olympics
Parent & Tot Pumpkin Carving
Parent & Tot Sports
Parent/Child Dance
Parent/Child Holiday Gift Boutique
Parent/Child Karate
Pee Wee Tennis
Pickleball for Kids
Pilates, Strength & Stretch
Pinochle Tuesdays
Pokemania Camp
Pre-Karate
Preschool Sports
Racquet Sports Camps
Real World Robotics
Restorative Gentle Jujitsu
Restorative Yoga Workshop
Santa Paws
Santa's Little Helper

Scratch Coding: Art
Scratch Coding: Storytelling
Senior Hawaiian Social
Skyhawks Baseball Camp
Skyhawks Beg. Golf Camp
Skyhawks Cheerleading Camp
Skyhawks Flag Football Camp
Skyhawks Mini-Hawk Camp
Skyhawks Multi-Sport Camp
Slime Time
Smart Start Art
Smart Start Art
Smart Start Art Camp
Smart Start Golf
Soccer Made in America Camp
Sound Journey & Gong Wash Meditation
St. Patrick's Day Social
STEP Aerobics for All
Summer Dance Combo A, B, I
Super Slime & Goopy Chemistry Camp
Superheroes Camp
Tae Kwon Do
Tie Dye Art Camp
Tiny Tot Tennis
Tiny Tot Triathlon
Toddler Playtime
Tot Rock
Tot Track, Field & Fitness
Touch a Truck
Trunk or Treat
Tumbling for Beginners
Tumbling for Cheerleading
Tumbling On
Tween Flashlight Egg Hunt
Unplug Illinois Day
Up, Up, & Away – Building Flying Models
Vamonos Youth Spanish
Vet Science Camp
Virtual Class Pass
Voice
Volleykidz Outdoors

Volleykidz USA
Wonder Robotics: Create & Code
Writers Workshop
Yoga
Yoga Fundamentals
Yoga Nidra
Young Actors Club
Youth Archery
Youth Developmental Basketball League
Youth Pickleball
Youth Tennis
Youth/Adult Karate
Zombie Candy Hunt
Zumba Gold
Zumba Toning & Abs

Other Benefits

While the Park District is a special purpose entity, its impact to the community is multi-faceted and far reaching. For example, the Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing health care costs. Before and after school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities also help reduce juvenile crime. The Park District's open space and trees help improve air and water quality and mitigate flooding. Additional benefits are listed below.

- **Recreation and Fitness:** We offer fitness programs, sports leagues, and recreational activities that promote physical health and well-being.
- **Community Events:** The Park District often hosts community events and gatherings that bring residents together and foster a sense of community.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Parks and facilities can contribute to the conservation of green spaces and natural habitats, benefiting the environment.
- **Cultural and Educational Programs:** Cultural and educational programs are offered, such as art classes, workshops, and nature programs, enriching residents' lives.
- **Social Interaction:** Parks and facilities create opportunities for social interaction and networking among community members.
- **Mental Health and Stress Relief:** Green spaces and recreational activities can improve mental health and offer stress relief for individuals.
- **Economic Benefits:** Well-maintained parks and facilities can enhance property values and stimulate local businesses.

- **Quality of Life:** Overall, the park district enhances the quality of life for La Grange residents by providing recreational, social, and environmental benefits.

IX. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

1. Intergovernmental Fees and Charges

One opportunity for efficiency would be the elimination of fees and charges assessed by other units of government. By way of example, below are amounts that other units of local government charge the Park District even though the Park District's taxpayers are also taxpayers of these other units of local government. Such fees and charges, and the bureaucracy that accompanies them, inhibit the Park District's ability to deliver programs, facilities, and services at the least possible cost.

- Village of La Grange, Permits & Third Party Fees
- Village of La Grange ESF Police/Fire
- ISP Background Checks
- Splashpad Permits
- Annual Liquor License

Other units of local government should recognize that intergovernmental fees often lead to inefficiency in the expenditure of taxpayer dollars through extra bureaucracy and administrative costs. In many cases, the unit of government assessing the fee ultimately benefits from the project or event, meaning it can recoup its costs through the extra sales tax or other revenue that will be generated. Where such fees are absolutely necessary, general purpose units of government should offset the fee by crediting the Park District for all benefits they will receive from a project, event, or property. For example, open space that is protected and maintained by the Park District helps mitigate stormwater management costs, so assessing stormwater management fees on the Park District not only leads to inefficiency, but it is also shortsighted.

Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from charging more than their out-of-pocket costs associated with the activities covered by a fee that is assessed to another unit of local government with the same taxpayers. In other words, one unit of local government should not profit by taxing another. Eliminating local permit fees is a way to reduce administrative costs without impacting overall public revenue. Local government best serves the people when it cooperates and works together. Some communities recognize this and do not charge fees to other units. All communities should be encouraged to follow that model to receive the best results for local taxpayers and to promote governmental efficiency.

2. Inefficiency of Other Governments

The Park District is also negatively impacted by the inefficiency of the state and other units of local government.

- Cook County has delayed the second installment property tax payments due to transitioning to a new finance software. This puts pressure on the District to utilize fund balances to cover missing revenue until it is received.
- La Grange Fitness PARC Grant was delayed.

3. Unfunded Mandates

Unfunded state mandates are another cost driver. While the Park District recognizes that there are benefits to some of these mandates, modifications could help alleviate some of the burden to the Park District.

- a) Non-resident FOIA Requests.** Last year, the park district spent \$407.25 in staff time and legal fees to fulfill FOIA requests. Often the individuals/businesses submitting the FOIA requests are from outside of the Park District boundaries, and they appear to be serving a specific agenda, rather than assuring better local government.

Under current law, resident taxpayers end up footing the bill for these non-resident or commercial requests. In order to help alleviate the burden for these non-resident requests the law could be amended to: (1) add a requirement that non-residents identify/explain the purpose of the request for information; (2) add a time limit on how far back a non-resident can request information; (3) staff time and costs could be included in the amount that is reimbursable for non-resident and commercial requests; (4) move back the deadline for non-resident requests 10 business days so that the Park District does not have to delay services to its residents in order to comply with a non-resident request.

Sunshine laws are supposed to protect taxpayers by allowing them to shed light on any issue that is not exempt from FOIA. Since local residents ultimately bear the expense of complying with FOIA, treating resident and non-resident requests differently would be justified.

- b) Criminal Background Checks.** All park districts are statutorily required to conduct criminal background checks on all employees pursuant to Section 8-23 of the Park District Code. The background checks must be done through the Illinois State Police (ISP). Last year, the park district spent \$1,845 for criminal background checks. The Park District does not recommend eliminating this mandate because it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of children and other park district patrons. However, the State should explore ways in which it could improve the current system and make it less costly for park districts to comply with the law.

The Park District recommends studying whether there is a more efficient background check process implemented through the ISP to reduce the time and expense it takes for background checks. Another suggestion is for ISP to waive the fee for checks on minors or waive all fees for name checks. If there is a “hit”

from a name check, the fee could be charged for the more costly fingerprint check. Since it is a state mandate, the fee structure for park districts should also be reviewed to determine whether the fee being charged exceeds the actual cost of doing the check and, if so, the ISP could consider reducing its cost to local governments.

- c) **Prevailing Wage.** One way to reduce the burden on local government staff is to limit the prevailing wage requirement to larger capital contracts. This would free up tracking of the paperwork on small repairs and projects. One reason for creating a threshold requirement is the cost of the administrative burden relative to the cost of the actual project. For example, eliminating prevailing wage on smaller projects, e.g., those less than \$50,000, will result in more local bids and decrease the overall cost for these smaller public works projects.
- d) **Newspaper Publication.** The newspaper is no longer the most effective way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach more people. Permitting the Park District to post the information on its website in lieu of newspaper publications would reduce costs.
- e) **Paid Leave Act Ordinance Cook County.** As of December 31, 2023, employees in Cook County can earn at least one (1) hour of paid leave for every forty (40) hours worked. This ordinance requires that all employers with employees in Cook County provide those employees with paid leave to be used for any reason.

There is currently an amendment that will be presented at the Cook County board meeting, February 29, 2024, to exempt park districts and school districts. If the amendment does not pass, this could cost the District approximately \$20,000 the first year, with increased costs ongoing.

- f) **Prevailing Wages.** The Prevailing Wage Act governs the wages that a contractor or subcontractor is required to pay to all laborers, workers and mechanics who perform work on public works projects. The Act also sets forth the record keeping requirements for a contractor or subcontractor and sets forth the obligations of municipalities and other public bodies to establish the prevailing wage as well as, to notify in writing all contractors and subcontractors regarding the Prevailing Wage Act when bidding and awarding contracts, as well as on work orders.
- g) **Minimum Wage.** The minimum Wage Law guarantees a minimum wage of \$14.00 per hour for workers 18 years and older by January 1, 2024, and \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2025. Youth (under 18, working less than 650 hours per calendar year) are guaranteed a minimum wage of \$12 per hour by January 1, 2024 and \$13 per hour by January 1, 2025.
- h) **Competitive Bidding.** Illinois Park District Code requires competitive bidding for contracts for supplies, materials, or work at \$30,000 or more. This process can add costs to have the bids prepared, delay projects, and limit flexibility.

i) **Annual Audit and Annual Financial Report.** An annual audit and report must be complied with by an independent certified public accounting firm. The cost for our upcoming audit is \$14,300 and increases approximately \$500 annually. In addition to the cost of the audit, there is a cost for time spent by staff preparing the documents for the audit.

j) **Local Records Act.** This act requires the District to maintain records in accordance with the Act. It requires staff time to maintain records, as well as an annual charge to hire a company to come in and shred the large number of documents once a certificate of destruction is obtained.

4. Opportunities for Increased Transparency

As illustrated above, the Park District is very transparent in its operations. The following are opportunities for increased transparency:

- Explore our website for opportunities

5. Opportunities for Other Intergovernmental Agreements

- School District D105

Dated: March 11, 2024

Chair Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____