

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

JULY 11, 2022

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Lacey, Posey, Lawrence, Vear, Opyd

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis
Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej
Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller
Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung
Park Operation Supervisor Claudia Galla
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Megan Mack
Nancy Bramson, Steven Krone, Becky Lorentzen

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

Director Bechtold announced that attorney Megan Mack is in attendance in place of attorney Derke Price. She also introduced Blake Ertmanis, the District's new director of parks, planning and maintenance. Blake has close to 20 years of experience, is a certified arborist and studied forestry at the University of Missouri.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

Steve Krone, 1041 S. Waiola, La Grange, stated he is a 37-year resident and taxpayer of La Grange living a couple of blocks from the tennis courts. There is a petition to save the courts which have been an integral part of the neighborhood and are the only courts available without crossing La Grange Road. They are well used for tennis and wiffle ball, and while they are not a money maker like most playgrounds, they provide a service to the community. The notices the school district posted to close the tennis courts threw the park district under the bus. The school district vs. the park district is not new to that area. The Spring Avenue tot lot was originally owned by the school district,

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and they were willing to sell it off for homes to be built. The park district purchased the land and saved the park. He stated that La Grange has a great park district and urged us to keep it strong by saving the tennis courts.

Consent Agenda

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Commissioner Posey moved to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of June 13, 2022; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of June 13, 2022; Item 3.3 Approval of the Financial Reports dated June 30, 2022; Item 3.4 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for July dated July 11, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lacey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jenny Bechtold

- Director Bechtold stated that Hitchcock Design Group will be at the August board meeting, and their portion will be lengthy at about 1.5 hours. The agenda will begin with the audit, followed by Hitchcock and then the regular meeting items. Jenny suggested moving the start time up to 5:30 p.m. and the Board concurred. The August 15th meeting is the third Monday of the month due to the fest.
- Jenny stated that Cody/Braun is still working with the Village. The Village will not allow us to move forward with the MWRD application until we resolve their issues. They want us to go 6 inches deeper, to 4.5 feet in the detention pond. We are waiting for an answer from their engineer on the reason for the depth. The issue will be how much soil we must haul away due to contamination. G2 is preparing a quote to take more samples and we hope the testing results allow more soil to be kept on site. If you have contaminated soil, you can reduce the volume through MWRD so we are evaluating if this is an option. We should be out to bid soon after these last few issues are resolved.
- Jenny reported that the Little League agreement is not on the agenda due to several sticking points. They are the only user of the two Sedgwick fields outside of a two-week Sox camp in the summer. They have exclusive use and we do not charge them user fees for those fields, but they want credit applied to other fields for the work they do at Sedgwick. They also do not want to be responsible for the infrastructure of the fencing and dugouts per their current president, but former presidents acknowledge they have had this responsibility in the past. If they insist on this, one option is to charge them hourly user fees for Sedgwick. They also recently trimmed trees at the park without the District's consent and were reminded of the importance of requesting approval prior to any work.

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The Board briefly discussed the Little League agreement and Sedgwick field use. It was suggested that any credit considered be issued only beyond the amount of the potential user fees for the fields. Jenny clarified that Little League has been responsible for capital replacement of the dugouts and fencing in the past, according to Park District employees and the previous Little League board president.

- Jenny reported that she and Leynette met with Lauterbach & Amen regarding the audit and also discussed finding a replacement for Leynette's position. It is not going as well as we would like, and we are proactively considering the possibility of contracting out in the event we cannot find someone to meet the District's needs.
- Jenny stated that Jamie from Lauterbach & Amen was not in favor of the District starting a foundation. Jamie advised that a foundation is a separate legal entity requiring their own books, financial reporting and tax returns, and it creates risk for the District if all the legal and financial procedures are not followed. There is also a concern that we will be transitioning to a new finance person who may not have experience with a foundation. There are other ways to manage donations internally.

The Board and staff discussed the current progress on the foundation and potentially deferring it. Leynette stated that we can accept donations without having a foundation and they would be tax deductible because we are a government body. We currently solicit sponsorship donations for special events. Most foundations exist for entities that receive large donations, and she does not think it makes sense to do it now when we do not have major donors. We would also have the burden of establishing a separate board and potential legal risk. She stated that this is Lauterbach's opinion after seeing problems when governmental entities take on this risk. Jenny added that we are struggling to find board members and will need a new liaison with Commissioner Lawrence stepping down. We could consider forming a committee instead which would get it going quicker, and we could get creative with marketing and sponsorships.

Commissioner Lawrence said she liked this suggestion until we have a larger group of foundation members but wants the focus to remain on special projects which help the community. She expressed concern that there is not a person doing the job of asking for donations year-round. President Opyd stated that he would still like to see community input if a committee is formed. Commissioner Vear stated that our balance sheet does not show significant donations over the last dozen years and wondered if there is a lack of public awareness to invest in the parks. Commissioner Posey stated that the vision of the foundation is unclear, and she likes the idea of bringing it back in-house to further our vision and benefit the community. She is in favor of pausing it and being more deliberate. There was consensus to table the item for now.

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Staff Comments

Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej

- Superintendent Kuniej reported that she continues to move forward with the final audit report for last year.

Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Superintendent Miller distributed a new PDLG map and Adopt-A-Park brochure as examples of projects Christine has completed. The brochure is on our website and the map will be included in our program brochures going forward.
- Kevin stated that his main priority the next few weeks will be getting ready for the fest.

Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung

- Superintendent Hartung stated that she would like to consider discontinuing participation in the Illinois Action for Children program in December. She explained that it is a state program that pays for a family's BASE childcare, with a possible co-pay required. Families apply directly to AFC for funding approval, but many families do not qualify due to the low-income threshold. There are only two families in the program this year. We submit monthly reports and attendance sheets that the parents must sign to AFC and receive payment 1-2 months later.

There was discussion of the AFC program. Director Bechtold stated that it is an extensive process for us to apply every two years as a provider and very time consuming for Leanna and her staff. We must apply for all six locations separately and all staff must complete fifteen continuing education hours, which is a heavy expense for us. We put considerable time and money in the program which is only serving one or two kids each year.

President Opyd asked about the cost of staff training and BASE fees, and Leanna estimated training is \$6,000. Each family incurs approximately \$2,800 in BASE fees for the year. He stated that from an equity standpoint we should consider establishing scholarships for BASE that would be available to students regardless of residency. We could save staff's time and training costs to cover those families. Commissioner Posey stated she does not like the idea of excluding anyone and is not in favor of dismantling the program without a work-around for those families. Commissioner Lawrence encouraged increased marketing of the AFC program so people know it is out there.

Park Operation Supervisor Claudia Galla

- Park Operation Supervisor Galla reported that with summer most staff is busy with routine maintenance of the parks.
- Claudia stated that they cleared the overgrown corner at 41st & Gilbert and will replant when the weather is cooler.
- She stated that Gordon Park has been mulched and is ready for the fest.

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Director Bechtold announced that starting next month Blake will take over and Claudia will not be attending board meetings. President Opyd thanked Claudia for her participation in previous board meetings.

Attorney Report

Attorney Mack had no report at this time.

Treasurer Report

Supt. of Finance Kuniej had nothing to add to her staff report.

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of Release of Easement Located at 536 East Ave and 610 East Ave

Director Bechtold stated that during the process of rezoning the Village of La Grange came across this easement which they no longer need. She referenced the drawing in the board packet and explained this is standard practice.

After brief discussion Commissioner Vear motioned for approval to Release the Easement Located at 536 East Ave and 610 East Ave. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lacey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Board Business

Old Business

Discussion and/or Approval of Holding Board Meetings at the Community Center
Director Bechtold reported that a review of the schedule revealed that there is a regular renter who has been reserving the community center the second Monday of the month for years. We can look at changing our meeting, but this year may be difficult. Next month is a long meeting with Hitchcock here, the NRPA conference is in September, and there will be bond proceedings in the later months. It would be less challenging next year when we could move the May and August meetings to the third Monday of the month. Commissioner Lacey stated that may help since the Village meeting is also the second Monday.

President Opyd stated that the item will be tabled until the meeting calendar for next year is done.

New Business

Discussion and/or Approval of the De Sitter Banquet Facility Sponsorship Agreement

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Director Bechtold stated that we have been working with De Sitter for a few months. They would like to sponsor the banquet room again, so we have updated the contract to a 4-year agreement. We will include a full page De Sitter ad in our seasonal brochures, keep the sign on the wall, and promote their name in our rental brochures. Their donation will be \$17,519.26 plus some designer fees of approximately \$700. We will make some updates to the room in addition to new carpet. The previous agreement expired in July 2020, and we continued to run in good faith.

After brief discussion Commissioner Lawrence motioned to Approve the De Sitter Banquet Facility Sponsorship Agreement. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Energy Pricing/Procurement

Director Bechtold stated that we have been monitoring pricing. We do not have to take action, but several companies have reached out to say that prices will continue to increase. Keeping in mind what happened with natural gas, we want to be proactive. The 36-month rate is an increase of 3% but would keep our costs the same because some of the pipeline in the country has gone down over the last several weeks which decreased pricing. Our contract is up in August of 2023, and we are looking a year out. We could lock in the 36-month rate, watch the market long term, or market watch for 120 days.

President Opyd stated that the middle of the air conditioning season may not be the best time to close a deal. Commissioner Vear suggested a market watch and stated a chart comparing seasonal rates would be helpful. Director Bechtold stated she will continue to watch the market and bring it back to the Board.

Committee Reports

Administration Committee

Commissioner Lacey had no report at this time.

Parks and Open Lands

Commissioner Lawrence had no report at this time.

Finance & Capital Project Committee

Commissioner Vear had no report at this time.

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Posey reported that she met with Director Bechtold, and they are working to put a policy together.

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Marketing/Social Media Committee

President Opyd had no report at this time.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

None

Board Comments

Commissioner Vear thanked newly appointed President Opyd for getting the meeting done in an hour and five minutes.

Commissioner Lacey stated that she read an article in *The Patch* about the Village giving the community center to the Park District. The picture was embarrassing, and she received calls about it. She added that we want that park to look like our other parks, and it is a good idea for the Board to meet there. She sees many kids using all our parks which are well used this summer. Claudia clarified that the picture that was used was an old one taken prior to the recent improvements.

Commissioner Posey welcomed Blake and stated she is excited to work with him.

Commissioner Lawrence stated that she made her comments last month (regarding her departure from the Board). The Board thanked her for her invaluable contribution to the team.

President Vear welcomed Blake and thanked Commissioner Lawrence for her insight. He also thanked the public for coming; it is valuable to hear from them.

Executive Session

At 7:11 P.M. Commissioner Posey motioned for the Board to convene to executive session pursuant to Item 12.1 Potential Claims and/or Litigation 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(11) and Item 12.7 the Selection of a Person to Fill a Public Office Vacancy 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(3). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Lawrence, Lacey, Vear, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

At 7:56 P.M. Commissioner Vear motioned the Board arise from Executive Session and Commissioner Lawrence seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 7:57 P.M.

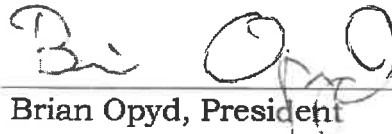
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Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session

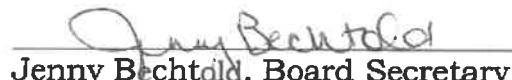
None

Adjournment

Commissioner Lawrence moved for adjournment at 7:57 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jenny Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved August 15, 2022