

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

**JUNE 12, 2023**

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

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

ABSENT: None

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 Derke Price  
Marian Honel-Wilson, Jim Boo, Bud Bach

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda. He announced that there will be a community input session at Waiola Park on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm and encouraged the public to attend.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

Jim Boo, 1327 Mason, La Grange, stated he has been a La Grange resident since 1994. He saw the review of the Denning building online and it looks like we are contemplating \$300,000 in repairs or building replacement at 2.8 million. It was originally an old run down house and he requested that we consider knocking it down as it doesn't benefit the Park District or the neighborhood. When we received voter approval to buy this building we considered omitting others. He suggested that we cut taxes and eliminate the building and possibly build a restroom facility there similar to Springrock Park.

President Opyd stated that the Board is looking at it for the first time tonight and no decisions have been made.

Bud Bach of the 500 block of Stone Avenue stated he lives across from Waiola Park and is aware of the planned forums but he wanted to provide input from

concerned residents in advance. Improvements to the park are welcome but it is crucial to remember that it is a neighborhood park in a small residential area. He stressed that the walking path feature is a major asset to the park, is used extensively, and it should be preserved. He encouraged minor improvements to the basketball court which the neighborhood kids use to excel. He discouraged expanding the court size because adults play intense games there which is not ideal for a small residential park, and smaller courts will discourage these kinds of games. He also expressed parking safety concerns. In recent years the park has become a major hub for T-ball and soccer which is great, however, it creates a significant issue with parking, especially on the Stone Avenue side. Stone is used as a cut-through street to avoid the light at Brainard and when there are cars on both sides of the street it is extremely narrow. This is not safe for residents walking with kids and there was a past incident where a child was seriously injured, and he asked that we look at this as we plan. He encouraged keeping the character of the park as we improve it and plans to attend the meeting tomorrow.

### **Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of May 8, 2023; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated May 31, 2023; and Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for June dated June 12, 2023. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Lacey, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Staff Reports**

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

- Director Bechtold reminded everyone about the community input meetings at Waiola Park to gain input from residents for the OSLAD grant. She, Blake and Kevin will be at tomorrow's meeting along with Wight. Commissioner Chvatal is coming and one additional commissioner may attend. A petition is being started on change.org to promote our OSLAD grant application.
- Jenny stated that next Monday is the Juneteenth event at the community center and our own Commissioner Lacey will be recognized.
- She reported that she has a webinar later this month to obtain more information on the local government efficiency committee. The committee will have their first meeting with their own agenda prior to a regular board meeting after our busy summer season.
- Jenny stated that Butterfield Park District had an accident with one of their buses and has inquired about borrowing or leasing our bus for their camp. We are not using our buses this summer and both entities are

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PDRMA members which makes it an easy transfer. We would lease our older 14-passenger bus and collect a small amount of revenue. She will update the Board as we move through the process.

- She reported that we are excited to have finalized Paycom which is robust program that will provide benefits from applicant tracking, onboarding, and processing payroll. We plan to go live in mid-September and she thanked Cassandra for working hard to pull the data. We may have to change a few policies with language for time off and possibly eliminate our safety incentive program and move to floating holidays to move away from incentivizing people to not report safety accidents.
- Jenny explained that she distributed a new organizational chart reflecting a couple of changes. With our transition to Paycom we had some redundancies and we eliminated our finance and accounting position, which opens payroll funds to other options. We also moved one of the parks laborers under Blake who has been cleaning satellite facilities and doing less park work to an A.M. custodian at the recreation center which helps with the challenges of hiring part-time staff. Our new facility manager was able to cut part-time wages by \$40,000 with this move. We made an offer to a new P.M. building custodian and are excited that we may also add a field specialist to Blake's team with the elimination of the other position.
- She stated that there are issues with work that Sportsfields completed at Gordon last fall.

Blake explained that the fields were unplayable if it rained and Sportsfields came in and they were supposed to put new mix in followed by leveling and grading which they did in September. When the fields were played on for the first time in April we found that the mix was bad and they confirmed they received bad mix from a company that went out of business. The fix that Sportsfields implemented did not correct the problem. We had an independent contractor take samples which came back as sandy mix which does not meet standards, and Sportsfields has offered to fix it again. Jenny stated that we are getting other quotes and working with legal and that Little League moved their schedule around to play at other fields. We want to move as quickly as possible but want it fixed properly.

Commissioner Posey stated that Sportsfields must make it 100% right or pay for someone else to do it and asked if we are allowing field play. Blake explained that it is not unsafe and the fields remain available if people want to rent them. Commissioner Vear asked if Sportsfields is a big company and how many fields were affected. Blake stated that four or five customers were affected and up until five years ago they were the only company doing this kind of work. More companies are popping up but they are the most recognized name, and he is not concerned that their company will go under. Jenny added that Little League is done at Gordon so we have time and our goal is to correct it by this fall.

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- Jenny stated that the District has been working hard on improvements to all our parks and facilities to make up for years of deferred maintenance, including soccer and ball fields. The May 2021 budget was already approved when she came on and she could not recommend changes until 2022. The spreadsheet included in the board packets reflects that to-date since 5/1/22 and including this year's budget we have budgeted \$329,890 and made significant investments at Gordon, Waiola and Gilbert. We have budgeted for equipment needed to allow us to improve our fields including a ball field machine, tractor, seeder, rake, sprayer, two zero turn mowers, and new lights. \$130,000 is also budgeted for prep field fencing, which we are still analyzing.

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

- Director Todd reported that we have finished the levy process which is imperative to confirm our levy for the new tax year.
- Cassandra stated that we are anxiously waiting for the turnaround for our final agency tax rate report so that we know what was extended to us from the county.
- She stated that we did not receive any tax receipts in May.
- She reported that we passed the preliminary audit and the full audit is next week.

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

- Director Miller thanked everyone that took part in the Pet Parade.
- Kevin reported that first session programs are trending higher than normal, fitness is great, and they are extremely busy with camp, which started today.
- He stated that they are working on the fall brochure.
- He reported that on June 28<sup>th</sup> we will have a movie in the park showing *The Sandlot* with open wiffleball games from 6pm-8pm prior to the movie.
- He stated that July is parks and rec month and our events will include a walking challenge, yoga in the park at Gordon on July 6<sup>th</sup> with a gathering at Milk Money Brewing for the participants afterward, a parks scavenger hunt the week of July 9<sup>th</sup>, and a family campfire at Denning on July 19<sup>th</sup>. We are ending the month with a family game night and ice cream social at the community center on July 25<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Chvatal asked if patrons must sign up for the campfire and social events, and Kevin stated that there are links on our website to sign up so that we can plan for supplies. Commissioner Vear asked what the highest number of fitness center memberships we have had was and Jenny stated it was 2,835.

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

- Director Ertmanis reported that the sidewalk has been poured in front of the building and once it cures it will be the access point for entry, however, a drop off area will not be accessible until the parking lot is complete.

President Opyd asked when the area in front would be torn up. and if any problems were found in the soil requiring remediation. Blake stated the front will be torn up in July and that the contractor will complete the stages of work on all areas of the project at the same time including curbing, stone and paving. He asked if any problems were found in the soil requiring remediation which would impact finances. Blake stated that the storm water retention pond has been dug and does not require remediation. He will get back to him with additional information after his weekly meeting with the contractor. Jenny added that the alternate for the water main is not needed which saves us \$20,000. Blake estimated that the project would be complete at the end of July or beginning of August.

**Attorney Report**

Attorney Price stated he will have comments to add in closed session.

**Treasurer Report**

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

**Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution 23-05 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings of Certain Board Executive Sessions*

Director Bechtold stated that this item is straightforward and requires looking at records from 18 months and one day ago which would be prior to 12/1/21. We have reviewed all the minutes and they are fine to open up.

President Opyd asked for a motion to Approve Resolution 23-05 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings of Certain Board Executive Sessions. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

## Board Business

### Old Business

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Board Policy Section 728 (AYSO)*

Director Bechtold stated that it came to our attention that we were missing agreements in place with AYSO. They returned Section 728 to us and requested a change. They are a California non-profit so we added that and are asking the Board to approve this minor revision.

Commissioner Chvatal motioned to approve Board Policy Section 728. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lacey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

### New Business

#### *Review and Discussion of Denning Park Activity Building Assessment*

Jenny explained that we are trying to plan for the future and our CMP recommended facility assessments. We started with Denning as we lease that building to The LeaderShop and they are requesting a longer lease, so we needed to know where the building stood and the improvements necessary for the next 5-10 years. Wight Company did a great job with their assessment and classified items as critical immediate needs, upcoming, and future. They found that over the next 10 years approximately \$302,250 in upkeep and repairs will be required. The building was built in 1976 and is approximately 2,500 square feet with a basement of 1,400 square feet, and the financials for the last 10 years indicate that very little was invested. We are currently paying for the utilities although The LeaderShop should have paid for them per the agreement, which averaged between \$5,000-\$8,000 over the last 10 years. Their current lease is about \$3,600 bringing in approximately \$44,000 per year. We budgeted \$20,000 in the capital plan knowing this assessment would be done so that we had funds for critical repairs. We are not seeking to make a profit but we need enough to pay for expenses and improvements. We wanted to get a feel for the Board's thoughts.

Commissioner Posey stated that The LeaderShop is a great community organization and in line with the mission of the Park District, and she used to be on their board. She inquired if we partner with them in activities. Kevin stated that they used to provide volunteers for our Halloween and Egg Hunt events but post-Covid it has been difficult and that relationship has dwindled. Jenny added that they did adopt a park and we have tried to be more collaborative but they are also short staffed. Commissioner Posey encouraged doing something creative that could be a win-win for everyone to retain the building so we do not demolish a resource there. She would like to take a look at the building.

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President Opyd stated that we have to think hard about \$300,000 which is a lot of money to spend on a building used by one group.

Commissioner Vear stated that he is not averse to Jim Boo's suggestion but would like to accommodate The LeaderShop and suggested they might find cheaper space in this market. He asked how long they have been renting and whether there were any empty offices in our building and questioned the expenses and high replacement cost of 2.8 million for the building. Jenny advised that we have no empty office space in our building and believes they started renting soon after we moved here but would need to verify that. Our expenses include utilities plus staff to clean. Blake added that we rent out the restrooms for rentals and staff cleans them daily. He stated that the replacement cost is high due to new building codes.

Commissioner Chvatal asked when the lease expires and whether we have asked residents what they would like to see there. Jenny stated that the lease is up October 31<sup>st</sup> and they want to stay with a longer lease. Feedback from the community is important but we first want to determine the length of the agreement and get the Board's fiscal decision. Blake added that snow removal is an extra cost and we just sealcoated. We wanted to have new carpet installed and they took a month to respond to his email.

Jenny stated that this is the perfect time during our planning process to discuss this with The LeaderShop and we have reached out to them but they have not responded. We have to give them a year's notice for non-renewal and we may have to specify an end date for this agreement to give them time to plan and prepare. We must be fiscally responsible to the District.

President Opyd asked what expectations are for now. Jenny stated that there is nothing to vote on tonight and it can come back under old business. She wanted to put it out there as we develop our asset management plan and consider possible referendum scenarios. We could complete several items in the 0-3 year range for the building with safety as the #1 priority and do a two-year lease which still gives us time to determine the future of the building.

President Opyd stated that he thinks they are a great organization and that the discussion will be tabled and brought back next month.

Public attendee Jim Boo asked how much the evaluation cost and Jenny answered that it was approximately \$6,000.

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Future Asset Assessment Plan*

Director Bechtold stated that this was developed per the Board's request in response to the CMP along with the possibility of a referendum scenario. The plan is based on the CMP and staff provided feedback on other items they felt were beneficial for the community. The first page is for the OSLAD grant for

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Waiola with staff ideas, and each page is formatted the same way with an area to record completed work and notes, and we tried to separate new infrastructure from replacements. There is a lot of information in this document for the Board to review and we can revisit this again next month.

President Opyd asked if the Waiola plan was pending input. Jenny stated it was, but this plan includes every park. Staff felt that Stone and Meadowbrook were the only parks that did not require a plan, but it would be good to have a firm complete a master plan for the other parks. Elm Park is only 1.6 acres but could benefit from a landscape architect and Stone is small enough that a playground provider could help with the layout.

President Opyd asked if we receive the OSLAD and get Waiola done how we envision going forward in the next 5-10 years at other parks with a referendum. Jenny stated a referendum could provide 7 million dollars depending on interest rates, which could make a significant impact across the District at multiple parks, which is where planning comes in. We want to work with a firm sooner rather than later to hone in on plans and pricing and to engage the community in the referendum process. We would also present a proposal from PMA as bond counsel. We would like to work with three firms to move forward with drawings, community engagement, and finally the referendum.

Commissioner Posey stated that every park district has a lane they can be in and patrons are frustrated when everyone does the same thing. If we go to referendum, what are we going to referendum for? We need to plan beyond recreation equipment to surprise and delight the community in a way that is different than other parks and consider public art, open spaces, a bandshell, and cultural activities. She urged the Board to think outside the box and for the District to be a leader and do something new.

Jenny stated that it is based on the community's input from the CMP and we need something for budgeting and planning, but we do want to be unique and not cookie-cutter. We need plans on paper for a starting point to move forward but those plans can change and be fluid. We have discussed nature themed playgrounds and a veterans' memorial.

President Opyd agreed that the time to be creative is during the planning and now is the best time to explore the options. He asked about the timeline for the planning process. Jenny stated that if we go to referendum we should start the process in September or October with early engagement of the community in January and she suggested having a parks committee meeting. President Opyd stated the committee could meet 30 minutes prior to the regular August meeting and it was agreed to meet at 5:30. Jenny encouraged the Board to bring their feedback to the next board meeting.

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### *Discussion and/or Approval of Construction Permit for La Grange Little League (LGLL) and Ratify the Action of the Executive Director to Authorize LGLL to Purchase the Scoreboard*

Director Bechtold stated that LGLL approached us to do some projects, and quotes and descriptions for each one are in the packet. Projects include new scoreboards at Sedgwick A and B fields, improve the fences at the east field at Sedgwick and installing dugouts with roofing at Gordon. Currently at Gordon there are just benches behind the sideline fence. They have offered to make and pay for the improvements, and we are happy to accept.

Commissioner Vear stated that he would not be in favor of the scoreboards if they are noisy. Blake clarified that the option for speakers is not on the quote.

Jenny stated that we appreciate the improved relationship with LGLL and staff will try to attend their next meeting. The Board is welcome to attend with them. There have been posts on social media and we want to cut them off and explain the policies of the District. She will keep the Board informed of the meeting.

Commissioner Chvatal motioned to Approve the Construction Permit for LGLL and Ratify the Action of the Executive Director to Authorize LGLL to Purchase the Scoreboard. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Ratify the Action of the Executive Director to Authorize Temporary Access and Construction License for Babe Ruth*

Jenny reported that she has spoken to several commissioners regarding this license. Babe Ruth moved forward without following protocols and we found out two days before the work would be done. We reached out and told them we needed a COI and different pieces in place. She thanked the board members who spoke with her and gave their approval for this. Babe Ruth moved forward and completed \$26,700 of work at the prep and senior fields and she asked the Board to ratify this.

President Opyd asked for a motion. Commissioner Vear motioned to Ratify the Action of the Executive Director to Authorize Temporary Access and Construction License for Babe Ruth. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING – JUNE 12, 2023**

### *Election/Appointment of Officers*

President Opyd stated that the commissioners need to make nominations for the next year.

Commissioner Vear nominated President Opyd for President.

President Opyd nominated Vice President Vear for Vice President.

Commissioner Vear nominated 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Lacey for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

Commissioner Vear nominated Director Bechtold for Secretary.

Director Todd was nominated for Treasurer.

All the nominations were accepted and uncontested. President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the slate of officers of Mr. Opyd for President, Mr. Vear for Vice President, Ms. Lacey for 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Ms. Bechtold for Secretary, and Ms. Todd for Treasurer. 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, Lacey, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: None

### *Discussion & Appointment of Commissioners to Committees*

President Opyd stated that there are three committees to consider. Director Bechtold stated that currently Commissioners Vear and Lacey are the Administration Committee, Commissioners Vear and Opyd are the Parks & Facilities Committee, and Commissioners Chvatal and Posey are the Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee. President Opyd questioned whether two commissioners were needed on each committee. Jenny stated it was not necessary, but we reduced the number of committees to provide additional support. After brief discussion the commissioners decided that Commissioners Vear and Lacey would comprise the Administrative Committee, Commissioners Vear and Chvatal would comprise the Parks & Facilities Committee, and Commissioners Posey and Opyd would comprise the Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee.

Commissioner Vear motioned to approve the committees as stated.

Commissioner Chvatal seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

## **Committee Reports**

### *Administration Committee*

No report at this time.

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### *Parks and Facilities Committee*

President Opyd stated that the new committee will meet in August.

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

Commissioner Posey encouraged all to attend the Juneteenth event; when she attended last year it was delightful. She encouraged everyone to think big audacious goals as they talk to the public and to think play.

Commissioner Chvatal asked what the timeline was for the mosaic panels project. Commissioner Posey stated that public workshops would be at the end of August with an unveiling in September.

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

None

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Vear stated that he thought the Park District had the best giveaways at the Pet Parade.

Commissioner Chvatal stated his family had a great time being a part of the Pet Parade.

Commissioner Lacey thanked the visitors for coming tonight. She stated that she likes the new, elegant look of the banquet room and all the special events we have coming up look good. Kudos to Jenny for coming out with her injury.

Commissioner Posey stated that it is an exciting time to be part of this Board and with the talent of the staff and great leadership, we are at a great moment in the District's history. We can have a significant impact on the public and she is excited to see where we go with the resources we have.

President Opyd stated that he is impressed with the way the board packets have evolved. Staff provides the Board with the information they need to discuss and they are a strong team.

President Opyd announced that the Board would be moving to executive session for Item 12.4 Personnel.

### **Executive Session**

At 7:23 P.M. President Opyd asked for a motion for the Board to convene to executive session pursuant to Item 12.4 Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

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At 7:31 P.M. Commissioner Chvatal motioned the Board arise from Executive Session and Commissioner Vear seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.


The Board resumed the regular meeting at 7:31 P.M.

**Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session**

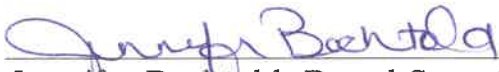
None

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Vear moved for adjournment at 7:31 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary

*Approved July 10, 2023*