

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

APRIL 12, 2021

President Vear called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners O'Brien, Opyd, Lacey, Vear

ABSENT: Commissioner Jacobs

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Dean Bissias, Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn, Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej, Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller, Superintendent of La Grange Fitness Jenny Bechtold, Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung, Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price
Nancy Bramson, Tom Cushing, Tim Kilrea

*Commissioner Jacobs joined the meeting at 7:02 P.M.

President Vear welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda, and he announced the Public Hearing on Ordinance 21-01 which will take place prior to continuing the regular meeting.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

Tom Cushing, the current president of the LTHS Board of Education District 204, and Tim Kilrea, Supt. of District 204 for 12 years, stated they are in attendance tonight to speak about Dean (Director Bissias). Tim Kilrea stated he met Dean 14 years ago when he got to District 204, and the first thing Dean said to him was that he was here for anything he might need. The Park District has been wonderful to work with and partner with, including issues at Elm Park. He thanked Dean for his service on behalf of the school board and looks forward to continuing to work with the District. Tom Cushing thanked Dean for being all-in working with the high school and remembered the ribbon cutting at the stoplight at Denning Park. He stated he has worked closely with Dean and that Dean is a man of great integrity. He worked with Dean and the Board on moving the fields at Gilbert Park and on the lights at Sedgwick Park, which increased baseball and softball field use. He thanked Dean for spending

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his career not only on District programs, but for his role working for children. It is appropriate that a man for the children has been asked to be the grand marshal of the Pet Parade this year. He presented Dean with the gift of a T-shirt of the Pet Parade designed from a 1967 trophy.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner O'Brien motioned to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 8, 2021; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board Meetings of March 30, 2021 and April 5, 2021; Item 3.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Board Meetings of March 8, 2021 and March 30, 2021; Item 3.4 Financial Reports dated March 31, 2021; Item 3.5 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for April dated April 12, 2021. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners O'Brien, Lacey, Opyd, Jacobs, Vear
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Staff Reports

Director's Report

- Director Dean Bissias reported that he is working on the capital budget. He is a bit behind on this because of getting the grant out last week, which took precedence. He will work with Chris to get it done before he leaves and it will be presented next month.
- Dean stated that the timeline from Planning Resources requested by Commissioner Opyd has been passed out tonight. They have begun talking with staff in preparation for the new master plan.
- He addressed his upcoming retirement and stated that it has been a long time and a pleasure. Everyone expressed their thanks to Dean for his service.

Staff Comments

Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn

- Superintendent Finn stated that it is getting busy with everything starting up outside. Little League and soccer have begun field use. Babe Ruth has been pushed back since high school sports are pushed back, but they will hold try-outs.
- Chris reported that he is working with Claudia on outdoor issues for spring and for shelter rentals, which are increasing as people want to be outside.
- We are starting to see more activity with rentals at the rec center and community center.

Commissioner Opyd asked about a patch of weeds in front of the community center and Chris reported that spraying was just done last week.

Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Superintendent Miller stated that he is currently doing second round interviews of six applicants for the athletic supervisor position and plans to make a selection and employment offer next week.
- Kevin reported that the rec department is working on day camps and will begin hiring camp counselors, and they are working on the summer brochure.
- He stated that he met with staff last week regarding the master plan SWOT analysis and he will meet with Ray tomorrow.
- Jenny is helping with the website and blog.

Superintendent of BASE Leanna Hartung

- Superintendent Hartung reported that BASE registration for the next school year began today for full-time families. 106 registrations came in with Ogden as the leading school at 42. Numbers are down from past years, but parents continue to come in to register. She expects a big turnout when registration begins on 4/26 for part-time families.

Superintendent of La Grange Fitness Jenny Bechtold

- Superintendent Bechtold reported that the fitness center currently has 1,612 members with 32 new memberships added in April.
- Jenny stated that preventative maintenance on fitness equipment is being done this week to keep it in top shape and extend its longevity.
- She is working on an outdoor fee-based class schedule with Freya. She is also working on offering outdoor personal training to gauge interest, and the trainers are on-board.
- She has been working on the website and marketing and thanked Commissioner Opyd for getting it going with access to the website and our capabilities. She was able to produce a blog with camp posts and will continue with different topics each month. Staff will meet on 4/21 to discuss how we can improve our site with revised tabs and levels.
- She is looking forward to working on the new master plan.
- She gave kudos to the rec department for the great Easter event. She was a volunteer and it was nice to see the community out in the park.
- She was fortunate to work with Commissioner Jacobs, President Vear and the team on the grant application that was submitted on Friday; it was a great experience.
- She attended the meeting with Representative Newman at the rec center.

Commissioner O'Brien thanked Jenny for helping with the email and adding the link to enable online payments; it will go a long way with a lot of people.

President Vear asked if it was difficult obtaining the new addresses for the postcard. Jenny replied that it was not. She submitted a FOIA for new residents and current residents, and she will create labels and use Vistaprint. The postcard will be good for one free guest pass and she will track it in

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RecTrac and in a spreadsheet.

Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej

- Supt. of Finance Kuniej stated that she is meeting with the audit firm this week and her attention will be on the fiscal year end.
- Leynette will be wearing double hats while Terri is on vacation for two weeks.

Attorney Report

Attorney Price stated he has nothing new to report.

Treasurer Report

None

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 21-01 the Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Park District of La Grange Fiscal Year 2021-2022

President Vear stated that staff has done a good job on this and asked if the Board wanted any discussion on this item, which they did not.

Commissioner O'Brien motioned for Approval of Ordinance 21-01 the Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Park District of La Grange Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Commissioner Jacobs seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners O'Brien, Jacobs, Opyd, Lacey, Vear

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Discussion and/or Approval of 2021-2022 MBO's

Director Bissias stated there are no changes to the MBO information in the board packets and that Commissioner Lacey's adopt-a-park MBO has been included.

Commissioner Jacobs reported that she received an inquiry from a resident regarding Meadowbrook Park. The barrier around the park ground has settled and is dangerous. Director Bissias stated that the Park District owns the playground but that Meadowbrook is responsible for any landscape or sidewalk issues on their property. Chris stated that he would visit the location tomorrow and we will advise Meadowbrook of the issue.

Commissioner O'Brien motioned for Approval of the MBO's for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Commissioner Lacey seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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AYES: Commissioners O'Brien, Lacey, Opyd, Jacobs, Vear
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Director Bissias commented that Meadowbrook Manor was completely rebuilt with an agreement with the Village of La Grange that the Park District install a playground there. We agreed, but everything else is theirs. Our only responsibility is the playground, and we will let them know if there is a problem. Commissioner Lacey asked if there were other parks like that. Dean answered that Countryside is responsible for all their own parks and equipment. Meadowbrook is the only one where we only own the equipment. The community center is a lease with the Village but is a bit different. Commissioner Opyd asked if there was a lease for the land at Meadowbrook. Dean stated that there is long-term agreement between the Village, us, and Meadowbrook and that if anything changes we still own the playground. Commissioner Opyd stated he would like more clarity on the agreement to understand the stakeholders and the relationships.

Board Business

New Business

Update on Representative Newman's Visit to the Park District

Commissioner Jacobs stated that Rep. Newman's visit was last minute, so she appreciates everyone jumping in on it. Who knows when there would be another opportunity to have a U.S. Congressperson come out here? Chris and Jenny talked with her and discussed the community development block grant, and the next day things were quickly added to the grant submission to meet her selection criteria. It was very nice timing that she visited on Thursday with the grant due on Friday. President Vear stated that Rep. Newman was very pleasant and gave us a lot of good advice. He thanked staff for their great work on the grant and said it was very eye-opening to see what you must go through in the grant process. He also thanked Commissioner Jacobs for her time and said it was a wonderful experience. Jenny also thanked Commissioner Jacobs, who replied that it was a group effort and could not have been done without a lot of help. She commended the packet that Jenny created, which was very helpful and professional.

Commissioner Lacey stated that all board members need to be informed and that they represent each other; members cannot do things on their own. President Vear said that the grant was voted on at the meeting on the 30th. Commissioner Jacobs stated she appreciates what Lynn is saying and that she sent an email out as soon as she heard about the visit and tries to make sure everyone is informed. Dean added that the only reason the entire Board was not invited was that we did not have the 48 hours required to post it as a board meeting. If we had more notice, we could have gotten it done.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that regarding the grant, we received six letters of support from community partners. They met with the Community Diversity

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Group and had a number of discussions, which led to the support letters. There was a lot going on in the short span of two weeks. President Vear added that we should recognize the support received from the staff at LTHS environmental studies, the LeaderShop, Caring Place, Community Diversity Group, LADSE, and the La Grange League of Women Voters. Separate meetings were held with each group with Bob and/or Karel. We will find out in the middle of May if we get through the first vetting.

Old Business

None

Committee Reports

President Vear stated that with a full Board we should consider who runs each committee since we have not reassigned them since Dan Collins left the Board. He suggested giving it some thought and addressing it at the next meeting or two.

Administration Committee

None

Parks and Open Lands

Commissioner Jacobs stated that they held a meeting a couple weeks ago and she will submit their report to include with the minutes. The group is excited about the grant, and some of them attended our special meetings. They also discussed the number of people on the committee. Currently there are five citizens and herself, and she suggested that they take the lead and she could act as a liaison. Their suggestion is for 6-8 members, and they would like to have a District staff member attend, even if only once or twice. Karel suggested it could be Claudia or Chris. They would like to get on a regular schedule of meeting four times per year and function more like a friends of the parks group. They will try to recruit a couple more members, including someone from the community center area. They currently meet on Sundays via Zoom.

Finance & Capital Project Committee

None

User Group Committee

None

Marketing/Social Media Committee

Commissioner Opyd gave kudos to staff for all the efforts on social media and the website. He is excited about the blog and sees a lot of activity regarding the parking lot and increased communication.

President Vear added that he also sees positive things happening on the web and social media, and Commissioner O'Brien offered his thanks for all the hard work on this.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

Nancy Bramson from the Community Diversity Group stated she is interested to hear what everyone has to say and appreciates these reports. She appreciates Commissioner Jacobs' time and all the work that was done on the grant.

Board Comments

Commissioner O'Brien

None

Commissioner Jacobs stated that although the PARC grant did not work out, the process and the journey of coming together and working towards a common goal makes her happy to be part of this organization, and she hopes everyone feels that way. She thanked Dean for putting up with her sticking the bear. She admires what he has done. The rec center and fitness center are game changers and he can go away feeling proud of that. She thanked him for all that he has done.

Commissioner Opyd thanked everyone for the flurry of activity related to the grant application and Rep. Newman's visit. Karel took the ball, and it was nice to see staff react so quickly to jump through all the hoops with this effort to help the community, and he is sorry he could not be there. He commended the great work on all the communication and he would like it to continue going forward to engage the community and with work on the master plan. He thanked all the community groups for their support with the grant. Finally, looking down memory lane, he remembers that his relationship with the Park District started about six years ago when he showed up in the audience at a meeting wearing a ridiculous T-shirt and poked the bear to ask his questions. Dean and the Board always answered respectfully and Dean brought about great change. He thanked Dean for his service on behalf of the community. He will be missed, and he looks forward to seeing him at the parade.

Commissioner Lacey expressed thanks to the people that supported her in the election. She is grateful for the good people she had working with her. She addressed staff and said they know how she feels about them; she brags about them all the time. She appreciates the time she has worked with Dean over the past nine years. He brought the District to where it is now and it will be hard to replace his size 13 shoe. He has a good staff that will continue what he started. She hopes this Board can do the same or better to work together. Each board is different and the differences should not create an attitude. The Board should remember that their leader is the President, and the director is here for advice.

Commissioner O'Brien congratulated the commissioners on the election and looks forward to working together. He thanked Karel and everyone involved with the grant. He offered Dean a round of applause for everything he has done for us.

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President Vear thanked everyone for their work on the grant. He stated that the staff are professionals, and the Board members are professionals in their respective fields but not park management. With the passing of the guard, it is important for staff to explain things and help them. They need staff input during the transition. He has known Dean since starting on the board seven years ago, and he is still an infant on his timeline with many boards coming before. Everyone knows what Dean has accomplished but what is important is the people he has touched. It is more valuable if you touch someone's life and make it better, and he thanks him for that. Dean said thank you, it has been my pleasure.

Executive Session

At 7:50 P.M. Commissioner Opyd motioned the Board convene to Executive Session pursuant to Item 12.2 Acquisition of Real Property 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) and Item 12.4 Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Opyd, O'Brien, Jacobs, Lacey, Vear
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

At 8:34 P.M. the Board resumed the regular meeting.

Action of Items Discusses in Executive Session

Commissioner Lacey motioned to appoint Jenny Bechtold as interim executive director of the Park District of La Grange. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Lacey, O'Brien, Opyd, Jacobs, Vear
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

Adjournment

Commissioner O'Brien moved for adjournment at 8:35 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lacey and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Robert Vear, President

Board Secretary
Approved May 10, 2021