

**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 13, 2022

President Vear called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej
Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn
Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller
Park Foreman Claudia Galla
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price
Charles Gilbert, Marian Honel-Wilson

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

Director Bechtold stated that Supt. of Facilities Chris Finn had an announcement. Chris announced that as of June 23rd he is resigning from the Park District and moving on to a position at the Bolingbrook Park District as their director of buildings, grounds, and natural resources. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve PDLG for the last 18 years. President Vear expressed his appreciation for all the work Chris did to help us get to where we are today, and Director Bechtold presented Chris with a recognition award.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

None

Consent Agenda

President Vear 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 May 9, 2022; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated May 31, 2022; Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for June dated June 13, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner

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Lacey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jenny Bechtold

- Director Bechtold thanked Chris for his years of service to the District; he will be missed.
- Jenny stated that the District has recently been hit hard by COVID affecting full-time and part-time staff. We were not certain we could run camp this week. We are taking operations day-by-day and doing all we can and hope that we do not have to cancel any programs.
- Jenny reported that we are still seeking members for the Park District foundation; send any interested parties her way. She has met regularly with Commissioner Lawrence and thanked her for her help. The Articles of Incorporation have been filed and they are moving forward with the by-laws and 501(c)(3) status.
- The parking lot project has been submitted to the Village for the permit. She just received their comments and has not reviewed them all, but it appears we need to clear a few items with them and with MWRD. We are trying to submit a plan with alternates for pavers, but it seems the Village prefers two sets of plans, which increases our fees by requiring us to pay .3% (.003) per plan for their expert to review. We are very concerned about the budget and want to determine how we can submit just one set of plans. If we submit for permeable pavers and cannot afford their cost, we will have to start over. Cody/Braun has assured us that both variations were in the plans.
- Jenny reported we locked in for natural gas which is good because it continues to go up. We went with the two-year which averaged a current one-year price and future one-year price which will give us some relief for this year. They are donating five trees to us for working with them.
- Work on the Little League agreement continues, and she hopes to have it for the Board at the next meeting.
- We are trying to schedule the work for Waiola and Gilbert and she has met with another company to try to expedite it.
- The underground tanks had soil testing completed and their professional opinion on testing is that we have had a release, but this will not be official until the samples are back. This is promising and will save us money in the capital budget.
- Jenny stated that the fest is right around the corner and asked the Board to save-the-date and let her know if they cannot make it. The commissioners normally assist with the beer booth on Sunday night, which will be August 7th. She would like to move forward with allowing exempt full-time staff to take special event time off for hours worked

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beyond their first 4 hours, as we did last year, and the time must be taken in August. Last year the average was 5-8 hours. The Board was agreeable to this.

- She stated that Christine is really making a positive difference with our marketing posts and e-blasts.
- Jenny stated that the new position of director of parks, planning and maintenance was offered to and accepted by a candidate. Once the paperwork has been finalized, she will make an announcement. They should start at the end of June or early July, and we anticipate a smooth transition.

Staff Comments

Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej

- Superintendent Kuniej reported that she was notified that the District received the GFOA award for last year's audit. We have received it for the last 19 years.

Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Superintendent Miller reported that they have been busy with summer programs, especially summer camps.
- Upcoming special events include the movie *Wonder* at Gordon Park on the 23rd. Nerf Wars is a new event being offered on June 25th at the Sedgwick tennis courts. We have 23 participants registered, not including the co-op numbers from La Grange Park and Western Springs. Unplug Illinois is on July 9th, and we will run a chalk-the-park event at Denning Park from 10am-noon.
- The fitness center sold 63 special student memberships this season with \$5,130 in revenue, and it continues through June.

Commissioner Opyd asked how many tennis and pickleball classes we will be able to run. Kevin stated that we are doing well with those sports. There are 9 summer tennis classes with 38 kids registered so far, and we have space for additional kids in the July and August classes. We have 28 enrollees in our 3 pickleball classes with an additional 25 registered for a new pickleball league that is a co-op with La Grange Park.

BASE Report

- Director Bechtold reported on behalf of Supt. of BASE Leanna Hartung. Today was the first day of BASE summer camp and it went well. It will be sticky this year with COVID.
- Leanna is recruiting staff for next year.

President Vear inquired on the staff for St. Francis school year BASE. Jenny stated that they just had a resignation, but Melissa will oversee that location, and Leanna is confident they can run the program there.

Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn

- Superintendent Finn reported that the aboveground gas tanks have been installed with several minor items remaining. It will be ready for the fire marshal inspection in the next week or two, to be followed by the final inspection from the Village.
- Chris stated that the soccer and baseball groups are wrapping up their summer season, though Babe Ruth will play into July.
- He is waiting for a part for the splash pad, but it is up and running well.
- He is working on numbers for capital projects before he leaves.
- Chris thanked the Board and District for the last 18 years.

Park Operation Supervisor Claudia Galla

- Park Operation Supervisor Galla reported that seasonal staff is now on board and her department has been busy with routine maintenance including mowing, trimming, and planting.
- Claudia stated that the final report for the forestry grant has been submitted and we should receive the reimbursement check for \$10,050 soon.

President Vear asked if the forestry grant entailed any ongoing requirements. Director Bechtold answered that we must follow the management plan and the advisory committee must meet annually. This will be discussed at the next board meeting. Commissioner Opyd asked about the rain barrel sale. Claudia reported that we sold 8, and the buyers were happy with them. She would like to try it again next year with additional marketing. She added that registration was great for the butterfly and pollinator event at 57 enrollees, however, only 8 attended, likely due to the cool weather.

Attorney Report

Attorney Price stated he will give his report during executive session.

Treasurer Report

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

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution 22-03 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 required every six months, and her memo details the information. The records which can be opened to the public include the 610 East Ave property and the public office vacancy from former commissioner Dan Collins.

Commissioner Opyd motioned for approval of Resolution 22-03 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session

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Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings of Certain Board Executive Sessions. The motion was seconded by President Vear and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of the White Sox License Agreement

Jenny stated that at the last meeting the Board requested that we speak to the White Sox regarding the current agreement. Supt. of Recreation Kevin Miller spoke with Michael Huff from the Sox. Kevin reported that in their discussion he related to Michael Huff that the District is reviewing all our agreements as we update our master plan and that their use of the facility and economics have changed. He agreed with Kevin and was fine with terminating the current agreement and renegotiating a new agreement. The Sox have invested a lot in the community, especially with Little League, and both parties would like to remain partners with an agreement that is not based on outdated 2016 factors.

After brief discussion Commissioner Opyd motioned for approval to allow the current license agreement with the White Sox to lapse. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lacey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 22-02, Declaring Necessity of Use and Authorizing the Transfer of Property for the Benefit of the Park District of La Grange

Director Bechtold stated that we have been in discussions with the Village regarding the community center. We currently have a 99-year lease for the facility, but their strategic plan includes transferring ownership of the community center to the Park District, which benefits both parties. We already maintain the facility and program its use and the transfer will provide us the opportunity to own the building and outdoor land and provide continued services to the community. A Phase 1 was done to ensure the property is safe.

After brief discussion Commissioner Lacey motioned to approve Ordinance 22-02 authorizing the acquisition of the property at 200 Washington. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

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Discussion and/or Approval of Comprehensive Master Plan

Director Bechtold reported that PRI provided notice that they are terminating their service with us. At this point the CMP is almost complete, but the missing piece is to pull it all together. Jenny stated she met with five firms and requested proposals but could not compare apples to apples. We would like someone to take the existing CMP prepared by PRI and modify it into a useable document for the District. Hitchcock is the only firm that will do this. The other firms would only provide an executive summary without modifying the CMP. Hitchcock's fee is \$13,700 and we feel they offer the best way to move forward. We did not make the final payment of \$10,961 to PRI, so we will be over budget a few thousand dollars, but we have park planning money. PRI did not meet with the Board and staff and Hitchcock will do this, enhance the plan, and provide all the data we need for an actionable plan.

Commissioner Posey commented that she knows we must pivot but wants to make sure we will be satisfied with the end result. Jenny stated that she is confident with Hitchcock. They have great references and are top-notch at creating comprehensive plans. They were involved in our RFP process but unfortunately were not selected at that time. Commissioners Opyd and Vear agreed that Hitchcock is the best choice.

Commissioner Opyd motioned to accept the proposal from Hitchcock Design to complete the Comprehensive Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Board Policy Manual Updates

Director Bechtold stated that Section 240 addresses vacation leave, and we would like to revise it to be more competitive in the current job market which is making it difficult to hire people. Candidates for director level positions with our required 7-10 years of experience have accumulated 3-4 weeks of vacation with their employer and would only receive 2 weeks here, which is a deterrent. Jenny would like to add a week so that director level positions come in at 3 weeks of vacation. She would like the authority to negotiate years of service and vacation time to attract and retain staff, as well as remove the rule prohibiting taking vacation time during the first 6 months of employment. Jenny provided information on several other park districts that have a similar policy in place.

Commissioner Opyd asked for clarification of the revisions in Section 240.13. Jenny stated that allowing carry-over of vacation to the next year will now be limited to 50% of accrued time to reduce large payouts and encourage staff to take their vacation time. Staff was given 1.5 years to comply by the end of 2022

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to avoid losing vacation time.

Commissioner Lacey motioned to approve Section 240 of the Board Policy Manual as updated. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Opyd and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Board Business

Old Business

Election/Appointment of Officers

Board President – Commissioner Opyd nominated at 5/09/22 meeting
Brian Opyd was elected unanimously by Voice Vote.

Board Vice President – President Vear nominated at 5/09/22 meeting
Robert Vear was elected unanimously by Voice Vote.

Board 2nd Vice President – Commissioner Lacey nominated at 5/09/22 meeting
Lynn Lacey was elected unanimously by Voice Vote.

Board Secretary –Executive Director Jenny Bechtold nominated at 5/09/22 meeting
Jenny Bechtold was elected unanimously by Voice Vote.

Treasurer – Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej nominated at 5/09/22 meeting
Leynette Kuniej was elected unanimously by Voice Vote.

New Business

Discussion and/or Approval of Holding Board Meetings at the Community Center

Director Bechtold stated that Commissioner Posey requested that this item be on tonight's agenda. Commissioner Posey explained that she attended a meeting at the community center and thought it was very spacious and the recent renovations the District completed were great. Community members from the surrounding neighborhood have requested attention and she would like the Board to consider holding quarterly board meetings there. This would be nice for the community and would also highlight the building, especially since we are going to acquire it. Director Bechtold stated that staff think it is a good idea but there is concern a new location could confuse the public, and we recommend holding meetings there twice a year to see how it goes the first year. There was brief discussion of using a hand-held mic since there is no microphone system there. Jenny stated that we can propose the dates at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lacey stated that when residents say they are not getting attention, what they want is for the park at the community center to look like

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our other parks. Director Bechtold stated that that is our goal.

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

President Vear had no report at this time.

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Posey reported that they met with members of the Community Diversity Group last week. Their organization is developing a public art tile mural project and are interested in the community center for the location. It is still at the concept level but presents an interesting potential partnership.

Marketing/Social Media Committee

Commissioner Opyd had no report at this time.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

None

Board Comments

President Vear congratulated Chris on his new opportunity and expressed appreciation for his 18 years and work ethic.

Commissioner Lacey announced that there will be a Juneteenth celebration at the community center on Monday.

Commissioner Opyd thanked President Vear for his service as head of the table. He hopes to do half as well as the new president.

Commissioner Lawrence announced that she will be vacating her role as commissioner after the July meeting because she is relocating outside of the community. In her limited time here, she has been impressed with the hard work and dedication of the staff to serve the residents of La Grange by providing high quality parks, facilities, and programming, which is important work and has the ability to shape future global citizens. Local parks are where we come together to interact and form lasting relationships and memories, learn to become stewards of our land, and learn about teamwork and inclusion. She applauded everyone here and expressed thanks for being welcomed and will always be available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Posey thanked Commissioner Lawrence for her insightful comments and hard work on the CMP, and thanked President Vear for the

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hours he gave serving as president of the board.

Executive Session

At 7:05 P.M. Commissioner Opyd motioned for the Board to convene to executive session pursuant to Item 2(c)(1) and Item 2(c)(7). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lacey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

At 7:37 P.M. Commissioner Lacey 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 7:37 P.M.

Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session

None

Adjournment

President Vear moved for adjournment at 7:37 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jenny Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved July 11, 2022