

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

NOVEMBER 9, 2020

Vice-President O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners O'Brien, Collins, Jacobs, Opyd
Commissioner Vear present telephonically

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Dean Bissias present telephonically
Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej
Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn
Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller
Superintendent of La Grange Fitness Jenny Bechtold
Assistant Supt. of BASE Melissa Seaberg
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price, Jim Boo, Bill Lanspeary, Dave
Bryant, Jasen Pinkerton from PMA Securities, LLC

Vice President O'Brien welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda. Supt. of Finance Kuniej requested that Action Items 7.3 and 7.4 be moved up to the top of the order in Section 7 of the agenda.

Commissioner Jacobs motioned for the Board to permit President Vear to participate remotely via telephone. Commissioner Opyd seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Commissioner Opyd motioned to move Items 7.3 and 7.4 to the top of the order of Section 7 of the agenda. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

David Bryant, 40 S. Ashland, La Grange, announced that he is from the

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La Grange Citizen's Council and that they are meeting on November 11th to interview park board candidates and on November 12th to interview village board candidates.

Jim Boo, 1327 Mason Drive, La Grange, stated he is in attendance regarding the tax levy in Item 7.5 on the agenda. He would like the Board to consider freezing the amount of money they get from citizens due to current conditions. Cook County is going to reassess the county based on who was affected by COVID, and we should take this into consideration.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Opyd motioned to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of October 12, 2020; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting on October 12, 2020; Item 3.3 Approval of the Financial Reports dated October 31, 2020; Item 3.4 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for November dated November 9, 2020.

Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Staff Reports

Director's Report

- Director Bissias stated that he has nothing new to add to his written board report.
- Dean apologized that he could not be at the meeting in person. This is only the second meeting he has missed in sixteen years.

Staff Comments

Superintendent of La Grange Fitness Jenny Bechtold

- Superintendent Bechtold reported that she worked with Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej on the financial software conversion. Leynette went above and beyond on this project and even the conversion consultant was impressed; we are lucky to have her.
- Jenny stated that the fitness center made money in October. There are currently 2,139 members, with 13 new members and 1 student special added in November. She added 7 new classes and had 85 participants the first week, but higher COVID numbers are affecting attendance.
- She shopped some other fitness centers to see what they are doing. The Y can only have 22 people in their building and 9 in small classes. They are now requiring their patrons to wear masks at all times, even while working out. LA Fitness is not taking reservations and they are looser than the Y, with classes for up to 11 people. Our fitness center is doing well, and we have clarified our mask guidelines so patrons know they must wear a mask when not engaged in physical activity, and they are complying.

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Commissioner Jacobs asked how long it takes for the air to exchange in the fitness center. Supt. Finn said he does not know how long the cycle is, but the units constantly bring in fresh air and there is a circulating system, so it is equalized. He will find out what the exchange time is.

Assistant Superintendent of BASE Melissa Seaberg

- Assistant Supt. Seaberg stated that the only thing she has to add is that they offered a specialty Thanksgiving camp on 11/23 and 11/24, but neither day is running due to low enrollment.

Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Superintendent Miller reported that basketball is now considered a high-profile level sport, so we have changed the structure and guidelines of our YDL program. Neither contact practices nor scrimmages are allowed, and we are going beyond the guidelines to mandate that participants wear masks at all times. Travel basketball began this week.
- Kevin stated that preschool is going well.
- Planning for holiday events continues. Breakfast with Santa has been changed to Donuts with Santa. The new event is sponsored by Tates Ice Cream Shop and will have two time slots offering pictures with Santa.
- The new virtual class pass has 7 enrollments, and specialty fitness programs are up with 74 additional registrations.
- The winter brochure is complete. It will be posted online Wednesday and a postcard will be mailed out to residents on 11/16 and 11/17.

Commissioner Opyd asked how people will be spaced for Donuts with Santa. Kevin explained that Donuts with Santa will be held in the banquet room with Santa on a stage with scenery, and families will be six feet apart in front of the stage, with a max of 25 per time slot. Commissioner Jacobs asked about the guidelines for basketball and how we are regulating it. He stated that our basketball teams are only practicing, not playing games, and that there are 8-10 players per team. The current max for each of our three courts is 25, and each team plays on their own court.

Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn

- Superintendent Finn stated that we have added two volleyball group rentals on Sundays, and that gymnasium space is maxed out. Guidelines are enforced for all users.
- Chris reported that since the mandated max number in our party rooms has been reduced to 25 from 50, some renters have cancelled, and there are not many rentals booked.
- User group fall outdoor sports are wrapping up. Field use ends this week for AYSO and Celtics. Little League played over the weekend with the good weather.

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Commissioner Opyd asked if the Trunk or Treat event is supplemental or will replace the indoor Halloween party in the future. Supt. Miller stated that it has not been decided. He would like to see it be supplemental, but it depends on COVID next year. President Vear asked Kevin if the October webinar regarding benchmarking was helpful for planning during COVID. He answered that it was not since it focused on a recent survey of park districts that did not address COVID.

Superintendent of Finance Leynette Kuniej

- Supt. of Finance Kuniej stated that we ran the second payroll with the new Tyler software today with no glitches, and she is happy with the program.

Commissioner Jacobs thanked Leynette for her work with Tyler and asked for clarification of the tax levy and bond issue. Leynette stated they would be addressed during the action item presentation.

President Vear stated that the previous fiscal reports included year-to-date budget amounts and prior year numbers and asked if this data could be included in the Tyler reports. Leynette answered that she will run an additional report and include it in the future.

Attorney Report

Attorney Price reported that we are dealing with the recent rollback to Tier 1 restrictions. Several areas are going to Tier 2 restrictions, and he expects that our area will be included in Tier 2 soon. The good news is that they have tried to let recreation activities continue under Tier 2. There is a lot of conflicting information online from the Governor's office which we must navigate through.

Treasurer Report

None

Action Items

Discussion and/or Possible Vote on Ordinance 20-07 an Ordinance providing for the issue of approximate \$355,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds, Series 2020, of the Park District for the payment of land for parks, for the building, maintaining, improving and protecting of the same and the existing land and facilities of the Park District, to provide the revenue source for the payment of certain outstanding bonds of the Park District and for the payment of the expenses incident thereto, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest on said bonds.

- Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej stated that this is the annual rollover bonds that we do every December, partially to pay outstanding debt and the balance used for capital projects. She introduced Jasen Pinkerton from PMA Securities, LLC who will conduct a bond presentation.

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Jasen Pinkerton gave an overview of the bond issue. The annual rollover is to pay debt service on alternate 2016 bonds and the recent refunding on 2020A bonds, as well as provide additional funds. The bid was sent to 35 banks in three states and we received two back, which is not unusual for a bid pool of 35, especially when the amount is small, and the municipal market is backed up. He is pleased with the two bids received from Peoples National Bank of Kewanee at .79% and Hinsdale Bank & Trust (Wintrust) at .80%. Jasen went through the written report he provided to the Board and explained each slide. The 2020B bonds are noncallable with a \$350,100 par amount and the debt service payment is part of the annual rollover. Upon completing his presentation, he said the next step is for the Board to review and authorize the bid from Peoples National Bank of Kewanee. The bond counsel will send the documents to Supt. Kuniej for signatures and they will be forwarded to Chapman & Cutler for a closing on November 18th.

After Board discussion Commissioner Opyd motioned to approve Ordinance 20-07 providing for the issue of approximate \$355,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds, Series 2020, of the Park District for the payment of land for parks, for the building, maintaining, improving and protecting of the same and the existing land and facilities of the Park District, to provide the revenue source for the payment of certain outstanding bonds of the Park District and for the payment of the expenses incident thereto, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax to pay the principal and interest on said bonds. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Possible Vote on Acceptance of Official Bid for the Issuance of General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds

Commissioner Vear motioned to accept the official bid from Peoples Bank of Kewanee for the issuance of \$350,100 General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval and Selection of a Firm to Create a New Open Space Master Plan for the Park District of La Grange

President Vear asked if the Board had reviewed the firms' answers to the questions that they were sent and suggested ranking the firms top to bottom.

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Commissioner Opyd stated that he looked at plans the firms have created. We should consider how our new plan can be used moving forward and how it will help us plan for improvements to facilities and parks. PRI provided a list of things to do but no real calendar. Hitchcock's philosophy was to create a project schedule with dates, while others were more of a checklist.

Commissioner Collins stated he liked that Hitchcock would come back for three years, but fundamentally the base they work from is the one that will help us in the first three years. He feels that PRI brings the most to the table. PRI's architect is stronger, and Ray is someone that can definitely provide answers.

Based on Board discussion, Commissioner Vear suggested narrowing the field by eliminating JSD, and the Board agreed.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that PRI included more meetings with different groups, but she did not like that they include only mail-based surveys. The level of data we would get from Hitchcock would be more useful, and their statistical survey is not a random one-time mailing. Hitchcock would use demographic groupings and continue to reach out to those folks online, by mail and phone so that we get a better sample of 300-400. It is awesome that they come back for three years to help us implement the plan.

Commissioner O'Brien asked staff if they were more comfortable with PRI or Hitchcock. Supt. Finn stated that his preference is PRI. They bring a lot to the table and took the time to come out to meet with us. Supt. Miller said his perception has not changed and he likes PRI for the same reasons he gave last month. He prefers their architect, is confident in their turn-around time, and thinks Ray will be great to work with. Supt. Bechtold said she also feels most comfortable with PRI based on the questions they answered, and they provide the best inventory of everything we have, which is essential for a comprehensive plan.

President Vear stated that PRI's fee is significantly less than Hitchcock's and includes all surveys and more group meetings. While Hitchcock has some great value, COVID has limited our financial resources and PRI is a better fit for us. If the Board and staff develop our survey questions appropriately, we will get good results.

Commissioner Opyd asked Director Bissias if he had made phone calls to the references provided by the firms, and Dean said he had and that he received positive responses on all three firms. Dean added that all three bring a lot to the table, but his choice would be PRI. PRI went out of their way to meet with him and Chris. Selecting a firm is the Board's choice and he will work with whoever they choose.

Commissioner Opyd said it is a hard decision. He could be happy with either, but noted that PRI does not have the gender diversity that Hitchcock has.

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Commissioner Jacobs stated that it is important to consider the opinion of staff. When she reviewed the firms' responses there was a big difference and Hitchcock was thorough, innovative, considered trends, and is the group to elevate our work. They would increase utilization of our parks and outdoor spaces, and they have more long-term ideas. She concurs that PRI had some plusses, but feels they are more traditional and do the same thing for all the groups they have worked with.

It was suggested that we ask PRI to increase online visibility with their statistical survey, and Attorney Price said we will negotiate and could build it into the contract.

After Board discussion President Vear motioned to select PRI (Planning Resources, Inc.) to create a new open space master plan for the Park District of La Grange. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion which passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of the Executive Director to Negotiate a Contract Allowing a Firm (based on Board discussion) to Create a New Open Space Master Plan for the Park District of La Grange

Commissioner Collins motioned for approval of the Executive Director to negotiate a contract with PRI (Planning Resources, Inc.) to create a new open space master plan. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

Prior to the vote there was discussion on the contract. Commissioner Opyd stated he would like Director Bissias to include a digital version of the statistically relevant survey in the negotiations, and Commissioner Jacobs requested that he request the firm to come back more than one year to help us revisit and implement the plan. Director Bissias agreed.

The motion passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion on Staff Presenting the Draft Proposal of Levy and Assessment of Taxes of the Park District of La Grange for the 2020 Tax Levy Year at the December Board Meeting

Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej directed the Board to the spreadsheet in the board packet which explains the numbers and provided an overview. She explained that she began with the prior year extension by fund, and then some assumptions are made in the calculations. The county always increases our

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rate by the prior year CPI which is 2.3%, and our EAV was \$750,549,627. The Village of La Grange provided 5 million as the estimate for new construction, and Mason Pointe adds an additional 5 million, for a total of 10 million in new property. The EAV will go up 10 million with an estimated rise of 1.35%. The green boxes indicate what she thinks the extension should be for the next fiscal year. She bumped up the rec fund because we lost so much revenue this year and reduced the special rec fund since it has a healthy balance and no current projects. This keeps the increase at a total of 1.1%. The increase is spread out to the new growth and new property and does not affect existing homeowners if their EAV does not change.

The Board discussed the information provided. Commissioner Opyd stated the levy is below the CPI and it is a good plan, which should be more or less flat for current property owners. Commissioner Jacobs felt the plan was palatable as it does not affect residents, but that there needs to be Board discussion about different fund balances after COVID and other ways to budget. She asked if the District has ever had a year when the tax levy was not increased, and Commissioner Collins asked what happens if we keep the levy the same with no increase. Leynette answered that we have not had a year without an increase, and that you lose those dollars forever if you do not add in the new property. Attorney Price added that the new property would then get a discount forever, and that capturing the new construction makes it fair for existing residents and businesses. Impact fees have been paid and keeping it the same would help new owners, not the residents that paid taxes last year.

Discussion and/or Possible Vote on SEASPAR Tax Levy for 2020

Director Bissias reported that the SEASPAR (South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation) levy comes before the Board annually. Our District is a member of SEASPAR and this year there is a reduction of 2.13%, which is \$2,345 lower than last year. We are required to provide these (inclusion) services and could not provide them ourselves, and he recommends Board approval.

President Vear stated that SEASPAR is a great organization and it would otherwise be costly for the District to provide these services. Attorney Price stated that they serve the community with disabilities, which is outside the tax cap. We are allowed to levy 4 cents additional, but we are only levying 1.45.

After Board discussion Commissioner Jacobs motioned to approve the SEASPAR tax levy in the amount of \$107,380 for 2020. Commissioner Opyd seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

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Board Business

Old Business

None

New Business

Discussion and/or Possible Vote on Board Meeting Dates for 2021

(Draft Proposal)

Director Bissias stated that the meeting schedule in the board packet is a draft for 2021 and follows what we normally do each year. The Board can approve the schedule today or at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that she has some Monday conflicts that she is trying to resolve and requested that Board vote on the schedule next month.

President Vear motioned to table approval of the meeting schedule until next month. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Committee Reports

Administration Committee

None

Parks and Open Lands

Finance & Capital Project Committee

None

User Group Committee

None

Marketing/ Social Media Committee

None

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

Jim Boo, 1327 Mason Drive, La Grange, stated that he does not agree with Attorney Price regarding the EAV calculations. Every year taxes go up in this town and it has been a problem since he moved here in 1994. The assessed valuation goes up each year and has risen 75%, and it never comes back down. Instead of figuring out how much money you can get, he would like the Park District to figure out how much is needed and do a top-down budget.

Board Comments

Commissioner O'Brien thanked Commissioner Collins for his time on the Park District Board and other boards he has served on and wished him all the best.

Commissioner Collins stated that from a budget standpoint, he does not think the District looks for how much money it can get. He has witnessed Dean be incredibly fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars. He thanked everyone and said it was a pleasure to serve on the Board. The staff is first class and has the best interest of the Park District at heart, which is a recipe for success, and he wished us all the best. Director Bissias told Dan he would be missed and that he has served with a level head and the big picture in mind and has been a blessing on the Board.

Commissioner Jacobs thanked the public for coming. She added that we were recognized in the grant application that Claudia put forward for the tree grant, and the District ranked first with another dozen districts behind us. Kudos to Dean and the staff. Regarding fiscal matters, Dean does run things prudently, but she does think an approach where we determine what we need is critical and there is room for improvement. She also wished Commissioner Collins good luck in Florida; it was a pleasure.

Commissioner Opyd thanked Melissa Seaberg for providing masks to staff. He is glad that a master plan vendor was approved and thanked staff for their input during the process. He thanked the public for attending, and thanked Commissioner Collins for his service.

President Vear thanked staff for keeping the ship sailing. He looks forward to seeing what the new financial software can do. He also thanked Chris and Kevin for keeping the recreation center and basketball moving forward, and Linda for taking the irate customer webinar. He offered thanks to Commissioner Collins and wished him good luck.

Executive Session

At 8:26 P.M. Commissioner Collins motioned the Board convene to Executive Session pursuant to Item 12.4 Personnel, 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1) and Item 12.7 Selection of a Person to Fill a Public Office Vacancy, 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(3). Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

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

At 9:00 P.M. the Board resumed the regular meeting.

Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session

Park District Board to Appoint a New Commissioner to Fill a Vacancy

After Board discussion Commissioner O'Brien motioned to appoint Lynn Lacey as commissioner to fill a vacancy left open by Commissioner Dan Collins.

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

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Adjournment

Commissioner O'Brien moved for adjournment at 9:05 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jacobs and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Robert Vear, President

Constantine Bissias, Secretary

Approved 12/14/2020