

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

**AUGUST 21, 2023**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Chvatal, Posey, Vear, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

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 Erin Monforti  
Becky Lorentzen, Nancy Bramson, Brian Lally,  
Molly Price, Marian Honel-Wilson

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda and there were none. He thanked the public for attending the meeting, which is the second one being held at the community center and asked everyone to speak loudly since there was no microphone.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

Marian Honel-Wilson, 950 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., La Grange, introduced herself as the president of the Community Diversity Group and thanked President Opyd for agreeing to speak at their rally on September 10<sup>th</sup>. She explained that they have asked several community leaders to speak about equity and inclusion in their organizations at the rally.

*Community Diversity Group Sign Presentation for Mosaic Art Project at the Community Center*

Becky Lorentzen and Nancy Bramson introduced themselves and stated they were in attendance to provide an update on the mosaic project. Becky explained that they came up with designs for the sign without input from the Park District which are at the end of the packet. Jenny has since told them

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that our direction is different, and we favor something like the sign by the La Grange parking garage that the paving company installed, which is pictured in the packet. The sign has a lot of color and design options and they have not had time to complete it but are investigating and getting quotes. They are presenting the direction they are heading to the Board and can present the final design in September if required. The size of the plaque in front of the parking garage is 18x30 which they may modify slightly and the very rough draft in the packet shows the story on the left and donor thank you's on the right. They promised the donors that their names would be included. A QR code is not being used because it would point to the same place and require redoing the web page. They want people to see the story with the panels representing the past, present, and future. They have a design marketer on their board who will provide professional input, and the banners could change but they would like the text to remain as presented. The sign location would be at the end of the corner in the mulch, and they would coordinate installation with the District. Becky stated that they would also like to present the completed mosaic to the Park District on October 8<sup>th</sup> or another date that we are available. Nancy added that they are the organizers, but the community wrote the descriptions of the plaques and wrote the story, and it is very important that the text be maintained as it would in an art museum.

Commissioner Posey thanked them for all their work, which was a labor of love. Commissioner Vear asked if the Park District's name and logo could be included on the sign. President Opyd suggested it could read "as a gift to" the Park District so that we are not taking credit for their project. Becky and Nancy agreed that this should be included with wording such as dedicated from the Community Diversity Group to the Park District of La Grange.

Becky provided their plans for the dedication which would be on a weekend with the doors opening at 2pm, a dedication of approximately 20 minutes at 2:30pm, followed by entertainment and refreshments. Ideally someone from the Park District should be there for the dedication. Their group also needs to procure the entertainment and publicize the date. There was brief discussion on the commissioners' and staff availability and President Opyd stated they would check their schedules and commit to a date by the end of next week. Becky and Nancy encouraged everyone to sign up or stop by one of the tiling workshops.

Director Bechtold requested that the installer speak with Director Ertmanis prior to the installation so that consideration is given to the sign location in conjunction with plantings and benches that are planned for the area.

President Opyd recommended that the group send a proof to Jenny when it is ready, and the Board will do a quick review to make sure we are all on the same page. Jenny stated that the signage could be approved tonight under Action Items pending final approval by the executive director and board president.

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### Consent Agenda

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of July 10, 2023; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated July 31, 2023; and Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for August dated August 31, 2023. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### Staff Reports

#### Executive Director Jenny Bechtold

- Director Bechtold stated that she and President Opyd discussed his speaking at the Community Diversity rally. He can speak on behalf of the Park District with Board consensus if they are comfortable with that or speak on his own behalf.

President Opyd stated that he could put together some bullet points for the commissioners' review and take feedback. Commissioner Posey agreed with this.

- Jenny reported that we are working with The LeaderShop on an agreement that will end after two years. Nothing has been decided about the building's future but we are putting the two years in place so we can make a decision moving forward. They would like to present it at their September 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, and we would present it at our October meeting.
- She stated that the first of the three required meetings of the Decennial Committee needs to be scheduled. She spoke to the three members, and they can meet at 5:30pm prior to the October or November meeting. It would be a general kickoff meeting to review the report started by staff.
- Jenny explained that a Board self-evaluation is part of the IAPD goals. It is a way for the Board to examine how we are operating with all the exciting opportunities coming to the Park District and determine what we are doing well and what we can improve on. The Board would meet with Peter Murphy or another member of IAPD in an executive session after a regular board meeting or separately. It is a busy time of year and may have to wait until after the new year, but she will email the Board to get it scheduled.
- She stated that Summerfest was August 4<sup>th</sup> through August 6<sup>th</sup> and while we had some rain we made it through. At this point our agreements are up with Windy City and LGBA and we had our wrap up meeting with LGBA. The fest went well but our expenses are higher every year. We estimate we may have made between \$10,000-\$15,000 total, but expenses are still coming in. We have been exploring new software

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placer AI for the District which looks at cellular phone data and it can track who comes to the parks. Based on the fest dates approximately 23,000 people attended for the weekend, with a 10%-20% margin of error. The software broke it down by zip code and of the 23,000 people who attended 4,500 (19.6%) were from zip code 60525, which includes other towns that share our zip code. Additional stats included 3,800 (16%) from Brookfield; 2,600 (11%) from La Grange Park; and 1,100 (4%) from Berwyn. The fest did not get busy until 4pm and the average stay was approximately two hours. It also shows where people went afterward and many went to McDonalds. Jenny added that if we purchase the software we can look back five years. It was a good time to try the software for the fest with our agreements being up. It is a large event and we are a small district with our staff putting in 718 hours Friday through Sunday. LGBA and their volunteers put in 400 hours and volunteers at the beer tent put in an additional 200 hours. During the weeks leading up to the fest our parks staff put in 226 hours for set up and take down and the committee and finance staff spent many additional hours.

President Opyd inquired when decisions need to be made since the agreements are up. Jenny stated that LGBA and their new executive director agreed that the event needs to be evaluated. We have different missions and do not always agree on the direction to take but we always compromise. We need to know our plans for next year by October to have new agreements in place, with direction from the Board no later than September. It is a great event for the community but with our current labor force it is very hard for staff. Jenny stated that she, Blake, and Kevin worked about 50 hours that weekend with other staff working up to 25 hours, and she is concerned about the toll of this event on staff. The \$10,000-\$15,000 estimated profit does not include exempt staff wages so we are not breaking even.

Commissioner Posey stated that as a member of LGBA board she will abstain from the discussion. Commissioner Chvatal stated he understands the hours and it is a big event but it would be disappointing not to have it. He is not sure why we are not bringing in the same amount of funds and would like to see the financials. President Opyd asked when the financials would be in and Jenny stated that we would have a more complete picture in September after we have received most of the invoices.

Commissioner Vear stated that we could hire temporary workers instead of demanding so much from staff and break even. Jenny explained that we used to have volunteers from the community and we only had eight this year, not including the Board. Volunteer support has decreased since COVID. Initially both entities agreed that losing \$30,000 was alright and the event used to cost \$60,000 but this year expenses rose to \$150,000 and continue to rise. Revenue was down with the rain and if we had a rain-out we would lose more than we have. Both entities need to agree what we are willing to lose. President Opyd

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stated that the next step is to see the numbers and have further discussion next month. Jenny stated that close to final numbers will be presented then.

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

- Director Todd reported that the financial reports are preliminary pending some adjustments that need to be made to sales revenue and capital fixed assets which will be updated for the September meeting when the auditors will make their presentation. She is working on an updated second draft of the audit and MD&A.
- Cassandra stated that no tax revenue was received in July, and we are waiting for the 2022 final agency tax rate report.

Director Bechtold added that the adjusting journal entry Cassandra referred to will be reflected in the audit as revenue collected in March and April that should have been deferred to the next year of approximately \$175,000.00.

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

- Director Miller reported that we are busy preparing for the busy fall season which includes BASE, preschool, and travel basketball. The tryouts for the La Grange Lions basketball program were the highest ever. There will be five girls' teams, which is the highest since 2011, and ten boys' teams.
- Kevin stated that La Grange Fitness is doing well, and Dom has done a phenomenal job over the last 4-5 months.
- He stated that the July NRPA parks and rec month was a success and included a s'mores night at Denning Park and an ice cream social at the community center. He thanked everyone for supporting the events.
- He reported that the BASE program begins Wednesday. We were able to get more space at Cossitt which allowed us to take up to 75 students. Our numbers are slightly down from 325 total last year to 309 this year because we lost some enrollees at Forest Road to the Right at School program.
- Kevin stated that Brandon Diaz began work as our new recreation supervisor. He graduated from Lewis University in the spring and has held several positions at the Plainfield Park District. He is excited to have him with his knowledge and passion for the field.

President Opyd asked how hiring was going for the BASE program. Kevin stated they are looking for one more staff member at Barnsdale but are fully staffed otherwise. He added that preschool had two resignations including a lead teacher and an aide so he and Brandon will be hiring.

President Opyd inquired if anything specific was driving the success of the basketball programs. Kevin answered not officially, but speculating from parent comments, Ronnie Fields and his staff recruited a lot of players and they have developed relationships in the community. Zach Price's communication with families is also a driver.

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

- Director Ertmanis reported that work on the parking lot has started again. The initial grading is done with fine grading of 610 to follow. The stormwater will be finished this week and there is a minor MWRD change which will not change the timeline for completion by October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Blake stated that there was a mishap with the installer so we were able to get free flooring in the lobby bathrooms at the recreation center.
- He stated that he and Zach continue to work with AYSO and Babe Ruth, though Babe Ruth is still being non-responsive.

President Opyd asked about the progress with the infields at Gordon Park. Blake stated that he sent a letter to Sportsfields last week and obtained quotes from two other contractors. Jenny added that we let Sportsfields know that we do not want to go the legal route, and we need their proposal by the end of the week and a refund on what we previously paid them with a deadline to finish by the end of September. The current quotes are \$30,000 per field to fix them and their condition is a combination of bad material and delayed maintenance. Blake added that testing indicates the soil is basically all sand resulting from four inches of bad materials and neglect over the past decade. Commissioner Vear asked if the company would remove and replace the four inches of bad mix. Blake stated the four inches of material would be removed and replaced with two inches of base material and two inches of ball mix. There will be a price increase because the old material must be hauled away. Jenny advised the Board that next month we may have a proposal to present to the Board based on the quotes we receive and we may have to adjust capital.

**Attorney Report**

Attorney Monforti had no report at this time.

**Treasurer Report**

Director of Finance Todd stated we received property tax revenue in August which will be reported in September.

**Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of the Waiola Park Conceptual Plan for the OSLAD Grant*

Jenny stated that the plan was taken back to the community and she presented the revised plan which was positively received. Staff would like to move forward with the plan as presented.

Commissioner Vear commented that the pollinator garden seems small and he would prefer it to be a little bigger, but he would approve the plan.

Commissioner Chvatal stated that he attended the last informational meeting and the public seemed happy with the changes. He added that the public expressed concerns about even having a pollinator garden in the park with kids there and do not want it near the playground. President Opyd pointed out that

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August 19<sup>th</sup> was honey bee pollinator day and that hummingbirds and other flying insects are also pollinators. He understands that people are scared of bees but thinks the location is fine where it is.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the conceptual plan for the OSLAD grant as presented. The motion was so moved by Commissioners Chvatal, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of the OSLAD Grant Program Resolution of Authorization, R23-07*

Director Bechtold reported that we received some cost estimates from Wight following the conceptual plans. We originally budgeted \$500,000 with a match from the Department of Natural Resources but the budget is now closer to 1.2 million. The resolution states that we have the funds to complete the project. We will not move the funds now but next year the first \$130,000 of capital will go towards the Waiola OSLAD grant if we are awarded the grant. We are confident we will have a healthy capital budget for next year and can fund it.

President Opyd asked if \$160,000 was allocated to contingency costs and Jenny confirmed it was. He also inquired if Wight provided an estimate on the duration of the project. Jenny stated the plan is conceptual and it would be a guestimate until it is finalized, and Blake added that it depends on when the grant is awarded. If we started next fall the park could open in July 2025 but once there is frost there would be a delay. Jenny reported that the deadline for the grant applications was extended to September 15<sup>th</sup> from August 31<sup>st</sup> so it will be pushed back a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve the OSLAD Grant Program Resolution of Authorization, R23-07. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of the Community Diversity Group Signage for the Mosaic Art Project at the Community Center*

President Opyd stated that this topic was discussed earlier in the meeting and that it will be approved upon review of the final draft. Director Bechtold added that the motion for approval would be with final approval from the board president and executive director.

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Commissioner Posey motioned to approve the Community Diversity Group Signage for the Mosaic Art Project at the Community Center with final approval from the board president and executive director. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Board Business**

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **New Business**

*President to Announce a September 11, 2023 “BINA Hearing” a Public Hearing Regarding the Sale of 2023 General Obligation Bonds (PDLG Annual Roll Over Bonds, Board President to Sign BINA Order)*

President Opyd announced that a “BINA Hearing” a public hearing concerning the intent of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois, to sell not to exceed \$394,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Park Bonds will be held on September 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the De Sitter Room at the administrative/recreation facility at 536 East Avenue in La Grange. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive public comments on the proposal to sell bonds in the amount not to exceed \$394,000 for the payment of land condemned or purchased for parks, for the building, maintaining, improving, and protecting of the same and the existing land and facilities of the District and for the payment of the expenses incident thereto.

He explained that this is an annual process that we go through every year and it is related to the improvements for the recreation center and Park District.

#### **Committee Reports**

##### *Administration Committee*

No report at this time.

##### *Parks and Facilities Committee*

No report at this time.

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

Commissioner Posey reported that the committee has not met but she attended public art events recently and this is something we can continue to bring to La Grange as part of our role to surprise and delight the community. She has some ideas percolating that she is excited about.



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

Mollie Price, 909 S. Catherine Ave., La Grange, stated that she is interested in the Gordon soccer fields, as is Brian Lally who was here earlier. She inquired if it was only baseball fields that are being looked into with Sportsfields or also soccer fields. She attended a meeting for the first time last month and it stuck in her brain that we have millions of deferred maintenance, and it is alarming. She questioned if it was common for a park district to have millions in deferred maintenance and what we are doing to alleviate the problem. She also asked if the financial presentation would be at the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Director Ertmanis stated that the soccer fields would be graded and seeded in-house and will be closed next spring and summer.

Director Bechtold stated that it is not uncommon for park districts to have deferred maintenance as we have limited budgets. She added that she stepped in a couple of years ago and we are putting a plan together that we will roll out over the next couple of months, which includes a possible referendum scenario we presented to the Board. She stated that our financials are included in our board packets every month and the earlier mention of final financials for the September meeting was in reference to the Summerfest financials.

**Board Comments**

Commissioner Posey thanked the Community Diversity Group for such effort in art and bringing the community together; it is really exciting to see it come together. She thanked staff for all the work that went into Endless Summerfest. It was a lot of fun despite the rain.

Commissioner Chvatal thanked staff for the fest which is a great community event. It creates lasting memories for many kids and has become a tradition. He appreciates the tons of hours and energy it takes.

Commissioner Vear stated that Tony and several other LGBA workers told him to say thank you for the fest. He thanked the Community Diversity Group and looks forward to seeing the completed project. He added that the CMP on our website goes into detail on what has been projected and staff identify what projects we have the funds to complete.

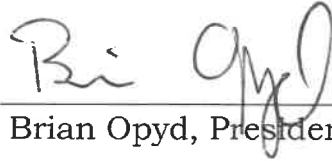
President Opyd thanked everyone for a job well done at the fest and the continued dedication to the community. He explained that this Board has been looking at creative ways to address deferred maintenance and things that are not the way they should be. He cited this building as an example which recently received \$150,000 in improvements.

President Opyd announced that there would not be an executive session meeting tonight.

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**Adjournment**

Commissioner Chvatal moved for adjournment at 7:14 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



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Brian Opyd, President



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Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary

*Approved September 11, 2023*