

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

**FEBRUARY 10, 2025**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Posey, Weber, Opyd  
Commissioner Vear arrived late at 6:03 P.M.

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Director of Finance & HR Jamie Hollock  
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller  
GM of Parks Maintenance Larry Buckley  
HR & Administration Coordinator Madonna Giampietro

OTHERS PRESENT: Patty King (Wight and Co.), Brian Suchan, Linda Pluto, John Pluto, Ray Sipla, Margaret Sipla, Avel Rodriguez, Bernice Mitchell, Erika Mitchell, Tish Bernhardt, David Bernhardt, Jean O'Brien, Virginia Delaney, Sharon Cooke, Laura Seliga, Rose Naseef, Alice Woodson and Marian Honel-Wilson

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda and there were none.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

President Opyd mentioned that the public comments are limited to three minutes and commentators should state their name and address prior to their comment.

John Pluto, 718 East Ave, La Grange, thanked Jenny for her prompt response providing current topographical surveys of Sedgwick Park. He stated that he requested the original drainage plans, but they were not available. He expressed his thoughts on wanting the current parking lots to be redone with permeable pavers to store some of the water runoff from the park. He would like to see the Park District go green on this issue. He asked the Park District for a map of the existing 5 catch basins and sewers that run through Sedgwick

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Park. He also brought up that the Park District has a lead pipe service to it, which will have to be addressed.

Erica Mitchell speaking for her aunt, Bernice Mitchell, 124 Sawyer Ave, La Grange, had questions regarding the encroachment issue between her aunt's home and the Rotary Park. Looking for clarification on the encroachment agreement.

Jean O'Brien, 701 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, thanked Jenny all those on the board for supporting her communication with IDOT regarding the traffic flow issues and getting it diverted.

Tish Bernhardt, 755 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, followed up regarding the location for the multipurpose courts at Sedgwick which were a topic at last month's board meeting. She expressed her preference to move it from the planned area near 49<sup>th</sup> street.

Margaret Sipla, 720 East Ave, La Grange, commented on the potential location of the multi-sport court at Sedgwick Park. She expressed her concerns that if you put the multisport court next to a busy street like East Ave, there could be potential for balls going out onto the busy street.

Sharon Cooke, 729 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, suggested keeping the courts at Sedgwick Park where they are currently, and did not agree that there would be a concern about balls going into traffic. Her preference would be to keep the courts where they currently are located.

Alice Woodson, 112 Sawyer, La Grange, questioned when work at Rotary Park will start, and will it affect her fence on the north end of Rotary Park.

### ***Presentation by Wight and Company***

Patty King from Wight and Co. presented playground design options for the playgrounds at Gilbert, Rotary and Spring Parks. Three options were provided for each park. A fourth company was contacted, but they did not submit drawings. These designs were then shared at a community input meeting on February 19, 2025.

The three companies which provided options are: Little Tikes, Playground by Kompan and Play by Burke. They were all provided with the same footprint and the same dollar value for equipment costs.

Executive director Bechtold mentioned that all these drawings would be on the park district website if anyone would like to look more closely at the options.

Gilbert Park- Patty from Wight and Co explained that the playground area footprint will be enlarged slightly from existing playground. She presented the

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three options and two different color schemes, blues and greens and browns and greens.

Rotary Park- Rotary Park is being completely overhauled. Everything will be new. Patty from Wight and Co. addressed the concern of the neighbor inquiring about the fence. She explained that the fence will remain, but it will be replaced with new fencing. She stated that the anticipated construction for Rotary Park is summer 2025.

Commissioner Opyd asked if the quality of products from each company is similar. Patty from Wight responded that the playground equipment from each company are all similar in durability, commercial grade, well built, and can last 15 to 20 years.

Commissioner Weber asked if there is a benefit to going with one company for all the playgrounds. Patty from Wight explained that each park district views that issue differently. If one vendor is used for all playground, then the replacement parts are all the same, however it can limit the uniqueness of each playground if the same vendor is used across multiple playgrounds.

Spring Park- The three options were presented.

Director Bechtold mentioned that the community input meeting regarding the playground options was pushed back a week due to impending weather conditions. She explained that the Park District relies on feedback from the community in addition to what the best play value is when she and her staff make recommendations to the board. She clarified that feedback from the community input meeting would be considered in the staff's recommendation to the board, but that the board would make the final decision. There would not be a vote at the community input meeting.

Commissioner Opyd asked if playground size in proportion to space needs to be considered. Ms. King responded that safety considerations and fall zones must be followed for each playground area.

There were no more questions regarding the playgrounds at Gilbert, Rotary, and Spring Parks.

With Patty from Wight and Co. still available for questions, Director Bechtold had a question regarding the courts at Sedgwick Park, which the board would be voting on later in the meeting. She stated that one of the board members inquired about why the courts would have to move in option 4, from its current location to the east of the trees. It was explained that the courts start with a proper orientation and are high school size, which is larger than the current court. Also, a fence would be required for the other sports that can be played on the new multi-sport court.

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Director Bechtold clarified that the orientation of the courts is not changing in option 4, it is just larger to accommodate the proper size and to have room for the fence required for the multi-sports which will be played on the courts.

### **Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 13, 2025; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated January 13, 2025; and Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for February dated February 10, 2025. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Weber, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Executive Director Jennifer Bechtold**

- Director Bechtold presented her report and added that she was excited that Kids Around the World are interested in taking the playground from Gilbert and Rotary Parks to be used in other countries. She reiterated that the community input meeting for the playground designs is being pushed back one week.

Commissioner Vear asked if drilling was taking place already. Director Bechtold answered that yes, environmental testing has started.

#### **Finance & Human Resources Jamie Hollock**

- Director Hollock presented her report and noted that in the expenditure report, there were three processed payrolls for the month of January. She added that the district received an Aa1 Moody's Bond rating which reflects the district's strong tax base and financial position.

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

- Director Miller presented his report. He added that he had a meeting with the three soccer affiliate groups to work on the field usage schedule for the spring soccer season.

President Opyd asked if the affiliates are comfortable with the construction schedule planned for the parks. Director Miller explained that the spring season will not be impacted so they are content now with scheduling, however they have some concerns when they move into the fall season. He added that he will continue to communicate the construction schedule with the affiliates as the details are confirmed.

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Commissioner Vear asked if there is construction planned at the parks in our neighboring communities. Director Miller replied that most of the surrounding communities have construction scheduled at their parks. He has been in communication with the surrounding park districts and is working on getting an email thread started with the neighboring parks to share construction schedules as available field space over the next two to three years will be limited.

Commissioner Posey asked about summer camp staffing. Director Miller responded that he has a meeting set for the end of the week with his summer camp supervisor to determine which staff members will be returning from last year and how many additional staff members will need to be added. Job descriptions and the number of openings will be posted next week.

### **Parks & Maintenance Larry Buckley**

- General Manager Buckley gave a brief update on the department operations and the tree management plan. Executive director Bechtold added that this tree management plan is posted on the park district website. The plan includes the pruning schedule and removal of trees if there is a safety issue or decay.

### **Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 025-01 Providing for the Issue of not to Exceed \$13,860,000 of General Obligation Bonds of the District Approved at the November 5, 2024, General Election, for the Purpose of Paying for Various Capital Improvements Throughout the District, Providing for the Levy Of Taxes to Pay the Bonds and Authorizing the Sale of the Bonds to the Purchaser Thereof.*

Commissioner Posey made a motion to approve an Ordinance Providing for the Issue of not to Exceed \$13,860,000 of General Obligation Bonds of the District Approved at the November 5, 2024, General Election, for the Purpose of Paying for Various Capital Improvements Throughout the District, Providing for the Levy Of Taxes to Pay the Bonds and Authorizing the Sale of the Bonds to the Purchaser Thereof as presented, seconded by Commissioner Weber, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

*Discussion and/or Approval to Invest \$13.86 Million into a Bonds Proceeds Account at Illinois Public District Liquid Asset Fund (IPDLAF), Managed by PFM.*

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Director Bechtold explained that the Park District needs to have a separate way to account for these funds due to the arbitrage, whether positive or negative in its spend-down. Staff explored a couple options for investing bond proceeds. Staff recommend investing the \$13.86 million in bond proceeds in a subaccount managed by PFM through IPDLAF.

Commissioner Opyd asked how long we have had a relationship with IPDLAF. Director Hollock explained that we have a long-standing relationship.

Commissioner Vear motioned to approve to invest \$13.86 million into a Bonds Proceeds Account at Illinois Public District Liquid Asset Fund (IPDLAF) Managed by PFM, seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Increase to Capital HVAC Project, Not to Exceed \$400,000*

Director Bechtold explained that the current budget for the HVAC replacements at the Recreation Center, Gilber Park, and the Community Center is \$313,000. She reminded the board that this project will require helicopter lifts for the units at the Recreation Center. The Recreation Center will need a third unit within the next year. Adding the third unit to this year's project will result in overall cost savings but will increase the total budget for this year to \$350,00-\$375,000. Staff recommends increasing the budget not to exceed \$400,000 to include the third unit needed at the Recreation Center.

Commissioner Weber motioned to approve the increase to capital HVAC Project, not to exceed \$400,000, and consensus on purchasing the units from Sourcewell in the amount of \$236,784, seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

## **Board Business**

### **Old Business**

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Updated Referendum Site Plans*

Director Bechtold presented the Board with updates regarding Denning Park, the Gordon Park Bandshell, the Rotary Park easement agreement, the barriers at Elm Park, and the location of the Sedgwick Park multi-sport courts.

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Denning Park-Request to move the expansion of the community gardens at Denning Park to group B to be completed in 2026. She explained that by doing this we could use the existing crushed limestone from the Sedgwick Park path and enhance the area around the gardens and replacing the beds too. She also noted that registration for the garden plots for 2025 has already started.

Gordon Park- Approval requested to move forward with the process of retaining a special use permit for the bandshell through the Village of La Grange. Director Bechtold also indicated that there will be closures throughout Gordon Park during construction including the splash pad, playground and restrooms. She stated that the handball courts should be able to remain open.

Elm Park- Director Bechtold explained that staff looked into the question about making sure there were going to be barriers. There is an existing ornamental fence on the south side of the park behind the sled hill. On the west side of the park, where the bushes are being removed, we will put up a snow fence during winter months when there is sledding for safety purposes.

Rotary Park- The board was updated on the Rotary Park Easement Agreement. The residents to the south of the park at 124 Sawyer. The residents stated they do not need the property and so there will no longer be a need for the easement agreement. We will put up snow fencing to make sure a permanent fence will work.

Sedgwick Park- At the January 13, 2025, regular board meeting, the board requested alternative options for the multi-sport court location at Sedgwick Park. Drawings for the options were presented. Director Bechtold explained the new options which were put together by Wight and Co. The following are the options presented:

Option 1- This is the plan that was presented during the referendum planning, where the courts are near 49<sup>th</sup> and East Ave with the volleyball courts just north of the multi-sport courts. This would require the removal of 1 tree.

Option 2- With community feedback in mind about not wanting to see the courts or fencing, this option puts the courts to the north and moves the volleyball courts just south of the multi-sport courts. This would require no tree removal.

Option 3- The location for this plan is in the North/East corner of the park near 47<sup>th</sup> and East Ave. The retaining wall would be eliminated, and the court would be 10 feet from the parking lot. This plan would require 3 trees and a possible 4<sup>th</sup> be removed. This would also take this area out of the possible dog park locations.

Option 4- This plan included locating the multi-sport court near its current

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location, but expanding the court, making it accessible for multiple sports. This option requires the removal of several trees.

An alternative location was presented for the dog park, which has been pushed back to group B, in 2026 as an alternative. This option includes approximately .8 acres on the NE side of Sedgwick Park.

Commissioner Posey asked if any affiliate programming would be impacted if option 2 for the multisport court is chosen.

Director Miller stated it would not impact the affiliates, he stated they use the north section as it is not graded well.

Commissioner Opyd added that there is no shade with option 2 and there is shade in Option 1.

Commissioner Vear offered thoughts on option 2. He said that by adding the courts to this area, even though it is moved slightly north, it still keeps the area dense in that area of the park with the increase offerings on this side of the park. He also indicated that the noise might become a problem if the courts are added to the SE end of the park.

Commissioner Opyd inquired how many nights we have baseball at Sedgwick, which is almost nightly. He responded that we have kids in the park every night making noise and now we are using noise as a reason not to put the court in. He does not feel like that is a good argument. He also commented that there is 400 feet of fencing with the baseball fields, and he does not feel this small added fence line for the multisport court is a good argument either.

Commissioner Posey mentioned that if noise is a determining factor, then option 4 would not be the best option as it would be increasing the usage by including futsal and increasing the current court size. She would be concerned about the noise for those neighbors.

Director Bechtold stated that staff would not be comfortable with moving forward with option 4 if that was the decision of the board without bringing the option to the community as the referendum plans have been presenting something different for over a year. She added that it could be taken off the plans for the referendum and possibly added to an OSLAD grant for 2026.

President Opyd expressed his preference as being option 2 as it is closer to what has been presented over the last 18 months.

Commissioner Posey explained her preference as being option 2 with the multisport court near where it has been proposed for the referendum flipped with the volleyball courts, placing it a bit farther away from residents.



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Commissioner Vear ranked his preferences as option 3, option 4, then option 2.

Commissioner Weber prefers having the area on the NE corner of Sedgwick as a possible dog park option, so he is not in favor of option 3. He explained his choice would be option 4 leaving the multi-sport court near its existing location.

Commissioner Opyd stated that looking at the scale on all the drawings, option 4 is the closest to the homes and should not be considered if location to homes is being considered.

Commissioner Vear stated that there were complaints from past residents about where the basketball courts are currently and he believes due to these few complaints, the basketball courts were defunded. He believes if we are going to move the basketball courts, they should be moved to a location that will not disrupt any residents, which he believes is option 3.

Commissioner Opyd stated that our parks are public parks, and that people using our parks means we are successful in our mission.

Commissioner Posey noted that all the options are imperfect in some way but with option 2, there is least impact on the park. She explained that if the argument is made that the court is too close to residents in option 1 then the same argument can be made for option 4, which is closer to those homes.

It was determined that two commissioners choose option 2 and two commissioners choose option 4 and the deciding vote for the location of the multi-sport court would have to be moved to the March 10, 2025, meeting to include Commissioner Lacey in the vote.

President Opyd expressed his thoughts that the courts should not be taken out of the plans all together as it is a priority to provide this to kids in the area.

A consensus was made to remove options 1 and 3 from consideration.

Commissioner Vear motioned to move the discussion on the location of the multi-sport court to the March 10, 2025, board meeting. President Opyd asked that all in favor of moving this discussion and decision to next months meeting and all commissioners present said Aye.

### *Discussion and/or Approval of the Band Shell (Gordon Park)*

Director Bechtold presented and asked for approval from the board for the plans for the Gordon Park Band Shell and explained that it requires a special use permit and all the material regarding the band shell would need to be turned into the Village by February 13, 2025.

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Commissioner Weber motioned to approve the band shell at Gordon Park, seconded by commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **New Business**

*Discussion and/or Approval of License Agreement Addendum for Storage Space, Rotary Club of La Grange.*

Director Bechtold presented a recommendation by the staff to extend the license agreement by two years, expiring on February 28, 2027.

Commissioner Vear moved to approve Amendment No. 3 to the License Agreement for Storage Space with the Rotary Club of La Grange, extending the agreement for two years expiring on February 28, 2028, seconded by commissioner Posey and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **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*

No report at this time

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

Sharon Cooke, 729 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, stated that her reason for not wanting the multi-sport court on the south/east side of Sedgwick Park is that there is not sufficient parking in that area. Questioned if the third volleyball court would be removed if the multi-sport court is not moving to that location.

Rose Naseef, 911 S. Stone, La Grange, mentioned that she does not live near Sedgwick but would not want to eliminate the courts from the plans. She likes it where it is now, but because it was not in the proposed referendum plans the whole time, it is a difficult situation. She thinks the dog park is going to have the same issue since it was not proposed at Sedgwick Park during the park planning referendum process. Thanked the board for considering the trees in

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their decision making.

Erika Mitchel, 124 Sawyer Ave. La Grange, asked where does her aunt go from here regarding the Rotary Park easement agreement. Director Bechtold said she would follow up with her after the meeting.

Alice Woodson, 112 Sawyer Ave, La Grange, asked for clarification of the sign at Rotary Park which says “no alcohol, no dogs, no ball playing” while doggy bags are provided at the park. She also voiced her concerns about the cottonwood trees at Rotary Park and asked for a sign that says, “No Ball Playing”. President Opyd explained that leashed dogs are allowed in the parks, and staff will look the signage issue.

Marian Hone-Wilson, 950 S. 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, thanked the Park District for participating in the Building Inclusive Community Conference and thanked Jenny for being on the planning committee.

Bob Cooke, 729 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, stated that he would like the multi-sport court to be left in its current location. He also voiced his concerns about the water drainage issues at Sedwick Park for the path around the park.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Posey thanked the board members for the respectful and robust discussion she voiced her appreciation for the different opinions and recognized that this is a difficult process as there are a lot of moving parts. She thanked director Bechtold and her staff for all the preparation that is put in for the board to be able to come to these discussions and decisions. She was delighted to see a full house attending the meeting and feels strongly about having community input.

Commissioner Weber thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for the great discussion. He also gave his thoughts on the water issues and expressed that it is first a Village issue, but appreciates the attention being brought to the board about the issues.

Commissioner Vear thanked the residents for coming to the meeting. He also thanked the staff and mentioned that he hopes those who attended conference got a lot out of it and hopes to hear all about it.

President Opyd thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He expressed his appreciation for everyone’s attention and for being part of the process of working for the people. He was pleased with the staff supporting the efforts with IDOT. He commented on the water issues and stated that he is happy to look into options, but pavers might not be the best solution.

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### Executive Session

At 7:18 P.M. President Opyd asked for a motioned to move to go into executive session for Item 10.4 Review of Personnel, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). The motion was moved by commissioner Posey, seconded by commissioner Weber and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

At 9:04 P.M. Commissioner Opyd motioned the Board to rise from Executive Session and Commissioner Posey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 9:04 PM.

### Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session


Commissioner Vear moved to increase the Executive Directors salary to \$147,000 and a bonus in the amount of \$10,000 and Commissioner Posey seconded the motion.

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

### Adjournment

Commissioner Weber moved for adjournment at 9:06PM. The motion was seconded by Posey and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

  
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Brian Opyd, President

  
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Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary  
*Approved March 10, 2025*