

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

**MARCH 09, 2026**

**President Opyd called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Carter, Weber, Vear, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Posey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Director of Finance & HR Jamie Hollock  
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller  
Parks, Grounds, and Planning Manager Tim White  
GM of Facilities and Operations Mike Hay  
HR & Administration Coordinator Madonna Giampietro

OTHERS PRESENT: Marge Sipla, Ray Sipla, Norman Madsen, John Pluto,  
Jonathan Robinson, Linda Pluto, Martin Calik,  
Tish Bernhardt, Virginia Delaney, Carrie Prystalski,  
Marian Honel Wilson, Dr. Copper Aitken-Palmer,  
Bob Cooke, Sharon Cooke, Dan Magiera,  
Sandra Magiera, Taranos Williams, Jim O'Connor,  
Bev O'Connor, Bill Engels, Jane Kinsley

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda and there were none. President Opyd reminded guests that for the public comments section of the meeting, to please state your name and address and limit your comments to 3 minutes.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

*Public Comments*

Marge Sipla, 720 East Avenue, La Grange, expressed her concerns regarding the removal of several trees at Sedwick Park.

John Pluto, 718 East Ave, La Grange, read an email that he sent to the Village of La Grange pertaining to the south basin project around Sedgwick Park. He noted some history of a water line near 47<sup>th</sup> and Bluff. He said his bottom line is that there is a 61-year-old pipe that needs attention before the park improvements. He expressed his concerns about lack of communication between the Village of La Grange and the Park District of La Grange.

Carrie Palstalski, 517 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, stated her dismay at the number

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING – March 09, 2026**

of trees that were cut down at Sedwick Park. She added that she felt the communication regarding the tree removal was not sufficient.

Dr. Copper Aitken-Palmer, 521 10 Ave, La Grange, explained her concerns about the tree removal process at Sedgwick Park and the potential for water runoff now and that the area already struggles with flooding issues and the loss of trees is profound. She stated that she would like to have seen a hydrological analysis completed.

Bill Engels, 621 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, shared his reservations about the cutting down of several trees at Sedgwick Park. He mentioned that standing water is already an issue around the ball fields at Sedgwick and this could make it worse. He explained that it is not a good look when surrounding towns visit the ballpark, as the standing water is a problem.

Jim O’Connor, 645 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. La Grange, acknowledged and appreciates that the board puts in a lot of time making decisions for the parks, but he wanted to convey his disappointment in the cutting down of the trees at Sedgwick Park. He questioned the specific trees which were cut down and specified that there were some trees that he thought could have been saved. He added his thoughts on the water accumulation on the walking path especially the part that runs parallel to 49<sup>th</sup>.

Norman Madsen, 708 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. La Grange, voiced his misgivings about the additional soil being added to the section of Sedgwick and his concerns about increased water runoff.

Martin Calik, 616 Selborne Road Riverside, representing AYSO 300 Region, thanked the Park District for working with them to bring soccer to the kids in the area. He emphasized that AYSO is made up of all volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to making soccer accessible to area kids.

**Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 9, 2026; Item 3.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session of February 9, 2026; Item 3.3 Approval of the Financial Reports dated February 28, 2026; Item 3.4 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for March dated March 9, 2026. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Weber, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

**Staff Reports**

**Executive Director Jennifer Bechtold**

- Executive Director Bechtold presented her report.

She asked the board if they had a chance to look at the LGLL request for signage proposal and if they had any feedback. Commissioner Vear responded that he thought the signs were too big, especially if they are proposed to be placed on top of the batting cages. President Opyd added that the size felt like the size of a billboard and conveyed that he did not believe that would be a valuable addition to the park and that it would open it up for other organizations to request similar signage. Executive Director Bechtold stated that LGLL does need some direction if they can put up these signs. Commissioner Weber remarked that he has seen these types of signs at other fields and he liked seeing the history of the leagues posted like this. Executive Director Bechtold responded that she can let LGLL know that the board thought the proposed signs were too big and maybe they could come up with a different option and location.

Executive Director Bechtold addressed the tree removal at Sedgwick Park topic. She asserted that the initial plan was not to remove additional trees, but that when it was discovered that there was contamination, those plans had to be revisited to coincide with the remediation plans. She added that removing trees is not what the district is about and explained that the plan is to add 1.5 trees for every one tree that will be taken out at Sedgwick, including planting some larger caliper trees for some of them. She explained that the Park District is going through the EPA and following their regulations and the plans have been submitted to the Village and MWRD for permits and all those regulations will be followed for this project.

**Finance & Human Resources Jamie Hollock**

- Director Hollock presented her report.

**Director of Recreation Kevin Miller**

- Director Miller presented his report. He added that he is working on an agreement for AYSO for additional lighting towers needed for Sedgwick Main soccer field.

Commissioner Vear asked about the unique participants for Mighty Munchkins and Trailblazers Summer Camp. Director Miller responded that he could pull a report and get him those numbers by the end of the evening.

**GM of Operations and Facilities Mike Hay**

- General Manager Hay presented his report. President Opyd asked how many participants have taken part in the new fitness classes. General

Manager Hay answered that the classes have averaged double-digit numbers in the first couple weeks and can accommodate up to 25 participants.

**Parks, Ground, and Planning Manager Tim White**

- Manager White presented his report.

**Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of a Three-Year Agreement with Lauterbach and Amen for the Park District Audit Services.*

Executive Director Bechtold presented the three-year agreement with Lauterbach and Amen for audit services that staff recommend with the following fees: April 30, 2026, Audit, \$15,800; April 30, 2027, Audit, \$16,600; and April 30, 2028, Audit, \$17,400.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the three-year agreement with Lauterbach and Amen for the Park District Audit Services. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Carter, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

*Discussion and/or Approval of the Grant Agreement Between the State of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources and the Park District of La Grange, Agreement No. OS-26-2712.*

Executive Director Bechtold explained that with the approval of the OSLAD Grant for Sedgwick Park, this is the agreement which has to be entered into with the state of IL to receive the grant. The memo was mistitled with Gilbert Park, but the agreement does specify the agreement is for the OSLAD Grant for Sedgwick Park. Commissioner Weber asked about the process with this grant and if it changes any plans already set in place for Sedgwick. Executive Director Bechtold replied that the plans have already been reviewed by the state for the approval of the grant.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the Grant Agreement between the State of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources, and the Park District of La Grange, Agreement No. OS-26-2712. It was so moved by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Carter, Vear, Weber, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Posey

*Discussion and/or Approval of Sedgwick Park Remediation Construction Management Services.*

Executive Director Bechtold explained that as part of the overall Sedgwick Park redevelopment, environmental remediation is required in designated areas of the park. The Park District has been working with Wight & Company on the referendum projects, and Wight Construction Services has submitted a proposal to provide design, engineering, and construction management services specific to the remediation work at Sedgwick Park. She included the information that this would be paid for through insurance but that the insurance company cannot hold the contract.

Commissioner Weber asked what would happen if this was voted against. Would it put a hold on projects like the tree removal at Sedgwick? Executive Director Bechtold answered that it would be difficult for Wight & Company to oversee the Sedgwick project without including the remediation piece as well. Commissioner Weber remarked that he is just thinking about the tree issue and if voting against this might give some time to reevaluate the tree removal. Executive Director Bechtold responded that the trees would still have to come down' that this is an agreement for the management of the remediation whether it is Wight & Co. or not.

Commissioner Vear asked to confirm that there won't be any financial changes and Executive Director answered that this is correct. Commissioner Carter followed up on that question asking if this was totally being covered by insurance. Executive Director Bechtold replied that the final approved remediation would be covered by the insurance company.

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the Construction Management Services Agreement with Wight Construction Services for the remediation project subject to final approval by the Executive Director and legal counsel upon receipt of insurance authorization. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Carter and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioner Vear, Carter, Opyd  
NAYES: Commissioner Weber  
ABSENT: Commissioner Posey

**Board Business**

**New Business**

*First Reading of the General Operations Budget and Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, Allowing the Budget to be Put on Display (Minimum 30-Day Requirement).*

Director Hollock presented the 2026-2027 budget draft. She detailed the Park District's plan for the expenditure of all revenue received. She explained the procedures, policies, and assumptions used in preparing the operational

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING – March 09, 2026**

budget and additional historical information was provided to enable further analysis.

Bryan Opyd asked why transportation costs have increased. Director Hollock explained that we will be having two additional weeks of summer camp to accommodate District 102 students. The increase in transportation is a direct result of these two weeks of camp.

After Director Hollock presented the section of the budget covering the BASE program, Commissioner Vear indicated his appreciation for the staff for the turn-around of this program. President Opyd provided input regarding how we view the term revenue when it comes to programs like BASE. He elaborated that revenue is representative of being able to cover the cost, operate and provide a needed service to community members.

The topic of Merchant Fees was discussed. Commissioner Weber asked if there are any alternative payment forms that we can look into to mitigate the credit card fees, some examples were Zelle, or Venmo. Director Hollock responded by explaining that currently, the district absorbs the credit card fees, we do not pass on the fees to patrons and that while she can look into alternate payment forms she is not currently a proponent of the third party payment companies like the ones mentioned as they can present other security risks. President Opyd added that no matter how we address the fees; he is always in favor of being transparent, so our members are not surprised by hidden fees.

President Opyd thanked Director Hollock for her work on the budget. He issued a reminder that there will be a public hearing on April 20, 2026, at 6pm at the Lacey Community Center for the presentation of the final budget.

### **Old Business**

#### **Committee Reports**

##### *Administration Committee*

Commissioner Vear shared that he met with Director Hollock and Executive Director Bechtold to review the 2026/2027 budget and was very impressed with it.

##### *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)**

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING – March 09, 2026**

Marion Honel Wilson 950 8<sup>th</sup> Ave La Grange, representing the Community Diversity Group, expressed her appreciation for the board and Executive Director Bechtold for their celebration of the opening of Lacey Community Center. She enjoyed hearing Lynn Lacey’s history of service in the community. She also mentioned that she hopes the sign for the mosaic on the building will be put back.

Dr. Copper Aitken-Palmer, 521 10 Ave, La Grange, provided comments regarding debit card and credit card fees. She also asked if MWRD had recommended phasing the cutting down of the trees at Sedgwick.

Jane Kinsley, 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. by Sedgwick, she asked about the breakdown in costs of mitigation at Sedgwick Park. She was referred to the board packet which had the breakdown listed.

Carrie Prystalski, 517 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, expressed her concerns about the specific trees which were cut down at Sedgwick Park. She elaborated that she would like to see the remaining trees, that are scheduled to be removed, be evaluated to see if any could be saved.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Weber thanked the public for coming and for their comments. He thanked Director Hollock for her work on the budget. He shared that cutting down trees was not something the board wanted to do as part of the park projects, but unfortunately with the remediation efforts the tough decisions had to be made, but he wanted to reiterate that it was never the goal in the referendum process to unnecessarily cut down trees.

Commissioner Vear seconded Commissioner Weber’s thoughts. He remarked that the board fought for as many trees as possible when the original plans came from the designers. He also reminded everyone that for every tree taken down at Sedgwick it will be replaced by 1.5 trees.

President Opyd reminded everyone that board members are residents of La Grange and when they make decisions they are thinking of the future of this community. He said that while he understands that putting in two small trees now to replace a tree cut down does not have immediate returns, he would like to think that what we are doing now will have a lasting positive impact in the future. He thanked the public for coming and reiterated how important it is to share concerns and be heard.

President Opyd announced that there would be an executive session tonight.

### **Executive Session**

At 7:40 P.M. President Opyd motioned to move to go into executive session for Item 10.4 Review of Personnel, 5ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). The motion was seconded

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING – March 09, 2026**

by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

At 7:52 P.M. President Opyd asked for a motion for the Board to rise from Executive Session. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

**Action Items Discussed in Executive Session**


*Discussion and/or Ratification of the Employment Agreement between the Park District of La Grange and the Executive Director.*


President Opyd asked for a motion to approve the Employment Agreement between the Park District of La Grange and the Executive Director as presented. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

**Adjournment**

President Opyd moved for adjournment at 7:53 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Opyd, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary  
Approved April 20, 2026