

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

MARCH 30, 2021

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

PRESENT: Commissioners O'Brien, Jacobs, Opyd, Vear

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Dean Bissias, Superintendent of Facilities Chris Finn, Superintendent of Recreation Kevin Miller, Superintendent of La Grange Fitness Jenny Bechtold, Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Robert Bush, Treasurer Rob Metzger
Marc Deveau-Henry Bros.
Nancy Bramson, Marian Honel-Wilson,
Greg Mino, Dave Bryant, Kim Gebhart,
Rebecca Ramana, Charles Gilbert

*Treasurer Metzger joined the meeting at 6:05 P.M.

*Commissioner Lacey joined the meeting at 6:10 P.M.

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

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

President Vear read a comment submitted via email by Elizabeth Crewe-Kluge, 429 7th Avenue, La Grange. She would like it on the public record that she is strongly for permeable pavers in the parking lot. La Grange has struggled with flooding issues and we have the opportunity to set a positive example for other residents and municipalities and to landscape the lot.

Marian Honel-Wilson, 950 8th Avenue, La Grange, stated that she is the president of the Community Diversity Group and is here tonight with Nancy Bramson, 4246 DuBois, Brookfield, who is a board member. They recently sent an email to the Board to bring attention to improvements needed as priority budget items at the Community Center, 200 S. Washington. The list was compiled with residents from the community. President Vear responded to the email and requested that the items be prioritized. The items address safety

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issues and are low cost and fill an urgent need as the facility has been neglected over time. They read a list of urgent repairs and additional priorities they are requesting. Residents have been waiting years to see the Community Center get the same attention as other facilities in La Grange. (A copy of their written statement and requested repairs follows the minutes.)

Kim Gebhart, 412 7th Avenue, La Grange, stated she is on the District's parks and open lands committee and the pandemic has reaffirmed how important green spaces are, especially because we are in an older, boxed-in suburban area. She thanked the Board for opening the parks to dogs on leashes. She frequents Sedgwick Park with her dog and has noticed how unkempt the park looks, including weeds and basketball hoops in need of repair. She was glad to see that mulch was laid down which helped the appearance of the park and thanked Claudia for it. She is here to voice support for permeable pavers for the parking lot at the rec center, especially since there are several grants that we could apply for to help with the cost. We sold green space and are now using some of that money to put in a parking lot and retention pond and no parking needs assessment was done. She gets that we need more parking and is not opposed to it. She does not know all the costs, but we should maximize the property with green space to reclaim some of the space lost from the sale of property at Gordon Park.

David Bryant, 40 S. Ashland, La Grange, stated that he emailed President Vear with his concerns and he wants him to read it for the record. The statement reads: Who profits from more parking? (Countryside? residents? commercial venues?); Process (Sale of park to buy parking? Cost of management? Permit conditions?); Management changeover (What will the new director of parks think?); Objective: Let's slow down and see if the pandemic abates and additional funding is available based on Congressional actions to boost the economy. Is there a better way to manage additional parking? To clean up the Nicor property? To get public support based on facts? To hire a new director that can deal with these issues.

Rebecca Ramana, 30 N. Spring, La Grange, stated that she lives on the west side of La Grange and she supports the changes that the members of the Community Diversity Group has talked about. She has spoken with residents that use the Community Center and hugely supports fixing it up and making the east side park more representative of the rest of La Grange.

Discussion and Potential Action/ Outreach and Communication to Residents Concerning the Newly Acquired Parcel

Commission Jacobs thanked the public for coming and for their support for storm water mitigation for the lot. We should have community outreach on the new parcel that closed in February. It was a long journey, and it is important to ask our community for their ideas and explain the situation to them, including the conditions of the site, what we are proposing, and the possibilities. We missed the piece of putting out the information; it has been

trickling out. Let us take a pause and get the community involved.

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of an Agreement with Henry Bros. to Act as the Construction Management Firm for the New Parking Lot Located at 610 East Avenue

Mark Deveau from Henry Bros. thanked everyone for the opportunity to work with the District as the construction manager on the project. Their firm celebrated its 100-year anniversary and they are located 15 minutes away. They work in parks and rec, and he is here to answer any questions or concerns regarding the project.

Commissioner Jacobs thanked Mark for being here. She stated that we have references and examples of the excellent work they have done on large projects. She asked if they have had any projects that were only parking lots, with MWRD involvement and permeable pavers. Mark answered that they have done parking lots that were part of larger projects, but not lots only or with MWRD. Their company is capable of managing large and small projects, and they have worked on projects where parking lots are a major component. They have a lot of experience and environmental references, including an industrial client in the Harvey area with the haul off of materials similar to ours. They have experience in all the components of our project.

Commissioner Opyd asked how the process would work with the potential changes being discussed. The contract states we can implement some changes, but we must remain compliant. If we change the original design does Henry Bros. issue a change order? Mark replied that they would. They have done enough work to gauge historical cost and the numbers get more exact as the project proceeds. A construction manager can put together the best quality at the best cost. Commissioner Opyd asked how a potential change from asphalt to permeable pavers would be handled and based on today's drawings, how long the project would take. Mark explained that he would communicate with the architect regarding the change so adjustments could be made. Permeable pavers would increase the cost and increase the time frame by perhaps an additional month for the project, which is estimated at 4-6 months. Once information is received back from the architect and civil engineer regarding the change it would be a week a week or two for him to come back to us with the numbers.

Commissioner O'Brien stated that there is a quote for permeable pavers based on the original drawing that Henry Bros. prepared. Commissioner Opyd stated that there is a seasonality working with asphalt and Mark advised against going into late fall, depending upon the wetness of the asphalt.

President Vear asked how many subcontractors would be involved, if we needed a manager, and whether it was fiscally responsible. Mark answered that it was, and there would only be 3-4 subcontractors. They would

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encourage the use of local firms if possible. One benefit of using construction management is that the bids normally have tighter numbers right off the bat, and you do not have to go back and forth to negotiate. For each trade they will consider a minimum of three contractors, write a scope of work as specific as possible, and prequalify the firms to avoid problems later. They will evaluate their references and vet each trade.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that to be clear with the numbers, hiring Henry Bros. for construction management vs. a general contractor means we are paying 15%, about \$215,000. Mark stated that the difference between construction management and hiring a general contractor is that fee is basically people costs, which is the most expensive thing in any project. Manpower can be the same on bigger vs. smaller projects, with the smaller project cost having a bigger percentage spent on manpower. Commissioner Jacobs stated that with the additional 6% profit and overhead fee Henry Bros.' fee is essentially 21% of the project cost.

President Vear asked for clarification of the Exhibit E exemptions to haul off material and if costs are dependent on the results of the soil sampling. Mark stated that whenever you haul off dirt there is a cost savings if it is clean, but unsuitable soil or environmental issues raise the costs. If it were clean soil you could reuse it at a park for a berm. It is in Exhibit E because it is a variable cost. He hopes the boring results will not raise costs, but you will not know until it is done.

President Vear thanked Henry Bros. for coming to the meeting. Commissioner Opyd stated he would like continued discussion on the design to reduce digging so as not to disturb contaminated soil and to reduce costs. Although pavers are more expensive, he wants more discussion on what we really want to do with the lot before approving this contract. Commissioner Jacobs would like more comparison pricing between hiring a general contractor vs. the construction management option, which has 20% overhead. While quality control is a good reason for this option for large projects, she is not sure this is the financially prudent way to go without seeing more comparisons before spending land sale money and taxes.

Director Bissias stated the big difference is that we have control of subcontractors with construction management. A general contractor can choose any subcontractors they want, and you give up any say. Change orders must still be approved with construction management, but you have more control over the build process and operations. Commissioner Jacobs stated that she thinks there are general contractors qualified for this kind of project and we could evaluate these companies.

It was decided not to vote on the contract tonight and continue the discussion at the next meeting.

BOARD BUSINESS

Discussion and development of MBO's for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Director Bissias stated that MBO's were tabled last year due to COVID and we are bringing most of the items back with a few additional to be added. Most of them are general operating budget items. Capital items will be determined after tonight's meeting.

Park Foreman Claudia Galla provided details on the MBO's she is suggesting. The first is to repair the pathway at Sedgwick Park. She explained that the pathway is done with screenings which is unstable and gets washed out when it rains. We have not done major work there and have always patched it. She would like us to consider a more permanent solution, possibly asphalt, since screenings are money out the door. The cost would be high, and she will patch it to make it safe in the short term. Commissioner Opyd stated that money is tight but that does not mean we cannot plan for investment in the long term and put it on the map in the 10-year master plan if it benefits the community. Commissioner Jacobs commended Claudia and stated the tough winter affected the path and we need to consider that it should meet ADA standards.

Claudia explained the second MBO for adding planters at the Community Center, which residents have requested. She has talked to the Village and they will donate the plants, but we need to buy the planters. She would like to mimic the planters downtown to tie in with the village. Commercial grade planters would cost around \$500 each. Commissioner Lacey liked the idea of bringing beauty to that area.

Claudia discussed the third MBO which is to investigate repairs to the basketball courts in all the parks. She would like there to be long term planning to address the courts at each park like we do with the tennis courts. We refurbished the nets, poles, and backstops at the Community Center last year, but it needs resurfacing, and the pole at Stone Park is leaning. The work would be expensive, but we could do a location each year and include it in the master plan. Supt. of Facilities Finn added that each location will need to be evaluated to determine the best option, such as remove and replace, crack fill and seal, or overlayment. The work will be dictated by the condition of the courts as well as funds available. There is a wide variety of pricing and methods and the cost could range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 per location. Commissioner Jacobs stated that courts are always full of kids and this is a good way to give to the community.

Commissioner Lacey proposed an adopt-a-park MBO. With all the changes going on we could ask one or two families to volunteer to keep an eye on a park and courts and be our eyes and ears. If they see something that needs to be done, they could call us. The Board agreed this was a good idea.

President Vear addressed the public and said that this MBO review was a shorter experience due to cutbacks from COVID. He explained the MBO

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process follows the flow chart in the packet, and that the MBO list is color coded for previous years. Commissioner Opyd suggested purging items that may no longer be relevant as we go through the 10-year plan. Director Bissias stated that items are prioritized based on points with safety and legal considerations, which should be kept in mind if purging items. Commissioner Opyd stated the ice-skating rink MBO was his and could be removed. Commissioner Jacobs stated she would like to revisit her MBO for recycling and diverting waste from landfills and include it on the list in a different form with costs included.

Board and Staff Discussion on General Operations Budget for 2021-2022

President Vear announced that a draft of the budget has been on display as required as of March 8, 2021.

Director Bissias reported that there was a change to the budget from the draft budget books, and the proposed balance is now \$49,596. Staff has had no bonuses or raises in the last two years and he made an adjustment for compensation and to spike moral, so salaries, social security and pension funds increased. Commissioner Opyd asked where we were with staffing prior to COVID and currently. Dean stated that only a handful a part-time employees have been brought back. Finance Assistant Kuzel reported that 99 part-time employees were laid off and that there are currently 51 employees on payroll, including full-time staff.

Director Bissias stated that Treasurer Rob Metzger is at the meeting tonight to explain income, revenue, and expenditures. Rob stated that the good news is we have been doing this the same way for almost 20 years and his observation is that Supt. of Finance Leynette Kuniej and staff does as good of a job as any he has seen. They do not just start with last year's and grow, they plan every expense item, and he is very much impressed. He worked through the drafts and final budget with President Vear, Dean and Leynette and reviewed each line item and there were good answers and detail. The top line of the budget itself with revenue history is primarily driven by taxes. They have done a good job managing business during the pandemic with a net revenue over expenses of about \$257,000. Lost revenue related to the fitness center and recreation were out of our control, and we managed through it with great expense control. The bulk of revenue itself is tax driven, activity-based rec fees, fitness center revenue, and rentals at the rec center. We have a good handle as to the level of activity we will have based on experience. Rentals and the fitness center are less clear based on what is allowed, but the business model has variable expenses to offset variable income. Rec expenses are based on the filling of classes; if we take away a class, we take away the expense. Last year had downturns but the District was still managed responsibly. Looking at this year the property taxes are what they are. We budgeted for rec fees as much as we think we can handle knowing expenses can be pulled back. Fitness center revenue is expected to come back somewhat and we should strategically focus on marketing the fitness center, which has been a huge success. The rec

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center rental revenue is a big base and has exceeded our expectations, but we are being conservative in projecting it for this year. We are conservatively projecting about 6 million in total revenue which does not include bond issuance, and we are coming out of the woods. Expenses fall out of it from there, with a bottom-up build and each department being squeezed, and it manages itself well. The executive director knows how to make things balance and has done a great job at it for 16 years. The District has done more than anyone thought it could with great leadership by Dean, Leynette and President Vear, and he vouches for the budget.

President Vear noted that Leynette put a lot of work into the budget over the past several months. Commissioner Jacobs stated she is happy that we are coming out even or a bit ahead, which is astounding for the year. Leynette stated we were very careful and it was a team effort. Commissioner Opyd asked about the change in cost of the fitness equipment and Leynette stated it was due to the lease expiration; the equipment is now ours.

Commissioner Vear stated that if there was no further discussion regarding the budget we will move on.

Commissioner Opyd stated that last year there was limited staff for summer park maintenance due to COVID and asked what this year's plan is. Claudia reported that she normally hires between 4-6 summer staff but has received few applications this year. She plans to hire 4 but the budget will allow for 5. Leynette added that overall, we are having trouble getting applications and staff for all positions, and that our minimum rate is \$11.

*Reminder of Public Hearing Meeting to be Held on April 12, 2021 at 7p.m.
Prior to the April Board Meeting*

President Vear reminded everyone of the public hearing meeting in April.

Public Comments

Greg Mino, 229 9th Avenue, La Grange, appreciates the desire to have the community involved. There is a lot going on and with the budget it is a great point to have public input. He agrees with Claudia that Sedgwick could be improved, and the 10-year plan is a great time to make decisions and thanked the Park District.

Board Comments

Commissioner Lacey stated it was a good evening and reminded everyone to vote on April 6th.

Commissioner Opyd acknowledged all the citizens that took the time to email the Board. He reads and tries to respond to all of them. It is good to hear what people think in the community. He thanked the large audience for coming out to tonight's meeting in person.

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Commissioner Jacobs stated that the commissioners and staff care about the same issues and are juggling a lot of things, and there is motivation to let residents know we are responding. Perhaps we can continue meeting participation through Zoom so residents can participate virtually. Attorney Bush stated they can participate virtually if we can set it up, and we will see what the Governor says next month. Residents can let the Board know their feelings in a meaningful way whether comments are submitted and read, virtual, or in person. There is no one size fits all, but Zoom meetings work well when the whole meeting is virtual, and everyone participates in the same way. It is cumbersome to have the public on the phone and everyone else live. He encourages the public to email their comments to be read at the meeting. Typically, public comments are not a questions and answer session, but an opportunity to have their comments known. Commissioner Jacobs said it is a work in progress. She thanked the public for coming out, thanked staff for the budget, and Rob Metzger for his role as treasurer.

Commissioner O'Brien thanked the public for coming out and commenting. We do not see all the facilities every day so please keep emailing and letting us know. He thanked Dean, Rob, and Leynette for their hard work on the budget.

President Vear gave kudos to the numbers people that put the budget together. There is a clean flow of information which is imperative for the District to move forward. Openness and the flow of information between the staff, Board, and public is the best way forward and we want to continue that.

Executive Session

At 7:32 P.M. Commissioner Lacey motioned the Board convene to Executive Session pursuant to Item 8.4 Personnel 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1). Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

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

At 9:16 P.M. the Board resumed the regular meeting.

Action of Items Discusses in Executive Session

Commissioner Opyd motioned for approval of the sale of a 2016 Ford Explorer vehicle. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion which passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

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Adjournment

Commissioner Lacey moved for adjournment at 9:18 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Brien and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

Robert Vear, President

Constantine Bissias, Secretary
Approved April 12, 2021

Statement Read at Special Park Board Meeting – March 30, 2021

To the La Grange Park Board:

My name is Marian Honel-Wilson and with me is Nancy Bramson. I live in La Grange and I am the president of the CommUNITY Diversity Group and Nancy is a board member. CDG recently sent the Park Commissioners an email to bring to your attention the updates, repairs and replacement of items that we would like to see placed as priority budget items for 2021 at the La Grange Community Center at 200 Washington. This list was compiled with input from residents of the immediate community.

Mr. Vear responded to the email and asked us to prioritize our list. In truth, the entire list is a priority because many of these items relate to the safety of people using the facility. Many of the items are also low-cost and don't require a large capital output. These items fulfill an urgent need as it appears that this facility has been neglected over time, as shown by the 33 images we emailed the board.

Some of the most urgent priorities include the following, which address unacceptable, very hazardous liabilities such as:

- An Empty Pay Phone Casing
- A Broken, Rusted Water Fountain -near the Playground
- A Damaged Picnic Table at the Playground
- Broken Doors and Locks -South and North Doors
- A Useless Cement Block on the Basketball Court
- Broken Glass Block Windows and Loose Plexiglass
- Replacing and Updating Rusted Meters and Post on West Side.

Some of our other priorities include the following:

- Entranceway- Painted and Repaired
- Planters (2 at entrance & 4 on corners of East Side Blacktop)- including appropriate plantings and seasonal maintenance.
- North Lawn Landscaping- including seasonal maintenance.
- Basketball Court Resurfaced and Painted - Add New Nets
- Blacktop Resurfacing on East, South, West side of building
- Entire Building Power Washed

Statement Read at Special Park Board Meeting – March 30, 2021

- Interior Bathrooms Updated
- Interior Walls Painted
- Floors Replaced - with material conducive for standing
- Kitchen Updated
- Office Updated

Mr. Vear, in responding to our email, stated that the Community Center "may be the most heavily used [building] outside of the Rec Center." For this reason, these and the other items on our list, should get priority scheduling for any maintenance planning. The residents in this community have been waiting years to see their parks and Community Center get the same attention as other parks and facilities in La Grange.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in your MBO process and make suggestions outlining park facility needs. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

THANK YOU,

COMMUNITY DIVERSITY GROUP OF LA GRANGE