

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

DECEMBER 12, 2022

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Chvatal, 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 Megan Mack
Jeffrey Braun – Cody/Braun & Associates
Todd Abrams & Chris Slykas – WT Group
Andrew Kim – PMA
Nancy Bramson, Becky Lorentzen
Marian Honel-Wilson, Ann Wohlberg

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

Communications, Presentations & Declarations

Public Comments/Participation (Board Manual Section #152)

Ann Wohlberg introduced herself as a 40-year resident of La Grange and has taken many classes here. She is interested in pickleball and previously met with Zach Price to discuss it. She distributed a written comparison of pickleball courts and classes offered by La Grange, La Grange Park, and Western Springs. She stated that La Grange has little in comparison with no dedicated outdoor pickleball courts and our classes are terrible. We offer indoor court time three weekdays but nothing on weekends or evenings. Pickleball is a fun and growing game with many people taking lessons, and she hopes we will have dedicated courts next year.

Overview of District's Debt Profile and Possible Referendum Scenarios, PMA, Andrew Kim

Director Bechtold stated that we have a referendum bond expiring with options coming up. She introduced Andrew Kim, bond counsel from PMA, who will speak to those options.

Andrew Kim provided an overview of the District's debt profile and future options during a detailed PowerPoint presentation beginning with the District's debt capacity, including the statutory debt limit and non-referendum debt limit. The non-referendum limit reflects the amount of debt we can issue without going to referendum. He stated that our 2012B referendum bonds mature in 2023. The 2016 and 2020 alternate revenue source (ARS) bonds do not count against the debt metrics. We are allowed to issue these bonds if we can service the debt and can refinance them in December 2029 if the market rates are lower. The annual rollover bonds are issued annually with a portion used for capital maintenance and the debt service on the ARS bonds.

Andrew explained the District's existing debt service which amounts to approximately \$900,000 annually for all bonds but will have a significant drop once the 2012B bonds fall off. The reduction in the 2023 rollover bonds is not an actual reduction since they will be issued again. The true drop off will be in 2023-2024. The District can currently levy approximately \$400,000 without a referendum. This amount uses the 5% CPI for the calendar year, and we can assume a conservative increase of 1% in future years.

Andrew reviewed two possible referendum scenarios including a bond referendum to issue bonds and an increase on the limiting rate where the increase goes into operating funds. Those dollars can be used to pay debt on a bond issue.

He discussed two bond referendum options. A 2025 bond issue with level debt service and annual payments equal to \$505,000 results in proceeds to the District of 6.985 million dollars over 25 years. This is an estimate based on the rates in effect in early November which have since come down 55-85 basis points; 10 points equates to approximately \$46,000 in proceeds. The second option is overall level debt service which assumes debt service grows by 1% each year but targets level overall payments. It assumes that annual payments decrease by 1% every year, starting at \$509,000, with net proceeds of 6.39 million. A change of 10 basis points equates to approximately \$41,000.

Andrew presented information on a limiting rate increase referendum. The tax cap limits any increase in the amount levied in tax dollars each year to the lesser of CPI or 5%, plus new development. The limiting rate changes each year based on the relative change in CPI and existing EAV; in 2020 it was .24 per \$100 of EAV. A limiting rate referendum asks for that rate to be increased for a period of 1-4 years. For a 4-year period the limiting rate remains constant, so if the EAV goes down in those 4 years the levy will go down. After 4 years the

calculations of PTEL take place again. He recommends a 1-year period because PTEL takes place the year after so the levy amount will go up every year. For this option the District must convert the amount of money needed into the limiting rate. There is more flexibility to use the dollars for operations, capital, or to pay debt service. A limiting rate increase is permanent unless a future Board takes action to reduce it. The ballot question does not permit language to explain that the bond tax rate is falling at the same so the District must communicate to the public that bonds are coming off and all we are doing is replacing the taxes on these bonds.

Andrew closed his presentation with a review of the municipal bond market back to 2003. The municipal market data (MMD) index short-term rates closely match federal rates, but longer-term rates are impacted by global events. The fed is increasing rates now so interest rates in the municipal bond market are going up, and the long-term 20-year MMD is lower than the fed short-term target rate yielding a curve inversion phenomenon that may predict a recession. In that case the fed may take action to fight a recession by lowering interest rates.

The Board discussed the referendum options. Director Bechtold clarified that the bonds coming off were for the purchase of this building and that the District can capitalize on an opportunity to keep taxes the same but capturing more dollars for the District as we look at our CMP and work on our budget. Commissioner Vear asked what the timeline would be. Jenny stated that we should plan and prepare for either scenario and budget for creating a task force and hiring a consultant to ideally put it on the 2024 ballot.

Commissioner Posey stated that we need to look at the CMP and goals before making a selection; which of the three scenarios is appropriate depends on our plan. Commissioner Chvatal agreed that he would like to see a plan for the funds. President Opyd stated that the CMP includes 6 million dollars in improvements, and we need to determine where we spend the dollars and select one of the options. If the budget is approved, we will need to start the planning process and allocate marketing funds. Jenny added that funds required to educate the public would be approximately \$50,000-\$75,000, but did not have an exact quote.

There was Board consensus for staff to proceed with a plan for next year.

*Presentation of Competitive Bid for 610 East Ave Parking Lot Project,
Cody/Braun & Associates*

Jeff Braun from Cody/Braun introduced himself and Todd Abrams and Chris Slykas from WT Engineering.

Jeff explained that bids were due on November 22nd and five were received which was a 25% return rate on contractors that requested drawings. He stated there was a base bid along with seven alternates resulting in many combinations and he put together five different scenarios to determine the low bidder.

Abby Paving was lowest for the base bid; the base bid plus all alternates except for the pavers; the base bid plus the EV stations; and the base bid plus the EV stations, extra landscaping, and water line relocation. Hoppy's Landscaping was the lowest for the base bid with paver alternates as well as the base bid plus all alternates. The low bidder will be determined after the Board selects the preferred options with construction estimated to begin around March 15, 2023. Jeff stated that the MWRD permit is going well with a recent positive review but will take some time. Director Bechtold added that the numbers presented do not include a contingency fund which is estimated at 10-15% based on the current market and would be at least \$200,000, which will bring the base bid up to 2.2 million. Jeff agreed that a contingency fund is a good idea because, even with the borings that have been done, until we start digging, we do not know what we will find in the soil.

Todd Abrams reported that we just resubmitted to the MWRD last week. Their comments were minimal which is good and means that our plans are complete, and we will not have to worry about changes to pricing one we have a contractor. We are very close to obtaining the Cook County Highway Department permit which can be finalized once we have a contractor, and we have met all the Village requirements. It turns out that we do not have to provide additional detention for volume control because of the high water table and existing soil which saves approximately \$75,000-\$100,000.

Director Ertmanis agreed with the contingency fund and stated his recommendation is in the memo. Director Bechtold stated she discussed the costs with Cassandra and Leynette and they all agree that the 2.283 million option, which includes a \$200,000 contingency (base bid, EV stations, landscaping, water main relocation) is what the District's budget can handle right now.

There was Board and staff discussion regarding the alternate for the dual use pickleball courts, which would be approximately an additional \$194,000 with lighting. Director Ertmanis stated that his preference would be to install permanent courts at another location for \$250,000-\$300,000. Dual use courts in the parking lot would be subject to wear and tear from salt, snow plows and fence removal, and staff would be needed to open and close them on weekends depending on parking needs. Permanent courts would also have more longevity. Director Miller stated that programming and facility rentals are affected by limited parking, especially mid-October through mid-March. Commissioner Vear stated that it seems counterintuitive to spend \$300,000 on a court in a different location if we cannot afford to spend \$100,000 on courts in the new lot. Residents are asking for pickleball, and he does not see us putting in courts for years if we do not do something now. He does not see including the courts in the plan as detrimental, and if we cannot afford all the features now, we should include the infrastructure. Commissioner Posey stated that the interest in pickleball is important, and it could be tied-in to exploring a referendum and made a priority with the strategic plan. She likes the idea of

more parking spaces here and is concerned about investing in a court in the lot because of wear and tear. We would get more bang for our buck in another location. Commissioner Chvatal added that our leagues need the additional parking on weekends, and we would spend money fixing the courts if cars are parked on them. He prefers permanent courts that are unrelated to this project which should be a Board priority. Director Bechtold stated that dual use courts in the lot would be closed approximately 75% of weekends to accommodate parking needs and building permanent pickleball courts at Gilbert or Sedgwick would be a better investment for residents. We know pickleball is a priority but there are a lot of moving puzzle pieces that need to be put together first including this project, the budget, and CMP. President Opyd stated that the key is to come to a sort of consensus to move forward with a March start date and asked the Board if they needed additional information before voting tonight, and they did not. He asked Jeff Braun if he had experience working with Abby Paving. Jeff answered that he has worked with them for 40 years and they are one of the best companies around and do top notch work.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Vear moved to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 14, 2022; Item 3.2 Approval of the Financial Reports dated November 30, 2022; and Item 3.3 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for December dated December 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jenny Bechtold

- Director Bechtold reported that the Village of La Grange is appointing Jack Knight as their new manager. Charity is being promoted to deputy director; she was not interested in the village manager position. Heather Malone is leaving at the end of January, and the fire chief is retiring at the end of the month.
- Jenny stated that we are transitioning to Microsoft 365 and individuals that have not transitioned their email should call IT to get it set up.
- She stated that a distribution list has been set up on our website for emails which will direct them to each commissioner as well as herself to streamline communications.
- Jenny stated that when we met with Little League a couple of months ago, we learned they were not utilizing all the field time they reserved. We learned Little League was not using approximately 80% of their fields booked, we wanted to determine if Babe Ruth was utilizing all of their field space. Staff thought if Babe Ruth is not using all of their space, we might be able to shift Babe Ruth to one field, the senior field and look at

turning over the prep field to Little League to make into their third field they are requesting. We met with Babe Ruth in November to discuss maintenance of the fields, as well as their field use, and they indicated they needed all their space. We are concerned about the field conditions, and during our discussions, it sounds like Babe Ruth does not have the funds to maintain both fields. We requested their maintenance plan and indicated we would take over maintaining the fencing, as we are for Little League. After that meeting Kevin created a mockup schedule of prep and senior games, increasing the number of teams by three. He was able to schedule all games on just one field on weekdays and Saturdays by adding one additional Saturday game, maximizing the space. Kevin forwarded the schedule to one of Babe Ruth's board members who seemed receptive, and they will discuss it at their next meeting. Again, shifting Babe Ruth to one field would allow Little League to utilize the prep field as the third field they have requested, preserving green space and the basketball courts. In addition to Little League Challengers utilizing the ADA field, the District could also program the field, including use for SEASPAR games, which Blake stated would be unique in our area. Jenny asked the Board if they were in favor of pursuing this option, which would reduce Babe Ruth's field availability, as well as financial obligation while improving the field conditions but may cause some challenges with Babe Ruth.

Commissioner Posey stated she loves the creative use of the space, and it checks off many boxes. President Opyd indicated he was all for it. Infrastructure will be improved, and it creates a win-win, which makes it worth continuing the conversation. Commissioner Vear agreed. All Commissioners were in favor with moving forward with further conversations with Babe Ruth.

Commissioner Vear asked for details on the document disposal progress. Jenny answered that the application is complicated but once it is done, the goal is to have an annual streamlined process.

Director of Finance & Human Resources Cassandra Todd

- Director Todd stated that she is working on the budget which will be online. We will utilize our ERP system and she will educate staff moving forward. This will result in a slim budget binder.

President Opyd stated he is excited to leverage the tools we have.

Director of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Director Miller thanked those that came out to the tree lighting event. With the good weather it was by far our biggest turnout.
- Kevin stated that the numbers in his report for the fall season are trending in a very good direction coming out of COVID.
- He explained that we are due for the renewal process soon for AFC (Action for Children) funding. We currently have two families enrolled in BASE

that qualify for funding, but they have not attended the program this year. New AFC funding requirements include finger printing and physicals for employees at a cost of approximately \$110 each. Considering the usage, we think we could offer a scholarship program to better serve these families while maintaining staff training.

Commissioner Vear asked if scholarship families would pay for the program if they do not attend. Kevin stated that scholarship families would pay 25% of the program fee. He also asked whether the participant spreadsheet yearly totals count the same participant more than once and whether we can report on unique households. Kevin stated that the report does not reflect unique households and he will investigate a RecTrac report to provide that information.

Commissioner Posey thanked everyone for the tree lighting which was magical and reminded her of a Hallmark movie. She also suggested that as a parent of three kids in various club activities she would love to see us explore off-season sports training for soccer and baseball. An organized program would be well-received by parents that currently pay a private trainer during the off-season. Kevin stated that he will check the language in the Sox agreement; we cannot offer professional training but there may be a workaround. He hears the most comments on basketball training.

Director of Parks, Planning & Maintenance Blake Ertmanis

- Director Ertmanis had nothing to add to his written report.

President Opyd asked for details on the landscaping work at Gilbert and when the ballfield machine would be in operation. Blake stated that staff removed dead junipers and bollards, so it is easier to maintain. A contractor also removed a dead box elder near a home. We will keep turf for now where trees were removed. The goal is to get seasonal staff to do all the mowing next summer to free up staff for other projects. Blake stated that the ballfield machine would be used beginning in April and staff will be trained to use it.

Attorney Report

Attorney Mack had no business to report on. She told the Board that they should have all received an invitation to their annual dinner.

Treasurer Report

Director of Finance Todd had nothing to add to her staff report.

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of Competitive Bid for 610 East Ave Parking Lot Project

President Opyd stated that with the presentation at tonight's meeting the goal is to get approval this evening so the project can start in March.

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve staff's recommendation of the

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competitive bid from Abby Paving (#5) in the amount of \$2,083,350.00 consisting of the Base Bid and Alternates 3, 5, and 6, plus a \$200,000 contingency. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Chvatal, Opyd
NAYES: Commissioner Vear
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 22-04 an Ordinance Levying and Assessing Taxes of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois for the 2022 Tax Levy Year

Director Todd stated that all four ordinances have been prepared and as discussed at previous board meetings there is an increase from 2021. There is no changed to what was presented last month.

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve Ordinance 22-04 an Ordinance Levying and Assessing Taxes of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois for the 2022 Tax Levy Year. 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

Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 22-05 an Ordinance Directing the Cook County Clerk to Reduce the Park District of La Grange's Real Estate Tax Levy 2022

Director Todd stated that this ordinance will instruct the county to reduce our general fund. It accounts for the additional 3% the County will automatically give and anything that they will adjust.

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve Ordinance 22-05 an Ordinance Directing the Cook County Clerk to Reduce the Park District of La Grange's Real Estate Tax Levy 2022. 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 Ordinance 22-06 an Ordinance abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2022 to pay principal of and interest on \$1,590,000 General Obligation Park Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2016, of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Ordinance 22-06 an Ordinance abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2022 to pay principal of and

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interest on \$1,590,000 General Obligation Park Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2016, of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois.

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Ordinance 22-07 an Ordinance abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2021 to pay the principal of and interest on \$2,505,000 General Obligation Refunding Park Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2020A, of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois
President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Ordinance 22-07 an Ordinance abating the taxes heretofore levied for the year 2021 to pay the principal of and interest on \$2,505,000 General Obligation Refunding Park Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2020A, of the Park District of La Grange, Cook County, Illinois.

The motion was so moved by Commissioner 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 Updates to the Board Policy Manual
Director Bechtold stated that the updates are spelled out in her memo and asked if there were any questions. President Opyd recommended changing the first paragraph in bereavement leave to be gender neutral; the language assumes that the president is a man. Jenny stated that “his absence” would be changed to “their absence”.

Commissioner Vear motioned to approve the updates to Section 236-Insurance, Section 240-Vacation, Section 242-Sick Leave, Section 244-Bereavement Leave and adding new policies Section 740-Whistleblower and Section 251-VESSA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of Yarn Bombing License
Director Bechtold reported that she has not heard back from Jan Reagan but wanted to include the item so it can be done next month. Commissioner Posey

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stated she has texted with Jan, and they have a new board that will not meet until January, and then the contract will be submitted to their attorney. She hopes they will rubber stamp it so we can move forward, and she will continue to reach out. Jan is creating pieces for the project. Commissioner Posey added that no action is required, and the item will be tabled for tonight.

Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution 22-04 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings

Director Bechtold stated that this is required every six months. Her report lists which closed session minutes and recordings would be opened. She spoke to Attorney Price about a couple of items that include the name of a previous staff member no longer with the District, and it is appropriate to open them.

Commissioner Vear motioned to approve Resolution 22-04 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chvatal and passed unanimously by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Board Business

Old Business

Discussion and/or Possible Approval of Energy Procurement (Electric)

Director Bechtold stated that she wanted to bring this back to the Board. When it was discussed in July the rate was up 3% and the Board wanted to wait to act. She spoke to Nania today and the rate is up 25% which would be an increase of approximately \$16,000. There could be some relief if the winter is mild, but the war is putting pressure on the pricing. Commissioner Vear asked about seasonal charts during the last discussion, but the market is so volatile that there are no seasonal charts to compare because it is out of the norm. Our contract is up in August 2023 and the trend is that rates continue to increase. She would like direction from the Board on whether to lock in now or wait until winter, with increasing prices it might be wise to lock in before they go higher.

President Opyd stated he was uncomfortable that the rate keeps going up. Commissioner Vear stated that if the bond presentation was right about the risk of a recession it makes sense to look at it month to month; a \$16,000 increase is tolerable. Commissioners Posey and Chvatal agreed. President Opyd tabled the item which will be reviewed again.

New Business

None

Committee Reports

Administration Committee

Commissioner Lacey was not in attendance.

Parks and Facilities Committee

President Opyd and Commissioner Vear had no report at this time.

Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee/ Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Posey had no updates other than the yarn bombing project. She stated she is in discussions regarding another long-term project which is in the early planning stages.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

None

President Opyd stated that there would be no executive session this evening.

Board Comments

Commissioner Vear stated that we like guests and thanked the public for coming out to the meeting. He is sorry he missed the tree lighting but is psyched that it went so well.

Commissioner Chvatal stated that the tree lighting was fantastic, and his family had a great time. He is happy it was well attended.

Commissioner Posey stated the tree lighting was terrific. She was proud to see all the people there and saw it on social media. The weather was good and so was the promotion of the event, which was a home run for sure.

President Opyd thanked Mrs. Wohlberg for attending the meeting; pickleball is something that we are discussing. He stated that he looks forward to seeing staff at the holiday party on Friday and that the tree lighting was an amazing event. He was happy to see so many more trees and wants to continue to see partnerships such as Horton's involvement in providing some ornaments for the trees. He wished everyone happy holidays and time with their families.


Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session

None


Adjournment

Commissioner Chvatal moved for adjournment at 7:57 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.

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Brian Opyd, President



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved January 9, 2023